

THE AUTHORIZED Sri Caitanya-Saraswata Parampara



Swami B.G. Narasingha

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All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga

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Swami B.G. Narasingha



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D e d i c a t i o n

We humbly dedicate this book to that revered transcendental personality Om̐ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, whose beautiful lotus feet are cherished by millions and millions of the purest and most qualified devotees, who is the most competent personality to preach the recognized process of devotional service for this era, who shines forth as the natural leading monarch within the extremely advanced devotee's camp, whose lion-like roar causes the envious to tremble and quickly flee, whose tender lotus feet gracefully bestow the ultimate benefit for the innocent, who has widely spread the glories of Śrī Gaurāṅga's holy abode, Śrī Māyāpur-dhāma, whose graceful personality has planted the lotus of Śrī Gaurahari's holy feet in the hearts of his deserving servitors, who is the eternal refuge of Śrī Gaurāṅga's devotees, who is dedicated to serving his spiritual master Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Babāj Maharājā, who is a careful servant of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose intense magnitude of devotion allows him a glorious position within the intimate group of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa, Śrīla Sanātana, and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, whose happy and elevated philosophical conceptions have crowned and seated him along with that esteemed personality, Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī, who has a friendly relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī and Śrī Narottama dāsa, as dear to them as their very own lives, whose loving disposition is more affectionate than even a father to the followers of Lord Gaurāṅga, whose purity attracts even the great administrative demigods, and who is the keeper of life's highest wealth, pure love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda.

We humbly offer our most respectful obeisances unto the charming effulgence that shines forth from the radiant lotus toe-tips of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

P r e f a c e

It is perhaps the ultimate irony that the sublime process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is comprised of the deepest and most profound philosophical cohesiveness and which demands the greatest self-sacrifice and renunciation or self-denial, has once again fallen into a pit of misconception. This is in spite of, after having been manytimes clearly enunciated and painstakingly delineated by the Lord and His pure representatives. All practitioners will heartily agree that the process is faultless and the goal certain, but just what the attainment (*prayojana*) is and how to reach it (*abhidheya*) raises severe differences of opinion amongst the devotees. The entire process is perfect and pure, precisely engraved in the Vaiṣṇava literatures and precisely enunciated by the Lord's pure agents. The fault lies entirely in the practitioners. As a lens on a camera filters everything according to its capacity, we find in this troubled age that some of the neophyte devotees of the Lord have taken to filtering the process of *bhakti* and applying it according to their own desires and necessities. Real devotion is a life of divine slavery, *saranāgati*—full surrender to that which is recognized as the highest necessity. Pure devotion—*jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*, necessitates the abandonment of prior conceptions and necessities—*sarva-dharmān-parityajya*, otherwise we are guilty of *karma-miśrā-bhakti* (devotional service tainted with fruitiveness). So many divergent opinions and impure alternatives have arisen, due to our failing or inability to adhere strictly to the essential core necessities of the process. *Māyāvādiśm* arises out of our false ego—our impure desire to lord it over all as the supreme enjoyer, rather than surrender to the pure Lord. *Sahajiyāiśm* arises due to our desire to enjoy the result now, without paying the price of purity, thus cheapening the process. Materialism, or the spirit of enjoyment, must be sacrificed in the fire of surrender—in recognition of our factual constitutional position as eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa.

It matters not what our fertile brains may think, speculate or desire, the Absolute Truth remains unchanged, in spite of our fallen condition. Our greatest necessity remains to recognize properly and serve the Absolute Truth according to His desire. According to the intensity of our surrender to the unillusioned and full divine conception of the Supreme Absolute Truth, we validate for ourselves His substantial position and our relationship with Him. The *Bhagavad-gītā* warns us that the fruits of demigod worship are limited and temporary, yet many pursue this path. Similarly, the taste of immediate sense gratification—the desire to enjoy Kṛṣṇa consciousness now, or that now we must concentrate on our own advancement at the cost of the serving disposition, captures our intelligence and deflects us from the true path of *suddha-bhakti*.

Kṛṣṇa is the enjoyer, not ourselves, yet we put ourselves first, cheating ourselves of the ultimate fruits and husk empty paddy.

*śrī-gaurānumataṁ svarūpa-viditaṁ rūpāgrajenādṛtaṁ
rūpādyaiḥ pariveśitaṁ raghu-gaṇair-āsvāditaṁ sevitaṁ
jivādyair abhirakṣitaṁ śuka-śiva-brahmādi-sammānitaṁ
śrī-rādhā-pada-sevanāmṛtam aho tad-dātum iśo bhavān*

What was sanctioned by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by His descent, was intimately known only to Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī. Sanātana Goswāmī, the elder brother of Śrī Rūpa, was attentive to that divine truth, and Rūpa Goswāmī himself served that very thing with his own hands to the devotees. Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī tasted its sweetness and also added something of his own to its flavor. What was distributed by Rūpa and tasted by Raghunātha dāsa was protected by Śrī Jiva Goswāmī, who lent support to it's divinity with scriptural evidence. The taste of that divine truth is aspired after by Śrī Śukadeva Goswāmī, Lord Śiva, and Lord Brahmā, who regard it with the highest respect from a distance. What is that inconceivable ambrosia? O Bhaktivinode

Ṭhākura, within this world, you fully possess the ability to give us that extraordinary nectar.

The Authorized Śrī Caitanya-Saraswat Paramparā completely focuses our conception, bringing us in line with the Lord's desires. Swāmī B. G. Narasingha Mahārāja has done an admirable job and most valuable service of pointing out the true path of devotion—clearly explaining the many constituent essential teachings and practices. The real value of this book is that the cheating of the deviant sects are exposed for what they are, so that the intelligent discerning devotees may more easily avoid their pitfalls and more clearly recognize the very precise line of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism—as enunciated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and brought to the contemporary world by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura.

Most readers of this book are dedicated practitioners, so we heartily recommend that you drink deeply and contemplate the contents. We sincerely hope that it will help us tread the path of pure devotion.

Swāmī Bhaktibhāvana Viṣṇu

Introduction

The words “*Sri Caitanya-Saraswata Paramparā*” indicate the disciplic succession (*paramparā*) which was handed down from the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to that of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. This *paramparā* is a disciplic succession of divine knowledge (*divya jñānam*), also known as the Brahma-Madhva Gauḍīya *sampradāya* or the *Bhāgavata-paramparā*.

Brahma-Madhva indicates the preceptors from Lord Brahmā to Śrī Madhvācārya who carried the *paramparā* in ancient times. The use of the term *Bhāgavata-paramparā* indicates the preceptorial line of the principles contained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *Bhāgavata-paramparā* itself began at the outset of this universe wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in four nutshell verses to Lord Brahmā. Lord Brahmā then spoke those four essential verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to his disciple Śrī Nārada Muni who in turn taught those verses to Śrī Vedavyāsa who in turn, upon his mature realization, compiled the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (in twelve cantos) as we know it today. Vyāsa’s disciple was Śrī Madhvācārya. From Madhvācārya the disciplic succession came to Śrī Mādhavendra Purī the fifteenth preceptor in the line. Mādhavendra Purī’s disciple was Śrī Īśvara Purī who became glorious as the spiritual master of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It is indeed the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and its principles therein which figure most prominently in the *Bhāgavata-paramparā*. The Vedas have been compared to a *kalpataru* (desire tree) and the mature fruit of that tree is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-samyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvī bhāvukāḥ*

“O expert and thoughtful men, relish *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Goswāmī. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls.” (*Bhāg.* 1.1.3)

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* contains ten divisions of principles regarding the Absolute Truth.

*atra sargo visargaś ca
sthānaṁ poṣaṇam ūtayaḥ
manvantareśānukathā
nirodha muktir āśrayaḥ*

“In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there are ten divisions of statements regarding the following: the creation of the universe, subcreation, planetary systems, protection by the Lord, the creative impetus, the change of Manus, the science of God, returning back to Godhead, liberation, and the very summum bonum (*āśrayaḥ*).” (*Bhāg.* 2.10.1)

The summum bonum of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is found in the tenth canto wherein the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the Vraja *gopīs* are described. This section is the foremost *āśraya-tattva* of the *Bhāgavatam*.

Prior to the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu all ten principles of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were explained by previous *ācāryas* like Śrī Madhvācārya. The conception of these *ācāryas* however was that Nārāyaṇa is the *āśraya-tattva*. The revelation that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *āśraya-tattva* had remained undisclosed to any *ācārya* since the advent of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—waiting for the reappearance of Kṛṣṇa in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to become fully manifest. Indeed it was this conclusive truth that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to distribute—which had never been distributed before.

*anarpita-carīm cīrāt karuṇayāvatirmaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śrīyam*

*hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śaci-nandana*

“May that Lord, who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śācīdevī, be transcendently situated in the innermost core of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has descended in the age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before—the most elevated mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love.” (C.c. *Ādi-līlā* 1.4)

*namo mahā-vadānyāya
kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya-kṛṣṇa-caitanya
nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, whose divine complexion is a radiant golden hue and who possesses the qualities of the most benevolent incarnation because He distributes what no incarnation ever distributed before, pure love for Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa *prema*). He is none other than Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa known in Kali-yuga as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” (Rūpa Goswāmī)

One might argue that pure love for Kṛṣṇa, being the purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, was surely realized to some extent by previous *ācāryas* but that such love reaches its highest and fullest expression in the personality of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is clearly only revealed through the *paramparā* after the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It was Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers such as Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmīs who announced that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the supreme shelter (*āśrayaḥ*) of all living entities. This is the ‘*āśrayaḥ*’ of which the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* ultimately speaks. This conception of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as the supreme *āśraya-tattva* was unknown to any Vaiṣṇava *paramparā* prior to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s appearance and such a conception is

still only accessible through His bona fide succession.

Based on the instruction of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu introduced the *saṅkīrtana* movement (the chanting of the holy names of God) as the prime benediction for humanity at large—for by such chanting the living entities can be delivered from the darkness of material ignorance.

*nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ yasya
sarva-pāpa-praṇāśanam
praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas
taṁ namāmi hariṁ param*

“Kṛṣṇa’s holy name can relieve us from all undesirable sinfulness, all filthy characteristics, and all miseries. Let us all bow down to him.” (*Bhāg.* 12.13.23)

Similarly, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught the esoteric principles of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*āśraya-tattva*) to His most confidential devotees, thus enabling them to enter into the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord in spontaneous love of God.

From Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the *paramparā* came through Swarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī, Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātana Goswāmī, Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, Jīva Goswāmī, and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī to Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, to Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, to Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, to Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura.

However, after the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu from the eyes of this mortal world many deviant *paramparās* (*sahajiyās*) immediately began to manifest. In numerous ways the *sahajiyās* attempted to monopolize the treasure chest of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s gift of divine love, thus causing a great confusion in the minds of innocent people. By the end of the 19th century the line of divinity established by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had almost

disappeared from sight. The situation was dismal—rascals and cheaters had destroyed the pure principles of the *Bhāgavata-param-parā* and in turn they propagated the lowest standard of sinful behavior in the name of pure spontaneous love, *rāgānuṅā-bhakti*.

For a long time the *sahajiyās* had continuously misrepresented the principles of pure devotional service under the false practices of *rāgānuṅā-bhakti* and that for which the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* stood became tarnished and eventually covered. These *sahajiyā* communities are described by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the *Āula*, *Bāula*, *Kartābhajā*, *Neḍā*, *Daraveśa*, *Sāni-sahajiyā*, *Sakhībheki*, *Smārta*, *Jāta-gosāñi*, *Ativāḍī*, *Cūḍādhāri* and *Gaurāṅga-nāgarī*. They had become so degraded that the very word ‘Vaiṣṇava’ was spoiled in Bengal. Without going into detail it will suffice at this point to say that under the patronage of the above mentioned *sahajiyā* communities ‘Vaiṣṇavaism’ had become known as a religion or occupation of women hunters, drunkards and beggars. Seeing this situation was intolerable for the pure hearted devotees of the Supreme Lord.

At that time the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sent two of His most confidential servants to take birth in this world. These two confidential servants were Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita who appeared as Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura respectively. These two great personalities became the shelter of all sincere followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu during their time. (See chapter seventeen for a detailed explanation).

The intimate disciple of both Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared in this world as the fourth son of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and from his childhood to his old age he dedicated his entire life to removing the clouds of misconception that covered the pure religion of the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Once our spiritual master, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmi Prabhupāda, was asked by a young devotee to say something about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. In reply he said, “What can I say to you—he was a Vaikuṅṭha man.” Here the meaning of ‘Vaikuṅṭha’ must be taken in its most fundamental sense, as indicating beyond material conception. Indeed, in a word, this is a most fitting description of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura, beyond material conception—beyond the reaches of our material calculations. He was cent per cent a man of the upper world whose eternal associates are none other than the Supreme Lords own dearest servants. Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura descended to this world from the inner circle of the Lord’s domain and his philosophical conceptions (*siddhānta*) were wholly that of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—one could not trace mundanity in him at any time in his career. Saraswatī Ṭhākura appeared in this world on the prayer of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with a mission to remove the misconceptions that covered the living entities pure consciousness and to illuminate the path of pure devotional service.

nikhila-bhuvana-māyā-chinnāvicchīna-kartrī
vibubha-bahula-mṛgyā-mukti-mohanta-dhātrī
śīhilita-vidhi-rāgā-rādhyā-rādheśa-dhānī
vilastu hr̥dī nityaṁ bhaktisiddhānta-vānī

“With his first step, he cut to pieces the whole plane of exploitation, and with his second, he crushed the speculation of scholars of salvation and liberation. With his third, he softened *vaidhī-bhakti* with a touch of divine love (*rāga-mārga*). Taking us beyond Vaikuṅṭha, he has introduced us to the highest worship of Śrī Rādhā and Govinda. With the softness of Vṛndāvana within, and the hardness of a devastator without, he created havoc in the world—fighting with one and all. Single-handedly fighting against the whole world, and cutting everything to pieces—that was his external attitude. And his

second attitude was to stop the boasting research of the scholars and doctors of different schools of thought; the third, to minimize and slacken the grandeur of the worship of Nārāyaṇa, and establish the service of Rādhā-Govinda as the highest attainment. He caused the domain of love to descend into this plane, with the service of Rādhā-Govinda, establishing the flow of divine love from the heart as all in all. That was his history—the real existence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. May his divine teachings, Bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī, dance eternally within the core of our hearts.” (Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja)

The *Śrī Caitanya-Sarasvata Paramparā* is indeed a bona-fide disciplic succession of pure devotees of the Supreme Lord which has existed since the most ancient times, yet in modern times the eternal flow of the divine knowledge of that *paramparā* was obstructed by unqualified persons. Unqualified persons posing as spiritual masters had made a mockery of the esoteric principles of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by a cheap show of imitating the higher sentiments of divine love. At that very peak of degradation in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared and recovered the principles of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from the hands of the rogues and resurrected the path of the *Bhāgavata-paramparā*.

Unlike many so-called *paramparās* of his day the *paramparā* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not simply the succession of bodies wherein dead *mantras* are passed on from *guru* to disciple despite their obvious disqualification. Nor was the *paramparā* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the disciplic succession of merchants who make a trade of *mantras* in exchange for money. Nor was the *paramparā* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura a disciplic succession of cheaters who compromise the regulative principles of purity by keeping illicit connection with women claiming that such is not a disturbance to the performance of ones *bhajana*. The *paramparā* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was however the descent of the highest principles of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* exhibited in both deed and concept.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared in this world at a time when the storehouse of the proper conception regarding Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's nectarine teachings had been sealed tight by pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reopened that storehouse and showed the way of bona-fide access to the highest plane of divinity by his personal example. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura preached strongly against the abominable practices and concepts of the *sahajiyās* (imitationists). Within his own movement as well he kept a vigilant eye out against any potential for imitation of pure devotion. His language was strong and he made it clear to his disciples and followers that real devotion was not a cheap sentiment. Devotion he said means submission to *śrī guru*, self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and wholehearted effort to render devotional service. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stressed that without going through all the stages of regulated practice (*vaidhi-bhakti*) one cannot come to the platform of spontaneous love (*rāgānugā-bhakti*).

The dress associated with the eternal associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (*bābāji-veṣa*) had become identified with the lowest men in society. To save the dignity of the highest order of Vaiṣṇavas (*paramahamsas*) Sarasvatī Ṭhākura introduced the saffron colored cloth and the triple staff belonging to the ancient order of renunciates known as *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa*. This of course raised considerable controversy at the time and many dishonest persons criticized Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for concocting unauthorized means of devotional service. However, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had not actually concocted any practices of devotional service—indeed he had reestablished the authorized practices for attaining the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, as authorized by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself. Seeing this illuminating personality standing in the midst of many dark clouds, the honest and sincere Vaiṣṇavas of the time gathered in support of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and assisted him in carrying forth the purely theistic principles of the *Bhāgavata-paramparā*.

The tenth canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the *prayojana-tattva* (the highest truth) through which one can taste the eternal

nectar of divine love. As such the *sahajiyās* are extremely fond of hearing the tenth canto, although they consistently neglect the first nine cantos. It is the first nine cantos of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which qualify the bona-fide candidate for actually entering into the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Yet, the *sahajiyās* prefer to jump over the first nine cantos to the tenth canto in the name of ‘getting the nectar.’ In the opinion of Saraswatī Ṭhākura a neophyte devotee should never have access to such topics as the intimate pastimes of the Lord, because if one prematurely enters the realm of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes that will bring more harm than good. If one is not situated above the propensity for sense gratification yet indulges in hearing or meditating on the intimate pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, one’s enjoying spirit will only increase. One must be fully aware of the Lord’s transcendental nature before entering into discussions or meditations on the Lord’s divine pastimes with His *hlādinī-śakti*. Saraswatī Ṭhākura did not encourage newcomers to read the tenth canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He also disapproved of indiscriminate displays of paintings of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. His standards were high because the goal was high—he did not allow a mockery of the highest conception to be made at any time.

To establish the principles of pure devotional service Saraswatī Ṭhākura wrote many articles in *The Harmonist* magazine, the *Gauḍīya* magazine and the *Nadiya Prakash* newspaper exposing the false practices of the imitationists. Following in the footsteps of Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura established a printing press which he called the ‘*Bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*.’ In the transcendental vision of Saraswatī Ṭhākura the printing press belonged to the category of *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti* and he stressed book distribution and preaching in the same light. A logo for the Gauḍīya Maṭha was designed by Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura in which a circle was drawn and various symbols representing the bona fide processes of devotional service were depicted within that circle. The circle was naturally divided into two sections. On the left side the symbols

representing *vaidhi-bhakti* were placed—such as the *Pañcarātric* literature and Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa representing worship in the mood of awe and reverence according to regulative principles. On the right side of the circle were placed the symbols representing *rāgānuṅā-bhakti*—such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa indicating worship in spontaneous love (*rāga-mārga*). The symbols of the *mṛdaṅga* and printing press were also placed in the *rāga-mārga* section.

In the beginning of the book *Śrī Caitanya Maṅgala* by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura it is mentioned that in the future there will appear a *senāpati* (a great general) who would cause an inundation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. Greatly learned scholars and pure devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who know the purport of the scriptures have understood the ‘*senāpati*’ to have been Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura—who between 1918 and 1936 caused a wave of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness to swell up in Bengal that would indeed inundate the whole world. The sound of the *kīrtana* raised by Saraswatī Ṭhākura conquered in all ten directions silencing the atheist non-believers, the impersonalist speculators, and the imitationist, *sahajiyā* sections of pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas.

Saraswatī Ṭhākura orchestrated a great preaching movement for eighteen years, awarding the triple staff of renunciation to his disciples and then sending these *sannyāsīs* to preach throughout India and eventually to western countries. Before passing away from this world Saraswatī Ṭhākura commented that he desired to spend at least ten years preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the western countries—this Saraswatī Ṭhākura was unable to do before his disappearance in 1936. However, through his intimate disciple Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda we see that Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura’s last desire for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the west was fulfilled. Hence the work of the *senāpati* foretold by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura was continued by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda and the same continues up to the present day in the form of Saraswatī Ṭhākura’s numerous disciples and grand disciples.

In the presence of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the anti-parties were either silenced or defeated, but now six decades later the anti-parties are again making their propaganda against the *Śrī Caitanya Saraswata Paramparā*. This time, however, the anti-parties have a plan to establish their deviant practices in the western world. By the blessings of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the road to the western countries for preaching Vaiṣṇavaism was gloriously opened by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda but now many anti-party spokesmen are also traversing on that road. The anti-parties all claim a monopoly on the process of pure devotional service based on bodily successes and caste consciousness. Rather than following the processes established by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for the attainment of love of God, the anti-parties prefer a ‘short cut to perfection’ via the process of concocted initiations and mental speculations. Such ‘short cuts to perfection’ are a dead end in spiritual life. Indeed the anti-parties are misrepresenting the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and are again making a mockery of the sentiments of divine love.

Part One of this book, *The Authorized Śrī Caitanya-Saraswata Paramparā*, entitled *Refuting the Anti-party*, deals with the false propaganda that the *paramparā* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is not a bona-fide disciplic succession. This misconception is strongly refuted in the opening five chapters with historical and scriptural evidences, which were originally written and published on the internet in response to direct anti-party criticism of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Part Two, *The Practice of Pure Devotional Service*, presents the bona fide practice of pure devotional service in spontaneous love of Kṛṣṇa, *rāgānugā-bhakti*. These articles have been written according to the opinion of previous *ācāryas* and supported by scriptural evidences. In Part Three, *A Few Words of Guidance*, some relevant instruction by Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla B.P. Purī Goswāmī Mahārāja are given to protect the bona-fide devotees from falling prey to imitation of the highest divine mellows of love of God. In particular Śrīla Śrīdhara

Mahārāja, in the fourteenth chapter, cautions that if one is negligent to protect one's self against the imitation tendency, one will regrettably be given the inspiration to live in a 'fools paradise,' thinking that he has now achieved the higher standard of devotion.

Our readers are requested to make a careful study of this book with a view to establish the principles of pure devotional service throughout the world and to crush the numerous anti-party misconceptions, which if allowed to prosper will eventually spoil the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Indeed that would be an intolerable loss for the whole of humanity.

Swāmī B. G. Narasingha



Siksa Parampara _____ Chapter 1

“Full fledged theism is not always manifest—it sometimes goes underground like a stream and again reappears. When it is underground in the unmanifest quarter we are not concerned with the paramparā which simply upholds the formal tradition, the bodily succession.....We should be solely concerned with the substance and always seek out pure devotion wherever it appears and accept that on our heads.”

It so happens that from time to time over the centuries the movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has come under strong criticism and ridicule by those who are either uninformed about the actual practice of pure devotional service or by those who are envious of the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees—the anti-party.

During the 1920s and 30s as well as recently as 1998 the anti-party has revived a certain propaganda that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is not in the *paramparā* of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. It is the suggestion of the anti-party that Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had no *guru* connection with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda whatsoever. Since Gauṛa Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was the *dikṣā-guru* (one who gives *guru-mantra* to *gopāla-mantra* and *kāma-gāyatrī*) of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—his *paramparā*, they say, should be traced to the Advaita *parivāra* (disciplic succession in the family of Advaita) and not to Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura, whom they say is in the Nityānanda *parivāra*. It is also their thinking that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura did not regard Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī as his substantial *guru* (*śikṣā-guru*).

Furthermore it is the contention of the anti-party that since Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not receive *siddha-praṇālī* from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura he should not be considered his true follower. One who does not receive *siddha-praṇālī*, they say, cannot attain Vraja *bhakti*. The anti-party is so strong on this point that they even go so far as to say that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was not pleased with Sarasvatī Ṭhākura due to Sarasvatī Ṭhākura having wholesale rejected Bipin

Bihari Goswāmī, the *dīkṣā-mantra*, *pañcarātrika-mantra-guru* of Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura. Therefore they say that Bhaktivinoda did not give *siddha-praṇāli* to Saraswatī Ṭhākura, as if rejecting him.

It is a fact that Bhaktivinoda sent Saraswatī Ṭhākura to Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābāji for initiation and it is universally accepted that Bābāji Mahārāja was a *siddha-mahātmā*. The fact that Bhaktivinoda did send Saraswatī to Gaura Kiśora is proof that he saw in the Bābāji a higher conception than he found in his own *dīkṣā-guru*—otherwise he could easily have corrected Saraswatī and sent him to Bipin Bihari Goswāmī, but he didn't.

The anti-party draws their line of disciplic succession from Bipin Bihari Goswāmī to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, to Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura (the brother of Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura) to Gadādhara-prāṇa and a few others.

The word “anti-party” has been chosen by Saraswatī Ṭhākura and his disciples to best describe the so-called disciplic succession going under the name of *siddha-praṇāli* because of their actually being in direct opposition to the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There is such a thing as *siddha-praṇāli* and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī has described *siddha-praṇāli* in his commentary to *Kṛṣṇa-karnāmṛta*. He says that both *siddha-praṇāli* and chanting the holy name are bona-fide, but Kavirāja Goswāmī concludes by saying that of the two—the process of taking the name of Kṛṣṇa is superior. One becomes pure by chanting the name without offense and the holy name itself reveals the *aṣṭakāliyā-lilā* (eight-fold pastimes), being nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa and His *lilās*. (This reference available at Caitanya Research Institute, Calcutta)

The first doubt raised by the anti-party is that the actual *guru* of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was Bipin Bihari Goswāmī and not Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji. They say that to consider Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji as the *guru* of Bhaktivinoda is an offense. They consider this so because Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted *dīkṣā* from Bipin Bihari Goswāmī in 1881 and he never received any such initiation from Ja-

gannātha dāsa Bābāji. Thus the anti-party wishes to discredit the *paramparā* line as shown by Saraswatī Ṭhākura in his song *Guru Paramparā* and simultaneously they wish to establish their own line as the true *paramparā* of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura went on pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana in 1881 at which time he met Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji. The Ṭhākura received many spiritual instructions from Bābāji Mahārāja and the Ṭhākura accepted him as his substantial *guru* (*śikṣā-guru*). Bhaktivinoda has referred to Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji as *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhaumaḥ*, the most revered and worshipable Vaiṣṇava:

gaurāvīrbhāva-bhūmes tvaṁ, nirdeṣṭā saj-jana-priyaḥ
vaiṣṇava-sārvabhaumaḥ, śrī-jagannāthāya te namaḥ

“I offer my most respectful obeisances to Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja who is respected and worshipped by the entire Vaiṣṇava community and who discovered the birth place where Śrī Caitanya-deva appeared.”

This raises another interesting point: With the help of Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was able to discover the place of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s appearance. Simultaneously it was declared that the so-called Yogapīṭha at Navadvīpa on the other side of the Ganges was false. Many caste *goswāmīs* objected to the site at Śrī Māyāpur being the original site. Bipin Bihari Goswāmī at that time rejected Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for preaching an untruth (*mithyāpracāra*) and he even published his rejection of Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda’s preaching in a small newspaper of his own called *Gaurāṅga-sevāka Patrika* in 1919. One could say at this point—that at the very least they did not see eye to eye or that their feelings for placing distance in their relationship with each other was mutual—indeed a difficult relationship to maintain between “*guru* and disciple.” (The *Gaurāṅgasevāka Patrika* and article available at Caitanya Research Institute, Calcutta.)

Therefore Bhaktivinoda turned over the Yogapiṭha at Māyāpur to Saraswatī and no one else, because he knew that only he had the strength, realization and *śāstric pramāṇa* (evidence) to hold the sacred ground against the *sahajiyā* and *brāhmaṇa* community. It is also interesting to note that although Bipin Bihari Goswāmī rejected the idea that Yogapiṭha was in Māyāpur—the modern day followers of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura, nonetheless, accept Yogapiṭha in Māyāpur and not the so-called Yogapiṭha in Navadvīpa.

Saraswatī Ṭhākura saw the exchanges between Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Bhaktivinoda at times when the two lived together at Svananda-sukhada-kuñja in Nadia for many years. We do not find any association of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with Bipin Bihari Goswāmī except for a short time in the village of Narail, East Bengal and this does not include any reference to the latter instructing Bhaktivinoda in the matter of pure devotional service.

It is true, as the anti-party says, Saraswatī Ṭhākura did not have very high regard for Bipin Bihari Goswāmī—he certainly did not consider him to be the *guru* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Saraswatī Ṭhākura as a small child (7 years old) was present when Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura received *dīkṣā mantras* from Bipin Bihari Goswāmī and from the outset Saraswatī Ṭhākura was critical of the Goswāmī. When Bhaktivinoda offered his obeisances to the Goswāmī—the Goswāmī attempted to place his foot on the head of the Ṭhākura—the child remarked, “Do you think that you have such spiritual power that you can put your foot on the head of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda?”

There is another short story: Once a celebrated *sahajiyā* came to see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda at his residence. The *sahajiyā* was a gentleman but nonetheless a *sahajiyā*. Saraswatī Ṭhākura was a young boy at the time. When he saw his father (Bhaktivinoda) talking with that gentleman he simply offered obeisances at a distance and got up and went away. Seeing this the gentleman inquired, “Was that your son—why does he offer obeisances and go away?” Bhaktivinoda re-

plied in a happy style, “He has taken a vow not to come within one hundred meters of a *sahajiyā*.”

We must mention here that both Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Saraswati Ṭhākura have been accepted by many great devotees and scholars as liberated souls who appeared in this world by the divine arrangement of Kṛṣṇa. They were not a pair (father and son) of this world as the mundane *bhaktas* (*prākṛta-sahajiyās*) think—rather they were eternal residents from Goloka Vṛndāvana; namely Kamālā-maṅjari and Nayanamaṅi-maṅjari respectively. Therefore, from the beginning of their lives they both showed exceptional qualities and characteristics which are to be attributed only to pure devotees and liberated souls.

For example, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was preaching the process of pure devotion; writing and printing books such as *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* and *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* (both revered devotional works) before he even met his so-called *guru*, Bipin Bihari Goswāmī—something which is highly unusual, even unheard of—unless that is, one is already a liberated soul. Similarly, Saraswati Ṭhākura manifested himself as a pure Vaiṣṇava from his earliest childhood. He was quick to catch the essence of the scriptures and he especially showed a keen ability to distinguish between real *bhajana* and that of the *sahajiyās* (imitationists). We will not go into greater detail regarding their many transcendental pastimes, for many biographies have been written on this subject—it will suffice to say that both Bhaktivinoda and Saraswati Ṭhākura were liberated souls who came down to this world from Kṛṣṇa’s personal entourage to establish the essence of pure devotional service.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura did for sometime show formal respect to Bipin Bihari Goswāmī but when the Goswāmī disrespected Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, the Ṭhākura distanced himself even more from Bipin Bihari. In essence, the details of this incident show that like many caste *goswāmīs* in Orissa, Bengal, Vṛndāvana and Rādhākuṇḍa—Bipin Bihari Goswāmī also thought that he could give bless-

ings to Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, the *prayojana-ācārya*, because dāsa Goswāmī was from a “lower caste” or so he mistakenly thought. It appears that Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura overlooked the stressful relation that had evolved between Bhaktivinoda and Bipin Bihari over the issue of Yogapīṭha being at Māyāpur and also that of Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, in favor of the formal arrangement of *dikṣā*. It does not appear, in spite of his vast learning, that he was able to catch the essence of the teachings of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

It is also known that Bipin Bihari mixed very freely with the degraded sections of Bengal society and associated with anti-Vedic philosophers like the *Brahma Samāja*. Even after his return to Vaiṣṇavism he continued bad habits like smoking etc.—thus Saraswatī Ṭhākura, who was himself very strict in principles, saw this as a sign of lower Vaiṣṇava *adhikāri* (*kaniṣṭha-adhikāri*), although Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura remained somewhat unspoken on the issue.

In 1911 there was an assembly of scholars held in Medinipur (Bengal) wherein the topic of debate was to be “Brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas.” Bipin Bihari Goswāmī was present at that assembly and, as already known, he would side with the *brāhmaṇa* community in the platform that *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇavas were automatically superior to non *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇavas, due to a *brāhmaṇa* being born in a higher caste. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was also invited to attend that assembly. The conflict between he and Bipin Bihari was destined. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura—not wanting to take the position of confronting and attempting to defeat his “*dikṣā-guru*” in a public forum declined to attend the meeting on the plea of bad health. In his place he sent Saraswatī Ṭhākura (age 37) to represent pure Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* in the line of Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, as per the teachings of Mahāprabhu.

In that assembly Saraswatī Ṭhākura prevailed in the debate and established to the satisfaction of the majority of that assembly that a pure Vaiṣṇava, regardless of his birth, was the topmost human being, due to his unalloyed love for Godhead. The news of this was

very pleasing to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The lecture (*Brāhmaṇa O Vaiṣṇavera Tāratamya Viśayaka Siddhānta—The Conclusion Concerning the Comparison of Brāhmaṇas and the Vaiṣṇava*) was published in a book in English called *Brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavism*. (Also available at Caitanya Research Institute, Calcutta)

One might ask why Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura took initiation from Bipin Bihari Goswāmī in the first place, for the question naturally arises whether or not the Goswāmī was actually a pure devotee (perfected soul)?

During those days in India all the “recognized Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas” were initiated into one of the main *parivāras* such as Advaita and Nityānanda *parivāras*. Everyone was expected to wear *tilaka* and neck beads corresponding to his particular *parivāra*. Since he had not taken initiation in any such *parivāra*, Bhaktivinoda did not wear the external markings of a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. It so happened that some persons who had no real eyes to see him would sometimes consider Bhaktivinoda to be a materialist and so forth and thus commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Seeing this situation Bhaktivinoda considered accepting the external markings of a Vaiṣṇava, which he must receive from a *guru*. He longed to meet a bona-fide *guru* who could inspire him, but as Bhaktivinoda later wrote, “I did not obtain one.” Later in a dream the Ṭhākura received some direction from Mahāprabhu and he accepted Bipin Bihari Goswāmī.

The followers of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura contend that this is proof that Bipin Bihari was a perfected soul, otherwise Mahāprabhu would not have given direction to Bhaktivinoda to accept him as *guru*. At this point the anti-party suggests that “could Mahāprabhu have made a mistake?”—thus they wish to indicate that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura received a *siddha-guru* (*sad-guru*) by the arrangement of Mahāprabhu Himself and not simply a formal connection for decorum’s sake. We couldn’t disagree more.

Mahāprabhu Himself took *sannyāsa* in the *māyāvādī sampradāya* for the same reason—for decorum’s sake only. And after

that the Lord continued His preaching mission of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The situation of Bhaktivinoda was similar—his mission was to preach—he had come down to this world with that purpose.

At the time of his initiation Bhaktivinoda received the *pañ-carātric mantras*; *guru-mantras*, *gopāla-mantra*, and *kāma-gāyatrī*. It is interesting to note here that Bhaktivinoda received those *mantras*, which are offered as a *saṁskāra* in place of the Vedic *dīkṣā-saṁskāra* and which are primarily meant for Deity worship following the system of *pañca-saṁskāra* (*tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*, *mantra*, and *yāga*). It is clear also in studying the life of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura through his writings that he did not imbibe any of the conceptions of Bipin Bihari Goswāmī. Factually the two, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Bipin Bihari were distanced from each other from the very beginning—although it can be said that Bhaktivinoda did continue to show the Goswāmī formal respect. Of course the anti-party says that Bhaktivinoda received *siddha-praṇālī* (*ekadāśa-bhāva*) from Bipin Bihari Goswāmī. Nonetheless, this does not establish the anti-party’s procedure of giving *siddha-praṇālī* to the unqualified.

Such respect for the Goswāmī was not so visible in Saraswatī Ṭhākura. In fact in later years Saraswatī Ṭhākura re-initiated (*hari-nāma*, *mantra-dīkṣā*, and *sannyāsa*) a prominent disciple of Bipin Bihari Goswāmī, who became known as Bhaktivivek Bhārati Mahārāja. There is no hiding the truth—Saraswatī Ṭhākura totally rejected the idea that Bipin Bihari Goswāmī was a spiritual preceptor of Bhaktivinoda and we are also accepting the same conclusion. The brother of Saraswatī Ṭhākura (Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura) however accepted just the opposite.

After the disappearance of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Saraswatī Ṭhākura and Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura started a mission together in Calcutta called Bhaktivinoda Āsan at Ultadanga St. In a very short time their difference in conception/vision about Bhaktivinoda arose and they parted ways. Saraswatī Ṭhākura used to say, “My brother sees Bhaktivinoda as *Bābu* (father) but I see him as the delegation

of Rādhā.” This statement reveals that Saraswatī Ṭhākura obviously considered that Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura placed more importance on form than on substance and that he also had no proper conception of the eternal divinity of Bhaktivinoda.

The disciples of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura have said that their *guru* has written extensively on the differences between he and Saraswatī Ṭhākura, but none of those manuscripts have ever been printed. On the other hand Saraswatī Ṭhākura wrote long and printed his manuscripts to spread the glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world. This reflects a seemingly distinct character difference between the two brothers—one was prone to fault the other, while the other dedicated his life solely for the service of Mahāprabhu.

Although Saraswatī Ṭhākura did receive *mantra-dikṣā* from Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja (1900) he also accepted Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as his substantial *guru*. It should be mentioned here also that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gave *mantras* for worshipping the Deity in 1881 and *harināma-dikṣā* to Saraswatī Ṭhākura in 1886. The following is a letter (1910) from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to Saraswatī Ṭhākura wherein Bhaktivinoda gives Saraswatī essential spiritual instructions, thus demonstrating that he was indeed his substantial (*śikṣā*) *guru*.

Saraswatī!

People of this world who are proud of their own aristocratic birth cannot attain real aristocracy. Therefore they attack the pure Vaiṣṇava, saying, ‘They have taken birth in low-class families because of their sins.’ Thus they commit offenses. The solution to the problem is to establish the order of *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma*—something you have started doing; you should know that to be the real service to the Vaiṣṇava. Because pure devotional conclusions are not being preached, all kinds of superstitions and bad concepts are being called devotion

by such pseudo *sampradāyas* as *sahajiyā* and *ativāḍī*. Please always crush these anti-devotional concepts by preaching pure devotional conclusions and by setting an example through your personal conduct.

Please make great effort so you can start *parikramā* of Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa as soon as possible. It is by those actions that everyone in this world will receive Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. Please try very hard to make sure that the service to Śrī Māyāpur will become a permanent thing and will become brighter and brighter every day. The real service to Śrī Māyāpur can be done by acquiring printing presses, distributing devotional books, and *saṅkīrtana*—preaching. Please do not neglect to serve Śrī Māyāpur or to preach for the sake of your own reclusive *bhajana*.

When I am not present any more, please take care to serve Śrī Māyāpur Dhāma which is so dear to you. This is my special instruction to you. People who are like animals can never attain devotion; therefore never take their suggestions. But do not let them know this directly or indirectly.

I had a special desire to preach the significance of such books as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Ṣaṭ-Sandarbha*, and *Vedānta Darśana*. You have to accept that responsibility. Śrī Māyāpur will prosper if you establish an educational institution there. Never make any effort to collect knowledge or money for your own enjoyment. Only to serve the Lord will you collect these things. Never engage in bad association, either for money or for some self-interest.

signed Kedarnātha Datta Bhaktivinoda

This letter shows that the innovator was Bhaktivinoda and the implementer was Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Although the anti-party gives prostrate obeisances to Bhaktivinoda they are nonetheless dead against the *sannyāsa* order introduced by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. From the above letter it is clear that Bhaktivinoda introduced the *daiva-*

varṇāśrama. Bhaktivinoda licensed Bhaktisiddhānta to implement *sannyāsa*—such that persons could actually attain the *rāga-mārga adhikāri* and tread the path.

Although the alleged story is that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura did give “*siddha-praṇālī*” to Lalita Prasāda it is also a known fact that Bhaktivinoda advised Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura to chant Kṛṣṇa *nāma*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura himself gives a warning in *Bhajana Rahasya* that to attempt meditation on *gopī-svarūpa* without proper *adhikāri* will be detrimental:

*adhikāra nā labhiyā siddhadeha bhāve
viparyaya buddhi janme śaktira abhāve*

“If one thinks of his *siddha-deha (siddha-praṇālī)* without achieving the *adhikāri* his intellect gets bewildered.”

In time it came to pass that *siddha-praṇālī* was being given out by imitationists to unqualified persons, therefore Saraswatī Ṭhākura also wrote one hundred verses called *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī* giving warning to the followers of the imitation *siddha-praṇālī* system.

Some verses from *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī* follow:

*sevāya unmūkha ha’le jaḍa-kathā haya nā
natuṅ cīn-maya kathā kabhu śruta haya nā*

“When one is enthusiastic for constantly rendering unalloyed devotional service, there is never any possibility for becoming distracted by idle talks related to the mundane world. Otherwise, if one is not enthusiastic, then confidential topics about the all-conscious spiritual world should never be heard.”

