

PRABHUPĀDA

V I J A Y A

PRABHUPĀDA
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V I J A Y A

A Collection of Articles Glorifying His Divine Grace

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Front Cover Art – Dhīra-lalitā Dāsī

Financial Contributors:

Devotees of Nueva Ekacakra, Mexico

Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa & Gopāla Dāsī

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PREFACE



*siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa
ibā haite kṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha mānasa*

One should not be lazy in deliberating on philosophy, for by doing so one's mind becomes firmly fixed upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (*Cc. Ādi-līlā* 2.117)

History has shown us that after the disappearance of a great *ācārya*, the light that he brought is eclipsed by a period of darkness. Various deviant philosophies and misconceptions appear like rapacious wolves to ensnare the innocent devotees and drive them off the path of pure devotion. Since the disappearance of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, many misunderstandings have arisen amongst his followers in regards to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*, and indeed, about the position of Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.

Some have zealously tried to mould Prabhupāda into a modern-day Indian messiah, the foremost guru in the *paramparā* (and also the last), professing that Śrīla Prabhupāda is to be the one and only spiritual guide for all future generations of devotees. Others, trapped within corporate society consciousness,

strive to divorce Śrīla Prabhupāda from the *sampradāya*, making him an authority unto himself, independent of the tradition that he represented. Operating under the notion that their conclaves solely represent the will of His Divine Grace, such persons believe that they alone are the true heirs to Śrīla Prabhupāda's legacy and all must come to him through them. Some even hail Śrīla Prabhupāda as the founder of a new *sampradāya*, the creator of a new Golden Age and attribute Christ-like miracles to him – indeed, the misconceptions that have been built around him are too numerous to mention here.

Prabhupāda Vijaya is an compilation of articles, talks and lectures by Swami B.G. Narasiṅha Mahārāja from 1993 to 2006. In these essays Narasiṅha Mahārāja attempts to remove the societal facade and sentiment obscuring Śrīla Prabhupāda to reveal something of his true personality and nature that many devotees are unaware of – a Prabhupāda who had an existence before stepping onto the Jaladūta, a representative of an ancient devotional tradition, a follower in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and a faithful disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

After a lifetime of dedication and service to Śrīla Prabhupāda, Narasiṅha Mahārāja shares his realisations about his beloved spiritual master and brings to light many important historical incidents in the life of His Divine Grace, as well as deep philosophical insights into the important topic of *guru-tattva*.

It is our sincere hope that the readers of *Prabhupāda Vijaya* will relish this unique glorification of His Divine Grace and comprehend the profound *siddhānta* found within its pages.

The Publishers



INTRODUCTION



During his worldwide preaching campaign, our Guru Mahārāja, His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, always exhibited an uncompromising mood in dealing with various misconceptions such as Māyāvāda, Sahajiyāism, materialistic science etc. and constantly protected his young disciples from their dangerous influence. Yet after Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure from this world, numerous ideologies have arisen in the guise of his teachings, leading to an increase in frustration and bewilderment amongst his followers.

Considering how much Śrīla Prabhupāda endeavoured to establish his mission and train his disciples in the correct understanding of Gauḍīya *siddhānta*, it is imperative for all his followers, both now and in the future, to understand and follow the philosophy and example given by His Divine Grace.

Prabhupāda Vijaya, by Swami Bhakti Gaurava Narasiṅgha Mahārāja, attempts to broaden the reader's access to the true Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* that Śrīla Prabhupāda represented and preached, especially in regards to *guru-tattva*. It establishes through guru, *sādhū* and *śāstra*, as well as through historical references, the strict adherence of Śrīla Prabhupāda to our Gauḍīya *siddhānta* as enunciated by the previous Prabhupādas led by Śrīla

Rūpa Gosvāmī, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. It also reveals many important facts about the early life of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his relationship with his guru and god-brothers.

Prabbupāda Vijaya reveals the root cause of many current philosophical controversies that are tearing apart the foundation of Vaiṣṇava communities worldwide. The unrelenting attacks of the Sahajiyās, institutional and Ṛtvik ideologies, misunderstandings about *guru-tattva* and *rasa-tattva*, society consciousness and much more are dealt with and made clear in this publication with a breadth of understanding that many will experience for the first time.

A brief overview of *Prabbupāda Vijaya* is as follows:

Prabbupāda's Praṇāma-Mantra is an article that narrates a little-known piece of history long forgotten in the present day. The recollection of its compilation will give insight into the intimacy and appreciation of Prabhupāda by his dear friends.

Bhaktivedānta: In this article we discover that Śrīla Prabhupāda's name was changed several times after the disappearance of his guru – each one is important and has a deep-rooted meaning that is rarely understood or appreciated.

Mahāprabhu as Prabbupāda is an exceptional explanation of the real meaning of the title 'Prabhupāda' in its highest theistic conception. Comprehension of it will significantly add to our realisation about our connection to the *rūpā-nuga sampradāya* and further reveal, "where our fate and fortune are located."

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How Great is Śrīla Prabhupāda? puts into historical perspective the greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda from an interesting comparison of previous *sampradāya ācāryas*.

Prabhupāda's Mission, Ideal and Achievements is summarised in relation to our previous *ācāryas* – a fundamental and necessary principal for the spiritual success of all Vaiṣṇavas. It explains how his achievements were appreciated by his god-brothers and who proclaimed him as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* is made known.

His Matchless Gift. In this talk, given in Vṛndāvana on Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day at Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple on November 17th, 1993, the glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda are shared by Mahārāja in relation to a verse from Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's *Mukta-carita*.

In *Gāyatrī-Mantra for Women*, Narasiṅha Mahārāja defends Śrīla Prabhupāda's controversial decision with numerous scriptural and historical references.

The Golden Age of the Saṅkīrtana Movement uncovers the attempts to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda as the Founder-*ācārya* of the Golden Age. The fallacy and offense of replacing Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is exposed.

Is the Guru Omniscient? Did Śrīla Prabhupāda know everything? The absolute and relative sides of *guru-tattva* are explained and a little known pastime of Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sheds considerable light on the verse, *pūjala rāga-paṭha gaurava bhāṅge*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda – in a Class by Himself? This is an analysis of a common phrase used to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda and is critical to understanding *guru-tattva*. To experience

that the guru is non-different from his instructions necessitates proper conception.

When Kṛṣṇa Gives, He Gives Through His Devotee. The supra-mundane significance of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *bbajana-kuṭīra* at Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple is emphasised in this chapter. There, the highest *līlā* took place in *mādhurya-rasa*, yet Śrīla Prabhupāda never explained it to us. Why the guru does not always directly reveal the truth is discussed at length.

Substance Over Form. The intensity of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's appreciation for Śrīla Prabhupāda may come as a surprise to those unfortunate souls who have been, or still are, subject to the institutional *aparādha*. The conception of 'substance over form' is quintessential to understanding our *guru-varga* and is worth paying attention to.

Books are the Basis? The whimsical habit of many devotees who misquote Śrīla Prabhupāda and its potential to distort the philosophy is explained in depth here.

Society Consciousness vs. Kṛṣṇa Consciousness illuminates the difference between the two and highlights the negative results of the wrong choice. It could be argued that this is the greatest obstacle facing devotees in these modern times. Narasiṅha Mahārāja's explanation on the topic is uniquely profound!

Deliverer or Instrumental Guru? and *Ṛtvik Defeated!* thoroughly expose, with stunning clarity, the defects in both the institutional and Ṛtvik conceptions of *guru-tattva*. Backed by substantial scriptural references with a particular emphasis on the supreme position of Rūpa Gosvāmī,

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these are must-read articles counter the ideology that Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī, referred to as the “death of the *sampradāya*.”

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada reveals the paramount importance of the highest conception amongst the vast collection of authorised Gauḍīya *bbajanas* and its unique connection to our greatest *ācāryas*. Though Śrīla Prabhupāda sang this song frequently between 1956-1965 at Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *samādbi*, he never sang it in the west or explained its meaning. Why, is vitally important.

Śrīla Prabhupāda-Līlā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala Stotram is a charming Bengali prayer composed by Swami Narasiṅgha in 1994. These 23 astounding verses sing the eternal glories of His Divine Grace as meditated upon by his disciple. They remain to this day unrivalled in beauty, substance and realisation.

My Guru is Rādhārāṇī. Continuing the theme from the two previous chapters, this article sheds considerable light on the debate about the eternal *rasa* of Śrīla Prabhupāda – is he in *sakhya-rasa* or *mādburya-rasa*? Full of references of great import as well as personal realisation, Mahārāja’s meditations on His Divine Grace are noteworthy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Antya-Līlā is a personal account shared by Narasiṅgha Mahārāja of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s final manifest pastimes. His remembrances of these moments in history are intensely personal and full of realisations that are seldom heard.

We hope the readers of *Prabhupāda Vijaya* will appreciate the contents and intent of the author. This book strives to inspire

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those who have the courage to look within and motivate them to 'raise their standard.' It seeks to improve our understanding of *guru-tattva* and our appreciation of the previous *ācāryas*. The more we can assimilate its contents, the more service we can render in spreading the glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda Vijaya!

In the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers -
Jayadeva Gosvāmī Dāsa Vanacārī

August 2nd, 2016,
Disappearance day of Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja
Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira
Vṛndāvana





PRABHUPĀDA

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ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S PRAṆĀMA-MANTRA



On February 10th, 1977, Śrīla Prabhupāda paid his last visit to Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha, particularly to visit Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja.* On that visit, two astounding things occurred – the first was that Śrīla Prabhupāda announced his departure from the world to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja. He also requested him to look after his disciples after his disappearance. This is a recorded conversation that has been printed and distributed worldwide for the information of the general devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda informed him, “Mahārāja, I will not remain much longer in this world. I want to bring you to Māyāpura so that you can preach to my disciples. I will bring people from all over the world – they will come and hear from you and you will preach to them.” Of course, nobody at the time could really understand that Prabhupāda was announcing his departure from the world, but in fact he told this to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

Also on that day, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested Śrīpāda Bhakti Sundara Govinda Mahārāja to compose a Sanskrit *praṇāma-*

*This Bengali conversation was transcribed by H.H. Bhakti Cāru Swami.

mantra which would then be recited daily by all of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples, because Govinda Mahārāja was a very expert devotional scholar of Sanskrit. At that time Govinda Mahārāja was a householder, but he was a lifetime servitor of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, and from his youth he was very intimate with our Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In 1947 when he was a young boy, he ran away from home and came to the *āśrama* of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja at sixteen, and was initiated and given the name Gaurendu Brahmācārī. His family didn’t live so far from Navadvīpa so they eventually came there looking for their son. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja knew that Gaurendu’s family would eventually come there, so he decided to hide him. Where did he hide him? He hid him in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s house in Kolkata. And so, for about 5 years he stayed mostly in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s house and became the favourite son of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own children were captured by their mother – she never really took much serious interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But young Gaurendu was very enthusiastic for Sanskrit studies, studying *Bhagavad-gītā*, kitchen service and all these things. In the beginning of his devotional service, Śrīla Prabhupāda had a hand in training him for preaching. In 1944, when Śrīla Prabhupāda started his *Back To Godhead* magazine, Govinda Mahārāja would go out and distribute it. He would meet so many people with opposing views, then he would come home and report to Śrīla Prabhupāda, “I found this opposition – they say this, they say that” then Prabhupāda would give him the answers. But he would say that sometimes Prabhupāda’s answers were “too heavy” and he was afraid that if he repeated them, the people might chase him and beat him with sticks. Therefore, while he lived with Śrīla Prabhupāda, a very affectionate relationship naturally developed between them that endured throughout.

Śrīlā Prabhupāda's Praṇāma-Mantra

In about 1983 or 1984, remembering the request of Śrīlā Prabhupāda before he departed this world, Govinda Mahārāja wrote a *praṇāma-mantra* in Sanskrit. Actually, if you look very closely at this composition, you will see that all the things that are near and dear to the followers of Śrīlā Prabhupāda are included there. He has included all the glories of Śrīlā Prabhupāda that are very important to us, much to our satisfaction – and in particular our fervour to always refer to our Guru Mahārāja as Śrīlā Prabhupāda. He restructured the original *praṇāma-mantra* that we are used to, so it read, *svāmī śrī bhaktivedānta prabhupādāya te namaḥ*.

*namaḥ om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
svāmī śrī bhaktivedānta prabhupādāya te namaḥ*

I offer my humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter of his lotus feet.

*gurvājñānī śīrasi-dhāryam śaktyāveśa-sva-rūpiṇe
bare-kṛṣṇeti mantreṇa pāścātya-prācyā-tāriṇe*

Taking the order of his guru on his head, he became empowered to act as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. He distributed the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* all over the Western world, delivering and uplifting all fallen souls.

*viśvācārya-pra-varyāya divya-kāruṇya-mūrtaye
śrī-bhāgavata-mādhurya-gītā-jñāna-pradāyine*

He is the best of millions of *jagat-gurus*, because he is the personification of divine mercy. He has distributed the sweet nectar of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and the transcendental knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā* all over the world.

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*gaura śrī-rūpa-siddhānta-sarasvatī niṣevīṇe
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāmbhoja-bhṛṅgāya gurave namaḥ*

He is constantly engaged in exclusive devotional service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I offer my humble obeisances unto Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is just like a bumblebee always tasting the nectar of the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

(From a lecture given on Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day, at Myrtle Beach, USA, on August 29th, 1994)





BHAKTIVEDĀNTA



Question: We have heard it said that Śrīla Prabhupāda (A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Mahārāja) received the name ‘Bhaktivedānta’ from his guru, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Others have said that he received the name ‘Bhaktivedānta’ from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and yet others are saying that he received the name ‘Bhaktivedānta’ from Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja. Can you please say something to clarify this issue?

Narasīṅgha Mahārāja: When our Guru Mahārāja (Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda) was initiated in 1933 he received both *hari-nāma* and *mantra-dīkṣā* at the same time. At his initiation Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura named our Guru Mahārāja, Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Dāsa, meaning ‘one who is fearless, having taken shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord.’ Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not confer any other names or titles upon our Guru Mahārāja during his lifetime.

In later years, after the disappearance of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, our Guru Mahārāja was engaged in writing articles for a Bengali journal published by his god-brother, Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Gosvāmī Mahārāja and other leading Vaiṣṇavas of the time were so impressed with the writing and preaching capabil-

ities of our Guru Mahārāja that Gosvāmī Mahārāja conferred upon our Guru Mahārāja the title ‘Bhaktisiddhānta.’* This was indeed the most honorific title a disciple could ever expect to receive – the very title of his guru.

According to the practice of name giving and awarding titles to deserving disciples, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had never given the name of his gurus, Gaura-kiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja or Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to anyone. Accordingly, some of the senior disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura thought that the title ‘Bhaktisiddhānta’ should not be given to any disciple, however deserving. This matter was discussed among the senior Vaiṣṇavas with whom our Guru Mahārāja was regularly associating and, in a mood of deep respect and harmony, it was decided that our Guru Mahārāja would be given the title ‘Bhaktivedānta.’

During those discussions it was recognised by all present that our Guru Mahārāja was a stalwart preacher in the line of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and that the inspiration of Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja to bestow an honorific title upon our Guru Mahārāja was directly inspired by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

In the days of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, certain senior disciples were often called upon when some particular point or issue was in need of clarification – Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was amongst those select few disciples of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who were able to clarify even the most difficult points of spiritual understanding.

In the discussion where the honorific title for our Guru Mahārāja was being discussed, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja suggested that our Guru Mahārāja be given the title ‘Bhaktivedānta.’ The name

*When registering the League of Devotees in Lucknow during the early 1950’s, our Guru Mahārāja referred to himself in that document as “alias Abhaya Charanaravinda Bhaktisiddhānta Das Adhikary” and his signature can be seen on the original document (Bhaktivedānta Archives).

Bhaktivedānta

‘Bhakti-siddhānta’ and ‘Bhakti-vedānta’ are synonymous in meaning. Thus the adjustment was made in keeping with the original inspiration felt by Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī.

From that time on our Guru Mahārāja became known amongst his god-brothers as ‘Bhaktivedānta.’ This occurred in Calcutta in 1947.

Some persons may look upon this event in our contemporary Vaiṣṇava history as being of little significance – the simple act of bestowing an honorific title upon a Vaiṣṇava. But apparently it was not so for everyone – the event was so spiritually moving that Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja decided for the future to name all his *sannyāsī* disciples ‘Bhaktivedānta’ – a title synonymous with ‘Bhaktisiddhānta.’ This standard is still carried out amongst the disciples of Keśava Mahārāja more than half a century later.

So, in contemporary times, our Guru Mahārāja was the first person in the line of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to receive the title ‘Bhaktivedānta’ (1947).

In 1959 when our Guru Mahārāja accepted *sannyāsa*, Keśava Mahārāja retained our Guru Mahārāja’s title ‘Bhaktivedānta’ given by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and then gave our Guru Mahārāja the *sannyāsa* name ‘Swami,’ which was chosen from the list of 108 names of *sannyāsīs* authorised by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in *Gauḍīya Kaṅṭhabāra*. Thus, our Guru Mahārāja became known as ‘A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Mahārāja,’ or simply ‘Swami Mahārāja’ amongst his god-brothers.

Our Guru Mahārāja retained the initials ‘A.C.’ for Abhaya Caraṇāravinda from his first initiation, but officially his *sannyāsa* title and name was Bhaktivedānta Swami.

In the Gauḍīya tradition, a *sannyāsī* is called Swami and this is added as a prefix to the *sannyāsa* title like ‘Bhaktivedānta’ and

the name of the particular *sannyāsī* follows such as Swami in the case of our Guru Mahārāja. However, if our Guru Mahārāja had strictly kept this tradition then his name would have been written thus: ‘Swami A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami.’ In a letter to his disciple Rayarāma Dāsa, our Guru Mahārāja explained something of the complexities of his name as follows:

So far the title ‘Swami’ is concerned, although this word is used generally for sannyāsīns, this ‘Swami’ is my particular name as a sannyāsī. Therefore, it must be suffixed at the end of my real name, A.C. Bhaktivedānta. So far the prefix ‘Swami’ is concerned, every sannyāsī has got to do that, but two ways ‘Swami’ (Swami A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami) is not good looking. The end ‘Swami’ is necessary because it is my sannyāsa name. The first ‘Swami’ may be transformed into ‘Gosvāmī’, which is on the same order of Swami. Therefore, I use the prefix ‘Tridaṇḍī Gosvāmī’ and suffix ‘Swami’, as I have printed on my card enclosed herewith. That will be nice. In small lettering, it can be written above my name ‘Tridaṇḍī Gosvāmī.’ Vaiṣṇava sannyāsīns are known as ‘Tridaṇḍī Gosvāmīs’, and Māyāvādī sannyāsīns are known as only ‘Swami.’

After the establishment of our Guru Mahārāja’s mission, the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, in the western world, our Guru Mahārāja stated in a letter to a senior disciple that he wanted all his qualified disciples to continue the title ‘Bhaktivedānta.’ Due to the successful preaching campaign of our Guru Mahārāja, the title ‘Bhaktivedānta’ has now become famous all over the world with special reference to the ‘Bhaktivedānta Purports’ of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

There are now many ‘Bhaktivedāntas’ in different parts of our *sampradāya*, but as for fulfilling the purport of ‘Bhaktivedānta’

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our Guru Mahārāja has set the standard in all respects and it is incumbent on other Vaiṣṇavas with this honorific title to live up to the standards that our Guru Mahārāja has set as a world-class preacher. Certainly one should beware of being a ‘Bhaktivedānta’ in name only.





MAHĀPRABHU AS PRABHUPĀDA



In the western Vaiṣṇava community it is often assumed that the title *Prabbupāda* only refers to Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. However, there are many Vaiṣṇavas in the West and in other places in the world who are disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura or who are the disciples of disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Gosvāmī and for them the title *Prabbupāda* refers to Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Prabbupāda is not a title applicable only to Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda or even to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Nor is the title *Prabbupāda* simply a nondescript or generic term applicable to any and all spiritual masters. Since the title *Prabbupāda* has been accepted by so few bona-fide Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, it must indeed indicate a title for a spiritual master of exceptional status and transcendental qualifications.

If we examine the etymological and the ontological meaning of the title *Prabbupāda*, we will ultimately come to the conclusion that it indicates one who represents the deepest flow of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* in terms of *rāgānuga-bhakti* and *rūpānuga-bhajana*, the most dignified conception of service to Godhead in spontaneous divine love.

In the classical Gauḍīya *sampradāya* there were only a few personalities to have been recognised with the title *Prabhupāda* such as; Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, Śrī Prabhupāda Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Prabhupāda Nityānanda Avadhūta and Śrī Prabhupāda Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu –the latter being the original Prabhupāda.

*kāśī miśra kabe — āmi baḍa bhāgyavān
mora gr̥be prabhu-pādera habe avasthāna*

Kāśī Miśra said, “I am very fortunate that the Lord of all Prabhus (Prabhupāda) will stay in my house.”

(*Cc. Madhya-līlā* 10.23)

Regarding this verse Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī comments:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and all His servants address Him as Prabhupāda. This means that there are many prabbhus taking shelter under His lotus feet.

It is clear from the above verse and statement of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta that Mahāprabhu was also known as *Prabhupāda*. There were many masters, Gosvāmīs, (controllers of the senses) such as Rāya Rāmānanda, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Govinda Dāsa, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Dāsa and many others who took shelter at the Lord’s lotus feet. Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda has commented in his purport to the above verse as follows:

The pure Vaiṣṇava is addressed as prabhu, and this address is an etiquette observed between Vaiṣṇavas. When many prabbhus

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remain under the shelter of the lotus feet of another prabhu, the address *Prabhupāda* is given. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Prabhu are also addressed as *Prabhupāda*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Advaita Prabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu are all *viṣṇu-tattva*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu. Therefore, all living entities are under Their lotus feet. Lord Viṣṇu is the eternal Lord of everyone, and the representative of Lord Viṣṇu is the Lord's confidential servant. Such a person acts as the spiritual master for neophyte Vaiṣṇavas; therefore the spiritual master is as respectable as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya or Lord Viṣṇu Himself. For this reason the spiritual master is addressed as *Oṃ Viṣṇupāda* or *Prabhupāda*. The *ācārya*, the spiritual master, is generally respected by others as *Śrīpāda*, and the initiated Vaiṣṇavas are addressed as *Prabhu*. *Prabhu*, *Prabhupāda* and *Viṣṇupāda* are described in revealed scriptures like *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. In this regard, these scriptures present evidence accepted by unalloyed devotees.

One can say that all personalities in the *viṣṇu-tattva* can be addressed as *Prabhupāda* as They are the shelter of all living beings. Yet in regard to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī *Prabhupāda* and those personalities who have held the title *Prabhupāda* since that time, we note in them a special characteristic – they understood the confidential heart of Mahāprabhu.

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was living at Purī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī 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 Gosvāmī and saw the verse written on the leaf:

*priyaḥ so 'yam kṛṣṇaḥ sabacari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tatbāham sā rādhā tad idam ubbayoḥ saṅgama-sukham*

*tatbāpy antaḥ-kbelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprḥayati*

My dear friend, this is the same beloved Kṛṣṇa meeting Me here at Kurukṣetra. I am also that same Rādhā, and we Both feel the same joy of union –and yet My mind yearns for the forest on the bank of the Kālindī where the fifth note of His flute sweetly plays within My heart. (Cc. *Antya-līlā* I.79)

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

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 Gosvāmī in the matter of transcendental mellows, *rasa-tattva*.

After some time, Mahāprabhu again visited Rūpa Gosvāmī accompanied by Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāmānanda Rāya and others. Mahāprabhu requested Rūpa Gosvāmī to read a number of the verses that he had composed. Being very humble and shy by nature, Rūpa Gosvāmī remained silent. Svarūpa Dāmodara then read the previous verse compiled by Rūpa and also another verse:

*tuṅḍe taṅḍavinī ratim vitanute tuṅḍāvalī-labdhaye
karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyāḥ sprḥām*

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*cetaḥ-prāṅgana-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyānām kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyadbbir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī*

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 thus all the senses become inert.

(*Cc. Antya-līlā* I. 99)

Hearing these verses compiled by Rūpa Gosvāmī, all the Vaiṣṇavas became jubilant. Rāmānanda Rāya especially showed interest in what Rūpa Gosvāmī had written. Being very pleased with him, Rāmānanda Rāya began to praise the qualities of Rūpa Gosvāmī 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 realisations. The wonderful descriptions of Rūpa Gosvāmī are superb arrangements that express the 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 offered to Rūpa Gosvāmī by Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya are considerably more meaningful when we take into account the identity of these personalities in the ontological hierarchy of the spiritual world. According to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Rāmānanda Rāya was the *gopī* in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* named Viśākhā and Svarūpa Dāmodara was the *gopī* named Lalitā-sakhī. Eternally, both Lalitā and Viśākhā are 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-sakhī in the *mādhurya-rasa* are the *mañjarīs*, the 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 with the utmost respect and attention.

When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are in a secret place, the older *sakhīs* do not like to approach the Divine Couple at that time for fear of causing even 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 this *mañjarī* group has appeared in *gaura-līlā* as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given him the supreme position as head of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* (*rūpānuga sampradāya*). Our *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī 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

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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 Gosvāmī, ever desiring his mercy, falling prostrate at his lotus feet, praying again and again to be accepted as a speck of dust at his lotus feet and to be enlisted in his group of servitors – that is *rūpānuga-bhajana*. That is what it means to be a follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. That is what it means to hold the title *Prabhupāda*.

This conception has been expressed most perfectly in a song by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura called, *Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī-pada*. This song is the topmost *bhajana* sung by the followers of the *rūpānuga* line.

*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada
sei mora bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa
sei mora jīvanera jīvana*

The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī are my treasure and the object of my worship. They are the wealth of my existence, they are my ornaments and the very life of my life.

*sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vāñcā-siddhi
sei mora vedera dbarama
sei vrata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa
sei mora dbarama-karama*

They are my ocean of *rasa* and they are the perfection of my desires. They are the *dbarma* of the *Vedas* for me. They are the goal of my vows and austerities and the chanting of my *mantras*. They are the purpose of my religious activities.

PRABHUPĀDA VIJAYA

*anukūla habe vidhi, se-pade baibe siddhi
nirakhiba e dui nayane
se rūpa-mādburī-rāśī, prāṇa-kuvalaya-śaśī
praphullita habe niśi-dine*

By those two lotus feet, all my actions will become favourable and perfection will be achieved. With these two eyes, I will finally be able to see. Both day and night, the sweet waves emanating from Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī's feet will shine like the moon upon the lotus of my heart.

*tuyā adarśana-abi, garale jārāla debī
cira-dina tāpita jīvana
bā bā rūpa kara dayā, deha more pada-chāyā
narottama laila śaraṇa*

The poison of the snake of separation from you has wasted my body away and eternally my life is afflicted by fever. O Rūpa! Kindly be merciful unto me. Give me the shade of your lotus feet. Narottama has taken refuge in you.

The conclusion is that etymologically *Prabhupāda* means a spiritual master at whose feet many qualified personalities have taken shelter. Furthermore, the ontological meaning of *Prabhupāda* is one who knows the heart of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and who knows how to extract the internal moods of devotional service (*unnatojjvala-rasa*) from the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, just as a bumble bee extracts nectar from the lotus flower.

Additionally, without being a follower and obedient servant of the internal flow of devotional service, *unnatojjvala-rasa*, enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one cannot be a true follower of Prabhupāda.

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All aspiring candidates for devotional service (our humble self included) should try to enter into the deep and mysterious meaning of *kṛṣṇānuśilana bhaktir-uttama* in the line of Rūpa Gosvāmī. That is the real essence of the teachings of Prabhupāda Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.





HOW GREAT IS ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA?



If we enter the ocean by boat we can navigate our direction to a destination based on the stars. The stars are compared to the knowledge found in the *Vedas*. One of those stars in the sky is called Dhruva-loka. In modern science, Dhruva-loka is called the Pole Star. When we are in the ocean, if we lose sight of that star then we cannot benefit from all the other stars – we will be lost in the ocean. The Pole Star doesn't move. It is fixed in one place.

Śrī Guru may be compared to the Pole Star, because with the help of the guru, we can derive great benefit from Vedic knowledge. But without the help of the spiritual master, we will be bewildered in our attempt.

The *Vedas* are sometimes compared to a 'jungle of knowledge' – not just an ordinary jungle, but a very dense jungle. In this material world we are already in the jungle of material misconceptions and if we want to search for God then we must come out of this jungle. To fulfil our search we may enter into the study of the *Vedas*. But if we study the *Vedas* without the help of the guru, we may eventually conclude that there is no God. Or we may conclude that there are many Gods. Or worst of all, we may conclude

that, “I am God. We are all God”. In this way, without the help of the guru, we may become bewildered and meet with ultimate ruin.

In the Vedic literature there are various opinions. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it says that Viṣṇu is Supreme. In the *Śiva Purāṇa* it says Śiva is the Supreme. In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* it says that Durgā is Supreme. And in the *Upaniṣads* it is mentioned, *aham brahmāsmi* – ‘I am Brahman’. So one may think that there are many gods, or that there are so many gods that there is no God at all. We may think that what the *Vedas* say cannot be true because there are too many apparent contradictions. Or we may take *aham brahmāsmi* as the ultimate conclusion and then believe that we are all God. This is what happens to persons who study the *Vedas* without the help of a bona-fide guru.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva compiled the *Vedas* in four divisions – the *Atharva Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *R̥g Veda* and the *Yajur Veda*. Then he compiled the *Purāṇas* and other literatures. Lastly, he wrote the *Vedānta-sūtras*. *Vedānta* means the end of knowledge. After revealing so much knowledge, Vyāsadeva tried to bring his writing to an end, to the conclusion of knowledge. After he completed the *Vedānta-sūtras* however, Vyāsa still did not feel satisfied. He was not satisfied within himself – his mind was troubled. He crossed the ocean of knowledge but still he was unsatisfied.

Then Nārada Muni, the guru of Vyāsadeva, came and Vyāsadeva inquired from him as to why he did not feel satisfied. Nārada Muni said, “Actually you are a cheater. You have cheated the people of the world because you have only indirectly described the truth. Without directly describing the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, you have not done justice to the truth. Now you have to give the meaning of all these things in one book.” Then Vyāsadeva wrote the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

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Bhāgavatam is the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*. The message of the *Bhāgavatam* is summarised in the First Canto – *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. Of all the Devas and incarnations of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme and original Godhead. Vyāsadeva revealed in the *Bhāgavatam* that Kṛṣṇa is the *āśraya-tattva*. In other Vedic literatures, Vyāsadeva only revealed the *āśraya-tattva* in part, not in full. If you are a ghost, then Śiva, who is known as Bhūtanātha, is your *āśraya* (shelter). Śiva stays in the cremation grounds and he gives shelter to so many ghosts. If you are a materialist, then Durgā is your *āśraya*. If you are a materialist then you get everything from this material nature by the grace of Durgā. But when we are ready for the perfection of life, Vyāsadeva revealed that Nārāyaṇa is the *āśraya-tattva*, because Nārāyaṇa resides in Vaikuṅṭha, which is above the material world and everything is under His shelter.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Vyāsa revealed that the highest plane is called Goloka. If we journey to the highest place in Vaikuṅṭha and look towards the spiritual sky, from there we will see a land known as Goloka Vṛndāvana. Goloka Vṛndāvana is above Vaikuṅṭha and in that place Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are Supreme.

Kṛṣṇa resides eternally in Goloka Vṛndāvana, giving shelter to all His devotees. Vyāsadeva therefore described that the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa are the Supreme shelter of all living beings. Kṛṣṇa confirms this also – *jīva bhūta sanātana*. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that all these *jīvas* have come from Him. All living beings are His parts and parcels. He is their ultimate shelter.

So the dear-most representative of Kṛṣṇa comes to the world to represent this message of Vyāsadeva - Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There have been many gurus in the world since the time of Vyāsadeva, but all of them did not represent the ultimate conclusion. Someone may ask, “Is there any thing special

about your Prabhupāda, your guru?” Naturally we will say, “Oh, of course, there are many special things about my guru.” Even if our guru never left the village in which he was born, still we will think that our guru has many special qualities. And if we are asked, we will say, “My guru saved me from the ocean of ignorance. That is the special quality that makes our guru different from all others and especially dear to us.”

*om ajñāna-trimirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākaya
cakṣur unmilitam yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

I offer respects unto Śrī Guru who opened my eyes, that were covered with the darkness of ignorance with the salve of divine knowledge.

Without guru, our eyes are sealed in darkness. We are born into darkness, into ignorance, but our guru opens our eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. This is a common aspect found in the relationship between all bona-fide gurus and bona-fide disciples.

