

PRĀKRṬA-RASA ARANYA CHEDINĪ

CUTTING THE JUNGLE OF MISCONCEPTION



SWAMI B.G. NARASINGHA

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ALL GLORIES TO SRI GURU AND GAURANGA

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DEDICATION TO SRI VIRA-NRSIMHA

*e duṣṭa hṛdaye kāma ādi ripu chaya
kuṭināṭi pratiṣṭhāśā sāthyā sadā raya
hṛdaya-śodhana āra kṛṣṇera vāsanā
nṛsimha-caraṇe mora ei to' kāmanā*

Within my sinful heart the six enemies headed by lust perpetually reside, as well as duplicity, the desire for fame, plus sheer cunning. At the lotus feet of Lord Nṛsimha, I hope that He will mercifully purify my heart and give me the desire to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*kāndiyā nṛsimha-pade māgibo kakhana
nirāpade navadvīpe jugala-bhajana
bhaya bhaya pāya yān'ra darśane se hari
prasanna hoibo kabe more dayā kari*

Weeping, I will beg at the lotus-feet of Lord Nṛsimha for the benediction of worshipping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in

Navadvīpa, perfectly safe and free from all difficulties.
When will this Lord Hari, Whose terrible form strikes
fear into fear itself, ever become pleased and show me
His mercy?

*yadyapi bhīṣaṇa mūrti duṣṭa-jīva-prati
prahlādādi kṛṣṇa-bhakta-jane bhadra ati
kabe vā prasanna ho'ye sa kṛpā-vacane
nirbhaya karibe ei mūḍha akiñcane*

Even though Lord Nṛsiṃha is terrifying towards the sinful
souls, He offers great auspiciousness unto the devotees
of Lord Kṛṣṇa headed by Prahlāda Mahārāja. When will
He be pleased to speak words of compassion unto me, a
worthless fool, and thereby make me fearless?

*svacchande baiso he vatsa śrī-gaurāṅga-dhāme
jugala-bhajana hau rati hau nāme
mama bhakta-kṛpā-bale vighna jābe dūra
śuddha cite bhajo rādhā-kṛṣṇa-rasa-pūra*

He will say, “Dear child! Sit down freely and live
happily here in Śrī Gaurāṅga-dhāma. May you nicely
worship the Divine Couple, and may you develop
loving attachment for Their Holy Names. By the
mercy of My devotees, all obstacles are cast far away.
With a purified heart, just perform the worship of
Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, for such worship overflows with
sweet nectar.”

*ei boli' kabe mora mastaka-upara
 sviya śrī-caraṇa harṣe dharibe īśvara
 amani jugala-preme sātṭvika vikāre
 dharāya luṭibo āmi śrī-nṛsiṃha-dvāre*

Saying this, will that Lord delightedly place His own divine lotus-feet upon my head? I will experience sublime love for the Divine Couple Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and undergo the ecstatic transformations called *sātṭvika*. Falling on the ground, I will roll about at the door of Śrī Nṛsiṃha's temple.

(Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, - *Śrī Navadvīpa Bhāva Tarāṅga*, 36-40)

PREFACE

Devotees aspire for that same nectar (*vāñcchitam amṛtaṁ*) aspired for by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. What is that nectar and how one should aspire for it are questions producing diverse answers amongst Vaiṣṇavas, a subject of some controversy.

The truth lies deep within the line of faith which we must draw through our affectionate guardians (*ācāryas*). Our spiritual wealth lies in strict adherence (obedience) to this line. Instructions vary according to necessity, but the essence remains the same, to follow and to propagate purely the sublime message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. For many devotees this line of faith extends only to their *guru*, whose instructions provide everything, as they should. Those with a deep vision see the entire line of faith represented in their *guru* and his instructions.

Our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, showed a mood of uncompromised preaching, with strong emphasis on differentiating ourselves from and

avoiding the contaminated presentations of the *māyāvādis*, misdirected material scientists and caste *brāhmaṇas*. He did not leave out the *sahajiyās* either, carefully instilling caution in his young disciples.

Our Affectionate Guardian Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja has been declared the Guardian of Devotion (*Bhakti Rakṣaka*) by his beloved *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, and continues to be held in high esteem by many senior Vaiṣṇavas. Known for his erudite learning of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures and profound realization, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja distributed nectar freely, but with every ounce of nectar he gave a pound of caution, carefully explaining the proper approach to the highest realms of devotional service.