The warning here is that only those who are enthusiastic should enter into talks and so forth on higher topics (such as *siddha-deha*). The characteristic of enthusiasm he says is that one should not be interested in any mundane talk. This of course includes mundane

activities and also such things as illicit sex, etc. If one still has attraction for this level of existence then he does not have the proper *adhikāri* for *siddha-praṇālī*.

*sāmagrīra amīlane sthāyi-bhāva haya nā
sthāyi-bhāva-vyatireke rase sthiti haya nā*

“In the absence of the necessary constituent elements of the *bhakti* process (such as *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, etc.) one can never become fixed up in their own eternal *sthāyi-bhāva* (one of five principle mellows). In the absence of *sthāyi-bhāva* and its necessary elements, one can never become situated in their eternal *rasa* (*siddha-deha*).”

*rati āge śraddhā pāche rūpānugā bole nā
krama patha chāḍi’ siddhi rūpānugā bole nā*

“The followers of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī never preach that transcendental attachment is reached before one develops pure faith. The *rūpānugas* never teach that the perfection of devotion (*siddhi*) can be reached by abandoning the consecutive order of developmental stages on the path.”

*anartha thākāra kāle līlā-gāna kore nā
anartha-nivṛtti-kāle nāma jaḍa bole nā*

“While still contaminated with *anarthas*, one should never sing songs about the Lord’s confidential pastimes. After these impediments are purified (*anartha-nivṛtti*), one never speaks of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa as if it were a mundane sound vibration.”

*anarthake ‘artha’ boli’ ku-pathete laya nā
prākṛta-sahaja-mata aprākṛta bole nā*

“One should never mistakenly call material obstacles ‘useful for devotional service,’ thereby following the wrong path. One should never say that the mundane opinions of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* (cheap materialistic impostors) are *aprākṛta* (transcendental).”

*aśakta komala-śraddhe rasa-kathā bole nā
anadhikārire rase adhikāra deya nā*

“A devotee should never speak on the topics of devotional mellows to one who has weak, pliable faith. A devotee should never attempt to bestow the qualification for *rasa* upon one who is unqualified to receive it.”

Siddha-praṇālī (revelation of one’s eternal perfected spiritual form, *siddha-deha*) is actually effected by the grace of the *guru* for one who purely chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa without offense. The grace of *sad-guru* is required and also that of *harināma* (the holy name) which appears when one purely chants the name in a deep penetrating mood of divine love.

The so-called *siddha-praṇālī* meditation of the anti-party amounts to mental speculation at best. *Siddha-praṇālī* cannot be effected in the mind of a conditioned soul, because such a mind is actually one of the eight material elements. One is required to transcend the mundane mind and come to the platform of *śuddha-sattva*—then from the subjective plane of reality the revelation of one’s *siddha-deha* can be realized—otherwise not.

Yes, we are saying that there is such a process as *siddha-praṇālī*, but that the imitation process is being offered by the anti-party—not the authentic *siddha-praṇālī*. The line of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is bona-fide and authentic because it recognizes both the *ajāta-rati-rāgānuṅā-sādhana* (*rāgānuṅā* before *bhāva*) and the *jāta-rati-rāgānuṅā-sādhana* (*rāgānuṅā* after *bhāva*). The anti-party wants to meditate on their so-called *gopī-deha* with dress, activities and residence (*ekadāśa-bhāva*) etc. while still conditioned with

anarthas. They do not favor preaching, *saṅkīrtana*, distribution of *Bhāgavata* literature and so forth—thinking that these things are not *ajāta-rati-rāgānugā-sādhana* but of a lower conception—that is their mistake. These services are nondifferent from *ajāta-rati-rāgānugā-sādhana* and will contribute to the purification of one’s heart, enabling one to fix the mind on the lotus feet of Rūpa Goswāmī and gradually come to the stage of *bhāva* and thus *jāta-rati-rāgānugā-sādhana* wherein one will glimpse the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjari.

The anti-party wants to say, “let us meditate on *gopī-svarūpa* as the activity of the *ajāta-rati-rāgānugā-sādhana*,” but we strongly disagree—and so have our many *ācāryas*. Otherwise what is the use of the *Gītā*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Ṣaṭ-sandharbhas*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and a host of other essential literature for all *sādhakas* desiring pure devotional service?

The anti-party contends that the giving of *ekadāśa-bhāva* (*siddha-praṇālī*) at the time of *dikṣā* is supported in *Bhakti-sandarbha* by Jiva Goswāmī in the following verse:

*divyam jñānam hy atra śrīmati mantre bhagavatā-svarūpa-jñānam
tena bhāgavata sambandha-viśeṣa-jñānam ca.*

“The term ‘divine knowledge’ here refers to the knowledge of the specific form of the Lord contained in the holy syllables of the *mantra* and knowledge of a specific relationship with the Lord.” (*Bhakti-sandarbha*, 283)

The anti-party then jumps to the conclusion that “*divyam jñānam*” (divine knowledge) means *ekadāśa-bhāva* (*siddha-praṇālī*), the knowledge of one’s form as a *gopī*, dress, residence, etc. However, this divine knowledge revealed by the *guru* at the time of giving *dikṣā* (as stated in *Bhakti-sandarbha*) is actually a reference to receiving proper understanding of the *mantras* for worship such as *upanāyana-saṁskāra* (*brahma-gāyatrī*), *guru mantra* and *gāyatrī*,

gaura-mantra and *gāyatrī*, *gopāla-mantra*, and *kāma-gāyatrī*. There is no suitable support for *ekadāśa-bhāva* found in the above quoted verse. For a thorough understanding of this subject (revealing the meaning of the *mantra*—receiving *divyam jñānam*) one should read the book *Śrī Gāyatrī Mantrārtha Dipikā* published by Gosai Publishers.

It is in one sense ironic that the anti-party dares to even show their face in the Vaiṣṇava world of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's movement to preach their misconceptions. The persons who are doing this mischief were once all devotees of ISKCON, who leaving our Guru Mahārāja Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda in the 1970's to go for *siddha-praṇālī* initiation, eventually fell down and were unable to even maintain the four basic regulative principles, what to speak of the meditation on their eternal form and relationship with Kṛṣṇa. In this way these men became reject disciples. Of course at least one of them feels himself qualified to give *siddha-praṇālī* initiation and has misled a number of newcomers. In an attempt to rationalize their existence, these ex-ISKCON devotees have taken to the study of many books—became scholars and after acquiring some theoretical knowledge of *rāgānuṣāṅga-bhakti* and *siddha-praṇālī*, they have tried to establish themselves as the actual followers of Mahāprabhu and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura—while at the same time they try to discredit the authority and qualifications of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Other than that, since the disappearance of Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura in 1914, they have done nothing to spread the cause of Mahāprabhu 's mission to the world. Their only work is to try to disprove the *paramparā* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In Bengal the anti-party is no match for the Gauḍīya Maṭha who are highly learned in all these matters historically and according to *sāstra*. The anti-party is only able to spread their misconception to a few less fortunate devotees from the West who are of weaker faith and beginners knowledge.

It is important to know that the *paramparā* which Saraswatī Ṭhākura mentioned in his *paramparā* song is a *śikṣā sampradāya* and not a *dikṣā sampradāya*. That is also to say that it is the *bhāgavata-paramparā*, which does not rely on any formality whatsoever but which draws completely on substance over form. The line shown by Saraswatī Ṭhākura is not the line of a bodily succession but the recognition of where (in which great Vaiṣṇavas) the conception of pure devotion was manifest. The line of Saraswatī Ṭhākura is not at all concerned with the so-called “pedigree” *dikṣā-paramparā* of the so-called “unbroken” succession.

The anti-party claims that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura never made any reference to *śikṣā-guru-paramparā* in his writing and therefore, how could there be a *śikṣā-paramparā*? Unfortunately the anti-party only produces “evidence of convenience” and not the truth. They have thus conveniently overlooked the following śloka from *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru*:

*dikṣā-guru-krpā kori mantra-upadeśa
koriyā dekhān kṛṣṇa-tattva nirdeśa
śikṣā-guru-br̥nda krpā koriyā apār
sādhake śikhān sādhaner aṅga-sār*

“The initiating spiritual master (*dikṣā-guru*) shows his causeless mercy by giving his disciples instructions in chanting the *mantra*. By so doing, he points the disciples in the direction of the truths pertaining to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I consider the numerous instructing spiritual masters (*śikṣā-gurus*) to be more important, for they show more mercy by training the *sādhakas* in all the essential aspects of *sādhana-bhakti*.”

A classic example of how the anti-party is lost in their “pedigree” conception of *dikṣā-guru* becomes apparent in their disregard of Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī—going so far as to say that, “there is no *dikṣā* connection from Dāsa Goswāmī to Bhaktivinoda.” Does

the anti-party wish to suggest that Bhaktivinoda is not in the line/*paramparā* of Dāsa Goswāmī simply because the *dīkṣā-guru* of the Ṭhākura was not in a *dīkṣā-paramparā* from Dāsa Goswāmī? Yes, that is exactly what they want to say. We find such a mentality to be mundane, strictly form oriented, undernourished, and blind to revealed truth.

Full fledged theism is not always manifest—it sometimes goes underground like a stream and again reappears. When it is underground in the unmanifest quarter we are not concerned with the *paramparā* which simply upholds the formal tradition, the bodily succession. Rather, Saraswatī Ṭhākura has demonstrated that we should be solely concerned with the substance and always seek out pure devotion wherever it appears and accept that on our heads. For that he taught a high measure of discrimination and caution.

The following is a quote from the Guardian of Devotion, Śrīla Śrīdhāra Deva Goswāmī, supporting the above statements on accepting the essence and not simply the form:

The very gist of the *guru-paramparā*, the disciplic succession, is *śikṣā*, the spiritual teaching, and wherever it is to be traced, there is *guru*. One who has the transcendental eye, the divine eye, will recognize the *guru* wherever he appears. One who possesses knowledge of absolute divine love in purity, he is *guru*. Otherwise the *guru-paramparā* is only a body *paramparā*: a succession of bodies. Then the caste *brāhmaṇas*, the caste *goswāmīs*, will continue with their trade, because body after body, they are getting the *mantra*. But their *mantra* is dead. We are after a living *mantra*, and wherever we can trace the living tendency for a higher type of devotional service, we shall find that there is our *guru*. One who has that sort of vision awakened will be able to recognize the *guru* wherever he may appear. (*Śrī Guru and His Grace*, p. 22)

The highest fulfillment of life (*aprakṛta-gopī-deha*) the perfected form of an eternal maidservant of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda is not a cheap achievement. The reality is that few are willing to pay the price—nonetheless Saraswatī Ṭhākura preferred not to lower the price—rather he showed by his own ardent example that the goal of life can be achieved by those honest seekers of truth who will not indulge in self deception (the imitation process of *siddha-praṇālī*).

Apart from all that I have said thus far, the fact that Saraswatī Ṭhākura's disciplic succession is the bona-fide succession of Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura is self-evident in the fact that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura turned over the world preaching mission and the birth site of Mahāprabhu (Yogapīṭha), along with his full blessings for success, to Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. It was Saraswatī Ṭhākura who sent his disciples (particularly A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda) out to preach the holy name all over the world and establish Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and that is a fact. If you are reading this article you are doing so by the grace of Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura and the grace of his disciples—because it is they who have brought Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the west.

Eternally Liberated _____ Chapter 2

“The real ekadāsa-bhāva (siddha-deha) is revealed in proportion to one’s conversion from the disease of the enjoying spirit to that of a healthy serving disposition. Our actual initiation into rāgānugā-bhakti is initiation into the conception of divine slavery.”

Prior to writing the first chapter *Śikṣā Paramparā*, I was shown correspondence from an anti-party representative who made specific derogatory statements about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura and his *paramparā*. That is reproduced here as follows. The anti-party representative wrote:

What is the connection between Bhaktisiddhānta and Bhaktivinoda Thākura that you speak about? Of course there was connection, they were father and son. But not *guru* and disciple. Bimālā Prasāda did not respect Śrīla Bipin Bihari Goswāmī, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda was very unhappy about this show of disrespect. For this reason Bhaktivinoda didn’t give Bimālā Prasāda *dikṣā*. Bhaktivinoda was also unhappy about Bimālā Prasāda’s heavy critique of many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

You say that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda found the leading Vaiṣṇava in Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and not in his *dikṣā-guru*. This is false!!... Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī was his *śikṣā-guru*, but that doesn’t mean that his position was higher than the *dikṣā-guru*. I happen to be initiated into the *dikṣā-paramparā* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, and therefore I know what the *paramparā* is. Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī is not included in it.....There is no such thing as ‘*śikṣā-paramparā*,’ as something that is independent of *dikṣā*. In the other Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* the unbroken line of *dikṣā* is the *guru-paramparā*. There is no ‘*bhāgavata paramparā*’ there. In the Gauḍīya line you won’t find support

for it either (outside of Gauḍīya Maṭha, ISKCON etc.). But this might be difficult to accept if you want to be a follower of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta’s line.

It was this statement written by the anti-party which first caught my attention and fueled the first chapter (*Śikṣā Paramparā*) as a response to their misconceptions. Rather than ignore the statements of the anti-party as simply being offensive to both Gauḍīya Maṭh and ISKCON, as one might normally do when confronting foolish persons, I decided to answer their questions, counter their arguments and expose their misconceptions with reference to *śāstra* and certain important histories in this regard. Now that the topic has come out in the open on the internet we feel that it is necessary to continue to expose all the misconceptions of the anti-party. There are no doubt hundreds of misconceptions in the anti-party and therefore our work may not be completed in this article or even in this lifetime.

After our first article appeared, the representative of the followers of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura wrote a few words rejecting our original article and then summed it up by stating, “With these words I have demonstrated the invalidity of Narasingha Swāmī’s accusations and misconceptions.”

We will not so easily concede this argument. The anti-party has failed to demonstrate anything substantial—nor have they countered any of our statements in the previous article wherein we have shown: 1- that the *paramparā* of Saraswatī Ṭhākura is indeed drawn from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī not Bipin Bihari Goswāmī, 2- that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura took *dikṣā*, for decorum’s sake only, from Bipin Bihari Goswāmī, 3- that Bipin Bihari Goswāmī did in fact reject Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (printed in *Gaurāṅgasevāka Patrika* in 1919) for the reason that the Ṭhākura had preached what the Goswāmī considered an untruth regarding the birth site of Mahāprabhu being at Māyāpur and not at Navadvīpa, 4- that Bipin Bihari Goswāmī offended Raghunātha dāsa Gos-

wāmi by considering him as born in a lower caste, 5- that Saraswati Ṭhākura defeated Bipin Bihari Goswāmī in the debate at Midinpur on *Brāhmaṇas* and *Vaiṣṇavas*, 6- that Bipin Bihari Goswāmī had the character of the lower Vaiṣṇava *adhikāri*, 7- that Saraswati Ṭhākura re-instated a leading disciple of Bipin Bihari Goswāmī thus showing his complete disregard for the idea that the Goswāmī was the *guru* of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, 8- that Bhaktivinoda was very pleased with the preaching of Saraswati Ṭhākura and gave him his full blessings to defeat all types of philosophical misconception, to establish the birth site of Mahāprabhu at Māyāpur and to establish the divine teachings of pure devotional service throughout the world (*daiva-varnāśrama*), 9- that *ekadāśa-bhāva* as practiced by the followers of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura is mental speculation, 10- that *harināma* is a superior process to *ekadāśa-bhāva* as explained by Kavirāja Goswāmī in his commentary to *Kṛṣṇa-kāraṇāmṛta*, 11- that the *śikṣā-paramparā* is the *sad-guru-paramparā* and not simply the line of bodily succession (*dikṣā-paramparā*), and 12- that one receives entrance into the process of *rāgānuṣāṅga-bhakti* at the time of initiation into the *paramparā* of Saraswati Ṭhākura.

All these points were substantially made in our first article but the anti-party has failed to refute even one of them properly. Rather they have simply resorted to jumbling a few words here and there with the hope of saving face. Of course it is a hard lump for the anti-party to swallow but they have accepted an illusory *paramparā* of bodies and dead *mantras*.

We would like to give further explanation to some additional points regarding the misconceptions of the anti-party about the *paramparā* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, Saraswati Ṭhākura, and the bona-fide process to attain perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

It is the opinion of the anti-party that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a conditioned soul (*nitya-baddha*), who was thus bewildered by the three modes of material nature and subject to the reactions of sinful activities in the beginning of his life. The anti-party states as

their main source of reference on this point a short autobiography called *Svalikhita Jivānī* wherein Bhaktivinoda describes in brief the events of his life in chronological order up to his retirement. In that book scarcely anything is mentioned regarding pure devotional service. The book was originally a letter written by Bhaktivinoda to his son Lalita Prasāda when the boy was just 15 years old. Much is given to describe the Ṭhākura’s previous life style and habits before fully manifesting his mission and reason for descent. There, Bhaktivinoda describes his old habits of eating non-vegetarian food, his having been a *māyāvādī*, etc. This the anti-party claims is evidence that the Ṭhākura was a conditioned soul prior to meeting Bipin Bihari Goswāmī.

The anti-party continues their line of thought and concludes that it was by the mercy of Bipin Bihari Goswāmī that the Ṭhākura became a liberated soul—one qualified to receive Vraja *bhakti*. This point they further try to prove by quoting the *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taranga* wherein Anaṅga Mañjarī takes Śrīla Bhaktivinoda (Kāmālā Mañjarī) and introduces him to Rūpa Mañjarī as a *nava-dāsī* (a newcomer).

*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-praśne īśvari āmāra
bolibe e nava-dāsī sakhī lalitāra
kamala-mañjarī-nāma gaurāṅgaika-gati
kṛpā kori’ deho ebe rāga-mārge gati*

“Being questioned by Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, my mistress Anaṅga Mañjarī will reply: ‘This new *dāsī* will be engaged in Lalitā Sakhī’s service. Her name is Kāmālā Mañjarī, and she is very devoted to Śrī Gaurāṅga. Please be merciful now and give her entrance into the flow of spontaneous devotional service to our Lordships.’”

The anti-party says that this verse proves that Bhaktivinoda was not a *nitya-siddha* (eternally liberated) soul, otherwise he would not have referred to himself as a *nava-dāsī*. They further conclude that

the Ṭhākura, having been introduced to Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī by Anaṅga Mañjarī, further demonstrates that the *paramparā* of Bhaktivinoda is coming in the line of the Nityānanda *parivāra*—from Jāhnavī Devī to Bipin Bihari Goswāmī in an unbroken *dikṣā paramparā*. Jāhnavī Devī is Anaṅga Mañjarī in Kṛṣṇa *lilā* and thus they say that this demonstrates that it was by the grace of Bipin Bihari Goswāmī that the Ṭhākura got entrance into the eternal pastimes of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa via Anaṅga Mañjarī.

The conception of Saraswatī Ṭhākura however is diametrically opposed to that of the followers of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura. Saraswatī Ṭhākura considered Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as *nitya-siddha*, eternally liberated. He never for a moment considered Bhaktivinoda as father—what to speak of considering Bhaktivinoda a conditioned soul. Saraswatī Ṭhākura always considered Bhaktivinoda as *guru* (*sad-guru*—eternal *guru*). In fact he always saw and spoke of Bhakti-vinoda as being in the highest plane of *guru-tattva*—as the delegation or representative of Śrī Rādhikā.

As already mentioned in our first article, Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura thought of Bhaktivinoda as “*Bābu*” (father). The fact that Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura saw Bhaktivinoda as “*Bābu*” is evident at the beginning of *Svalikhita Jivānī* where he writes:

My honorable father ordered me not to misuse whatever was written to me by him. Such was his instruction to me. That is the reason that I cannot give this book to ordinary persons. Only one who has complete love and faith in my father can read this work. If anyone reads this volume and makes his own commentary that is against my father, then he alone is responsible, not I.

Saraswatī Ṭhākura on the other hand did not consider Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura as “father”—he only saw him as *guru*. Nor did he see any so-called mundane thing about the life of Bhaktivinoda to

be an indication that the Ṭhākura was ever a conditioned soul. Thus Saraswati Ṭhākura gave no importance whatsoever to the book *Svalikhita Jivānī*.

The quotation from *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taranga* wherein Anaṅga Mañjarī takes Bhaktivinoda (Kamālā Mañjarī) and introduces him to Rūpa Mañjarī as a *nava-dāsī* (a newcomer) does show however that Bhaktivinoda has an intimate friendly relationship with Anaṅga Mañjarī in eternal pastimes (*aprakāṣa-līlā*). His being referred to as a *nava-dāsī* (newcomer) does not prove that he was previously a conditioned soul but rather the description of his being a *nava-dāsī* is given in the mood of showing us how a member of our *sampradāya* in the stage of perfection (*svarūpa-siddhi*) will be introduced into the divine pastimes of the Lord. Because they are victims of a faulty process and are averse to the practices of pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*), the anti-party has no entrance into this understanding.

In any chronology of an author's works we would naturally expect that the latter works would reflect the authors deepest thought and development. In this regard we reference the last book written by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in 1907, namely *Sva-Niyama-Dvadāśakam, 12 Verses of My Self-Imposed Regulative Principles*. In the first verse Bhaktivinoda makes special reference to the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī (Rūpa Mañjarī) and the devotees of his disciplic succession. There he says:

gurau śrī-gaurāṅge tad-udita-subhakti-prakaraṇe
śaci-sunor-līlā-vikasita-sutīrthe nija-manau
harer nami preṣṭhe hari-tithiṣu rūpānuga-jane
śuka-prokte śāstre prati-jani māmāstām khalu ratih

The third line; *harer nami preṣṭhe hari-tithiṣu rūpānuga-jane* makes special reference to the line of Rūpa Goswāmī and his followers, by the words *rūpānuga-jane*. Bhaktivinoda prays in his mood of natural humility that whenever and wherever he may

happen to take birth he simply desires that his loving affection and attachment will remain unshaken for the line of Rūpa Goswāmī and his followers.

The anti-party however does not give serious consideration to the position of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī in the disciplic succession of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, despite Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu having personally appointed Rūpa as the *rasa-ācārya*. Rūpa Goswāmī simply does not figure predominately in their thinking or understanding of the process of *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Prior to the appearance of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, none of the anti-parties called themselves *Rūpanugas* or followers of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. This term “*Rūpanuṣa*” was coined in our modern times by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The anti-party prefers to jump over 269 verses of Rūpa Goswāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and immediately enter into the internal *sādhana* of *rāgānugā*, leaving the necessary practice of *vaidhi-bhakti* behind. This amounts to a spiritual dead end.

From the reading of the anti-parties literature one cannot glean even a particle of the proper conception necessary for *rāgānugā-bhakti*. One could read such books as *Why Did Caitanya Mahā-prabhu Come and What Did He Come to Give* and *Navadvīpa Vraja Mādhurī* from cover to cover without ever realizing that the life of divine love which Śrī Caitanya came to give is based on sacrifice! Enjoying the *līlās* of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa “NOW,” while one is still at the stage of *bhajana-kriyā* (practice) and without proper qualification (*anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā*, and *ruci*), is the odor that the anti-party reeks of. Before one can enter the plane of higher topics one must first embrace a life of divine slavery—that was the conception of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The real *ekadāsa-bhāva* (*siddha-deha*) is revealed in proportion to one’s conversion from the disease of the enjoying spirit to that of a healthy serving disposition. Our actual initiation into *rāgānugā-bhakti* is initiation into the conception of divine slavery.

One must always keep the higher conception above and worship that from a little distance:

*pūjāla rāgapaṭha gaurava bānge
mattala sādhu jana viṣaya range*

This *śloka* was composed by Sarasvatī Thākura and it describes the particular type of posing which should be adopted by all *sādhakas* (devotees at the stage of practice). From a little distance and below we should offer our highest regard to the highest quarter. An imitative show of the higher sentiments of divine love will only bring about a negative result in the practicing life of a devotee. Imitation is always to be avoided. The *ekadāsa-bhāva* practiced by the anti-party certainly falls into the category of imitation. (The imaginary *ekadāsa-bhāva* process practiced by the anti-party consists of receiving the following eleven points of information about one’s so-called eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa from a so-called *guru*; *sambandha*—relationship, *vayasa*—age, *nāma*—name, *rupa*—form, *yutha*—group, *veṣa*—dress, *ajna*—orders, *vasa-sthana*—residence, *sevā*—service, *parakastha*—highest aspiration, and *palya-dāsi-bhāva*—the mood of a protected maidservant.)

To support their misconception of receiving *ekadāsa-bhāva* at initiation the anti-party quotes the following verse from *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Anuccheda 283, Text 20:

*divyam jñānam hy atra śrīmati mantre bhagavat-svarūpa-jñānam
tena bhagavatā sambandha-viśeṣa-jñānam ca*

The words “*divyam jñānam*” (transcendental knowledge) here refers to the descriptions of the Lord’s transcendental form in sacred *mantras*. Chanting those *mantras* establishes a relationship with the Supreme Lord. The term “*viśeṣa-jñānam*” here refers to specific knowledge of a specific relationship with that Lord.

The anti-party interprets this however to mean receiving *ekadāsa-bhāva*. How from *tena bhagavatā sambandha viśeṣa-jñānam ca* is the *ekadāsa-bhāva* construed? It is only the stretch of their imagination. *Ekadāsa-bhāva* actually belongs to the *prayojana-tattva* (the highest stage of realization). The anti-party wants to cut off the word *sambandha* (the beginning stage of knowledge—fundamental knowledge) and establish their own interpretation thus making *ekadāsa-bhāva* a part of *sambandha-jñāna*. They want to take up *prayojana* at the stage of *vaidhi-bhakti* leaving aside the *abhidheya* or means of attainment rather than undergo the real process of purification.

The followers of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are certainly not without *divyam jñānam* or *viśeṣa-jñānam*. A significant proof of this fact is that the followers of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura have penetrated into the meaning of the *mantras*, referred to by the above verse, such as *brahma-gāyatrī*, *guru-gāyatrī*, *gaura-gāyatrī*, *gopāla-mantra*, *kāma-gāyatrī*, and *sannyāsa-gāyatrī* (the *rāga-mārga mantra*) to such depths that have never been revealed before. In the commentaries to these *mantras*, the followers of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, by his grace, have established the acme of divine truths regarding the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Thus they have demonstrated that their lineage is the divine succession of Vraja *premā* in the *paramparā* of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. To satisfy our readers regarding this bold statement we invite you to read the book *Śrī Gāyatrī Mantrārtha Dipikā*, published by Gosai Publishers.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught *sambandha-jñāna* to Sanātana Goswāmī (Rati/Lavaṅga Mañjarī) and *abhidheya-jñāna* to Rūpa Goswāmī (Rūpa Mañjarī) but we do not find that Mahāprabhu gave *ekadāsa-bhāva* to either of them while imparting His general and specific instructions—as it is assumed by the followers of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura. Yet if one follows sincerely the instructions given to both Sanātana Goswāmī and Rūpa Goswāmī, one will no doubt

gradually come to the stage of *prayojana* (perfection), wherein *ekadāsa-bhāva* will be revealed.

Another interesting point to note here is that the verse quoted above from *Bhakti Sandarbha* appears in the section on Deity worship. There Deity worship is being recommended by Jiva Goswāmī for householders and a reference is given to the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa* wherein it is recommended that for wealthy householders the path of Deity worship is most important.

While discussing the defects of imitating *ekadāsa-bhāva* it should also be noted here that the anti-party frequently recommends the practice of *sādhārani karon* as a stimulus to *ekadāsa-bhāva*. This *sādhārani karon* is the process of attending drama performances known as *rasa-lilās*. Here the anti-party enthusiastically recommends that by watching such *lilā* dramas, one's eternal loving sentiments (*bhāvas*) for Kṛṣṇa in *mādhurya-rasa* are aroused. This they say is achieved by identifying one's self with one of the actors and thus experiencing the sentiments being portrayed. Thus they sometimes make a show of shedding tears and manifesting other bodily symptoms of *bhāva*. We point out here the obvious—their *sādhārani karon* process is imitation. One may ask, "What is the harm if neophytes watch *rasa-lilā* dramas?" The answer is that unless one is established in transcendence (*niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, or *āsakti*) the viewing of *rasa-lilās*, will only arouse one's mundane sentiments of love which are sentiments of *premā* (divine love) covered by lust. When this happens the whole thing is spoiled and one may lose his highest prospect forever. What to speak of losing our highest prospect—those who are the eternal residents of the divine world will themselves block our entrance there, due to our having committed offenses. When there is imitation, only offenses will be created. Those offenses will be recorded in that circle of the examiners of the upper quarter, and they will give a stamp of disqualification that we are criminal and unfit. This will go against us and hamper our future progress.

Our Guru Mahārāja Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, once commented to us in Vṛndāvana about this *sādharaṇi karon* process wherein he said, “One who has already realized *rasa-līlā*, he can go to see such performances—otherwise not.” It is also a known fact that such *līlā* dramas must be performed by pure devotees in order for the actual sentiments (*bhāvas*) to manifest. This point the anti-party also overlooks and eagerly goes to attend the *līlā* dramas performed by ordinary conditioned souls. Thus from start to finish it is a cheating process. A process of self-deception.

Some devotees in ISKCON are willing to concede that there are two branches from the *paramparā* of Bhaktivinoda. One being *harināma* and *daiva-varṇāśrama* as represented by the line of Saraswatī Ṭhākura and the other being *ekadāsa-bhāva* (*siddha-praṇālī*) as represented by Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura. These devotees, for want of proper understanding, sometimes conclude that these are two parallel paths—one coming from Bhaktivinoda’s *dīkṣā* connection (Bipin Bihari Goswāmī) and one coming from his *śīkṣā* connection (Jaḡannātha dāsa Bābāji). This idea, however, is completely rejected by the Gauḍīya Maṭha. The *siddha-praṇālī* mentioned by Kavirāja Goswāmī in his commentary of *Kṛṣṇa-kārnāmṛta* is not the same as the *siddha-praṇālī* practiced by the followers of Lalita Prasāda Ṭhākura and thus the path of the anti-party is a rejected one.

The devotees should know that the anti-party, despite their sometimes quoting the books of the Six Goswāmīs to support their conception, is not in the *rūpānuga-paramparā*, the disciplic succession of Rūpa Goswāmī (Rūpa Mañjarī). The anti-party starts their *paramparā* from Nityānanda Prabhu to Jāhnavī Devī down to Bipin Bihari Goswāmī. Thus, the Six Goswāmīs are not included in their *paramparā*.

It is sometimes expressed by the anti-party that Saraswatī Ṭhākura was a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a great devotee. This they say for convenience sake when trying to work themselves out of a corner. What they really think of Saraswatī Ṭhākura is

evident in the statement made by their spokesman, quoted at the beginning of this article.

When the anti-party seemingly shows respect to Saraswati Ṭhākura by saying that he is a *mahā-bhāgavata*—it is actually a hidden criticism. The real meaning of what they say is that they only consider him a preacher of the *yuga-dharma* (*harināma*) and a devotee of the Nārāyaṇa aspect of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—not a member of the Vraja camp. In the conception of the anti-party, *harināma* is something different from *rāgānugā-bhakti* and thus they insinuate that Saraswati Ṭhākura cannot give the proper conception of Vraja *bhakti* although he did preach *yuga-dharma* very nicely. Thus, they say, his followers can only attain Vaikuṅṭha *premā* but not Kṛṣṇa *premā* in Vraja. The anti-party stresses here that since Saraswati Ṭhākura did not receive *ekadāsa-bhāva* from Bhaktivinoda that he was given entrance only to Vaikuṅṭha.

By saying that Saraswati Ṭhākura can only give Vaikuṅṭha *premā* the anti-party indirectly insinuates that Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābāji, a *siddha-puruṣa* and eternal resident of Vraja, Guṇa Mañjarī, did not bestow the conception of *Vraja-bhakti* upon his disciple Saraswati Ṭhākura. It is here that the anti-party makes one of their biggest mistakes.

There is a nice story in this connection regarding Saraswati Ṭhākura being a Vaikuṅṭha Man and a man of Vraja as well:

Once a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava spent some time at Māyāpur in the association of Saraswati Ṭhākura. After some days this man went to Navadvīpa to be in the association of Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābāji. Hearing that this man had come from Māyāpur, Bābāji was very happy and he inquired about Māyāpur. The man replied that he would not go to Māyāpur any more, because Saraswati and others there are Vaikuṅṭha men. They are only interested in *aiśvarya* mood—they are not in the Vraja mood. Hearing these words Bābāji Mahārāja was quite disgusted and he scolded that man for his foolishness and offense at the

lotus feet of a pure Vaiṣṇava. Bābājī said, ‘It is ridiculous for a sparrow to attempt to cross the ocean. If you are serious about living in Vraja, then give up your criticism of pure devotees. Do you think that you will get information about Vaikuṅṭha from hell? Saraswatī is in Vaikuṅṭha and he is in Vṛndāvana as well. You are presently in the lap of the witch Māyā. How will you know the Saraswatī of Vraja? You do not possess the eyes to see how Bhaktivinoda and Saraswatī Prabhu have exemplified the performance of *hari-bhajana* with pure ecstatic emotion.

The highest *ekadāsa-bhāva* that one can achieve is that of a *mañjari* maidservant in the camp of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This was actually the *bhāva* of Saraswatī Ṭhākura. There is a short anecdote in this connection which shows that Saraswatī Ṭhākura (Nayanamaṇi Mañjari) was indeed in *mañjari-bhāva*:

In Navadvīpa there lived a very famous and revered Vaiṣṇava saint named Vamsidāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Vamsidāsa was accepted by all the Vaiṣṇavas as a *siddha-puruṣa* (perfected soul). Vamsidāsa had a special affectionate relationship with Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura. Saraswatī Ṭhākura sometimes visited Vamsidāsa at his place of *bhajana* in Navadvīpa—seeing Saraswatī approaching Vamsidāsa would shout in a very loud voice, “Oh, a *mañjari* (Nayanamaṇi Mañjari) has come! Will Rādhā come also? She will come, she will come!

The anti-party considers both Bhaktivinoda and Saraswatī Ṭhākura to have been conditioned souls. Both these conclusions are thoroughly rejected by Gauḍīya Maṭha and ISKCON. The words of Vamsidāsa alone are sufficient to verify the position of Saraswatī Ṭhākura in *mañjari-bhāva*—provided that is—that one has faith in the words of great saintly persons:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir, yathā-deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ, prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.”

Our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhu-pāda, used to say that Saraswatī Ṭhākura was “A Vaikuṅṭha Man.” The meaning of this statement is that Saraswatī Ṭhākura was beyond all mundane calculations and designations. He descended to this world at Śrī Kṣetra Jagannātha Purī to dispel the ignorance which covered the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and reveal the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. That is the meaning of the name which his father gave him, Bimālā Prasāda. Bimālā Devī is the *yogamāyā* potency of Lord Jagannātha and it is Bimālā Devī who reveals the pastimes of Jagannātha. Thus Bimālā Prasāda means one who has descended by the arrangement of the internal potency (*antaraṅga-śakti*). It is their misfortune that the anti-party cannot see this truth.

The greatest defect of the anti-party is that they do not have complete faith that the holy name of Kṛṣṇa can reveal one’s *siddha-svarūpa* (eternally perfected form). The anti-party actually lacks faith in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Furthermore they consider that the attainment of divine consciousness is an ascending process. This is wrong—by practice alone one cannot attain divine consciousness. Divine consciousness is the super-subjective plane of reality and He reserves the right to reveal Himself to His devotee. It is a descending process. The real knowledge of *ekadāsa-bhāva* is not the so-called knowledge of relationship, *rūpa*, *nāma*, etc. imparted to a conditioned soul by a so-called *guru*, but the actual attainment of *ekadāsa-bhāva* is effected by the descent of the holy name—when one chants the name in pure unalloyed love and devotion without even the slightest trance of desire for *kāma* (enjoyment) or *mokṣa*

(liberation). This is the method of perfection recommended by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in *Śikṣāṣṭakam—param-vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has himself chastised the mind of those who want to jump to the higher plane—neglecting the auspicious process of chanting the holy name. We find the following verse in *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru*, Song 18, Verse 4:

*nā mānile su-bhajana, sādhu-saṅge saṅkīrtan
anā korile nirjane smaraṇa
nā uṭhīyā brkṣopari, tānātāni phal dhori'
duṣṭa-phal korile arjan*

“But your idea, dear mind, is to neglect the best and most auspicious process for worshipping Kṛṣṇa, namely the congregational chanting of His holy names in the association of purified devotees. And you don’t even bother to try to remember Him in a lonely place. Your attitude is just like trying to pick fruits forcibly from a tree by jumping at them from the ground. Instead of climbing the tree to properly pick the sweet, ripened fruits from the top of the tree, you will simply get the sour, unripe fruits by such a jumping process.”

Hundreds of articles defeating the anti-party and *sahajiyā* misconceptions can be written, as Saraswatī Ṭhākura has given us the inspiration and courage to do so. He himself wrote hundreds of verses and gave thousands of lectures defeating all types of misconception, so that sincere souls could traverse the path of pure devotional service. This however the anti-party considered a lower platform of service to the Supreme Lord. Unfortunately it is they who are the losers—as Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābāji said, “They do not possess the eyes to see how Bhaktivinoda and Saraswatī Prabhu have exemplified the performance of *hari-bhajana* with pure ecstatic emotion.” That they do not possess the eyes to see, means that the anti-

party is blind to self-manifest spiritual truths.

The real divine life of Saraswatī Ṭhākura is described in the following two verses:

*namaste gaura-vāñī-śrī-mūrtaye dina-tāriṇe
rūpānuga-viruddhāpasiddhānta-dhvānta-hāriṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto you, who are the personified teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You are the deliverer of the fallen souls. You do not tolerate any statement which is against the *siddhānta* enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī.”

*nikhila-bhuvana-māyā-chinnāvichina-kartri
vibudha-bahula-mṛgyā-mukti-mohanta-dhātri
śīhilita-vidhi-rāgā-rādhyā-rādheśa-dhānī
vilasatu ḥṛdi nityam bhaktisiddhānta vānī*

“With his first step, He cut to pieces the whole plane of exploitation, and with his second, he crushed the speculation of scholars of salvation and liberation. With his third, he softened *vaidhibhakti* with a touch of divine love (*rāga-mārga*). Taking us beyond Vaikuṅṭha, he has introduced us to the highest worship of Śrī Rādhā and Govinda.

“With the softness of Vṛndāvana within, and the hardness of a devastator without, he created havoc in the world—fighting with one and all. Single-handedly fighting against the whole world, and cutting everything to pieces—that was his external attitude. And his second attitude was to stop the boasting research of the scholars and doctors of different schools of thought; and third, to minimize and slacken the grandeur of the worship of Nārāyaṇa, and establish the service of Rādhā-Govinda as the highest attainment. He caused the domain of love to descend into this plane, with the service of

- Eternally Liberated -

Rādhā-Govinda, establishing the flow of divine love from the heart as all in all.”

“That was his history—the real existence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. May his teachings dance eternally within the core of our hearts.”

The Benign Authority _____ Chapter 3

“Anurāga means the plane of direct experience of the world of Absolute Divine Reality, and there the experience is itself the highest confirmation. The śāstra is only pointing the way.”

At the same time that the articles *Śikṣā Paramparā* and *Eternally Liberated* appeared on the internet, there was simultaneously another attack on the Gauḍīya Maṭha and ISKCON *paramparā* being conducted in Vṛndāvana—in the very midst of the annual Māyāpur/Vṛndāvana festival. This time the attack against our *paramparā* was coming from a young Indian scholar (once a member of ISKCON)—who was representing the arguments and objections of the anti-party *guru*—a elderly Hindu scholar. As it turned out, in their opinion, not even Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is bona-fide, what then to speak of Saraswati Ṭhākura and his followers.

Shortly thereafter I received several emails from a fellow Vaiṣṇava in Vṛndāvana informing me of the accusations against Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Ṭhākura, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda and their respective missions.

To get a confirmation regarding the Vṛndāvana anti-party’s accusations against our *guru-paramparā* we sent two *brahmacārīs* to Vṛndāvana to seek an interview with the anti-party spokesman. We were successful in obtaining first hand information regarding the propaganda against our *guru-paramparā*. It was no longer hearsay—the Vṛndāvana anti-party was on a campaign to disrupt the faith of innocent devotees who had taken shelter of our *guru-varga*.