But about our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, we must say that there is a special characteristic found in him that is very rare, and to this day we have not seen it duplicated. What is that characteristic? It is something that was previously only known in the most cultured spiritual sections of Indian society. He took that out of India and distributed that to every town and village in the whole world.

*ṛṭhivite āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

In every town and village of the world, My Holy Name will be sung. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa 4.126*)

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This is the prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, that the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa will be spread in every town and village. By the mercy and instruction of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa was spread all over the world. From far away places in the north such as Siberia and deep into the southern reaches of Africa and Australia, to China in the Far East and throughout the western world – the Holy Name and the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was carried everywhere under the guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

A guru, or a great *ācārya*, may spread Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in a village or even in a state or a country, but to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the whole world, that indeed is very rare. For example, Rāmānujācārya, a great Vaiṣṇava saint, spread *viṣṇu-bhakti* in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Rāmānuja is considered to be the *śakti* of Ananta – still when he preached in Kerala they did not accept and they told him to leave. Who can speak better than Ananta, who has a thousand mouths and knows all the *Vedas*? But even so, Rāmānuja was not successful in Kerala.

There is a place called Tonnur in Karnataka where Rāmānuja debated with sixty-thousand Jain philosophers and defeated them. At that time Ananta personally manifested through Rāmānuja and defeated and converted the Jains. If you visit the Yoga-Narasimha temple in Tonnur, you will see a deity of Rāmānuja and behind him is Ananta. The *stbala-purāṇa* there says that Lord Ananta Himself came there and, with many mouths, debated with the Jain scholars and defeated them all. So Rāmānuja was indeed a very great personality, yet he could only spread his mission successfully in three states, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Another very great saint in India was Madhvācārya. He is considered to have been an *avatāra* of Bhīma and Vāyu. But he was only able to spread his mission successfully in Karnataka. Practically speaking, outside of Karnataka nobody has heard of

Madhvācārya. Of course, on occasion he preached in Vārāṇasī, but the people of Vārāṇasī never became the followers of Madhvācārya. Vārāṇasī remained what it had always been, a place of Māyāvādī philosophers.

Both Rāmānuja and Madhvācārya were indeed very great personalities, but their spiritual influence was more or less regional. However, in the time of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he not only had an influence in a few states in India but he travelled around the world twelve times and successfully spread his mission. Because of his preaching, the name of Kṛṣṇa and Vaiṣṇavism is known in almost every country in the world. With this consideration we may ask, “How great is Śrīla Prabhupāda?”

When the mission of Rāmānuja, who held the *śakti* of Ananta, was successful in only three states and the mission of Madhvācārya, who is Bhīma and Vāyu combined, was successful in only one state then what is the power and greatness of that person who spread Kṛṣṇa Consciousness throughout the whole world? How great is Śrīla Prabhupāda?

When Rāmānuja and Madhvācārya toured India for spreading their missions, they had to contend with the opposing elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, the materialists and the Māyāvādīs. But when Śrīla Prabhupāda went out into the world to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he had to contend with all of the above and more. The scientists, who hold a grip on the whole world, were especially a formidable opposition to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but Śrīla Prabhupāda defeated them and many of them surrendered and became his disciples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had to fight with many opposing elements in countries where the culture was not at all favourable for spiritual advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Yet he established over one

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hundred temples, *āśramas*, and Kṛṣṇa conscious communities throughout the world.

With our mind we might try to imagine who he was, what power stood behind him and what his eternal spiritual identity is. Some of the greatest Vaiṣṇavas I have ever had the good fortune to meet considered that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the *śakti* of Nityānanda-Baladeva.

Rāmānuja held the *śakti* of Ananta, but Ananta is an *aṁśa* of Baladeva. *Aṁśa* means a part – Baladeva is the source of Ananta. Baladeva means the full spiritual potency and energy of Godhead. In *gaura-līlā*, Nityānanda Prabhu and Baladeva are considered non-different. Many great transcendentalists in our times who witnessed what our Guru Mahārāja achieved, have concluded that he was the *śakti* of Nityānanda Prabhu, a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. That means that he was empowered with the *śakti* of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world.

Nowadays we may meet a swami or guru (especially in India) who has many disciples and when asked, “Who are you?” he will say, “I am Bhagavān, I am God!” or he may say, “I am the *jagat-guru* (the spiritual master of the universe).” But when our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked “Who are you?” he would say, “I am the humble servant of my Gurudeva. My only credit is that I am the obedient servant to the order of my guru. All the success that I have is due to the grace of my guru.”

Although it is the opinion of many great devotees that our Guru Mahārāja was a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* of Nityānanda Prabhu, still in his own words, he considered himself to be the humble servant of his guru. Our Guru Mahārāja had such a vision that he could see that the whole world could become God conscious, Kṛṣṇa conscious, but he still considered himself the humble servant of his guru.

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If we have love for someone then we may naturally exaggerate their qualities, because that is the natural way of love. But even without any exaggeration due to love for our Guru Mahārāja, if we say that Śrīla Prabhupāda was one of the greatest saints to have ever come to this Earth, it cannot be taken as an exaggeration – his life and achievements stand as evidence for his greatness.

(From a lecture given on Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day at Govindajī Gardens, India, on September 1st, 2002)





PRABHUPĀDA'S MISSION, IDEAL AND ACHIEVEMENTS



I would like to say a few things about Śrīla Prabhupāda. Today I thought of three things in particular regarding His Divine Grace – his mission, his highest ideal and his achievements. Each one of these subjects could indeed be the topic of a book.

His mission is the mission of all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, particularly those who are the followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in these modern times. Recently, on Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's Vyāsa-Pūjā, we mentioned the name *Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata* – Śrī Caitanya means Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and *sārasvata* means 'from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.' This is our line of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Our Guru Mahārāja's mission is the mission of all those Vaiṣṇavas from the time of Caitanya Mahāprabhu down to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and those who have followed in his footsteps.

Our Guru Mahārāja's ideals are also the highest ideals of all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. When we begin in this life, we may have some *sukṛti* from our previous lives. Those who are born in India are accredited with some great *sukṛti*. Once, Prabhupāda said that an ant in India is more fortunate than a human born in another country. That same week he also said that a *ricksaw-wallab* in

Vṛndāvana is superior to the president of the United States. If you speak to a few of the older *rickshaw-wallabs* and if you have a chance to meet the president of the United States, you will understand this point. Whoever is born in India has some *sukṛti* and they begin from there. Those who are born in foreign countries have no *sukṛti* and we must begin from that stage. But regardless of where we begin, very few, if any of us, are born with a high ideal in mind. Within Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism there is an extremely high ideal and this is exemplified in the lives of great *ācāryas* since the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Thus, our Guru Mahārāja's high ideal is the same ideal shared by all bona-fide Vaiṣṇavas.

Thus, his mission and ideal is the same as other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, but as far as his achievements are concerned it could be said that it is possible only in dreams. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja said, "Swami Mahārāja has done a miracle." What is a miracle? A miracle is something beyond our capabilities, something which is beyond ordinary human strength. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja also said, "The Divine came down through him and worked through him. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu personally lived within him. Nityānanda Prabhu lived within the body of Swami Mahārāja and danced a miracle for twelve years all over the world." In regards to Śrīla Prabhupāda's achievements, I have also heard many of our friends and well-wishers in the Gauḍīya Maṭha quote this verse:

*prthivīte āche yadi nagarādi-grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

In every town and village of the world, My Holy Name will be sung. (*Caitanya-bbāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa. 4.126*)

We cannot conceive how this happened. How will the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa be sung in every town and village of the world? Have you ever been to Khartoum in Sudan, Addis Ababa in Ethi-

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opia or Uganda? Have you ever been to a remote village in Chile? You can go to any place on the globe nowadays and the name of Kṛṣṇa will be there to greet you. Some people say that 'Hare Kṛṣṇa' has become 'a household word,' but actually the name of Kṛṣṇa is not a household word – it is a divine sound. In the 1970's I went to the ancient city of Oman in North Africa. When we got off the plane, the baggage handler looked at me and said, "Hare Kṛṣṇa!" We thought we were bringing the Holy Name there, but that fellow had been to London and seen the devotees there, so when he saw us he remembered, "Oh, Hare Kṛṣṇa people." From the remote aborigine villages of Africa to Trafalgar Square in London, to Times Square in New York – all around the world the Name of Kṛṣṇa is there. That is to Śrīla Prabhupādā's credit. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja used to say, "We are so proud of what Swami Mahārāja has done. We are so proud. We could not think how it will happen. He has done a miracle."

It seems that there is an intrinsic characteristic within Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism since time immemorial, that whenever there is an *ācārya*, past or present, there is a controversy surrounding him. It seems that is inherent from the spiritual world. There is even controversy within the eternal *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana – the *vātsalya-rasa* section has some complaint about the *mādhurya* section. Maybe such controversies stem from there, or maybe they simply come due to the nature of this world, which is always filled with controversy. Nonetheless, we see that in the lives of so many great personalities, some controversy surrounds them. One of the reasons is because the contribution of an *ācārya* breaks the norm. We have an expression in modern English – 'a wake up call.' It is like an alarm going off. The plane of this world is sedentary – it always wants to slow us down. Śrīla Prabhupādā used to say that if a *sannyāsī* stays in one place, he will become

expert in eating and sleeping. That is the nature of this world. We settle down and become fixed in our ways. The nature of this world always goes down, not up. Those whom we mark as *ācāryas* make major contributions. They are doing something to wake up, not just the masses of ignorant people, but they are often times shaking the devotees also. Thus, whenever a great personality appears in our midst, it seems like there is always some controversy surrounding him and our Guru Mahārāja was no exception to that. Controversy means complaint, but this is not a new thing. There are certain sections here in Vṛndāvana who claim that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not initiated, therefore everything after him is useless! That propaganda was made sixty years ago and it was passed down within their little groups. Nowadays, people our age or even younger make the same claims. They will fight and we will defeat them! At present, there are devotees in various missions all over the world – all that is due to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

Our Guru Mahārāja carried the dignity of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* all over the world, and so that it would be known and there would be no mistake about it, he ordered that the logo of the Gauḍīya Maṭha should be painted on both sides of the gate at his headquarters in Māyāpura. We *are* Gauḍīya Maṭha, and anyone who thinks otherwise is both blind and foolish. Our Guru Mahārāja carried what he had been given by the order of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In this contemporary world, everything begins with Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas wearing saffron cloth began with Sarasvatī Ṭhākura; carrying the *sannyāsa-daṇḍa* started with Sarasvatī Ṭhākura – so many things that we do in this preaching mission was started by him, and his followers are carrying this far and wide – both in India and abroad.

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We do not think that our Guru Mahārāja is the only preacher, but we must say that his contribution in these modern times was something that other could only dream about. It was unthinkable how it would happen. Even in his own dreams, he could not actually conceive how it would happen! However, he was always very positive. When he had absolutely nothing but the cloth that he wore and a few books, one man in New York asked him, “Do you have any mission?” Śrīla Prabhupāda told, “Yes, I have temples all over the world in many countries – they are just not manifest yet.” But that was not simply a statement – he knew. Why? He had *guru-niṣṭhā*. He had *prema* also, and he had faith in the order of his guru. He knew, “I am here on the order of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, therefore all success will come to me.” He had that conviction and I have seen it. He used to say, “My Guru Mahārāja is always by my side.”

Once, I asked Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, “Is there any tape recording of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura?” He looked at me as if I were a fool and said, “Bābā, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is always present with us.” We are thinking that we must have a tape machine to find him, but those disciples who have faith, know that he is with them always. Similarly, if we have faith in our Guru Mahārāja, his presence and his blessings are always with us and the potency to succeed in following his order is also there. With sincerity we must try to follow that and we may be successful by his grace.

(From a lecture given on Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day, in Vṛndāvana, on November 7th, 1994)



HIS MATCHLESS GIFT



Once, I was in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room, not long before he left this world. Several other *sannyāsīs* were also present, and Śrīla Prabhupāda asked us each to recite a *śloka* in praise of the guru. At last my turn came. By then however, others had already recited all of the verses that I knew by memory. So I began:

*nama om viṣṇupādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine*

Then I explained the meaning. Prabhupāda sat gravely and replied, “That is good, but you should learn another *śloka* as well.” Embarrassed, I vowed to take his instruction to heart.

Many years and many verses later, I found myself in an assembly of devotees and I heard a beautiful verse in praise of Śrī Guru, which was originally composed by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī in his *Mukta-carita*. Its purport was revealed at the time, and I knew within my heart that this was the verse Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted me to learn. Thinking that the time allotted for speaking on this occasion might be short, I wrote a short offering to Śrīla Prabhupāda in which this verse and its deep meaning are discussed. Let me read it to you.

The matchless gift that His Divine Grace Śrī Viśvācārya Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda has so graciously given to his disciples, followers, and ultimately the whole world is nicely expressed by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī in the following prayer to his spiritual master. What we find expressed here by Dāsa Gosvāmī is indeed the essence of our Gauḍīya *sampradāya*.

*nāma-śreṣṭham manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpam
rūpam tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭavātīm
rādbā-kunḍam giri-varam abo rādbikā-mādhavāśāin
prāpto yasya pratbīta-kṛpayā śrī gurum tam nato śmi*

I am fully indebted to Śrī Guru. Why? Because he has given me so many matchless gifts. What are they? He has given me the highest conception of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, the highest form of sound, which contains the highest form of thought, aspiration, ideal, everything. He has given me my *dikṣā-mantra*, which contains a particular kind of meditation for my heart's inner fulfilment, and he has given me the service of Śrī Śacīnandana, the son of Mother Śacī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has brought me in connection with the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's favourite personal assistant, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, the representative of Lalitā-devī, the dearest friend of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has brought me in connection with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the head of our *sampradāya*, who was personally selected by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to distribute *bhakti-rasa*, the highest mellow of spontaneous devotion, *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Śrīla Prabhupāda has given me the connection of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who adjusts our position in relation to *rāgānuga-bhakti* by giving us *sambandha-jñāna*, or the knowledge of what is what, and a proper acquaintance with the environment of pure devotion.

His Matchless Gift

Śrīla Prabhupāda has given me Mathurā-maṇḍala and Śrī Vṛndāvana, where Rādhā and Govinda eternally perform their loving pastimes. In that transcendental land all the forests, creepers, shrubs, grains of sand, hills and water – everything bears the remembrance of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*. I am now becoming acquainted with the association of those cow-herd people of Śrī Vṛndāvana, their nature, and their feelings of love for Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has given me the acquaintance of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the favourite place of Rādhā-Govinda for Their pastimes, and the great Govardhana Hill. Last but not least, Śrīla Prabhupāda has given me the great hope that one day I may be accepted into the confidential camp of servitors who are always eagerly serving the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhikā-Mādhava-sundara. All these inconceivable, matchless gifts are given by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Therefore, I bow down before his lotus feet.

This prayer certainly expresses all the wonders that are the matchless gifts of His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

These matchless gifts are the exclusive property of the *ācāryas* in the disciplic succession of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu coming down from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. These matchless gifts are not available in other *sampradāyas* or through the transcendental teachings of the *Vedas*. These matchless gifts are available only by the grace of the eternal associates of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who have descended to this world from Goloka Vṛndāvana and Śrī Svetadvīpa – Navadvīpa-dhāma.

If we are conscious of all these wonders that our *ācārya* Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṃsa Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda has descended to give us, then we can consider that we have properly approached the lotus feet of our guru. Devoid

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of this understanding, what have we really gained? May the supremely radiant conceptions of Rūpa-Raghunātha illuminate our hearts forever.

Let us always remember the lotus feet of our Divine Master, who is the benefactor of eternal joy in the hearts of his surrendered servants and who is a torchlight of inspiration to all the members of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* in the matter of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

(From a lecture given on Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day at Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple, Vṛndāvana, on November 17th, 1993)





GĀYATRĪ-MANTRA FOR WOMEN



Question: We find that throughout the bona-fide *paramparās* in India the *brahma-gāyatrī* is not given to women, yet your spiritual master (Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda) has done so. Why?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: It is true that our Guru Mahārāja gave *brahma-gāyatrī* to women, but that is not unprecedented, nor is it unauthorised. In the *śāstra* we find that women and *śūdras* are generally never offered *mantra-dīkṣā* (*brahma-gāyatrī*). These two classes are of the same type and they are generally considered by the followers of the Vedic tradition as unfit to receive *mantra* and to perform all the duties that one performs after receiving *mantra-dīkṣā* such as studying the *śāstra*, *yāga* and *yajña*. Nonetheless, we find that Īśvara Purī, the spiritual master of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, accepted Govinda Dāsa (a *śūdra*) as his disciple by offering him the appropriate *mantras*. Govinda Dāsa was a *śūdra* by birth and thus he was ineligible for *dīkṣā*, yet Īśvara Purī accepted him. Later on, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya doubted the authority of such a standard and he inquired from Mahāprabhu. The Lord replied by saying:

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*prabhu kabe — īśvara haya parama svatantra
īśvarera kṛpā nabe veda-paratantra*

The Lord said, “Both the Supreme Lord and Īśvara Purī are fully independent. The mercy of the Lord and Īśvara Purī are not subject to any Vedic rules and regulations.”

(*Cc. Madhya-līlā* 10.137)

Śrīla Prabhupāda was also like Īśvara Purī – he was an ocean of mercy (*kṛpā-sindhu*). Particularly he has been recognised by learned and self-realised Vaiṣṇavas as *śaktyāveśa* – the manifest potency of Śrī Nityānanda Avadhūta. Śrī Nityānanda Avadhūta is the personified mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and He was empowered to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted women as disciples as generously as he accepted men.

Nityānanda Avadhūta is directly Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, by whose potency the pastimes of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa become manifest. Without being invested with the potency of Śrī Baladeva Prabhu (Śrī Nityānanda Avadhūta), no one can become an agent of the Supreme Lord in the matter of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

So our first consideration is from that standpoint – Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mercy are non-different from that of the Supreme. Therefore, we happily accept his decisions, even when the so-called ‘Vedic followers’ question them.

But who is a true ‘Vedic follower’? That is not so difficult to understand. One who has realised the purport of the *Vedas* is a true ‘Vedic follower’ – not simply those persons who adhere to the numerous rules and regulations found in the *śāstra*. Such persons are generally known as Smartas, but such Smartas are usually lacking in their realisation in regards to the ultimate goal of life.

Gāyatrī-Mantra for Women

One may regard the activities of an empowered agent of the Supreme Lord as independent and thus conclude that even his so-called unauthorised activities are to be accepted. But if we look closely in the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, etc. we will certainly find philosophical and practical support for his activities, because the *ācārya* does not act whimsically.

The *brahma-gāyatrī* is Vedic by nature and we find many examples of women in the Vedic literature chanting Vedic *mantras* such as Sarmā, Indrāṇī, Lopāmudrā and Apālā, to name but a few. Furthermore, in the *Ṛg Veda* there are many *mantras* whose seers were women. In his commentary to the *Mahābhārata*, Śrī Madhvācārya explains how Draupadī was a scholar of the *Vedas*:

vedā apyuttamastrībhiḥ kṛṣṇādyābbhirivākhilāḥ

The best of women should follow Draupadī and study the *Vedas*. (*Mahābhārata Tātparyā Nirṇaya* 29.33)

The regular chanting of the *brahma-gāyatrī* three times daily by the duly initiated is called *sandhyā-vandana*. We find in the *Sundara-khaṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* that Hanumān was waiting for Mother Sītā to perform her *sandhyā-vandana*. Hanumān says:

*sandhyā kāla manāḥ śyāmā dbhruvam eṣyati jānakī
nadīm ca imām śiva jalām sandhyā arthe vara varṇinī*

Knowing that this is the time for *sandhyā*, the ever-youthful Jānakī (Sītā) who has the best of complexions, will certainly come to this river with auspicious water in order to perform the *sandhyā* rites. (*Rāmāyaṇa, Sundara-khaṇḍa*, 14.49)

All types of bodily-consciousness, whether they are based on gender, race, or caste, are impediments to spiritual progress. One

who wants to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness must become free from such lower planes of identification. On the spiritual platform there is no difference between one *jīvātmā* and another. All are actually *prakṛti*, or feminine, in the eyes of God.

It is sometimes said that among the conditioned souls, the mind and heart of a man is hard, whereas the mind and heart of a woman is soft. In the Gauḍīya Maṭha I have heard it stated many times that the *brahma-gāyatrī* denotes *puruṣa-bhāva* and when chanted by a man, his mind and heart softens; but if chanted by a woman, the effect will be just the opposite. If this were true there is still no objection to our Guru Mahārāja having given *brahma-gāyatrī* to western women, because in the west we do not find such subtle difference between men and women. In fact, the thinking and feeling of men and women in the west are so identical that we find women desiring the position of *sannyāsa* and even guru.

There are many circumstances that prevail in the west that are basically unheard of in India. Our Śrīla Prabhupāda was empowered to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world, in spite of the vast cultural differences between east and west, and he took liberties in doing so. One should judge a thing by the result (*phalena paricīyate*). Many swamis are now coming from India to the west for preaching, and some are even preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. However, I have not seen any of these swamis who have fully understood the magnitude and depth of the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda. I do not say that this is their fault – the fault falls on the heads of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples and followers who have not actually lived up to his standard. Thus his greatness and authenticity are now in question.

Since the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda many unauthorised ‘disciples’ have introduced degraded standards and *apa-siddhānta* into his movement – such things are often being

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propagated in his name ('Prabhupāda said,' 'Prabhupāda wanted' etc.). Seeing this situation, even the orthodox sections of our own *sampradāya* often draw their conclusions far below the actual dignity and achievements of our Guru Mahārāja. It is indeed lamentable, but it is our fault – not theirs.

The duty of a disciple is to live up to the standards set by the previous *ācāryas*. The measure of the greatness of the spiritual master will be, in many cases, measured by the standard of his disciples. In this way Śrīla Prabhupāda used to stress that his disciples must rise to the standard, otherwise it would be he who would be criticised. Indeed, in this regard, there is much to be desired...





THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE SĀNKĪRTANA MOVEMENT



Question: In a pamphlet entitled, *Śrīla Prabhupāda: The Founder-ācārya of the Golden Age*, it is constantly emphasised that the formation of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s institution is the beginning of the Golden Age of Kali-yuga, and that Śrīla Prabhupāda is the *ācārya* for the Golden Age. Furthermore, the phrase, “For ten-thousand years my books will guide the world” is attributed to Prabhupāda and often repeated. Are we to regard such statements as authoritative for all Vaiṣṇavas, or could the author have been carried away by his own sentiments? Is Śrīla Prabhupāda the *ācārya* for the Golden Age?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: I think that the author has been carried away by his own sentiments. In the pamphlet you are referring to, many statements are out of context or written with the mood of *āmāra guru jagat-guru* (my guru is the guru for the entire world). Such statements have no universal application, however well-intended their author may be.

In any event, the phrase attributed to Śrīla Prabhupāda, “For ten-thousand years my books will guide the world,” is actually not verifiable. He may or may not have said it. Obviously, some devotees think that he did, otherwise they would not quote it. But

it is not mentioned in any of the main books, articles, lectures, letters, room conversations, morning walks and so forth which have been recorded and preserved in the archives of our Guru Mahārāja. Therefore, we do not accept such hearsay as an absolute or authoritative statement. There are 484 references by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the Bhaktivedānta VedaBase to “my books” – none of which even remotely alludes to the famous quote about the ‘Golden Age of ten-thousand years’. Only in the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* do we find the quote. Satsvarūpa Dāsa Gosvāmī writes:

One day in the car he had said, “My books will be the law-books for human society for the next ten-thousand years.”
(*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, Vol.6, Chapter 50)

It is not mentioned where Śrīla Prabhupāda said this, or when, or who was present. Nevertheless, let us consider the possible truth of the statement, for surely it has its validity in transcendental arrangements. What were Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in the first place? Were his books his own creation or were they something else? Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books were, for the most part, translations of, and commentaries on the already existing books written by such empowered personalities as Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not take credit for his own writing, but rather repeatedly took pains to proclaim that he was following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*. In fact, the Bhaktivedānta Purports are so much in line with the purports of previous *ācāryas* that, in many cases, one could say they are direct translations of the previous *ācārya*’s purports. Indeed, they are, but one would never know it unless one took the trouble to examine the writings of the previous *ācāryas*. In a room conversation on February 26th, 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “They are not my books. I am simply translating.”

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The intimate relation between the Bhaktivedānta Purports and those of the previous *ācāryas* is the true glory of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He did not add anything or take anything away; he simply repeated the words of previous *ācāryas*. Therefore, how could the previous *ācāryas* be any less important? We should remember that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that anyone who does not recognise his ‘*Swami*’ is a prostitute. Mahāprabhu made this statement as an admonishment to Vallabhācārya, who failed to recognise the importance of Śrīdhara Svāmī, the original commentator on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva was directly empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the mature product of the *samādhi* (meditation) of Vyāsadeva was *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. We find also that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was directly empowered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to distribute *bhakti-rasa* throughout the world, and he was specifically instructed to write books on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Actually, it is Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī who is the head of our *sampradāya*.

*śrī-caitanya-manobhīṣṭam sthāpitam yena bhū-tale
svayam rūpaḥ kadā mābyam dadāti sva-padāntikam*

When will Śrī Rūpa, who has established the cherished desire of Śrī Caitanya within this world, give me shelter at his lotus feet. (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī established the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in this world, and thus it is he (Śrī Rūpa) who is the actual *ācārya* for the period of the Golden Age. Hence, all members of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *saṅkīrtana* movement are called ‘*rūpānugas*,’ the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

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*mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nabe anya
rūpānuga-janera-jīvana*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is non-different from Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, is very dear to the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. (Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura)

The test of a genuine disciple lies in how well he has understood the purpose of the spiritual master. It is surprising, even alarming, that some devotees ignore the fact that the goal of being a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda is to become a *rūpānuga*. This is confirmed in the Bhaktivedānta Purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 19.132 as follows:

That was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's opinion, and he specifically told his disciples to write books. He actually preferred to publish books rather than establish temples. Temple construction is meant for the general populace and neophyte devotees, but the business of advanced and empowered devotees is to write books, publish them and distribute them widely. According to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, distributing literature is like playing on a great mṛdaṅga. Consequently, we always request members of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness to publish as many books as possible and distribute them widely throughout the world. By thus following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one can become a 'rūpānuga' devotee.

Ironically, some pretenders who claim to be great *ācāryas* decry the *saṅkīrtana* movement by saying that the distribution of transcendental literature is only *karma-yoga*. Such persons are *kaniṣṭha-adhikāris* (the lowest type of devotees) who have no real knowledge of what it means to be a *rūpānuga*.

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The Six Gosvāmīs, headed by Śrī Rūpa, carefully studied all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya establishes this conclusion:

*nānā-śāstra-vicāraṇaika-nipuṇau sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau
lokānāṁ bita-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane mānyau śaraṇyākarau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-bhajanānāndena mattālikau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau*

I offer my obeisances unto Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha Dāsa, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. Śrī Jīva and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, who are expert in deliberating upon the *śāstras* in order to establish true *dharmā*. Because they perform the highest welfare activities for humanity at large, they are honoured throughout the three worlds and are worthy of full surrender. They are absorbed in *bhajāna* to the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and are intoxicated with transcendental bliss. (*Ṣaḍ Gosvāmyaṣṭakam 2*)

Therefore, it must be concluded that the books of the Six Gosvāmīs are indeed intended to guide the world and Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations and commentary on them must also be of the same quality. A similar position is held by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, in that he was empowered to write the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

*more ājña karilā sabe karuṇā kariyā
tān-sabāra bole likhi nirlajja baiyā*

All the devotees have mercifully instructed me. Although I am shameless, due to their order, I have attempted to write. (*Cc. Ādi-līlā 8.72*)

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we also find mention that Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura was the Vyāsadeva of *gaura-līlā*, and therefore no intelligent devotee could possibly dismiss his writings as unessential. Actually, without being empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, no one can write transcendental literature. The fact is that the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* has a great number of such literatures written by empowered personalities. It is the super-excellent characteristic of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* that it has the greatest collection of transcendental literature the world has ever known. All such literature is meant to guide the world.

kali-kālera dharma kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nabe tāra pravartana

The *dharma* of the Age of Kali is the chanting of the Name of Kṛṣṇa. Without being empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement. (*Cc. Antya-līlā* 7.II)

It is a most glaring defect in certain sections of contemporary Vaiṣṇava society that some devotees want to replace Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was appointed as the *ācārya* of our *sampradāya* by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Discounting the contribution of all *ācāryas* and missions since the time of Śrī Caitanya, some persons declare that Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the West marks the beginning of the Golden Age. It is a foolish proposal and Śrīla Prabhupāda would certainly not sanction such inappropriate conclusions.

It is a fact that during Śrīla Prabhupāda's lifetime, his society did perform wonderful service to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement. This is to the eternal credit of all those souls who participated. Yet pride seems to be the greatest enemy of many of those souls who once served the lotus feet of Śrīla

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Prabhu-pāda, and consequently received the blessings of Mahā-prabhu on their humble heads. It is truly unfortunate that in the two and a half decades since the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhu-pāda, some proud and arrogant disciples have brought more disgrace to His Divine Grace, his movement, and the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* than has befallen the whole of Vaiṣṇavism in the past 5000 years. It is sad, it is unfortunate, but it is true – and all in the name of society consciousness!

There is indeed a Golden Age within the age of Kali-yuga, but that age began with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the advent of His *saṅkīrtana* movement, and not with the forming of any institution in modern times. There is no monopoly on the *saṅkīrtana* movement by any institution; the *paramparā* itself retains all rights. Whosoever takes up the *saṅkīrtana* movement will prosper spiritually, and whosoever deviates from the principles of pure devotion will reap a harvest of mixed results. Śrīla Prabhu-pāda mentioned a ten-thousand year period in his *Bhāgavatam* commentary as follows:

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared, He ushered in the era for this saṅkīrtana movement. It is also said that for ten-thousand years this era will continue. This means that simply by accepting the saṅkīrtana movement and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, the fallen souls of Kali-yuga will be delivered. The ten-thousand years of the saṅkīrtana movement inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu five-hundred years ago provide the opportunity for the fallen souls of Kali-yuga to take to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

(Bhāg. 8.5.23 purport)

Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura predicted in his *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

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*pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

In as many towns and villages as there are on the surface of the earth, My Holy Name will be preached everywhere. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Antya-khaṇḍa* 4.126)

It is a fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the one who conducted a preaching mission beyond the borders of India that astonished the Vaiṣṇava world. Many of Śrīla Prabhupāda's god-brothers remarked, 'We could not imagine how the prophecy of Mahāprabhu was to be fulfilled.' The god-brothers were wonder-struck that 'Swami Mahārāja' (Śrīla Prabhupāda) had done it! Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja commented, "It is wonderful that Kṛṣṇa always acts through someone. Swami Mahārāja has done a miracle! We are happy, we are glad and we are proud." Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura mentions in his book, *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*:

*ebe nāma-saṅkīrtana tikṣṇa khaḍaga lai yā
antara asura jīvera phelibe katiyā*

*yadi pāpi chāḍi dharma dūre deśe yāya
mora senā-pati-bhakta yaibe tathāya*

(Mahāprabhu said:) Taking the sharp sword of the congregational chanting of the Holy Name, I will destroy the demoniac mentality within the *jīvas*. If some sinful people give up *dharmā* and go to far off countries, then My general (*senāpati-bhakta*) will go there. (*Caitanya-maṅgala*, *Sūtra-khaṇḍa* 12. 564-565)

Thus, Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura predicted that in the future there would appear a *senāpati* (a great general), who would cause an inundation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. In

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the opinion of many devotees, that personality was Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. Yet it is doubtful that Śrīla Prabhupāda would agree with them, as he always considered himself a humble servant of his Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. This is the reason he was chosen and empowered by guru and Kṛṣṇa to accomplish this service to the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

However, greatly learned scholars and pure devotees who know the purport of the scriptures, have understood the *senāpati* mentioned in *Caitanya-maṅgala* to refer to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Between 1918 and 1936, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura caused a wave of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Bengal that would indeed inundate the whole world. The sound of the *kīrtana* raised by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura conquered the ten directions, silencing the atheists, the impersonalist speculators, and the imitationist Saha-jiyā section of pseudo-Vaiṣṇavism.

Sarasvatī 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 his departure, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that he desired to spend at least ten years preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the western world. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was unable to do this before his disappearance in 1936. However, through his intimate disciple, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's last desire for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the west was fulfilled. Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda continued the work of the *senāpati* foretold by Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, and Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's numerous disciples and grand disciples carry on the same work up to the present day.