Of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, our *parama-guru*, it has been written *rūpānugā-virudhāpasiddhānta-dhvānta-hāriṇe*, that he does not tolerate any statement against the teachings of devotional service enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. His bold preaching fulfilled the necessity of the time, to counter the strong *sahajiyā* section, who had distorted the highly refined and invaluable inner wealth of the Vaiṣṇavas, and covered it with an outer layer of immorality and inappropriate practices. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura preached boldly, pushing back the wall of illusion, touching the hearts of so many sincere Vaiṣṇavas.

We find interwoven amongst the lives of the prominent personalities in our line of faith, a strong intolerance of *āpasiddhānta* and a strong focus on the inner wealth distributed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's most intimate disciples. It is indeed intolerable to any sincere Vaiṣṇava to hear a distorted expression

of Mahāprabhu's inner mood. Just as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was protected by Svarūpa Dāmodara from hearing *rasābasa*, *apasiddhānta* and other inappropriate things, so we see the same mood in our *ācāryas*, who protect the line of devotion from misrepresentation. If the pure line of devotion, as understood by our prominent *ācāryas*, is not upheld and delineated carefully and strongly, then it will be diluted, distorted and confused by *sahajiyās* and *kaniṣṭhas*. Indeed, this book itself has been written due to the overwhelming philosophical confusion found amongst modern-day practitioners of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Even so, this mood is not appreciated by all Vaiṣṇavas; some wish 'controversy' would just go away, others wish that everyone else, except those who agree with them, would go away, and a good share are hopelessly confused. Sincere Vaiṣṇavas seek the truth and the chance to hear clear and precise explanations which dissipate the cobwebs of illusion and misdirected teachings. Those who do not look very hard for the truth will not find it.

No less, we find this mood of intolerance toward *apasiddhānta*, *sahajiyāism*, and any other teachings or activities not favorable to the inner mood of our *ācāryas*, and the protective mood of Svarūpa Dāmodara, personified in our dear godbrother, Śrīpāda Bhakti Gaurava Narasiṅgha Mahārāja. It has been written of him,

*vāñcchitam amṛtaṁ yattu śrī rūpa-raghunāthayoh
taddāne truṭi leśam yaḥ sahate no narasiṅghakah*

“Śrīpāda Bhakti Gaurava Narasiṅgha Mahārāja does not tolerate even the slightest deviation in the distribution of that sublime nectar which is aspired for by Śrīla Rūpa and Raghunātha.”

The truth is not always pleasant, *satyaṁ bruyat priyaṁ bruyat*. However, it is the duty of all honest devotees to illuminate the truth, *satyaṁ*, even though it may not be *priyaṁ*, palatable. Indeed, it is written in *śāstra* that a *sādhū* cuts away the *māya* with strong words. To tell the truth and expose improprieties is seen by some as disturbing and undesirable, yet they delude themselves by thinking that to proceed in illusion is better.

In *Prakṛta-rasa Aranya Chedini*, Śrīpāda Narasiṅha Mahārāja presents a collection of articles carefully enunciating various Vaiṣṇava truths, exposing improper conceptions and dissipating erroneous, yet popular misconceptions. We sincerely feel that the Vaiṣṇava community will benefit greatly from *Prakṛta-rasa Āraṇya Chedini*.

Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu
Svāmī Bhakti Bhāvana Viṣṇu
Rāsa Pūrṇimā, Kārttika Māsa, 2003

INTRODUCTION

Prākṛta-rasa Āraṇya-Chedini (Cutting the Jungle of Misconception) is a compilation of twenty-one articles that were written over a period of three years. Each of the articles disputes a particular misconception prevalent in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world.

The first chapter of the book begins by establishing the position of a Vaiṣṇava according to the opinion of *śāstra* and the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanyadeva. Subsequent chapters of the book establish the Gauḍīya *siddhānta* (conclusive philosophical truths) according to *guru* (*ācāryas*), *sādhū*, and *śāstra* (the spiritual master, saintly persons, and revealed scripture).

Prākṛta-rasa Aranya-Chedini establishes the proper understanding of various controversial issues concerning; the origin of the *jīva*, the fall of the *jīva* into material bondage, the pure consciousness of the *jīva*, the position of the *guru*, the Golden Age, the position of the Founder *Ācārya*, the leader of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, the different types of disciples, the highest vision of *guru-tattva*, the omniscience of the *guru*, the highest aspiration of the

liberated *jīva*, the process by which the *jīva* achieves the highest perfection, the titles of Prabhupāda and Deva, the position of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, the chanting of the Holy Name, the proper qualification (*adhikāra*) for discussing higher *līlās*, the stage of purification (*anartha-nivṛtti*), hearing from *rasika-gurus*, who is actually a bona-fide *ācārya*, the divine sentiments of love of God, the highest standards of worship, and the instructions of liberated souls.