The majority of the anti-party criticisms were aimed at Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda and ISKCON. Gauḍīya Maṭha was lumped in here and there. The anti-party spokesman took serious objection as regards the preaching mission and *siddhānta* of Saraswati Ṭhākura and also Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

In many instances the remarks of the Vṛndāvana anti-party were outrageous, in other instances they were based on logic or argument, and were often followed with scriptural references. Sometimes the arguments were even childish. However, in every instance one thing stood out the most—the objections lacked substance. The very essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was lacking.

We are going to reproduce the main points of objection that the Vṛndāvana anti-party makes against our *paramparā* and respond with our comments. We are doing this because we have been requested to do so by several concerned Vaiṣṇavas who feel that the propaganda of the Vṛndāvana anti-party is an intolerable offense to our *guru-paramparā*.

Before beginning the main topic of this article we would like to say a few words to clarify our position. Some of our readers may feel that we are speaking too harshly against the Vṛndāvana anti-party. If so we would like to point out that we have not attacked the persons of the Vṛndāvana anti-party but only that which we perceive as their offenses and misconceptions. We should also add that it is they that endeavor to find fault in the divine succession of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Saraswatī Ṭhākura and their followers—it is not we who have sought out our accusers with a view to offend their *paramparā*. It is they who have attacked us, not we who have attacked them.

Nonetheless, we would like to vindicate some of the anti-party members to some degree for we feel that they alone are not to blame for their having arrived at their present position of offending our *paramparā*. If we look closely at ISKCON we will find that there are many devotees in ISKCON who think and feel in a way which is conducive to the anti-party sentiments. This, we propose, is not the fault of the individuals but the fault of the institution in which they have taken shelter.

It is the concerned opinion of many older members of ISKCON that since the disappearance of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda the leadership in ISKCON has not trained their stu-

dents in the proper *siddhānta* and practice of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. It seems that the leaders have also over stressed the importance of external achievement at any cost, be it one’s own *sādhana* or even the dignity of another Vaiṣṇava, *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. This we feel is largely due as a result of the ISKCON leaders having completely cut themselves off from the senior members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha who are themselves living/realized representatives of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

It is also a fact that the Vṛndāvana anti-party spokesman and others of their camp have been poorly treated at times by ISKCON leaders and they may naturally bear a grudge against ISKCON and our *paramparā* as a result of their bad experience. It is indeed unfortunate. I can sympathize with their plight to some extent but I cannot tolerate their propaganda against those who are very dear to Kṛṣṇa. We do not hate the sinner—we hate the sin.

The following are ten points of criticism of our *paramparā* by the Vṛndāvana anti-party:

1. Only *śāstra* (scripture) is an authority—no human can be so in any circumstance. Even God follows *śāstra* to show the example. *Śāstra* is there to make sure that the independent “self-effulgent” personalities do not appear.
2. *Bhāgavata-dīkṣā* does not exist—there is no logical meaning of *bhāgavata-dīkṣā*.
3. Only Kṛṣṇa is self effulgent—no *jīva* soul can be, because self effulgent means, in so many words, independent.
4. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda is a rebel against the *paramparā*. He disregarded all the proper *dīkṣā* lines and attempted to establish his own concocted line by picking famous names from the Gauḍīya history.
5. *Guru* is *sādhana siddha*.
6. *Mantra* is a secret that must be revealed. It must be heard directly from the *guru*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, if he ever received initiation, definitely did not receive *brahma-gāyatrī* and *sannyāsa gāyatrī*. Since his *mantras* are not received in a bona-fide disciplic succession they will never bear fruit—*sampradāya vihīnā ye, mantrās te niṣphala matāḥ* (*Padma Purāṇa*).

7. *Mantras* which are received in ISKCON and the Gauḍīya Maṭha at the time of *mantra-dīkṣā* are not bona-fide. (This point is based on the idea that the *mantras* which the anti-party spokesman received from his *guru* in the Gadādhara *parivāra*, are not the same as those given in ISKCON and Gauḍīya Maṭha).
8. *Harināma* initiation is a concoction. The idea of giving the holy name through *dīkṣā* has no genuine origin.
9. Acceptance of *brahma-gāyatrī* (*upanāyana saṁskāra*) is only a part of the *varṇāśrama* system in the Vedic tradition, and has no place in the Gauḍīya line.”
10. *Sannyāsa* is not to be given in the Gauḍīya line, it is only an external necessity of the ritualistic *varṇāśrama* society.

With the blessings of our *guru-varga* we have taken up these points against our *guru-paramparā* in this presentation, presenting counter arguments and clarifications.

I offer my humble-most *praṇāmas* to all the Vaiṣṇavas who have assembled at the lotus feet of our *guru-paramparā* to perform *hari-bhajanā* and to broadcast the message of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sankīrtana Movement. *Param-Vijayate Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Saṅkīrtanam!* Gaura Haribol!

In this section we will discuss the first point raised by the Vṛndāvana anti-party and briefly mention the second point as well.

The Vṛndāvana anti-party says: “Only *śāstra* is an authority—no human can be so in any circumstance. Even God follows *śāstra* to show the example. *Śāstra* is there to make sure that the independent “self-effulgent” personalities do not appear.

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The first point of the Vṛndāvana anti-party is groundwork for their attempt to establish that the *guru-varga* of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda did not preach according to the *śāstra*. The Vṛndāvana anti-party is of this faulty opinion for two reasons: 1- They themselves have not realized the purport of *śāstra*, and 2- they fail to understand that the pure Vaiṣṇavas are on equal footing with the *śāstra* in all circumstances. Not only are the pure Vaiṣṇavas on an equal footing with the *śāstra* but they are sometimes on a superior footing as well. A pure Vaiṣṇava can make adjustments to the *śāstra* when and if necessary. This is of course possible only by the Lord's own direct arrangement, nonetheless it does happen. We will give some examples and evidence for this opinion as our article develops.

It is indeed imperative that the *śāstra* be accepted as the benign authority in human society. Yet we see that only those with the divine vision can see what is hidden in the *śāstra*—what it is that the *śāstra* seeks to tell us. Other than to the pure devotees, the truth remains hidden. In fact it is almost without exception that the *kaniṣṭha* and *madhyama-adikāri* devotees seldom (if ever) understand the real meaning, or the essence of the *śāstra*. If nothing else, the history of Hinduism in India will bear testimony to that.

Here is an example of how the hidden truth in the *śāstra* is only known through the devotees who have higher vision, the *rasikā-bhaktas*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the essence of revealed truth, we find no direct mention of the name of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. We are told that the *Bhāgavatam*, from it's first verse to it's last verse, sings the glories of the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Yet, we find no direct mention of Śrī Rādhikā in *Bhāgavatam*. So how are we to know these things? They are revealed through the writings and purports of realized souls. It is not by Sanskrit grammar alone that one can extract the essence of the *Bhāgavatam*, otherwise millions of *jñānīs*, *smārtas*, *brāhmaṇas*, *māyāvādīs* and others would have known this most secret of all secret truths long, long ago.

It is Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees alone who can extract the essence of the *śāstra*. They can show us how *Bhāgavatam* sings the glory of Śrī Rādhikā, they can show us how the *Bhāgavatam* is the purport of *Brahma-gāyatrī*, and they can show us that the purport of *Brahma-gāyatrī* is the Divine Service of Śrī Rādhikā. They alone can trace all these things in the *śāstra* and therefore the Vaiṣṇava is the highest authority. Through him we can see and understand the *śāstra*. Without the Vaiṣṇava to guide us, the *śāstra* is static. It becomes dynamic when revealed by a pure Vaiṣṇava.

Whatever topics Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu revealed with His descent, the Six Goswāmīs endeavored to give support to by quoting the *śāstra*. Nonetheless only those fortunate souls with *śraddhā* (faith) have accepted their evidences. On the contrary, many learned persons have rejected the works of the Six Goswāmīs, even going so far as to say that Śrī Jīva Goswāmī was an outcast *ācārya* or a rebel.

In the not so distant past some scholars (like Giridhara Lal Goswāmī) have criticized an *ācārya* like Śrī Jīva Goswāmī, considering that he had no proper understanding of the *śāstra*. Similarly in this decade we find a few so-called scholars criticizing the validity of the works of *ācāryas* like Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

The Vṛndāvana anti-party statement in point one is a direct attack on Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for their having made revolutionary adjustments according to time, place, and circumstance in order to advance the cause of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. Since the Vṛndāvana anti-party discriminates between the book *Bhāgavata* and the person *Bhāgavata* they therefore conclude that these adjustments are against the injunctions of the *śāstra*.

We strongly disagree with the anti-party on this point. It is the opinion of the followers of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's line that the actions and words of great *ācāryas* (pure Vaiṣṇavas) are themselves as good as the *śāstra* and thus they are acceptable as an ultimate authority. As confirmed by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura: “*sākṣād-*

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dharitvena samaṣṭa-śāstrair—all the *śāstras* sing the glories of the *ācārya* as being the direct non-different form of the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari.”

Indeed, Kṛṣṇa Himself has said:

*ācāryam mām vijānīyān nāvanmanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

“One should know the *ācārya* as Myself and never disrespect him in anyway. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods.” (*Bhāg.* 11.17.27)

What one hears from a bona-fide *ācārya* can be accepted as good as the *śāstra*. Just because the revelation of a pure Vaiṣṇava is above our present understanding we should not disrespect or criticize him as the foolish and less intelligent persons may do. One in the lower position cannot give the certificate to the Vaiṣṇava in the higher position. It is not the duty of the lower *adhikāri* Vaiṣṇava to instruct or criticize the higher *adhikāri* Vaiṣṇava. Also it is not the duty of an empowered representative of Kṛṣṇa to ditto the plane of our limited understanding.

Those who cannot recognize the higher *adhikāri* Vaiṣṇava are either covered by ignorance, false pride, envy, *aparādha* (offenses) or all of the above. They violate the injunctions of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which declares that the *paramahansa*’s activities are no longer ruled by the scriptures—*avidhi-gocaraḥ* (*Bhāg.* 11.18.28)

The difficulty with the anti-party is that they cannot see the divinity of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Saraswati Ṭhākura, neither from their writings, from their personal conduct, or from their preaching missions. The anti-party cannot see that Bhaktivinoda and Saraswati Ṭhākura had a higher transcendental vision of the necessity of their times or that they had a higher understanding of the purpose of the *śāstra*. The anti-party is not prepared to accept that these two were divine personalities and that they were inspired by the Supreme

Lord within. Therefore the Vṛndāvana anti-party rejects the contributions of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Saraswatī Ṭhākura.

Only Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura can save his critics from the darkness of ignorance—therefore we will now quote extensively from the words of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and allow the Ṭhākura to directly explain to the Vṛndāvana anti-party the truth regarding revealed scriptures.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in *Śrī Tattva-sūtra*:

This *Tattva-sūtra* is obtained and proved by the eternal realization. Therefore, it can be known as the very essence of the Vedas. This is originated from the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya, and hence, is the origin of all the revealed scriptures. Only the reality has been accepted in this treatise.

The divine knowledge is characterized as the sun whereas all the scriptures (*śāstra*) are rays of that sun. This saying reveals that no scripture can contain the divine knowledge to the fullest extent. The self-evident knowledge of the *jīvas* is the source of all the scripture. This self-evident knowledge should be understood as God-given. The sages endowed with compassionate hearts have received this self-evident knowledge (axiomatic truths) from the Supreme Lord, and recorded the same in the scriptures for the benefit of all *jīvas*. This recorded portion of this primeval knowledge (God-given to the *jīva*) has been manifested in the form of the Vedas.

The independent cultivation of the self-evident knowledge is always necessary. This is the important thing needed in understanding the truth along with the study of the scriptures. Since the knowledge (divine knowledge) itself is the origin of the scriptures, those who disregard the root and depend upon the branches cannot have any well-being. Now, it may be argued that, when all the scriptures have been derived of the self-evident faith, where is the need for honoring them? The answer is that, in the conditioned state of the *jīvas*, the real knowledge is covered

by the darkness of ignorance. In the devotional cultivation associated with retraction, when the hidden reality is gradually manifested in the state of *bhakti-samādhi*, the *jīvas* will be realizing the self-evident knowledge.

Beginning from the time of cosmic creation until today, a great amount of knowledge about the reality has been discovered by the sages. Apart from that limitless knowledge discovered, still the sages are occasionally delivering many new facts about the reality, obtained in their devotional trance of *samādhi*. All these discovered principles may be called as the scriptures. By the help of a certain principle another one may be properly understood. Therefore, it is imperative to carefully record all these discovered principles of reality. Without following this process, the ultimate conclusions of the discovered principles can never be attained.

Śrī Brahmā, the original propounder of the scriptures enlightened Śrī Nārada with the principles of reality discovered by himself and advised him to develop the same by the further discovery of other divine principles.

All the discovered principles of the reality will get added to the scriptural knowledge and help the future developments of the same. Therefore, those who believe in the self-evident faith, they can never disparage the scriptures if at all they are intelligent in the study of them. But, those who are not endowed with the study of the principles of *bhakti*, which is the essential purport of the scriptures, their scriptural learning is only a waste of labor.

Therefore, the 'essence-seekers' conclusion is that, all the principles will be decided by the help of self-evident knowledge. All the scriptures should be understood by the help of that unalloyed knowledge. But, this rule does not apply to those whose self-evident knowledge has been adulterated with the empirical knowledge. Hence the following aphorism,

‘Scriptural ordinances are intended for the regulation of the ignorant human beings whereas those who are endowed with

discretion and divine wisdom are not controlled by them.’

Similarly, Manu also has elaborately explained the importance of scriptures and finally stated the following:

In this way: in all the scriptures these two signs can be seen viz., 1- honor of the revealed scriptures in general, 2- secondary importance of the scriptures in comparison to the self-evident faith. But, the authors of the scriptures do not clearly indicate the lightness of the scriptures. The reason for such an attitude is that, the meritorious people who are authorized to discard the scriptural binding can naturally become independent of the scriptures by the help of the hidden indications of the scriptural authors and also by their own purified knowledge. Such meritorious persons can carry on the sinless activities by the help of their own intellect as well as by the advice of the scriptures. In that stage, the scriptures will not have any binding over them but only they serve as their guides. On the other hand those who are unable to understand their own spiritual path due to the lack of self-evident knowledge and due to ignorance who may not be able to ascertain their duties and fall into misery due to sensuality, for such people the scriptural ordinances are imperative. Such persons should not know that there is any way for them apart from the bindings of the scriptures. When they become authorized due to their advancement, they will be able to know this secret by the suggestions of the scriptures.

Since knowledge itself is the root of the scriptures the one who has attained that self-evident knowledge will not be ruled by the scriptures, but only they guide him with advice. In case of ignorant people, this is not so. They must be governed by the rules of the scriptures for their upliftment, if not they will have their inevitable downfall due to the sensual addictions. It is argued that, instead of governing by means of tedious rules, let the scriptures help the ignorant people by means of friendly advice. The reason for such an attitude is that the ignorant

people do not understand their own good and bad due to the lack of knowledge. Due to the instinctual habits they will engage in wanton activities.

Since their nature is mostly inclined towards the gratification of the senses, for their spiritual betterment the scriptures try to reform them through many types of tricks, by applying coercion, and with skillfulness etc. Often the scriptures threaten the ignorant people with punishment of hell, at times they put forth the temptations of heavenly enjoyments. Again, they reform the human beings depending upon their inclinations. In many scriptures one may see the sanction of liquor, polygamy, killing of animals etc. All those are meant for the gradual control of the barbarian human beings by means of sanctioning some type of restricted activities according to their inclination. By their gradual reformation, the scriptures want to put them in the path of detachment. The many types of fruits mentioned along with those activities are only meant for attracting the attention of the ignorant followers.

An argument may arise in this regard that, this *Tattva-sūtra* also being a scripture, why the secret purport of the scriptures has been openly given here? The answer is that, this book of *Tattva-sūtra* has been published for the benefit of the self-realized *Bhāgavata* devotees. They are authorized to know about all these thoughts. By the help of these aphorisms, their intellect will become favorable for the cultivation of divine love. Therefore, the author has openly declared here the scriptural secret.

Devotees of the Supreme Lord are not controlled by the scriptures since their activities are congenial to the divine wisdom.

Therefore, when the self-realized devotees ordain any new arrangement, they should be agreed with as a religious code, even if such new arrangements are not found in the scriptural dictums of the previous sages. (*Śrī Tattva-sūtra*, pages 191-204)

How can even a single thread of doubt remain regarding the proper understanding of the relationship between the pure Vaiṣṇava and the *śāstra* after hearing from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura? If such doubts still remain in one’s heart it is surely due to the Supreme Lord being dissatisfied with that person.

According to the Vṛndāvana anti-party the *śāstra* should be taken as the basis of everything and the Vaiṣṇava can never be considered an authority—that is, unless he dittos the *śāstra*. This concept, however, is not the opinion of self-realized souls like Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura, who has been accepted throughout the land of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas as the Seventh Goswāmī. Our readers should not take it lightly that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has been called the Seventh Goswāmī. He was given this due respect not by the ignorant masses but by some of the most dignified and educated Vaiṣṇavas of his time. Paṇḍita Ṣaṭkari Chattopadhyāya Siddhānta Bhūṣan and other respected gentlemen of his mark all accepted the divinity of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the Seventh Goswāmī, and it was thus accepted by all of Bengal. Not only Bengal, but in recent times the Harvard Divinity School has commented that, “Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has made the most significant contribution to theistic thought in this 20th Century.”

A proper understanding of the point regarding the innovations of religious principles introduced by bona-fide *ācāryas* is that one should accept those innovations to be as good as the *śāstra*. This is especially true in relation to Saraswatī Ṭhākura having introduced the institution of *samyāsa*, and the giving of *Brahma-gāyatrī* as part of *mantra-dikṣā*. We discuss this topic at length in chapter four.

The actual basis of spiritual life or advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is *śraddhā*, faith, and association with *sādhus*. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has written: *ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo ‘tha bhajana-kriyā*. In the beginning, at the basis of everything there must be *śraddhā*, faith. Then comes *sādhu-saṅga* and then in the association of *sādhus* one begins the study of the *śāstra*, *bhajana-kriyā*. Only to

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those who have this *śraddhā* as the basis of their Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the association with pure devotees are all the purports of the Vedas (*śāstra*) revealed:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā-deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 6.38)

This is a hard lump for the scholars to swallow, but faith alone is the sole necessity for advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—faith and faith in the Vaiṣṇava. Scholarship alone can never reveal Kṛṣṇa:

*śabda-brahmaṇi niṣṇāto na niṣṇāyāt pare yadi
śramas tasya śrama-phalo hy adhenum iva rakṣataḥ*

“One may be expert in Vedic scholarship, but if he fails to understand the position of the Absolute Truth, all his study is a waste of time. His hard work will be his only reward, and his efforts will be like the labor of one who struggles to maintain a cow that has no calf and cannot produce milk.” (*Bhāg.* 11.11.18)

This is also confirmed in the *Brahma-Saṁhitā* 5.33:

vedeṣu durlabham adurlabham ātma-bhaktau

“The Lord cannot be understood by academic wisdom of the Vedas, but knowledge of Him is revealed to unalloyed devotees.”

Like many scholars, anti-party members seem to have been overcome by the *anartha* of *prāyaśa*, or trying by one’s own endeavor to acquire knowledge of the scriptures without proper guidance. The result of such *prāyaśa* is always the same, one fails to understand the purport of Vedic literature.

*bahu-śāstre bahu-vākye citte bhrama haya
sādhya-sādhana śreṣṭha nā haya niścaya*

“If one becomes a bookworm, reading many books and scriptures and hearing many commentaries and the instructions of many men, this will produce doubt within the heart. One cannot in this way ascertain the real goal of life.” (C.c. Ādi-līlā 16.11)

The search for knowledge is certainly misleading in our ultimate quest for pure devotional service. In fact, although somewhat necessary in the beginning of devotional service, it nonetheless becomes the prerequisite for pure devotional service that one become free from knowledge, *jñāna-śūnya-bhakti*. By knowledge, it is meant the spirit of ascertaining the Absolute Truth with a calculative approach, the attempt to capture the infinite in one’s fist. In the ultimate issue Kṛṣṇa is unknown and unknowable. Śāstra points the way, but only faith can reveal the higher plane. *Jñāna-śūnya-bhakti* is the plane of divine love which is free from any calculation and does not consider even the opulence and power of the Lord—*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva*. This is the standard of pure devotion of the eternal residents of Śrī Goloka Vṛndāvana.

The mastery of knowing everything must be hatefully rejected if we are to approach the highest domain, *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*. It is not possible to “know” anything about the infinite, either in magnitude or quality. The infinite is a flow of autocracy, so what can we “know” of it? Whatever we “know” at present can all prove false in a moment simply by His will.

Kṛṣṇa is the unconquerable, *ajita*, but He becomes conquered, *jitah*, by the love of pure devotees, not by the knowledge of scholars or the study of many books. The anti-party wants to become expert in logic and argument to besmirch the path of pure devotion, the *bhāgavata-mārga*, but this is all a waste of the valuable form of human life. For all their scholarship and learning the anti-party has simply become an educated combatant with the *guru-paramparā*.

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A good example of the higher position sometimes being given to a pure Vaiṣṇava with regard to his being an agent of revealed truth is found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, a *śāstra* accepted by all Gauḍiṃya Vaiṣṇavas. We find in the discussions between Śrī Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya that there is a point where the *śāstra* retires and the authority of the pure Vaiṣṇava is taken as the final word.

Śrī Caitanya, at the beginning of the discourse with Rāmānanda requested Rāmānanda to speak about the ultimate goal of life and to support his statements with the *śāstra*.

prabhu kahe, “pada śloka sādhyera nirnaya”

Śrī Caitanya said to Rāmānanda Rāya, “Please recite a verse from the revealed scriptures concerning the ultimate goal of life.” (C. c. *Madhya-līlā* 8.57)

This is certainly the generally accepted rule in spiritual circles in India—one must support his statements with reference to the *śāstra*, otherwise one will not be accepted as a spiritual authority.

*śruti smṛti purāṇādi pañcarātra-vidhiṃ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*

“Devotional service to the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literature like *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, *Nārada Pañcarātra*, etc. is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.101 and *Brahma-Yamālā*)

Śruti means that which is given by the Lord and *smṛti* means that which is spoken about the Lord by His devotees. In any case only the *Māyāvādīs* do not accept the *smṛti* to be as good as the *śruti*. To the Vaiṣṇavas, both the Lord and the Lord’s pure devotee are authority.

After each and every statement by Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrī Caitanya requested him to go further: *āge kaha āra*, “Please go further.” Thus the conversation between Śrī Caitanya and Rāmānanda

progressed from one topic to another, step by step revealing the ultimate goal of life. At last the end of the discussions in *mādhurya-rasa* culminating in the transcendental loving affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were discussed. All this was done by Rāmānanda by quoting *śāstra*.

At that point Śrī Caitanya pleasantly surprised Rāmānanda Rāya by saying:

eho haya, āge kaha āra

“This is very nice. Now please tell me something more!”

Hearing this Rāmānanda replied:

*ihā va-i buddhi-gati nāhi āra
yebā ‘prema-vilāsa-vivarta’ eka haya
tāhā śuni tomāra sukha haya, ki nā haya*

“There is another wonderful topic (*prema-vilāsa-vivarta*) which you can hear from me but I do not know if you will be satisfied with what I say.”

Here Rāmānanda Rāya reveals before Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that there was a feeling in his heart which he was willing to express on the order of the Lord but that he would not be able to quote from *śāstra*. As it is said, “*dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitam guhāyām*,” the Absolute Truth is hidden in the heart of an unadulterated self-realized person. (*Mahāb. V.P.* 313.117)

Rāmānanda then spoke a verse which was his own composition. This verse begins with the words, *pahilehi rāga nayana-bhaṅge bhela* (*C.c. Madhya-līlā* 8.194). In these words, Rāmānanda gave a hint about the divine appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in whom both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are combined.

For what Rāmānanda wanted to say, he had no *śāstra* to quote. Nonetheless, when Mahāprabhu heard the composition of Rāmānanda

He was very satisfied. Indeed Rāmānanda, by his own composition, revealed that which had never before been revealed in the *śāstra*.

Rāmānanda Rāya further said to Śrī Caitanya:

yei kahāo, sei kahi vāñi
ki kahiye bhāla-manda, kichui nā jāni

“I do not know what I am saying, but You have made me speak what I have spoken, be it good or bad. I am simply repeating that message.” (C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 8.198)

What we find here in the discussions between Śrī Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya is a truth superior to that which the anti-party has attempted to establish in point number one. We do agree with all parties that indeed the *śāstra* is important and is not to be vilified, but the proper *siddhānta* according to Kavirāja Goswāmī, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, is that the Lord speaks personally through His pure devotees.

According to Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja, the stage of *anurāga* (in which Rāmānanda Rāya was situated) is a stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness independent of the *śāstra*. The *śāstra*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja says, is to give us a confirmation of what we feel in our heart. The real thing, he says, is to be realized in the heart. *Anurāga* means the plane of direct experience of the world of absolute divine reality, and there the experience is itself the highest confirmation. The *śāstra* is only pointing the way. Furthermore, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja says that the *śāstras* are the recorded experiences of those great personalities who have their special experience in the plane of infinite faith, *śraddhā*.

Not only does Kṛṣṇa speak through His pure devotees but He acts through them as well, for their every action is executed solely in conjunction with His will. Therefore the proper conclusion is that the socio-religious adjustments that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Sarasvatī Ṭhākura have made with regard to the preaching mission

and especially with regard to the institution of *sannyāsa*, are to be considered as an introduction of religious principles for the benefit of all mankind according to time, place, and necessity. These adjustments are exclusively meant for the preaching of the *saṅkīrtana* movement, the prime benediction for humanity at large. This has also been confirmed by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his *Śrī Tattva-sūtra*, as quoted earlier in this chapter.

We also find the following statement by Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja in the *Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva*, 313.117:

*dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitam guhāyām
mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*

“The solid truth of religious principles is hidden in the heart of an unadulterated self-realized person. Consequently, as the *śāstras* confirm, one should accept whatever progressive path the self-realized predecessors advocate.”

Unfortunately the anti-party lacks the spiritual sense to recognize that the contributions of realized souls are the very essence of the *śāstra*. It is also an obvious oversight of the anti-party that the *śāstra*, although eternal, does not come to us independent of the Vaiṣṇava.

The decent of the Absolute Truth which comes to us through the succession of pure devotees and which is the only life of a bonafide (living) *paramparā*, is called a *bhāgavata-paramparā*. Indeed the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the most essential scripture for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, only comes to us via a *śikṣā* or *bhāgavata-paramparā*. Kṛṣṇa spoke the essence of the *Bhāgavata* to Brahmā. Brahmā spoke it to Nārada, and Nārada in turn taught it to Vyāsa. Śukadeva, who was known not to have undergone any *dikṣā saṁskāra*, learned its essence from Vyāsa. Śukadeva spoke it to the Emperor Parikṣit. At that time Sūta heard it as well, and he in turn spoke it to Śaunaka. This is the *Bhāgavata-guru-paramparā*,

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a *śikṣā-paramparā*. This is also our answer to the second objection of the Vṛndāvana anti-party wherein they say, “*Bhāgavata-dīkṣā* and thus *Bhāgavata-sampradāya* are bogus.” In a nutshell, our response is that without the *bhāgavata-paramparā* (as mentioned above) there is no *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*! Here we might put a counter challenge to the anti-party: if you have no *bhāgavata-paramparā* then you have no *paramparā*!

Truth is first revealed within the heart of Brahmā:

tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye

“Vedic knowledge was first imparted into the heart of Brahmā, the original created being.” (*Bhāg.* 1.1.1)

Then, this transcendental knowledge is passed on to Nārada and next to Vyāsadeva who, in this millennium, is the compiler of the Vedas. And after Vyāsadeva many perfected souls contributed to the *śāstra* from their realizations. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself composed eight śloka which all Gauḍīyas accept to be as good as *śāstra*. The Lord then inspired and empowered his representatives in disciplic succession to also write books on the science of pure devotion, and He also empowered them to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

If we trace the origin of all *śāstra* we come to Vyāsadeva, and then to his *guru* Nārada who heard the essence of truth from his *guru* Lord Brahmā in the form of the four nutshell verses of the *Bhāgavatam*. We do not find anywhere that Nārada received *mantra-dīkṣā* from Lord Brahmā. Lord Brahmā had realized the ocean of truth after he performed meditation on the three-fold *gāyatrī*, *OM*, which had manifest from the Divine Flute of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *OM* is indeed the seed of *divya-jñānam*, divine knowledge, the seed of all knowledge from which manifests the *gāyatrī*. Next the Veda, then the *Vedānta*, and then the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Although it is said that *OM* emanates from Kṛṣṇa, it actually is emanating from Kṛṣṇa’s

flute, and Kṛṣṇa’s flute is a *nitya-pārṣada* devotee eternally situated in *śanta-rasa*. Kṛṣṇa simply causes the flute to vibrate, when it comes in connection with His lotus lips. Kṛṣṇa does not directly vibrate the sound *OM*, but He causes His flute to do so. In this way, from the very beginning the position of Kṛṣṇa’s devotee is conspicuous in the process of receiving divine knowledge. Either the devotee is imparting knowledge according to his realization or the Lord is directly speaking through him. In either case the message is transcendental.

In the last part of the anti-parties’ first statement it is said, “*Śāstra* is there to make sure that the independent self-effulgent personalities do not appear.” I have not mentioned this point up to now in this article. Possibly they are trying here to make a twist on the *siddhānta* by playing on words. Anyway, the proper understanding should be that the *śāstra* is there to help us recognize “self-effulgent” personalities if and when they do appear, not to restrict such personalities from appearing.

We have written here a few words with regard to the objections of the Vṛndāvana anti-party against our *guru-paramparā*. Subsequent chapters will address further anti-party misconceptions.

The Process of Initiation _____ Chapter 4

“Saraswatī Ṭhākura did not invent methods of devotional service or create his own paramparā according to his whim. The real truth is that Saraswatī Ṭhākura simply uncovered bona-fide Vaiṣṇava practices that had either been neglected or covered by selfish persons desiring to make a trade of, or a family affair of the process of pure devotional service.”

Challenging the entire initiation process followed by ISKCON and the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the Vṛndāvana anti-party states as follows:

1. *Harināma* initiation is a concoction. The idea of giving the holy name through *dikṣā* has no genuine origin.
2. Acceptance of *brahma-gāyatrī* (*upanāyana saṁskāra*) is only a part of the *varṇāśrama* system in the Vedic tradition, and has no place in the Gauḍīya line.
3. *Sannyāsa* is not to be given in the Gauḍīya line, it is only an external necessity of the ritualistic *varṇāśrama* society.

This article addresses the complaints of the anti-party with regard to the above statements and demonstrates how the practices of giving *harināma* initiation, *brahma-gāyatrī*, and *sannyāsa* are all bona-fide processes for the attainment of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and that these processes are recommended by previous *ācāryas* and the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

To establish their criticism against *harināma* initiation the anti-party references a verse from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* wherein it is stated that the holy name is independent of *dikṣā*. This verse is as follows:

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

“One does not have to undergo initiation or execute the activities required before initiation. One simply has to vibrate the holy name with his lips. Thus even a man in the lowest class (*caṇḍāla*) can be delivered.” (C.c. *Madhya-lilā* 15.108)

Unfortunately the anti-party has taken the meaning of this verse out of context. The holy name is certainly independent of everything because the holy name is non-different than the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa and His name are absolute and therefore both are supremely independent. Kṛṣṇa does not require anything from His devotee; food, flowers or anything else—nonetheless when these things are offered to Kṛṣṇa with love, He accepts them. Similarly the holy name is independent of initiation but this does not mean that the holy name will not be offered by the *guru* to a sincere disciple in an official ceremony.

The anti-party has not actually understood the meaning of the above statement from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. We shall present here, the proper understanding of this verse, stating the independence of the holy name and its practical application in the process of *sādhana-bhakti* (the stage of practice).

Independence of the holy name from “*dīkṣā*,” can be understood in two ways. The holy name is independent from the process of initiation as mentioned above, as well as being independent from the initiation into *gāyatrī* and *mūla mantras*; *mantra-dīkṣā*.

Mantra-dīkṣā is of two types; *upanāyana* and *pañcaratric*. In *upanāyana mantra-dīkṣā*, the *brahma-gāyatrī* is offered to the disciple and in the *pañcaratric mantra-dīkṣā*, the *gopāla mantra* and *kāma-gāyatrī* are given.

The correct understanding of the verse we are discussing is that the holy name (*mahā-mantra*) may be given to those who have not yet received *mantra-dīkṣā* either *upanāyana* or *pañcaratric*. By the use of the words *purascarya* and *vidhi* this verse states that the holy name can be chanted even before one has undergone any previous *samskāra* (ritual for purification) or begun to follow the regulative

principles. From this verse we understand that everyone is eligible to immediately begin the culture of chanting the holy name.

The process of chanting the holy name that is followed in the *paramparā* of Saraswati Ṭhākura is strictly according to the above quoted verse from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In neither of these institutions do we find that the students are prohibited from chanting the holy name before receiving a particular initiation. So in effect the anti-party criticism on this point is without basis. The new students in both Gauḍīya Maṭha and ISKCON are immediately encouraged to chant the holy name even before moving into the temple. In fact it is almost always required that one has been chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* at home for some time before moving to the temple or *maṭha*. In particular it is an established rule in ISKCON temples that the student must begin chanting at least 16 rounds of *japa* and attend all *kīrtanas* from the very first day. Gauḍīya Maṭha follows a similar process of requesting their members to chant 64 rounds a day but in either case both institutions encourage their students to immediately begin chanting the holy name. Once living in the temple or *maṭha* the students continue to chant the holy name and then begin following *purascarya-vidhi*.

Purascarya-vidhi means the preliminary rules and regulations to be practiced before receiving *mantra-dīkṣā* (*gāyatrī* initiation). The holy name can be chanted even before having performed any of these preliminary purifications. From the lowest position of material conditioning one can begin the chanting of the holy name. In fact according to *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 17.11,12 it is said that one has to chant the holy name before receiving *mantra-dīkṣā*.

*pūjā traikālikī nityam, japas tarpaṇam eva ca
homo brāhmaṇa-bhuktiś ca, puraścaraṇam ucyate
guror labdhasya mantrasya, prasādena yathā-vidhi
pañcāṅgopāsanā-siddhyai, puraś caitad vidhīyate*

“In the morning, afternoon and evening, one should worship the Deity, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, offer oblations, perform a fire sacrifice, and feed the *brāhmaṇas*. These five activities constitute *purascarya*. To attain full success when taking initiation from the spiritual master, one should first perform these *purascarya-vidhi* processes.”

After strictly following the *purascarya-vidhi* the serious students in Gauḍīya Maṭha and ISKCON are offered the shelter of the lotus feet of the spiritual master (first initiation—*harināma*) and this is followed up after an additional six months to one year, with *mantra-dikṣā* (second initiation). This is the system recommended in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 17.11-12 above.

As already stated, the holy name is to be considered independent of the process of *dikṣā*. Yet the necessity to chant the holy name under the guidance of a pure devotee (spiritual master) is a necessity. The process of receiving the shelter of the *guru* and instructions on how to chant the holy name successfully has come to be known as *harināma-dikṣā* (*harināma* initiation).

Śrī Jīva Goswāmī in his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentary on verses 7.5.24 & 25, has confirmed the importance of *harināma* initiation. There Śrī Jīva says that, “Indeed, one can chant the holy name without initiation but in Kali-yuga it is necessary to chant the name under the guidance of a bona-fide spiritual master. One should receive the holy name from the spiritual master who is a bona-fide representative of Śrī Hari.” That is the opinion of Śrī Jīva the *tattva-ācārya* of all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. This is sufficient evidence as to why *harināma* initiation is offered in both Gauḍīya Maṭha and ISKCON. No further discussion is necessary, but to strengthen this conclusion some other references from scriptures and *ācāryas* can be cited as follows.

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has also made a similar statement in his commentary on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sixth canto, with regard to the necessity of chanting the holy name under the guidance of the *guru*. There Śrī Viśvanātha comments that those who learn about the importance of *guru*, but keep on

chanting the name without searching out *sad-guru* can never chant the holy name purely. Viśvanātha says that their chanting is simply *nāma-aparādha* or offensive chanting. He says that those who want to chant the holy name purely must do it under the guidance of *sad-guru*.

There are three stages of *nāma-bhajana* or chanting the holy name. These are *nāma-aparādha*, *nāma-ābhāsa*, and *śuddha-nāma*. Those who chant the holy name without the shelter of *guru* will be in either the stage of *nāma-aparādha* or possibly with some luck in the stage of *nāma-ābhāsa*. *Nāma-aparādha* means the stage of committing offenses while chanting the holy name and *nāma-ābhāsa* means the clearing stage of chanting wherein freedom from sinful activities is achieved. At the stage of *nāma-ābhāsa* one can be delivered from material existence. It is practical experience also that in India there are many pious people who utter the holy name without the shelter of a bona-fide *guru* but these persons usually remain in the lower stage of *nāma-bhajana* (*nāma-aparādha*). However, on rare occasion, some of them do achieve the stage of emancipation (*nāma-ābhāsa*). But *śuddha-nāma* is only achieved when one has obtained the shelter of *śrī gurudeva*.

Those who have a sufficient fund of knowledge never oppose the formal giving of *harināma* as a form of *dikṣā*. The example of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu may be taken in this regard also. The chanting of the holy name was indeed available here and there in Mahāprabhu's time but He did not formally begin His *saṅkīrtana* movement until after He had received *harināma* with instruction from His spiritual master. Śrī Iśvara Purī, the spiritual master, while giving *harināma* to Mahāprabhu instructed Him as follows:

‘kṛṣṇa-mantra’ japa sadā,—ei mantra sāra

“You must always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. This is the essence of all *mantras* or Vedic hymns.” (C.c. *Ādi-līlā* 7.72)

It is the opinion of the anti-party that this verse does not indicate the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, *harināma*, because the words ‘Kṛṣṇa *mantra*’ generally refer to *kāma-gāyatrī* or *gopāla mantra*. However, in the verses immediately following this one in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, wherein Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is explaining His initiation by Īśvara Purī to the *māyāvādīs* at Benaras, we find that verses 73-97 qualify the meaning of Kṛṣṇa *mantra* in verse 72, as indicating the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, as in the *mahā-mantra*.

All these verses 73-97 describe the supreme position of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, the potency of the holy name, the characteristics of the holy name, the effects of chanting the holy name, the necessity of chanting the holy name, and dancing in ecstasy while chanting the holy name. It is certainly very clear in verse 83 that the Kṛṣṇa *mantra* which Īśvara Purī instructed Mahāprabhu to always chant, *japa sadā*, was indeed the *mahā-mantra*.

*kṛṣṇa-nāma-mahā-mantre ra ei ta'svabhāva
yei jape, tāra kṛṣṇe upajaye bhāva*

“It is the nature of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* (*kṛṣṇa-nāma-mahā-mantra*) that anyone who chants it immediately develops his loving ecstasy for Kṛṣṇa.” (C.c. *Ādi-līlā* 7.83)

By orthodox standards in the Gauḍīya line the *nāma-dikṣā* is given to a disciple without an accompanying *yajña* (fire sacrifice). When our spiritual master Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda came to the western world to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness he offered *harināma* very liberally. In fact it has been said that he distributed the holy name like water—such was his capacity to distribute grace. To impress the neophyte disciples who were taking *harināma*, with the importance of the step that they were taking in spiritual life, he also performed the ritual of a fire sacrifice at that time. Admittedly this was something of his own doing but it had just the effect that he desired it would. No disciple of His Divine Grace, hence forward, ever thought that the holy name could be successfully chanted without the shelter of the bona-fide *guru*.

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Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also recommended the taking of the holy name under the guidance of a bona-fide *guru* in his article “*Pañca Saṁskāra*.” There the Ṭhākura lists five important items in the process of performing devotional service, of which *harināma* is the central pivot:

*tāpaḥ puṇḍraṁ tathā nāma mantra yāgaś ca pañcamah
ami hi pañca-saṁskārāḥ paramaikānti-hetavaḥ*

“*Tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*, *mantra*, and *yāga*; these five items comprise *pañca-saṁskāra*. They are the cause of intense devotion to Lord Hari.”