Some persons might object that we do not concede that Śrīla Prabhupāda is the *senāpati* spoken of in *Caitanya-maṅgala*. Such

an objection shows a lack of understanding of the *guru-param-parā* and the position of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, both in contemporary society and in *aprākṛta-līlā* (the eternal pastimes of the Supreme Lord).

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared in this world by the prayer of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who implored Lord Jagannātha to send His representative to fulfil the prophecy of Mahāprabhu to spread the Holy Name in every town and village. In response, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared as the fourth son of Bhaktivinoda.

Devotees often overlook this ecstatic piece of transcendental knowledge when trying to establish the greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda. We should remember that the greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda does not reside in our concocted ideas. Certainly it does not reside in putting Śrīla Prabhupāda in the position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (the *sampradāya-ācārya*), or in the position of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (the *senāpati* who appeared in this world as a direct response to the prayer of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura). Such concocted attempts at glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda fail miserably, due to being tainted with the *kaniṣṭha* mentality of *āmāra guru jagat-guru*.

The actual greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda is beyond challenge. Yet he reserves the right of proper disclosure, the right to reveal his eternal identity to those who are free from envy. What Śrīla Prabhupāda did in this world is written in eternal history. Yet to separate him from the very root of his greatness in an attempt to glorify him, denotes a lack of transcendental vision. Such *kaniṣṭha* disciples are often found to be in the category of *guru-bhogī* (one who enjoys the property and mission of the guru), rather than in the position of *guru-sevaka* (one who serves the vision of the guru).

The greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda is not understood or expressed by concoction or sentimental exaggeration. The tran-

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scendental position of His Divine Grace can only be realised when one sees how Śrīla Prabhupāda is connected to the *paramparā* of great masters, and what qualifications earned him that illustrious position. The bona-fide disciple earns this right of divine vision through a lifetime of service and dedication at the lotus feet of the spiritual master – not by any amount of mundane speculation. There is no other way to the truth than this.





IS THE GURU OMNISCIENT?



Question: Was Śrīla Prabhupāda, or any other guru, omniscient?

Narasiṅgha Mahārāja: There are two aspects of the guru, namely absolute and relative. On the inspired side, the guru is absolute and within his own thinking, he is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Our *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja explained this topic as follows:

By the special will of Kṛṣṇa, Gurudeva is a delegated power. If we look closely within the spiritual master, we will see the delegation of Kṛṣṇa, and accordingly, we should accept him in that way. The spiritual master is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and at the same time, the inspiration of Kṛṣṇa is within him. These are the two aspects of Gurudeva. He has his aspect as a Vaiṣṇava, and the inspired side of a Vaiṣṇava is the guru. On a fast day like Ekādaśī, he himself does not take any grains. He conducts himself as a Vaiṣṇava, but his disciples offer grains to the picture of their guru on the altar. The disciple offers the spiritual master grains even on a fast day. The disciple is concerned with the delegation of the Lord, the guru's inner self, his inspired side. The inspired side of a Vaiṣṇava is ācārya, or guru. The disciple

marks only the special, inspired portion within the guru. He is more concerned with that part of his character. But Gurudeva himself generally poses as a Vaiṣṇava. So, his dealings towards his disciples and his dealings with other Vaiṣṇavas will be different. This is acintya-bhedābheda, inconceivable unity and diversity. (Śrī Guru and His Grace, Chapter 2)

So from the standpoint of a disciple, he should consider the guru as absolute and as non-different from Kṛṣṇa.

*ācāryam mān vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo gurub*

One should consider the *ācārya* as non-different from Myself and never show any disrespect towards him. One should not envy him, nor consider him to be an ordinary person as he is the representative of all the demigods.
(*Bhāg.* II.17.27)

The disciple says, “Because my guru knows Kṛṣṇa, he knows everything,” but that is a different matter. We do not find omniscience listed amongst the twenty-six qualities of a pure devotee, nor is omniscience one of the fifty qualities of a *jīva*.

A certain section of devotees thinks that the guru is omniscient; that he knows everything because he knows Kṛṣṇa. This section of devotees believes that the guru’s omniscience means that he may be sitting in his institution and nearby, one of the children in his school is being harmed and the guru knows that such a cruel thing is taking place. They will say that because the guru is omniscient he knows everything, and when asked why the guru did nothing to save the poor child, they reply that the guru does not want to interfere with that child’s *prārabdha-karma*. The neophyte devotee may carry on thinking in this way for lifetimes

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together, but there is no evidence in either *śāstra* or history to support such a misconception.

Some devotees will say that the guru and all other great sages are *tri-kāla-jñā*, that they know the past, present and future, but that is only their conjecture. *Tri-kāla-jñā* means that the liberated soul is not under the laws of material time, which has three phases of existence – past, present, and future. A liberated soul knows that he existed in the past, he exists at present and he will exist in the future. Because the guru knows Kṛṣṇa, that means he is free from the illusion of the effacement of the self (*ātmā*). Those under the bodily concept of life are simultaneously under the influence and illusion of time. Such persons have no knowledge of the eternal existence of the soul, or knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

The guru's 'knowing Kṛṣṇa' does not mean that he knows everything that is going on in Māyā's kingdom. Of course, in a general way, the guru knows that Māyā's kingdom is a place of birth, death, old age, and disease, but still, he wants to save the living entity from the clutches of Māyā – so why would he tolerate an assault against a defenceless child who is under his care in the *gurukula*? Such thinking is only palatable to the lowest section of devotees who have no proper understanding of *guru-tattva*.

The higher devotees and great authorities in the devotional line think in a completely different way than that of the neophytes. Lord Śiva, one of the Twelve Mahājanas (great devotees), says:

abam vedmi śuko vetti vyāso vetti na vetti vā

I know the *Bhāgavatam* and Śukadeva knows it. Vyāsa may or may not know the meaning.

Vyāsadeva may or may not know (*vyāso vetti na vetti vā*) – this is the thinking of the higher class of devotees. By the will of the Supreme Lord, a flow of knowledge may come down in the Vaiṣṇava, but even he may not be aware of its meaning. This is possible – he may or may not know – *vyāso vetti na vetti vā*.

In this regard, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja related an incident. Once, while Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was delivering a lecture, an especially high flow of Gauḍīya conception came down in him. While speaking very intensely, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gestured to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, who was sitting nearby, to write it down. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued to speak for some time but there was no pencil or pen available. When Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stopped speaking, he turned to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and eagerly inquired, “Did you get it, did you get it?” Śrīdhara Mahārāja replied that there was no pen or pencil available to which Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, “Just see, *gobar Gaṇeśa!*” Śrīdhara Mahārāja relates this incident in his own words:

*What I told you, it is not under my command. It is coming from above me. I also once heard Prabhupāda say such. From Vṛndāvana he came to Prayāga. I also went with him, and we were invited to a big man’s place there, and such beautiful, new things came out that I was feeling very much disturbance that I could not note them down – so much so, that I could not attend his lecture very deeply. I only felt much disturbance to get a pen and paper. Then, I felt very much uneasiness, because I could not mark those words. Then I came out and Guru Mahārāja told...his word to me was *gobar Gaṇeśa* – that is *Gaṇeśa* made of *gobar*. *Gobar* means cow dung. *Gaṇeśa* composed of *gobar*. Guru Mahārāja could not know these thoughts that came. He said, “Even I felt the necessity of going through these ideas afterwards.”*

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That person to whose house he (Sarasvatī Tbhākura) went to visit was technically from that section who worship satyam (truth). Then what is the conception of satya? Mahāprabhu, and Rādhā-Govinda, Navadvīpa — that is the highest conception of satya. Satya is not an abstract conception of rules of some transcendental type. What is the relation of Kṛṣṇa and this satya? Guru Mahārāja explained that. And he told us that he also wanted to see the thoughts that came at that time...the inspiration that was revealed in his heart at that time. He wanted to see. That was unknown to him. He said like that. He told us like that, “They are strange to me, but they passed through me, and I want to see.”

I was very much mortified that I could not know them, and at the same time, I had some inner satisfaction that I could appreciate those finer points. Those extraordinary higher points that were delivered then, I was very much disturbed that I could not know them. So, I had the capacity of appreciating the highness of those higher sentiments. That was my satisfaction. There is some inner element in me that can appreciate so much high ideas, and our Guru Mahārāja also wanted to have them to consult a second time. That was my satisfaction, but at the same time, I was mourning all through the lecture that I could not keep it for the public. And what our Guru Mahārāja wanted to do, I also wanted to keep them again, to pass through me.

So, we are instruments. It is the higher property. It may not stay in a particular plane always. By our negotiation, it may care to come down to particular persons. This is very rarely to be found...few and far between. In other words, it is the wealth, the property of our Gurudeva and not ours. That should be our understanding — pūjala rāga-pātha gaurava-bhāṅge.

We find a similar narration by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, describing another incident to Pradyumna Prabhu on November 11th, 1978 as follows:

Sometimes the agent may not know what things are passing through this arrangement. Vyāso vetti na vetti vā — but it is passing through Vyāsa. It is taṭasthā-vicāra. That is Absolute. From the Absolute standpoint, this has been told like that. Even Vyāsa may not know, but things may come through Vyāsa to grace others. This is possible sometimes. But still, we must not admit so easily that Vyāsa does not know. We don't admit. I told it once to my Guru Mahārāja.

I had composed a Sanskrit śloka about Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Guru Mahārāja was very much pleased with that. In Darjeeling I just showed him that I had written this poem about Bhaktivinoda. He saw it. At that time one Mahārāja was like his clerk. Prabhupāda dictated and the Mahārāja used to write letters. The Mahārāja was his attendant for letter writing, but one letter came from Vana Mahārāja, from England, with something. Then Prabhupāda told, "Who has supplied this information to Vana Mahārāja?" The Mahārāja said, "Prabhupāda, you yourself have written this news to him."

"No, no, no. I never wrote this thing to Vana Mahārāja," replied Prabhupāda. Then the Mahārāja humbly took it, "I wrote and you dictated. I remember — you were giving this news to him."

"No, I don't remember," Prabhupāda replied. Then I spoke, "Vyāso vetti na vetti vā." I just remarked at the time that, vyāso vetti na vetti vā.

The narratives above certainly give us an intimate look into the higher conception of *guru-tattva* via the life and teachings of such exalted personalities as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Is the Guru Omniscient?

Ṭhākura and his disciples. The pure devotee is always attentive to the will of the Supreme Lord, but everything that can be known is not always knowable to the devotee. Kṛṣṇa is an autocrat and according to His wish, something may descend in the heart of a devotee as divine revelation, which even the devotee is not aware of. This is what is shown to us by the higher thinking devotees.

While commenting on the Tenth Canto of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Madhvācārya declined to comment on the portion known as *Brahma-vimohana-līlā* (the illusion of Brahmā). In the conception of Madhvācārya, he could not believe that Brahmā, the original guru of our *sampradāya*, could be in illusion. Madhvācārya could not accommodate the idea that Brahmā did not know everything. But Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted everything in *Bhāgavatam* in toto. In this regard, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has stated the following in *The Loving Search for the Lost Servant*:

Although Brahmā and the other gods and gurus and the givers of many sāstras may have given some description of His pastimes, we shall have to realise that Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are not bound by their descriptions. Kṛṣṇa is not confined within a cage.

For this reason, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not hesitate to give a description of the bewilderment of Brahmā (Brahma-vimohana-līlā). Brahmā was bewildered in kṛṣṇa-līlā in Vṛndāvana, and again when Brahmā went to have an interview with Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā, we find the same condition. The boundary of the sweet will of the infinite is such that anything can be accommodated there, and even Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, can be perplexed by Kṛṣṇa.

All these pastimes are like so many lighthouses showing us which way to go. Brahmā is our guru, but he was bewildered by Kṛṣṇa. And Veda-Vyāsa, the universal guru, was also chastised by Nārada. Nārada was put to the test many times.

All these examples are showing us the way. They are pointing out the direction.

Omniscience is a quality of the Supreme Lord and not the quality of the *jīva* or even of the guru. According to the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the Supreme Lord has a total of sixty-four transcendental qualities. The *jīvas*, however, only have fifty of those qualities and can manifest them to a minute degree. Omniscience is not listed amongst these fifty qualities.

Besides these fifty qualities, the Supreme Lord has five more qualities that are sometimes partially manifest in personalities like Lord Śiva. These transcendental qualities are:

- (1) *Sadā-svarūpa-samprāpta* (changeless)
- (2) *Sarva-jñā* (all-cognizant)
- (3) *Nitya-nūtana* (ever-fresh)
- (4) *Sac-cid-ānanda sandrāṅga* (possessing an eternal blissful body)
- (5) *Sarva-siddhi-niṣevita* (possessing all mystic perfections)

‘All-cognizant’ means to know everything or to possess omniscience. According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, this is a quality that even the perfected *jīvas* do not have. Only Kṛṣṇa is fully omniscient. Only Kṛṣṇa, or God, knows everything. Additionally, it may be mentioned that according to *Webster’s Thesaurus* some synonyms for omniscience are as follows:

God; the Creator; the Almighty; the Supreme Being; our Heavenly Father; the Lord; and Allah.

None of these synonyms however are applicable to a pure devotee, the guru or the *ācārya*. So our conclusion is obvious – omniscience is a quality of the Supreme Lord and not a quality of the pure devotee, the guru or the *ācārya*.



ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA IN A CLASS BY HIMSELF?



When speaking of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we sometimes hear the quote of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura – “When thou art living still in sound,”* or that, ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda is living in his instructions’ but this doesn’t simply mean that he’s living in so many gigabytes in the Bhaktivedānta Folio or that he is living in the pages of the beautifully hardbound books adorning our bookshelves.

If we want to experience that Śrīla Prabhupāda is non-different from his instructions, then we must embrace the conception of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We cannot live without that conception and simply honour him in the form of books, folios, marble *mūrtis* and so forth. We will have to join him by joining in with that conception. If we give so much praise to him but we ourselves don’t come to the proper conception of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, then that praise may benefit us and the people in general, but it does not serve the highest purpose. It is like propagating *nāmābhāsa* – what will *nāmābhāsa* do? It will give freedom from material miseries, it will award liberation and it will defeat so many things – but all those results are a mere shadow of *prema-bhakti*. Propa-

*From the English poem *Ṭhākura Haridāsa* composed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in 1871.

gating *nāmābhāsa* pales in comparison to *śuddha-nāma*, the pure Name of Kṛṣṇa. The pure Name of Kṛṣṇa does not give liberation – the pure Name of Kṛṣṇa gives one a taste of love of God. Even liberation is considered mundane when compared to *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

We must come to the right conception. Many times our *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was asked the question, “How will we come to the right conception?” Many ‘how’ questions were asked, and he answered them by saying, “Guru, *sādhū* and *śāstra* – by taking shelter of the lotus feet of our spiritual master, by associating with saintly persons who themselves have the right conception and by studying the scriptures in light of that conception.

The *Bhāgavatam* is not an alien literature to India, but who in India truly understands the meaning of the *Bhāgavatam*? Who understands its actual message? The followers of Rāmānuja study *Bhāgavatam*, the Tattvavādīs in Uḍupī study *Bhāgavatam*, the Vallabhas study *Bhāgavatam* and even the Māyāvādīs study *Bhāgavatam* – but Mahāprabhu rejected all of them! Mahāprabhu recognised Śrīdhara Svāmī, the original commentator on *Bhāgavatam*.

*śrīdhara-svāmī-prasāde bhāgavata jāni
jagad-guru śrīdhara-svāmī guru kari māni*

It is only by the mercy of Śrīdhara Svāmī that I understand the *Bhāgavatam*. Therefore, I accept *jagad-guru* Śrīdhara Svāmī as My spiritual master. (Cc. *Antya-līlā* 7.133)

There is a line from Śrīdhara Svāmī to the Six Gosvāmīs, to the Seventh Gosvāmī (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura), to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and to those who live by their teachings at present – these personalities understand the *Bhāgavatam*. Those persons should be our holy association. Guru, *sādhū* and *śāstra* will help us come to the proper conception and then we will have the merciful presence and grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda – in a Class by Himself?

It is sometimes said that, “Prabhupāda is in a class by himself.” In fact, these days it has become popular to praise Śrīla Prabhupāda by saying this. This is a misnomer. He is not in a class by himself – he is in the top class of the servants of the Lord, who live eternally in the Lord’s company. He is not alone. A Māyāvādī may say, “My guru is in a class by himself. Bliss is experienced alone!” They will eliminate everything and everyone, but we are not for elimination. ‘A class by yourself’ means you have been sentenced to hell for eternity. Rāmānanda Rāya declared that to be without the devotees is the worst type of hell.

*duḥkha-madhye kona duḥkha haya gurutara
kṛṣṇa-bhakta-viraha vinā duḥkha nābi dekhi para*

(Mahāprabhu asked:) Amongst all types of miseries, which is the greatest? (Rāmānanda replied:) Apart from the separation from the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, I see no other misery. (Cc. Madhya-līlā 8.248)

We must see Śrīla Prabhupāda in light of the association of the devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda would never take pleasure in those words. “Oh yes Prabhupāda, you are alone and you are by yourself!” That is like saying, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are a failure.” Śrīla Prabhupāda is always with his Guru Mahārāja, and Śrīla Sarasvatī Thākura is always with his Guru Mahārāja and they are all gathered together far from here. If you study the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, you can get some idea where all these great souls are gathered together. The universe is covered by ten material layers, each one ten times thicker than the previous layer.

*etad aṇḍam viśeṣākhyam krama-vṛddhair daśottaraiḥ
toyādibhiḥ parivṛtam pradbānenāvṛtair bahiḥ
yatra loka-vitāno ’yam rūpam bbagavato hareḥ*

The universal sphere known as *viśeṣa* (subtle manifested energy) is surrounded with elemental layers such as water etc., each ten times thicker than the previous one. The last layer is covered by the *pradbāna*. Within this sphere are the various planetary systems that make up the form of Lord Hari. (*Bhāg.* 3.26.52)

The last of the ten layers is 450 quadrillion miles thick, and after you cross that, you are on the border of infinity. Those great souls are gathered together there – on the higher side of the infinite.

We should select our words of praise carefully – they should not be gathered from mundane feelings. A politician may come and people will tell him, “Oh sir, you are a great man!” but his greatness is never really defined. So we may say that Śrīla Prabhupāda is great, he is our saviour etc. without understanding how he is great and in which way he is actually our saviour. Proper understanding is required. In the days that Śrīla Prabhupāda was physically present, his disciples were often-times at a loss for words to describe his greatness and to praise his actual position.

Now, as time progresses, we should try to understand and not simply make his glorification as something cheap, just as so many people praise Jesus or Mohammed. We find devotees making similar statements about Prabhupāda – “He is the way, the truth and the light!” but behind that, the meaning is very elusive. Devotees want to enthusiastically glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda, but they don’t actually understand his greatness and thus they make statements like, “He was in a class by himself.” This is a big mistake. Our Guru Mahārāja is known as Prabhupāda because he was qualified for that title and his qualification was not that he was independent in his activities, writings or his *siddhānta*. He stated many

Śrīla Prabhupāda – in a Class by Himself?

times, “My only qualification is that I did not deviate one inch from my spiritual master’s instructions.”

He did not come to present something different to us. The proper understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda is to see him in light of the previous *ācāryas*, and proper glorification of him necessitates remembering those previous *ācāryas*. In other words, when we think of Śrīla Prabhupāda in any deep way, for any length of time, we must think of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we must think of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, we must think of Śrīpāda Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī and Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. We must remember the various prayers of great *ācāryas* like Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī. We must remember the statements of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, because these are the things that Prabhupāda came to give us. The conception of Mahāprabhu is represented in all these personalities.

If we want to understand who Śrīla Prabhupāda is, we should look at his title – ‘Prabhupāda.’ Where does it come from? We find in the *Madhya-līlā* of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī refers to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as Prabhupāda. It is also mentioned that Nityānanda Prabhu was called Prabhupāda as well as Śrī Advaita Ācārya.

*kāśī miśra kabe – āmi baḍa bhāgyavān
mora gṛhe prabhu-pādera habe avasthāna*

Kāśī Miśra said, “I am very fortunate that the Lord of all Prabhus (Prabhupāda) will stay in my house.” (*Cc. Madhya-līlā* 10.23)

Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Ācārya are all *viṣṇu-tattva*, and They are all referred to as Prabhupāda. Later on, in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, there is a description of the tree of

caitanya-bhakti. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the trunk of that tree, then there are two branches – the two branches are Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Ācārya. Therefore, in our *paramparā*, the first Prabhupāda is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself and then Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Ācārya.

When the Lord appeared, many devotees of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from Goloka, also appeared in Navadvīpa-dhāma and other parts of Bengal in order to assist Him in His pastimes. All were fully qualified in an infinite variety of ways; nonetheless, the Lord selected certain devotees amongst His associates that would be the icons for the *sampradāya* in various ways. For example, He selected Haridāsa Ṭhākura to be the *nāmācārya* – the *ācārya* for chanting the Holy Name. He selected Śrīpāda Rūpa Gosvāmī as the *rasa-tattvācārya*, and positioned him as the head of the *sampradāya*. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu met Rūpa Gosvāmī at Prayāga, He instructed him in *rasa-tattva*. Rūpa Gosvāmī is also known to us as Prabhupāda, but he is not *viṣṇu-tattva*. He heads the group of select servitors, generally known as the *mañjarīs*, that serve Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Why did Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu select Rūpa Gosvāmī to become the head of the *sampradāya*? There were so many great devotees at that time. What did Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī do? What did he say? In particular, what did he write? We find in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Śrī Rūpa could understand the mood and feelings of Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

*mora ślokerā abhiprāya nā jāne kona jāne
mora manera kabā tumi jānile kemane*

Nobody has understood the point of My verse. How did you understand the intention of My mind? (*Cc. Madhya-līlā* 1.69)

Śrīla Prabhupāda – in a Class by Himself?

From that time until this day, we are known as Rūpānugas – the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī.

I am often surprised to see glorifications of Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes running into hundreds of pages and there is never a mention of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī or the previous *ācāryas*. Śrīla Prabhupāda is waiting for the day when we will realise who he is, and what his connection is with all these great personalities. He is not in any way pleased or charmed by our foolishness when we say he is ‘in a class by himself’ or that he is the *senāpati-bhakta*.^{*} This means that we have not understood His Divine Grace.

(From a class given on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance day at Rūpānuga Bhajana Āśrama, Vṛndāvana on 27th October 1995)



^{*}See Chapter 8, *The Golden Age of the Sāṅkīrtana Movement*.



WHEN KṚṢṆA GIVES, HE GIVES THROUGH HIS DEVOTEE



Once, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “I live eternally at Rādhā-Dāmodara.” Śrīla Prabhupāda’s place of residence at Rādhā-Dāmodara is very, very significant in a number of ways. Firstly, it is the place where we find the *samādhi* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is the head of our *sampradāya*. Just behind his *samādhi*, we find Śrīla Prabhupāda’s place of *bhajana*. He used to look out of his little window while writing his purports to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and he told us, “By seeing the *samādhi* of Rūpa Gosvāmī, I got inspiration to go to the west.”*

It is also quite significant that the Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple is also the place of Jīva Gosvāmī, who is the Gauḍīya *tattvācārya*. All the writings and teachings of Rūpa and Sanātana were supported by Jīva Gosvāmī. He took on all opposition and defended the conceptions of Rūpa-Sanātana which are non-different from the conceptions of Mahāprabhu. In Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhāgavatam*

* “From ‘56 to ‘65 I was in Vṛndāvana. I would sit at Rādhā-Dāmodara and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and see the *samādhi* of Rūpa Gosvāmī. And I would type and cook a little. These *samādhis* are the best in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. They gave me inspiration to go to the West. I have a hundred places to go now, but I still like it here.” (Prabhupāda to Hayagrīva Dāsa, from the article, *With Śrīla Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana*, published in *Back To Godhead*, Issue 53, 1973)

purports and other writings, he also took on so much opposition – Māyāvādīs, Śūnyavādīs, materialists and so many brands of atheism doubting the existence of God. In the place of Jīva Gosvāmī, Prabhupāda took up that service.

It is generally known that Mother Yaśodā bound Kṛṣṇa’s waist with ropes and for this reason He is known as Dāmodara. But at Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple, another binding took place. Kṛṣṇa was captured, defeated and tied up – but it wasn’t Mother Yaśodā that tied Him up and He wasn’t tied with ropes. It was the love of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that bound Him. Śrī Līlā-śuka Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura writes about this pastime.

*īśāna-deva-caraṇa-bharaṇena nīvi-
dāmodara-sthira-yaśaḥ-stavakodbbhavana
līlā-śukena racitaṁ tava kṛṣṇa-deva
karṇāmṛtaṁ vabatu kalpa-śatāntare’pi*

May this *Karṇāmṛtam*, composed by Līlā-śuka who has manifest the glories of the constant fame of Kṛṣṇa who is bound by Rādhā’s girdle, and decorated by the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, flow for a hundred *kalpas*. (*Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* 110)

Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī further explains in his commentary to *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, that the name Nīvi-dāmodara refers to Kṛṣṇa who was bound by the girdle of Rādhārāṇī. He then cites a verse from the *Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa*:

*saṅketāvasare cyute praṇayataḥ saṁrabdhayā rādhayā
prārabhya bhrū-kuṭīm hiraṇya-raśanā-dāmnā nibaddhodaram
kārttikyāḥ janani-kṛtotsava-vara-prastāvanā-pūrvakaṁ
cāṭūni prathayantam ātma-pulakaṁ dhyāyema dāmodaram*

When Kṛṣṇa Gives, He Gives Through His Devotee

When Kṛṣṇa neglected Their appointment, Rādhā became angry and seizing Him, She bound Him around the waist with golden ropes. He then explained that He could not come because He had to attend the Kārttika festival organised by His mother. Let us meditate upon Dāmodara, who speaks eloquent words as His hairs stand on end.

Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that the word *nīvī* also means ‘treasure’ which refers to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s love for Kṛṣṇa. Thus, it is said that Lord Dāmodara was bound by the *prema* of Rādhārāṇī.

In the area known as Sevā-kuñja, Rādhārāṇī defeated Kṛṣṇa, and that is where Kṛṣṇa worshipped the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī. That is where He showed that *rādhā-dāsyam*, service of Rādhārāṇī, is the highest achievement. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple is the most sacred place in Vṛndāvana.* When the *ācārya* speaks, the deepest thing may not be revealed directly, because the indirect revelation is considered to be higher than the direct revelation. We may talk about so many high things from time to time, not everyday – the service of Rādhārāṇī, the position of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Rūpa-mañjarī etc. and such talks may be heard by so many people. But what will they make of that? What will come of that? That is called the subjective plane and there it is a more substantial thing. Many have heard the message. Even the Sahajiyās have heard the message about Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa etc. but they have never actually entered into that plane. They simply make a business out of it. The guru does not always directly reveal the truth, but through his advancement and through revelation in the heart, these things can be realised by the disciple.

* “... it all began here. Therefore, these Rādhā-Dāmodara rooms are the hub of the wheel of the spiritual universe.” (Prabhupāda to Hayagrīva Dāsa, recounted in his book, *Vṛindaban Days*, Chapter 5)

So, when Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke about Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple, he didn't mention this intimate pastime of Kṛṣṇa being defeated by Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa worshipping Her. He simply said, "It is the place of Rūpa Gosvāmī and Jīva Gosvāmī" and made his disciples understand, that it is a very sacred place. He did not go into any detail about that. What are we to understand from this? We should understand that these things are not simply meant for the ear. These are heart realisations, and one should try to become qualified for them. We have only heard a little, but that gives us some idea. For example, people in India may only hear a little about America, but they hear enough to awaken the desire to want to go there. It is not possible for them to fully understand what is in America. No matter how hard we would try to explain to them what is in America, they will have to see for themselves. If that is true about America, then what to speak of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa? Even *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* only points in the direction, "Go this way! Go in the direction of *kṛṣṇa-līlā*." In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* a summary of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is given. As lengthy as the Tenth Canto is, it is nonetheless, a summary – but it is such an important summary! It is so potent that it will awaken within us a desire to know, "Who is this Kṛṣṇa? Who is this cowherd boy who roams the fields of Vṛndāvana with cows and plays on Govardhana Hill?" By hearing about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, this desire may awaken within us. This is our highest fortune in life. It is for this reason that Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself came. It is for this reason that His devotees came, and it is for this reason also that Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the western world.

Some devotees think that Śrīla Prabhupāda became great when he arrived in America. What does that mean? It means that we contributed to his greatness. Because of us, he's great! Some people say that a 'golden age' of Kali-yuga began when the Jala-

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dūta docked in America. This is just an expanded version of the phrase, *āmāra guru jagat-guru* ('my guru is the universal guru). It may be that your guru is the *jagat-guru*, but the emphasis is on *āmāra* (my) and not on guru. This mentality is found in neophytes. Their guru may be very high and the disciple may become very fanatical about that, but that fanaticism is mixed with their own false ego. This should be avoided.

Once, Śrīla Prabhupāda told one of his lady disciples a story. While writing the *Gītā-Govinda*, Jayadeva Gosvāmī became very disturbed when he found that he wanted to write a *śloka* wherein Kṛṣṇa begged for the mercy of Rādhārāṇī. He thought, "How has this impure thought entered my mind? Kṛṣṇa is begging for the mercy of Rādhārāṇī?" He abandoned his pen and told his wife, "I'm going to bathe in the Ganges to purify myself." Soon after, he returned and sat down while his wife served him his meal, and after finishing, he went to his room. Then his wife sat down to take her meal, but while she was eating, again Jayadeva entered the house, freshly bathed. Seeing his wife eating, he chastised her saying, "What are you doing? You are eating your meal before your husband?" She said, "You already ate your meal then you went to your room!" Jayadeva became even angrier, "Are you completely mad? I just came back from taking my bath." Again, his wife told him, "You came here, you ate, then went to your room!" Jayadeva then went to his room and looked at his manuscript. There was the verse that he had hesitated to write:

*smara-garala-khaṇḍanam
mama śīrasi maṇḍanam
debi pada-pallavam udāram*

Mercifully bestow upon My head the soft petals of your lotus feet, which dispel the poison of love in separation.
(*Gītā-Govinda* 10.8)

Many revelations must have come to him at that time, and one of them was, “Oh, how fortunate my wife is!” He returned and gave obeisance to his wife.

What Kṛṣṇa wanted to say, He revealed in Jayadeva’s heart. Yet he originally thought, “How can I write this? It is not proper” and he abandoned his pen. But Kṛṣṇa desired that, “It must be written!” and He came and wrote it Himself and then vanished. When Śrīla Prabhupāda told this story to his disciple, she said that Śrīla Prabhupāda became very pensive and his mood was very intense, but again, he just focused on this point – what Kṛṣṇa wants to give, He will give through His devotee.

Many times the *ācārya* will point exactly to a topic, but for his own internal reason, he may not say what it is. Later, his servant may further explain that topic . This is the *paramparā*. Jīva Gosvāmī wanted to say that *parakīya-rasa* was the most super-excellent aspect of *mādhurya-rasa*, but he was opposed, not by Sahajiyās or Māyāvādīs, but by the moralists – cultured people who felt that *svakīya* was the only recognisable plane of *mādhurya*. Śrī Jīva wanted to explain that *parakīya-bhāva* has no contact with this mundane conception, but the moralists could not understand because their purity was contaminated with mundanity. Later, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura came in our line and pointed out the hidden meaning within the writings of Jīva Gosvāmī. It was couched, but he revealed, “Here is *parakīya-bhāva!*” *

This doesn’t occur only once – it happens many, many times. The true potency to understand the teachings of the guru, the potency to know his heart and the potency to understand Mahāprabhu is not simply based on external knowledge that enters

* Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the true position of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in his *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary to *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

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the ear. It is an internal arrangement that is made. We call it the 'subjective plane of reality', and when that comes to us, then we will understand these things. But we may have many different conceptions if the words go no further than our ears. So how can we attain the right conception? We must *serve* the conception. You should serve that which you recognise to be the highest. Once, a god-brother told me, "Yes, I also *take* from the conception of Śrīdhara Mahārāja!" I replied, "That is your mistake! Don't *take* anything! Put your head there! Sacrifice, surrender and serve this conception – then you will understand the conception of Rūpa Gosvāmī. But you cannot *take* it for your *pratiṣṭhā*."