By no means has *Prākṛta-rasa Aranya-Chedini* been written for the general public who have no background in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Prākṛta-rasa Aranya-Chedini* is for the devotees of Śrī Caitanya-deva who seek clarification or conclusive answers to some of the controversial issues in our contemporary Vaiṣṇava society.

*siddhānta baliyā cite nā kara alaśa
iha ha-ite kṛṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha manasa*

“A sincere student should not neglect the discussion of such conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind. Thus one’s mind becomes attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. Ādi. 2.117)

The conclusive truths put forth in *Prākṛta-rasa Aranya-Chedini* are according to *ācāryas* in the disciplic succession of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The statements and quotes found in this book are not the opinions of the conditioned souls of this world for such would have no value in the assembly of pure Vaiṣṇavas.

The inspiration for the title of this book came from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who at the beginning of

the 20th century compiled a book entitled *Prākṛta-rasa Śata Dūṣiṇi* (one hundred misconceptions of the *sahajiyā* mellows). Many of the verses composed in *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-Duṣiṇi* by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are quoted in *Prākṛta-rasa Aranya-Chedini* —the focus of which aims at exposing the defects of those who imitate the practices of the highest order of Vaiṣṇavas.

Prior to the appearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the *sahajiyā* movements and pseudo *gurus* had all but ruined the good name of the Vaiṣṇavas. Due to the improper behavior of rascals and imitators the word *Vaiṣṇava* that was once held in great regard by societies' elite had completely fallen under foot and the Vaiṣṇavas were thought to be bands of beggars and woman-hunters.

To save the dignity of the highest order of Vaiṣṇavas (*paramahamsas*) Sarasvatī Ṭhākura preached strongly against the pseudo practices of all those who misrepresented the pure teachings of Śrī Caitanyadeva. The strength and intensity of his preaching shook the very ground upon which his opponents stood. No one could continue to contend with him and soon the *sahajiyās* and pseudo *gurus* withered away in fear.

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura preached exclusively the pure mellows of *mādhurya-rasa*, but to do so he had to cut the jungle of misconception. He reopened the storehouse of divine love and showed the way for all sincere souls to follow. It has been said by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's most intimate disciples that, "He spared gallons of blood to establish what is not the *mādhurya-rasa*. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used perhaps 90% of his energy to point out what is not the *mādhurya-rasa*."

Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge— the whole tenor of the life of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is captured in this verse: “The *rāga-patha* is on our head. We are servants of the path of spontaneous love. We are in *vidhi-mārga* under the rule of *śāstra*, and we must always keep the *rāga-patha* upon our head.

Now close to a century after the preaching campaign of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came to a close, the *sahajiyās* and pseudo *gurus* are again stirring about, and various misconceptions have somehow crept into the minds of many aspiring devotees. By the blessings of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura this *Prākṛta-rasa Aranya-Chedini* will help guide sincere souls through the jungle of misconception to reach the path of pure devotion and thus attain the eternal loving service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

Svāmī B.G. Narasiṅgha
 Snāna-yatra Mahotsava
 517 Gaurābda
 June 14th 2003

WHO IS A VAISNAVA?

Devotee: What is the *śāstric* definition of a Vaiṣṇava?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja:

*grhīta-viṣṇu-dikṣāko viṣṇu-pūjāparo narah
vaiṣṇavo 'bhihito 'bhijñairitaro 'smādavaīṣṇavaḥ*

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

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains three kinds of Vaiṣṇavas.

An ordinary Vaiṣṇava:

*prabhu-kahe, 'yāñra mukhe śuni eka-bāra
kṛṣṇa-nāma, sei pūjya, śreṣṭha sabākāra'*

“Who chants the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa just once may be considered a Vaiṣṇava. Such a person is worshipable and is the topmost human being.” (Cc. *Madhya* 15.106)

A superior Vaiṣṇava:

*‘kṛṣṇa-nāma’ nirantara yāñhāra vadane
se vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭha, bhaja tāñhāra caraṇe*

“A person who is always chanting the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is a superior Vaiṣṇava and your duty is to serve his lotus feet.” (Cc. *Madhya* 16.72)

The topmost Vaiṣṇava:

*yāñhāra darśane mukhe āise kṛṣṇa-nāma
tāñhāre jāniha tumi ‘vaiṣṇava-pradhāna’*

“The topmost Vaiṣṇava is he whose very presence makes others chant the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. Such a Vaiṣṇava is superior to all others!” (Cc. *Madhya* 16.74)

The heart of a Vaiṣṇava is by nature softened due to the touch of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. By nature a Vaiṣṇava is *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*, that is, he feels pain when he sees the suffering of others.