Tāpaḥ means performing austerities and professing one’s self as a servant of Hari (Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa). *Puṇḍra* means applying *tilaka* marks (vertical lines drawn on the body), symbolizing the body as the temple of Hari. *Nāma* means receiving the holy name from the spiritual master and chanting that name according to his direction:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Of the five elements of *pañca-saṁskāra*, it is *nāma* which is given the most importance. In all the Vedic literature the holy name of Hari is glorified;

*yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukirtanād
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo ’pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavān nu darśanāt*

“To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face to face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices

if he once utters the holy name of Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.” (*Bhāg.* 3.33.6)

Those who offenselessly chant *nāma* are automatically imbued with all good qualities. One who chants the holy name of Hari (Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa) thus becomes qualified on the strength of the holy name to receive Vedic *mantras*, the fourth of the *pañca-saṁskāra*. *Mantra* here means *mantra-dīkṣā* or receiving the *brahma-gāyatrī* (*upanāyana*) and the *pañcarātrika-mantras*. After receiving *mantra-dīkṣā*, the *sādhaka* is engaged in the worship of Śrī Mūrti under *śāstric* (scriptural) regulations and this is called *yāga*. These are the five processes for purification called *pañca-saṁskāra* and these should be performed under the guidance of *sad-guru*.

In accordance with the above information it must be concluded that the offering of *harināma-dīkṣā* is indeed a bona-fide process and not a concocted one as the anti-party has suggested.

The next statement of the anti-party that we shall discuss is as follows:

Acceptance of *brahma-gāyatrī* (*upanāyana saṁskāra*) is only a part of *varṇāśrama* in the Vedic tradition, and has no place in the Gauḍīya line.

Here again the anti-party has taken their liberties, but without proper knowledge. The *brahma-gāyatrī* although chanted by the *brāhmaṇas* in the system of *varṇāśrama* and offered to young *brāhmaṇa* boys in the *upanāyana* ceremony, should not be considered as simply a part of *varṇāśrama*. *Varṇāśrama* in *Kali-yuga* has become only a mundane system of social management based on one’s tendencies to perform work. The *brahma-gāyatrī* however is a transcendental sound vibration (sprung from the flute of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) known as *śabda-brahman* or *divya-jñānam*. According to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *brahma-*

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gāyatrī is the Mother of the Vedas; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the purport of *Vedānta*, is an explanation of *brahma-gāyatrī* and therefore it must always be held in transcendental regard. It is not simply a part of *varṇāśrama* as the anti-party has suggested.

*praṇavera yei artha, gāyatrīte sei haya
sei artha catuḥ-ślokīte vivariyā kaya*

“The meaning of the sound vibration *omkāra* is present in the *gāyatrī-mantra*. The same is elaborately explained in the four *ślokas* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* known as *catuḥ-ślokī*.” (C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 25.94 and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7)

A similar description is found in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* wherein it is said that the purport of *brahma-gāyatrī* is to be found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*artho 'yam brahma-sūtrāṇām bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo' sau vedārtha-paribr̥mhitah*

“The meaning of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is present in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The full purport of the *Mahābhārata* is also there. The commentary of the *brahma-gāyatrī* is also there and fully expanded with all Vedic knowledge.” (*Garuḍa Purāṇa* and C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 25.144)

The meaning of the *gāyatrī mantra* must be in the line of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If we analyze how this is possible, we shall uncover the steps leading the *gāyatrī-mantra* to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Here the *rūpānuḡa ācārya* Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja has explained *gāyatrī* in the following way:

What is the meaning of *gāyatrī*? The word *gāyatrī* is a combination of two Sanskrit words: *gānat* (what is sung) and *trāyate* (gives deliverance). This means, “A kind of song by which we can get our salvation, relief, emancipation. *Gāyatrī* is known

as *veda-mātā*, the mother of the Veda. If we examine the Vedic conclusion from its most condensed aphorism to its most extensive expression, we shall find that it begins with *omkāra*, the Vedic symbol *om*. That truth is expressed as the *gāyatrī mantra*, then it appears in the form of the Vedas and there after as the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Finally, the Vedic conclusion is given its fullest expression in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Since the meaning, the purpose of Vedic knowledge progresses in this line, the *gāyatrī-mantra* must contain within it the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—that is, that the Kṛṣṇa conception of Godhead is the highest.

Both Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja and Śrī Jiva Goswāmī have explained the purport of *brahma-gāyatrī* to indicate Rādhā *dāsyam* or the Divine Service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The basis of their commentary is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That is summed up as follows:

gāyatrī-muraliṣṭa-kirtana-dhanam-rādhāpadam dhimahi

“*Gāyatrī*, which has emanated from the flute sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, only sings the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”

When the very goal of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is to attain shelter in the serving group of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, it is hardy imaginable that one could then say that the *mantra* for worshipping Her (*brahma-gāyatrī*) is simply meant for *varṇāśrama*. Indeed it is foolish to even think such a thought.

It is also a fact that this practice of giving *brahma-gāyatrī* to the *sādhakas* or devotees is not exclusive to only Gauḍīya Maṭha and ISKCON. This practice was in effect even before the time of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. It so happens that the followers of Śyāmānanda Prabhu (the spiritual master of Rasikānānda Prabhu) are an excellent example of this. From the time of Śyāmānanda Prabhu until the present day the *brahma-gāyatrī* is given to the new initiates in the Śyām-

ānanda *sampradāya* at the time of *dikṣā*. *Brahma-gāyatrī* is offered to the initiates along with other *rāga-mārga mantras* and a fire *yajña*. Does the Vṛndāvana anti-party wish then to suggest that the Śyāmānanda *parivāra* is also not a bona-fide Gauḍīya *sampradāya*?

The fact of the matter is that Saraswatī Ṭhākura did not invent methods of devotional service or create his own *paramparā* according to his whim. The real truth is that Saraswatī Ṭhākura simply uncovered bona-fide Vaiṣṇava practices that had either been neglected or covered by selfish persons desiring to make a trade of, or a family affair of the process of pure devotional service. This revival of authorized Vaiṣṇava practices—incorporating them into the *saṅkīrtana* movement, is indeed Saraswatī Ṭhākura’s welcome contribution to the cause of Mahāprabhu.

Possibly the most valuable contribution of Saraswatī Ṭhākura among the followers of Mahāprabhu was the revival of the order of *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa*. This now brings us to the third anti-party objection:

Sannyāsa is not to be given in the Gauḍīya line, it is only an external necessity of the ritualistic *varnāśrama* society.

Mahāprabhu Himself was a *sannyāsī*. Therefore, even if one were to admit that *sannyāsa* was merely part of the *varnāśrama* system, it would still be fair to say that *sannyāsa* was indeed a part of Gauḍīya Vaishnavism, based on the example of Mahāprabhu, who was after all a “Gauḍīya”.

One may argue that the *sannyāsa* of Mahāprabhu was *māyāvāda sannyāsa*, since He took it from Keśava Bhārati and therefore it is not acceptable as an example of Gauḍīya *sannyāsa*. This however is only argued by those who do not have proper knowledge of the *sannyāsa* pastime of Mahāprabhu.

Before taking *mantra* and *veṣa* (dress) from Keśava Bhārati, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu initiated Keśava Bhārati with the *sannyāsa*

mantra, “*tattvamasi*.” Mahāprabhu knew that Keśava Bhārati would give Him the *mantra*, “*tattvamasi*,” but Mahāprabhu did not like that. The *māyāvāda* conception of that *mantra* is, “I am that. (I am God.)” This thought was not acceptable to Mahāprabhu. Although Mahāprabhu was taking *sannyāsa* for decorum’s sake, for preaching His *saṅkīrtana* movement, He nonetheless could not accept a *mantra* with *māyāvāda-siddhānta*.

Mahāprabhu approached Murari Gupta and explained the perplexity of the situation. After careful deliberation Murari Gupta informed Mahāprabhu that there was a Vaiṣṇava conception to the *mantra*, *tattvamasi*, that is, “You are His.” Hearing this Mahāprabhu was very happy and He approached Keśava Bhārati and informed him, “I had a dream and in the dream you gave me a *mantra*. I was wondering if this is actually the *mantra* that you will give me.”

Hearing this, Keśava Bhārati said, “Oh, what *mantra* did I give you in Your dream?” As Keśava Bhārati leaned forward, Mahāprabhu pronounced the *mantra* “*tattvamasi*” in his ear. At that very moment Keśava Bhārati was completely converted into a pure Vaiṣṇava by the potency of Mahāprabhu. Then the *mantra* was given. And the *sannyāsa* name also came from Keśava Bhārati, but not any of the ten names generally given to a *sannyāsī* in the *māyāvāda* school. The name was given, “Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.”

This example also demonstrates the potency of a *mantra* when uttered with higher conception. It is not the *mantra* alone which is the cause of liberation but it is the conception which accompanies the *mantra* which has the real potency.

After taking *sannyāsa* and wandering for some days in Bengal, Caitanya Mahāprabhu started for Jagannātha Purī. On the way Mahāprabhu fell unconscious in a state of ecstasy by the side of a river. At that time Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu picked up the *eka-daṇḍa* (single staff) of Mahāprabhu and broke it into three pieces. Nityānanda Prabhu did this to demonstrate to all the devotees present that indeed Mahāprabhu had taken *tridaṇḍī* (Vaiṣṇava) *sannyāsa*.

Those who are *rasikā-bhaktas*, who know the inner meaning of

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Mahāprabhu’s pastimes, have concluded that Mahāprabhu was indeed a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī*.

After taking *sannyāsa* Mahāprabhu also uttered the *mantra* from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* again and again:

*etām sa āsthāya parātma niṣṭhām
adhyāsītām pūrvatamair maharṣibhiḥ
ahaṁ tariṣyāmi duranta-pāraṁ
tamo mukundāṅghri-niṣevayaiva*

“I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. This was approved by the previous *ācāryas*, who were fixed in firm devotion to the Lord, Paramātmā, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (*Bhāg.* 11.23.57 and *C.c. Madhya-līlā* 3.6)

Again it must be pointed out here that those who are actually learned in the science of pure devotion and the pastimes of Mahāprabhu, acknowledge that the uttering of this verse again and again by Mahāprabhu is the authorization to accept the order of *sannyāsa* as a bona-fide method to attain the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

While describing the pastime of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepting *sannyāsa* in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the author Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī has written a verse explaining the purpose of *sannyāsa*.

*parātma-niṣṭhā-mātra veṣa-dhāraṇa
mukunda-sevāya haya saṁsāra-tāraṇa*

“The real purpose of accepting *sannyāsa* is to dedicate oneself to the service of Mukuṇḍa. By serving Mukuṇḍa, one can actually be liberated from the bondage of material existence.” (*C.c. Madhya-līlā* 3.8)

By uttering the verse beginning with *etām sa āsthāya parātma-niṣṭhām*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has authorized the taking of *sannyāsa* and Kavirāja Goswāmī has confirmed this by explaining the

meaning of *sannyāsa* in the verse beginning with *parātma-niṣṭha-mātra*. If there were no such thing as *sannyāsa* in the Gauḍīya line, as the anti-party suggests, then Kavirāja Goswāmī would not have taken the trouble to explain its meaning. This argument is based on simple logic and supported by *śāstra*.

The *sannyāsa* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu should be sufficient evidence to support the authenticity of *sannyāsa* in the Gauḍīya line—indeed it is, but it is not the only evidence.

After Mahāprabhu accepted *sannyāsa* many of his followers did the same. Some of them like Svarūpa Dāmodara and others took *sannyāsa veṣa* (dress) from the *mayavādīs* at Banaras while others like Rūpa and Sanātana self-adopted the short white cloth.

Sometimes it is said that the Six Goswāmīs were *bābājīs* and not *sannyāsīs* but this is only a partial truth. The anti-party says that there is no direct mention of the word “*tridaṇḍī*” anywhere in the writings regarding the pastimes of Mahāprabhu and therefore there cannot be any such thing as “*tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa*.” However, it also happens that there is no mention of “*bābāji*” anywhere to be found either. In this way the anti-party (who favor *bābāji* over *sannyāsa*) are defeated by their own argument.

However, the real fact of the matter is that both the *bābājīs* and *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs* are bona-fide renunciates. The *bābāji* is actually a *bhajanānandī* or one who devotes his life to secluded chanting of the holy name and the other, the *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsī*, is actually a *goṣṭhyānandī* or one who devotes his life to the service of the holy name by spreading the holy name in every town in village. In either case these are actually birds (*paramahamsas*) of the same feather because the goal of their respective duties in renunciation is to develop Kṛṣṇa *premā*.

Whatever has been stated in this article concerning the authenticity of *harināma* initiation, *brahma-gāyatrī*, and *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa* in the *paramparā* of Saraswatī Ṭhākura

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has been represented with logical argument and scriptural evidence—therefore it should be accepted as conclusive.

Monarchs of Mantra Diksa _____ Chapter 5

“Devotees should not become discouraged thinking that there are many criticisms against our paramparā. In fact it may be said that these criticisms are a kind of recognition of our preaching success. Like the Bhāg-avatam, the preaching mission of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was started to create a revolution in the minds and hearts of the misguided and unfortunate.”

At present, most of the criticisms of our *paramparā* are being aimed at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for what his critics have labeled as “introducing concocted methods of devotional service.” In the chapters *Śikṣā Paramparā, Eternally Liberated, The Benign Authority, and Process of Initiation*, we have answered some of the main criticisms against our *paramparā* and shown that for reviving and propagating pure devotional service at the beginning of this century Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was indeed empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and that all of his so-called innovations were actually supported by scripture and previous Vaiṣṇava tradition.

Up to this point there remains only one outstanding criticism against the *paramparā* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura which we have not yet mentioned. This last criticism is coming from certain individuals among the *brāhmaṇa* and caste *goswāmī* anti-party in India. I say, coming from certain individuals in this community, because not all caste *brāhmaṇas* or *goswāmīs* objected to the organized preaching efforts of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Indeed many of the caste *brāhmaṇas* and *goswāmīs* in India greatly appreciated Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who initiated thousands of sincere individuals into the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Those who begrudged Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for having accepted the position of *ācārya* and having spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness on a wide scale, faulted him in the following manner:

A *sannyāsī* should not initiate (give *dikṣā*)! Only the *grhastha-brāhmaṇas* should be allowed to give *dikṣā*.

Here the anti-party makes this criticism of Saraswatī Ṭhākura with utter disregard for the instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*

“Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī* or a *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a *guru* if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa.” (C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 8.128)

Neglecting this instruction of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, that the qualification to become *guru* is that one should know the science of Kṛṣṇa, the anti-party has concocted their own standard by which they say that only the *grhasthas* (householder devotees) can give *mantra-dikṣā*. Ignoring the above verse, the anti-party tries to claim that as Mahāprabhu gave charge of *sambanda-jñāna* to Sanātana Goswāmī, and *abhidheya-jñāna* and *rasa-tattva* to Rūpa Goswāmī, he also gave exclusive rights over the initiation process to the *brāhmaṇa-grhastha* community, by giving the following instruction to the Kurma *brāhmaṇa*—a *grhastha*.

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'- upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*

“Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way become *guru* and try to liberate everyone in this land.” (C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 7.128)

Thus the anti-party concludes that the position of giving *mantra-dikṣā* is exclusively the right of a *grhastha-brāhmaṇa*. This verse however does not mention *mantra-dikṣā* at all. The verse ac-

tually states, “*kaha ‘kṛṣṇa’ upadeśa,*” tell everyone you meet about ‘*kṛṣṇa’ upadeśa*, the instructions of Kṛṣṇa. “*Upadeśa*” means instructions and giving instruction means *śikṣā*. Thus the proper translation of this verse leads to the understanding that the *param-parā* which Mahāprabhu Himself advocated was a *śikṣā-paramparā*. The verse in no way gives the position of *mantra-dikṣā* exclusively to the *grhastha-brāhmaṇa* community.

There are several variations of this claim being made against the bona-fide followers of Mahāprabhu. Some sections of the anti-party stress *brāhmaṇaism*, stating that one must be born a *brāhmaṇa* and be a *grhastha* in order to give *mantra-dikṣā*. Another section says that if one is not a *grhastha* and a *brāhmaṇa* by birth, one should first enter the renounced order before giving *mantra-dikṣā*. In case after case the anti-parties differ from one another in their conclusions on such matters—this is so because not only are they envious of Sarasvatī Thākura and his mission but they are also envious of each other. Each anti-party seeks to establish itself as the exclusive monarchs of *mantra-dikṣā*.

To further try and support their claim against the *sannyāsis* in the Gauḍīya line for giving *mantra-dikṣā* the anti-party quotes the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*na śiṣyān anubadhnīta, granthān naivābhyased bahūn
na vyākhyām upayujīta, nārambhān ārabhet kvacit*

This verse (*Bhāg.* 7.13.8) describes precautionary measures for a *sannyāsi*. The anti-party stresses, “*na śiṣyan*—he should not make *śiṣyas* or disciples!” This they conclude means that only the *grhasthas* (householders) should initiate or give *mantra-dikṣā*.

However if we continue to understand this verse in the same way as the anti-party has understood the meaning of “*na śiṣyan,*” then the second segment would mean that the *sannyāsi* should not read books (*granthān na*), and the third segment of this verse would

mean that a *sannyāsī* should not talk or preach (*na vyākhyām*). In this way the whole verse becomes massacred due to self motivated interpretation. A correct understanding of the verse, as given by our *ācāryas* is as follows:

A sannyāsī must not present allurements of material benefits to gather many disciples, nor should he unnecessarily read many books or give discourses as a means of livelihood. He must never attempt to increase material opulence unnecessarily.

Rather than an admonishment to *sannyāsīs* who accept disciples in the course of their preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, this verse is a chastizement to anyone (*sannyāsīs* or otherwise) who allure disciples by material means, read many books to become famous as a scholar, or maintain a livelihood by speaking the *Bhāgavatam* (*bhāgavata-saptāha* or *bhāgavata-kathā*).

The words *vyākhyām upayūñjīta* refer to maintaining one's livelihood by speaking the *Bhāgavatam*. This is strictly prohibited in this verse, *na vyākhyām upayūñjīta* - *na* means not. One should not maintain a livelihood by such means.

The fact is that Gauḍīya *sannyāsīs* do not speak the *Bhāgavatam* as a way to maintain their livelihood. In particular Śrīla A.C. Bhakti-vedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda (a leading disciple of Saraswatī Ṭhākura, who spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world) underwent such hardships to speak and spread the messages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that he would sometimes go without food or even a proper place to sleep at night. It can hardly be said that he preached *Bhāgavatam* as a livelihood. It is also true that such great personalities as Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, the *guru* of Saraswatī Ṭhākura, completely despised the professional recitation of *Bhāgavatam*.

Once when the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was recited by a professional speaker near the cottage of Gaura Kīśora, Bābājī Mahārāja re-

quested his servant to go there and purify the place with cow dung. The servant replied that since the *Bhāgavatam* had been recited at that spot, what need was there to again purify the place with cow dung? Bābāji Mahārāja replied, “Oh, you have heard the *Bhāgavatam*? I could not hear the *Bhāgavatam*—I only heard that man say, ‘Rupee, rupee, rupee.’”

Among the *sannyāsīs* in the Gauḍīya line we do not find any instance where one is speaking the *Śrīmād-Bhāgavatam* simply to earn a livelihood. On the other hand there are many so-called followers of Mahāprabhu among the *brāhmaṇa* and *grhastha* communities who speak *Bhāgavatam* in the public, collect donations, and after returning home spend those donations for family maintenance or even for sinful activities like smoking, drinking and maintaining prostitutes.

For further authentication of the policy of a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* giving *mantra-dikṣā*, one can cite the examples of Śrī Rāmānujā-cārya and Śrī Madhvācārya who were both *sannyāsīs* and who both gave *mantra-dikṣā*. However, it is a well known fact that the main spokesman for the anti-party claims that Rāmānuja and Madhva were hypocrites for initiating as *sannyāsīs*. Indeed this attitude alone demonstrates the ignorance of the anti-party.

From the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* there are many examples of *sannyāsīs* giving *mantra-dikṣā*—these occur even before the time of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. A foremost example is that of Mādhavendra Purī (a *sannyāsī*) who initiated Śrī Adwaitācārya.

*tānra ṭhāñi mantra laila yatana kariñā
calilā dakṣiṇe puri tānre dikṣā diñā*

“Śrī Adwaitācārya begged to be initiated by Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. After initiating Him, Mādhavendra Purī started for South India.” (C.c. *Madhya-lilā* 4.111)

It should be noted here that Adwaitācārya was a *brāhmaṇa* by birth and a householder—what to speak of His being the Supreme

Personality of Godhead, Mahā Viṣṇu, yet He received *mantra-dikṣā* from Mādhavendra, a *sannyāsī*.

We also find in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Mādhavendra Purī initiated *brāhmaṇas* (Vrajavāsīs) at Govardhan Hill.

*sakala brāhmaṇe purī vaiṣṇava karila
sei sei sevā-madhye sabā niyojila*

“All the *brāhmaṇas* present on that occasion were initiated by Mādhavendra Purī into the Vaiṣṇava cult, and Mādhavendra Purī engaged them in different types of service.” (*C.c. Madhya-līlā* 4.87)

In order to elevate those *brāhmaṇas* to the status of Vaiṣṇavas, Mādhavendra Purī initiated them into Vaiṣṇava *mantra*. It should be pointed out here that not only did Mādhavendra Purī initiate as a *sannyāsī* but he initiated *brāhmaṇas* who were residents of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma and by his giving them initiation they became Vaiṣṇavas. This is quite significant. According to the *Padma Purāṇa* one cannot become a Vaiṣṇava without being initiated into a Vaiṣṇava *mantra*.

*grhīta viṣṇudikṣāko viṣṇu-pūjāparo naraḥ
vaiṣṇavo 'bhīhito 'bhijñairitaro 'smādavaṣṇavaḥ*

“One who is initiated into the *Vaiṣṇava-mantra* and who is devoted to worshipping Lord Viṣṇu is a Vaiṣṇava. One who is devoid of these practices is not a Vaiṣṇava.” (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 11 quoted from *Padma Purāṇa*)

Similarly, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also received *mantra-dikṣā* from Śrī Īśvara Purī who was a *sannyāsī*. About Īśvara Purī, Mahāprabhu has said:

*prabhu kahe—īśvara haya parama svatantra
īśvarera kṛpā nahe veda-paratantra*

“Both the Supreme Personality of Godhead and Īśvara Purī are completely independent. Therefore the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and Īśvara Purī is not subject to any Vedic rules and regulations.” (C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 10.137)

This is indeed a most profound statement. If one is a qualified spiritual master, he is certainly qualified to give mercy. In the opinion of Mahāprabhu the bona-fide spiritual master is not subject to any Vedic rules and regulations. Mahāprabhu made this statement to Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya in relation to Īśvara Purī having accepted a disciple who was a *śūdra* by caste.

Actually one is not qualified to become a *guru* based on caste or any other material designation. The proper conclusion is that one becomes qualified to give *mantra-dikṣā* if one knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu has said:

*kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā sei ‘guru’ haya*

“Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī* or a *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a *guru* if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa.” (C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 8.128)

This verse was directly spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and as such it can be taken as the ultimate authority to defeat the anti-party propaganda that only a *gṛhastha* can give *mantra-dikṣā*. Nonetheless we have also cited some other interesting evidence for the satisfaction of our readers.

In a last ditch-effort to confuse the modern day followers of Saraswatī Ṭhākura, the anti-party spokesmen often make reference to the incident of a man called Ananta Vāsudeva. In his early career Ananta Vāsudeva was a very close disciple of Saraswatī Ṭhākura. After the disappearance of Saraswatī Ṭhākura this Ananta Vāsudeva took *sannyāsa* and became a leading *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya Maṭha. After sometime, however, Ananta Vāsudeva rejected his *sannyāsa* and his *dikṣā* connection with Saraswatī Ṭhākura. Accompanied by

another scholarly devotee named Sundarānanda Vidyavinoda, these two left the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

After leaving the Gauḍīya Maṭha Ananta Vāsudeva declared that Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was a conditioned soul who had simply concocted unauthorized means of devotional service. Ananta Vāsudeva went to Vṛndāvana where he and Sundarānanda Vidyavinoda traded their connection with Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for *siddha-prāṇalī-dīkṣā* which they took from a certain member of the caste *goswāmī* families. The anti-party likes to state this as their crowning evidence against Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his mission, to show that even his own disciples realized it was bogus. It so happens that not less than three different anti-party factions in Vṛndāvana claim that Ananta Vāsudeva rejected Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for *siddha-prāṇalī* in their line. Each of these anti-party factions likes to claim that Ananta Vāsudeva took *siddha-prāṇalī* in their camp because they consider him to be a great trophy—trophy or symbol of shamelessness?

What the anti-party does not like to state however is the immoral character of Ananta Vāsudeva both before and after he had departed from the Gauḍīya Maṭha. As an *ācārya*, Ananta Vāsudeva had become proud of his position (as did the infamous Romaharṣaṇa Sūta of the *Bhāgavatam*) and he began to lord it over his fellow Godbrothers causing them many unnecessary inconveniences and troubles. This resulted in *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, which led to Ananta Vāsudeva even criticizing his own *guru* and eventually engaging in illicit activities. These illicit activities led to the birth of an illegitimate child from a local prostitute. It was at this point, after his moral character and deviations from the *siddhānta* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura were exposed, that he decided to leave the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Ananta Vāsudeva then associated with certain *goswāmīs* and *bābājīs* at Vṛndāvana who do not consider illicit sex or even homosexual as an impediment to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is shocking, but many groups of *bābājīs* and *goswāmīs* consider sex life, in whatever

form, to be the same as passing stool or urine—therefore they do not consider it an impediment. They consider it a normal and harmless bodily function. Thus they sometimes engage in sex life as frequently as they pass stool. No mere wonder then that the anti-party lack sufficient brain substance to understand *siddhānta*.

Ananta Vāsudeva had come to Vṛndāvana with his prostitute and thus he found the association of those *bābājīs* and *goswāmīs* encouraging. In such association he could continue his attachment to illicit life, something which was not possible for him in the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

The anti-party with whom Ananta Vāsudeva joined had previously been thoroughly defeated by the Gauḍīya Maṭha in the time of Saraswatī Ṭhākura. But now with Ananta Vāsudeva among their ranks the anti-party found renewed strength to propagate their old arguments. This attempt to divert the flow of the *Caitanya-Saraswata paramparā*, however, failed miserably because the sincere disciples of Saraswatī Ṭhākura, like their illustrious *guru*, were fully conversant with the conclusions of *śāstra* and they could not be shaken in their *guru-nistha*.

Nonetheless the anti-party published three books in which they attempted to refute the *siddhānta* of Saraswatī Ṭhākura. This attempt was indeed formidable due to the scholarly mode of presentation, but the publications, referred to as the “Trident Against Gauḍīya Maṭha,” only bolstered the already existing misconceptions of the anti-party members—despite their scholarship and determination, the anti-party could not penetrate with their misconceptions to the heart of Gauḍīya Maṭha.

After some years Ananta Vāsudeva met an inauspicious end in life by committing suicide. As for Sundarānanda Vidyavinode he simply vanished into the shadows.

For the most part, the devotees from western countries do not know all these unpleasant stories in detail. Therefore the anti-party tries to mislead them by using the example of Ananta Vāsudeva—

stating that Ananta Vāsudeva was a highly qualified Vaiṣṇava and that he rejected the institution of *sannyāsa* because he realized that *sannyāsa* and the *siddhānta* of Saraswatī Ṭhākura were bogus. But really, what is bogus is the story that the anti-party tells.

In 1959 our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda wrote a prayer (*Śrī Viraha Aṣṭakam*) on the anniversary of the disappearance of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura wherein we find a reference to the disciples who had rejected their *guru*. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

One of your closest disciples whose cup you lovingly filled to the brim with the deathless nectar of your instructions has ungratefully thrown away that chalice. And his regrettable preference for infectious poison has resulted in an epidemic of *sahajiyāism*. It seems that the prize valiantly acquired by the triumphant lion has at present been unscrupulously stolen by the jackal. The oppressive forces of nescience have reduced everyone to tears. And it appears that each of the young lions is again becoming a mouse.

The sad events surrounding Ananta Vāsudeva and Sundarānanda Vidyavinode indeed brought tears to the eyes of many of the dedicated disciples of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura—but it did not deter them in their own faithful service to their Divine Master. The grace of the *guru* always flows to the sincere and dedicated disciple. Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura had many sincere and highly qualified disciples; Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla B.P. Purī Mahārāja, Śrīla B.D. Mādhava Mahārāja, Śrīla B.S. Goswāmī Mahārāja, and Śrīla B.P. Keśava Mahārāja, just to name a few.

The devotees in the west, often think and speak of Gauḍīya Maṭha as a complete failure but this is not a fact. There were indeed troubled times after the disappearance of Saraswatī Ṭhākura but his sincere disciples struggled through those times and in the end glori-

ously spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world and continue to do so up to the present moment. We see that the coverings of *māyā* also enveloped many leading disciples in ISKCON after the disappearance of our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda. In due course of time we see that some of those individuals have hatefully rejected the instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda, others have sunk to the lowest levels of immorality, while others have even ended their lives in a most inauspicious way. *Māyā* takes advantage of the disappearance of great personalities and tries to again cover the path shown by the previous *ācārya*—but indeed the sincere disciples again manifest the path of pure devotional service. An institution can go astray at any moment, be it ISKCON, Gauḍiya Maṭha, or whatever—we are not concerned with the relativity of the *paramparā*, the institution or society, we are to concern ourselves with the substance, the Absolute, the *siddhānta*. It is this *paramparā* that continues decade after decade, century after century, and millennium after millennium—the *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

Devotees should not become discouraged thinking that there are many criticisms against our *paramparā*. In fact it may be said that these criticisms are a kind of recognition of our preaching success. Like the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the preaching mission of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was started to create a revolution in the minds and hearts of the misguided and unfortunate people of Kali Yuga.

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yat
śṛṅvanti gāyanti-grṇanti sādhaveḥ*

“On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization. Such

transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung, and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.” (*Bhāg.* 1.5.11)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was indeed a powerful personality and it is historical fact that in his life no one was ever able to defeat his sound *sāstric* evidence supporting the activities of the Gauḍiya Maṭha. His power was in his purity—not in word jugglery or wealth or any such things of this world. He spoke with such conviction, backed by *sāstric* reference, that his critics were afraid to stand before him. For the most part the envious persons who opposed Sarasvatī Ṭhākura simply barked from the back—they had no courage to oppose him directly. The *kīrtana* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was so grand that the sounds of the barking dogs were simply drowned in an ocean of ecstasy.

In the absence of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his stalwart disciples, the barking sounds of the anti-party can again be heard. But those who are intelligent and pious will embrace the missionary spirit of totalitarian war against illusion started by the *senāpati*, the great general among Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and join in his illustrious line which is sanctioned by the Supreme Lord and by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Revolution means opposition or controversy and it is this controversy that helps us to increase our faith and attachment for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa
ihā ha-ite kṛṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha mānasa*

“A sincere student should not neglect the discussions of such conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind. Thus one’s mind becomes attracted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (*C.c. Ādi-līlā* 2.117)

– Monarchs of Mantra Diksa –

THE PRACTICE of Pure Devotional Service



P a r t t w o

Preaching is the Essence _____ Chapter 6

“One who has got life, he can preach. Preaching (kīrtana) is actually real bhajana—not simply sitting idle—at least that was the opinion of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and our Guru Mahārāja.”

In the later pastimes of our Guru Mahārāja, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahāṁsa Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda he manifested many divine instructions in the presence of those who served his lotus feet with great love and affection.

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda, from an external point of view, may have appeared to be suffering physically due to his deteriorated bodily condition—His Divine Grace always remained absorbed in the plane of transcendence—remembering the lotus feet of his most worshipable Deities, Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāmasundara.

One day, seeing that it was with great difficulty that Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to speak into the tape recorder—translating the verses of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and giving his Bhaktivedānta purports—Śrīla Prabhupāda’s secretary (Śrīpada Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī Mahārāja) asked him why he continued to translate and preach at this advanced stage of life—when in fact Śrīla Prabhupāda had already written so many books and preached all over the world. The secretary suggested that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s daily working on the *Bhāgavatam* was not necessary at this time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied very humbly by telling us the story of the “Good Soldier.” Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “Even if a good soldier (who serves in the army of the King) is struck down on the battlefield and his head is severed from his shoulders—still even if he is lying on the ground in such a condition—if he is a good soldier he will try to wave his sword in the air with the hopes that he will somehow strike the enemy.” “Similarly,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “I

am a servant in the army of my Guru Mahārāja and as long as I have life I must preach—even in my present condition (and he waved his hand about in the air as if waving a sword).”

Then, shortly before departing from this world, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a blessing to the devotees present. He said, “Live long and preach.”

It was indeed a favorite saying of Śrīla Prabhupāda (and also of Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura) that, “*Prāṇa arthe yañra sei hetu pracāra*—One who has got life, he can preach.” Preaching (*kīrtana*) is actually real *bhajana*—not simply sitting idle—at least that was the opinion of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura and our Guru Mahārāja. In the logo of the Gauḍiya Maṭha, which was designed by Saraswatī Ṭhākura and which Śrīla Prabhupāda had painted on the left and right sides of the main gate at ISKCON Māyāpur (still existing), we find that the *mṛdaṅga* drum and the printing press are located in the section of the logo under *rāgānuṅā-bhakti*. Certainly this is a contrast of thought to those that think that *kīrtana* (preaching and book distribution) is a lower form of *bhakti*—the higher form of *bhakti* being to always discuss *gopī-rasa*.

Is preaching the essence? Preaching is something more—Preaching is the highest form of *bhajana* life. Just consider the following:

Kīrtana, book publishing, and thus distribution also have been accepted by Saraswatī Ṭhākura and other great *ācāryas* as service in the line of *rāgānuṅā* (also *rūpānuṅā*). To write about the Lord is also *kīrtana* and similarly to preach (to assert and convert others) is also *kīrtana* (when our preaching is performed for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees it is *kīrtana*).

In his song *Vaiṣṇava Ke?* (Who is a Vaiṣṇava?) Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura says,

kīrtana prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe

– Preaching is the Essence –

se kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhāva

“Internal remembrance (*smaraṇa*) can occur by the power of *kīrtana*, and only then is solitary (*nirjana*) service possible.”

The Guardian of Devotion, Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmi Mahārāja has said,

So also, to be engaged in (preaching) answering the questions of the environment, automatically demands concentration, which is very rare in this age. When one is doing *kīrtana*, he automatically cannot but give all concentration and attention. He cannot speak independently; intuitively, he must be all-attentive. For this reason, *kīrtana* (preaching) has been recommended as the highest form of *bhajana*, especially in the age of Kali. (*Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion*, Ch 2, *Bhajan—Real and Apparent*, pp. 24)

Of course we must raise the question, here, “Preaching about what and printing books about what? And what is the conception in *kīrtana*? Surely if such things are in *rāgānugā-bhakti* they must have some distinguishing characteristics.

To answer my own question I must say—certainly every musical sound made with a *mṛdaṅga*, *kartālas*, and shouting the name is not really *kīrtana*. *Kīrtana* which is performed for gaining prestige and fame—which is filled with the false ego of being the enjoyer and does not carry the proper service attitude—is not really *kīrtana* (*śuddha-nāma*) and thus it cannot be *rāgānugā*. Similarly, to preach with the view to become a world *ācārya* and to do good to the people is also not pure devotion, due to being tinged with the false ego that I am the doer. Thus, every book published under the banner of “we are preaching” does not actually come under the category of *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Even when such books seemingly only speak about *premā*, *gopīs*, *mañjaris*, and other such lofty topics, this does not mean that such books are automatically *rāgānugā*. We

should remember that the *sahajiyā* section also publishes books on such topics. Real *rāgānuṅā* necessitates higher backing—from above (the subjective plane) the inspiration to preach and write must come down to us—then it is transcendental—then that may be considered *rāgānuṅā*.

Sometimes devotees like to read many unauthorized books with a view to deepen their understanding of *rāgānuṅā*, but unfortunately the unauthorized attempt to enter into *aprakṛta-līlā* never attains success. What then to speak of reading books, etc. that are simply concerned with varieties of mundane topics such as; vegetarianism, social politics, the “Big War,” ghost busting, worshiping crystals, alien beings, New Age prophecies, etc. (I say this because it is a fact that devotees these days tend to not only absorb themselves in reading unauthorized books but in publishing them as well.) Such books are certainly not *rāgānuṅā* because they are lacking the sense of serving disposition in the inner plane of divine service to the Supreme Lord. Although such topics may sometimes be beneficial from a mundane point of view, they are not *aprakṛta-kathā*, transcendental topics of conversation and thus they cannot help us to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (towards Kṛṣṇa *premā*).

Before one can attain *premā* they must acquire the necessary qualifications. Without proper progress in the right line, it will all be imagination—a madman’s feat. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja used to say,

One must gradually reach the plane of truth, *śuddha-sattva*. There are so many planes to cross—Bhur, Bhuvar, Svar, Mahār, Janar, Tapar, Satyaloka, Virajā, Brahmaloaka. Mahāprabhu says that the creeper of *bhakti* grows and rises up to Goloka, and she has to cross all these planes. (*Sermons*, vol. 2, pp. 29)

*upajiyā bāḍe latā brāhmāṇḍa bhedi yāya
virajā brahmaloka bhedi paravyoma pāya*

– Preaching is the Essence –

*tabe yāya tad upari goloka-vṛndāvana
kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-kalpa-vṛkṣe kare ārohaṇa*

“The creeper of devotion is born, and grows to pierce the wall of the universe. It crosses the Virajā river and the *Brahman* plane, and reaches to *Vaikuṅṭha*, finally reaching to embrace the wish-yielding tree of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.” (*C.c. Madhya-līlā* 19.153-4)

But the pseudo-devotees do not want to cross these planes—they want everything cheaply. They want to go on uttering the names of *gopīs*, but in their next life they will attain the bodies of mundane women—bewildered by the three modes of material nature—they will not attain the *aprakṛta-gopī-deha*, the form of a *gopī* in the transcendental land of *Vraja*.

Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja used to say with regard to those who think they can enter the higher plane simply by imitating the higher devotees;

If a lady enters into a maternity ward, she cannot produce a child only by imitating the sounds and symptoms of labor. Many things are necessary before that. Only by imitation, *bhajana* cannot be effected. One must have connection with *śuddha-sattva*, the real plane, and then all the higher symptoms may appear. Otherwise, only those speculative antics will manifest.

Even a liberated soul, *aprakṛta-jīva*, should externally take constant shelter of *kīrtana* (chanting *harināma*)—that is the advice of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Internally, such a liberated soul (in the eternally perfected form as a *gopī*) should render service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī while deeply meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eight-fold daily pastimes (*aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā*). In other words, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says this is the culmination of *bhajana* for devotees who have taken shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s lotus feet. The deep meditation on Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eightfold daily pastimes (*aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā*) is not possible for those who are filled with material desire, misconceptions,

and the likes of which that come with being a neophyte.

So how can one think that preaching (*kīrtana*) is something inferior to meditation (remembering Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes) when even the *aprakṛta-jīvas* are advised to take shelter in *kīrtana*? Such thinking is certainly due to a lack of proper knowledge (*sambandha-jñāna*). Those who have no real *sambandha-jñāna* are not fit for entering into the higher plane of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are also not fit to preach the message of Mahāprabhu, because they cannot impart to others the proper method by which the living entity attains the ultimate goal of life.

Indeed, at present there are certain parties of devotees around the world who are at serious odds with each other over the “preaching” issue (even to the point of physical outbursts)—we wonder how well either parties have grasped the “essence?” One thing is for certain—they all became devotees because of preaching.

Rasika or Sahajiyā _____ Chapter 7

“To determine who is actually a rasikā-bhakta is not always possible simply by observing external behavior....There are internal standards, however, and one who knows those standards of the rasikā-bhakta can never be misled.”

During my last visit to Śrīdhāma Māyāpur I had the great fortune of getting the *darśana* of Śrīla Bhakti Promode Purī Goswāmī Mahārāja, age 100, an affectionate friend and Godbrother of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Purī Mahārāja joined the mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura in 1922 and has been an active preacher of Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement ever since. We discussed many transcendental topics with Śrīla Purī Mahārāja and we were very happy to see his mood of extreme reverence for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and Śrīla Prabhupāda, the holy name, the Vaiṣṇavas, and the teachings of Mahāprabhu. Most of all we were very touched at heart by his deep humility and gentle dealings.

One evening as we sat at Śrīla Purī Mahārāja’s lotus feet hearing about what it means to be a genuine Vaiṣṇava we were astounded when suddenly Śrīla Purī Mahārāja said, “There is a wave of *sahajiyā-ism* coming to the western world and you must preach against this misconception.”