The higher devotees may say some very intimate things about Kṛṣṇa, but there is a danger for the lower devotees. We may repeat those very same words, but we have to be careful because we may be influenced by *pratiṣṭhā*. These things will enthuse and charm us, but when we tell these things to others, we have to be careful that we are not making a business of this high conception. We should not show off – "See what I know? I know so much!" We may be well intended, but because we are neophytes, we may fall under that sway. Therefore, we should leave such work to the higher devotees. 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure'. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja said, "The prospect is so great, why risk it?" If it takes a hundred thousand lifetimes to enter into eternity – that is nothing! That is a small price to pay – the goal is so great. Why risk being barred from there? Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja explained that the Lord's most intimate eternal associates guard the higher world. If they trace in us any misgiving, selfishness or *pratiṣṭhā*, they will not allow us to go there. We cannot force our way in. We have to serve our *guru-paramparā* very sincerely. This is so simple that even a child can understand it. It's very simple, but it is also very profound. A child may come and clean

the guru's room, that is very good, but can that child understand the guru's conception? When we can serve the heart-conception of our guru, then we have actually achieved *guru-sevā*. This is where many devotees have fallen short of the goal in *bhakti*. They have served with body and mind, but not with their soul – the soul means with the heart. They swept floors, they collected money and they even sold books. Many people did that, but they never properly grasped the conception inside those books.

Here, in this world, we succeed by being forceful, but in that world, we must enter head first and head down. Everyone in that world is our superior. We are superior to none – inferior to all. This is actually the feeling of an *uttama-adbhikāri*. When we actually have that humble mood of service, Kṛṣṇa and His devotees will bring us inside. But if that mood is lacking, even if we have wealth, followers etc. these things will not help us. Those things will not bring us one inch closer to the ultimate goal of life.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja said, “The things of the lower world can never give fulfilment” This is such a simple, but beautiful statement. This expression is right under our nose throughout our whole life, but who has figured it out? The soul is a higher thing, higher than matter. We must realise that matter can never fulfil our inner desires. We can never be satisfied by the lower – only by the higher. We have to be attentive to this. How can we be attentive in the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? How can we achieve the ultimate goal of existence? Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja said, “You have come to Swami Mahārāja's movement for that purpose – now don't be a self-deceiver, don't cheat yourself.” After starting on the path to attain the highest goal, will you settle for ‘position’? Will you settle for the position of a GBC? Will you settle for the position of a temple president? Will you settle for the position of a guru? Whatever it may be – don't settle for any of those

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things! You came for the ultimate goal of life, now pursue the ultimate goal of life! How will you do that? Mahāprabhu says *sādbu-saṅga* – keep association with devotees. ‘Devotee’ doesn’t mean those who don’t know where they’re going, who are not fixed on the goal of life and are simply enthralled by *māyā*. *Sādbu-saṅga* means associating with devotees who are liberated from *māyā*.

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* the association of *sādbus* is pronouncedly given in Mahāprabhu’s teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī. Of course, some devotees will say, “We have already come to a *sādbu* – we have Prabhupāda. We are loyal to Prabhupāda!” But even after coming in touch with a *sādbu*, you have to keep that connection with him. Even if you’ve awakened love of God, you are not independent of the *sādbu*.

kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya sādbu-saṅga
kṛṣṇa-prema janme teṅho punaḥ mukhya aṅga

The root cause of devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the association of *sādbus*. Even when love for Kṛṣṇa arises, association of *sādbus* remains the most essential principle of devotion. (*Cc. Madhya-līlā* 22.83)

How else are we to relish love of Kṛṣṇa but in the association of His devotees? There is no other alternative. Once we become a lover of Kṛṣṇa, we won’t want to associate with anyone to except His devotees!

This world is a treacherous place – guard your soul! Don’t allow it to be consumed by matter. Guard your soul! We all came to Prabhupāda’s movement for that purpose. Don’t be a self-deceiver! Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said:

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*Maintain thy post in spirit world
As firmly as you can,
Let never matter push thee down
O stand heroic man.*

*O Sāragrābī Vaiṣṇava soul,
Thou art an angel fair,
Lead, lead me on to Vṛndāvana
And spirit's power declare.*

*There rest my soul from matter free
Upon my Lover's arms
Eternal peace and spirits love
Are all my chanting charms. **

Don't allow yourself to sink into this material world. You have the human form of life, you have come in touch with Śrīla Prabhupāda and the *sādhus*; you have come in touch with the words of the holy scriptures; you have come in touch with the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa – we must protect all these things as our wealth!

(From a class given in New York on July 7th, 1998)



* This English poem was composed by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda at Purī while performing *bbajana* in 1871, in contemplation of the *samādhi* of Nāmācārya Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura.



SUBSTANCE OVER FORM



Who is a follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda and who is only a worshipper of his form? Are the worshippers of Śrīla Prabhupāda's form and his institution actually following Śrīla Prabhupāda or are they simply giving lip service to his name? The issue is an argument of substance over form (*vāñī* versus *vapu*).

The following is a conversation between Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja and a leading devotee from Iskcon on March 6th, 1982, at Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha, Navadvīpa-dhāma. In this conversation Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja concludes that the leaders of Iskcon are simply taking the name of Prabhupāda without entering into a substantial understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. His concluding words are devastating:

Whatever you say, that will be superficial to me — that won't reach to the depth of my knowledge and experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever you will see, what all of you will see, that won't reach the depth of my knowledge about Iskcon, that is, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Who is Kṛṣṇa? You are all primary students. I think you so.

Now, many years have passed, but unfortunately the position of our Guru Mahārāja's institution has gone from bad to worse — nothing has changed for the good. A new generation of devotees is now taking the challenge to bring about change for the better, but they will meet with the same mentality (or worse) that the previous generation met with fifteen years ago — and all in the name of 'Prabhupāda.'



Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So, you united yourselves and joined Swami Mahārāja what for?

Devotee: For spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, that is all-important, is it not? *Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* — not only non-religion, but all faiths of religion. We must forsake, abandon them only for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so valuable and so accommodating. So, we shall take all risk for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya*.

sva-dharme nidhanam śreyaḥ para dharmo bhayāvahāḥ

It is better to die while performing one's own duties, for executing the duties of others is fraught with uncertainty. (*Gītā* 3.35)

When I was young, I was a student of *Bhagavad-gītā*. When I used to come to this line, *sva-dharme nidhanam śreyaḥ* — I felt discouragement. Where I am, my immediate duty, I must die for that, for discharge of duty. But whenever I would come to *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, I got some strength of infinite character.

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Risk everything for Him. So everything is laudable as long as it is in connection with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for which Swami Mahārāja went there empty-handed.

I do not know less than you about Swami Mahārāja. I knew him from before he joined the mission, until the last day of his life. He asked me from America, he wrote one letter – “I don’t feel well, I may die. Should I die here working for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or shall I go back to India?” I told him, “I feel that Prabhupāda (Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) has given you that land for propaganda work. It is in my mind, so I shall say, ‘You give your life up there, working.’” And he took it up.

I knew him best. When this Iskcon was first conceived perhaps twenty years ago, he began his actual life in preaching from a hired house in Calcutta. The *Back To Godhead* was published, and my article was there, and at that time he thought of the name Iskcon. But you have sacrificed so much. We have got also some experience of sacrifice in our mission in the time of our Guru Mahārāja. And what for? That is all-important, and that is not a very cheap thing. Kṛṣṇa consciousness proper is not a very cheap thing.

*anyābbhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukulyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

The highest form of *bhakti* develops when one is devoid of all material desires, *jñāna* and *karma*. One must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favourably. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* I.1.11)

*muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parayanah
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahā-mune*

O great sage, even amongst many millions that are liberated and have achieved perfection, one may be a devotee of Lord

Nārāyaṇa. Such devotees are fully peaceful and very rare.
(*Bhāg.* 6.14.5)

What is Kṛṣṇa consciousness proper is all important. Only in human life is it possible to begin, and that is also very uncertain. So, once connected, one should try his best to attain, to work towards that goal as far as possible. The spirit of the thing should be kept, as much as it is possible, and then unity, and management, administration, everything is well and good.

He came here at least five or six times after he began his preaching. Before that also, he came here numberless times; I also used to live by his side, next door. His laboratory was on the ground floor; I was on the first floor for a long time. Anyhow, when he began his translation of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it was in consultation with me in a very deep way. Anyhow, he requested me many a time that, “Please look after them; I am taking them this side. You have got some responsibility to look after them.” In this way, my nature is to avoid; not very inviting, but still, he repeatedly came to me and requested me. In the first batch of devotees that he brought here to India, he kept here in my care. And it was I who suggested to purchase land where Iskcon is standing now. Anyhow, I was also friendly. Now also I am so. But things are being turned opposite. When I heard that many dissatisfied souls are going astray, away from Iskcon, and some of them I knew personally, then I felt some pain in my heart, “Such good souls are going away?”

I gave some proposal to them that these persons should be accommodated, but they did not care to hear in the beginning. After a time, three important persons in the management were rudely treated. Then both the parties were aggrieved and came to me and I effected some compromise and they accepted and

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things went on well. Even so, I find now and then, some persons are going away, and those persons that are in power, their power is growing; the men and money are coming in their hands. It is generally a trial for the *ācārya*. I have got experience of at least fifty-five years, about the mission; so many split and I also tried to make a compromise and did a little something also. In this way, I am staying, passing my days.

I am of a little different character. I do not like any big company. Rather, I like more to read the *śāstra* and to understand the meaning from it in different ways. I have written some poems in Sanskrit; some books also in Sanskrit and my mind is almost always busy to find out the real meaning to the *śāstrika* scriptures – the *mantram* or the *sūtram* or anything. That is my nature generally. But when such things were occurring amongst some of them, some offended persons came to me and requested me to intervene in the matter, because Swami Mahārāja said many things about me within his mission to his disciples. So, some of them knew it and they asked me to intervene. Then when I gave some proposal, but they showed deaf ears. Then I asked them, “Try to help in my name in a relieving way.”

Devotee: Who did you ask, and in which case?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Pradyumna came first with eighteen points of dissatisfaction. I reported it to Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja. He was busy in his propaganda work. Then he told me, “Things are going on very well. I can’t go now. When I shall go during Gaura-Pūrṇimā, I shall try to meet you.” Then he came and went away, but did not care to meet with me. “Things are going on very well.” Then one devotee came – he was in charge of Vṛndāvana *gurukula* perhaps. I saw he was a good man, but I heard that he has become indifferent...an important man has become indifferent. Then next they came saying that, “Three gurus, they are unfit and

they should be discharged and punished.” They came to punish three gurus who had direct appointment of Swami Mahārāja including Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja also. Anyhow, I intervened, and some compromise was effected. In this way, so many came and I am hearing and I told, “Go on with some relief work.”

Devotee: I am here, as you say, for unity. This is a unity effort only. “United we stand, divided we fall.”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I differ from you. Unity for what? Unity for a bad thing – that can create havoc.

Devotee: Well, how can it be a bad thing? Iskcon is meant for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I say that the ideal is all-important, and next, unity. Administration is the position of the *kṣatriya*. And the *ācārya*’s work – that is for the *brāhmaṇa* who does not care for this worldly achievement. That is for the *brāhmaṇas*, and administration is with the *kṣatriya*, finance with the *vaiśya*. This should be the general conception. So, those with brahminical temperament, they should be concerned about *sāstrika* knowledge; that is their *lakṣaṇa* (symptom).

śābde pare ca niṣṇātām

The qualification of a spiritual master is that his faith is fixed in the Lord and the *śāstra*. (*Bhāg.* II.3.21).

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

Just try to understand this knowledge by approaching a self-realised person who has seen the truth. Make submissive inquiry and render service unto him. The *tattva-darśi*,

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the seer of the truth, will instruct you and give you initiation into this sacred path. (*Gītā* 4.34)

tasmād gururṇi prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreyayaḥ uttamam

One should thus take shelter of a spiritual master and inquire about the highest goal of life. (*Bhāg.* II.3.21)

*tad vijñānārthan sa gururṇ evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṇi brahma-niṣṭham*

In order to learn the transcendental knowledge, one must submissively approach a spiritual master who is fixed in the Supreme Truth. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12).

That should be the criterion of the *ācārya*. Not a man who can conduct good administration, make money and recruit more men. That is not the criterion of an *ācārya*. So, the dissatisfied, to help them, that was my advice to the discontented, and before this, there is one thing I should say – anyone who came to me and asked anything, they took it on tape, and that tape may be propagated anywhere and everyone. Whoever comes, whatever I say, they take a tape of that. And they began to preach in their own way. In this way, I heard that Dhīra-Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja took some tapes of me and has copied them and he is spreading it amongst the public. I was told that this was appreciated. Those that came to hear that tape, I am told that they had got some sympathy for me. In this way perhaps, some persons were attracted towards me through the tapes, and that is the cause of all this trouble. Those that can hear from me through the tapes, they are having some sympathy towards me, and they come to me seeking for help. I am here and I speak to those that are coming to hear from me, irrespective of anyone. In this way, the trouble has arisen here. Some are more attracted towards my tape. Have you heard?

Devotee: Yes, I very much appreciate, I had heard with him also last year. Only thing, that their point is that by hearing your...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, I also like . . . all of us are proud, those that have faith in Mahāprabhu, they cannot but be proud that Swami Mahārāja has done such wonderful work in his propagation. It is inconceivable to so many. And that his position and prestige will be diminished – that will be almost death to us! We want that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism should have a spacious field. But still, justice should be there.

Devotee: Now, their point is that by hearing your tapes...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I have heard their point. They say that whatever will be the majority of the committee (GBC) is absolute. I differ there. I consider that you are all students in the line of truth – so don't think that you are all perfect! You are students. So try to be accommodating, and strive to keep the standard.

Devotee: One thing they say is that by hearing your tapes, the determination to serve in Iskcon should increase, but instead they are finding fault.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: One doctor (a Ph.D. in neurophysiology) was sent to me for initiation. He was sent by one of the zonal *ācāryas*, and perhaps he heard my tapes. Anyhow, he got some faith in me and I initiated him. I have written one book, *Pra-panna-jīvanāmṛta*, a compilation from many sources, and I have also composed some poems in Sanskrit. That doctor said that, "Your writings are helping Iskcon in an inestimable way – making Iskcon more deeply rooted, and it is also enlivening." That remark came to me and it is not impossible. Swami Mahārāja spread Mahāprabhu's instructions very widely and what I collected in that book, many very selected passages from many higher devotees, that can help the movement. In this way, my connection was

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to consolidate and make it deep-rooted. But unfortunately, things are going in such a way as if I am standing in the opposite party. But I don't think so. I think that my inclination, my advice and my friendship with Swami Mahārāja can help you a great deal on both sides – on the constitutional, as well as the spiritual ideal. This is my simple conviction. For my whole life, I had no ambition, and in my old age I am not such a fool that this time, at the cost of Iskcon, I will try to improve my position.

Devotee: They have always had great reverence for you.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Only when they did not differ with me.

Devotee: The only thing that they are a little bitter about now is that some of the people who have some criticism against the movement have...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Reverence formally. What sort of reverence do they have towards me? Formal or material? Substantial? Spiritual?

Devotee: Well, I think that for your knowledge...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: No, no, their reverence for me is in a formal way, I think. At least now they have proved like that. They are more particular with form management, and they want formal help from me. But I am not a man who is concerned with form only. I like spirit more than form. Rather, I like to be a form-breaker than a form-maker, if it is necessary for spiritual upliftment.

Devotee: That's pretty heavy.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And it is there – *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. What is that? What is the ideal and the highest goal?

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*āsām abo caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām abarṇi syāṁ
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajarṇi sva-janam ārya-patnarṇi ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-pada-vīriṇi śrutibhir vimṛgyām*

O, let me become a bush, a creeper or a plant in Śrī Vṛndāvana, so that I may attain the dust of the feet of the *gopīs*. They have given up those things that are most difficult to renounce such as the association of their family members and the laws of society in order to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, which are searched for by the *Vedas* themselves. (*Bhāg.*10.47.61)

Are you acquainted with this *śloka* of *Bhāgavatam* which is spoken by Uddhava about the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, about their qualification? Are you acquainted with this *śloka* of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*?

Devotee: No. Kindly tell me.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So you should have connection with the highest ideal in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Where to go? What is our destination? For what have we come to Iskcon? Swami Mahārāja has given a general call to so many, crushing the pride of the present scientific civilisation. But what for? What is our highest aim? You must be conscious of that. For what have you come? You soldiers, you are arrayed to fight with *māyā*, but what for? What is your aim? What is the conception? There are so many conceptions – the Islamic conception, the Christian conception, the *varṇāśrama* conception, the Buddhist conception, Śaṅkara's conception – so many. But what is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness that Swami Mahārāja gave to you?

Devotee: Our thinking is that we do not know Kṛṣṇa. We have no

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qualification to know Kṛṣṇa. But we know Prabhupāda, therefore we want to serve him.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is your Prabhupāda? There are so many spiritual masters in the world. What is the peculiarity of your Prabhupāda?

Devotee: He is putting us at the feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Then what is Kṛṣṇa? Did he not preach about Him? He preached about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And what is that Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Devotee: Surrendering to Prabhupāda means preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: He captured your mind through preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Devotee: Right.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And what do you find peculiar to Kṛṣṇa consciousness that you left your previous religious ideas and joined Swami Mahārāja? You took so much risk – what is that great Kṛṣṇa consciousness? You must know that.

Devotee: Yes, yes, we know – whatever Prabhupāda has taught us!

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Not hazy – you are simply taking the name of Prabhupāda!

Devotee: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord – that is a vague word. Someone else will say that Allah is the Supreme Lord, another will say that Jesus is the Supreme Lord...

Devotee: Well, He has His name, form, paraphernalia, pastimes – they are non-different from Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: You have to know what is the Kṛṣṇa conception. Back to Godhead – what is that Godhead?

Devotee: We are being educated in our Iskcon society about that.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: That education is not a mere fashion. That is reality.

Devotee: Our Guru Mahārāja – he was there guiding this mission for 13 years...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I know your Guru Mahārāja more than you do. I knew him from the beginning to the last days of his life. So much so, that once he proposed to me to become the president of Iskcon. I refused. In his last days, he wanted me to live along with him in Iskcon, to have my constant association.

Devotee: If I say something representing their side (the GBC), you please do not mind it.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Whatever you say that will be superficial to me. That won't reach to the depth of my knowledge and experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever you will see, what all of you will see, that won't reach the depth of my knowledge about Iskcon, what is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, who is Kṛṣṇa. I think you are all primary students.



As I mentioned in my opening statement, “The position of our Guru Mahārāja’s mission has gone from bad to worse – nothing has changed for the good.” Bad to worse means that previously they had only a slight necessity for adjustment in areas such as Vaiṣṇava behaviour and philosophy. Now, the philosophical misconceptions have increased a thousand fold. What to speak of Vaiṣṇava behaviour, *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* has become their food and drink!



BOOKS ARE THE BASIS?



*“Books are the basis, purity is the force
preaching is the essence and utility is the principle.”*

How many times did Śrīla Prabhupāda make this statement? This is indeed an important slogan in any temple, *āśrama*, or household where a disciple or follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda resides. This saying has been quoted thousands of times in *Bhāgavatam* class by *sannyāsīs*, gurus and leading preachers as a ‘Prabhupāda said’. But His Divine Grace never said it!

If you have the Bhaktivedānta VedaBase then simply type in the above slogan and see for yourself. This slogan, which has become a principle by which to understand the desires of Śrīla Prabhupāda for Iskcon, actually never came from the lips of Śrīla Prabhupāda! So how is it that we have all come under this misunderstanding?

This saying comes from a Chinese scroll which was pointed out to Śrīla Prabhupāda by his disciples on February 25th, 1977. Remarkably Śrīla Prabhupāda did not even ditto the slogan at that time. Although the devotees present appreciated the slogan, we do

not find that Śrīla Prabhupāda made any further mention of it, nor did he authorise it in any way to be spread throughout Iskcon. However, this saying was popularised through the BBT newsletter.

Thus, for the most part, many devotees are under the impression that this motto was personally uttered by Śrīla Prabhupāda many times and that he established it as a pillar of thought in his movement or even as ‘law’ for that matter – at least that is what we have been led to believe.

Ironically, if we analyse it, this motto is philosophically incorrect when we try to apply it to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Firstly, books are not the only basis. The basis that forms everything in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy is guru, *sādbu* and *śāstra*. It isn’t just *śāstra* (books) – it has to be all three.

*sādbu-śāstra-guru-vākya
bṛdaye kariyā aikya*

One must make the words of the *sādbus*, the scriptures and the guru one within the heart. (*Prema-bbakti-candrikā* I.10)

Preaching is not the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Preaching is what we do to convert non-believers to Kṛṣṇa consciousness – so how can that be the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*? The essence is *śraddhā* (faith) and *śaraṇāgati* (surrender). First there is *śraddhā*, which eventually matures into *śaraṇāgati*. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has explained that *śraddhā* is the halo of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and *śaraṇāgati* is the halo of Kṛṣṇa. *Śraddhā* reveals Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thus, the most essential requirement in devotional service is faith, Without faith we cannot make any progress, and without *śaraṇāgati*, there is no entrance into Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Purity is not the force. From the standpoint of purity, the *gopīs* were impure due to their transgressing the laws of society and

Books are the Basis?

śāstra (*ārya-paṭhaṁ ca hitvā*). Whether one is in a pure or impure condition is irrelevant.

*apavitra pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣaṁ sa babyābhyantara śuciḥ*

Whether one is pure or impure, or having passed through all conditions of life, one who remembers the lotus-eyed Lord becomes externally and internally clean. (*Garuḍa Purāṇa*)

*dvaite bhadraḥbhadra-jñāna saba mano-dharma
ei bhāla, ei manda — ei saba bhrama*

In the world of duality, the conceptions of good and bad are all mental creations. ‘This is good’ or ‘This is bad’ – this is all illusory. (*Cc. Antya-līlā* 4.176)

Utility is the principle – using everything in Kṛṣṇa’s service (*yukta-vairāgya*) is certainly *a* principle in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but it is not *the* principle. The main principle is to always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him:

*smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidbi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) is always to be remembered, and He is never to be forgotten. All other rules and regulations should serve these two principles. (*Padma Purāṇa*)

Thus this slogan, ‘books are the basis’ etc. may sound good to rally the troops to action, but where is the *śāstrika pramāṇa* for this statement? There is none. It does not hold up under scrutiny.



SOCIETY CONSCIOUSNESS VS. KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS



Question: I read a recent article on the internet by a leading Iskcon *sannyāsī*/GBC/guru wherein he said:

We cannot even extend this family (Iskcon) to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. We cannot even take one step forward because the problem is that if we put too much emphasis on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, then we will miss out on our focus. We will lose the focus on Iskcon.

Is there really a conflict of interest between Iskcon and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura?

Narasīṅgha Mahārāja: There is a ‘yes answer’ and a ‘no answer’ to your question. One wonders who the ‘our’ in ‘our focus’ is that he is speaking of? Is it Śrīla Prabhupāda or is it the present Iskcon leadership?

No – there is no conflict of interest or a loss of focus if Iskcon gives emphasis to Bhaktisiddhānta because, in the opinion of Iskcon’s founder, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, Iskcon is the movement of Bhaktisiddhānta!

On the other hand, yes – there will be a conflict of interest and a loss of focus if Iskcon gives any emphasis to Bhaktisiddhānta because the present day Iskcon is a deviation from the original Iskcon in numerous ways. The fact that thousands of devotees have left Iskcon and joined other bona-fide branches of the Gauḍīya Maṭha is a testimony to this. In the formative years of Iskcon, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote as follows:

On the disappearance day of my Guru Mahārāja, you may hold a meeting to discuss his activities and offer respect to his memory. Practically this movement is his, because it is under his order that I have come to your country. (Letter to Upendra, December 2nd, 1968)

This movement was started by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and then it was entrusted to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Then we are trying to serve his word and many of my god-brothers, they are also... (Lecture, Los Angeles, January 13th, 1969)

Practically there is no credit for me – if there is any credit it goes to my Spiritual Master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who is helping me by sending so many good souls like you in this movement. Whatever is being done, it is due to His Divine Grace only. So my business is just to carry out his order. (Letter to Dayānanda, March 26th, 1969)

So I am pet dog of my Guru Mahārāja and you have helped him so nicely to push on the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and I am very much pleased by your serious and sincere attitude, so you will get all the full blessings of my Guru Mahārāja. That you may know for certain. (Letter to George Harrison, January 4th, 1973)

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These quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly demonstrate a connection and the non-difference between Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement and the movement of Bhaktivinoda and Bhaktisiddhānta. They are in harmony – not in contrast.

The person you have quoted, however, didn't join Iskcon until a few months before Prabhupāda's disappearance and therefore had no real experience of what Prabhupāda's mood was in establishing Iskcon. It should also be remembered that this is the same person that made a TV series about Śrīla Prabhupāda in which a flash of light emanates from Śrīla Prabhupāda's forehead, which repels the personality of Kali-yuga. Such a portrayal of Śrīla Prabhupāda as a Bollywood *sādbu* by a senior disciple is a serious cause for concern...

In the early years of Iskcon, it was an established daily practice to recite or sing the *praṇāma-mantras* of Bhaktisiddhānta in all Iskcon temples. Although we were not permitted at that time to read the books of Bhaktisiddhānta, still it was quite clear in everyone's mind that Bhaktisiddhānta was our *parama-guru* and Śrīla Prabhupāda was carrying out his orders and fulfilling his desires. Thus, there is no difference between the interests of Bhaktisiddhānta and those of Iskcon. They are synonymous.

In 1976 Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed that the logo of the Gauḍīya Maṭha (originally designed by Bhaktisiddhānta) should be painted on either side of the gate at Iskcon's world headquarters in Māyāpura. That logo remains there to this day, although hardly anyone pays any attention to its significance or meaning, both of which seem quite clear – Iskcon is non-different from the movement established by Bhaktisiddhānta under the name of Gauḍīya Maṭha.

In the final days before his departure, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for his god-brothers and sent a message to all saying, "The war is

over” and he compelled everyone to work together in harmony to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda also established the Bhaktivedānta Charitable Trust in 1977 for the purpose of working in harmony with the Gauḍīya Maṭha institutions of his god-brothers. Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Mahārāja of Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha was made the first president of the trust. One of the first duties of the trust was to finance the completion of the temple room at Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja’s *maṭha* in Navadvīpa.

The problem lies not in how to accommodate Bhaktisiddhānta in Iskcon, but in how to keep Iskcon focused on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and not on society consciousness. These have a tendency to come into conflict with one another.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness means the absolute consideration and society consciousness means the relative consideration. The society is established for the purpose of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (the absolute consideration) and not the other way around. When the society ceases to represent the Absolute and functions only for its own well-being, then such a society is no longer transcendental – it simply becomes another mundane society. Bhaktisiddhānta has summed it up in this way:

The idea of an organised church in an intelligible form, indeed, marks the close of the living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical establishments are the dikes and the dams to retain the current that cannot be held by any such contrivances. They, indeed, indicate a desire on the part of the masses to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose. They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bona-fide spiritual teacher. (From the essay, Pūtanā, The Harmonist, January, 1932)

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Could the above quote apply to Iskcon? If one pays careful attention to what is happening, then one will come to the conclusion that many of Iskcon's leaders do not want to give any value to the words of Bhaktisiddhānta. If they do, then the hoax will be exposed and the evidence suggests that the movement established by Śrīla Prabhupāda has been hoodwinked by pseudo-spiritualists and led astray.

It is the opinion of some of our editors, that the title of this article, *Society Consciousness vs. Kṛṣṇa Consciousness*, is antiquated because, in their opinion, the battle for Iskcon is already lost – it has become a society for itself and by itself, i.e. an International Society for Society Consciousness (Isscon).

On the path that Iskcon has chosen, society consciousness prevails. This is reminiscent of the formation of the Christian church after the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. when the church abandoned spiritual wisdom for the lure of dollars, diplomacy and despotism. One would be hard-pressed to show the difference between what the church became and what Iskcon is becoming.

Furthermore, if one reflects on Iskcon and listens closely to Śrīla Prabhupāda, one will discover that in Prabhupāda's own words, the only addition that he made to the movement of Bhaktisiddhānta was that he (Prabhupāda) as a *sannyāsī*, performed the marriage ceremony for his young disciples. Otherwise, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that all other aspects of his movement were already established by Bhaktisiddhānta. That means that the Deity worship, the formation of a GBC, the establishment of the temple president as a lifetime commitment, decentralisation, preaching in foreign countries, printing and distributing books, *bari-nāma saṅkīrtana*, diorama exhibitions, film projects, *prasādam* distribution, printing and distributing journals, the establishment of *daivi-varṇāśrama* and the acceptance of *sannyāsa*

as a Vaiṣṇava *aṅga*. Literally everything Iskcon does or has, was established by Bhaktisiddhānta and given to Śrīla Prabhupāda to form Iskcon. So how could anyone in their right mind think that the mood of Bhaktisiddhānta could be a negative influence in a progressive Iskcon?

Proof of the weakened position of Iskcon at present is evident in their inability to defend the *paramparā*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and even the society itself from the attacks of the anti-party, caste *Gosvāmīs*, Sahajiyās, Madhva-*ugravādīs* and even aggressive Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava preachers. In all these cases, Iskcon leaders have turned to devotees outside of Iskcon for help, guidance and relief. Had they included Bhaktisiddhānta as at least a member of the Iskcon family, then they might have been able to take care of themselves and not call others to the rescue.

It is the view of the Iskcon neo-cons (new-conservatives) that they can only be comfortable if all branches of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* (including Bhaktisiddhānta) come under their control. They see themselves as the trunk of the tree and have even relegated Bhaktisiddhānta to that of a sub-branch. This is not a very humble view of one's self. Of course, the societal jingoism is that Iskcon is Prabhupāda's movement, Prabhupāda was better than anyone else and nothing has changed. In reality however, everything in Iskcon has changed! Practically nothing is the same – particularly the laws of Iskcon that Śrīla Prabhupāda handwrote in 1966. There were only eight and they could all fit on one page:

- 1) All initiated devotees must attend morning and evening classes.
- 2) Must not be addicted to any kind of intoxicants including coffee, tea and cigarettes.

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- 3) They are forbidden to have illicit sex connections.
- 4) Must be strictly vegetarian.
- 5) Should not extensively mix with non-devotees.
- 6) Should not eat foodstuff cooked by non-devotees.
- 7) Should not waste time in idle talks nor engage himself in frivolous sports.
- 8) Should always chant and sing the Lord's holy names.

The present Iskcon law book consumes nearly 1000 pages. What to speak of changing the laws, Śrīla Prabhupāda's original books have also been changed and that is a controversy that continues to rage on.

Iskcon wants everything under their control – to silence the voices of dissent and crush any opposing views. Everything must come under the standards of 'Prabhupāda,' that they themselves have created. This sounds like a draconian cult, or worse still, Christianity, and as Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said, party spirit (society consciousness) is the enemy of truth:

Party-spirit — that great enemy of truth — will always baffle the attempt of the inquirer who tries to gather truth from religious works of his nation, and will make him believe that absolute truth is nowhere except in his old religious book. (The Bhāgavata, 1869)

If Iskcon is so sincere, then what is the difficulty in coming under Bhaktisiddhānta when even Prabhupāda took shelter at his lotus feet? This is not to suggest that Iskcon should join the Gauḍīya Maṭha or that the Gauḍīya Maṭha should join Iskcon, but that harmony amongst Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas will be drawn from

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acknowledging the common factor and grandfather of all, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

What is actually happening is that, step by step, slowly but surely, some of Iskcon's leaders are pulling Iskcon away from the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* to become an *apa-sampradāya* – a shadow of the *paramparā*.





DELIVERER OR INSTRUMENTAL GURU?



Question: Recently, we read an article where the author begins by establishing certain well-known scholars from the Rāmānuja and Madhva *sampradāyas* (most notably H.H. Śrī Raṅgapriya Mahā-deśikan Swami and Vidyā-vācaspati Bannanje Govind-ācārya) as authoritative sources of transcendental knowledge regarding *guru-tattva*. In that article the author tries to establish that Śrīla Prabhupāda is the deliverer-guru for the duration of 10,000 years. All gurus following Prabhupāda are only instrumental-gurus, whose purpose is to assist him. Is this in any way correct?

Narasiṅgha Mahārāja: We have personally had the pleasure to meet Śrī Raṅgapriya Mahā-deśikan Swami and Bannanje Govind-ācārya on several occasions, and we are happy to say that they are indeed scholars and sincere devotees of Śrī Rāmānujācārya and Śrī Madhvācārya, respectively.

We also agree that what the Madhva and Rāmānuja scholars have stated in regards to *guru-tattva* is indeed true to their creed and applicable to their *sampradāya*.