What did he mean, “a wave of *sahajiyāism* is coming to the western world?” *Sahajiyāism* we know, means to imitate—imitate ecstasy, imitate the behavior of exalted Vaiṣṇavas, to take things cheaply by not following the four regulative principles and the recommended process of devotional service, etc.—all these practices are *sahajiyā*. We have read about these things in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and we are no doubt aware of the shortcomings of *sahajiyā* tendencies—or are we?

If a man comes to your temple or your house dressed in a *sari*, wearing a nose-ring, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and rolling on the ground

with tears of ecstasy in his eyes, well—you will probably recognize his *sahajiyā* tendencies and reject his association. But beyond these gross manifestations of *sahajiyāism*—do we actually understand what a *sahajiyā* is and how to avoid *sahajiyā* tendencies? Apparently not or Śrīla Purī Mahārāja would not have mentioned it so strongly.

Further discussions with Śrīla Purī Mahārāja revealed what he meant when he exclaimed, “a wave of *sahajiyāism* is coming.” Not only will the *Caste Goswāmīs*, *Gaurṅāgarīs*, *Āula*, *Bāula*, *Siddha-dehas*, *Siddha-praṇālīs*, *Sakhī-bhekīs*, *Daraveśas*, *Sāni*, *Smārtas*, *Ativādī*, *Cūḍādhārī*, *Sahajiyā* and many other worthless schools of imitation come to spread their nonsense in the west, he said, but members of your own community, persons from within our own *sampradāya*, are coming to demonstrate *sahajiyāism*. They are doing this in the name of *rāgānuḡā-bhakti*.

Rāgānuḡā-bhakti, the topic for the 90’s—what is it and how do you do it? Śrīla Purī Mahārāja stressed that if a devotee, a *sannyāsī* or a *brahmacārī*, thinks that he has become a *rāgānuḡā-bhakta* or a *rasikā* and he wants to hear about the confidential *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* without first having the proper qualifications—then he runs the risk of becoming a woman with a mundane body in his next life! Unfortunately, there are many senior disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja who are trying to approach the higher subjective world of Kṛṣṇa *līlā* by practice and meditation with the mind. According to Śrīla Purī Mahārāja, however, none of them have the authorization of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura! Even if one has the necessary *adhikārī*, it is not the process which has been shown by Saraswatī Ṭhākura or our previous *acāryās* and *gurus* such as Śrīla Prabhupāda or Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

To guide us in our approach to the upper world Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura has composed a nice verse which recommends that the highest aspirations in our *bhajana* life be kept overhead or within:

– Rasika or Sahajiyā –

*pūjāla rāgapāṭha gaurava baṅge
mattala sādhu jana viṣaya range*

“The path of divine love is worshipable to us and should be held overhead as our highest aspiration”

And to protect us from the *sahajiyā* misconception Saraswatī Ṭhākura has written a small book called *Prakṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇi*, in which he mentions one hundred defects of the *sahajiyā* school. There are thousands of defects in the *sahajiyās* which disqualify them, but Saraswatī Ṭhākura has only mentioned a few of their defects in his book.

To exemplify this idea of keeping the highest ideals above our heads, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja told how Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura wanted to reside at Govardhana rather than at Rādhā Kuṇḍa. “I am not fit to live in Rādhā Kuṇḍa. So I shall live in a lower position, but my *gurus*—Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābāji, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and others—are fit to serve there. So I shall go and serve them there in Rādhā Kuṇḍa, and then return to a little lower position, in Govardhana. There I shall stay.”

But what is our actual position? Shouldn’t we aspire for the highest knowledge, the highest truth? It is a tricky question. We must move in the direction of truth, we must have proper knowledge—yet at the same time we must exercise great caution, fools rush in where angles fear to tread. To want to know everything about Kṛṣṇa *līlā* is a defect and that will cause us to fall down. It is to our advantage to always seek a lower position. That is the proper tactic to maintain a subjective position in the subjective world.

As Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja once said, “Otherwise, if we think that we are in the highest quarter, that higher reality will vanish from us. Only from a little lower position shall we view that higher plane with respect.”

Once we have been given proper connection with the higher world by the *guru* we should worship that conception on the altar of our heart. We should show the highest respect for those who are

a part of Kṛṣṇa’s intimate *lilā* and for those who have come here to represent that quarter.

Above all, the esoteric *lilās* of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* are never to be discussed in an open assembly—among unqualified persons. Nor should paintings of intimate *lilās* nor other such displays such as *rasa-lilā* drama be shown to the public. The ordinary people will consider Kṛṣṇa *lilā* with the *gopīs* as mundane sex relations and the neophyte devotees will also not be able to understand these topics. Therefore, it is an offense to disclose such topics in their presence.

First deserve, then desire. To discuss confidential topics about Kṛṣṇa *nāma* and Kṛṣṇa’s *rasa-lilā* in the presence of persons who do not have the required *adhikāri* or qualification constitutes an *aparādha*, an offense;

aśraddadhāne vimukhe ‘py aśṛṇvati

Offenses of this type must certainly be avoided by one who wants to progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Of course the higher subject matters may be discussed—they are not forbidden altogether. But there must be a qualified speaker and a qualified listener. Actually these things are reserved for liberated souls and to hear about such things without qualification is itself *sahajiyāism*. In the lives of our *acāryās*, especially Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura—the founder of the preaching mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in this modern age, we find that he was extremely reserved in discussing esoteric topics. In this manner, both Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja were also perfect examples of the standards he set.

I have observed throughout my career as a disciple of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda that even though Śrīla Prabhupāda was internally relishing the confidential truths regarding Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism he was nevertheless very, very discrete about openly discussing such truths—even amongst his most qualified disciples. Although outwardly not discussing the esoteric

pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, it is a fact that internally Śrīla Prabhupāda was fully conscious of the sublime mellows of love of God. Like his spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—outwardly Śrīla Prabhupāda worshipped the way of divine love with grandeur, awe, and reverence, but his object was actually that of the simple and beautiful, divine love of Vṛndāvana, and his temperament in establishing the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the world was just like that of a lion.

A devotee who internally relishes the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is called a *rasikā-bhakta*, one who takes transcendental pleasure in remembering the mellow sweetness of love of Godhead. It is a fact that one will have to approach such higher devotees sooner or later, but at present we are posed with a problem—how to tell the difference between a *rasikā-acāryā* and a *sahajiyā*?

I think it is safe to say without objection from my readers that Śrīla Prabhupāda was a *rasikā-acāryā*. As such we can further learn about the proper approach to the higher subject matter by observing his mood of presentation. Although keeping everything within—not allowing his ecstasy to manifest on the external plane—the depth in which Śrīla Prabhupāda relished Kṛṣṇa consciousness would sometimes become revealed in something he did or said. For the most part, however, his internal mood was couched within his dress as a world *acāryā*, as *jaḡad-guru*, as that of a humble servant of his spiritual master and as a preacher of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. In this way Śrīla Prabhupāda was constantly engaged in *kīrtana* and preaching for the benefit of the fallen conditioned souls. To understand the internal workings of a *rasikā* devotee is not an easy matter—if at all possible. But we must try if we are to make progress.

One example of Śrīla Prabhupāda keeping the mood of esoteric topics within and not disclosing them openly or publicly can be cited in relation to the verse *dehi pada pallavam udaram* from *Gītā Govinda* by Jayadeva Goswāmī. This verse is regarded by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas as being amongst the highest and most revered verses

ever spoken. Yet Śrīla Prabhupāda is only known to have raised this verse in preaching twice after his coming to the western world. It is a most relishable subject for the pure devotees but they do not like to discuss such things amongst the conditioned souls. Only the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, by His grace, can understand anything of the substance of this verse. It contains within it the highest aspiration of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, *Rādhā-dasyam*.

Dehi pada pallavam udaram. This verse was spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the course of their intimate conversations. Here Kṛṣṇa has expressed Himself openly—with great urgency and necessity, He begs for the pardon of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, “Please forgive Me and place Your lotus feet on My head.” This is a most high and esoteric concept—that Kṛṣṇa Himself is declaring the exalted position of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as the supermost worshipable object. This kind of thinking is not possible for beginners—the neophytes cannot conceive of such an exalted position. How is it possible? The whole world is searching after Kṛṣṇa; all the *yogīs*, *munis*, and sages; even Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu desire the *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa is begging for the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Just see how great She is!

Śrīla Prabhupāda only once discussed this intimate matter before his western disciples and that was while instructing one of the BBT artists, Śrīmatī Jadurani devī dāśī, sometime in 1967.

Śrīla Prabhupāda narrated the incident to his disciple that while writing the *Gītā Govinda* and describing the love affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa these words came to the mind of Jayadeva, *dehi pada pallavam udaram*. When this happened Jayadeva was astonished, “What is this! How has such a thought entered my mind? I cannot write such a thing. How is it possible?”

Jayadeva could not conceive of such a thing. How could Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Lord ask for the feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to be placed on his head? Jayadeva had great devotion and love for Kṛṣṇa

as the topmost Supreme Entity, therefore it was not appropriate for Kṛṣṇa to utter such words. Jayadeva could not bring himself to write such a verse. He began to tremble and the pen fell from his hand.

Feeling somewhat disturbed Jayadeva decided to go to the Ganges for bath. He informed his wife. "Oh good wife, I shall go to the Ganges for bath. Please prepare my *prasādam* and have it ready when I return." To which his good wife replied, "Yes, my respected husband, everything shall be done as you have requested."

Jayadeva then left the house and started for the Ganges. A short time later Jayadeva returned to the house and requested his wife to immediately serve *prasādam*, as he was very hungry. Jaya-deva's wife then served her husband, after which Jayadeva returned to his study and began writing.

As is the custom in India, Jayadeva's wife then sat down after her husband had eaten and began to take her *prasādam*. Suddenly Jayadeva appeared at the doorway of his house and began to call for his wife requesting her to serve *prasādam*, as he was very hungry. Astonished to hear such a thing, Jayadeva's wife informed her husband, " My most respected husband, upon returning from the Ganges you have already taken your meal and in turn after you, I have already taken my *prasādam*. After that you went to your study and continued your writing. I have seen you do all this, so why do you now say that you are very hungry and that you want to take *prasādam*?"

Hearing this, Jayadeva was bewildered and he could not understand the strange behavior of his wife. Upon entering his study Jayadeva became even more astonished when he saw that the verse that he had hesitated to write, was now written in his own handwriting on the paper he had left. Kṛṣṇa Himself had come to complete the verse. Kṛṣṇa had wanted Jayadeva to disclose this most inconceivable truth but he hesitated—so Kṛṣṇa did it Himself.

*smara garala khaṇḍanaṁ mama śrīraṣi maṇḍanaṁ
dehi pada pallavam udaram
javalati mayi daruṇo madana kadanā ruṇo
haratu tadu pāhita vikāram*

“O Śrī Rādhe, Your holy lotus feet are very kind and generous. The burning poison of Kāmādeva, which is always pressing Me, will be finished if You place Your lotus feet on My head. Only You can save Me.”

When Śrīla Prabhupāda uttered this verse he himself began to feel great ecstatic emotions within but he checked himself for the benefit of his disciple. Śrīla Prabhupāda never again uttered this verse during the remaining ten years of his preaching mission until 1977 when he spoke the same verse *dehi pada pallavam udaram* in the course of chastising a film producer who came to get Śrīla Prabhupāda’s blessing for producing a film on “Kṛṣṇa *līlā*.” Śrīla Prabhupāda was outspoken and firm—he had no intention of ever blessing such a project. And his reasons were obvious—“who will understand your film production?”

To determine who is actually a *rasikā-bhakta* is not always possible simply by observing external behavior. Externally a *rasikā-bhakta* may even appear not to be relishing *rāsa*. Externally he may even have a common appearance. There are internal standards, however, and one who knows those standards of the *rasikā-bhakta* can never be misled.

One very important standard of a *rasikā-bhakta* is that he cannot tolerate *rasābhāsa* (inconsistency or opposing mellows in *rāsa*) or the fact that unqualified persons try to enter into confidential subject matters. Śrīla Prabhupāda often showed this example of being totally intolerant toward such topics. In all cases Śrīla Prabhupāda never failed to heavily stress that the confidential *rāsa-līlās* of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* were “only for liberated souls” and it was not at all possible for conditioned souls or neophyte devotees to understand these topics.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was unrelenting on this point. He would of-

ten become angry when unqualified persons raised such confidential topics and he would chastise them, “My point is that for ordinary discussion, ordinary show these things are not meant for ordinary persons. These things are for liberated souls! That is my point.”

As for outward displays of ecstasy by a *rasikā-bhakta* one can refer to Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi of Caitanya *līlā*. Whenever Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi happened to hear the topics of Kṛṣṇa *līlā* he would become overwhelmed with ecstasy and exhibit all the bodily transformations of love of God—trembling, faltering of the voice, shedding tears, fainting, rolling on the ground, and speaking like a madman, etc. Only by seeing these extraordinary bodily manifestations of love of God could one actually understand the exalted position of Śrīla Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi. Outwardly he appeared very ordinary, but inwardly he was a devotee of the highest caliber. Of the highest caliber—to say the least—he was the incarnation of King Vṛṣabhānu, the father of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Actually both of these examples which I have given, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the other of Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, are factual characteristics of a *rasikā-bhakta*, however, of the two examples we are to concern ourselves more with the example of Śrīla Prabhupāda, rather than that of Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi. Why? Because cheaters often imitate the behavior of devotees like Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi but they almost never imitate the preachers like Śrīla Prabhupāda. For example, in Vṛndāvana there is a certain *māyāvādī sannyāsī*, who, upon hearing the name of Rādhārāṇī falls into “trance” and sheds tears of “ecstasy.” But when I asked him so many questions regarding Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s philosophy he had nothing to say. He had no philosophy and therefore he was exposed.

The actual *rasikā-bhaktas* are masters of *rasa-tattva* or the philosophy of *rasa*. This *rasa-tattva* is not simply a matter of book learning but it is the intrinsic truth about transcendental love affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa manifest in the hearts of pure devotees. It is the superior truth about transcendental love affairs, acquired due to

their full surrender and deep attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Because *rasa-tattva* is intrinsic in the hearts of pure devotees, it cannot so easily be imitated by the pseudo *swamis*, *yogis* and *gurus*.

Our conclusion is that we should make the goal of our life the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa's dearest servants. That will automatically qualify us for the higher plane but if we become intruders of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, if we try to jump ahead without proper qualification, then we will certainly be cast down.

It is the duty of all the disciples and especially the *sannyāsīs* of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja to preach against the advances of *sahajiyāism* in the Vaiṣṇava community here in the western world. That will be a great service to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement. The standards for preaching and *bhajana* have already been established for this movement by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura and as Śrīla Purī Goswāmī Mahārāja has recently requested—we should take inspiration from Saraswatī Ṭhākura and do the needful.

Sadhana Bhakti _____ Chapter 8

“As followers of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the line of Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda we are called rūpānugas, followers of Śrī Rūpa. We may neglect the teaching of so many saints like Patañjali, Buddha, Jesus, Śaṅkara, even Rāmānujācārya and Madhvācārya.”

DEVOTEE: How can we practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

NARASINGHA MAHĀRĀJA: When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu met Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī at Prayāga the Lord instructed him in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

*kṛṣṇa-tattva, bhakti-tattva, rasa-tattva-prānta
saba śikhāila prabhu bhāgavata-siddhānta*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī the ultimate limit of the truth about Lord Kṛṣṇa, the truth about devotional service and the truth about transcendental mellows, consummating in conjugal love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Finally, He told Rūpa Goswāmī about the ultimate conclusions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave confidential instructions to Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and He also empowered him with the ability to distribute it widely. Later on, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī compiled the essence of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings in his book, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

In the second wave (chapter two) of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has listed sixty-four items of practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which are to be followed by all the devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda. They begin with:

*atha aṅgāni—
guru-pādāśrayastasmāt kṛṣṇadīkṣādi-śikṣānam
viśrambheṇa guroh sevā sādhuwartmānuvartanam*

“The following are the indispensable parts of *sādhana-bhakti*: 1- Taking shelter of the lotus feet of the *guru*; 2- receiving initiation and training from the *guru*; 3- serving the *guru* with affectionate zeal, and 4- following in the footsteps of the great devotees.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Eastern Division, Second Wave, Txt. 74)

In the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* by Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī, the manifold aspects of practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness have already been mentioned, but Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī comments that he has selected only the more important *aṅgas* of *bhakti*—*haribhakti-vilāse'syā bhakteraṅgāni lakṣaṣaḥ, kiṁtu tāni prasiddhāni nirdiśyante yathā matī*.

Guru-pada-āśraya—thus the foremost principle of practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness is stated first—take shelter at the lotus feet of *śrī gurudeva*, the bona-fide spiritual master. *Āśraya* means shelter. *śrī gurudeva* is the *āśraya-vigraha* or the shelter giving principle of the Supreme Godhead. Under his care, his guidance, we can learn the actual process of becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Without the shelter of *śrī gurudeva* the so-called practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a mental concoction or simply mundane. Actual Kṛṣṇa consciousness is situated in the supra-mental, supra-mundane plane and cannot be attained simply through our mental speculations. One becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious via Kṛṣṇa's grace received through the descending process—*guru* to disciple. Kṛṣṇa's grace will surely descend to us when we have proper connection. Therefore, our first business in a practicing life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to take shelter of *śrī gurudeva*.

*tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇātaṁ brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam*

“My dear king, he who desires to know the ultimate goal of life must surrender completely to the *guru*. The *guru* is always an unalloyed devotee of the Supreme Godhead. The *guru* is always free from the

duality of material existence such as attraction and aversion to sense objects. The *guru* has fully realized the purport of *śabda-brahmaṇi*, the revealed *bhakti* scriptures, and he is always engaged in *para-brahmaṇi*, chanting the holy name and singing the glories of the Lord's transcendental pastimes." (*Bhāg.* 11.3.21)

In Goloka Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa is surrounded by His eternal associates, the *nitya-parikara*. These eternal associates like Patraka, Śrīdama, Nanda and Yaśodā, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are the chief *āśraya-vigrahas*. The *nitya-parikara* devotees are not in the category of the *jīva* souls but are known as the *rāgātmikās*, the Eternal Counter-Whole Manifestations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All the *nitya-parikara* devotees in *mādhurya-rasa* like Lalitā, Viśākhā, and even Candrāvalī are the expansions of the serving temperament of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In the remaining *rasas* all the *nitya-parikara* devotees like Nanda, Yaśodā, Śrīdama etc. are manifest from the serving mood of Śrī Baladeva. These devotees are not *jīva* souls or marginal entities, nor should they be confused with the *viṣṇu-tattva* category. The *jīva* soul can never become a *rāgātmikā*. In the highest stage of perfection the *jīva* soul can come to the stage of being an eternal servant, of the servant, of the servant of Lalitā, Viśākhā, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā.

Śrī *gurudeva* is known as the principle of *āśraya-vigraha* which has extended itself to the world of conditioned souls to meet their ultimate necessity of receiving the shelter of the *rāgātmikās*. The *guru*, being the most merciful devotee of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or Śrī Baladeva, is always prepared to shelter the submissive and sincere disciples and to guide them in matters concerning their spiritual upliftment.

Shelter means to surrender—*śaraṇāgati*. Without surrender to the *guru*, the transaction between *guru* and disciple never takes place. One should be careful not to approach the *guru* with an argumentative mentality. Submissive behavior in front of the *guru* is

essential. We are suffering in the mundane world due to our rebellious attitude against the Supreme Authority of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, to oppose the words of *śrī gurudeva* will not help us.

The *guru* is also not an inquiry office. Shall we come to the *guru*, put forward our inquiry, take some knowledge and then go away? If so we will not gain anything spiritual. The knowledge of *śrī gurudeva* is not for our selfish purpose. We must surrender at the lotus feet of *śrī guru*. His knowledge will defeat us, destroy all our doubts, and reveal to us the wealth that is within us. We must pledge ourselves as a slave of *śrī gurudeva*. We should never try to make the knowledge of *śrī gurudeva* an ornament of our false prestige. “See what I know. See how advanced I am.” Such false pride will surely check the disciples advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We have been purchased by *śrī gurudeva* and he has every right to dispense with us according to his wish. After surrendering to *śrī gurudeva* we should not withdraw our energy for our personal enjoyment or out of fear that we are being exploited. We must keep our faith, *śraddhā*, in *śrī gurudeva*. Such full surrender and faith is the only price to pay if we want to go forward in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā-deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have faith in *śrī gurudeva* and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are all the imports of Vedic knowledge revealed.”

To support the necessity of the second *aṅga* (*dīkṣā* and *śikṣā*) Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda has cited another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*tatra bhāgavatān dharmān śikṣed gurv-ātma-daivataḥ
amāyayānuvṛtyā yais tuṣyed ātmātma-do hariḥ*

“The *guru* should be served with all sincerity in the consciousness that he is as dear as one’s very self. One should consider the *guru* as God-in-person. So considering the *guru*, the disciple should receive instructions from him in the esoteric meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the related *bhakti* literatures. Such meaningful behavior of the disciple greatly pleases the Supreme Lord.” (*Bhāg.* 11.3.22)

Initiation—*harināma* and *mantra dikṣā*, are offered to the disciple on the threshold of *bhakti*. Initiation means the beginning. One who has received proper initiation in the *paramparā* system is in the position to receive the descent of Kṛṣṇa’s grace. If we cannot find a qualified devotee to whom we can surrender and from whom we can accept initiation, then with great earnestness we must continue our search. “Seek and ye shall find.” If, however, even after continuing our search we cannot find any qualified person, then we must accept that the defect is within us. If we cannot get the shelter of *śrī gurudeva* then we are not actually sincere. Kṛṣṇa will not neglect our sincere search and according to our earnestness we will receive the divine connection with *śrī gurudeva*.

Guru is not a fashion. Once Śrīla Prabhupāda, A.C. Bhakti-vedānta Swāmī Mahārāja asked a group of his disciples, “Who needs a *guru*?” to which a disciple replied, “Everyone needs a *guru*!” Much to everyone’s surprise Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “No! Not everyone needs a *guru*. Only one who wants to put an end to the miserable conditions of material existence—he needs a *guru*, not everyone. *Guru* is not a fashion.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained the process of initiation as the system called *Pañca Saṁskāra—tāpa, puṇḍra, nāma, mantra, and yāga*. First, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, the student must approach the *guru* with an attitude of *tāpa*, repentance for his past sinful activities. Then the *guru* will instruct the student in *puṇḍra*—marking the names of Godhead on the twelve locations of the body. Seeing the willingness of the student to reform, the *guru* will then offer *nāma* and the sincere student becomes an initiated disciple. By the strength of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa all ones sinful

activities are destroyed and the disciple realizes his eternal nature as that of servant of Kṛṣṇa.

Next the *guru* gives his disciple *mantra*. The *mantra*, usually the *kāma-gāyatri-mantra*, helps the disciple to refine his taste or to develop a particular mellow sweetness (*rasa*) in the chanting of Kṛṣṇa *nāma*. Then the *guru* gives instruction (*śikṣā*) to the disciple in *yāga* or Deity worship. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments that without Deity worship it is very difficult for the conditioned soul to make progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Actually the holy name of Kṛṣṇa alone can reveal the highest truth, but because the neophyte devotee cannot purely utter the name of Kṛṣṇa due to either *anarthas* or *aparādha*, he requires purification via the process of Deity worship, *arcanā*.

All the items of *Pañca Saṁskāra* have been included in the sixty-four *angas* of *sādhana-bhakti* established by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda. To support the third *aṅga* of *bhakti*, service of the *guru*, he again cites a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27;

*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

“Know the *ācārya* or *guru* to be My Very Self. Never think of him as an ordinary man. Never disrespect him. Never find fault with him. The *guru* is the embodiment of all the demigods.”

Once when asked about the *guru*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja told, “The *guru* is not *jīva-tattva*.” The devotees present were a little shocked to hear this, because according to their present understanding, the *guru* was not God or *viṣṇu-tattva*, therefore he was *jīva-tattva* or a spirit soul. This is true, but the correct understanding of the position of the *guru* is that he belongs to the *guru-tattva* category. The *guru* is not considered as a *jīva-tattva* nor does the disciple find any mundane qualities about his *guru*. Whatever the *guru* does or says will be seen as divine by the disciple, because

the disciple is seeing the descent of Kṛṣṇa in *śrī gurudeva*. Where Kṛṣṇa comes down to embrace the devotee—that point is *śrī gurudeva*. Because the *guru* is non-different than Kṛṣṇa Himself, he is most worthy to be served by the disciple.

Kṛṣṇa is attracted by the service of his pure devotee. By his complete surrender and willingness to please Kṛṣṇa by any and all means the pure devotee is able to attract the Lords affection—so much so that the Lord Himself then desires to render service to His pure devotee. The pure devotee however or *śrī gurudeva* is always cautious not to accept service from Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, there remains an unfulfilled desire in Kṛṣṇa’s heart—to serve *śrī gurudeva*. When the sincere disciple renders service to the *guru* with affectionate zeal this gives Kṛṣṇa great satisfaction because his innermost desire is being fulfilled.

Here there is a particularly fine point about *śrī gurudeva* to which we should pay special attention. Kṛṣṇa is served by his dearest confidential devotee, *śrī gurudeva*.

*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvyata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“The *guru* is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord, because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and followed by all authorities. Therefore, I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of *śrī gurudeva*.”

Śrī gurudeva is the most confidential servitor of Kṛṣṇa. But who is that most confidential servitor? In the words of Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja, “If we raise our heads a little and search, then we shall find that it is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.” It is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the dearest servitor of Kṛṣṇa, who is behind the function

of *śrī gurudeva*. If we search earnestly and give full attention to the teaching of our beloved *guru* we shall find Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in *śrī gurudeva*. That is the highest, most revered vision of our *guru*. We are told that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura saw Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Bhaktivinoda and that Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī saw Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in his beloved *gurus*, Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana Goswāmī. That is the ultimate vision of *śrī gurudeva* and that is the meaning of *kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya*.

The first three *aṅgas* of devotional service specifically pertain to the *guru*; his shelter, his instruction, and his service. The fourth *aṅga* is to follow in the footsteps of the great devotees, *sādhu-vart-mānuvartanam*. To support this *aṅga* Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda quotes a verse from the *Skāṇḍa Purāna*;

*sa mṛgyaḥ śreyasām̐ hetuḥ panthāḥ santāpa-varjitāḥ
anvāptaśramam̐ pūrve yena santha pratasthīre*

“The best way to search for the truth is to follow the path that has been previously gone over by saintly persons and devotees and by which they have attained the supreme goal of life. Such a path is always free from all kinds of obstacles and hindrances to our progress and one very quickly attains the desired result.”

Actually there are many *avatāras* (incarnations), many saints and many prescribed methods of spiritual and material achievement mentioned in the Vedas but we are not interested in them. In this connection I once heard a story from Śrīpad Govinda Mahārāja—Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda had written one very difficult *śloka* in his *Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu* which says, “I do not care for Baladeva, and I do not care for Rukmiṇī or Satyabhāmā, but I must do my service. That type of ego I have.” Here we find such apparent extreme neglect being expressed, that a neophyte will imagine it to be offensive. How can one neglect Baladeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā the eternal queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa at

Dwārakā? We cannot even think of such a thing, so how is it possible that Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda has written it?

Unable to understand the meaning of this *śloka*, some very important scholars once came to Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja at Navadvīpa-dhāma to ask his opinion. The great scholars could not understand the hidden meaning of this *śloka* and so they came to Śrīla Guru Mahārāja knowing him to be of superior internal understanding and not simply a scholar of the outward dress. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja said that, “Rūpa Goswāmī composed this *śloka* with some purpose: to show what is the target of the devotee; O, Baladeva, O, Rukmiṇi, O Satyabhāmā, You are all most worshipable to me, but please do not interfere with me now. I know that you are all superior servitors of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but I am your servitor’s servitor; I have my duty to perform. So please, do not interfere here, but go and be seated over there and I shall worship your lotus feet.” After hearing Śrīla Guru Mahārāja’s explanation all the scholars were very much satisfied and went away in a happy mood.

In this way we may also pray, “My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa you are the absolute king of love and you always sport in the groves of Śrī Vṛndāvana with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as your eternal companion. I have heard this from my *guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas and I have now become hopeful and enthusiastic. Therefore, please do not cheat me by attempting to capture my mind with your expansions of opulence and grandeur. I will not be satisfied with that. I want only to hear about your wonderful Vṛndāvana pastimes and to see your transcendental form standing by that of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. I cannot accept anything less than this as the ultimate goal of my life.”

As followers of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda we are called *rūpānugas*, followers of Śrī Rūpa. We may neglect the teaching of so many saints, like Pa-taṅjali, Buddha, Jesus, Śaṅkara, even Rāmānujācārya and Madhvācārya can be neglected, what to speak of neglecting so many social duties to family, country, etc. prescribed under the *varnāśra-*

ma-dharma system. All can be neglected to the extreme degree if one surrenders at the lotus feet of Vṛndāvana-Kṛṣṇa;

*sarva-dharmān parityaja, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“In the eternal land of Vraja, you will experience the whole conception of beauty. Dismiss all other engagements and prospects, and come to Me alone. Your inner hankering will be fulfilled beyond your expectation. You will find such dignity in Me, that you will be beyond reaction and repentance.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

We are first interested in the line of the Vṛndāvana saints, such as Rāmānanda Rāya, Svarūpa Dāmodara, the six Goswāmīs and their disciples. We should not allow ourselves to become attracted even by Vaikuṅṭha, Ayodhyā, or Dwārakā. Nor should we be interested to read many books from other *sampradāyas*, describing their conceptions of reality. Reality for us is Kṛṣṇa the beautiful. That is the actual standard of *rāgānuṣāṅga-bhakti*, spontaneous loving devotion. Our sole interest should flow toward the Vṛndāvana section, excluding all other conceptions.

On the path previously treaded by the great devotees of the Lord there is surely success. The only thing which can mar our attempt is *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* and *nāma-aparādha*. All obstacles may easily be conquered by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and *sādhu-sevā*, service to the *guru* and the saints, but if we make offense to the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, or to the *guru* and the saints then we will surely fall from the path. Therefore, we must be careful to avoid any offense by always offering our most humble obeisances to *śrī gurudeva* and the Vaiṣṇavas, and by constantly chanting *harināma*.

If we give thorough attention to these first four *aṅgas* of *sādhana-bhakti* our progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is assured.

Rāganuṅa Bhakti _____ Chapter 9

“Somehow the idea has come about that *rāganuṅa-bhakti* means to exclusively perform solitary bhajana and not to preach or at least not to preach very enthusiastically. That is not correct thinking. Everything we can understand correctly from the viewpoint of Caitanya līlā—audarya-līlā, i.e. the distribution of the highest mellows of spontaneous love of God.”

DEVOTEE: It is sometimes said that your Guru Mahārāja, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja, taught his disciples *vaidhī-bhakti* and not *rāganuṅa-bhakti*. Is this true?

NARASINGHA MAHĀRĀJA: No. That is a misunderstanding. Actually our spiritual master engaged his disciples in *rāganuṅa-sādhana* following the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātana Goswāmī and Rāgunātha dāsa Goswāmī. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is of a lower order. Devotion that is performed according to the rules and regulations found in the Vedic scriptures such as those used by the Rāmānuja *sampradāya*, characterized by awe and reverence, that is *vaidhī-bhakti*. This *vaidhī-bhakti* we find in Vaiṅkṣṇa but not in Vṛndāvana. *Rāganuṅa*, exclusive spontaneous dedication, is unique to the Vṛndāvana devotees.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī was chosen by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the most fit person to distribute *rāganuṅa-bhakti*. The rules and regulations our spiritual master gave us are found in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (*The Nectar of Devotion*) compiled by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the handbook of *bhakti-yoga* or *sādhana-bhakti*. *Sādhana-bhakti* has two divisions or categories, *vaidhī* and *rāganuṅa*. They are in one sense separate, while at the same time inseparable—in that they are complimentary components of the same substance i.e., *sādhana-bhakti*.

Śaraṅāgati—full surrender and twenty four hours engagement in the service of Rādhā Govinda was the sum and substance of all

that His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda spoke of and of every action he performed. Unfortunately, due to offenses to the holy name and to the Vaiṣṇavas some of our godbrothers have fallen from the path of pure devotion and others have been captured by the grandeur, the glamour and have divorced themselves from the inner spirit or truth.

Somehow the idea has come about that *rāgānugā-bhakti* means to exclusively perform solitary *bhajana* and not to preach or at least not to preach very enthusiastically. That is not correct thinking. Everything we can understand correctly from the viewpoint of Caitanya *līlā*. Caitanya *līlā* is *audarya-līlā*, i.e. the distribution of the highest mellows of spontaneous love of God, following in the footsteps of the cowherd maidens of Vṛndāvana. This *audarya* is the result of the most advanced stage of *premā* i.e., *mahābhāva*. Tasting the mellows of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa in the ecstatic mood of the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu becomes like a madman and wishes to distribute the mellow taste of that love in all directions. In other words *rāgānugā-bhakti* is not exclusive of preaching, rather *rāgānugā* is where real preaching begins.

It was in the divine flow of tasting the drops of nectar that fell from the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, that Śrīla Prabhupāda carried on his campaign of distributing love of Kṛṣṇa all over the world. In fact, his program of engaging everyone in spontaneous devotion was so dynamic that his rule of thumb was, “Kṛṣṇa consciousness now—rules and regulations later,” as taught by Rūpa Goswāmī:

*yena tena prakāreṇa manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet
sarve vidhi-niṣedhā syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

“An *ācārya* should devise a means by which people may somehow or other come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. First, they should become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and all the prescribed rules and regulations may later be introduced gradually.”

Due to our Śrīla Prabhupāda’s following this prescribed method of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, some less advanced Vaiṣṇavas used to criticize him. For example, in the beginning of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s movement his *sannyāsa* disciples carried the *tridaṇḍa* (staff) that was at least one foot taller than the particular *sannyāsī*. Once at Māyāpur some persons complained, “Their *daṇḍas* are too big!” The regulation for the *daṇḍa* is that it should be the same height as the *sannyāsī*. But this detail was being overlooked. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard of this criticism he laughed and said. “That is because we are big preachers.”

It is true to some extent that, in the days of Śrīla Prabhupāda, his students could not always catch the deepest meaning of everything. All the devotees were for the most part working very hard doing whatever Śrīla Prabhupāda asked. Many devotees made great personal sacrifices to try and fulfill the orders of His Divine Grace. Those that did certainly received his mercy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was very cautious about discussing certain confidential areas of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, specifically *mādhurya-rasa*. His caution was to save us from the *sahajiyā* section—a fate a thousand times worse than hell. The unintelligent have falsely concluded that he had no standing in the *mādhurya* conception. That is a diseased way of thinking.

There is hidden reason for Śrīla Prabhupāda not speaking at length or in great detail about certain subjects such as Rādhā *dāsyam*, the divine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and her *mañjarī* class, i.e., the confidential assistants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. That reason is similar to why Śukadeva Goswāmī has not directly mentioned the name of Rādhā in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

It has been stated by renowned *ācāryas* in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* that had Śukadeva spoken the name of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī directly he would have entered *aviṣṭa-citta*, a state of trance, and become inert for six months. Thus Parikṣit Mahārāja would not have been able to hear the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in seven days. Similarly,

had Śrīla Prabhupāda entered into deep discussions with his disciples about the intimate love affairs of Rādhā Govinda Sundara and Their confidential associates, he would not have been able to carry on his world wide preaching activities. Therefore, for the benefit of the world he checked his deeper interests and emotions, in order to stay in connection with us.

In this line of thinking there is a narrative of how once while having to speak about Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in a public place Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Thākura lost his external consciousness and fell from the chair in which he was sitting. Such was his deep devotion for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Many devotees now want to know about all the confidential subjects of *mādhurya-rasa* and to collect some knowledge and to show their learnedness on the subject they run here and there talking to everyone and anyone and reading everything and anything. After that they want to produce some *rasa* literatures. This is also a faulty process. The *mādhurya-līlā* is most confidential and just by acquiring categorical knowledge of the subject one does not actually enter into that realm of consciousness. One can only know the super subjective plane of intimate *līlās* of Rādhā Govinda by submissive inquiry and service at the lotus feet of one who is himself situated in that realm.

The confidential *līlās* of Kṛṣṇa are never knowable by the primary students of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The proof that one has no standing there, even after examining so much knowledge on the subject, is that we utter the holy name of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī but we remain absorbed in *kanaka*, *kāmīnī*, and *pratiṣṭhā*: money, women, and name and fame. The fact that we talk about such confidential matters and still remain conscious is proof that we have no devotion of that type. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu used to say that the proof of his not having any love for Kṛṣṇa was the fact that He did not die immediately.

When the sun sets, darkness follows. Similarly, after the disap-

pearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, *māyā* or darkness once again overcame many devotees. In the presence of the spiritual master we may find our way in Kṛṣṇa consciousness more easily due to his illuminating presence. But after his departure from this world we will be put to test. *Māyā* will try to cover our faith and impede our progress.

The sudden departure of Śrīla Prabhupāda from this world created a great need or necessity in the hearts of his sincere disciples. Just to increase their attachment to him, Kṛṣṇa had called the very life of their life back to His eternal abode. The spiritual master had returned to the supreme realm of Rādhā Govinda to engage in eternal *līlā* but the direction in which he had gone and in which his disciples should follow somehow became unclear. Many were again lost and others prayed earnestly for help from above. Kṛṣṇa fulfilled the prayers of the earnest devotees and met their necessity in the hour of their greatest need by manifesting once again before them in the form of His Divine Grace Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

It is a long story but Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja helped many devotees in many different ways. Most importantly he inspired us to carry on in the line of pure devotion, following in the footsteps of our Śrīla Prabhupāda.

So, by the grace of these two renowned agents of Kṛṣṇa; Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja we have imbibed a proper conception of *rāgānugā-bhakti* and the ultimate goal of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. That is our good fortune.

Siddha Deha Revealed _____ Chapter 10

“First they must cross the Virajā, Brahman, and even Vaikuṅṭha conceptions before they can reach Goloka Vṛndāvana. But they are not ready to pay the price of surrender and purification.”

DEVOTEE: There is a book entitled *Why Did Caitanya Mahāprabhu Come and What Did He Come to Give*. Could you kindly comment on this book in light of our *paramparā* system.

NARASINGHA MAHĀRĀJA: The book and the author which you have mentioned both belong to the imitationist school, *siddha-prāṇali*. Their thinking will not be of any assistance or help to those devotees actually desiring to make advancement on the path of *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti*, spontaneous love of Kṛṣṇa.

QUESTION: The author strongly supports his statements and conclusions with many scriptural references from the *bhakti* school and extolls *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti* as the highest path of devotion, so how can it not be helpful for our progress? What is the fault in it?

ANSWER: Firstly, the whole of the imitationist school has been disqualified in their attempt, because they do not want to pay the price which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has insisted upon. Mahāprabhu has said,

*upajiyā bāḍe latā brahmāṅḍa bhedi yāya
virajā brahma-loka bhedi paravyoma pāya
tabe yāya tad upari goloka vṛndāvana
kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-kalpavṛkṣe kare ārohaṇa*

“The creeper of devotion is born, and grows to pierce the wall of the universe. It crosses the Virajā river and the Brahman plane, and reaches to the Vaikuṅṭha plane. Then it grows further up to Goloka Vṛndāvana, finally reaching to embrace the wish yielding tree of Kṛṣṇa’s Lotus Feet.” (*C.c. Madhya 19.153,4*)

The imitationists ignore this instruction of Mahāprabhu and take the whole process very cheaply. From the *brahmanda*, the physical and mental plane, the imitators speculate to try and enter Goloka Vṛndāvana. They do not care to purify themselves or elevate themselves beyond the scope of matter. First they must cross the Virajā, Brahman, and even Vaikuṅṭha conceptions before they can reach Goloka Vṛndāvana. But they are not ready to pay the price of surrender and purification first. In the words of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, “The imitators want the fruits without taking the trouble to climb the tree, so what sort of fruits can be expected. Their fruits will be ruined or rotten.” Without proper progress, as stated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, their so-called progress is imaginary—a sort of self-deception. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura has written a poem, *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī*, in which he has given a hundred defects in the imitationists conception. Their defects are numerous, but Saraswatī Ṭhākura has listed only one hundred. Namely he says that the imitators want everything cheaply.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s disciples such as Rūpa, Sanātana and Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī after receiving direct instruction from Him were instructed to write many books outlining the progressive steps toward *rāgānuṣāṅga-bhakti*. Thus in their writings Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī has established *sambandha-jñāna*, the process of re-establishing our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has given us the directions by which one actually engages in a service relationship with Kṛṣṇa and he also gives us the knowledge of *rasa* or intimate mellows of divine love reciprocation, *abhidheya-tattva*. Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī, our *prayojana-tattva-ācārya*—the topmost example of perfection in the Caitanya school, has given us the concept of the highest aspiration of service—the maid servants service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. However, eliminating Rūpa and Sanātana, the imitators try to jump to the stage of Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī by the agency of the mind. The imitators factually misunderstand the position and instructions of the exalted devotees and by

the process of imitation they unfortunately develop a hellish mentality.

Under the guidance of a so-called *guru* the imitators receive some *mantra* and in a secluded place they go on mentally identifying themselves with the name of a particular *sakhī* of Kṛṣṇa *lilā*, her age, her duty, her place of service, her dress and so on. They try to imitate the highest plane of spiritual reality from the lowest plane of material existence. In this way, however, real *bhajana* cannot be effected. We do not see that any of the Six Goswāmīs of Vṛndāvana or any of the previous *ācāryas* who have come to represent Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, engaged in this process of imitation anytime in their career. Actually we see just the opposite. Even though many of our previous *ācāryas* were *nitya-siddha*, or eternally perfected souls who descended to this world on the order of Kṛṣṇa, we see that they practised self-forgetfulness to the extreme degree. Although they were *gopīs* in Kṛṣṇa *lilā* they did not wander about Vṛndāvana meditating on their form and identity as a *gopī*. They completely forgot their spiritual identity and cultivated the feelings of intense separation, *vipralambha*. Not only our *ācāryas* but Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself also was in a state of self-forgetfulness and whenever anyone reminded Him of His real identity He closed His ears and ran away. These are vivid examples which the imitators ignore or avoid by some word jugglery.

In the words of Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, “The imitator is like a woman who enters the maternity ward and simply by producing the sounds of labor thinks that she can produce a child. Many things are required before that.” In other words one must first become qualified by transcending all lower stages of material and spiritual existence before one can enter the plane where one’s eternal form and intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa are revealed. This means that one must first transcend the material mind and senses. But the imitationists do not care to take this trouble. They misunderstand the process and while still being conditioned by the

mind and the modes of material nature they try to bring the supramundane *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa within the quantum of their speculative process. The result of their imitation is zero—it is worse than zero—they likely will be hurled down to hell, losing the prospect of devotional service for many thousands of lifetimes.

The pure-hearted ecstatic devotees of Lord Caitanya, who are always absorbed in the intimate loving pastimes of the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhikā Mādhava Sundara, consider the imitationists as a class of offenders. Such offenders are never the recipients of the mercy of the confidential devotees of Godhead and without the blessings of such higher Vaiṣṇavas it is not possible for them to progress in the line of *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti*.

As in the case of the author of the book which you have mentioned, it is an unfortunate history but he and two others who first came in connection with our spiritual master Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya Jagadguru Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, later on rejected the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda and took initiation from the *siddha-prāṇali* section. It was during Śrīla Prabhupāda's lifetime and in his very presence that these men greatly displeased him. In this way these men became reject disciples and their advancement in spiritual life came to an end. In an attempt to rationalize their existence they have taken to the study of many books and after acquiring some categorical knowledge of *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti* and a misconceived *siddha-prāṇali* conception, they have tried to establish themselves as the actual followers of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu—while at the same time they are trying to discredit the authority and qualifications of our Śrīla Prabhupāda and of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. It is sad to say, but they are simply increasing their offenses and paving their way to a darker and darker material existence.

DEVOTEE: Although many of our western godbrothers and godsisters have only recently become aware of the *siddha-prāṇali* misconception and are now having to defend the line of pure devotion and our

paramparā—am I correct to assume that this issue is not a new one but that it perhaps was something which our *param gurus* had to deal with?

ANSWER: Yes, it is a fact that the imitators have been creating or at least trying to create a disturbance in the teachings of Lord Caitanya for the last four hundred and fifty years. Almost immediately after the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the weeds of the imitationist *sahajiyās*, such as the Nityānanda *varṁśas*, began to sprout up. The Nityānanda *varṁśas* were the family descendents of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and they claimed a heritary right to the performance of devotional service and to holding the exclusive position of *guru*. There were other *sahajiyā* groups, many of which were immoral and poorly behaved also.

By the time of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the imitators had almost completely ruined the name of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas. At that time, the general public's opinion of a Caitanya Vaiṣṇava was that he was a free mixer with loose women and begged from door to door in the dress of a holy man just to fill his belly. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, by his untiring service and uncompromising dedication to the pure precepts of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, after much difficulty brought dignity and respect once again to the Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas. He wrote many books, commentaries, and songs eliminating false conceptions and establishing the truth, Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*.

After the disappearance of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the imitators entered the line of Bhaktivinoda as the *siddha-prāṇali* concept but fortunately were detected and exposed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was highly revolutionary in his approach to eliminate the imitators from the preceptorial line of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. For example Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted *sannyāsa* and the red color dress which was previously not accepted by the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disciples, the Six Goswāmīs. Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābāji

Mahārāja as a real *bābāji-paramahansa* but rejected all others in his time as pretenders. He declared that we shall hold a lower position as *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs*, or *parivrājakācāryas* and give dignity to the real *paramahansas*. Actually Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was a *paramahansa-parivrājakācārya* as were many of his followers and a significant proof of this is the fact that he gave the *paramahansa-bābāji mantra* to his disciples at the time of giving them *sannyāsa*. That *mantra* is also the principle *mantra* of the *rāgānuḡā-mādhurya-bhajana*. We have explained this in two small booklets entitled, *The Meaning of the Sannyāsa Āsrama* and the *Sannyāsa-gāyatrī-vākhyā*.

In a tactical maneuver to discredit Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, the *siddha-prāṇali* section then declared that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not an actual follower of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and that he did not represent or fulfill the desires of Bhaktivinoda. This is a difficult accusation to substantiate.

Within our thinking and experience such a statement is totally weak, inaccurate and even foolish, since it was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who upheld the pure doctrines of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and exposed the many upstarts who attempted to equate the supra-mundane *līlā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* with the lusty affairs of mundane men and women. Further Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura showed us the proper standard of a sincere follower of the teachings of Mahāprabhu by always keeping the highest aspirations of service above our heads and by keeping the lotus feet of Rūpa and Ragunātha as our most worshipful object, *pūjāla rāgapaṭha gaurava baṅge mattala sādhujana viṣaya range*.

It is also a historical fact that the renowned disciple of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura namely our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, on the order of his *guru* spread *rāgānuḡā-bhakti* as taught by Lord Caitanya all over the world in its truest and most perfect form, *param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*. *Saṅkīrtana-līlā* means *rasa-līlā*.

And at this time it is the disciples of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda and those of other branches of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciplic succession who are continuing the *paramparā* system, giving great pleasure to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. So, how one can say that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not the successor to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is unthinkable—at least to any sane person.

QUESTION: What then should be our final position? Should we understand that all this talk about *siddha-deha* is false and therefore we should just continue with our service and the chanting of Kṛṣṇa *nāma*?

ANSWER: The *siddha-deha* of the living entity is not false, it is real. It is the highest stage of reality for the liberated souls who have entered the world of *prema-bhakti*. Only the process is being falsely practiced. One should therefore show interest and study this subject in great detail under the guidance of pure devotees who are themselves free from all kinds of material contamination—the tendencies toward exploitation and self-deception.

The path of *rāgānugā-bhakti* is in fact the process leading to ones *siddha-deha*. That stage comes after the devotee enters into the realm of *bhāva-bhakti*, the stage of awakening of emotions prior to *prema-bhakti*, the stage of unalloyed spontaneous love of Kṛṣṇa. However, one must come to the stage of *prema-bhakti* by gradual purification and development. What is that ? *Ādau śraddhā, sādhu saṅga, bhajana kriyā, anartha-nivṛtti, niṣṭha, ruciḥ, āśaktiḥ*, then *bhāva*, then *prema-bhakti*.

First one must have some faith or *śraddhā*. *Śraddha* has been described as the halo of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Only Rādhārāṇī can reveal Kṛṣṇa to the devotee and Her good-will appears in the fortunate living entities as *śraddhā*. That *śraddhā* will lead one to associate with pure devotees, *sādhu-saṅga*. In the association of pure devotees one will hear the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and holy talks about Kṛṣṇa. Gradually one will come to inquire about making spiritual

advancement and how to render devotional service. That is the stage of *bhajana-kriyā*. In *bhajana-kriyā*, initiation or *dikṣā* is offered to the devotee who has taken shelter under the lotus feet of the spiritual master. By the acceptance of *dikṣā* the devotee is given a proper acquaintance with the goal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and he or she is sent in the direction of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*.

After receiving *dikṣā* we can say that the devotee has begun the process of developing his spiritual body or *siddha-deha*. At that time all knowledge and services required for advancement are given to the disciple by the *guru* and one simply has to carry out those services in proper knowledge according to the directives given by the six Goswāmīs headed by Rūpa, Sanātana and Ragunātha dāsa Goswāmī.

Then comes the stage of *anartha nivṛtti*, the clearing of unwanted things from the core of one's heart. This means purification. Then *niṣṭha*, firm faith develops, at which time one is not easily shaken from the path. One in the stage of *niṣṭha* becomes steady in devotional service and does not waste time in idle talks or in matters that do not concern Kṛṣṇa.

Then comes the stage of *ruci* or a sweet taste for hearing the transcendental glories of the Supreme Lord, His name, His abode, His devotees, and His *līlā*. When *ruci* increases it becomes *āsakti* or intense attachment. When attachment for hearing and chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa increases it becomes *bhāva-bhakti*, the awakening of transcendental emotions of love. These emotions which, when mature, are called *premā*, are the feelings that make up the spiritual body of a liberated devotee. This stage is also called *svarūpa-siddhi*, or the plane where the Divine Couple manifest Their transcendental pastimes.

Once the devotee has reached the stage of *svarūpa-siddhi* and acquired the status of *siddha-deha* then one takes direct instruction from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lalitā devī and Viśākhā devī. At that time all the details about ones eternal form and service are revealed. To want to know these things in the premature stage of devotion

is *māyā*—material desire. The standard of pure devotion as taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers is that the desire for such knowledge should be rejected. It may come to the devotee and it certainly does in due course but it is never the desire of the pure devotees to want to know such things prematurely.

When the realized devotees give up their bodily connection with this material world they are immediately transferred to Gokula Vṛndāvana within the universe where Kṛṣṇa has manifest his *līlā*. There in the company of the eternal associates of the Divine Couple, the devotees receive a spiritual body corresponding to their *rasa* or mellow of service and all matters and details concerning their *siddha-deha* are revealed. Everything is automatically revealed to the devotee at that time and he need not make any mental endeavors to understand his position. When again the Lord manifests His *līlā* in another universe, at that time the devotee is transferred to Goloka Vṛndāvana, the *vastu-śakti* or the portion of *līlā* which always remains unmanifest. This is explained in *Brahma-saṁhitā* and the purports of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, text 2 and 55. All that is necessary for the devotees to achieve complete perfection is faith and full surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

The *svarūpa-siddhi* has also been described as the extended self of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is a most exulted stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, not to be cheaply achieved or imitated. We cannot jump to our *siddha-deha* by some artificial proclamation “Now you are a *gopī*.” That is not possible.

So long as one still has a material body one should receive direction from Rūpa, Sanātana, and Raghunātha dāsa, while serving and taking shelter under a bona-fide spiritual master who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we follow the process in this way then our success is assured. But if we want the cheaper method then we are lost.

Our *paramparā* is not in want of anything, as wrongly conceived by the imitators and some caste *goswāmīs*. Actually

Ragunātha dāsa Goswāmī has given us so many things. He has given us the divine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the highest aspiration within the infinite *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa. He has given us Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa, the highest place of service. He has given us Govardhana Hill, the place of our eternal residence. He has given us the aspiration for joining the highest group of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's servitors under the shelter of Lalitādevī and Rūpa Mañjarī and He has given us the hope that one day we will be accepted into the group of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's most intimate associates as an insignificant servant. The imitators, misunderstanding all these things, are now bereft of the most valuable opportunity in this human form of life.

Our humble position is to go on uttering Kṛṣṇa *nāma* and rendering pure devotional service, free from exploitation and renunciation, at the lotus feet of our spiritual master, in the association of like-minded pure devotees. That is our eternal spiritual identity and there is nothing higher than this for the devotees to aspire for.

Vaisnava Aparadha _____ Chapter 11

“The pure devotee cannot recognize an offense against himself and therefore the only way to get free from an offense committed to a pure devotee is to fall in the dust of his lotus feet and beg forgiveness. Śrīla Viśvanātha says that the dust at the feet of the pure devotee remembers the offense that one has committed and therefore only the dust can give forgiveness.”

DEVOTEE: It is said that a Vaiṣṇava is fearless. Is this actually a fact or does the Vaiṣṇava also have some fear?

NARASINGHA MAHĀRĀJA: Yes. A Vaiṣṇava is fearless in all circumstances because he knows that Kṛṣṇa will always protect him. Yet, if we examine the mood of the great souls, the *sādhus* and the *ācāryas*, we can detect that a Vaiṣṇava is fearful of only one thing—*vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Not only a Vaiṣṇava, but the Supreme Lord Himself is also afraid of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, not for Himself but for the benefit of His devotees, and He therefore cautions His devotees accordingly.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended to this world to bestow the greatest boon of love of Kṛṣṇa upon all living entities. While instructing and empowering Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī at Prayāga to distribute the mellows of *bhakti-rasa* the Lord cautioned against offenses committed at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava.

*yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hāti mātā
upāḍe vā chinḍe tāra śukhi yāya pātā*

“If the devotee commits an offense at the feet of a Vaiṣṇava while cultivating the creeper of devotional service in the material world, his offense is compared to a mad elephant that uproots the creeper and breaks it. In this way the leaves of the creeper are dried up.”
(*C.c. Madhya-līlā* 19.156)

There are many incidents of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* recorded in the revealed scriptures, as a reminder to all aspiring devotees about the serious consequences of offenses committed at the feet of a pure Vaiṣṇava. When a non-devotee makes an offense against a pure Vaiṣṇava, as in the case of Gopāla Cāpāla, who offended Śrīvasa Paṇḍita by placing the paraphernalia for worshipping the Goddess Bhavānī outside his door—the usual reaction is that the offender is stricken with a horrible disease such as leprosy or even death.

Gopāla Cāpāla was a *brāhmaṇa*, but he was envious of Śrīvasa Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Gopāla Cāpāla's offense was envy—envy of the Vaiṣṇavas. Greater than the sin of killing a cow; greater than the sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa*, a woman, or even killing children, is the sin of envying a Vaiṣṇava. That is the ultimate sin.

In the case of Gopāla Cāpāla, he was immediately stricken with leprosy due to his offense to Śrīvasa Paṇḍita and his face and other extremities of his body began to melt away. After sometime he met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu along the way to the Ganges and he begged the Lord to please forgive him and deliver him from his miserable condition. Hearing the man's plea to be delivered, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became furious with anger, "You sinful wretch!" said the Lord, "Why do you blaspheme the Vaiṣṇavas? All the living entities in material existence are My friends. However, I am completely inimical to one who is envious of a Vaiṣṇava. Even after suffering for ten thousand lifetimes still you won't be released from your offense against a Vaiṣṇava. I can forgive an offense against Myself, but a fool who commits violence to a Vaiṣṇava is lost forever. Such an envious sinner goes straight to hell. O most sinful man, you will never see the end of your suffering."

That man did not die immediately but continued to suffer for many years and was eventually delivered, when at last he fell in the dust of the lotus feet of Śrīvasa Paṇḍita and begged for his mercy. The Lord easily forgives an offense against Himself, but he

never forgives an offense committed against His pure devotee. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravatī Ṭhākura says that the pure devotee cannot recognize an offense against himself and therefore the only way to get free from an offense committed to a pure devotee is to fall in the dust of his lotus feet and beg forgiveness. Śrīla Viśvanātha says that the dust at the feet of the pure devotee remembers the offense that one has committed and therefore only the dust can give forgiveness.

The non-devotee offender certainly suffers miserable disease and even death as a result of his offense to a Vaiṣṇava but there are examples also where even a great devotee, a pure devotee, accidentally committed some offense to another Vaiṣṇava. Knowing that if one Vaiṣṇava offends another Vaiṣṇava, the offender can never experience love of Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu becomes very anxious that the offense be removed, so that His devotee can taste Kṛṣṇa *premā*.

An example of this is Mother Śacī, the mother of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Mother Śacī was thinking that due to the influence of Advaitācārya her eldest son Viśvarūpa had left home, taking up the renounced order of life. Mentally, Mother Śacī harbored this apprehension about Śrī Advaitācārya, thinking that He might similarly be a bad influence on her younger son Nimai. She never said anything directly to Advaitācārya, she only thought like that.

Being the omniscient Supreme Personality of Godhead, Caitanya Mahāprabhu knew the mind of Mother Śacī. Thus considering the exalted position of Advaitācārya the Lord proclaimed that Mother Śacī had made *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* to Advaitācārya. Mahāprabhu then called for Advaitācārya who could hardly believe his ears when he was informed that Mahāprabhu had declared that Mother Śacī had made *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* against him. On the way to Mother Śacī's house Advaitācārya incessantly chanted the glories of Mother Śacī. To conceive that Śacī had made an offense to him was not within Advaita's thinking capacity, he was so devoted to Śacī Devī.

When Advaitācārya entered the house of Mother Śacī he fell to the floor in a faint of love of God. Mahāprabhu knew that the

Ācārya would never allow Śacī to touch his feet, therefore when Adwaita lay on the floor in a faint He requested His mother to touch Adwaitācārya’s lotus feet. Mother Śacī did this and got release from the offense. She was then able to taste the pure nectar of Kṛṣṇa *premā*.

We should consider—if *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* was possible even for Mother Śacī then what about me. “I am the king of fools. What offenses I must have committed against the Vaiṣṇavas—knowingly or unknowingly. What is my position? How shall I redeem myself with the Lords devotees?”

Only our sincerest humility, mixed with the dust of the Vaiṣṇava’s lotus feet, can help us to be forgiven for our offenses and avoid *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* in the future. Our best safeguard against *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is humility. Not a calculation of humility, “O here is a Vaiṣṇava. Let me be careful—I shall be humble and show respect to him.” No. Not a show of humility by calculation. That will not help us much. What is required is a flow of real humility from the heart—which is free from envy. Not that I envy the Vaiṣṇavas and therefore I am calculative in all my dealings with them. Envy means calculation and this certainly leads to offenses.

We have seen that sometimes a neophyte devotee tries to see the words and deeds of a venerable Vaiṣṇava in a calculative way. Thinking that the Vaiṣṇava poses a threat to his position or reputation, the neophyte begins a slander campaign against the pure Vaiṣṇava. The venerable Vaiṣṇava is always the well wisher of the aspiring devotees in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but when the neophyte allows his previous material conditioning of fear, duplicity, apprehension, and envy to adulterate his vision, he calculates that the Vaiṣṇava has become his enemy. In that state of consciousness the neophyte unfortunately makes many offenses to the pure devotee. Unless by the grace of God, the offender comes to his senses and surrenders to the dust of the Vaiṣṇava’s lotus feet, unfortunately his Kṛṣṇa consciousness is destroyed.

In the second verse of *Śikṣāṣṭakam* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has written,

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśi tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

“O My Lord, in Your holy names there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have many names such as Kṛṣṇa and Govinda, by which You expand Yourself. You have invested all Your potencies in those names, and there are no hard and fast rules for remembering them. My dear Lord, although You bestow such mercy upon the fallen, conditioned souls by liberally teaching Your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I commit offense while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting.”

Even though we may have embraced the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa for millions of lifetimes, if there is offense, and especially if there is offense to a Vaiṣṇava, we cannot develop attachment for the holy name. This, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu indicates, is due to offenses. In the next verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka* the Lord indicates the proper way of chanting which will help one to avoid *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

*trṇād api sunicena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtaniyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

“One who thinks himself lower than a blade of grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor, yet is always prepared to give all respect to others, can very easily constantly chant the holy name of the Lord with attachment.”

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* advises that we should wear this verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka*—*trṇād api sunicena*, strung on the thread of the holy

name, around our neck for continuous remembrance. It is so important to maintain proper humility—without humility we will not be able to have offenseless dealings with the Vaiṣṇavas.

Our humility must be genuine. We must be really sincere in our vision of the Vaiṣṇavas. What is that? The Vaiṣṇavas are my masters. I am their servant and the servant of their servants. The Vaiṣṇava is not my servant. He is not my order supplier. I should not think that if he does not satisfy me I will become angry with him. Such thinking will always put us in an offensive mentality. It is always better to conceive of one's self as the servant, of the servant, of the servant, of the Vaiṣṇava. That is our true position according to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

gopī bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa dāsānudāsaḥ

“Our position is that of the servant, of the servant, of the servant, of the followers of the Vaiṣṇavas (*gopīs*).”

By uttering “*gopībhartuḥ*” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has indicated the topmost devotees and the prescribed mood of worship in which we should follow in order to understand His conception. Amongst all the Vaiṣṇavas the *gopīs* are the topmost. Mahāprabhu has stated this and Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī has shown this in his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*. The topmost servants in love of Godhead are the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana. And among the cowherd maidens of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Vṛndāvana, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī stands supreme. This is proclaimed by the *Bhāgavatam* in the verse “*anayā rādhito nūman*” in which Śrī Candrāvalī has said, “no one but Rādhārāṇī can fully satisfy Kṛṣṇa.”

From the word *arādhitam* the name of Rādhārāṇī is understood just as in the verse spoken by Lord Śiva to Parvatī in *Padma Purāna*, *ārādhānām sarveṣāṃ viṣṇor ārādhanaṃ param* the word *ārādhānām*, the best worshiper, indicates Rādhārāṇī. So, it may also be conceived that *aparādha*, an offense, means that which is dis-

pleasing to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Love for Kṛṣṇa is not possible without the grace of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and therefore if one commits offenses to the Vaiṣṇavas it is not possible to get Her grace.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the original devotee. In the words of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Predominating Moity and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the Supreme Predominated Moity of the Absolute Truth.” All devotional service to Kṛṣṇa must first pass through Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the Mother of Devotion.” Mother means one who gives birth. So the energy of devotion is born from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. It is not the energy of the living entity, *jīva-tattva*, which serves Kṛṣṇa directly. There must be a connection with the source of the devotional flow, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, then the *jīva* can perform his normal and natural function in relationship to Kṛṣṇa.

The venerable Vaiṣṇavas are the representatives of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and as such no one can get Her blessings without first satisfying the Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore our *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja gave much stress to the service of the Vaiṣṇavas. The Vaiṣṇavas are like the *kalpavṛkṣa*, the wish fulfilling trees of Goloka Vṛndāvana who can fulfill all our spiritual desires. By the grace of a Vaiṣṇava all our cherished desires to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa will be fulfilled or by their displeasure all is lost.

Vaiṣṇava-aparādha is such a grievous thing, yet we are so unfortunate that we deal with the Vaiṣṇavas in a most ordinary way, as though they were common street people or worse. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7:3):

*manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu kaścīd yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānām kaścīn mām vetti tattvataḥ*

“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.”

The devotee of Kṛṣṇa is so rare—no one is more dear to Kṛṣṇa on this earth than the pure devotee. Our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, stressed this point literally hundreds of times—beware of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*—“it is most grievous.” Perhaps our greatest defect as Westerners is that we come to deal with the highest conceptions of divinity, with the Supreme Lord and His dearest devotees, but we bring with us our mundane pride and our arrogance.

During the lifetime of Śrīla Prabhupāda he earnestly requested the Vaiṣṇava community in India to kindly accept his disciples as genuine Vaiṣṇavas and *sannyāsīs*. And by his grace we were accepted. However, regrettably, after the departure of Śrīla Prabhupāda we foolishly began to consider that, “our *guru* was the only *guru* and we in turn are the only Vaiṣṇavas.” Thus, many unnecessary offenses were committed against humble and venerable Vaiṣṇavas in India. It is nothing to be proud of, but it is a fact. Many offenses have been committed against some of Kṛṣṇa’s dearest devotees—many have had to suffer on account of that. Should we have learned our lesson by now? One would think so, but again, regrettably the offensive mentality toward the Vaiṣṇavas still exists in many of us today. We are so unfortunate.

As neophytes we may sometimes wrongly consider, “My *guru* is the topmost devotee of Kṛṣṇa and by his grace I have become advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and am preaching all over the world. Therefore, I can do anything and everything and nothing can check me.” This is a grave mistake. In the name of my *guru* I may also commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*—if so, even he may not be able to save me from the reaction.

By accepting the service of a liberated soul and taking shelter at his lotus feet one very quickly becomes qualified in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But, due to *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, one may again fall down into illusion and material suffering. Once upon a time there lived a devotee by the name of Rūpa Kavirāja (not to be confused with Rūpa Goswāmī) who had taken shelter at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-

charaṇa Cakravartī (the *param-guru* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and who was Raṅga Mañjarī in Kṛṣṇa *līlā*). Due to the association and blessings of his *guru*, Rūpa Kavirāja became celebrated as a great devotee, advanced in the mellows of Vraja *bhakti* and very learned in the *bhakti-śāstras*. Later on, after the departure of his *guru*, envy of the Vaiṣṇavas manifest in the heart of Rūpa Kavirāja and he fell down.

At Rādhā-kuṇḍa this Rūpa Kavirāja used to recite the *Śrīmād-Bhāgavatam* and many respectable Vaiṣṇavas would come to hear him. One day a certain Vaiṣṇavi named Śrīmatī Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākurāṇī came to sit and listen to the discourses on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākurāṇī was very dear to all the devotees because she constantly chanted the holy names of Kṛṣṇa in a humble state of mind. While listening to Rūpa Kavirāja deliver his discourse the lips of Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākurāṇī ever so softly vibrated the holy names.

Suddenly, Rūpa Kavirāja stopped speaking and addressed Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākurāṇī, “How is it that you are able to do two things at once. I am speaking the *Bhāgavatam* and you continue your chanting. Have you no respect?” Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākurāṇī replied, “It is not that I chant purposefully but my tongue and lips uncontrollably chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa even without my wanting to do so.” When Rūpa Kavirāja heard this reply he became furious with Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākurāṇī and angrily chastised her in the assembly of Vaiṣṇavas. Everyone was very sad to hear his cruel words hurled upon the humble person of Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākurāṇī.

Rūpa Kavirāja immediately fell down from his position and he lost all potency to speak the *Bhāgavatam*. People stopped attending his discourses and soon he was stricken with leprosy. He left Vṛndāvana and tried to get shelter in other Vaiṣṇava communities elsewhere in India but the news of his having grievously offended a pure Vaiṣṇava spread to wherever he tried to hide. Lastly he died in exile somewhere in Orrissa.

What could be done? Rūpa Kavirāja had a *guru* of the highest caliber, but due to envy of a pure devotee, he unfortunately committed *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* and was vanquished forever. Even having such a high type of *guru* could not save him from the reaction to his misdeed. This unfortunate incident is mentioned in the biography of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravatī Ṭhākura.

Another example of offenders is that of Jagāi and Mādhāi. These two fallen souls from a *brāhmaṇa* family lived in Navadvīpa town during the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Mostly we have heard that they were drunkards and were delivered by Mahāprabhu, but they were much more than just drunkards. The *Caitanya-bhāgavata* by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura states that these two brothers were so sinful that it is not possible to account for the unlimited sins they had committed. Not only were they drunkards but they were murderers of cows, *brāhmaṇas*, and even women. No one could count the number of innocent persons that they murdered. They were so mean and nasty that everyone in Navadvīpa was deathly afraid of them.

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave His order to take the holy name of Kṛṣṇa to every home in Navadvīpa the Lords chief assistants said that as long as Jagāi and Mādhāi were present it would not be possible, as these two brothers repeatedly stopped the chanting of the holy names and threatened to kill the devotees. The Lord then organized a *saṅkīrtana* party and in a joyous mood he led the *saṅkīrtana* party to the house of Jāgai and Mādhāi who were fallen down in a drunken stupor.

After sometime the brothers were awakened by the tumultuous sound and the banging of drums and the ringing of *kartālas*. What is this they thought, “Who dares to disturb our peaceful sleep? Catch them! Catch them!” Picking up clubs to beat the devotees the two brothers ran to the street where they saw the Lord amidst his favorite devotees; Nityānanda Prabhu, Adwaitācārya, Murāri, Mukuṇḍa Datta, and many others dancing and chanting the holy names of

Kṛṣṇa in great ecstasy. With nasty words and in an angry tone Jāgai and Mādhāi tried to rebuke Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees but when all else failed the brothers became completely mad and in a frenzy of anger they struck Lord Nityānanda in the head with a piece of earthen pot.

Seeing this, Mahāprabhu summoned His *sudarśana cakra* which then sped toward Jāgai and Mādhāi to cut their heads from their shoulders. Lord Nityānanda, the most merciful to the fallen souls, stopped the *sudarśana cakra* and petitioned Lord Caitanya to kindly show these sinners His mercy by delivering them. The scene of Lord Nityānanda pleading with Lord Caitanya to spare the two brothers, melted the stonelike hearts of Jāgai and Mādhāi.

Later, Jāgai and Mādhāi came before the Lord with folded hands. Lord Caitanya then requested the brothers to give the Lord a *tulasī* leaf saying, "I will take your sinful reactions. Give them all to Me." At first the brothers refused saying, "O Lord, You do not know how sinful we are. We cannot do it." The brothers reminded the Lord that they had killed many cows, *brāhmaṇas*, women, and given trouble to countless innocent persons. But the Lord insisted and finally it was done. When Lord Caitanya received the sins of Jāgai and Mādhāi the Lord lost his golden complexion and He immediately became black. At this moment the Lord said, "Whoever offends a Vaiṣṇava will have to accept the sinful reactions of Jāgai and Mādhāi." The Lord then resumed His original golden color. This story is narrated in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* and the *Caitanya-maṅgala*.

So we are to deal with the Lords devotees in a most sincere and humble way. We should not allow a trace of envy or pride or duplicity to enter our dealings with the Vaiṣṇavas. Among all the living entities, the Vaiṣṇava and especially one who broadcasts His message, is the most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścīn me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyañ priyatarao bhūvi*

“There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he who preaches this message to the devotees, nor will there ever be one more dear.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.69)

There is no consideration about a Vaiṣṇava’s birth, caste, nationality, gender, age, or race. These are all external designations of the material body and these should not be considered as very important when trying to understand who is a Vaiṣṇava. Similarly, it is of little consequence as to what spiritual society a Vaiṣṇava does or does not belong to. When approaching a Vaiṣṇava, if we allow our consciousness to focus on so many external designations, then we are sure to make offenses at his lotus feet. Actually, it is a fact that excessive consideration about the society a pure Vaiṣṇava belongs to or doesn’t belong to, has perhaps become the single greatest cause of committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* since the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is also a fact that instead of preaching love of Kṛṣṇa all over the world and glorifying the Lords dearest servants, we all too often fall prey to preaching society consciousness and sometimes oppose the pure devotees, thus perpetuating an offensive mentality in the minds of the newcomers in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Once Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked how we can tell who is a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, to which he replied, “It takes one to know one.” So, in the meantime let us try to remember the Lords instruction to always remain in a humble state of mind while constantly chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. The Vaiṣṇavas are *kṛpā-sindhu*, an ocean of mercy, and we the fallen souls are in great need of coming in contact with that ocean of mercy. The Vaiṣṇavas are the only saviours for the down-trodden and fallen souls of this material world (*patita-pāvana*). Therefore, all unhealthy mentalities leading to *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* should be totally abandoned and given up immediately.

With the following prayer let us bow our heads in the dust of our *gurus*’ lotus feet and always beg to remain as a humble servant of the Vaiṣṇavas, and to always be gentle and gracious in our dealings with all those Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord who have embraced

– Vaisnava Aparadha –

the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and who are the only shelter and life-giving nectar for the surrendered souls.

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sinḍhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

Rupanuga Bhajana _____ Chapter 12

“We have to conduct ourselves in such a way that naturally we can connect with that highest, purest spiritual conception, from here. We must not allow ourselves to be satisfied with anything less than this highest ideal.”

DEVOTEE: What is *Rūpānuga Bhajana*?

NĀRASINGHA MAHĀRĀJA: There is a Bengali verse sung by Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura which goes as follows:

*mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya,
rūpānuga janera jivana*

“Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya, who is nondifferent from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, is the very life of those Vaiṣṇavas who follow Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī.”

The followers of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī are known as *rūpānugas*. Rūpa Goswāmī was the chief disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and it was he whom Mahāprabhu chose to head the future generations of devotees of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Once while living at Purī, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī composed a verse and after writing it on a palm leaf he went to bathe in the ocean. At that time Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited the residence of Rūpa Goswāmī and saw the verse written on the leaf:

*priyaḥ so 'yam kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāham sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-murali-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprhayati*

“My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Kṛṣṇa on this field of Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī and now We are

meeting together. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamunā beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within the forest of Vṛndāvana.” (C.c. *Antya-līlā* 1.79)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu read this verse and was overwhelmed by ecstatic love. When Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī returned, Mahāprabhu slapped him mildly and said, “My heart is very confidential. How did you know my mind in this way?” After saying this the Lord firmly embraced Rūpa Goswāmī.

Mahāprabhu then inquired from Svarūpa Dāmodara, “How could Rūpa have understood My heart?” Svarūpa Dāmodara replied, “I can understand that you have already bestowed Your causeless mercy upon him, otherwise it would not be possible for Rūpa to have understood your mind.” Thereupon, Mahāprabhu was very pleased and requested Svarūpa Dāmodara to kindly give further instruction to Rūpa Goswāmī in the matter of transcendental mellows, *rasa-tat-tva*.

After sometime, Mahāprabhu again visited Rūpa Goswāmī accompanied by Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāmānanda Rāya and others. Mahāprabhu requested Rūpa Goswāmī to read a number of the verses that he had composed. Being very humble and shy by nature Rūpa Goswāmī remained silent. Svarūpa Dāmodara then read the previous verse compiled by Rūpa which was so much liked by Mahāprabhu and the *tunḍe tāṇḍavini ratim* verse:

*tunḍe tāṇḍavini ratim vitanute tunḍāvali-labdhaye
karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambini ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅgini vijayate sarvendriyāṅām kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyadbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayi*

“I do not know how much nectar the two syllables ‘kṛṣ-ṇa’ have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that

name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert.” (C.c. *Antya-līlā* 1.99)

Hearing these verses compiled by Rūpa Goswāmī all the Vaiṣṇavas became jubilant. Rāmānanda Rāya especially showed interest in what Rūpa Goswāmī had written. Being very pleased with him Rāmānanda Rāya began to praise the qualities of Rūpa as if He had a thousand mouths. Rāmānanda Rāya said, “This is not a poetic presentation; it is a continuous shower of nectar. Indeed, it is the essence of all ultimate realizations. The wonderful descriptions of Rūpa Goswāmī are superb arrangements to express transcendental loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Hearing these verses will plunge the heart and ears of everyone into a whirlpool of supreme transcendental bliss.”

The significance of the praises of Rūpa Goswāmī offered by Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya may be considerably more meaningful to the audience when we take into account the who’s who in the ontological hierarchy of the spiritual world. According to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Rāmānanda Rāya was the *gopī* in Kṛṣṇa *līlā* named Viśākhā and Svarūpa Dāmodara was the *gopī* named Lalitā Sakhi. Both Lalitā and Viśākhā are eternally the very intimate associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Lalitā and Viśākhā are considered the personal expansions of the serving mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, thus they are the two chief assistants in the *mādhurya* love affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Directly serving under Lalitā Sakhi in the *mādhurya-rasa* are the *mañjarīs* (younger cowherd girls). This *mañjarī* group of servitors mainly consists of new recruits to the *mādhurya-rasa* and due to their young age they have been given the most sacred type of pure service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Our *ācāryas* have recommended that we should conceive of the *mañjarī* class most respectfully and attentively.

When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are in secrecy, in a private place, the older *sakhīs* do not like to approach the Divine Couple at that time for fear of causing a slight disturbance. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa may feel some shyness in the presence of the older *sakhīs* at that time. But the younger *gopīs*, the *mañjarīs*, can enter there without disturbing the free mixing of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This *mañjarī* group of servitors in the *mādhurya-rasa* is headed by the *gopī* named Rūpa Mañjarī. To perform their service, the *mañjarīs* headed by Rūpa Mañjarī, sometimes go to that place where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are intimately engaged in divine love dalliances. Such a high and intimate scope of service is available to no other group of servitors than that of the *mañjarīs*. Rūpa Mañjarī who leads the *mañjarī* group has appeared in Gaura *līlā* as Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given him the supreme position as head of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* (Rūpānuga *sampradāya*).

As our beloved *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja, used to say, “The camp, the *sampradāya* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is known as the Rūpānuga *sampradāya*. There our fate and our fortune is located. Now we have to conduct ourselves in such a way that naturally we can connect with that highest, purest spiritual conception, from here. We must not allow ourselves to be satisfied with anything less than this highest ideal. That should be the highest goal of our life.”

So, the real meaning of Rūpānuga *bhajana* is nothing less than that—the highest ideal of the highest spiritual conception. Following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī; ever desiring his mercy; falling prostrate at his lotus feet and praying again and again and again to be enlisted in his group of servitors. That is Rūpānuga *bhajana*.

This concept has been expressed most perfectly in a song by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura called, *Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada*—the top-most *bhajana* sung by the followers of the Rūpānuga line.

*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada
sei mor bhajana-pūjana*

- Rupanuga Bhajana -

*sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa,
sei mor jīvanera jīvana
sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vāñcha-siddhi,
sei mor vedera dharama
sei brata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa,
sei mor dharama karama
anukūla habe vidhi, se-pade hoibe siddhi,
nirakhibo e dui nayane
se rūpa-mādhuri-rāśī, prāṇa-kwalaya-śaśī,
praphullita habe niśī-dine
tuwā adarśana-ahi, garale jārālo dehī,
ciro-dīna tāpita jīvana
hā hā rūpa koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
narottama loilo śaraṇa*

“The feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī (Rūpa Gosvāmī’s eternal form as a *gopī* of Vraja) are my real wealth. They are the object of my *bhajana* and *pūjā*. They are the treasure of my heart, and they are my ornaments and the life of my life.

They are the reservoirs of all *rasa* for me and the fulfillment of all my desires. They are the conclusion of the religion of the Vedas for me and are the goal of all my vows, austerities, and the chanting of my *mantra*. They are the purpose of all my religious activities.

By the power of those feet my activities will become favorable to devotion, spiritual perfection will be achieved, and with these two eyes I will be able to actually see. The exquisite beauty of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī’s divine feet will shine like the brilliant moon upon the lotus of my heart both day and night, thus giving relief to my afflicted soul.

By the venom of the snake of separation from you, my soul has wasted away and my life is ever afflicted and distressed. O Rūpa Mañjarī, please be merciful and give me the shade of your lotus feet. Narottama dāsa has taken refuge.”

A FEW WORDS of Guidance



P a r t t h r e e

Part Three

In “A Few Words of Guidance,” we present some very special talks by two leading disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, further elucidating the proper Gauḍīya conception.

Chapter thirteen, “Pastimes and Instructions,” is a talk given by Śrīla Bhakti Promode Purī Goswāmī Maharājā in honor of the 124th Vyāsa Pūjā celebration of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

Chapters fourteen thru seventeen, “Bhajana—Real and Apparent,” “Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread,” “Delusion and Divinity of the Devotee” and “Heart and Halo” are talks by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhāra Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja given at Śrī Caitanya Saraswat Maṭha, Koladwīpa, Navadwīpa-dhāma.

Pastimes and Instructions _____ Chapter 13

“Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, on noticing any deviance to the doctrine of pure devotion, would be prompt to refute all such opposing arguments. He had the unusual ability to still all opposition with his witty, fiery replies in accordance with the conclusions of scriptures..”

The most auspicious event of the 124th birthday anniversary of my spiritual master (now in his eternal pastimes), Om Viṣṇupāda 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura, will be on February 16th, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Pañcamī, the month of Māgha (Jan-Feb). This festival will be celebrated by all the *maṭhas* in a grand way. The advent of my spiritual master is called Vyāsa Pūjā. The other commonly known ‘Guru Pūrṇimā’ day is in the month of June-July. This is the day of the advent of Lord Vedavyāsa. The servitors of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, knowing the spiritual master as non-different in truth from Lord Vyāsa, every year celebrate his advent as ‘Vyāsa Pūjā.’ Lord Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu first established this worship of ‘Vyāsa Pūjā’ through Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu in Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, Māyāpur.