However, the conception of *guru-tattva* in the Madhva tradition is quite different from the concept of *guru-tattva* in the

Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. The fact that Madhva himself could not accept the pastime wherein Brahmā (the original guru of both his and our *sampradāya*) became bewildered, is itself conclusive evidence for this statement. While Madhva omitted the section of *Bhāgavatam* known as *Brahma-vimobhana-līlā* from his version, the illusion of Brahmā was accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī, the original commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*. Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary was accepted by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

That which is useful to Gauḍīyas in Madhva's commentary is certainly negligible compared to that of Śrīdhara Svāmī. Most notably, Madhva accepted Viṣṇu as the *āśraya-tattva* (ultimate shelter), whereas Śrīdhara Svāmī accepted Śrī Vṛndāvana-candra (Kṛṣṇa) as the *āśraya-tattva*, and *śaraṇāgati* (surrender) as the ultimate *sādhana*, or means to the end.

Bearing this in mind, it would be safe to say that guidance from the Madhva tradition in the matter of understanding *guru-tattva* amongst Gauḍīyas is indeed of limited value in the ultimate issue. Although it may appear to be helpful to some devotees at this present time, since there seems to be a glaring inability for many to understand our own tradition from within, it will nonetheless lead to difficulty in the future.

The teachings of Rāmānuja are much closer to Gauḍīya *sidhānta* than those of Madhva. In the conception of Rāmānuja, *śaraṇāgati* plays the essential role, as it does in the teachings of Śrī Caitanya. Regarding topics like *dīkṣā*, *arcana*, and *sannyāsa*, there are also more similarities between the Rāmānujas and the Gauḍīyas than there are between the Madhvas and the Gauḍīyas. Our connection with the Madhvas is actually one of form, whereas our connection with the Rāmānujas is based more on substance. The similarity between the Rāmānujas and the Gauḍīyas is certainly an interesting topic, but it is not the topic of this essay and can therefore be dealt with separately at another time.

Deliverer or Instrumental Guru?

Overall, the numerous rudimentary points regarding the Founder-*ācārya* and the gurus that succeed him were well addressed in the article that you have mentioned. There is a need, however, for some clarification.

It is true that Madhvācārya and Rāmānujācārya each hold unique positions in their respective *sampradāyas* as the *uddhāraka-guru* (deliverer-guru). However, to be more precise, the deliverer-guru in the Rāmānuja sect is Nammālvār, one of the twelve Ālvars from whose writings Rāmānuja drew his doctrine of *śaraṇāgati*.

Although Rāmānuja considered himself to be an *upakāra-ka-guru* (instrumental-guru), he is nonetheless regarded as the head of the Śrī *sampradāya* in modern times – the *uddhāraka-guru*.

One might ask that since Rāmānuja considered himself an instrumental-guru, how is it that his followers consider him the deliverer-guru? The answer can be traced to the fact that it was Śrī Rāmānuja who gave shape to the *Viśiṣṭhādvaita* philosophy (not accomplished previously by Nammālvār) by writing a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*. One who knows the answer to this question knows the secret of the *guru-paramparā*.

The position of *uddhāraka-guru*, held by Rāmānuja and Madhva in their respective successions, has already been given to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda in our Gauḍīya *sampradāya* by none other than Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, 500 years ago.

Our Śrīla Prabhupāda does not hold the same position as Madhva or Rāmānuja, since he did not introduce a new philosophical system or establish a *sampradāya* based on that. That was accomplished by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and hence we are all known as *rūpānugas*, followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī – this includes Śrīla Prabhupāda, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Without being a *rūpānuga*, one cannot be a *prabhupādānuga* (as followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda are sometimes called), and vice-versa. Śrīla Prabhupāda established his mission within an existing *sampradāya*, for preaching purposes only. His mission was not intended to be a separate *sampradāya* from that which was already established in the 20th Century by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda. If it were a separate *sampradāya*, then a new *tilaka* would also be necessary for the mission, along with substantially more commentary – including a new commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* in Sanskrit, showing how Śrīla Prabhupāda’s conception differed from that of his predecessor *ācāryas*. Indeed, no intelligent disciple would entertain such a thought for even a moment.

*śrī-caitanya-manobhiṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā māhyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam*

When will Śrī Rūpa, who has established the cherished desire of Śrī Caitanya within this world, give me shelter at his lotus feet. (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*)

I do not think that either the institutionalised devotees or the Ṛtvik proponents have understood this basic point. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is the head (*uddhāraka-guru*) of our *sampradāya* in this world, and in the spiritual world he is our supreme leader in the form of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. The *sampradāya* of the Gauḍīyas has descended from Goloka Vṛndāvana and its ontology is complete.

It seems that both institutionalised devotees and the Ṛtvik proponents, each in their own way, want to put Śrīla Prabhupāda in the place of Rūpa Gosvāmī. This appears to be the case largely because a vast majority of devotees have no proper ontological understanding of *siddhānta*. The idea that Śrīla Prabhupāda is the head of the *sampradāya* for the next 10,000 years has no basis in

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spiritual reality. It appears that many devotees are simply driven by mundane sentimentality, compounded with *vaiṣṇava-aparādhā*. The result of this is complete bewilderment!

The position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has been conclusively established by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in his last instructions before leaving the mortal world:

All of you please preach about Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha with great enthusiasm. The supreme goal of all our desires is to become specks of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Again, the supreme position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is made clear by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura in his song, *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada*:

*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada
sei mora bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa
sei mora jīvanera jīvana*

The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī are my treasure and the object of my worship. They are the wealth of my existence, they are my ornaments and the very life of my life.

Actually, Śrīla Prabhupāda was an *upakāraka-guru* (instrumental-guru), in that he delivered his disciples to the lotus feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the *uddhāraka-guru* (the deliverer-guru).

As for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He is our *iṣṭa-deva* or the most treasured Deity of our *sampradāya*. But many devotees do not fully understand this either. Anyone who does not accept these basic conclusions regarding the position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and that of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is a *kaniṣṭha* disciple, at best.

There is no indication by anyone from the Madhva or Rāmānuja *sampradāyas* that the instrumental-guru cannot be a liberated soul or pure devotee, as is the deliverer-guru. The fact that all the *ācāryas* in our *paramparā* since the time of Mahāprabhu were pure devotees does not alter the fact that they were instrumental-gurus, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was the deliverer-guru.

Therefore, our conclusion is that Śrīla Prabhupāda does not become the head of a new *sampradāya* because he was a pure devotee, the Founder-*ācārya* of an institution or even a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* (which we believe he was). In fact, to become a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa is the necessary qualification to become a guru of any kind, either *uddhāraka* or *upakāraka*! There are no short cuts. This is also not understood by the institutionalised devotees or the Ṛtviks.

If I'm not mistaken, the Madhvas and the Rāmānujas understand this point to some degree, but the fact is that they have similar problems in their own *sampradāyas*. For example, being a pure Vaiṣṇava is not enough to initiate in their *sampradāya* — one has to be born a *brāhmaṇa*, and this is often a contentious point in the Madhva and Rāmānuja communities.

An interesting point to note here is that those that propound the idea of Śrīla Prabhupāda being the deliverer-guru are prepared to inquire from scholars outside our *sampradāya*, who know nothing of the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Six Gosvāmīs. They refuse to inquire from advanced Gauḍīya scholars and devotees who are surrendered souls at the lotus feet of Mahāprabhu. Some devotees are prepared to accept the advice of those who are in complete ignorance of the divinity of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but they are averse to accept the advice of Mahāprabhu's direct representatives. Such a mentality could easily get one classified as a fool and a rascal.

Deliverer or Instrumental Guru?

It seems that the author of the article we are discussing does indeed understand the difference between the *uddhāraka-guru* and the *upakāraka-guru*, save that he does not understand the position of Śrīla Prabhupāda. It appears that the leaders of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission are trying to get out of a difficult situation with the Ṛtviks, but without help from advanced Vaiṣṇavas they cannot come to conclusive answers, at least answers that others will accept. Because they endure in their offences to the senior members of our *sampradāya*, they have no opportunity to approach them, either personally or through books.

All these questions regarding the position of Śrīla Prabhupāda and those gurus who would succeed him were already answered in 1978 by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja. Unfortunately, many of the devotees in leadership positions in the western Vaiṣṇava communities have developed amnesia regarding this fact. But fortunately for all, the answers given by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja regarding *guru-tattva* were recorded and published in a book called, *Śrī Guru and His Grace*. This book is recommended reading material for any and all devotees who would like clarification on *guru-tattva*.

At the conclusion of the article we are discussing, the author summarises that Śrīla Prabhupāda is the deliverer-guru and that he takes everyone back to Godhead. Yet such a statement is not found anywhere in the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda (books, letters, room conversations, or lectures, etc.). The idea that the institution established by Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *sampradāya* separate from the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is possibly the biggest deviation to have occurred in our *sampradāya* since the reject sons of Advaita Ācārya began to preach impersonalism.



ṚTVIK DEFEATED!



When I accepted *sannyāsa* in 1976, Śrīla Prabhupāda said in the class, “You become guru.” He said it five times during this lecture.* Some people will say, “That means *śikṣā-guru*.” However, in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s essay, *In Search of the Ultimate Goal of Life*, he writes that there are some people who say that ‘become guru’ means only becoming *śikṣā-guru*, and he says that such persons are foolish and do not understand the *paramparā*:

Some foolish students have accepted the statements of Lord Caitanya conditionally. According to them, the spiritual master who is fully conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa, yet not born in a brāhmaṇa family, can be an instructing spiritual master, but not an initiating spiritual master. They do not know that there is hardly any difference between the two classes of spiritual masters. According to them, a caste initiator or caste Gosvāmī, by dint of his hereditary blood lineage, becomes the real spiritual master, while a person knowing all about Śrī Kṛṣṇa can only become an instructor. They foolishly think that

* See Appendix: *Become Guru!* Prabhupāda’s lecture given in Māyāpura, on March 16th, 1976

the position of the initiating spiritual master is greater than that of the instructing spiritual master. However, the matter is very clearly and conclusively discussed in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 1.47):

*śikṣā-guruke ta' jāni kṣṇera svarūpa
antaryāmī, bhakta-ṣreṣṭha — ei dui rūpa*

One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself as the Supersoul and as the greatest devotee of the Lord.

Prabhupāda says, “You become guru” not only in my *sannyāsa* initiation lecture, but hundreds of times in other places – but there is no reference anywhere of Ṛtvik. In the *Nectar of Devotion*, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that *sannyāsīs* can accept disciples:

Therefore, in the line of Lord Caitanya, even the sannyāsīs can speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere, and if someone is seriously inclined to become a disciple, the sannyāsī always accepts him. (Nectar of Devotion Ch.7)

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, where *guru-tattva* is described, Prabhupāda says that without being initiated by a bona-fide spiritual master, one cannot go back to Godhead:

One should always remember that a person who is reluctant to accept a spiritual master and be initiated is sure to be baffled in his endeavour to go back to Godhead. One who is not properly initiated may present himself as a great devotee, but in fact he is sure to encounter many stumbling blocks on his path of progress toward spiritual realisation, with the result that he must continue his term of material existence without relief. (Cc Ādi-līlā 1.35)

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He doesn't say, "Without being initiated by a bona-fide spiritual master (although he's left the world) through Ṛtvik initiation, one cannot go back to Godhead."

There is no example of Ṛtvik initiation anywhere, except sometimes during the living presence of the spiritual master. The *ṛtvik* acts as a priest because the guru cannot be physically present. That's quite common. There are different functions of the *ṛtvik* at different times, in different places.

I was also a *ṛtvik*. At the Hyderabad farm in 1976 there were three people taking first initiation and right in front of the devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me to chant on the beads because he was tired. Then he gave them the beads and the names. So many times Prabhupāda wrote to the *sannyāsīs* and temple presidents, "You can chant on their beads and these are their names –". That is the *ṛtvik* function. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was ill, he set up a system that in different areas senior men would initiate on his behalf, yet he didn't say that they would be anything but *ṛtviks*! So according to some devotees, because there is no proof that this was ever changed, the *ṛtvik* system must continue until Śrīla Prabhupāda returns and indicates otherwise! But the *otherwise* had already been indicated during his 12 years of preaching. There is no example of a Ṛtvik *ācārya* in any bona-fide *sampradāya* in the whole history of this universe, and there are hundreds of stories in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* about gurus and disciples. There was never any Ṛtvik initiation during the Vedic period, what to speak of during the time of Caitanya Mahāprabhu or when Śrīla Prabhupāda was present. There is only the example of the *paramparā*.

We are members of a living *sampradāya*. We are not Sikhs. That is the conception started by Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Nanak was the founder of the Sikh *dharma* and Guru Gobind

Singh was the tenth guru. The ninth guru was killed and his son, Guru Gobind Singh ascended the seat of his father. He wasn't much of a preacher – he wanted to make an army, but nonetheless, he was the guru. So he used his post as guru to make an army in the Punjab to fight the Moghuls. Before he died, he declared that there would be no more gurus after him. The Sikhs are very strict about this. Some years ago, when I was preaching in Chandigarh, there was a Sikh in Delhi claiming to be the next guru. An assassin stood up during a programme and blew him away right in front of 10,000 people.* Guru Gobind Singh also stated that the eleventh guru would be the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred book of the Sikhs, and that one could reach God just by reading that. It's similar to how some devotees say, "All we need are Prabhupāda's books!"

Ours is a living conception. Once, one *sannyāsī* told Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, "There are those who say that one should not accept disciples and they favour the Ṛtvik conception." Śrīla Purī Mahārāja said two things – first, that the Ṛtvik idea was very dangerous, and also that it is the death of the *paramparā* – a dead man's philosophy! Then Śrīla Purī Mahārāja said, "Whatever you have received, you try to give that with all your sincerity, with all your earnestness, to the best of your ability and try to march forward." That is the standard of the *paramparā*.

The Ṛtvik idea is a dead conception. Where is the life? Life means I must become pure, I must surrender, I must embrace a life of unalloyed devotion and I must preach. But the Ṛtviks are pointing to the so-called disqualifications of others and claiming that no one is qualified to hold the post of guru. They see only disqualifications in everyone. They are like Duryodhana.

* The name of the Sikh leader was Gurbachan Singh who was assassinated on April 24th, 1980.

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There is a story in the *Mabābhārata** that once, Droṇācārya called for Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira. He asked Duryodhana to go out into the kingdom and bring back a person more qualified than himself. Then Droṇa requested Yudhiṣṭhira to go out and find a person less qualified than himself. After some time both men returned alone. Droṇa then inquired from each why they had returned empty handed. Duryodhana said, “I could not find anyone more qualified than myself” and Yudhiṣṭhira said, “I could not find anyone less qualified than myself.”

The Ṛtviks have the mentality of Duryodhana – they cannot see the good qualities of others. What they are trying to say is that they alone are qualified, at least to judge the qualifications of other. This kind of thinking is *avaiṣṇava* and it is against the devotional line. The Ṛtviks say that no one is qualified, but they have not seen everyone, so how do they know for sure? A man says that he has not met anyone who has seen God, therefore he concludes that no one has. But how does he know? He has not met everyone. Even if he did meet someone who has seen God, would he believe him? Probably not.

We must give respect to the post of guru. Of course, the guru should have the necessary qualifications of *guru-niṣṭhā* and *niṣkiñcana-bhakti* – firm faith in the order of the spiritual master and freedom from the desire for power, profit, adoration and distinction. One should have these qualifications before accepting the post of guru and accepting disciples. But it will be very difficult to say from an objective point of view who is or who isn't a *paramahansa*. Someone says the guru must be *paramahansa*, but actually the post is *paramahansa*.

How do you know for sure if a god-brother is a qualified *paramahansa* or not? First you must surrender – become a pure

* *Mabābhārata*, *Ādi-parva* Ch.8

devotee of Kṛṣṇa and your spiritual master, then you will know who is who. It takes one to know one. If I ask my god-brothers, “Was Śrīla Prabhupāda a pure devotee?” obviously they will all say yes. But what is your proof that he was a pure devotee? They may say, “Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to America alone, spread the movement, preached to the public and published many books on the topic of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda did that and much, much more – but that is all external! Do you mean to say that if an old man simply comes to America and publishes some books on Kṛṣṇa then we should consider him a *paramahansa*?* No. So what is the actual proof? A god-brother may then say, “I have my faith – I know it in my heart that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a pure devotee.” Yes! That is your only proof! Your faith is your proof. Faith allows us to understand and to measure the standard. That is our only real proof. Śrīla Prabhupāda also said that. Once he asked the devotees, “How do you know Kṛṣṇa is God?” First they were giving evidence from *śāstra*, but Prabhupāda said, “The Bible says something else, Koran says something else. How do you know?” Then they quoted the *ācāryas* and Prabhupāda said, “The Christians are also saying.” He was playing the devil’s advocate. Finally one devotee said, “Well, I know in my heart” Prabhupāda said, “Yes! That is your proof!”

You can seek help from the *śāstras* to understand some of the necessary qualifications of guru, but ultimately we must hear from our heart. It is a subjective experience. The R̥tviks don’t even have a conception of objective and subjective planes of con-

* An example of this is the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava monk, Bābā Premānanda Bhāratī, who came to America in 1902 and established a centre in New York City (the Krishna Samaj). While there, he wrote a book called *Sbri Krishna: The Lord of Love*, a retelling of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. He travelled around the United States giving lectures in St. Louis, Boston and Los Angeles. He returned to India in 1911 and passed away in 1913. Despite having stayed nine years in America, Premānanda Bhāratī didn’t make any spiritual impact there.

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sciousness. It is a matter of knowing from the inner flow of the heart. Knowledge of the position of the guru descends from above – Kṛṣṇa Himself reveals the guru to a prospective candidate. Kṛṣṇa chooses who will be guru and for whom. It is not a matter of voting a man to the post of guru, nor is the position of guru understandable by those who have no faith. The qualification to understand the position of guru depends upon *śraddhā*, our faith.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā-deve tatbā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah*

Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master is the import of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.38)

If we have proper faith then the truth is revealed in our heart, and there is no greater proof than that. We may judge the position of so many persons in this world by their various qualifications and disqualifications, but if we try to understand *guru-tattva* in the same way, we will be baffled.

The Ṛtviks claim that the self-effulgent *ācārya* manifests – but who will say that he has manifested? Is it the disciple who recognises him? Is it the god-brother that recognises him? Is it the non-devotee in the street that recognises him? Who recognises him? Who recognised Śrīla Prabhupāda? First we would say that we did! Yes, first he appears to the disciple – who else? Some would say, “Well, Prabhupāda’s god-brothers didn’t recognise him!” That is not true. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja fully recognised him, and so did Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja.* Actually, before Śrīla Prabhupāda passed away, Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Mahārāja, Bhakti Hṛdaya Vana Mahārāja and other god-brothers recognised him

and his work. So is the self-effulgent *ācārya* only recognised by the disciples that he comes to deliver, or by other senior Vaiṣṇavas also? What the Ṛtviks are saying is that, “We will recognise the self-effulgent *ācārya* when he comes!” But they can’t recognise a self-effulgent *ācārya* because they’re not even looking! What is their idea of self-effulgent? I heard Śrīla Prabhupāda say that once, in reference to how one can recognise a pure devotee. He said, “It takes one to know one” or it takes some good fortune.

The Ṛtviks will state that the guru must be pure and perfect. Yes, but what is your conception of purity or perfection? In which way shall we consider that he is perfect or not? How shall we understand his purity? By Vedic standards the *gopīs* are impure – they are unchaste from the material point of view, but what is their standard of spiritual purity? They are actually the purest of the pure because they simply want to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. They have no separate desire other than to please Kṛṣṇa. Why is it that the wives of the *yajñika-brāhmaṇas* in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* were purer than their husbands? Because they simply tried to satisfy Kṛṣṇa and His friends.

Rāmānanda Rāya was a *śūdra*, a government servant, therefore he was impure by Vedic standards and thus a *sannyāsī* should never touch such a person. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected such measures of purity and embraced him. Not only that, He also accepted Rāmānanda Rāya as His *rasa-guru*.

* “I consider him to be *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, and it is confirmed by his journey on the ship through the Atlantic and how he landed there and the nature of the beginning of his movement. What was his intense degree of dedication to Kṛṣṇa? How much he made himself empty to call down Kṛṣṇa to help him? It is corroborated that Kṛṣṇa worked on his behalf. He was completely dedicated to that purpose and a divine force came down to help him. Nityānanda Prabhu is in charge of preaching Mahāprabhu’s glories, so I took it that Nityānanda Prabhu must have some special dedication in him in his last days which helped him to inundate the whole world in such an inconceivable magnitude.” (Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja – August 8th, 1980)

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We cannot understand what spiritual purity is when we measure it by material standards. One may follow perfectly the four regulative principles for many, many lifetimes but remain impure. On the other hand, one may not fully observe the regulative principles, yet he may be a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Now someone might say, “What? That’s impossible! Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us to strictly follow the regulative principles otherwise we cannot go back to Godhead.” Yes, we may strictly follow the regulative principles, but without surrender to guru and Kṛṣṇa where is our purity? Without surrender it will remain as material purity. There are many *brāhmaṇas* and *sannyāsīs* in India who strictly follow the four regulative principles, yet they are great oppressors and offenders of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission. Similarly, there are examples of many devotees who were not so strict about the regulative principles, yet they were pure devotees nonetheless.

Everyone knows that Śrīla Prabhupāda dedicated his *Kṛṣṇa Book* to his father, Gaura-mohana De – “a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.” Do the Ṛtviks accept that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s father was a pure devotee? If so, then let them explain why Prabhupāda’s father gave hashish and marijuana to the *sādbus* that came to his house. He also had a hookah in his house that he would offer to his guests. If you did such things nowadays, your god-brothers would drive you away with a stick. You would be an outcast in the modern Vaiṣṇava society. What is the criterion that makes Gaura-mohana pure devotee? By what criterion do the Ṛtviks know he was a pure devotee? I don’t think they can answer that question. By their estimation, Prabhupāda’s father was not fit because he didn’t strictly follow the principles. So in which way was he a pure devotee? His purity was that he simply desired that his son would become a pure devotee of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and he prayed to all the saintly persons whom he entertained to please give this blessing. That was his purity.

We have to judge purity from the inner plane, not from external circumstances. There is also the example of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. When he came to Navadvīpa, he was sitting in his luxurious house smoking a hookah, wearing costly clothing and perfume. From his external appearance and habits he looked like a materialist, but then he heard a verse from the *Bhāgavatam* recited by Mukunda Datta:

*aho baki yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyam
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema*

O how amazing it is! The sister of Bakāsura (Pūtānā) desiring to kill Śrī Kṛṣṇa, smeared poison on her breasts and forced Kṛṣṇa to drink her milk. Even so, Lord Kṛṣṇa accepted her as His nursemaid and thus she reached the destination suitable for Kṛṣṇa’s mother, Of whom should I take shelter but the most merciful Kṛṣṇa? (*Bhāg.* 3.2.23)

When Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi heard this verse he became mad with love of Kṛṣṇa. He began shivering, shedding tears, and rolling on the floor in ecstasy and crying, “Of whom should I take shelter but the most magnanimous Lord? Where should I take refuge without such a Lord?” Internally Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi had great devotion for Kṛṣṇa, but outwardly he appeared to be an ordinary materialist.

The Ṛtviks think a pure devotee means somebody who is materially pure. No one is materially pure – everyone is more or less materially contaminated. They don’t know what spiritual purity is. They have some idea of what material purity is, but even on that level many of them fail. They fail on both accounts and because they are unqualified, they conclude that no one else is qualified.

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Śrīla Prabhupāda had at least five thousand disciples, and many of them are still carrying on Kṛṣṇa consciousness even to this day. The Ṛtviks claim that nobody amongst them is qualified to be guru. If that is true, then why would anyone want to become Prabhupāda’s disciple? If, after following his teachings for 25-30 years, not one person is qualified, then why should I follow Prabhupāda’s teachings? What is the advantage? It must mean that his teachings have no potency, and that is what the Ṛtviks are actually saying – that Prabhupāda’s teachings have no potency. They don’t know what it means to become qualified. The spiritual master can qualify somebody, even though they may have a defect in their habits or in their practice. Ṛtvik is a sinful philosophy because it is offensive to those devotees who actually *do* follow their guru.

If we want to learn karate and go to a school and inquire, “In the national competition, how many students of this karate teacher took first or second place?” If we hear, “Oh, no, no – they get beaten every year” – then why would you want to become his student? But on the other hand, if someone tells us, “There’s another teacher – his students win every time,” then immediately we will want to enrol in that school where the students are successful – not where the students are all failures! You don’t want a teacher whose students fail. If you look for a teacher, you will seek out someone whose students pass the exams with flying colours. Similarly, if you look for a guru, you seek spiritual master who has qualified disciples. The Ṛtviks discredit Śrīla Prabhupāda by saying that no one is qualified. They are actually condemning him. Why? Because their glorification of him is mundane – it is not really transcendental. When it is put under the magnifying glass, it is no glorification of him at all. It is a vilification! Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that one knows a spiritual master by the position of his disciples. So that is what we can understand about

Śrīla Prabhupāda according to them – that there is no use in following his teachings because they don't work!

They may say that nobody is qualified, but for the dignity of Śrīla Prabhupāda I would say, "I don't have the same opinion. I see others who *are* qualified, who *have* the mercy, who *know* the philosophy and who *know* the practice." I can't agree with the Ṛtviks. Just like Śrīla Prabhupāda once said, "You say you haven't seen God but I say I have, so sit down and be quiet." Ultimately, I have to take the same stand. It is an embarrassment for them to keep saying that no one who has been following Śrīla Prabhupāda for so many years is qualified. I would have to say, "I *am*, I *can*, I *will*, I *do* – and all by the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda – nothing by my own endeavour." But they say just the opposite – they say that his grace may come to me, but it amounts to nothing. That is their ideology. "We can continue glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda throughout the world and continue his lineage without becoming pure to do it. We can continue to be screw-ups for the rest of our lives!" No! You will be a failure! You can only continue to glorify the spiritual master by becoming pure yourself.

It is a poor excuse to say that, "No one is qualified, therefore I don't have to become qualified either – we will just initiate everyone as Prabhupāda's disciple." Again and again we heard from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja about this – he gave no credence to the Ṛtviks. When the gurus started to fall down, he said, "My guru has left – now I will become a Prabhupāda disciple! This is foolishness!" It was unacceptable. That's how this Ṛtvik ideology began. The Ṛtvik philosophy is a philosophy of frustration stemming from the inability to follow the teachings of the guru, as well as not properly studying and understanding the *siddhānta*.

There is also another point – a new person doesn't come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and decide that they want to become Prabhu-

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pāda's disciple. It is mainly our Ṛtvik god-brothers who decide that for them. According to the association we accept, our faith develops. If a new person meets a Ṛtvik, he is told, "Nobody is qualified to be guru. You just do this and that – we will initiate you and you will become a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda." However, you may find in due course that the candidate may say, "I don't want to be Prabhupāda's disciple, I want to be *your* disciple. I don't know Prabhupāda. I've read his books, but I am inspired by what *you* tell me." This actually happened during the time of Śrīla Prabhupāda – some man wanted to be initiated by Brahmānanda. There is a letter wherein Śrīla Prabhupāda said that in the living presence of the spiritual master, generally a certain etiquette is followed. * In the living presence of one's guru, all new candidates are transferred to him. After the disappearance of the guru, the same *ṛtvik* who initiated on behalf of his guru as a priest, can accept full charge of taking disciples back to Godhead. All he does is take them to his guru while he's living – after that, he has to take full responsibility. Back in 1975, somebody was clamouring that a certain *sannyāsī* was qualified to be a guru. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote a letter to that devotee and gave some clarification. He said that during the living presence of one's spiritual master, generally one should not make disciples, but after the disappearance of the spiritual master, one can accept disciples without limitation.**

* "So far as your taking initiation from Brahmānanda Mahārāja, I have no objection, but it is the etiquette that in the presence of one's Spiritual Master, one does not accept disciples. In this connection, Swami Brahmānanda may write me and I will instruct him." (Letter to John Milne, March 24th, 1971)

** "But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession." (Letter to Tuṣṭa Kṣṇa Dāsa, February 12th, 1975)

Is this just a custom that one shouldn't make disciples while the guru is living? If it's just a rule to stop the disciple from doing that, then Vaiṣṇavism is not very deep. It must have some deeper meaning. The true disciple knows that the result of his preaching has the support of his guru. It is actually only his guru's potency that allows him to preach and draw people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So in his guru's living presence, it is a natural practice for the disciple to transfer those people he attracts and bring them to his guru. He wants everyone he enlists to be initiated by his own guru. The disciple is just a medium – he transfers their faith. But after the disappearance of the guru, the same principle is at work if he is surrendered to that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *ṛtvik*, Bhaktisiddhānta is a *ṛtvik*, Rūpa Gosvāmī is also a *ṛtvik* – a *ṛtvik* means a representative. Didn't we learn at the beginning of our devotional journey that guru means representative of Kṛṣṇa and the *paramparā*? If you're not a *ṛtvik*, you're not a guru. But the modern *Ṛtviks* want to avoid the responsibility of being a guru – they are not real *ṛtviks*.

(From a talk with god-brothers in Mysore, South India, on March 20th, 1995)



ŚRĪ RŪPA-MANĀJARĪ-PADA

It is mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that during the Ratha-Yātrā, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu danced in front of Lord Jagannātha and sang a particular verse originally found in Mammata's *Kavya-prakāśa*, a treatise on Sanskrit poetics. This was actually an ordinary love sonnet between a young boy and a young girl, and no one could understand why Mahāprabhu was reciting it or what was the meaning.

*yaḥ kaumāra-baraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās
te conmīlita-mālatī-surabbayaḥ prauḍbāḥ kadambānilāḥ
sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-līlā-vidbau
revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetaḥ samutkañṭhate*

He who stole my heart during my youth is verily he who is here today as my lover. And these are the same nights in the month of Caitra, when the fragrant breezes from the *kadamba* grove are heavy with the scent of newly blossoming jasmine. And I too am the same person – yet still my heart yearns for the dalliances of love that we enjoyed amidst the *vetasī* trees on the banks of the river Revā.

(*Cc. Antya-līlā* 1.78)

At that time, Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mood was so intense that He would become choked up and sometimes could not even speak. After the Ratha-Yātrā was over, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote a śloka.

*priyaḥ so'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ sabacari kurukṣetra-militas
tatbāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tatbāpy antaḥ-kbelan-madbura-murali-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spr̥bayati*

My dear friend, this is the same beloved Kṛṣṇa meeting Me here at Kurukṣetra. I am also that same Rādhā, and we Both feel the same joy of union. And yet My mind yearns for the forest on the bank of the Kālindī where the fifth note of His flute sweetly plays within My heart.

(Cc. Antya-lilā 1.79)

This śloka gave the meaning of what Caitanya Mahāprabhu was actually saying, and from that time on, the devotees could understand what Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mood was when He sang that verse at the Ratha-Yātrā. Mahāprabhu was in the mood of Rādhārāṇī when She is calling Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana. Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote that verse on a palm leaf and, after putting it in the rafters of the roof of his hut, he went to the ocean. At that time, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu arrived and found the palm leaf in the roof. He read the verse and understood that, "Rūpa Gosvāmī understands My mind. He understands My heart." When Rūpa Gosvāmī came back from the ocean, Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave him a gentle slap on the face and appeared for a moment to be angry. Mahāprabhu told him:

*mora ślokera abhiprāya nā jāne kona jane
mora manera katbā tumi jānile kemane*

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada

Nobody understands the point of My verse. How did you understand the intention of My mind?

(Cc. Madhya-līlā I.69)

Inwardly however, Mahāprabhu was very happy. The next day, Caitanya Mahāprabhu came there with so many devotees – in particular His chief assistants, Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya. He brought them there to examine the character of Rūpa Gosvāmī, read his poetry and, of course, to bless him. In that meeting the various poems and prayers of Śrī Rūpa were read and the devotees were astounded to hear those things. Mahāprabhu asked the devotees to bless Śrī Rūpa and the devotees said, “Without Your mercy, how could he understand Your heart?” At that time Rūpa Gosvāmī was made the head of the *sampradāya*.

Many years later, Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura went to Vṛndāvana where he lived with the devotees and received their blessings. Through their blessings he himself became highly qualified and wrote many devotional songs, wherein we trace out the *siddhānta* of the *paramparā*. One of the songs he wrote was *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada*.

śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada
sei mora bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa
sei mora jīvanera jīvana

The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī are my treasure and the object of my worship. They are the wealth of my existence, they are my ornaments and the very life of my life.

sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vāñcā-siddhi
sei mora vedera dbarama

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*sei vrata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa
sei mora dbarama-karama*

They are my ocean of *rasa* and they are the perfection of my desires. They are the *dbarma* of the *Vedas* for me. They are the goal of my vows and austerities and the chanting of my *mantras*. They are the purpose of my religious activities.

*anukūla babe vidbi, se-pade baibe siddhi
nirakhiba e dui nayane
se rūpa-mādburī-rāśī, prāṇa-kusalaya-śaśī
prapbullita babe niśi-dine*

By those two lotus feet, all my actions will become favourable and perfection will be achieved. With these two eyes, I will finally be able to see. Both day and night, the sweet waves emanating from Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī's feet will shine like the moon upon the lotus of my heart.

*tuyā adarśana-abi, garale jārāla debī
cira-dina tāpita jīvana
bā bā rūpa kara dayā, deha more pada-chāyā
narottama laila śaraṇa*

The poison of the snake of separation from you has wasted my body away and my life is eternally afflicted by fever. O Rūpa! Kindly be merciful unto me. Give me the shade of your lotus feet. Narottama has taken refuge in you.

If we want to know who Caitanya Mahāprabhu is and what His mood is, then we must approach Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has written this song that identifies Rūpa Gosvāmī as Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī, one of the leading maidservants

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada

of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. It is said that this song connects one to the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī, or Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and in this way it is considered the topmost *bhajana* in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. When we think of ourselves, we should try to think in terms of the *sampradāya* – not so much in terms of the particular society we belong to. The society to which we all belong is called the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, and that society does not base itself upon nationality or any kind of designation pertaining to this temporary world.

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada is the favourite song of all the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. It is their favourite song, firstly because it is this song that offers one the connection of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and is therefore of great importance to all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. It is also important to the disciples of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura because it was sung at the time of his departure from this world.*

Śrīla Prabhupāda lived at the Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple from 1956 all the way up to 1965. He remained there preparing his Bhaktivedānta Purports for the *Bhāgavatam*, writing articles for *Back To Godhead* and performing his *bhajana*. Right outside his window was the *samādhi* of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. Some devotees, who were his very close friends, would stay with him there from time to time, and it is from these friends of Śrīla Prabhupāda that we learned that *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada* was his favourite song. He sang it every day while he lived near Rūpa Gosvāmī's *samādhi*, preparing himself for his preaching mission.

* “We were on duty at his (Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's) sickbed. I was also among them. My duty was from 2 o'clock at night till 4 o'clock in the morning. Just 24 hours before his departure, he called for me and asked me to sing the song, *śrī rūpa-mañjarī-pada*, *sei mora sampada* – this famous song which is supposed to be the highest realisation of any Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava devotee. Then, after 24 hours, that is the 1st January early morning, he left the world.” (Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, spoken on January 4th, 1983)

But after coming to the west, there is no recording of him singing or discussing this song. We know that he sang many songs with the harmonium and *mṛdaṅga* and gave purports to them – but he did not allow himself to sing this song because the mood and remembrance were too deep. The experience was too profound.

We cannot always know a great personality by direct perception. The best way to know a great personality is through the indirect method and that is even true of Kṛṣṇa Himself. If one really wants to know who Kṛṣṇa is, then one has to approach Kṛṣṇa's closest associate, His counterpart, the *blāḍinī-śakti*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

If we want to know about someone's qualities, sometimes the best way is through a friend or a close associate. The person that you are inquiring about may not personally tell you what their innermost desire is, but their associates may know.

We may discover many things about the inner personality of Śrīla Prabhupāda through his friends and associates, whereas, by applying the direct method, one might never know that Śrīla Prabhupāda sang *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada* daily. This is the foremost song in his repertoire of *bhajan*s and remembrances of his spiritual master – but he never revealed it and never sang it after he came to the west. This information is only accessible to us through an indirect method. This is the nature of esoteric truth. Through the agency of the associates of the Lord we may know something about their intimate disposition.

Śrīla Prabhupāda certainly did not tell us everything about his life. In fact, he only spoke about himself on a few occasions. He told a brief history of how he came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, how he came to meet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and similar stories like that. He only told us a few things about Śrīla

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the things he said were fairly generic that can be found in the biographies of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Now naturally, someone may ask why Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't say many things about himself or Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta? One of the reasons is that these subjects were very close to Śrīla Prabhupāda's heart. Contemplating these deep topics may have made it difficult for him to continue his preaching campaign around the world. He was spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in foreign lands, in foreign cultures, amongst people that had no spiritual background whatsoever. Once, somebody asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Do you have all the mystic *siddhis*?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Yes."

Then they asked, "Can you fly in the sky?"

Prabhupāda said, "Yes."

They then asked, "Then why do you fly in an airplane? Why don't you just fly in the sky?" Prabhupāda replied, "To be one with you."

The meaning is that if Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to his natural transcendental position, he could no longer relate to us. In order to help us, he descended to this plane of activity.

Hearing all these things, someone may ask, "Aren't these subject matters very high? Shouldn't we be very careful about these things?" Yes, these *are* very high subject matters. The goal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is high – in fact, it doesn't get any higher. One *should* be careful about discussing these topics. In fact, *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada* was included in the first Iskcon songbook when it was published in 1974. It has been there all along. There is also the *tulasī-ārati*, a very intimate song, that is sung in hundreds of temples around the world by everyone, from new devotees to gurus.

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*namo namaḥ tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī namo namaḥ
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā pāba ei abhilāṣī*

O Tulasī, beloved of Kṛṣṇa, I offer my respects unto you again and again. My desire is to attain the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

*ye tomāra śaraṇa laya, tāra vāñchā pūrṇa haya
kṛpā kari kara tāre vṛndāvana-vāsī*

Those who take shelter of you have their wishes completely fulfilled. Bestowing your mercy upon them, you make them a resident of Vṛndāvana.

*mora ei abhilāṣa, vilāsa kuñje dio vāsa
nayana heriba sadā yugala-rūpa-rāṣī*

My desire is that you will grant me residence in the forest bowers where the Divine Couple perform Their pastimes. Thus, my eyes will eternally behold the beautiful combined forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

*ei nivedana dbara, sakhīra anugata kara
sevā-adhikāra diye kara nīja dāsī*

Please consider this request – kindly make me a follower of the *gopīs*. Please give me the qualification and make me your own maidservant.

*dīna kṛṣṇa-dāse kaya, ei yena mora haya
śrī-rādhā-govinda-preme sadā yena bhāsi*

This fallen servant of Kṛṣṇa prays, “May I eternally swim in the love of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.”

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada

This song is sung from day one when you join the temple – but we don't pay attention to what we are singing or what we are actually praying for.

Proper glorification of the spiritual master necessitates our understanding of all of these things – otherwise we will not understand who he is, what his message is or what he comes to give. We cannot expect to understand the nature of this world or the nature of the spiritual world unless we pay very close attention to these matters. Proper glorification and understanding of the spiritual master also means a connection with his friends, servitor associates, paraphernalia and place of residence. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is always properly glorified in relation to His associates, servitors, devotees, paraphernalia, holy place of residence etc. Kṛṣṇa is never alone – that is the disqualification of Mīrābai. Mīrābai was a Rajasthani princess, but she gave that up, never married and just worshipped Kṛṣṇa her whole life. She wrote many beautiful songs glorifying Kṛṣṇa, but Sarasvatī Ṭhākura didn't give any attention to Mīrābai whatsoever. He considered her *avaiṣṇava*, an imitation. Throughout her life and throughout her songs, there is no mention of the Vaiṣṇavas or the associates of Kṛṣṇa – only Kṛṣṇa directly.* Throughout the songs and the literatures of our *ācāryas*, there's an endless glorification of the Lord's associates.

Proper glorification of the spiritual master necessitates all those things, and in regards to Śrīla Prabhupāda, it also demands proper glorification of our *parama-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Devotees all over the world are preparing to celebrate Śrīla Prabhupāda's centennial appearance in

* “So far we know, that Mīrābai's devotion is of some mis-type – not real type of devotion, because her devotion is only confined to Kṛṣṇa and not any mention of any devotees. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is very clear in his analysis of the famous exponents. Tulasidāsa, Mīrābai – they are rejected from the *śuddha-bhakti* school, but generally people think that they are devotees of the higher order.” (Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, September 20th, 1981)

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1996 – there are vast arrangements being made and in almost every single instance Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is a forgotten personality! When Śrīla Prabhupāda was present in this world, his Vyāsa Pūjā was a day when his disciples would meet together and glorify him but he expected us to praise Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also. On those occasions, Śrīla Prabhupāda would often request us to read the simple poem that he wrote for his Guru Mahārāja in 1935:

*Adore, adore ye all the happy day,
More blessed than heaven, sweeter than May,
When he appeared at Purī, the holy place,
My Lord and Master His Divine Grace.*

*Oh! my Master the evangelic angel,
Give us thy light, light up our candle.
Struggle for existence a human race,
The only hope, His Divine Grace.*

*Misled we are, all going astray,
Save us, O Lord, our fervent pray.
Wonder thy ways, to turn your face,
Adore Thy feet, Your Divine Grace.*

*Forgotten Kṛṣṇa, we fallen souls
Pay most heavy the illusion's toll.
Darkness around, all untrace,
The only hope, His Divine Grace.*

*Message of service Thou hast brought,
A healthful life, as Caitanya wrought.
Unknown to all, it's full of brace,
That's your gift, Your Divine Grace.*

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada

*Absolute is sentient thou hast proved,
Impersonal calamity thou hast removed.
This gives us a life, anew and fresh,
Worship thy feet, Your Divine Grace.*

*Had you not come, who had told
The message of Kṛṣṇa forceful and bold?
That's your right, you have the mace,
Save me, a fallen, Your Divine Grace.*

*The line of service as drawn by you
Is pleasing and healthy like morning dew.
The oldest of all but in new dress,
Miracle done, Your Divine Grace.*

Proper glorification of Śrīla Prabhupāda naturally precipitates glorification of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. If we approach Śrīla Prabhupāda in this way, keeping the whole *param-parā* in focus back to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, then we will understand who Śrīla Prabhupāda is, who we are and the depth of what we are involved in. We will find great hope when we see the opportunity that we have been mercifully given. This hope will sustain us and give us the courage to endure all kinds of difficulty while enabling us to proceed toward the ultimate goal of life.

We must always trace the substance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and not simply follow the form. The form may mislead us from time to time. Kṛṣṇa *is* His form, but in regards to the living entities in this world, there is a difference between the body and soul. This is applicable also to the spiritual master – he is also not the body, although wherever we find something connected to divinity, that also takes on transcendental qualities. But if we simply try to understand the spiritual master in terms of his physical appearance, then we may confuse some of his Indian habits, or

foreign habits to be some sign of divinity. For example, when Śrīla Prabhupāda first came to America – we saw that he would wiggle his head when he liked something. Everybody thought that was a symptom of a pure devotee. But when the devotees came to India, they found millions of people doing exactly the same thing!

We have to go beyond the physical manifestation and the cultural appearance. We have to go beyond a skin-deep understanding of the spiritual master. We will have to transcend all our experiences of him in this world. During his manifest pastimes, the spiritual master's physical presence is very important, but after his departure it is not as important. If one focuses too much on the form, then one will be misled by the arrangements of Māyā. One will not understand the spiritual master or spiritual substance – to such an extent that when we begin to hear the truth, we may become agitated and oppose it.

This has been going on since guru-disciple began. We find a reference to this concerning the sons of Advaita Ācārya. The sons of Advaita Ācārya split into two groups – one group were the true followers of Advaita Ācārya and the others became Māyāvādīs.* So this is not a new development. It is a perpetual obstacle in this world. Therefore, it is the duty of the disciples, grand-disciples, followers and admirers of Śrīla Prabhupāda to pay attention to the substance. According to our capacity, we should give attention to the inner meaning of our experience. This will bring about the best result in us and in others also.

(From a lecture given on Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day at Myrtle Beach, USA on August 29th, 1994)

* Śrīla Sarasvatī Tḥākura elaborates on this in his commentary to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā* 12.13-17.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA
LĪLĀ-SMARAṆA-MANĠALA STOTRAM

(1)

*jaya-re sva-pāriṣada, śrīla svāmī prabhupāda
abhaya amṛta parā-gati
tomāra caraṇa-padma, dbūli morā śreya-sadma
tābe mama nitya paraṇati*

jaya-re – all glories to you; *sva-pāriṣada* – with his own associate servitors; *śrīla svāmī prabhupāda* – A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda; *abhaya* – fearlessness; *amṛta* – nectar; *parā-gati* – supreme goal; *tomāra* – your; *caraṇa-padma* – lotus feet; *dbūli* – dust; *morā* – my; *śreya-sadma* – all auspicious shelter; *tābe* – in that; *mama* – my; *nitya* – continual; *paraṇati* – obeisances.

TRANSLATION

All glories to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda who is always accompanied by his associate servitors, His internal nature is just like the sweetest nectar and externally he appears like fearlessness personified. I continually offer my full prostrate obeisances unto the dust of his lotus feet that are the all auspicious shelter and goal of my life.

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(2)

sat-jana vandita, mama cira vānchita
prabbupāda-padme sukba-sevā
tava sevā parasāde, purila se hṛdi sādhe
tava guṇa-śobbhā mana-lobbhā

sat-jana – saints and devotees; *vandita* – glorified; *mama* – mine; *cira* – eternal; *vānchita* – cherished desire; *prabbupāda-padme* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda; *sukba-sevā* – blissful spontaneous service; *tava* – your; *sevā* – service; *parasāde* – grace; *purila* – fulfilled; *se* – that; *hṛdi-sādhe* – heart’s desire; *tava* – your; *guṇa* – qualities; *śobbhā* – beauty; *mana-lobbhā* – charms the mind.

TRANSLATION

The blissful service of the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda is glorified by the topmost saints and devotees. To obtain the unalloyed service of his lotus feet is the only cherishable goal of my life. That eternal desire is always being fulfilled by the nectar of His Divine Grace and therefore the beauty of his unlimited transcendental qualities continually charms my heart. Now my dear devotees, please hear with great care and attention the narration of Śrīla *Prabhupāda-Lilā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala Stotram*, the transcendental qualities and pastimes of His Divine Grace, the topmost servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

(3)

śrī nandotsava-dine, nija sakhī-gaṇa-sane
premānanda-nimagna śrī rādhe
sukba icchā parakāśa, dāki nija priya dāsa
kabilena ‘pura ei sādhe’

śrī nandotsava dine – on the day of Nandotsava; *nija* – own; *sakhī-gaṇa-sane* – with Her *sakhīs*; *premānanda* – bliss of *kṛṣṇa-prema*; *nimagna* – deeply absorbed; *śrī rādhe* – Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *sukba icchā* – pleasant desire; *parakāśa* – revealing; *dāki* – calling; *nija* – own; *priya-dāsa* – dear servant; *kabilena* – said; *pura* – fulfil; *ei* – this; *sādhe* – desire.

Śrīla Prabhupāda-Lilā-Smaraṇa-Manḡala Stotram

TRANSLATION

On the day when the grand festival of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, celebrating the birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa was being held, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī accompanied by Her *sakbīs*, who were all deeply absorbed in the bliss of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, called for one of Her dear-most servants. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the Absolute Queen of Vṛndāvana, spoke thus revealing Her happy thoughts, “You must fulfil one desire of Mine.”

(4)

*āji śubha divasete, mama kṛpāśiṣa sāthe
avatīrṇe hao dbaranīte
śrī kamalā-dhani tatbā, tava gaura-sevā-kathā
pracārila bhaviṣya-vāṇīte*

āji – today; *śubha* – auspicious; *divasete* – this day; *mama* – my; *kṛpāśiṣa* – merciful grace; *sāthe* – with; *avatīrṇe* – advent; *hao* – become; *dbaranīte* – on the earth; *śrī kamalā-dhani* – dear blessed Kamalā; *tatbā* – there; *tava* – your; *gaura-sevā* – service to Gaura; *kathā* – message; *pracārila* – spread; *bhaviṣya-vāṇīte* – foretelling.

TRANSLATION

On this auspicious day, you must advent on the earth along with My blessings and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in every town and village of the world. My very dear Śrī Kamalā (the eternal spiritual form of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) has already announced your coming and she has also predicted your devotional service unto My Lord Gaurāṅga.

(5)

*iṣṭa-devī-pade-nami, tabe he śrī kṛṣṇa-premī
e dbarāra kroḍa dhanya-kare
avatīrṇa haile nāma, śuddha-bhakata-vaiṣṇava
śrī gaura-mohana-parivāre*

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iṣṭa-devī – Supreme adorable Goddess; *pade* – unto the lotus feet; *name* – paying obeisances; *tabe* – then; *śrī kṛṣṇa-premi* – lover of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *e dbarāra* – of this earth; *kroda* – countless; *dbanya-kare* – blessing; *avatīrṇa* – advented; *baile* – became; *nāma* – renowned; *śuddha-bhakata-vaiṣṇava* – pure devotee; *śrī gaura-mohana* – Śrī Gaura-mohana; *parivāre* – family.

TRANSLATION

That unalloyed servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (later to be known as A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda), whose heart was filled with the most inconceivable love of Godhead, paying obeisances and offering countless prayers at the lotus feet of the Supremely Worshipable Goddess of Fortune, then appeared on the Earth in a renowned devotee family, headed by the pure Vaiṣṇava, Śrī Gaura-mohana.

(6 & 7)

*nija putra tare tini, parama kalyāṇa māni
prārthanā karilā sneha bhare
he vaiṣṇava sādhu-gaṇa, kara kṛpā anukṣana
mora prāṇa ei putra-pare*

*mama putra e abbaya, yena rādhā-dāsa haya
nitya-kāla seve rādhā-dbana
parama gaurava-bhaṅge, kīrtana karuka raṅge
tāṇra guṇa bbariyā bbuvana*

nija – his; *putra* – son; *tare* – for; *tini* – he; *parama* – great; *kalyāṇa* – auspicious; *māni* – taking; *prārthanā karilā* – prayed; *sneha bhare* – with great affection; *he vaiṣṇava* – O Vaiṣṇavas; *sādhu-gaṇa* – O sādhus; *kara kṛpā* – give your mercy; *anukṣana* – continually; *mora* – my; *prāṇa* – life and soul; *ei* – this; *putra* – son; *pare* – upon; *mama* – my; *putra* – son; *e* – this; *abbaya* – Abhaya; *yena* – so that; *rādhā-dāsa* – a servant of Śrī Rādhā; *haya* – becomes; *nitya-kāla* – all the time; *seve* – serves; *rādhā-dbana* – Rādhā, the Supreme Wealth; *parama* – great; *gaurava-bhaṅge* – in a grand and glorious way; *kīrtana karuka* – let him sing and preach; *raṅge* – in a joyful mood; *tāṇra* – Her; *guṇa* – qualities; *bbariyā* – inundating; *bbuvana* – the world.

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TRANSLATION

Invoking the blessings of the Vaiṣṇava *sādhvas* upon his son, Gau-
ra-mohana prayed to all of them with great sincerity, “O *sādhvas*,
O Vaiṣṇavas, please bestow your blessings upon this dear son of
mine, who is my life and soul, so that he can become the serv-
ant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, eternally serving Her, the Supreme
wealth of life. Please bless him so that he can preach and sing
Her qualities and glories in a most grand way, inundating the
whole world.”

(8)

pare eka śubha-kāle, tvadīyā karuṇā bale
mililā śrī gurudeva-sāthe
śrī viṣṇu-kiraṇa-dyuti, su-dīvyā karuṇā-mūrti-
rūpa tini herilā tāñbāte

pare — afterwards; *eka* — one; *śubha-kāle* — auspicious moment; *tvadīyā* — Her (Rādhārāṇī’s); *karuṇā* — mercy; *bale* — caused by; *mililā* — met; *śrī gurudeva* — His Gurudeva; *sāthe* — with; *śrī viṣṇu-kiraṇa-dyuti* — an effulgent ray of Viṣṇu; *su-dīvyā* — divine; *karuṇā* — grace; *mūrti-rūpa* — personified; *tini* — he; *herilā* — saw; *tāñbāte* — in him (Sarasvatī Ṭhākura).

TRANSLATION

Afterwards, at an auspicious moment arranged by the grace of
Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Śrīla Prabhupāda met his spiritual master
(Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura). He saw the divine
grace of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in his Gurudeva and understood him
to be an effulgent ray of Viṣṇu, His Divine Grace personified.

(9)

bbaya-hīna pracāraka, bbakti-sadācara dakṣa
prabhu-vara se dayitā dāsa
nija dṛḍha citta-mate, nāma dilā sva-śiṣyete
īśa-abbaya-caraṇa dāsa

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bhaya-bīna — fearless; *pracāraka* — preacher; *bhakti-sadācara* — practices of devotion; *dakṣa* — expert; *prabhu-vara* — great master; *se* — that; *dayitā dāsa* — Dayitā Dāsa; *nija* — own; *dṛḍha* — powerful; *citta-mate* — according to his heart feeling; *nāma* — name, *dilā* — conferred; *sva-śiṣyete* — to is own disciple; *īśa* — the Supreme Lord; *abhaya-carāṇa* — fearless lotus feet; *dāsa* — servant.

TRANSLATION

That great divine master Śrī Varṣabhānavi Devī Dayitā Dāsa (another name of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, meaning the servant of the lover of Śrī Rādhā) who is expert at practicing pure devotional principles and who is a fearless preacher of the divine message of Godhead, now conferred upon Śrīla Prabhupāda the name Abhaya Carāṇāravinda according to his own firm self-confident character. The meaning of that name is that he is the servitor of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead that are the abode of all fearlessness and hopes for the pure devotees.

(10)

rādhā-kuṇḍa taṭāṅgane, ati antaraṅga sthāne
ela tānra sāndra premāveśa
gāḍha anurāga-mane, sarva-ātma nivedane
māthe tule-nilā gurvādeśa

rādhā-kuṇḍa — Rādhā-kuṇḍa; *taṭāṅgane* — on the bank; *ati* — most; *antaraṅga* — intimate; *sthāne* — place; *ela* — came; *tānra* — his; *sāndra* — condensed; *premāveśa* — loving ecstasy; *gāḍha* — intense; *anurāga-mane* — with loving heart; *sarva-ātma* — with all heart and soul; *nivedane* — surrender; *māthe* — on his head; *tule-nilā* — took up; *gurvādeśa* — the order of his guru.

TRANSLATION

In the most intimate place of the *mādburya* pastimes, namely Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Prabhupāda experienced the full ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Wholeheartedly surrendering unto Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with intense love, Śrīla Prabhupāda received upon his head the most holy order of his Gurudeva, “If you ever get money print and distribute books.”

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(11)

rūpa-sarasvatī-śrota, guru iccbā-ājñā-mata
premabbare kīrtana karite
pradarśila e jagata, sakala saubbhāgya yata
āse gāḍha guru-niṣṭha hate

rūpa-sarasvatī-śrota — the current of succession from Rūpa Gosvāmī down to Sarasvatī Ṭhākura; *guru* — spiritual master; *iccbā* — desire; *ājñā* — order; *mata* — message; *premabbare* — with great loving devotion; *kīrtana karite* — singing and preaching; *pradarśila* — has shown; *e* — this; *jagata* — world; *sakala* — all; *saubbhāgya* — fortune; *yata* — that; *āse* — comes; *gāḍha guru-niṣṭha* — adherent devotional service; *hate* — from.

TRANSLATION

By singing and preaching with great loving devotion that sublime message of his Gurudeva, which is pure devotional knowledge of the Rūpa-Sarasvatī (*rūpānuga*) stream, Śrīla Prabhupāda has shown to the world that all good fortune manifests from adherent devotional service unto the lotus feet of Śrī Guru.

(12 & 13)

śrī śrī rādhā-dāmodare, śrī jīvera mandire
prabhu-datta nija kuṭirete
āra rūpa-samādbite, vraja-rāga āveṣete
bbajana karilā rasa-prīte

śuddha-bhakta-ratna-maṇi, rūpe nitya-kāla tini
sethāya rabena virājita
yethā rādhā-pada-sevā, dbari rasa-mūrti-śobbā
nirantara bana prasphuṭita

śrī śrī rādhā-dāmodare — in the temple of Rādhā-Dāmodara; *śrī jīvera mandire* — in the temple of Jīva Gosvāmī; *prabhu-datta* — given by his divine masters; *nija* — own; *kuṭirete* — room; *āra* — and; *rūpa-samādbite* — by the *samādbi* of Rūpa Gosvāmī; *vraja-rāga āveṣete* — loving devotion of Vraja; *bbajana karilā* — performed *bbajana*; *rasa-prīte* — loving happiness; *śuddha-bhakta* — pure devotee; *ratna-maṇi* — precious gem; *rūpe* — form; *nitya-kāla* — eternally; *tini* —

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he; *sethāya* — there; *rabena virājita* — gloriously present; *yetbā* — where; *rādhā-pada-sevā* — devotional service to the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī; *dhari* — taking; *rasa-mūrti-śobbhā* — embodiment of all loving beauty; *nirantara* — eternally; *hana* — becomes; *prasphuṭita* — fully bloomed.

TRANSLATION

In the temple of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, namely Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira and Śrī Rūpa's *samādbi*, in his rooms given by his divine masters, Śrīla Prabhupāda performed his *bbajana* in the loving devotional mood of the eternal residents of Vraja.

Śrīla Prabhupāda lives eternally in his place of *bbajana* as the precious gem amongst the pure devotees where the loving devotional service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī constantly blooms personifying the beauty of divine ecstatic mellows.

(14, 15 & 16)

parama subṛda haye, gaura-prema-vāñī laye
pāścātya-deśete āilā yabe
'bbāi' bali śrī kṛṣṇere, sambodhiyā samādare
prārthanā karila ei tabe

bbāi! tava puṇya habe, rādhārāṇī kbuṣī babe
dhruva ati bali tomā tāi
labhive se bhāgya āru, yadi tumi kbuṣī kara
bhāgya-devī-rūpa śrī rādhāi

śrī siddhānta sarasvatī, rūpa dhari se śrīmatī
more ājñā dilā pracārite
sei icchā pūrṇa kara, āmāra vacana dhara
tabe pāri tāñbhāre sevite

parama — most; *subṛda* — well-wishing friend; *haye* — becoming; *gaura-prema-vāñī* — the message of divine love for Gaura; *laye* — carrying; *pāścātya-deśete* — in the western countries; *āilā* — came; *yabe* — when; *bbāi* — O brother; *bali* — taking; *śrī kṛṣṇere sambodhiyā* — addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *samādare* — with love; *prārthanā karila* — prayed; *ei* — this; *tabe* — then; *bbāi* — O brother; *tava* — you;

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punya babe – acquire pious merit; *rādhārāṇī kbuśī babe* – Rādhārāṇī will be pleased; *dbruva ati* – most definitely; *bali* – tell; *tomā* – You; *tāi* – therefore; *labhive* – will gain; *se* – that; *bhāgya* – fortune; *āru* – more; *yadi* – if; *tumi* – you; *kbuśī kara* – please; *bhāgya-devī-rūpa śrī rādhāi* – Śrī Rādhikā, the Goddess of all fortune; *śrī siddhānta sarasvatī* – Sarasvatī Ṭhākura; *rūpa dhari* – taking the form; *se* – that; *śrīmatī* – Rādhārāṇī; *more* – me; *ājñā dilā* – gave the order; *pracārite* – to preach; *sei* – that; *iccbā* – desire; *pūrṇa kara* – fulfil; *āmāra* – My; *vacana* – advice; *dhara* – take; *tabe* – then; *pāri* – am able; *tāñhāre* – Her; *sevite* – to serve.

TRANSLATION

Leaving behind the sacred land of Vṛndāvana and taking a great risk in his old age, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the western world as our Ever Well Wisher carrying with him the message of *gaura-prema*, love of Lord Gaurāṅga. Upon his arrival he earnestly prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa addressing Him as ‘*bhāi*’ (O Brother) in an intense loving way.

“O dear brother, my dear and intimate friend! I tell You this in a most definite way. You can achieve some invaluable merits by pleasing Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. You (Lord Kṛṣṇa) can really attain even more fortune if You can now please Her, the Supreme Goddess of all good fortunes. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself, in the form of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, ordered me to preach Her message. Therefore please take my word and advice and fulfil Her desire; then only can I attain success and serve my guru fully.”

(17 & 18)

atula saubbhāgya-khani, tāñra ei divya-vāñī
śrī nāma śrī śacī-putrāśraye
śrī svarūpa sanātana, rūpa-prabhu guru-gaṇa
sabe mahā-kṛpānvita haye

āmā-bhakta sabākāre, dena praveśādbikare
śrī rādhā-sevikā-gaṇāṅgane

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*vṛndāvana-govardhane, kabhu rādhā-kuṇḍa-pāne
parama abbiṣṭa-siddhi dāne*

atula – incomparable; *saubbhāgya-khani* – mine of good fortune; *tānra* – his; *ei* – this; *divya-vāñi* – divine message; *śrī nāma* – the Holy Name; *śrī śacī-putrāśraye* – under the shelter of Śrī Caitanya, the son of Śacī; *śrī svarūpa sanātana* – Svarūpa-dāmodara Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī; *rūpa-prabhu* – Rūpa Gosvāmī; *guru-gaṇa* – divine masters; *sabe* – all of them; *mabā* – greatly; *kṛpānvita* – gracious; *baye* – becoming; *āmā* – My; *bbakta* – devotees; *sabākāre* – all; *dena* – give; *praveśādbikare* – eligibility to enter; *śrī rādhā-sevikā-gaṇāṅgane* – in the embrace of the dear servitor associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; *vṛndāvana-govardhane* – at Govardhana in Vṛndāvana; *kabhu* – sometimes; *rādhā-kuṇḍa-pāne* – going to Rādhā-kuṇḍa; *parama* – supreme; *abbiṣṭa siddhi* – fulfilment of the goal of love; *dāne* – giving.

TRANSLATION

The mine of incomparable good fortune is the message of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda – “If someone takes shelter of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the son of Mother Śacī, along with His dear associates, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī – they being greatly pleased with such a person, bestow upon him entrance into the embrace of the dear associate servitors of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī at Govardhana, Vṛndāvana, and sometimes at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa – blessing them with the supreme fulfilment of the ultimate goal of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

(19)

*śrī rādhikā priyaṅkarī, śrī kārttikī-māsa bari
giri-rāja bhṛdayete smari
tīnho aprakṣa hailā, nitya-līlā praveśilā
rāje yetā rādhā-saṅge hari*

śrī rādhikā priyaṅkarī – dear to Rādhārāṇī; *śrī kārttikī-māsa* – the month of Kārttika, which is non-different to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; *bari* – accepting; *giri-rāja* – Govardhana, the king of mountains; *bhṛdayete* – at heart; *smari* – remembering; *tīnho* – he; *aprakṣa hailā* – disappeared; *nitya-līlā* – eternal

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pastimes; *praveśilā* – entered; *rāje* – effulgently present; *yetā* – where; *rādhā-saṅge hari* – Śrī Hari, in the association of Śrī Rādhā.

TRANSLATION

Completing his missionary activities in the western world, Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to Vṛndāvana. Accepting the month of Kārttika, which is non-different from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, bearing Girirāja-Govardhana in mind and embracing the lotus feet of his most worshipful Lord in the core of his heart, Śrīla Prabhupāda made his disappearance from this world and entered the *nitya-lilā*, the eternal loving pastimes of Goloka where Lord Govinda is always effulgently present with His dear-most Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

(20)

ei pantbā pradarśane, śikṣā dilā āmāgaṇe
kon vastu-siddhi lakṣya haiya
kari vāsa govardhane, dainya ātma-nivedane
labha śrī rādhikā-gaṇāśraya

ei – this; *pantbā* – path; *pradarśane* – by showing; *śikṣā dilā* – taught; *āmāgaṇe* – us; *kon* – which; *vastu-siddhi* – fulfilment of the ultimate aim and object of life; *lakṣya* – goal; *haiya* – is; *kari vāsa* – residing; *govardhane* – in Govardhana; *dainya ātma-nivedane* – by self-surrender and humility; *labha* – attain; *śrī rādhikā-gaṇāśraya* – the shelter of the associate servitors of Śrī Rādhikā.

TRANSLATION

By showing us his disappearance from this world in the month of Kārttika and by revealing his desire to go to Govardhana Hill, Śrīla Prabhupāda has thus shown us the path which leads to the fulfilment of the ultimate aim and object of life – that is, to obtain supreme shelter in the camp of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's associate-servants with humble self surrender, residing always at Śrī Govardhana.