The word Vyāsa means to divide, or in another sense, to expand. The complete Vedas were divided into four parts by Him: *R̥g*, *Sāma*, *Yajur*, *Atharva*, and also works like *Mahābhārata* and the *Purānas* were extended by the Muni Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa. The spiritual master similarly performs this work of Śrī Vyāsadeva in delivering this knowledge to the conditioned living entities. For this reason, the adorations offered to him on his advent are called Vyāsa Pūjā. The Vyāsa Pūjā pastime of Śrīman Mahāprabhu has been explained by Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda in the *Gauḍīya Journal*.

The scriptures say that the moment one feels detachment, from that time, freeing himself from the lures of material sense enjoyments, he relishes the taste for devotional service to the Lord with-

out any consideration for the proper time in doing so. Then, being completely renounced from sense gratification, he takes to the shelter at the lotus feet of the spiritual master. Many refer to this acceptance or surrender at the lotus feet of the spiritual master as ‘Vyāsa Pūjā’.

This ‘Vyāsa Pūjā’ is required to be performed in all the four stages of life with more emphasis on the renounced order. The other meaning of ‘Vyāsa Pūjā’ is in offering everything to the service of the spiritual master, in doing works conducive to the fulfillment of his wishes. Our predecessor spiritual master, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, in his offering has humbly prayed:

*śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhīṣṭam sthāpitam yena bhū-tale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam*

“When will Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, who has established within this world the mission to fulfill the desire of Lord Caitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet”

The Vyāsa Pūjā worship of Vyāsadeva ultimately means the same mood of surrender and faith to the predecessor spiritual masters.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, even in his youth, was very attached to the chanting of the holy Name. When Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the deputy magistrate at Rampure, he was a student of the 7th class in high school. Observing his avid absorption in the practice of service to the Lord, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gave *tulasī* beads, and awarded him the initiation of the *harināma* and Narasimha *mantra*. In the year 1881, in Calcutta, during the construction of their house there named ‘Bhakti Bhavan’, a Kūrmadeva Sālagrāma Śīlā (Deity) was discovered in the earth. His intense desire for such worship, even though he was only 8 years old at that time, made his father teach him the proper method of worship, complete with the worship *mantras*. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda always executed such Deity worship very rigidly while maintaining his code of conduct. I myself

had the good fortune to see with my own eyes the Deity that was once worshipped by Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda in that house.

Once Śrīla Prabhupāda was standing at the entrance of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha temple room and was viewing the Deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndarvikā-Gīridhārī. The doorway to the inner sanctorum was rather small and he was not having his spectacles at that time. A dearest disciple, who was standing by his side, was thinking his spiritual master was not able to get a good view of the Deities from outside because of the small doorway. On hearing this, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a chuckle and for the benefit of all, replied: “Do not attempt to see the Deities with these mundane, visual senses; instead try to obtain the necessary pure devotional qualifications so that the Supreme Lord will Himself manifest to us in person, for this type of meditation is superior.”

*ataḥ śrī kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam-indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

“The Name, Form, Qualities and Pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are transcendental and cannot be relished through the material senses. But to one who performs pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord, beginning with the tongue, by chanting the holy Name purely, the Lord will personally manifest to such a devotee.” (*Padma Purāṇa*)

The glories of pure devotion have been declared in the holy scriptures, for it is the only way by which one can reciprocate lovingly or have the actual vision of the Supreme Lord.

Another day, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples were walking to Śrī Yogapīṭha from Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. On the way, some of his very dear disciples, smelling the foul odors from the sides of the track, began to tie some cloth over their noses.

It appeared as if they could not breathe properly and Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, noticing this, started to laugh and commented: “This is a transcendental land full with absolutely pure spiritual scents, but

your noses detect only the bad odors of this material world. Do not try to view this transcendental land with your material intelligence, this is non-different from the Supreme Lord.”

In mid-February of 1930 at Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda held a spiritual exhibition called the Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa-Māyāpur exhibition, for a period of approximately one month. Many corrugated tin huts were temporarily constructed for this occasion and were unveiled ceremoniously by Sir P.S. Ray on his auspicious arrival. For the whole period of the exhibition, the sky remained clear by the immeasurable mercy of Lord Gaurasundara and His dear associate, the spiritual master. At the end of the exhibition, heavy winds erupted and tore those tin structures apart, hurling them away at a considerable distance. One such tin structure in its obituary flight, hit one of the domes of the Deity of Śrī Rāmānuja adjacent to the main sanctum and after shattering the concrete dome, fell on the side of the temple where a tube well was stationed. After the tempest had calmed down, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, examining the broken dome, commented that for the dome of one of our main spiritual masters to be broken, especially being the foremost *ācārya* of our Deity worship, could only be due to some grave offense in the Deity worship. True to his word, after an inquiry was conducted, it was discovered that the priest had committed a major offense in the Deity worship. He was immediately replaced and the broken dome renovated. Whenever there were incidents like theft from the temple, or when Śrīla Prabhupāda himself appeared unsound in health or even when disciples were experiencing some major disturbance from the norm, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda would especially caution his disciples not to commit offenses against the Deity. The offenses to the Name, the holy *dhāma* (like Māyāpur) and the established Deities were the basis of Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda's repeated warnings of caution to his disciples.

On the 23th of October 1936, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda assigned the task of propagating the divine messages of Lord Caitanya in Europe and America to the late Śrīman Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu, one of his

stalwart disciples. On the eve of his start for his first rendezvous in London, Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed him to worship the Deities of Govardhana, Sālagrāma and Gomatī daily whilst there. The same day, at the temple hall of Bagh Bazaar Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, addressing a large crowd, delivered a fiery speech, enthusiastically extolling the preaching mission of Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu and showering his mercy upon him for his successful campaign—the mercy potency of Lord Gaurāṅga. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda had firm conviction that only in the wide spread propagation of Lord Caitanya’s teachings via spiritual initiation and instruction, could the living entities ultimately attain their eternal welfare. Consequently, with untiring vigor, he began to preach accordingly, together with exhibiting model personal conduct.

Some time before, from March 1933 up to 1935, his disciples Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja had been in London and Germany. There, at various locations, by the holding of public speeches and letter correspondences, they were able to inspire many elite, educated people to become interested in the message of Lord Caitanya. With the consent of Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, gradually the first London Gauḍīya Mission Society was formed and simultaneously the Gauḍīya Maṭha became established there. The chairman of the Society, Lord Zetland, used to discuss in his weekly meetings, the teachings of Lord Caitanya as inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda. The preaching excursion to Burma resulted in a Maṭha being established in Rangoon in 1935. However, the preaching was curtailed due to the political turmoil in Burma at that time. In many densely populated cities and holy places in India, Śrīla Prabhupāda personally, or through the media of his disciples, established Gauḍīya temples replete with Deity services. The doctrine of devotion of Mahāprabhu was taught and the importance of personal conduct was also stressed in the course of one’s devotion. Altogether sixty-four temples were established in India which were all listed in the weekly ‘*Gauḍīya*’ periodical.

It was his innate desire to establish pedestals for the footprints of Lord Caitanya in at least 108 holy places where Śrīman Mahāprabhu had traversed by foot previously. This was to awaken remembrance of the Supreme Lord, Lord Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. During Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence, eight of such footprints became established and after his departure many more.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda used to participate personally in the circumambulation of the holy lands of Vraja and Navadvīpa. In Purī-dhāma specifically, he would hold excursions to all the main holy spots. Every year, the 16 krośa circumambulation of Navadvīpa was performed by him and to this day his disciples faithfully observe this regularly as a limb of devotional service. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to remark that in the circumambulation of the transcendental land, five main limbs of devotion are performed in conjunction with it, namely: chanting of the holy name, association of devotees, hearing the holy scriptures, residence in the holy land, as well as worship to the Deity form of the Lord. The fact that opportunities are presented to perform all these devotional practices together is the reason why he stressed that the circumambulation be performed with proper care and effort.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda became hard like a thunderbolt in seeing actions contrary to the principles of devotion and in favorable practices, he appeared soft like a rose.

In the engrossed hearing of the loving separation pastime exhibited by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Mathura, he became overwhelmed with such agonizing separation that tears flooded from his eyes. His attraction for hearing about the pastimes of the Lord was phenomenal. He would continue in such discussions hour after hour, so much so that when reminded of meal-times, he would become annoyed. He would often remark of the famine existing due to lack of nectarine discussions on the Supreme Lord. As every expert physician requires to be consulted to give the proper diagnosis, similarly he would complain that his disciples did not give him enough opportunity to speak about the Supreme Lord's pastimes. Thus, when

questioned “how are you?” he would reply: “I am alright but these people do not indulge me in spiritual discussions, therefore I am unwell.”

Congregational chanting of the Holy Name was always relished by Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda but not from the lips of pseudo devotees whose songs contradicted spiritual conclusions (*rasābhāsa*). His real mood was revealed in the self-composed song he used to sing:

*prāṇa ache tāra se hetu pracāra
pratiṣṭhāsā hina kṛṣṇagāthā saba
śrī dayitā dāsa kirtanaete āsa
kara ucchaiḥ svare harināma-rava*

“The real life of the devotee is exhibited in self-surrender to the Lord, devoid of all sense of false prestige.”

The songs of those not surrendered and intoxicated with false prestige, are like a dead body without consciousness and thus should not be entertained. This was his verdict. Unauthorized discussions of high spiritual subjects were not at all approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda. To always remember Kṛṣṇa at all times is productive of pure devotion. Love of Godhead is only attained by the pure chanting of the holy names, devoid of all offenses. Once that stage of offenseless chanting is attained, no other extra effort or purity is required in chanting the holy name. If one with all petty desires for gain, fame and prestige encompassing the mind, puts on a false show of spontaneous pure devotion that was only hypocrisy, it was extremely intolerable to him. He used to say:

*mādhavendra puri bhāva-ghare curi
na karila kabu sadāi janaba,*

The famous words of the great souls tell us: *vidhi mārga braja-bhave paite nahi śakti*. One cannot attain spontaneous devotion

by mere practice of devotion (*sādhana*). The actual gift of spontaneous devotion is awarded only by the intense greed to receive it, coupled with the blessings of proximity to a genuine teacher who is a resident of the holy *dhāma*. Pretentiously imitating the activities of realized souls is a disturbance to society, resulting in unqualified discussions. Premature attempts of spontaneous devotion are of no avail! The question may be asked from the context of the above verse as to what the real method of attainment is. The answer is revealed by Lord Gaurāṅga when He informs His confidential associates to deeply imbibe the following verse:

*nāma sankīrtana kalau parama upaya
iha haite sarva siddhi haibe “sabara”*

“The holy name is to be taken shelter of in complete faith and this will ensure all perfection to the chanter.”

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvita ‘nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmāṁ
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

The word *śraddhānvitaḥ* used in this context, specifically refers to the faith that leads to the attainment of spontaneous devotion. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has stressed that the holy name is replete with all transcendental potency, being non different from the Supreme Person Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The holy name is pure, eternal, replete with all spiritual mellows and is like a wish-fulfilling tree. The process of attaining pure spontaneous devotion is by exclusive surrender to the lotus feet of the personified name, praying to Him with complete yearning and taking to the chanting with a fixed resolve. The cessation of offenses to the name produces final enlightenment in the aspirant.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī, in his commentary, explains the following verse:

*ataeva śraddhānvitāḥ iti śāstra viśvāsinam
nāma parādhīnam premapi na aṅgikārotiti bhāvaḥ*

“The word *śraddhānvitāḥ* is not applicable to the faithless or those who persist in committing offenses against the holy name. The mellows of love are beyond the imagination of Goddess Lakṣmī. It is not by mere intelligence or discrimination that it can be obtained. The only sure way is the obedience to follow the path chalked out by the *gopīs* of Vraja and not otherwise.”

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda never did approve of such intricate discussions by the unqualified, always giving priority to the chanting of the holy name. Similarly, Śrī Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s song couplet is enlightening:

*viddhi mārṅa rata jane sva-adhīnata ratna-dīne
rāga mārṅe kāraṇa pravesh*

Here this verse is extolling the glories of the rigid devotional service in practice, ultimately giving us natural entrance into spontaneous devotion. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda has commented on the 7th verse of *Upadeśamṛta*, saying:

The characteristics of the holy name are compared to sugar candy, and ignorance is compared to jaundice (excess bile). As a jaundiced person is unable to relish the flavor of sugar candy, likewise the conditioned materialistic living entity is unable to taste the nectarean bliss of the holy name due to ignorance. In taking to the chanting of the holy name sincerely and endeavoring with right efforts, the sweetness of the name becomes apparent and eventually will lead to the dissipation of all unwanted desires.

Further on, the explanation of the 8th verse of ‘*Upadeśamṛta*’ reads:

The lay aspirant should tame his mind, which is outgoing and restless, with the chanting of the holy name, pastimes, form and qualities of the Lord in a determined way. Side by side, hearing and remembering these attributes of the Lord should also be practised. The increased attraction for such activities as it blossoms, will automatically give one the qualifications to perform spontaneous devotion, gaining immortality. It is important to remember that premature practice of high devotion can lead to the upsurge of low and base instincts of the individual causing him to stray away from the spiritual path.

Common people, under the deception of trying to sing about the pure mellows of devotional service, are only creating opposing mellows (*rasābhāsa*), which was detested by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Further, he sternly opposed those who eked out a livelihood by the reading of the holy scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, or the exhibition of installed Deities in order to collect their own maintenance.

Even though the ritualistic priests (*smārta*) may differ, Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī, a main leader in the Gauḍīya Madhya line, has confirmed that all persons, irrespective of caste, can, by the process of spiritual initiation be elevated to perform the worship of the Deity of Sālagrāma Śilā. Spiritual initiation involves five rites (*tāpa, puṇḍra, nāma, mantra, yāga*). Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has defined the *yāga* mentioned above as Deity worship in his holy treatise ‘*Prameya Ratnāvalī*.’ It is interesting to note that many of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s associates, although being from other castes underwent the ritual of ‘*brāhmaṇa*’ initiation and had *brāhmaṇa* disciples.

Dikṣā vidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām—actual *brāhmaṇa* hood is born from the spiritual initiation process (*dikṣā*). (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 2.12)

This is the foundation of the *daiva-varṇāśrama* system i.e. divisions of labor and class in one’s stage of life only by the basis of devotion. The only criteria for actual qualification in this human life is devotion to the Supreme Lord.

Many vivid proofs are mentioned in scriptures regarding this. The low class dog-eater surrendered to Lord Hari with mind, body and speech is most superior, while a *brāhmaṇa* devoid of devotion to Lord Hari is considered fallen. (c.f. *Bhāg.* 3.33.6) These statements confirm the efficacy of devotion. The natural function of the soul is to serve the Supreme Lord. Logically, one who engages in this natural function, is immediately elevated to the caste of *brāhmaṇa* and more. The fruitive workers who maintain their superiority through seminal birth, are rejected by the devotees of the Lord. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavīrāja’s famous verse in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.66) reads:

*nīca-jāti nahe kṛṣṇa-bhajane ayogyā
sat-kula-vipra nahe bhajanera yogyā
yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhakta-hīna, chāra
kṛṣṇa-bhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra*

“The person who practices devotion intensely is more superior irrespective of caste or creed. To consider a devotee as belonging to some particular caste or creed is a hellish mentality.”

“A person born in a low family is not unfit for discharging devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, nor is one fit for devotional service simply because he is born in an aristocratic family of *brāhmaṇas*.”

“Anyone who takes to devotional service is exalted, whereas a non-devotee is always condemned and abominable. Therefore in the discharge of devotional service to the Lord, there is no consideration of the status of one’s family.”

Once, a huge public debate was organized in Baligha, Midnapura, to decide the position of high caste *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, appearing unsound in health, send his son to the meeting, empowering him to protect the dignity of the Vaiṣṇavas. The meeting was presided by Śrīman Madhusūdana Go-swāmī and Śrī Viśvambharānanda. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, delivering an expressive, erudite lecture, explained both concepts in great detail, ultimately proving uncompromisingly the superiority of the Vaiṣṇavas above the born *brāhmaṇas*. He was thereby given a standing ovation and all the saintly people present there became greatly overjoyed in the confirmation of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s teachings.

The printing press was an important tool utilized by Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the wide publicity and propagation of spiritual literatures. He would refer to it as the big drum (*brhad-mṛdanga*) whose sound could not only go a long way, but remained for some time. In his boyhood, while assisting his father Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his publications, Śrīla Prabhupāda gained much experience in proof reading and other works relating to the press. Consequently, with the establishment of many presses, he published many books and periodicals, i.e. the weekly *Gauḍīya*, *Bhagavad-gītā* with commentary, *Jaiva Dharma*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu*, etc...

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda used to be vigilant in the proper service of Śrī Dhāma Māyāpur, the transcendental birth place of Lord Gaurahari. In Yogapīṭha and Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, he experienced many divine experiences. He had the vision of Saraswatī River in seeing the river Jalangi. Similar visions were perceived by Śrī Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The confluence of the river Saraswatī and Gaṅgā in Śrī Māyāpur (Triveṇī) was especially dear to him. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had forecasted that an extraordinary temple would be constructed in Śrī Yogapīṭha. To confirm the prediction of his father, Śrīla Prabhupāda, with the help of his wealthy disciples, constructed a huge temple there. During the excavation for the temple, a four handed Deity of Viṣṇu was discovered in the earth. Later, this Deity was identified as Adhokṣaja Viṣṇu with Śrī and Bhū potencies

by him, according to different arrangements of weapons and symbols in the hands of the Deity. An expert archeologist, Śrī Ram Prasād Chandra, verified the Deity as being very old. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda commented later that this Deity was formally worshipped by Jagannātha Miśra. This beautiful Deity is being worshipped at present in Śrī Yogapīṭha, Māyāpur.

To illumine and increase publicity about the holy land, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda used to invite many eminent and dignified people to Māyāpur time and again. Every year was highlighted with the Navadvīpa *parikramā*, simultaneously followed by the birth anniversary celebrations of Mahāprabhu. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda had planned that from Yogapīṭha to Candrasekara Bhāvana in the North and up till Hulloor Ghāta at the extreme South, all the area of land be named actual Māyāpur. His prophecy was that all this will be in future the locality of devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and many temples of Lord Kṛṣṇa will be constructed. The auspicious sounds of gongs, bells and drums would be a constant daily affair.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to remark that Lord Gaurasundara was eternally performing congregational chanting and dancing with His associates in this holy land of Māyāpur. Even today the mystical sounds of gongs and drums can be subtly heard all of a sudden by a very selected few. Śrīla Prabhupāda personally experienced this many times.

As discussed, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda worked tirelessly to propagate the pure devotional messages of Śrīman Mahāprabhu through books and journals. Primarily, through his four main printing presses and help of other presses, he printed over 100 books and different journals in English, Bengali, Oriya and Assamese languages. The propagation of devotion was not only through the length and breadth of India, but many disciples went to foreign countries to preach under his bidding. Unfailingly as a daily vow, he used to chant one lakh names of the Lord (64 rounds) and his instruction to all his disciples was to do likewise. Keeping this vow intact, he would

allot his times incredibly to cover all his preaching schedules and literary work, being a source of inspiration to all who came in contact with him.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, on noticing any deviance to the doctrine of pure devotion, would be prompt to refute all such opposing arguments. He had the unusual ability to still all opposition with his witty, fiery replies in accordance with the conclusions of scriptures. He posed as the awesome figure of non-compromise to pure devotional ideals. To adjust or compromise with concocted deviant philosophy or to show indifference when there was overlapping of mellows, was never tolerated by him. His strict code of behavior was always according to the instruction of Śrīman Mahāprabhu: *asat saṅga tyāga—ei vaiṣṇava ācāra*—To completely avoid association of the materialistic sense-enjoyers and the non-devotees, atheists.

The absence of such a dynamic leader has caused the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world to go through many troubled situations.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda had extraordinary knowledge about the secrets of the disciplic succession. The compilation of *Vaiṣṇava Mānjuhā Samhitā* dictionary was begun regarding different varieties of knowledge about the devotees of Viṣṇu. However, only four editions were completed and published. His memory powers were astounding. The moment he would speak, many fresh and interesting ideas would be revealed, such that it would leave the audience spellbound. Previously, I would be trying to note all these ideas with a deft hand, still I would miss out on many points. Later, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda personally would rectify such writings.

The very name ‘*māyāvādī*’ was quite unbearable for Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda to hear. Some people used to contend that Śrī Prakāśānanda Saraswatī, after receiving the mercy of Lord Gaurāṅga, became known as Śrī Prabhodānanda Saraswatī, who was the author of the famous devotional treatise *Śrī Śrī Rādhā Rasa Sudhanidhi*. This was vehemently rejected by Śrīla Prabhupāda. He explained that the spiritual master of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī was his own uncle, Śrīla

Prabhodānanda Saraswati. He used to stay at Śrī Raṅgam and was the follower of Śrī Rāmānuja. He is not to be mistaken with the other Prakāsananda who was from the Śaṅkarācārya sect and staying in Benares.

At the close, before his entrance into his eternal pastimes, in the morning he requested Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja to sing Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pāda of Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, and Navin Kṛṣṇa Prabhu to sing Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Tumi doya sagara tarayite prani*. This was the commentary of the 2nd verse of the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. After giving this instruction to sing, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda began to repeat his famous counsel, already mentioned, previously (Dec. 23th): "Implicit obedience to the preceptors laid down by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī through the medium of the spiritual master is the wealth of our devotion."

In this instruction, he outlined the true method of our devotional practice as well as the real disciplic succession. Furthermore, in hearing the song of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (*tuya daya echana parama udara*), Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda clasped his hands to his forehead and profuse tears of humility rolled down his cheeks. These personal gestures reminded us of our lamentable plight in not having any attraction for the holy name. The name has all potency and is not dependent on time or purity of the chanter. Faith and unalloyed surrender only prevails. We acutely became conscious of all these facts by his gestures. He further reminded us again to follow Śrī Śrīla Rūpa and Raghunātha's teachings through the medium of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Finally, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his blessings openly to all present as well as to those who were not present and advised them all to perform devotional service to the Supreme Lord and the service of pure devotees, specially by the method of propagation of his divine literatures.

Our most worshipable spiritual master Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda has bestowed his affectionate blessings not only to his disciples, but to

his grand-disciples and all those who will in the future come to this line of disciplic succession. There is no cause for loss of hope or fear, for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's line will never cease. This is the assurance of Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, the world teacher. He is eternally present among us. He is my Lord birth after birth, he is my only source of strength and those following in his footsteps should take his merciful instructions on their heads by mutually cooperating with each other, with Jagat Guru Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda as the center, and try to fulfill his desires in serving the mission of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. All perfection will be attained on pleasing Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

“Promotion is inevitable if we always try to adhere to the lower duty. Eagerness for promotion is the enemy. That is for pratiṣṭhā (renown), and that will undermine everything.”

DEVOTEE: I have heard that some *ācāryas* hold that *smaraṇa*, internal remembrance, is of prime importance as a devotional service to the Lord, above even *kīrtana* or chanting; or is it subservient to *kīrtana*?
 ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: There are some who are of that opinion because *smaraṇa* is exclusively connected with consciousness, or more concerned with the subtle part of our existence; so that should be the most effective form of *sādhana*, or means to the end. But our Guru Mahārāja, and Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī, and also Kavīrāja Goswāmī Prabhu, laid stress on *kīrtana*—especially for the beginners. Guru Mahārāja says in his song *Vaiṣṇava Ke?* (“Who is a Vaiṣṇava?”):

*kīrtana prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe,
 se kāle bhajana nirjana sambhava*

“Internal remembrance can occur by the power of *kīrtana*, and only then is solitary service possible.”

Nirjana-bhajana or *smaraṇa*, exclusive solitary devotion unconscious of the environment is not at all possible for beginners. And Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī says (*Bhakti-sandarbha, sankhya* 273):

*yadyapy anyā bhaktiḥ kalau kartavyā
 tadā kīrtanākhyā-bhakti-samyogenaiva*

“In this Kali-yuga, of the nine basic forms of Devotional Practices, the forms other than *kīrtana* certainly should be practised, but they must be conducted subserviently to *kīrtana*.”

This is the principle of Mahāprabhu’s preaching. *Kīrtana* has its own special characteristic, particularly in Kali-yuga. Śrī Śuka-deva Goswāmī said:

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

“O King, the age of Kali, the repository of all evils, has but one glorious characteristic: in this age, those who simply chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa are liberated and reach the Supreme Lord.” (*Bhāg.* 12.3.51)

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

*dvāpariyair janair viṣṇuḥ pañcarātrais tu kevalaiḥ
kalau tu nāma-mātreṇa pūjyate bhagavān hariḥ*

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

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, when the incarnation of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is mentioned (*Bhāg.* 11.5.32), the method by which the people will worship Him is also given: *yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*. Here, *yajñaiḥ* means sacrifice, dedication, which is *saṅkīrtana-praya*, or *saṅkīrtana-pradhāna*, which means ‘predominated by *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name;’ and this is performed by those endowed with sufficient piety. So, in this Age of Iron, *kīrtana* has its own special privilege, granted by the Supreme Lord—Mahāprabhu’s speciality is preaching, *kīrtana*. He inaugurated and conducted Hari *kīrtana*.

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

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

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

“Of all forms of divine service, nine forms are superior, which with great potency bestow upon the devotees love for Kṛṣṇa, and their personal relationship with Him; and of the nine, the best is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. By offenselessly taking the holy name, the treasure of love for the Lord is attained.” (C.c. *Antya-līlā* 4.70-71)

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

*sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevāna*

“Association with the pure devotee, chanting the holy name, hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, residing in Mathura-dhāma, and faithfully worshipping the Deity.” (C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 22.128)

Of these five, Mahāprabhu has given *nāma-saṅkīrtana* the highest position. *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* is considered best of all by the

ācāryas. That was especially given by our Guru Mahārāja, and the basis is supported by the *śāstra*, scriptures. But if other *ācāryas* have shown preference for *smaraṇa* in any instance, that will be in the sense that *kīrtana* may be in the relativity of the material environment, whereas *smaraṇa* is independent of the material consideration. From that point of view, *smaraṇa* may be recommended as the highest, but that is not accepted in a general way. It may be a special opinion.

In *Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has clarified that there are two types of devotees in the stage just prior to attaining the highest plane of *paramahaṁsa* or *uttama-adhikāri*. The devotees who cross the middle stage (*madhyama-adhikāri*) and reach towards occupying the highest position are called devotees in the stage of *premāruruṅṣu*. They are classified in two sections—*gosthyānandī* and *viviktānandī* (or *bhajanānandī*). The first are always engaged in preaching, and the second take to *smaraṇa* or *nirjana-bhajana*—a solitary life of worship, without mixing with the environment. It does not prove that one is superior to the other. The *viviktānandīs* generally like secluded life and go on with *smaraṇa*; and those who are of the *gosthyānandī* type go on with *kīrtana*, preaching, and also attain the highest position without coming to the school of exclusive *smaraṇa*. Those who have attained the highest plane are known as *premārūḍha*.

Guru Mahārāja clearly said that when we are in a lower position, *smaraṇa* is injurious. Rather, we should take to *kīrtana*. *Kīrtana prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe, se kāle bhajana nirjana sambhava*. The *Sahajiyā* school (imitationists) are more fond of *smaraṇa* than *kīrtana*. They are ‘followers’ of *smaraṇa*. They lead a secluded life, and mentally they go on identifying themselves with a particular *sakhī* of their own age, her duty, her place of attendance in a particular place of Vṛndāvana, in a particular *līlā*, under the guidance of a particular *sakhī*, and so on. They are required to go on meditating on all these things by their so-called *guru*. That is the process amongst the Sa-

hajiyā school, but we do not admit that. We consider it all false and imaginary. They are not fit for the plane. They do not have real *sambandha-jñāna*, knowledge of what is what. They only go on with the habitual repetition of a particular mental speculation, but *anartha-nivṛtti* (purging of evils) or any other process based on it cannot be effected thereby. Their imagined achievement is sheer concoction. They are not aware of the facts—the ontological gradation from Virajā to Brahmaloḥa, Vaiḥṇṭha and Goloka. They are *pukura-curi-wāle*—'pond thieves.' To think one can steal a pond is self-deception. We think that kind of '*smaraṇa*' to be something like self-deception.

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

nā uṭhiyā vṛkṣopari, ānātāni phala dhari'
duṣṭa-phala karile arjana
(*Kalyāṇa-kalpataru, Upadeśa* 18)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that if one wants fruits without taking the trouble to climb the tree, what sort of fruits can he expect? The fruits will be ruined, or rotten. Without proper progression, it is all imagination—a madman's feat. One must gradually reach the plane of truth, *śuddha-sattva*. There are so many planes to cross—Bhūr, Bhuvar, Svar, Mahār, Janar, Tapar, Satya-loka, Virajā, Brahmaloḥa.

Mahāprabhu says that the creeper of *bhakti* grows and rises up to Goloka, and she has to cross all these planes.

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

“The creeper of devotion is born, and grows to pierce the wall of the universe. It crosses the Virajā river and the *Brahman* plane, and reaches to the Vaikuṅṭha plane. Then it grows further up to Goloka Vṛndāvana, finally reaching to embrace the wish-yielding tree of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.” (C.c. *Madhya līlā* 19.153-4)

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

Carma-māmsamaya—kāma, prema—cidānanda dhāma. The carnal appetite is lust, whereas love is the abode of divine ecstasy. So imitation is not success. It rather degrades. Imitation degrades. Imagination is only a mental exercise.

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

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: Mind is separate. *Śraddhā* is connected with soul, *ātmā*, and mind is matter. Mind is material: a part of material potency. This is also clarified in *Gītā* 7.4:

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

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

DEVOTEE: But isn't pure mind a product of *śraddhā*?

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: Mind cannot be pure, just as a fossil cannot produce life. Similarly, mind cannot produce *śraddhā*. *Śraddhā* is original and fundamental. When the Supreme Lord appears in the heart, mind vanishes. Reality is just the opposite. Darkness cannot produce light—light comes, darkness vanishes. So truth appears when real pure consciousness appears, and mental speculation vanishes. The mind is concerned with misconception. It is an element of the *aparāśakti*, the inferior potency. That potency is both subtle and gross. Earth, water, fire, air and ether are gross; mind, intelligence and ego are subtle; but they're all material. Soul is transcendental. And *śvarūpa-śakti* or the Lord's personal potency, *bhajana* or divine service, and Goloka-Vaikuṅṭha are all supra-mundane and transcendental—on the other side of the soul, not on the lower side where the mind is located. Mind emerges from the ego, that is, the false ego, and it is made of the exploiting tendency. But Mahāprabhu says, *mora mana—vrndāvana*: “My speculation is on the other side—Vṛndāvana.” That is not an element of this mundane plane.

DEVOTEE: So there is a pure mind?

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

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

*dānāṁ svadharmo niyamo yamaś ca
śrutam ca karmāṇi ca sad-vratāni
sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇāntāḥ
paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhīḥ*

“Charity, constant and conditional prescribed duties, mental and sensual control, hearing the scriptures, holy vows and duties—all these are observed to gain subjugation of the mind. Mental control is known as the supreme *yoga*.” (*Bhāg.* 11.23.45)

DEVOTEE: You were talking about *kīrtana*; I have read that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that *japa* (private chanting) is also related to *kīrtana* (congregational chanting, or preaching), and also that Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī says there are three types of *japa*, namely *mānasika* or mental, *vācika* or vocal, and *upāṁśu* or whispered. Which is proper for us, and which is the most effective?

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: In *upāṁśu* there is no sound, only movement of the lips; and in *mānasika* there is no lip movement. You ask which is superior of the three types?

DEVOTEE: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

Ṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura says that one feeds himself, another feeds thousands and feeds himself. Who's the greater? *Kīrtana* is to

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

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

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

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

At the time of entering the present Bagh Bazaar Maṭha (of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Calcutta), there was a festival. From a rented house, the Deities were brought on a chariot in procession. There was chanting and dancing, and the Deities were installed in the new Temple. *Mahā-prasādam* was distributed. At twelve or one o'clock that night we went to bed. My bed was just nearby the bed of one of my Godbrothers, a learned professor. He was very humble. In

the morning, the professor said to me, speaking very slowly, “Last night, I felt so much weakness that I thought I was dying. I thought that I would arouse you, but then again I thought, ‘No, why should I disturb the Vaiṣṇava? He’s so tired tonight, and having his rest, so let me wait;’ and after waiting a little I gained some strength, so I did not have to disturb you. But I’m still very weak now.” Very slowly, and soberly, he told these things. He was dying, and he did not arouse me, only for fear of disturbing my rest.

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

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

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

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

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: Yes, he wanted to travel through the whole of Vṛndāvana and circumambulate Govardhana by bullock-cart. But Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja’s help was sought, and he came and was

somehow able to dissuade him from that plan. Despite his serious condition of health, Swāmī Mahārāja wanted to go to all the places of *līlā* like Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Govardhana, offer obeisances, and return.

So the fact is that anything in connection with God—all types of *bhājana*—all are good. We are not against anything of that type. But we must consider what will be most effective according to our capacity. At the same time we must not commit any offense by omission. If we say that *smaraṇa* is superior and that the other types of *bhājana* like *pāda-sevāna*, etc., are of a lower order, how can we be so audacious as to condemn them in such a way? Still, we may distinguish very cautiously, but not merely to satisfy our curiosity. Only when the necessity arises shall we venture to establish the superiority of Lakṣmī over Śukadeva, or Ambariṣa, and so on. But we must not venture to make light of such matters. These are all serious points.

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

DEVOTEE: My friend was relating last night that you once said ‘humility is accepting no position.’

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: Yes. ‘No position,’ because a servant has no independent position—his position is always on the command of the master. He’s always situated within infinite possibility. But he’s humble to his master, not to the *goondās* (rogues). His humility must be chiefly towards whom? “I am humble, the lowest of the low, to whom? Towards my master. I am humble towards the Lord’s own, the Vaiṣṇava. I am humble there.” When it is necessary for Hanumānji to burn the golden city of Laṅkā, his humility is not dis-

turbed. He is as humble as anyone can be in carrying out the order of Lord Rāmacandra. He is fully given, wholly surrendered.

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

DEVOTEE: Yes.

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

DEVOTEE: Yes.

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

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

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: There will be humility if it is really service, because its object is the centre. The devotee feels his inspiration and direction from there, and cooperates accordingly. He is connected with the Absolute Centre, so competition may be arranged by *yo-gamāyā*.

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

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

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

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

DEVOTEE: That is not dedication.

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: Of course. The military will shoot you then and there! “That is our consideration from above; it is not left to you whether Battalion 1, 2, 3 or 4 will go.” Only the highest brains have

command. Complaint against that high command means to die—to be done away with immediately.

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

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

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

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

Similarly, it is also mentioned in the story of the Keśavatāra (Incarnations from hair) that Lord Viṣṇu gave a boon that a black and a white hair from his head would go and save the Earth from the

horrors of the burden of sins she was suffering from. Those hairs are said to have taken the forms of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They took up those two robes, but in that instance They are only *Bhū-bhāra-haraṇākārī Avatāras*, or descents appearing to relieve the Earth of its burden, and not *Svayam Bhagavān* or the Supreme Lord in Person. The Lord as He is in Vṛndāvana is entirely distinct.

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

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

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

Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura says, “I bow at the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas; may there be no offense in my attempt to serve them.”

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

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread—where angels fear to tread, fools rush in. Like fools, we rush into the subtlest realm

of sentiments of the high order; so we must beg to be excused by the high personalities. *Apasiddhānta* or philosophical adulteration strikes very harshly. It was Svarūpa Dāmodara's service to first examine any poems or writings for purity before they were taken to Mahāprabhu. If writings with *apasiddhānta* were offered to Mahāprabhu, He would be disturbed in a very cruel way. *Appasiddhānta* cruelly attacks the ideal of the higher-thinking persons.

There is a narration by Kālidāsa about a king who required a *palanquin* carrier. At random he selected a man from the crowd, not knowing that the man was a learned man, a *paṇḍita*. When bearing a corner of the *palanquin*, the man did not carry it steadily, due to his avoiding the ants on the road.

The king enquired, “*Skandam kim bādhati?*” (Literally, “Do you shoulder [sic] hurt?”). The pandit replied, “*Na tathā bādhathe skandam yathā bādhati bādhathe*”—My shoulder doesn't pain me as much as your ‘pain’ (your grammatical misuse of *bādhati* for *bādhathe*)!”

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

Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread _____ Chapter 15

“Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, preached exclusively this mādhyama-rasa, but with great precaution. He had to spare, in his words, ‘gallons of blood’ to establish what is not that mādhyama-rasa.”

DEVOTEE: In *Śrī Brahma-saṁhita* it is described that Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are seated on a divine throne, and the whorl of the lotus flower upon which They are seated is described as a hexagonal figure. What is the meaning of this hexagonal figure?

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: I am sorry, but we are not to enter into the discussion of such higher and subtle position of the *līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. That is not to be brought into public, and that is the distinction between the Gauḍīya Maṭha and the *sahajiyā* section. The *sahajiyās* are trying to imitate all this things, but we have no faith in imitation. The higher *līlā* will come in an individual case, and it will awaken in an irresistible way. When the program of the *sādhana* stage is finished it will come automatically, spontaneously. We are believers in that, and not to know the form already and then we will reach there—that is not the policy accepted by Guru Mahārāja, Prabhupāda: *pūjāla rāga-paṭha gaurava-baṅge*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also said, “Stick to the rulings of the class you are fit for, then you will see automatically.”

*yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde
vindeta bhaktim kṛta-puṇya-rāśiḥ
tathā tathotsarpati hṛdy akasmād
rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbu-rāśiḥ
(Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta 88)*

Strictly stick to Gaura *līlā*, Mahāprabhu, and you will automatically find within your heart that *Rādhā-rasa-sudhānidhi* is flowing.

Don't attempt directly to have it. It will come automatically, spontaneously. Not intellectually you shall approach that, for that will give you a bad prejudice. Not only that, but it will be harmful prejudice and you will have to expend more energy to do away with that layer of misunderstanding. So our Śrīla Prabhupāda did not allow these things. Do your duty in your plane, according to what you deserve, and that will come naturally. That is his instruction all through, not only temporarily, but all through. Don't do like that, for then you will get *māyā* instead of *yogamāyā*.

He knows it fully well, She knows it fully well, when you are to be taken into the confidential area, and that cannot be acquired by any other thing but His sweet will—the flow of Her sweet will, or His sweet will. Try to have the natural thing, not any thing of imitation or any reflection. Reflection and shadow, these two kinds of misconception may come there. Reflection is more dangerous.

In *Harināma* also it has been stated like that. On our way that sort of temptation may come, but we must not think that everything will come within the fist of our intellect.

*acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā
na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet*

That which is inconceivable, don't take it under the jurisdiction of reason. When it will be extended to you, you will be astounded only to find a peep into that. *Na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet*: don't try to drag that into the zone of reason. This is autocratic in its nature. It may come in one shape to you, it may go in another shape to another gentleman. It is so expansive and so free in its nature. It is infinite. Rather, the Infinite is the base of those pastimes. Always prepare yourself. Hanker. But don't make it an object of your experience.

When Mahāprabhu talked about the higher *līlās* it was as if He was in a trance. As if in a trance He gave a description of His wonderful experience of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. Several times we find that sort

of deep *lilā*—the higher *lilā* of Kṛṣṇa being related by Mahāprabhu Himself—the Govardhana *lilā* and the Jalakeli *lilā* when He jumped unconscious into the ocean and for hours was carried by the waves of the sea to Cakra-tīrtha from Swargadwār. The Jalakeli of Kṛṣṇa, he described how it is. Also at Chāṭaka-parvata—there is no end to His *lilā*. When His body was transformed like a pumpkin, then also He described a *lilā*, but the nature of that description was not any book produced thing. It cannot be taken into black and white. It is such a thing. So we receive caution often, that: “Don’t try. It will come automatically. Go on with the program that is given by the *śāstra* and the *guru* and it will be. If you have such a possibility of fortune then it will come to you. It is not a natural experience that can be given to this and that. It is not to be tackled in such a way.”

Yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde—engage your full attention in Gaura *lilā* and that will come automatically within you. From the indirect way it will come to you from the higher domain. When it will be pleased it will come down for some time to give you experience, and you will simply be astonished, “What is this!” Then even when gone, withdrawn, you will have nothing to lament. A living thing. Try to come to get the whole. We cannot make it our object. Such higher thing. Such higher thing.

Even it is very hard to get an ordinary man’s conduct with his intimate friends, and so it is with the *lilā* of the Supreme Lord. How can we dare to enter into that, and especially publicly. It is not possible. Externally we can try to give some description of the outer possibilities, but not the actual thing. We won’t venture to enter there.