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(21)

kabe tāra aprākṛta, bhāva-guṇa-vibhūṣita
jīvana-caritra-madburimā
satya kari e vāstave, āmāri sampada habe
e jīvane dāni sukha sīmā

kabe — when; *tāra* — his; *aprākṛta* — transcendental; *bhāva-guṇa* — mood and qualities; *vibhūṣita* — possessed with; *jīvana-caritra* — life and character; *madburimā* — beauty; *satya kari* — actually; *e vāstave* — this reality; *āmāri* — my; *sampada* — wealth; *habe* — will become; *e jīvane* — in this life; *dāni* — giving; *sukha sīmā* — highest happiness.

TRANSLATION

When will that day be mine, in some distant lifetime, when the beauty of Śrīla Prabhupāda's transcendental life, possessed by the qualities of pure love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa actually become my only wealth, giving me a taste of the highest happiness? O when will that day be mine?

(22 & 23)

sakala hr̥daya diye, sutivra ākāṅkhā laiye
sei āse rabi mui hīna
kabe sei bhāgya habe, e jīvana dhanya habe
kabe morāsibe se dina

prāṇa-bari prati-stbāne, tānri kṛpā-śaktyadbāne
labbi eka-niṣṭha tanu-mana
e dina sevaka tānra, guṇa-gāṅthā-sambhāra
kari yabe satata kīrtana

sakala — all; *hr̥daya diye* — yearning heart; *sutivra* — most keen; *ākāṅkhā laiye* — having longing; *sei āse* — hoping that; *rabi* — humbly; *mui* — I; *hīna* — lowly self; *kabe* — when; *sei* — that; *bhāgya* — fortune; *habe* — will; *e* — this; *jīvana* — life; *dhanya* — blessed; *habe* — will be; *kabe* — when; *morā* — my; *āsibe* — will come; *se* — that; *dina* — day; *prāṇa-bari* — with all my heart and soul; *prati-stbāne* — at every place; *tānri* — his; *kṛpā-śaktyadbāne* — empowered by his grace; *labbi* — having; *eka-niṣṭha* — firm determination; *tanu-mana* — body and mind; *e* — this;

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dina – fallen; *sevaka* – servant; *tānra* – his; *guṇa-gāṅṭhā-sambhāra* – the wealth of his qualities; *kari yabe* – will continue; *satata* – all the time; *kīrtana* – chant.

TRANSLATION

Let us always pray to remain the humble and obedient servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda. With a burning heart, filled with an intense longing for his association, this poor and lowly insignificant beggar humbly prays for that fortunate day when the life of his servant will be empowered by His Divine Grace with firm determination so that I may, with one pointedness, not caring for anything else, constantly sing with my body and mind the sweetest glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda's unlimited transcendental qualities and pastimes.



PURPORT TO ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA
LĪLĀ-SMARAṆA-MANĠALA STOTRAM

Let me offer my most respectful and humble obeisances to the lotus feet of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrī Jagat-Guru Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

Let me also offer my most respectful and humble obeisances to all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal servants, paraphernalia, and pastimes. By the boundless mercy of His Divine Grace, vast numbers of conditioned souls are being drawn to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

I humbly bow my head in the dust of the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda and sincerely pray that he will accept me as one of his eternal servitor associates.

The disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda worship His Divine Grace as the dear-most servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. I must therefore beg forgiveness at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda and before all of you, the listeners and readers, for any fault or offence that I have committed in my attempt to glorify His Divine Grace.

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

I offer my respects unto all the Vaiṣṇavas, so I may not make offences to them. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa* I.87)

We shall always remember Śrīla Prabhupāda, our eternal father, as the empowered representative of the most glorious and beautiful Queen of Śrī Vṛndāvana, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and we shall forever aspire for the shelter of his lotus feet. What follows are eight transcendental remembrances of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda's manifest pastimes in Śrī Caitanyadeva's ongoing *sāṅkīrtana-līlā*, all of which point to his eternal service in the camp of Śrī Rādhā.

HIS BIRTH – An Eternal Resident of Goloka Vṛndāvana

It was Nandotsava, the day after Janmāṣṭamī, the advent day of Lord Kṛṣṇa, when Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared in this world in a small village on the outskirts of Calcutta. It was a very auspicious day and all the people in the three worlds were engaged in a wonderful festival celebrating the birth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-candra, who had advented at Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma almost five thousand years before. At this auspicious time, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the Queen of Vṛndāvana, called Her dear servant and said, "Please go to earth and give them Kṛṣṇa's mercy." Thus Her own servant was sent to this world to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in every town and village. Who else but the dear-most servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī could be worthy of such a task?

The same year as Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance (1896), Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's introductory book in English, *Śrī Caitanya: His Life and Precepts*, appeared at McGill University in

Canada. This was the first book about Śrī Caitanya to reach Western shores. Shortly after that, Bhaktivinoda also predicted that a great soul would soon come to fulfil Śrī Caitanya's prediction from *Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

*prthivīte āche yadi nagarādi-grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

In every town and village of the world, My Holy Name will be sung. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Antya-khaṇḍa*. 4.126)

That Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's first publication came to the West in the same year that Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared in this world as 'the ambassador to fulfil the prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu' is felt in the hearts of Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal servants as an eternal transcendental truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is always situated in eternal pastimes of the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in the transcendental realm of Goloka Vṛndāvana. Thus the place of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance in this mundane world is considered non-different from Goloka Vṛndāvana.

It is stated in the 17th Chapter of *Caitanya-bhāgavata* that in order to teach others how to be a faithful disciple of Śrī Guru, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed the example by visiting the birth-place of Īśvara Purī at Kumārahaṭṭa and collected some earth from his birth-site. This Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu kept very carefully and He used to eat a small portion of it daily. Let us therefore eternally worship the auspicious day and the auspicious place where Śrīla Prabhupāda manifest his humble appearance in this world.

HIS FATHER – A Pure Devotee of Kṛṣṇa

Gaura-mohana De, a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, desired the very best for his son. “Please bless him,” he used to say, whenever holy men visited his home. “Please bless my son that he will become a great devotee of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “My father also trained me and instructed me to his best capacity, and he prayed for me that Rādhārāṇī may be pleased upon me, and I think by my father’s blessings and grace, I may have come to this position, and I have gotten into relationship with His Divine Grace Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja also by his mercy. So it is Kṛṣṇa’s grace that I got a good father and also a good spiritual master.”

What else did Gaura-mohana desire for his son? “He should learn to play *mṛdaṅga* very nicely and he should engage in the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s father made all these arrangements: *mṛdaṅga* lessons and Deities of Rādhā-Govinda for Śrīla Prabhupāda’s childhood worship. In due course of time, everything became wonderfully manifest in Śrīla Prabhupāda, as per his father’s transcendental desires.

What wonderful arrangements the Lord makes for his pure devotees! Let the holy remembrance of Śrī Gaura-mohana De, the father of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, be ever present in our thoughts.

HIS GURU – My Guru Mahārāja was a Vaikuntha Man

Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “The ideas I imbibed from my father in my childhood days were later on solidified by my spiritual master, the eternal father, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.” Who was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of

our beloved spiritual master? The eternal ego of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is disclosed here in these two beautiful prayers by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja:

*ati-laukika-gati-taulika-rati-kautuka-vapuṣam
ati-daivata-mati-vaiṣṇava-yati-vaibhava-puruṣam
sa-sanātana-raghu-rūpaka paramāṅga-caritam
su-vicāraka iva jīvaka iti sādhubhir-uditam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣa-ravijā nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sabitam*

O Dayita Dāsa, your divine personality exists within the spiritual realm, and your manner of movement is quite gentle while your divine figure fondly engages in the Lord’s *śṛṅgāra-rasa* pastimes. In addition, your external appearance radiates the prestige of a dignified renunciate – far superior to any class of demigod – and possesses the intelligence of a pure devotee. Every aspect of your distinct personality is exactly parallel with those magnificent devotees Śrīla Sanātana, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Due to your wonderful and precise judgement, the devotees have declared that you are the life-image of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. On your auspicious appearance day, I humbly offer my respects unto the tips of your lotus toes in the association of your favourite servitors. O Gurudeva, you are the dear-most object of King Vṛṣabhānu’s daughter, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. (*Śrī Dayita Dāsa Praṇati-pañcakam* 3)

*nīte yasmin nisānte nayana-jala-bharaiḥ snāta-gātrārbudānān
ucchhair utkrośatān śrī-vṛṣa-kapi-sutayā-dhīrayā svīya-goṣṭhīm
pṛthivī gāḍhāndhakāir-br̥ta-nayana-mañivāvṛta yena hīnā
yatṛāsau tatra śigbraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana be nīyatān kiṅkaro ‘yam*

At the close of night, early morn, there were thousands of devotees freshly bathed and loudly wailing, their eyes overflowing with sorrowful tears of hopelessness. Śrīmatī Rādhikā, that radiantly beautiful Queen of Vraja and daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, had summoned Her intimate servant Śrī Dayita Dāsa to return to Her divine camp, their personal family. Now in the absence of Nayana-maṇi-mañjarī, the earth planet has been vacuumed into the deepest, vacant darkness. Oh! With no further delay, kindly accept this fallen soul as your servant. O Dayita Dāsa, I am hoping against hope to be embraced within the fold of your divine company. (Śrī Dayita Dāsa Daśakam I)

Let the transcendental memory of Śrīla Prabhupāda as the eternal servant of the servant of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda become our exclusive meditation and *bhajana*.

HIS GURU'S INSTRUCTIONS – Rādhā-kuṇḍa – Print Books!

Śrīla Prabhupāda often spoke about the instructions of his Guru Mahārāja to preach and publish Kṛṣṇa conscious literature. Śrīla Prabhupāda was especially fond of mentioning the story of how he received his most important instructions from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrīla Prabhupāda recalled that at the time, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was feeling some dissatisfaction in regards to some disciples competing over who would live in which rooms in the newly constructed temple in Calcutta.

While walking along the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the place of the most intimate pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed his mind. “I think it would be better to sell this temple and the marble and print books.” Then, Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura turned to Śrīla Prabhupāda and said, “If you ever get money, print books.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda told this story many times and he would usually add these words: “And so, I am doing. Printing books is our first business. Print books and distribute them all over the world and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu will bless you.”

With great humility, Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that his only qualification was that he had firm faith, *guru-niṣṭhā*, in the order of his spiritual master.

The ultimate conception of the spiritual master in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is that the guru is the representative of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Śrīla Prabhupāda saw his Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, in that way and that is the standard that we must adopt if we wish to enter deeply within the ocean of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Let us always worship the holiest of holy places, Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, and let us always remember the instructions of Śrī Rādhā to Her most confidential servant at that most holy place.

HIS PLACE OF BHAJANA – The Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple

Once, in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda informed a small group of his devotees of something very sublime, “I live eternally in my rooms at the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple.” The real substance of this statement is, of course, only fully known to Śrīla Prabhupāda himself, but we can feel with our heart that this clearly indicates that Śrīla Prabhupāda is an eternal member of the camp of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

In his small rooms overlooking the *samādhi* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Prabhupāda used to execute his daily *bhajana* of

chanting the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa and writing the Bhaktivedānta purports in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda also informed us that, “I got inspiration for going to the West simply by performing my *bhajana* and praying before the *samādbi* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.” There he performed his *bhajana* and sang daily Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura’s song, *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada*. It is in this song that we find the highest aspiration of the followers of the *rūpānuga sampradāya* in the service of Śrī Rādhā.

The Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple is located within the *rasa-maṇḍala* of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma and it occupies a most exalted position as the place of highly confidential *līlā* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. It was here also that the renowned devotee, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī prepared transcendental literature on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Dāmodara generally refers to Kṛṣṇa being bound with the ropes of love of Mother Yaśodā, but there is another meaning of Dāmodara which is known only to the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Dāmodara means bound by the love and affection of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. So great is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s love for Kṛṣṇa, that She has captured Kṛṣṇa and bound Her Lord making Him Her exclusive property and servitor.

The Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple now stands at that place where Lord Kṛṣṇa became a slave to the love of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, where He bowed to Her holy feet in *rādhā-pada-sevā*, and this also is the eternal place of service and *bhajana* of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Let us always remember the Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple, the place of holy *bhajana* of Śrīla Prabhupāda and let us never forget his most exalted position as a servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the camp of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

HIS ARRIVAL – You Will Obtain Your Good Fortune

When the Jaladūta was crossing the Atlantic Ocean en route to Boston Harbor on September 13th 1965, Śrīla Prabhupāda composed a beautiful prayer in his native Bengali language. The refrain appeals to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is bound by Rādhārāṇī's love.

*kṛṣṇa taba puṇya habe bhāi
e-puṇya karibe yabe rādhārāṇī kḥuśi habe
dḥruva ati bali tomā tāi*

Commenting on Śrīla Prabhupāda's poem, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja once said:

I consider him to be a śaktyāveśa-avatāra and this is confirmed in his writings on his spiritual journey through the Atlantic. How he arrived in America, the nature of his beginning the movement, his intense degree of dependence and dedication to Kṛṣṇa, and how much he made himself empty of any other desire than the order of his Gurudeva corroborate that Kṛṣṇa came down to help him. In his poem, Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa, we find him pleading with Kṛṣṇa, "My dear brother, Your good fortune will come to You only when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes pleased with You." Seeing his Gurudeva, Śrīla Baktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, as Rādhārāṇī's delegation and his order as Her divine service, he humbly submitted that he did not feel himself worthy or fit to discharge the divine service — so he enlisted Kṛṣṇa in the service of his guru. He had completely dedicated himself to the purpose; he was so earnest in his prayer to Kṛṣṇa that divine force came down to help him. Otherwise, it is impossible. It is not an ordinary thing that anyone can do, rather the highest thing was extensively taken down to the lowest position, to the fallen souls. It cannot but be

the divine power, embodied and in a great intensity and magnitude! So, śaktyāveśa-avatāra, I cannot but take him to be so.

The longest journey begins with the first step and certainly any and all progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness begins by first approaching Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Just as all the planets revolve around the pole star, Dhruvaloka, so divine service revolves around Śrī Rādhā. Therefore, with emphasis (*dbruva*) Prabhupāda wrote, *dbruva ati bali tomā tīi*, emphatically imploring Kṛṣṇa, “You will only be happy if Rādhārāṇī is pleased; therefore, You must help me to do Her service.”

It is the desire of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world and it is the desire of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to spread the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī amongst the surrendered souls. Both these elements are present in the very beginning of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s attempt to start the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the Western world.

Once, Śrīla Prabhupāda commented that, “Kṛṣṇa alone is not so beautiful.” The meaning is that without Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī at His side, Kṛṣṇa is incomplete. The ultimate truth is that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are together eternally. They actually never separate even for a moment. Just as Kṛṣṇa never takes even one step out of Vṛndāvana, similarly, Kṛṣṇa never leaves the side of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī even for a moment. The Two are eternally united.

The pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa never desire to enjoy separately with Kṛṣṇa – rather they eternally desire to serve the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa by attending to all Their needs and transcendental necessities.

Let us always remember the lotus feet of our divine master, His Divine Grace, who has obtained the greatest fortune from the

Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa by the grace of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and who is eternally engaged in Their most intimate service.

HIS MESSAGE, A MATCHLESS GIFT

We Have Come Here to Receive the Greatest Gift

The matchless gift that His Divine Grace so graciously gave to his disciples, followers, and ultimately to the whole world, is nicely expressed by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī in the following prayer to his spiritual master. What we find expressed here by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is truly the essence of the mission of His Divine Grace and the most refined understanding of the substance of our Gauḍīya *sampradāya*.

*nāma-śreṣṭhān manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṅ
rūpaṅ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭavātīm
rādhā-kunḍaṅ giri-varam abo rādhikā-mādhavāśān
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī guruṁ taṁ nato 'smi*

Here, Dāsa Gosvāmī prays to his Gurudeva and if we can understand the things represented in this verse, we can say that we have understood Śrīla Prabhupāda's message. By the grace of His Divine Grace, we have received the highest conception of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa and the shelter of Śrī Caitanya. Śrī Caitanya's personal secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara, is none other than Śrī Lalitā-sakhī, the closest friend of Śrī Rādhā, who canvasses widely on Her behalf. By Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace, we have come to her shelter and also the shelter of Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. By their grace, we can become acquainted with our eternal place of service at Govardhana and sometimes be called to Rādhā-kunḍa in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

Let us always remember the lotus feet of His Divine Grace, who is the giver of the matchless gift of eternal joy in the hearts

of his surrendered servants and who is a torchlight of inspiration to all members of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* in the matter of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

HIS DEPARTURE – Govardhana and Kārttika

After preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world fifteen times in only twelve years, His Divine Grace eventually returned to Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma where he manifest his final pastimes before our eyes and gave us his last instructions.

His Divine Grace showed us many things by his personal example and inspired us to continue preaching this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world. Then in the month of Kārttika a few days before Govardhana-pūjā, His Divine Grace suddenly manifested a strong desire to go to Govardhana Hill. It came as a shock to all the devotees as they could not tolerate the idea of His Divine Grace making such an arduous journey. Then, with the help of Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire was relaxed, at least from the external point of view.

What was His Divine Grace teaching us, or what did he actually express by telling us that he wanted to go to Govardhana Hill? It was not simply the Govardhana Hill that can be reached by either car or bullock cart to which His Divine Grace desired to go. It was the infinite play of his eternal Lord in the service of Śrī Rādhā at Govardhana to which he desired to return. As Dāsa Gosvāmī realised when Śrī Caitanya gave him the *govardhana-śilā* and *guñjā-mālā*, “Mahāprabhu has given me a place at Govardhana in the service of Śrī Rādhikā,” so His Divine Grace instructed us about these truths through his disappearance.

Kārttika is the most revered time of year in Vṛndāvana because it represents the month of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Śrī Govardhana Hill is the place of unlimited eternal, intimate pastimes of

the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. His Divine Grace was being called to return to those wonderful pastimes of divine love.

The days and moments passed and the devotees stood by helplessly – then suddenly the only meaning in our poor lives disappeared from our sight. Our most beloved guide, master, father, and friend had returned to the side of his most worshipful Lord – simultaneously, he had entered our hearts forever. The devotees shed an ocean of tears, yet to this day we have not extinguished the fire of separation felt for his affectionate and reassuring presence. How shall we maintain our lives now?

His Divine Grace expressed his inner desire to go to Govardhana Hill and he chose the time of Kārttika, the month of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, for his departure from this world. Thus, he has shown us the way and he has drawn the whole world to Govardhana Hill and the Kārttika festival. We have understood this by our practical experience as thousands of devotees from all over the world celebrate Kārttika in Vṛndāvana and circumambulate Govardhana Hill every year.

Let us always remember our Divine Master, His Divine Grace, as an eternal servant and resident of the eternal pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda and let us carry the impression of his lotus feet and his instructions in the core of our hearts and continue on, as he so strongly desired, to become pure devotees and to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to every corner of the world.

Everything is possible by the will of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and His Divine Grace is also always present before us. His Divine Grace has given us the assurance and blessing that, through his instructions he will be by our side at every moment. May we all be blessed with his everlasting memory and his transcendental association via faith, surrender and transcendental loving service.



MY GURU IS RĀDHĀRĀṆĪ



Question: I have seen in the composition, *Prabhupāda Līlā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala Stotram* that you seem to have indicated that Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda was in *mādburya-rasa*. However, we have also heard from other great souls quoting Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja that Śrīla Prabhupāda has shown an affinity for *sakhya-rasa*. This apparently has been shown in his prayer written on the Jaladūta while he was on his way to the western world. So my question is, being an admirer of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, how do you harmonise your opinion about the *rasa* of your Guru Mahārāja with that indicated by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja?

Narasiṅha Mahārāja: Whatever Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has spoken, we should take upon our head. After the departure of Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is appropriate that we should accept the direction of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja. These very same words were uttered almost verbatim about Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja by Śrīla Prabhupāda in a letter to Śrīpāda Bhakti Sundara Govinda Mahārāja. So to accept Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's opinion is natural for anyone who knows anything about his higher subjective realisations and his intimate relationship with our Śrīla Prabhupāda.

When Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja heard the recitation of the poem composed by our Guru Mahārāja, *Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa*, he commented that there was indeed a strong indication of our Śrīla Prabhupāda being in *sakhya-rasa*. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja said:

He has expressed himself, his eternal position, the acme of his aspiration. In Vṛndāvana he has established Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa and Nītāi-Gaura, and he is saying like that, Nītāi-Gaura are Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. It is almost clear that he comes from that group. And now he is again there.

Such a statement by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja is not to be taken lightly. Even so, a short time later some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples raised an objection to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja referring to Śrīla Prabhupāda as being in *sakhya-rasa*. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was shocked by the immaturity of those devotees. The consideration of *rasa* was obviously not a topic that those disciples were familiar with. Indeed, their harshness in dealing with Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja reflected their extreme neophyte state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

At that time, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja said that because of the special empowerment of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, our Guru Mahārāja may have couched his *mādburya* tendencies in deference to Him.

The idea given by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was that it is possible that our Guru Mahārāja was in *mādburya-rasa*, but out of deference to Śrī Nityānanda, by whose potency he was influenced for his preaching campaign, Śrīla Prabhupāda may have veiled his *mādburya* sentiments. Therefore, some of the *sakhya* influence of Nityānanda Prabhu was shown outwardly, keeping *mādburya* in

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the background. It was not unthinkable for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja to say such a thing – that our Guru Mahārāja was outwardly showing *sakhya* influence and keeping his *mādburya* sentiments in the background. It is certainly not unreasonable.

To be a follower of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja does indeed mean to adhere to his instructions and opinions. His instruction was that through the process of *śaraṇāgati* (surrender), one should come to know the plane of eternal truth in the core of one's heart (*anurāga*).

Some devotees may be in favour of our Guru Mahārāja in *sakhya-rasa*, while others may favour him in *mādburya-rasa*. To establish a right and a wrong in this matter, however, may not be as black and white as some would like it to be. The truth is subjective – as He wishes us to see Him, so we shall see Him.

In the life of our Guru Mahārāja, there were innumerable indications that he was connected to *kṛṣṇa-līlā* in *mādburya-rasa*. We have tried to show practically through these indications, how Śrīla Prabhupāda is very dear to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Only a portion of those indications have been recounted in the song, *Prabhupāda Līlā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala Stotram*. Those were as follows:

- (1) That Śrīla Prabhupāda's father, praying to the Vaiṣṇava *sādbus*, asked for their blessings that his son become the servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.
- (2) That Śrīla Prabhupāda took *mantra-dīkṣā* (initiation) from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī Dayitā Dāsa, also known as Nayanamaṇi-mañjarī in his *siddha-rūpa*).
- (3) That Śrīla Prabhupāda received his most cherished instructions to print books from his guru while they strolled along the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa (the most sacred place of pilgrimage for the followers of Śrī Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha).

(4) That Śrīla Prabhupāda's chosen place of *bbajana* in Vṛndāvana was just behind the *samādhi* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (Rūpa-mañjarī).

(5) That Śrīla Prabhupāda after completing his world preaching mission returned to Vṛndāvana and selected Kārttika month (the month non-different from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī) as the time of his departure and his entrance into the eternal *līlās* of the Lord.

(6) And finally, Śrīla Prabhupāda manifested a great desire, just a few days before his pastime of departure, to go to Govardhana Hill, the eternal place of residence of the followers of Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha Dāsa. These, and other indications of Śrīla Prabhupāda being the dear most servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, were expressed in *Prabhupāda Līlā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala Stotram*.

It may be said that one cannot judge the *rasa* of a particular devotee simply by his external movements or place of residence etc. However, such a statement may be taken as only partially true. Otherwise Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas would not choose the holy *dhāmas* such as Vṛndāvana, Navadvīpa and Jagannātha Purī as their preferred places of residence and *bbajana*. The *prakṛta-līlā* (external movement) of the pure devotee is not necessarily devoid of *aprakṛta-bhāva* (one's internal feelings of love for Kṛṣṇa). Although the movements of the pure Vaiṣṇava are certainly deeply mysterious and not easily understood, nonetheless they may give us some perspective on the level of their intimacy with the Supreme Lord.

Further biographical information that has not been mentioned in the *Prabhupāda Līlā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala Stotram* indicating the intimacy of Śrīla Prabhupāda in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līla* is as follows:

My Guru is Rādhārāṇī

- (1) When choosing to establish his mission (The League of Devotees) at Jhansi, Śrīla Prabhupāda chose a building known as Rādhā-Smaraka (Rādhā Memorial) to set up his offices.
- (2) When Śrīla Prabhupāda went to Delhi for printing his *Back To Godhead* magazine, he chose a residence at the Chippiwada Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple.
- (3) When choosing a printing press to begin the publication of his life's work *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda chose the Rādhā Press in Delhi.
- (4) When introducing his disciples to the worship of Śrī Guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested us to daily sing the *Gurvāṣṭakam*, the prayers to the spiritual master composed by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, in which the spiritual master is glorified as a servant of the Divine Couple in *mādhya-rasa* (*nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai*).
- (5) Before every class, Śrīla Prabhupāda would sing Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's song, *jaya rādhā-mādhava jaya-kuñja-vibari*.

In any case, we have many such remembrances of our Divine Master which have unfolded in our heart so as to impel us to contemplate him as a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and an eternal member of the intimate circle of *mādhurya-rasa*. We feel proudly in our heart that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the confidential representative of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī who was especially empowered by Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. As Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has said:

If we raise our head a little higher and look up, then we shall find Rādhārāṇī and Gurudeva. It is Rādhārāṇī who is instrumental in accomplishing the function of Gurudeva from behind. The source of grace for the guru is coming from the

original source of service and love. Sākṣād dbaritvena samasta śāstraiḥ — we are asked to see Gurudeva not as opaque but as transparent, to such a degree that through him the highest conception of service, the first conception of service can be seen. It can be obtained there. If we are earnest then we shall find the highest link from the original source. We are requested not to see guru as limited in his ordinary personification, but as the transparent mediator of the highest function in his line. If only our vision is deep, we can see that according to the depth of our śraddhā, our vision, guru-tattva is very particular, very noble, very broad, wide and very deep.

In summary, we may conclude that our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda is in *mādburya-rasa* simply because he saw his guru as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. His guru is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This was also confirmed by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja on several occasions as follows:

Swami Mahārāja has clearly written that his guru is Rādhārāṇī. It is there — “Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī will be pleased if You help me in this campaign” — e-puṇya karibe yabe rādhārāṇī kbuśi habe dbruva ati bali tomā tāi. So he has admitted that his guru is Rādhārāṇī. So we aspire after the service of Rādhārāṇī under the direction of Śrī Rūpa and other devotees, not committing any wrong.

In general rasa, general service of Kṛṣṇa, he preached in the West. Though he knew and admitted that, “My guru is Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī, my gurudeva, has ordered me to preach in the west, and Kṛṣṇa, my friend, You are to help me, because Rādhārāṇī will be satisfied, my Gurudeva. Your bigness is also like that. So, You must come to help me.”

My Guru is Rādhārāṇī

Certainly Śrīla Prabhupāda will forgive us if we have overstepped our boundaries in endeavouring to serve him with our full heart's love and devotion.

We offer our humble apologies to anyone and everyone if we have made any offence in following our heartfelt intuition and pray that you will kindly forgive us.





ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S ANTYA-LĪLĀ



I will say something briefly about the disappearance day of Śrīla Prabhupāda. To a certain extent for many of you, this *tirobhava* is more of a festival day. Of course, by transcendental arrangement, you may enter into some mood where you will find a connection to Śrīla Prabhupāda and find his grace there. You can have a sense and feeling of Prabhupāda's grace by worshipping him, singing his glories, dancing in front of his *samādbi* and so forth. But really, you can't know what happened on this day twenty-five years ago and what events led up to that unless someone tells you.

I mentioned earlier today that Śrīla Prabhupāda started his pastimes of disappearance in Māyāpura, sometime prior to Gaura-Pūrṇimā in 1977. It may have been at the time of Nityānanda Trayodaśī. Around 900 devotees had arrived for the festival.

Every morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda would come down to the temple room for what is called, 'Greeting the Deities.' After greeting the Deities, he would walk to his *vyāsāsana* which was directly opposite the Deities at the very back of the *kīrtana* hall. There, we would offer *guru-pūjā* and sing the song, *śrī guru-carāṇa-padma*. When that was over, Śrīla Prabhupāda himself would say the

jaya-dhvani prayers, then devotees would sit down for *Bhāgavatam* class. Prabhupāda would begin by singing, *jaya rādhā-mādhava*. After the class, the devotees would start the *kīrtana* again and Prabhupāda would go around the Deities three times. On each side of the altar there was a big bell and when he would come to the bell-rope, someone would give him the rope and he would ring it and the *kīrtana* all around him would become more and more ecstatic. Devotees would be airborne and some of them didn't come down – they just stayed up there! Prabhupāda liked to see all the devotees jumping. It wasn't just children jumping – some of those devotees were thirty or forty years old. Prabhupāda especially liked to see Brahmānanda Prabhu, who was 200 pounds, jumping. After, the *kīrtana* would go outside as Prabhupāda went to this room. That was the normal morning programme.

But on this particular day when Prabhupāda came down from his room, he did not seem his normal self. He greeted the Deities, went to his *vyāsāsana* and there was *guru-pūjā*. But after the *guru-pūjā* he didn't sing. We noticed on that day that Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't look well – he looked withdrawn. Instead of singing himself, he called for one of his servants to sing, but that devotee wasn't there. Then he called the name of another devotee to sing – that devotee was also not there. Then he called the name of a third devotee to sing and that devotee was also absent. Actually all those devotees were present in Māyāpura, but they just weren't there in the temple. After asking three devotees to sing, Prabhupāda didn't say anything – he just put his head down and shut his eyes. It seemed that he became a little sad that they weren't there. Then one devotee leaned forward and asked, “Prabhupāda, should I sing?” Prabhupāda just nodded his head and said, “Yes, you can sing.” So that devotee sang *jaya rādhā-mādhava*. After the *bhajana* was over, Śrīla Prabhupāda got up

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Antya-Lilā

and went to his room. There was no *Bhāgavatam* class and there wasn't another *kīrtana*.

That was one of the last times that Śrīla Prabhupāda sat on the *vyāsāsana* to give class, or anything formal here in India. The rest of the festival he never came down to the temple room. He stayed in his room the whole time, which was another 10 days or 2 weeks.

After Gaura-Pūrṇimā, all the devotees went to Delhi and then on to Vṛndāvana. Every year, Śrīla Prabhupāda was the life of the Vṛndāvana Festival – there was no question about it. Everyone had come from all over the world mainly to be with him – to be in Vṛndāvana or Māyāpura was secondary. But that year, Prabhupāda did not go to Delhi and he did not go to Vṛndāvana for the festival. He sent a message to all the devotees, “You should go and carry on with the festival.” That was very sad for everyone and by then the news was that Śrīla Prabhupāda's health was not good and it was better for him to rest. So everyone went to Vṛndāvana, the festival concluded and all the devotees went back to their temples all over the world. It was sad for the devotees. For many of them, the Māyāpura Festival was the last time they ever saw Prabhupāda.

In May, during the hot season, Śrīla Prabhupāda decided to go to Rishikesh with a group of devotees. He stayed there for a few weeks in the guest-house of a life-member. During the hot season in Rishikesh, it is cool at night and warm in the day. Prabhupāda stayed there for a few weeks and was in quite a happy mood. Sometimes he would sit in a chair in the kitchen and give some cooking lessons. He also taught the devotees a special technique to get drinking water from the Gaṅgā. You have to take a pot, turn it upside down so there is air trapped inside, then you dive into the Gaṅgā and go down about 10 feet and roll the pot

over – then it will fill up with pure water deep from within the Gaṅgā. Prabhupāda had Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja and other devotees dive in the Gaṅgā to get fresh water and if it came up with particles of sand or anything, he would say, “No, no, no – do it again!” Like this, he was having casual pastimes with those devotees, teaching them.

But all this time he was very weak and remained withdrawn – he was not his normal self. Then he came back to Vṛndāvana and from there he decided to go to England. Prabhupāda thought, “Preaching is life. Simply sitting around here, feeling like this... let me go for preaching.” The day he went to England, I went to the airport with about 20 or 30 devotees in the middle of the night and we put Śrīla Prabhupāda on the plane and four or five devotees flew with him.

He was in England for Janmāṣṭamī and his Vyāsa-Pūjā. I believe he came downstairs only once. He sat on the *vyāsāsana* for *guru-pūjā* and went back to his room. He did not give any class, but during that time, he still endeavoured to do translation work with his dictaphone. With the help of devotees, he would do some translation of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. He was working on the 10th Canto and he would do that when he had the energy. That was in August 1977. Of course, the devotees in the US, Canada and other countries had hopes that Śrīla Prabhupāda would also come there, but he didn't.

In England there was an incident where he had some physical difficulty and the devotees whisked him away to the hospital in an ambulance – he didn't like that...he didn't like that at all! When he got out of the hospital he told the devotees, “You take me back to India immediately! I don't want to die in these hospitals!” He hated these places. He was disturbed that the devotees' concern would simply be external – they would rush him to a

hospital and he may end his life there. He didn't want to end his life in a hospital. He was adamant about that, so they took him back to Vṛndāvana.

At that time I was in Vṛndāvana when we got the message, "Prabhupāda is coming back to Vṛndāvana." I had the good fortune to arrange Prabhupāda's room. It was sometime in early September when he came. All the devotees were outside doing *kīrtana*, so when Prabhupāda came to his room, I opened the doors from the inside and I was very surprised. I wasn't surprised – I was shocked! Prabhupāda had become very thin. Since the Māyāpura Festival, he had only been eating a few small handfuls of *prasādam* everyday, so he had become very thin. It was a big shock for all the devotees in Vṛndāvana, to see him like that.

Every morning, all the *gurukula* boys would come outside Prabhupāda's room and chant *Brabma-saṁhitā* and sometimes *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. We used to sit Prabhupāda in a modified rocking chair – we took a rocking chair and put handles on it so that four men could carry it. Prabhupāda would sit in that chair and we would carry him into the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple. At that time there was a *tamāla* tree in the courtyard and Prabhupāda would sit under that tree for an hour or so, just absorbed in seeing the beauty of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Rādhā-Śyāmasundara and Gauṛa-Nitāi. He would sit and look at the Deities and the devotees would sit down and would do *kīrtana*. He would just gaze at the Deities and sometimes he wouldn't move.

Around June of that year, I travelled to London and went shopping in Harrods, which used to be the most exclusive store in the world. I thought I would buy Prabhupāda a new pair of shoes. I always used to think, "If I buy him a new *chaddar*, I might get his old *chaddar*. If I get him a new pair of shoes, I might get his old shoes." So I went and looked, but I could not find the type

of house shoes that Prabhupāda used to wear – they were out of season because it was summer and they only used to sell them in winter. All I found was this kind of shoe that wasn't a house shoe – it just had two straps and your foot goes inside. It wasn't the kind of shoe that Prabhupāda wore, but somehow or other I was drawn to buy those shoes. Anyway, I brought them to India and gave them to Prabhupāda's secretary. I felt very shy because I knew they were not the kind of shoes that Prabhupāda would generally wear. However, at that time Prabhupāda's feet had become swollen and there were no shoes that they could buy in Vṛndāvana that would fit his feet. Prabhupāda's secretary and servant were lamenting, "What are we going to do? There are no shoes for Prabhupāda!" Suddenly, I showed up with this box and said, "I bought some shoes for Prabhupāda in England." They opened it and said, "Oh, just what we needed – exactly!" I had also bought the wrong size – they were too big, but because Prabhupāda's feet had swollen, the shoes were a perfect fit. Prabhupāda used to wear those shoes everyday. They were actually the last shoes he ever wore. They are there in his room in Vṛndāvana in a glass box. It was good for me – I got to offer that service to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Then the situation became quite serious – there was no improvement. Prabhupāda seemed to withdraw day by day. He talked constantly about leaving this world and going to Kṛṣṇa, and of course, this was very disturbing for the devotees.

It became known that certain things would keep him in this world – the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, good reports of *saṅkīrtana* and other such things. So at one point, I jumped in a truck and went to the Himalayas to do some *saṅkīrtana* and I sent Prabhupāda some pictures. Whenever somebody sent a report about preaching, Prabhupāda's secretary would read it to him. When he heard that, Prabhupāda would become enlivened, but almost immediately,

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Antya-Lilā

he would come back down again. This became a constant battle – to keep Prabhupāda interested in being in this world. At that time we were all very neophyte – we're still neophyte, but then we were very neophyte and not able to understand what we call Śrīla Prabhupāda's 'pastimes of departure.' No one could properly understand what was Prabhupāda's mood and there were mixed feelings about what should be done. It made everybody more and more attached to Śrīla Prabhupāda at that time and naturally, it came to the point that the devotees were willing to try anything.

Prabhupāda would not take allopathic medicine; he would not take anything from modern medicine, although he was a chemist in his early life. Once he became a *sannyāsī*, he never touched any of that. He would only accept Ayurvedic medicine. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned one night that he had a dream about an Ayurvedic doctor with big Śrī Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* who gave him some medicine. Immediately devotees left Vṛndāvana and searched the whole of South India within a few days, going to every Ayurvedic doctor they could find until they found one wearing *tilaka*. They grabbed that man, flew him to Delhi and took him to Vṛndāvana. Even so, Śrīla Prabhupāda's condition remained the same.

The devotees became more and more worried. At a point, 24-hour *kīrtana* began in over 100 of Prabhupāda's temples around the world. This went on for months and months non-stop. The *kīrtana* in Prabhupāda's room was very soft with one small pair of *karatālas* and 3 or 4 devotees singing or reading from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. When the reading would stop, then *kīrtana* would start up again. Around 10:30 or 11 o'clock at night everything would stop in Prabhupāda's room and the *kīrtana* would go on in the temple all night long. A few devotees would sit with Prabhupāda all night, and if he needed anything they would see to it. Again, I was very fortunate – I had the opportunity to

spend some nights there, taking care of Prabhupāda from 11:00 at night until 4:00 in the morning. Generally at that time he wouldn't say anything, but if he needed something, we were there to serve him.

Previously, Śrīla Prabhupāda used to take a massage every day, but at that time in Vṛndāvana he was so thin that the devotees were afraid to give him a massage in case it might hurt him. However, it was thought that if he could have a good massage from a professional masseur, then there might be some relieve to his suffering. I say 'suffering' but Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say again and again, "I'm not suffering." One doctor came to see him and said, "According to his physical condition, if Prabhupāda were an ordinary man, he would be crying in pain," But Prabhupāda said, "I have no pain."

One day the devotees brought a man from Vṛndāvana who was known to give good massages. They brought him into Prabhupāda's room and when he came to Prabhupāda's bedside, Prabhupāda slowly waved his hand meaning, "Get rid of him!" Prabhupāda would sometimes do that. If some irritating guest was in his room, Prabhupāda would wave his hand once and someone would lead them out. So, just as that man was ready to give a massage to Prabhupāda, he waved his hand like that. The devotees told that man politely, "Sir, we just changed the programme. No massage!"

Then they asked Prabhupāda, "Was there a problem?"

Prabhupāda said, "His fingernails were filthy dirty!"

Then the devotees went searching for another person to give a massage to Prabhupāda. The next day they brought a another Vraja-vāsī – they gave him a new *kurta*, new *dbotī*, he was clean-shaven and perhaps the devotees might have scrubbed that man's

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Antya-Lilā

finger-nails as well – he was shining from head to toe. He came forward and then Prabhupāda looked, nodded and gave the okay. That man gave a massage to Prabhupāda, but these things were very external. Prabhupāda did not have any disease. Śrīla Prabhupāda's 'disease' was *vipralambha* – separation from Kṛṣṇa.

Many years later, I read a description of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. After Caitanya Mahāprabhu left the world, Gadādhara Paṇḍita remained for some years and was overwhelmed with feelings of separation and gradually, he himself also left the world. The description of Gadādhara Paṇḍita that I read, almost perfectly fits the symptoms of what we saw exhibited by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't take any modern medicine, but now and then a doctor would come to diagnose him, but they could not say what his disease was. There was no explanation. Of course, they could say that his blood pressure was down etc. but they could not give any reason. The actual reason was his feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa and that was the cause of his withdrawing from the world.

Another plan was hatched one day. The devotees said, "Prabhupāda, maybe we should bring an astrologer."

Prabhupāda said, "Oh yes, let's have some fun! Bring an astrologer."

So they went and got the best astrologer in all of Delhi, whose name was Pandit Ojas. The astrologer came in with some paper and noted down Prabhupāda's birth time, looked at his hand etc. – then he left the room and made his calculations. When he came back, he said, "Prabhupāda needs a sapphire!"

These astrologers always prescribe some jewellery, and generally their brother or cousin is always a jeweller! So Pandit Ojas recommended that Prabhupāda needed a sapphire and the next day one devotee flew from Hong Kong with a large blue sap-

phire that he purchased for \$12,000 U.S. dollars. The devotees mounted that sapphire on a gold ring and Prabhupāda wore that ring when he was placed in *samādbi*.

After this, things became worse – Prabhupāda began to give away his personal belongings – his watch, his *tilaka* mirror etc. He started calling certain devotees who had been with him since he first came to America and gave away things that he was personally using. Naturally, there were mixed feelings. They were happy to receive his gifts, but at the same time they were also very sad.

At one point, Śrīla Prabhupāda told the GBC to have a meeting to decide whether he should stay or go. I don't know... I look back at these things and I think that Prabhupāda was just playing with us like a kid bouncing a ball – he was just bouncing our hearts and making us more attached to him. During this time somebody asked, “Prabhupāda, what does Kṛṣṇa want?”

Prabhupāda replied, “I'll have to ask Him.” Then he shut his eyes for about half an hour, although it seemed like forever to us. He was quiet, lying in his bed, not saying a word. Then after a while, he opened his eyes and said: “Yes, Kṛṣṇa said I can stay and continue my nonsense for sometime.” Prabhupāda was referring to his preaching work – he called it, “My nonsense.” Then everybody shouted, “Jaya!” They were very happy.

What is important to Kṛṣṇa? Anything Kṛṣṇa wants, He can snap His fingers and make it happen. If He desires, He can make everyone in the world stand up and chant, “Haribol! Haribol!” but he's letting us do that on His behalf. He is allowing us to make people stand up and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

There were many incidents like that – some of them gave life to the devotees and some of them seemed to give life to Prabhupāda for sometime. But progressively, from just before

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Antya-Lilā

the Māyāpura Festival until November 14th 1977, it was his pastimes of departure.

At that time, many of Śrīla Prabhupāda's god-brothers would come to see him – especially Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who would come and talk with Prabhupāda and sing for him. Generally we would all sit on the floor around Prabhupāda's bed and if someone was doing a particular service for Prabhupāda, they might lean on his bed. But Bābājī Mahārāja would come in, jump up on Prabhupāda's bed and sit down cross-legged, saying, "Haribol!"

Bābājī Mahārāja was a *paramahansa*. One time when he came, Prabhupāda was making a strange noise and the devotees were very worried. They were trying to ask Prabhupāda, "Do you need something? Do you need water?" But he would just make noises. Bābājī Mahārāja said, "No, no. You see, he's just entered Goloka-Vṛndāvana. On this side, you are simply hearing noises, but on that side, he's embracing Kṛṣṇa." It was more than anybody could understand – it probably still is, but it was quite exceptionable.

Several days before Śrīla Prabhupāda left, he wasn't eating anything and the devotees became very concerned, so they called the *kavirāja* (Ayurvedic doctor). In the evening Prabhupāda had been silent for many hours and feeling his pulse, the *kavirāja* expressed to the devotees that this may be Prabhupāda's last day. When that news went around, things became almost chaotic. My Indian visa had just expired so I had to go back to the United States about two weeks before Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure.

That evening, everybody came to see Śrīla Prabhupāda – even people who were generally never allowed in his room. The room must have had 50 to a 100 people in it. It was so packed that some people were leaning through the windows from outside. There

was a *kīrtana* going on for a long time. I don't know for how long the *kīrtana* went on for, but at a point, it wasn't even a *kīrtana* anymore – there must have been 10 or 20 devotees leading the *kīrtana*. Everybody was singing. Someone was singing “Hare Kṛṣṇa,” some were singing “Hare Rāma” – the *kīrtana* had just dissolved into 100 people crying and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Everyone was around Prabhupāda's bed and he hadn't said anything for hours, when suddenly he just said, “Hare Kṛṣṇa!”

We all have to depart from this world and Prabhupāda was adamant to show that our shelter is not in modern science or any other form of material concoction – our only shelter are Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa and the association of the Vaiṣṇavas. That is the only shelter that we should seek. He used to say that when you are young and unwell, you should make a programme for recovery, but when you get old, you should make a programme for departure. That was his advice. In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes sing the prayers of King Kulaśekhara:

*kṛṣṇa tvadīya-pada-paṅkaja-pañjarāntam
adyaiva me viśatu mānasa-rāja-haiṁsa
prāṇa-prayāṇa-samaye kapḥa-vāta-pittaiḥ
kaṅṭhāvarodbhava-vidhau smaraṇāni kutaś te*

O Kṛṣṇa, at this moment may the swan of my mind become entwined in the stems of Your lotus-like feet. At the time of death, how will I remember You when my throat is choked up with mucus, bile and air? (*Mukunda-mālā Stotram* 33)

On two different occasions, Prabhupāda gave *bābājī-veśa* to two young disciples who thought they had some terminal disease

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Antya-Lilā

and were going to die. He told them to go to Vṛndāvana and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Later however, they got cured, gave up their *veśa*, gave up chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and went back into the material world. Someone may tell me, “But you have given *bābājī-veśa* to a healthy devotee who is 50 years old – Prabhupāda only gave *bābājī-veśa* to those men he thought were dying.”

Yes, those men thought they were dying, but after 50, you shouldn't think you are dying – you should *know* you are dying! After 50, that's what's waiting. It's the end. You've crossed the line. It's downhill from there. To get another 50 years is very rare. Only one person in a million may live to be a hundred.

There probably hasn't been a disappearance of a Vaiṣṇava like Śrīla Prabhupāda since the time of Bhīṣmadeva. At the time of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's disappearance, there were only a few devotees present. He left this world in a very quiet way. Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja also left this world very quietly early in the morning. Yet somehow or other, Śrīla Prabhupāda was selected by Kṛṣṇa to be an ambassador, a beacon, a light – not just for his disciples, but for the whole world. Throughout his pastimes of departure, Śrīla Prabhupāda would say, “I am teaching you how to leave this world.”

(From a lecture on Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day in Govindajī Gardens, India, on November 8th 2002)



APPENDICES





BECOME GURU!



(The following *sannyāsa* initiation lecture was given by Śrīla Prabhupāda in Māyāpura on Gaura-Pūrṇimā, March 16th, 1976. On this day, Swami B.G. Narasiṅha Mahārāja accepted the renounced order of life from His Divine Grace.)

So this purificatory process...according to Vedic system, there is purificatory process. *Janmanā jāyate śūdraḥ* —“By birth everyone is born a *śūdra*.” A *śūdra* means without any knowledge and simply full of lamentation – *socati*. So the Vedic process is that, from the low-grade position, to bring the human society to the highest, topmost position. Generally it is...the first, topmost position is to become a *brāhmaṇa* in the society.

catur-varṇyam māyā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ

I have created the four social divisions that are determined by the influence of the modes of material nature and their parallel activities. (*Gītā* 4.13)

Four divisions of the social system are there according to quality and work. That is very natural in this world. Everyone is accepted on quality and work. If you have got a qualification of a good lawyer and if you have done very nicely your activities, then

you are selected as the high-court judge. The high-court judge is selected amongst the lawyers in the court. It is not appointed from outside. A lawyer who has done his legal profession very nicely, the government offers him the post, that, “You become a high-court judge.” So this quality and work is estimated everywhere and in all circumstances. So *Bhagavad-gītā* recommends – Kṛṣṇa says personally, the Supreme Personality of Godhead – *catur-varṇyam māyā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*. So that process is applicable at all times. And Nārada Muni, he also gave description to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja while they were talking about the *varṇāśrama*. So Nārada Muni gave different symptoms of different *varṇa* – *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*. Then, at the conclusion, he said:

*yasya hi yal lakṣaṇam proktam punso varṇābhivyāñjakam
yady anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet*

If one exhibits the symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, even if one appears in a different class, one should be designated according to those classifications. (*Bhāg.* 7.11.35)

He said that, “I have already explained the different symptoms of different *varṇas* – *brāhmaṇa* will be like that, *kṣatriya* will be like that, *vaiśyas* will be like that, *śūdras* will be like that.” So, he says, “If these symptoms are found, *anyatra*...suppose one is not born in the *brāhmaṇa* family, he might have taken birth in a lower family, but he has acquired...if he has acquired the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*, he should be accepted as *brāhmaṇa*.” This is the process. Or if one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family but he has not attained the qualities, neither he is working as a *brāhmaṇa*, then he should be accepted – either *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. So this is the system. So Caitanya Mahāprabhu also wanted to introduce this system.

Become Guru!

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

Whether one is a *śūdra*, a *brāhmaṇa* or a *sannyāsī* if he is master in the science of Kṛṣṇa, one who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa can become guru. (Cc. Madhya-līlā 8.128)

He never accepted this, that by birth, no. Either he is a *brāhmaṇa* or he is a *śūdra*, by caste or by birth, *kibā vipra kibā śūdra nyāsī kene naya*, either he's a *gṛhastha* or a *sannyāsī*, it doesn't matter. He can become a guru. How? *Yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā*. One who knows the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one who understands Kṛṣṇa, he can become a guru. So guru is the post given to the *sannyāsīs*, to the *brāhmaṇas*. Without becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, nobody can become a *sannyāsī*, and *sannyāsī* is supposed to be the guru of both all the *āśramas* and all the *varṇas*. So the preaching work...we require so many *sannyāsīs*. People are suffering all over the world for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. My Guru Mahārāja used to say that there is no scarcity. This is false propaganda. The only scarcity is that there is no Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the difficulty. Actually that is the fact.

Take some practical example. I have travelled all over the world many times. I have seen America from village to village, Africa, Australia. There is so much land vacant that if we properly utilise that, we can produce so much food grains that we can feed ten times as many population as it is now. That's a fact. We do not utilise the land properly. And Kṛṣṇa has given us the formula, *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*: "You produce *anna*." *Annād bhavanti bhūtāni*. Then the animals and the human being will be well-fed and they will be happy. If anyone, either animal or man has his belly filled up with sufficient food, he'll never be dissatisfied. That is the nature. So unfortunately, we are not following the

instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā*. If we follow the whole social system, political system, economic system of the whole world will be very, very nice, and everyone will live very peacefully and there will be no fight, no *ism*, no schism. Everything will be alright. That is the purpose of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Don't think that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a matter of sentiment. No, it is practical.

Just like in America they produce huge amount of grains. Sometimes they throw it in the sea on account of overproduction. Why overproduction should be given on the sea? It should be utilised. There are so many people starving. But this political situation is there that everyone is thinking "This is my country. This is my home. This is my land." This is called *māyā*. *Ahaṁ mameti. Janasya moho'yam ahaṁ mameti* — everyone is under this impression, "I am this body, and anything belonging to this body, that is mine." or "My nation." This conception should be given up. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ* — everything belongs to the Supreme Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* also, the same thing is confirmed:

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram
subṛdam sarva-bbūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati*

One attains peace by knowing Me to be the original enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Controller of all the planets and the benefactor and friend of all living beings. (*Gītā* 5.29)

The *śānti*...everyone is trying to have peace-peace of the mind, peace of the society, peace of the nation. Very good, but you do not know how to get this peace. That is described in every Vedic literatures. Therefore, Vedic knowledge is so important.

Become Guru!

nityo nityānām cetanas cetanānām

He is the prime Eternal amongst the eternals, the Supreme Consciousness amongst those that are conscious. (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.13*)

The Supreme Lord is the leader. He's also a living being like us. He's not a dead stone. Just like Kṛṣṇa, when He comes, He lives like us, just like human being. So similarly the...no, not similarly. Kṛṣṇa is a living being like us. He has got also two hands, two legs, one head, as you have got. But what is the difference between you and Him? The difference is that *eka*, that singular number living being, *vidadbāti kāmān babūnām* — He maintains everyone, and we are maintained. That is the difference. We plural number living entities, we are maintained, and He, the Supreme Lord, being Supreme Being.

In the dictionary, English dictionary, God means Supreme Being. So Supreme Being, He's also living being. He's not a dead stone. The difference is that He is the maintainer and we are maintained. He is the ruler; we are ruled. This difference we have to understand. And He is the proprietor; we are servants. Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy is this. That is a fact.

jīvera svarūpa haya nitya kṛṣṇa dāsa

The *jīva's* original position is to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. (*Cc. Madhya-lilā 20.108-109*)

So this consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is being spread all over the world for the peace of the world, for the peace of the mind, for the peace of the society. So take it very seriously. It is very authorised. It is not a concocted speculation, it is fact.

And it is happening so. Now these American boys and girls who have come, spending thousands of rupees here...and they have no such distinction that, “He is Indian. He is African. He is *brāhmaṇa*. He is *kṣatriya*.” Why? Because they have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

So this movement is so important that everyone from every part of the world, they should take part in this movement, and there will be peace in the world. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission is this. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s birthday is today. In this land, in this very spot we are sitting now, He appeared for this mission. And He said that:

*bbārata-bbūmite baila manuṣya-janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari para-upakāra*

One who has takes birth as a human in the land of India (Bhārata-varṣa) should make that birth successful by benefiting others. (*Cc. Ādi-līlā* 9.41)

This is Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission.

*ṛṭhivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra baibe mora nāma*

In every town and village of the world, My Holy Name will be sung. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa* 4.126)

And that is being done. And the people from all parts of the world, they are responding. There is very, very good scope for spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and learned circle, important men in all parts of the society and world, they are appreciating this mission. *Bbārata-bbūmite manuṣya*...it was Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s desire that especially those who are born in

Become Guru!

India, and especially in Bengal, because Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this land of Bengal, so it is the duty to spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. But unfortunately they are not coming forward.

Anyway, it doesn't matter whether he is Bengali or am Hindu or Muslim – anyone who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa, he can spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. And there is great necessity, great necessity. And the preaching work is meant for the *sannyāsīs*. So we have got some *sannyāsīs* who are doing very nicely, so today we shall make a number of *sannyāsīs* more to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. And those who are going to take *sannyāsa*, they should remember how much responsibility they have got. So live like a very strict *sannyāsī*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu took Himself *sannyāsa* at the age of twenty-four years. So it is not that in old age one has to take *sannyāsa*. That is not in the *śāstra*. From *brahmacārī-āśrama* one can enter into the *gṛhastha-āśrama* or *vānaprastha-āśrama* or *sannyāsa-āśrama* as he thinks fit. There is no such rules and regulation that only the old man without any energy, he'll take *sannyāsa*. No. Rather, the young men...

Just like Caitanya Mahāprabhu did personally. He was twenty-four years old. He had beautiful wife, young wife, sixteen years old, at home, very, very affectionate mother, and His position was very great. Not as a *brāhmaṇa*, but still, as young man, He could collect hundreds of thousands of men by His order only, to make civil disobedience movement upon the Kazi in this land. So the civil disobedience movement was started by Caitanya Mahāprabhu for a good cause. So there are so many things. I especially appeal to the native of this land to take part in this movement of Caitanya Mahāprabhu for the benefit of the world. And we are trying to construct a very attractive temple here. Let them coop-

erate. It doesn't matter whether he is Hindu, Muslim – Caitanya Mahāprabhu is for everyone. Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted Haridāsa Ṭhākura as His chief disciple. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was born in a Muhammadan family and his mission was to introduce this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* chanting.

*barer nāma barer nāma barer nāma eva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

In the age of Kali the only means of attaining deliverance is through the chanting of the Holy Name of Lord Hari. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way. (*Bṛhan-Nāradya Purāṇa*)

And He made Haridāsa Ṭhākura *nāmācārya* – the *ācārya* to introduce Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura was chanting three *lakhs*, counting daily. That means the whole day and night. So nice movement, everyone should take part in it and dedicate to the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And it is not at all difficult. It is very easy. Caitanya Mahāprabhu said:

*āmāra ājñaya guru bañā tāra ei deśa
yāre dekha tāre kaba 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*

Whomever you see, tell them about the instructions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By My order, become guru and deliver this land. (*Cc. Madhya-līlā 7.128*)

Anywhere, either you are in this district or that district, it doesn't matter. Either you are at home or outside home, it doesn't matter. You become a guru. Everyone. "How shall I become guru? I have no qualification." Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "You don't require any qualification. You simply require one qualification,

Become Guru!

that you repeat the instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā*. That's all." *Yāre dekha tāre kaba 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*. That's all. You become a guru. Don't adulterate *kṛṣṇa-upadeśa* like a rascal or nonsense. Present it as it is, *Bhagavad-gītā*. Then you become a guru. You can become a guru in your family. You can guru your society, your nation, wherever you are. And if it is possible, you go outside and preach this mission of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore our movement's name is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever Kṛṣṇa says, you accept and preach. You become guru!

Thank you very much.



ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA ĀRATI

(The following Bengali song is sung in praise of Śrīla Prabhupāda every morning at Govindajī Gardens in South India)

(1)

*jaya jaya prabhupāder ārati sundara
śrī bhaktivedānta svāmī ācārya-bhāskara*

All glories, all glories to the beautiful *ārati* ceremony of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who is like an effulgent sun amongst the universal *ācāryas*.

(2)

*śūnyavāda māyāvāda kariyā khaṇḍana
gaurāṅgera prema-dharma karilā sthāpana*

Destroying the evils of void and impersonal conceptions, Śrīla Prabhupāda has wonderfully established Lord Gaurāṅga's religion of Divine Love.

(3)

*sarvatra-ṛthivīte hari-nāma pracārule
śrī caitanya-dever vāṇī su-satyā karile*

PRABHUPĀDA VIJAYA

Śrīla Prabhupāda has fulfilled the instructions of Śrī Caitanya by gloriously preaching the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa throughout the entire world.

(4)

*kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha, bhakti-śreṣṭha, nityānandāveśe
patīta-durjana prema-saubhāgya prakāśe*

Śrīla Prabhupāda is very dear to Kṛṣṇa and he is the best of millions of devotees. He is empowered by Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and he has manifest love of Kṛṣṇa to save the fallen souls.

(5)

*tomāra maṅgala-rūpa divya-bhāvāśraya
śrī rādhā-mādhava nāme sadā premamaya*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's auspicious form is full of transcendental emotions as he lovingly chants the Divine Names of Śrī Śrī Rādhikā-Mādhava-sundara (*jaya rādhā-mādhava, jaya kuñja-vihārī...*).

(6)

*bara niṣṭhā kari kaila sarasvatī sevā
tava mahimā varṇive bena acbe kevā*

Śrīla Prabhupāda serves his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, with great determination. How can one fully describe Śrīla Prabhupāda's unlimited glories?

(7)

*bā bā prabhu kṛpāmaya vaiṣṇava ṭhākura
ei dāsādhame dayā karabe pracura*

O my master, O most merciful Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura! Kindly be merciful upon your fallen servant.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Ārati

(8)

*jaya jaya prabhupāder yaśa kīrtir jaya
yābāra mahimā gāna viśva mājhe haya*

All glories, all glories to His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhakti-vedānta Swami Prabhupāda. May his glories be sung throughout the universe.



ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA STOTRAM

(The following Sanskrit prayers to Śrīla Prabhupāda were composed by Śrī Ananta-Rāma Śāstri, an Indian Sanskrit scholar who was engaged by Śrīla Prabhupāda in working on the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam in 1976. Śrīla Prabhupāda appreciated these verses so much that he requested the devotees to learn them.)

(1)

*kṛṣṇaika-ceta mada-moba-vināśa-kārin
mad-dṛṣṭi-gocara prabho prabhupāda-svāmīn
doṣābhivṛtti-paridūṣita-manda-buddheḥ
sañcintayāmi caraṇau tava bhakti-hetoḥ*

O my master, O Śrīla Prabhupāda, may you always be the object of my vision. Only Kṛṣṇa can remove my pride and illusion. I constantly meditate upon your lotus feet with devotion, although my intelligence is dull and polluted by evil intentions.

(2)

*vṛndāvane ramaṇa-reti-prasiddha-bhūmau
tatrāpi kṛṣṇa-balarāma-supāda-mūle
jñānam paramā parama-kṛṣṇa-sudharmīty uktam
dāntas tu deva prabhupāda namo namaste*

PRABHUPĀDA VIJAYA

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, O master of the senses, I offer my obeisance unto you. In the glorious land of Vṛndāvana, in Ramaṇa Reti, situated at the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, you preach the supreme knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of the highest *dhārma*.

(3)

namaste namaste kṛpā-pūrṇa-dṛṣṭi
namaste namaste mabānanda-dbātrī
namāmo namāmaḥ punar rakṣa rakṣa
prasiddha-prabho pāhi mām dakṣa dakṣa

I offer my obeisance unto you, whose glances are full of compassion; I offer my obeisance unto you, who bestows the greatest bliss; I offer my obeisance unto you! Protect me, protect me again and again. O most renowned master, kindly protect me again and again!

(4)

bbaktisiddhānta-śiṣyāya
bbaktivedānta-nāmine
prasannāya praśāntāya
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ

I offer my obeisance unto my spiritual master, who is a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who is known as Bhaktivedānta Swamī and who is always joyful and peaceful.

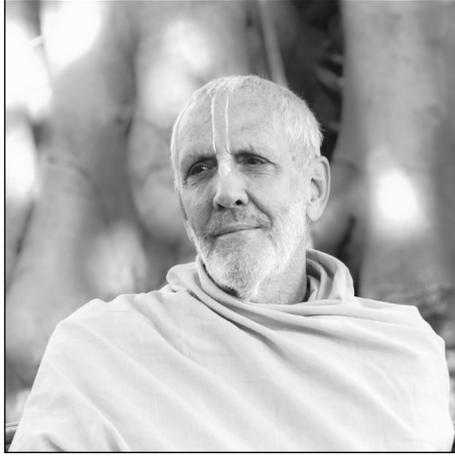
(5)

śrī-vaṅga-bhūmi-jana-bhūṣaṇa gaura-līlā
gaurāṅga-bbāva parisāraṇa-mātra-śīlā
rādhā-mādhava-pada-padma-mano-vilāsin
ānanda-rāśi prabbupāda namo namas te

Śrīla Prabhupāda Stotram

The pastimes of Śrī Gaura are the treasure of those who have appeared in the land of Bengal. Śrīla Prabhupāda is always deeply immersed in thoughts of Mahāprabhu's mood. His mind delights in the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. I offer my obeisance again and again unto Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is imbued with divine bliss.





SWAMI B.G. NARASINGHA

Swami Bhakti Gaurava Narasingha was born in 1946 in the USA and grew up in California, Florida and Hawaii. In 1967, Swami Narasingha met His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda and in 1970, became his direct disciple. In 1976 Swami Narasingha accepted the renounced order of *sannyāsa* from His Divine Grace and travelled extensively for many years in India. In the period between 1986 and 1999, Swami Narasingha also studied under his *śikṣā-gurus*, Swami B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja and Swami B.P. Purī Mahārāja.

In 1994 Swami Narasingha established Śrī Narasingha Caitanya Āśrama (also known as Govindajī Gardens) and the Kāliya-mardana Kṛṣṇa Āśrama in South India. At both of these centres, Swami Narasingha currently instructs students, disciples and followers in the methodology and philosophy of *bhakti-yoga*.

Swami Narasingha has written many articles for such spiritual journals as *Clarion Call*, *Gauḍīya Vedānta*, *Gauḍīya Touchstone* and *KṛṣṇaTalk*. He has also authored several books such as *Vaiṣ-*

ṇava India, Kumbha Mela, Evolution of Theism, The Authorized Śrī Caitanya-Sāraswata Paramparā, Prākṛta-rasa Āraṇya-chedinī, The Meaning of Sannyāsa, Śrī Dāmodara-kathā, Śrī Gāyatrī Māntrārtha Dīpikā, a commentary to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dusinī* and a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

In addition to these literary contributions of his own, Swami Narasiṅgha has edited and published, *In Search of the Ultimate Goal of Life* by A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, *Words from the Guardian of Devotion, Follow the Angels, Encounters with Divinity*, and *Upadeśāmṛta* by Swami B.R. Śrīdhara as well as the book, *Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura*, describing the life and precepts of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with many rare photos.

Swami Narasiṅgha has also been the inspiration behind Devavision Productions, producing documentaries such as *The Universal Teacher, Kumbha Mela, Gandaki and Himalayan Pilgrimage*. DevaVision Productions has also produced a series of lectures by Swami B.R. Śrīdhara such as *Gāyatri, Absolute Harmony, Darśana, Ujjvala-nīlamani, Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread* as well as *The Art of Sādhana* series by Swami B.P. Purī.

Swami Narasiṅgha spends most of his time in India, as well as Mexico, where he has a number of *āśramas*. Swami Narasiṅgha also visits various countries in Europe such as Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy and Germany, where he has students.

For more information on the books, articles and lectures of Swami Narasiṅgha please visit the following URLs:

www.rupanugabhajanashram.com

www.swaminarasigha.com