QUESTION: Can they draw something general, like the lotus flower?

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: A lotus flower is representing the idea of beauty, softness, and such things. And different petals representing different platforms of *rasam*. In such a way we can take it—beauty, softness. No mundane ideas should be drawn there only distant similarity. But categorical difference should always be there.

Even we are not allowed by our master to read the books where They are described: *Govinda-līlāmṛtam*, even *Stava-kusumāñjali*, even *Ujjava-nīlamanī*. He did not allow us to study and to discuss it. Rather, he would be very much disturbed, disturbed if he heard that someone is interfering with the higher *līlās* in those books. He did not like it.

Duṣṭa phala karibe arjjana—Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gives warning that you will get only a bad result if you venture to cross the line, a bad effect will come to you. *Aparādha*. From the lower position, *anartha*, the steps are shown. *Śraddhā, sādhu-saṅga, śra-vana, kīrtana*, then *anartha-nivṛtti*—the undesirable things will vanish althogether. Then *ruci*, then *āsakti*, then *bhāva-bhakti*—the sprout of real devotion. Then *prema-bhakti*, and *sneha, māna, pranāya, rāga, anurāga, bhāva, mahābhāva*. By such steps we are to approach there.

Once Prabhupāda remarked, though how you will take it I do not know; one gentleman, of course he was a senior, wanted to discuss these things with Prabhupāda. He laid much stress on that, and ultimately he left the association of Prabhupāda and lived a secluded life. Previously he did much service to the mission, that gentleman. Prabhupāda remarked, "Oh, he has two lives. He is married with Kṛṣṇa and she has got a child." Such remark was there that he was a man, but taking himself a *gopī* he wanted to culture about the life of the *gopīs*—intimate connection of Kṛṣṇa and *gopīs*. In this way he wanted intensely, but Prabhupāda remarked in that way: "Oh, he has turned into a lady, a *gopī*, and after coming in contact with Kṛṣṇa she produced a child!"

Another time, the Guru Mahārāja of Prabhupāda, Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Bābājī, was in a hut near the Ganges. Another disciple of Prabhupāda, leaving Prabhupāda went to imitate Prabhupāda's *guru-deva*, Gaura Kīśora Bābājī, and constructed a tiny hut nearby and imitated his *bhajana, harināma* and the discussion of Narottama Ṭhākura—all this things—and observed strict *vairāgyam* in his

physical life. Gaura Kīśora Bābājī remarked one day that only by entering a labor room and imitating some pain of giving birth to a child, a child will not come simply by that imitation of the sound. Many important previous events are necessary, then a child will come. Only imitation will not give birth to a child. Such was his remark to that gentleman.

So, *śuddha-sattva*, pure goodness. You must come in connection with what is known as *śuddha-sattva* first. *Viśuddha-sattva*, the *nirguṇa* world. *Śuddha-sattva* means *nirguṇa*. You must come in connection with *nirguṇa*, then only may you try to approach the subtle happenings or events there.

So, not to satisfy curiosity. “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” With this spirit we must approach the whole thing. At the same time we may not be, by God’s grace, a disbeliever by considering, “I shall judge the whole thing to the last details, then I shall accept what you say.”

There are many things below, but the charm and reasonableness of the higher plane, that is enough to convince a person to come this side, and these high *lilās* should be left high above your head. Very cautiously we are to handle all this *lilā*, especially *mādhurya-lilā*.

Just the other day I was thinking, about a year after joining the Mission, Prabhupāda arranged for the full Kārttika month to preach in Vṛndāvana. He asked the Mahārāja, Bhārati Mahārāja at that time, to explain the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: the story of Prahlāda, not the story of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Yaśoda or anything of Vṛndāvana, but, “Preach *śuddha-bhakti* of Prahlāda first. They are ripe in *sahajiyā*. Just try to make them understand: ‘Enter the plane of *bhakti*; what to speak of Kṛṣṇa *lilā*, that is far, far above.’”

So, in Vṛndāvana the people rather wonder, “What is this? They are explaining *Bhāgavatam*; but leaving the Tenth Canto they are explaining the Seventh Canto, the Prahlāda *lilā*, the lower portion of *bhakti*. That is wonderful and strange.”

Again, I found later on that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself gave a lecture between Rādhā Kuṇḍa and Śyāma Kuṇḍa. There is a boundary line between the two. There he used to speak for a few days. The *Upadeśāmṛtam* of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī was read by him and explained. He did not explain about Śrīmatī Rādhārānī, nor about Kṛṣṇa, but about that *Upadeśāmṛtam*—the basis. His attention was always towards the basis, and the fruit will come of itself: “Pour water onto the root; pour water onto the root, and the fruit will come up itself.”

He himself explained this while sitting in the middle between Rādhā Kuṇḍa and Śyāma Kuṇḍa. He explained not only *Bhāgavatam*, but *Upadeśāmṛtam*. *Upadeśāmṛtam* is the substance of Mahāprabhu and the language of Rūpa Goswāmī.

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropaṣṭha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*

And the last *śloka*:

*kṛṣṇasyoccaiḥ praṇaya-vasatiḥ preyasibhyo'pi rādhā
kuṇḍam cāsyā munibhir abhitas tādr̥g eva vyadhāyi
yat preṣṭair apy alam asulabham kim punar bhakti-bhājām
tat premedam sakṛd api saraḥ snātur āviṣkaroti*

These topics were explained by Śrīla Prabhupāda and not even anything of *Govinda-līlāmṛtam* or Viśvanātha Cakravartī's *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta*—these things were left. So, our training was in this line.

Pūjāla rāga-paṭha gaurava baṅge—that is always upon our head, that the prospect of our life's future, life after life, cannot be finished. We shall rather foster the hope, the pure hope that we may be taken in one day in that camp. With this idea.

QUESTION: Sometimes in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī makes reference to *Govinda-līlāmṛtam*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and other such confidential selected works. How are we to take that?

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: There are three chapters of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that we were generally not allowed to enter into, including the discussions with Rāmānanda Rāya, to a certain extent. Where the *līlā* portion of Rādhā-Govinda is mentioned, we had no entrance into that *līlā*. Of course when *pārāyaṇ* (consecutive chanting of the whole book) is going on, we go on reading but without giving any particular attention to the *līlā* of highest order of *rāga*. That was barred: “Don’t try to come into details there. That will come automatically when the time will be. Do not make it a discussion of the public. Do not take it in the public eye.”

So much so, that the following incident happened in Vṛndāvana. Prabhupāda had a friend there from his childhood, an attorney, who came to see him, so Prabhupāda went to give a return visit to this friend from his boyhood. Śrīpad Paramahansa Mahārāja was with Prabhupāda and they went to give the return visit. They were told, “He is upstairs.” They went there and saw that a Goswāmī was explaining the *rāsa-līlā* section of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Prabhupāda just bowed down his head and came away. Immediately he came away. Then his friend also came down, leaving that *rāsa-līlā* discussion, and said, “Yes, the *rāsa-līlā* explanation is going on, but you did not take your seat at all. You just bowed down your head and came down. What is the matter?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Our *guru*’s order is such that, ‘If you attend *rāsa-līlā* explanation you will commit offense.’ That will be an offense to attend *rāsa-līlā* explanation, so I had to come back. This is my *guru*’s order. To attend *rāsa-līlā* explanation is *aparādha*.”

So, for us, such strict behaviour he has shown. And we also do that, especially myself. At so many other places they show the *rāsa-līlā* with dolls, but I never do that. Following what is true to my un-

derstanding of my *gurudeva*'s will and his words, I do not make any show of *jhulana-lilā* or *rāsa-lilā* or anything of that type. I find in my heart that this is not desirable to my Guru Mahārāja. But in so many *maṭhas* I see at present, I hear also, that they are doing that, but I strictly abstain from that sort of showing. The *jhulana-lilā*, the *rāsa-līla*. That is too high for us, I considered. I must be true to my hearing of the words of my *gurudeva* if I want my realisation and not any position: the position of some sort of popularity. To attract people by such show, and to make money, or to make a favorable field for preaching, they may do like that, but I do not do. I do not want popularity nor any position of a higher *ācārya*. I am a student.

Still I am a student. I consider myself to be student. A faithful student. What I heard from my *gurudeva*, I try my best to stick there, to keep my position there as I heard from him. I do not want to mutilate that in any way to suit to my purpose. I try not to do that. Of course for big propaganda they may take different ways as they think. They are now free. But I am not a member to do so—to go on in such way. I try.

When Prabhupāda offered me to go to the West, I replied simply that I did not consider myself fit to go to the West, “I will not be able to show success there.” I mentioned two defects. Then some *sannyāsīns* showed much reverence to me, “What is this? So many persons wish this opportunity. You are prepared to lose this chance? You neglect to take advantage of such a position, that you will be a world preacher. Do you have no hankering for that?”

I replied, “Yes, Mahārāja, I have no hankering to have such a position. My only humble ambition is that I may be reckoned as a sincere devotee of Mahāprabhu, Śrī Caitanyadeva. No other ambition I have in my mind such as to become a world preacher and so on.”

In my nature I am such. I want truth, and hope and crave for the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas and you all, that I may not have that ambition, but to be the humblest, the most humble servant of the Lord, that I may not be misguided.

– Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread –

I may engage myself in the lowest form of service. *Tad dāsa-dāsa-dāsānam dāsatvaṁ dehi prabho*. My faith may be so firm and may be of such quality that the least offer of His service, of divine service, may satisfy me. I may not get the chance there in the higher officer class. With my lowest connection with the divinity I may go on satisfied with my life.

Mahāprabhu says, “Just consider myself a speck of dust at Your feet, Kṛṣṇa.”

*ayi nanda tanuja kiṅkaram
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūli-saḍṛśaṁ vicintaya*

“O Nandanandana, son of King Nanda, although I am Your eternal servitor, I have fallen into the terrible ocean of material existence due to the fructification of my own deeds (*karma*). Please graciously consider me to be a particle of dust at Your lotus feet.”

That may be our guidance, “Consider me to be one of the specks of dust that are at Your feet.” That is too much! Our faith should come to such a grade in quality that we may be satisfied to become a speck of dust at His feet. Then by His sweet will, anything may happen. But our humble aim should be to have even the least connection of the divinity real. Not a concocted Kṛṣṇa.

Pūjāla rāga-paṭha gaurava-baṅge—very sweet. The *rāga-patha* is on the head. We are servants of the *rāga-patha*. We are in *vidhi-mārga*, under *śāstric* rule. We must live and move under *śāstric* rule, and always keep the *rāga-patha* upon our head.

Once an incident happened while our Śrīla Prabhupāda was at Rādhā Kuṇḍa. A *pāṇḍā* in his talk made a side remark that, “We are *brāhmaṇas* in Vraja. We can bless Raghunātha dāsa Goswāmī.” Prabhupāda was perturbed by such a haughtily remark, “Dāsa Goswāmī is our highest *ācārya* in our camp, in the Gauḍīya Camp. And that fellow, he says that he is able to bless Dāsa Goswāmī, and I am to

hear that?” He stopped taking food, and remarked, “If I was an ordinary *bābāji* I would not care. I would leave the place. But I am running with a motor car here as an *ācārya*. I have responsibility. I am moving here in the pose of an *ācārya* that I shall protect the *sampradāya*. I shall brush the dust of undesirability from the *sampradāya*. How can I tolerate such a remark against my *guru*?”

He left his food: “Until any *pratīkār* (any suitable objection and correction, cure) is given to me, I won’t take any food. I cannot take any food.”

I think I did something to give vent to the feeling of my *guru-deva* today! I did something today to clarify his position. *Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava-baṅge*—this is enough.

Tad dāsa-dāsa-dāsānām dāsatvaṁ dehi me prabho... This is not a figurative thing, this is not mere poetry, Mahāprabhu says:

*nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśya na śudra
nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gr̥ha-patir no vana-stho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrnāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayoḥ dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*

“I am not a priest, a king, a merchant, or a labourer (*brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra*); nor am I a student, a householder, a retired householder, or a mendicant (*brahmacārī, gr̥hastha, vānaprastha, sanṇyāsī*). I identify myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *gopīs*, who is the personification of the fully expanded (eternally self-revealing) nectarean ocean that brims with the totality of divine ecstasy.”

This is not only an ornamental thing. It is reality. This is reality. To feel ourselves to be actually mean, is really to become eligible for the higher service. So much selflessness, so much self-abnegation is necessary for a unit here of the lowest order to enter into that domain. So much self-abnegation is necessary, then we can come into that plane. There is a plane of undercurrent, an undercurrent

– Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread –

plane. and if we really want to contact with that, we shall have to manifest the finest of the fine in ourselves, and with no demand. In this negative way we are to transform ourselves, then we can have a touch of that plane where we can go.

The least tinge of exploiting, any speck of the ambitions life, will not take us there—that is another thing: *pratiṣṭhā*. *Pratiṣṭhā* is self-establishing, to be stable, to be immortal, to be invincible—it is not self-giving, but it is the self-establishing tendency: “I must stay. I must live.” But, if necessary I must die for the interest of Kṛṣṇa.

*mārobi rākhobi - yo icchā tohārā
nitya-dāsa prati tuwā adhikārā*

“Slay me or protect me as You wish, for You are the master of Your eternal servant.”

A suicidal soldier! For the cause of the country, if necessary I must die. I must efface myself. I may be effaced. If it is necessary my very existence may be effaced for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa.

“My very existence may be effaced if it is necessary.” Such temperament, such selflessness, of such degree is necessary to find that plane. So much subtleness. Let us be blessed by Prabhupāda Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. All glory to Guru and Gaurāṅga. All glory to Guru and Gaurāṅga!

(To the devotees gathered there...) You are helping me to take out from my inner heart so many beautiful and so many valuable things. It is through your help that these old memories are coming again fresh to me. I am forced to take out those things of the inner nature of my previous life which I got from my *gurudeva* as wealth. Again I have the chance of seeing that treasury. I am given the opportunity by this recapitulation of what I heard from the divine feet of *gurudeva*.

This is our education, what I got from the divine feet of *gurudeva*. I just sincerely put it to you all. It is such.

Pūjāla rāga-paṭha gaurava-baṅge—He instructed that we must not go to live in Rādhā Kuṇḍa. One day near Lalitā Kuṇḍa, the Swānanda Sukhaṇḍa Kuñja is there, and there is a single-story building. He said, “A second story is necessary, but I will not be able to live there.”

I asked, “If you will not live on the first floor, who will live there? What is the necessity of further construction?”

“No. You don’t know. Better persons will live there: Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Gaura Kīśora Bābāji Mahārāja. They will live there, and we shall stay on the ground floor and we shall serve them.”

Again he said, “I shall live in Govardhana. Rādhā Kuṇḍa is the highest place—the place of our Guru Mahārāja, our *gurudevās*. They will live here in closer connection with *līlā*, but we are not fit to live there. We shall live in Govardhana, just a little far away. Because we shall have to come and serve our *gurudeva*, we must be near, but we must not live in closer connection with them. We are not fit.”

Pūjāla rāga-paṭha gaurava baṅge—The whole tenor of his life was such: “That is high, high. And from below we are to honour that.” We are to establish in the whole world this sort of posing: the proper regard of that higher *līlā*: “That is too high.”

One day in Allahabad—perhaps it was that very year Śrīpād Swāmi Mahārāja was initiated—while speaking in a park Śrīla Saraswatī Prabhupāda said, “I am out to give a challenge to fight with any person to show that the highest position is occupied by my *gurudeva*, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and by Mahāprabhu. Let anyone come to fight with me to decide. I am ready. I am ready to give that challenge to anyone and everyone. Let them come to fight with me. I am ready to establish the throne in the highest place—my *gurudeva*.”

Pūjāla rāga-paṭha gaurava baṅge. “Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, preached exclusively this *mādhurya-rasa*, but with great precaution. What is not that thing, he used per-

– Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread –

haps 90% of his energy to point out the negative side—“This is not *mādhurya-rasa*”—and clear away the negative side. He had to spare, in his words, ‘gallons of blood’ to establish what is not that *mādhurya-rasa*.”

Delusion and Divinity of the Devotee _____ Chapter 16

“We have to walk there on our head, not on our feet. All are guru; the soil is guru, the entire paraphernalia is guru, superior. I am made of a lower stuff, and that plane is of higher substance, so it is impossible to enter there at my sweet will.”

DEVOTEE: Mahārāja, if a devotee falls down and becomes disconnected, is that worse than if he becomes a *sahajiyā*?

ŚRĪLA GURU MAHĀRĀJA: Which is worse, a poor man or a thief? One had money and lost it; the other is imitating that he is wealthy, by committing wrong. One who is disconnected may be reconnected again soon; but *sahajiyā* means either that he had a real connection with the truth, became disconnected, then chose a wrong path, or that already he is engaged in the wrong path. So which is the better position: not to get the real thing, or to get the wrong thing? Which is superior?

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavad-gītā* it is mentioned that in *tamo-guṇa*, the lowest position, one thinks ‘A’ to be ‘B’. In *rajo-guṇa*, there is doubt whether *this* is real, or *that* is real. He cannot ascertain what is true; but to think that ‘A’ is ‘B,’ and ‘B’ is ‘A,’ that is the worst kind of error. They are misguided; *sahajiyā* means misguided. They are accepting matter as consciousness, so their position is more detrimental than that of those who have nothing, or who have lost their connection with the real thing. In a similar way, the conclusion of the *māyāvādī* section who think that ‘merging’ into formless *brahma* is the highest end, is more dangerous, because “a half truth is worse than a lie.”

*se du’yer madhye viṣayī tabu bhālo
māyāvādī saṅga nāhi māgi kona kāla*

“Association with those who are out-and-out sense enjoyers can never be so detrimental to one’s spiritual welfare as is the company of an impersonalist.” (*Śaraṇāgati* 27.3)

If one man admits “I have no money,” and another, who really has no money, shows some counterfeit currency and claims “this is money,” then his condition is worse because he is engaged in falsehood.

So to become a *sahajiyā* is worse. He is deceived, his attention is captured by, engrossed in, a wrong conception, One person had some conception for some time and became disconnected, but he may again easily reestablish his connection, but the other has become captivated by a wrong conception, so to convince him of the truth is more difficult because his mind is possessed and captured by that prejudice. The first person has no engagement; the engagement he had is gone. But the second has mistaken one thing for another. He has taken matter to be divine, and that is worse.

Once, in my childhood, I heard this example from my teacher in school. He said that in America there is a school of music, and if anyone had some knowledge of music, to attend that school he had to pay double the normal fee, but those who had no musical knowledge only had to pay the standard fee. That is because they do not know anything, so they can be taught easily; but the others who had some knowledge of music had to pay double, because everything which they had previously learned would first have to be forgotten, and only then would they be allowed to start learning in the proper way. They had to be taught first to forget their previous prejudices, their misconceptions of musical science, so for them there was a double charge. It is something like that. In one case, no *bhakti*, no devotion; and in the other, in the name of devotion, some non-devotional thing has captured the man. That is imitation, and worse, it is offensive. Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura said it is *vañcanam*, to ridicule the devotees—Mahāprabhu, Rūpa, Sanātana—it is to ridicule them, because it confuses what is *premā* and

– Delusion and Divinity of the Devotee –

what is *kāma*. They are at opposite ends; and to accept *kāma* in the name of *premā* is not only heinous and injurious to oneself, but it contaminates the whole atmosphere. So Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura says:

*kāme preme dekho bhāi, lakṣaṇete bheda nāi,
tabu kāma ‘prema’ nāhi hoy,
tumi ta’ barile kāma, mithyā tāhe ‘prema’-nāma
āropile kise śubha hoy*

*keno mana, kāmere nācāo prema prāy
carma-māṁsa-maya kāma, jaḍa-sukha abirāma,
jaḍa-biṣayete sadā dhāy*

“Just give your attention to this, my brother: lust and love, their symptoms may appear as similar; still, lust is not love. But you have accepted lust in place of love, and if you give the certificate, that ‘this is *premā*,’ by this mistake you only cheat yourself. By mistaking one thing for another in this way, you will never get anything auspicious. Lust is concerned with flesh and blood, but love is in the highest position of spiritual existence.” (*Kalyāṇa Kalpataru* 18-19)

So they are opposites, like the South Pole and the North Pole. One is concerned with this body, the other, with the Supersoul; a great gulf lies between them! There is the ocean of dedication, and the highest point of that dedication is *gopī-premā*. It only exists where Kṛṣṇa is, and here there is only imitation.

koṭi-mukta-madhya ‘durlabha’ eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta

“Out of many millions of liberated persons, a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to find.” (*C.c. Madhya-līlā* 19.148)

We must consider all these things. Such dedication is possible only in the highest position of spiritual existence, the conscious area

which is all-spiritual, and is not in any way concerned with flesh and blood. It is not concerned with the body.

The most heinous thing is that one will play the part of Kṛṣṇa and a lady will play the part of a *gopī* and they will unite, and in that way they will enjoy. To think *this* to be *that*, it is impossible. Any ordinary moral man will hate this. What to speak of the higher devotees, even an ordinary moral man will hate it. The steps are shown to us as:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo' tha bhajana-kriyā
tato' nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.4.15)*

In the beginning is faith, then association with devotees, engagement in service, purging of faults, attainment of steadiness in devotion, spiritual taste, firm attachment, transcendental emotion and pure love of Kṛṣṇa. These are the steps. And from another standpoint:

vaikuṅṭhara pṛthivy-ādi sakala cinmaya

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuṅṭha are all spiritual.”
(C.c. *Ādi-līlā* 5.53)

We must always remember this: “I am the offspring of *taṭastha-śakti*, the marginal potency; that is where I was born, and I must go through *svarūpa-śakti*, which is higher than me. There the soil is of higher stuff than that of which I myself am made. The earth, the air, the water, the trees, birds, everything there is superior to me, And I am to enter there? It is not a small thing, not an easy thing. It is not within the power of the person who wants to go there to enter, rather it is completely dependent on the grace of his superiors: *guru-kṛpā, vaiṣṇava-kṛpā*.

We have to walk there on our head, not on our feet. All are *guru*; the soil is *guru*, the entire paraphernalia is *guru*, superior. I

am made of a lower stuff, and that plane is of higher substance, so it is impossible to enter there at my sweet will. To approach that direction as far as *mukti*, liberation, may be easy, but thereafter we can only be drawn by their grace; it is not a matter of right that anyone can enter that realm. It is only the wholesale, cent-per-cent grace of a child of that soil which can take us there. Just as a guarantee for the subject, so some agent of that soil must take responsibility for me, and at his risk, I can go. Vaiṣṇava and *guru*, children of that soil, they will take the risk and bring me there. So without their grace, *vaiṣṇava-kṛpā*, *guru-kṛpā*, *bhāgavata-kṛpā*, we cannot enter there.

No right—all grace. That grace can take me there. From our side, we have no right. I am a child of the marginal potency, but there the whole substance, everything, is made of a higher stuff than my own existence. I have my existence as a person, and there they are also all persons, but all there are of an existence superior to me. How then can this person stand on the head of those? Only for their service; otherwise, it is inconceivable and impossible. Even to accept this principle is most difficult, what to speak of entering there:

*bahūnām janmanām ante, jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti, sa mahātmā sadurlabhaḥ*

“After many births, one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me (Vāsudeva) realizing that it is I who am both the source and substance of all that be. Such a great soul is extremely rare.”
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.19)

And *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states:

*muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahā-mune*

“O great sage, out of many millions of souls who are liberated and free from ignorance, and out of many millions of *siddhas* who have

nearly attained perfection, there is hardly one pure devotee of Nārāyaṇa. Only such a devotee is completely satisfied and peaceful.” (*Bhāg.* 6.14.5)

It is easy to think of, but hard to attain! No right can be established there; it is not as a matter of right that we can go there, so the ‘right-seeker’ will be totally frustrated. We must be prepared for “all risk, no gain.” But if somehow we can reach there, it will be “all gain, no risk!”

So to become a Vaiṣṇava proper is almost impossible. It is only as a matter of grace from that level that we can go there; there is nothing we can do from our side. Only with complete surrender, complete self-forgetfulness, complete dedication to the interest of that place, can we hope to be taken there:

*vaikuṅṭhēra pṛthivy-ādi sakala cinmaya
māyika bhūtera tathi janma nāhi haya*

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuṅṭha are all spiritual. Material elements are not found there.” (*C.c. Ādi-līlā* 5.53)

Uddhava is a devotee of such quality that he prays: “If I can be a creeper there, I shall consider my fortune to have reached its highest extent.” In Vṛndāvana the creeper is such a valuable thing that Uddhava—about whom the Lord says “you are my most favorite devotee; I love you even more than my own self”—he is aspiring to take such a birth that will give him that position there. This is not mere hyperbole. When Uddhava is aspiring to be a shrub, to be some grass there, then how are we to prepare ourselves, that we shall walk over that place? I shall have to walk over the head of Uddhava? So how much higher a conception must that place be?

And the *sahajiyās*—ridiculous! By imitation, here in the plane of flesh and blood, they think they will achieve that. They are the worst enemies, because by imitating in this way not only are they themselves going to hell but they are attracting so many

many others there also. They are not conscious of the facts, of what is what. So they have got their hated position in society; the general society has got hate for them, those ‘*bābājis*.’

But we have to put faith in our Guru Mahārāja who said, “It is my misfortune. I could not find a single Vaiṣṇava in this great, holy place of *Vraja-maṇḍala*.” Pressing his hand to his forehead he said, “It is my misfortune that I could not find a single Vaiṣṇava in this great, holy place of *Vraja-maṇḍala*.” That was his conclusion.

And after he had performed *Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā*, he said about one *bābāji* who was generally recognized as the best of the *sa-hajiyā* ‘Vaiṣṇavas’—as their leader—“He is a *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri*. He may be considered as a beginner, to have admission into the infant class.” That man was considered unanimously as a *siddha-bābāji*, to have attained the highest position among them, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura said, “He has got admission into the primary class.” In writing, in the *Gauḍīya-patrikā* newspaper, he stated this. And we are trained accordingly and consciously, not with blind faith. He explained to us what is what; we tried to follow his directions, and we have also come to such conclusions.

Step by step we must approach the highest point. It is not mental concoction, imitation. Imitation is the worst. It is hateful, filthy. If in the name of that higher love we represent this fleshy connection with the body and the mind—then that is the most hateful thing. We must try to avoid it with our utmost will and energy.

Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī describes: *vaikuṅṭha prthivy-ādi sakala cīnmaya*—that the elements of that Vaikuṅṭha world are all-spiritual and the scientific survey of that land is possible to our soul’s eye. We must understand that, how it is true. And for that we must first understand what is the *taṭastha* region; what is *virāja*, what is *brahmaloka*.

But we are in such a material position that we cannot even understand this lower process:

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur, indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir, yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ
(Bhāgavad-gītā 3.42)*

What is our soul? We can't follow, we can't understand what our own soul is! There is the world; we conceive it, we perceive it through our senses, so they are higher. The mind receives experience of the world through the senses, above that is the soul proper. And then we approach the Supersoul area; through *virāja*, *brahmaloka*, eventually we reach Vaikuṅṭha. There are so many layers to cross, but who is to cross? Our own soul—we cannot even find him! We are far away from that conception, in a hopeless position, and we say that the highest conception of the Paramātmā world is in our fist! That is foolish.

First, we must feel our own soul, what is our real existence and identity in the spiritual position; then that soul will have to go higher and higher; by crossing more and more valuable planes he must go up. But he must feel his own identity.

So, the *sahajiyās*, the imitationists, should be considered as the enemy. Like Quisling (an enemy collaborator during World War II), they are *jana-śatru*, the enemy who has sprung up at home, the enemy within. This kind of imitation is the worst. Ordinary imitation may be bad, but imitation of the highest reality is completely repugnant and must be rejected because what is Supreme is being exploited in such a low, mean way. *That is sahajiyā.*

We cannot see our own soul! That is our position. Absorbed in this gross matter of exploitation, we cannot even know what is our mind, of what substance it is made. Then, how can one understand what is the intelligence, *buddhi*, the faculty of judgment within us; or beyond that, the soul; or ultimately, the realm of the Supersoul? But we are living in this mundane world and imagining: “I have got the Lord of my dreams!”

Heart and Halo _____ Chapter 17

“I see my gurudeva as Guṇa-mañjari, and in that mañjari form he has some partial representation of Radhārāṇi. But if I attempt to look more deeply, I find him identified fully with Her.”

The prejudice of our past experience, caught within us in a subtle form, has covered, like dust, the eye of our soul. Our inner vision is densely covered with the dust of many different misconceptions of separate interest, causing us to ignore the universal interest.

This mental cover is made up of the prejudices of local and provincial interest, and it keeps us from seeing reality: *viṣaya-dhūlite kemane se paratattva pāiye dekhite*. How will a person be able to read the universal wave when his mind is fully engrossed with local interest of different kinds? How can one detect the universal interest, the universal wave? Only one who has fully eliminated all kinds of local interest, and is eager to understand the universal wave, can see it clearly.

Artheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāt: what is the purpose of the movement of this world? The answer is clear: “For Itself.” Reality is for itself: not to satisfy many, but to satisfy One. All the waves are meant to satisfy that One, and if we can put ourself on that level we can understand the truth; otherwise we are all cheaters.

We are far from the truth when we cannot see that everything, all waves are flowing towards the satisfaction of One, *Svayam Bhagavān*. We are laboring under a deception; we are deceivers who are not just deceiving ourselves but the world also. We are guilty of misunderstanding everything and of carrying that false knowledge to others. Everyone, all the *baddha-jīvas*, are more or less cheaters. That is our position and we must be relieved of such misunderstanding, such deception of our own self as well as of the environment, if we are to be placed in our proper position.

Then we can go there and find that universal wave and see it—*darśana*. *Darśana* means ‘to see,’ and how to see, that must be learned. What to see, how to read what is going on, in myself and outside, that is proper understanding and proper education. A proper understanding of one’s own self and also of the environment is proper education. Education must be Vedic. The standard must be drawn from outside this area of *māyā*, misunderstanding; it must be drawn from the perfect realm through Veda, revealed truth.

We must accept revealed truth and bid farewell to so-called scientific knowledge and other kinds of perceptions, which are all erroneous, based on false experience and false information. “It belongs to me; it belongs to him; it belongs to them,” this calculation is all false. So we have to be relieved, we have to get wholesale relief from this mania, this misconception. And not only must we get relief from the misconception, from misunderstanding the external waves, but we must attain a positive position, to learn to understand the wave, the vibration of Goloka. Goloka is the most universal, most fundamental plane, and if we can harmonize ourself with that plane we will be led to Vṛndāvana, or Navadvīpa, and there we shall see things as they are.

Some are more attached to Kṛṣṇa *lilā*, others more towards Navadvīpa *līla*, and others have an inclination to be accommodated in both places. In Kṛṣṇa *lilā* also, some are attracted to Rādhārāṇī’s camp, some to Kṛṣṇa’s camp and some are holding the middle position. We find this sort of division, and that is necessary for the *lilā*, by the arrangement of *yogamāyā*. So, in the highest plane, we find two kinds of pastimes, Kṛṣṇa *lilā* and Gaura *lilā*, and they are of the same value. In one there is transaction within a ‘limited’ camp and in the other there is transaction, along with a tendency towards distribution to others. But they are of the same value. That which is being distributed, and that which is being enjoyed are of one and the same value of ecstasy, sweetness, love and beauty. Some are more attracted to the one *lilā*, some to the other.

Within Gaura *lilā* also, we find those like Narahari Sarakāra and his followers, who were more given to Kṛṣṇa than Gaurāṅga, and others who are more inclined towards Gaurāṅga than to Kṛṣṇa. This is all by the grant of the Lord, the Supreme will—His *lilā*.

In Gaura *lilā*, Gadādhara Paṇḍita is holding the helm, everything belongs to him; still he has to admit he's dispossessed, that Gaurāṅga has taken everything! He is exhaustively dedicated to Gaurāṅga. So Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī says: *teṅho lakṣmi-rūpā, tāṅra sama keha nāi*, that he represents the main potency of Gaurāṅga, and no one is to be compared with him. This is the conclusion of Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī about Śrī Gadādhara. He is *gaura-prema-māyā*, the embodiment of Śrī Gaura's love.

Gadādhara dāsa represents the halo of Śrīmātī Rādhārāṇī, but Gadādhara Paṇḍita represents Her mood, Her nature—Her heart. It is as if Mahāprabhu has taken away Gadādhara Paṇḍita's soul, and the body is still standing! That is the position of Gadādhara Paṇḍita; he is quite empty, and following Mahāprabhu. He is not full in himself. Something, the most important thing, his heart, has been taken by Mahāprabhu, so he has no other alternative but to follow Him. He is wholly given to Mahāprabhu. Gadādhara Paṇḍita's position, the part he played, was something like that of Rādhārāṇī, Her heart stolen by Kṛṣṇa, the empty body still standing. *Rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*: He was fully engrossed in the conception of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Gaurāṅga had taken everything from him, so he had no other alternative; he was fully engrossed, captured completely by Him.

We find his activity throughout his whole life was like this. Of the other devotees, some were ordered to go to Vṛndāvana, and some were allowed to go there, but although Gadādhara Paṇḍita wanted to visit Vṛndāvana with Mahāprabhu Himself, he was denied: "No, you won't go." When Jagadānanda Paṇḍita asked to go there, Mahāprabhu, with hesitation, granted him permission, "Yes, go there, but move always under the guidance of Rūpa and Sanātana." He also gave

him some special instructions: “Do this, and this, and don’t do that.” But Gadādhara Paṇḍita was not allowed to go there.

He was the representation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself, yet his particular position was such: the Queen of Vṛndāvana, but now transferred to Navadvīpa. His position had become just the opposite; he could not enter Vṛndāvana! He prayed for permission, but Mahāprabhu did not give it. He said “No, stay and live here.” And he had to do so. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita represents the predominated Moeities, and he represents the predominated half. He is one half of the Absolute Truth.

In the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose preaching was inspired by Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Śrīman Mahāprabhu, we also find all the substance that is present in that plane of vibration. These two personalities, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura, are our great *gurus*, our guides, and by offering our worship to them we can sow the seed of our highest benefit. By the grace of that great Guru Mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda, we have been able to understand this.

And Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, though generally he has his own position, as understood from the consideration of the disciple, Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura has seen Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in him—a ‘relative’ vision. He once said that Rādhārāṇī represents the full play of *aṣṭa-nāyikā*, the eight characteristics of the heroine; we see that they are all perfectly represented in her. In other places we may find partial representations of them, but we find them fully manifest only in Her.

He said “I see my *gurudeva* as Guṇa-mañjarī, and in that *mañjarī* form he has some partial representation of Rādhārāṇī. But if I attempt to look more deeply, I find him identified fully with Her; the eight kinds of qualities displayed in the service of Kṛṣṇa (*aṣṭa-nāyikā*) are to be found there. If I look at him with my head a little more erect, I can see that he is one with Rādhārāṇī. *Ācāryam mām vijānīyāt*: know the *ācārya* as Myself. If I give more attention to this

śāstric rule and try to search out the meaning, I find that Radhārāṇī comes to take Her place there, in the position of my *gurudeva*.” In this way he has seen in Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the fullest representation of the cult of Śrī Gaurāṅga.

This realization is expressed in his poem where he says that he saw Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī in Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī, and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In one place he has written: *gadādhara-din dhari’ pāiyācche gaura-hari*, that he has accepted the day of the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to be identified with that of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita. In another place, in his poem at the conclusion of his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* commentary, he has written: “Here, in Navadvīpa-dhāma, the eternal pastimes are going on continuously; only those who have got that deep vision can perceive it.

*gadādhara mitra-vara, śrī svarūpa damodara,
sadā kāla gaura-kṛṣṇa yaje
jagatera dekhi’ kleśa, dhariyā bhikṣuka-veśa,
aharahaḥ kṛṣṇa-nāma bhaje
śrī gaura icchāya dui, mahimā ki kava mui,
aprākṛta pāriṣada-kathā
prakaṭa haiyā seve, kṛṣṇa-gaurābhimna-deve,
aprakāśya kathā yathā tathā*

He says, “It is very difficult to perceive the sweet will of Śrī Gaurāṅga, but if we can lift ourselves to that level, we see that Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita are always engaged in their service here in Navadvīpa. Sometimes it is suppressed and sometimes it is appearing on the surface. In that plane all is going on by the sweet will of Śrī Gaurāṅga, without any restriction. But now I find that those two have appeared on the surface as Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. I have seen it with my own eye of divine service but this is not to be advertized, not

to be given publicity anywhere and everywhere; people will laugh at it. But this is my heartfelt conclusion.” He has written this in his poem concluding *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

So Gadādhara Paṇḍita was identified with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. That was the vision of our *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He could see in them the same identity. He considered *śikṣā-guru paramparā* to be the most substantial thing. Eliminating the *sahajiyā-vāda* which gives much importance to the outer cover, try to look within, and see things more deeply. Try to understand the deeper vibrations of the outside environment, and see within yourself also. Dive deep, and you will find the plane of the finest vibration which will carry that news to you, and you will see that truth.

Pronunciation Guide

The system of transliteration used in this book conforms to a system that scholars have accepted to indicate the pronunciation of each sound in the Sanskrit and Bengali language.

The short vowel a is pronounced like the u in but, but long ā like the a in far. Short i is pronounced as in pin, long ī as in pique, short u as in pull, and long ū as in rule.

The vowel ɾ is pronounced like the ri in rim, e and ai are pronounced as the ey in they, and o and au are pronounced as the o in go.

The anusvāra (ṁ), which is a pure nasal sound, is pronounced like the n in the French word bon, and visarga (ḥ), which is a strong aspirate, is pronounced as a final h sound. At the end of a couplet aḥ is pronounced like aha, and iḥ like ihi.

The guttural consonants -k, kh, g, gh, and ṅ - are pronounced from the throat in much the same manner as in English. K is pronounced as in kite, kh as in Eckhart, g as in give, gh as in dig hard, and ṅ as in sing.

The palatal consonants - c, ch, j, jh, and ñ are pronounced from the palate with the middle of the tongue. C is pronounced as in chair, ch as in staunch-heart, j as in joy, jh as in hedgehog, and ñ as in canyon.

The cerebral consonants - ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, and ṇ are pronounced with the tip of the tongue turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate. Ṭ is pronounced as in tub, ṭh as in light-heart, ḍ as in dove, ḍh as in red-hot, and ṇ as in nut.

The dental consonants - t, th, d, dh, and n are pronounced in the same manner as the cerebrals, but with the forepart of the tongue against the teeth.

The labial consonants - p, ph, b, bh, and m are pronounced with the lips. P is pronounced as in pine, ph as in uphill, b as in bird, bh as in rub-hard, and m as in mother.

The semivowels - y, r, l, and v are pronounced as in yes, run, light, and vine respectively. The sibilants - ś, ṣ and s - are pronounced, respectively as in the German word sprechen and the English word shine and sun.

The letter h is pronounced as in home.

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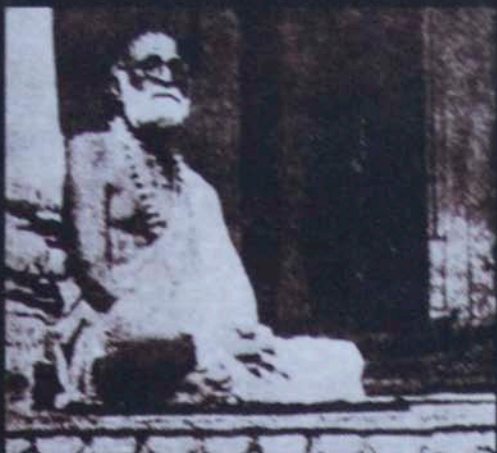
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With his first step, He cut to pieces the whole plane of exploitation, and with his second, he crushed the speculation of scholars of salvation and liberation. With his third, he softened *vaidhī-bhakti* with a touch of divine love (*rāga-mārga*). Taking us beyond *Vaikuṅṭha*, he has introduced us to the highest worship of Śrī Rādhā and Govinda. With the softness of *Ṛṇḍāvana* within, and the hardness of a devastator without, he created havoc in the world—fighting with one and all. Single-handedly fighting against the whole world, and cutting everything to pieces—that was his external attitude. And his second attitude was to stop the boasting research of the scholars and doctors of different schools of thought; and third, to minimize and slacken the grandeur of the worship of Nārāyaṇa, and establish the service of Rādhā-Govinda as the highest attainment. He caused the domain of love to descend into this plane, with the service of Rādhā-Govinda, establishing the flow of divine love from the heart as all in all. That was his history—the real existence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda. May his teachings dance eternally within the core of our hearts.