*mahad-vicalanaṁ nṛṇāṁ grhiṇāṁ dina-cetasām
niḥśreyasāya bhagavān kalpate nānyathā kvacit*

“O Nārada, great persons like you visit the homes of family men, not to profit from them, but simply to bestow

eternal auspiciousness upon them, even though they are often reluctant to hear anything for their spiritual benefit, being too materialistic. Otherwise you have no need to travel from one place to the next.” (Bhāg. 10.8.4)

There are twelve such great Vaiṣṇavas from the Vedic Age known as Mahājanas:

*svayambhūr nāradaḥ śambhuḥ kumāraḥ kapilo manuḥ
prahlādo janako bhīṣmo balir vaiyāsakir vayam*

Brahmā, Nārada, Śiva, the four Kumāras, Kapiladeva, Svayambhuva Manu, Prahlāda, Janaka Mahārāja, Bhīṣma, Bali Mahārāja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and I (Yamarāja) know the real transcendental principles of religion. (Bhāg. 6.3.20)

Prahlāda is the best of the devotees:

*kvāhaṁ rājāḥ-prabhava īśa tamo ‘dhike’ smin
jātaḥ suretara-kule kva tavānukampā
na brahmaṇo na tu bhavasya na vai ramāyā
yan me ‘rpitaḥ śirasi padma-karaḥ prasādaḥ*

“O my Lord, because I was born in a family full of the hellish material qualities of passion and ignorance, what is my position? And what is to be said of Your causeless mercy, which You never offered even to Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, or the Goddess of Fortune, Lakṣmī? You never put Your lotus hand upon their heads, but You have put it on mine.” (Bhāg. 7.9.26)

Better than Prahāda are the Pāṇḍavas:

*na tu prahlādasya grhe param brahma vasati
na ca tad darśanārthaṁ munayas tad grhān abhiyanti
na ca tasya brahma mātuleyādi rūpeṇa varttate
na ca svayam eva prasannam
ato yuyam eva tato 'pyasmatto 'pi bhūri-bhāgā iti bhāvaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead did not personally remain in Prahāda’s home, although He stayed in the home of the Pāṇḍavas. Great sages did not travel to Prahāda’s home to see the Supreme Lord, but for this purpose they did visit the home of the Pāṇḍavas. The Supreme Lord did not become the intimate relative of Prahāda Mahārāja, He was the maternal cousin of the Pāṇḍavas. He also did not personally express great pleasure at the daily activities of Prahāda as He did with the Pāṇḍavas. For all these reasons, Nārada Muni has said that the Pāṇḍavas were more fortunate than either himself or Prahāda.” (*Laghu-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa* 19)

The Yādavas are superior to the Pāṇḍavas:

*sadāti san-nikṛṣṭatvāt mamatādhikyato hareḥ
pāṇḍavebhyo'pi yādavaḥ kecit śreṣṭhatamā matāḥ*

“Because of their constant intimate association with Lord Kṛṣṇa and close ties with Him, some members of the Yadu dynasty are more exalted than the Pāṇḍavas.” (*Laghu-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa* 18)

Uddhava is superior to the Yādavas:

*na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na śaṅkarah
na ca śaṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavan*

“O Uddhava, Brahmā, Śiva, Śaṅkarṣaṇa, Lakṣmī-devī
and even My own self are not as dear to Me as you are.”
(Bhāg. 11.14.15)

*noddhava ‘nv api man-nyūno yad guṇair nārditaḥ prabhuḥ
ato mad-vayunaṁ lokaṁ grāhayann iha tiṣṭhatu*

“Uddhava is not inferior to Me in any way. He is never
affected by the modes of material nature. As such he may
remain in this world to disseminate specific knowledge
about the Personality of Godhead.” (Bhāg. 3.4.31)

The gopīs are superior to Uddhava:

*āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
vṛndāvane kim api gulam-latauśadhinām
yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-paṭham ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-pada-vim śrutibhir vimṛgyām*

“O when will that day be mine, when I can take the dust
of the lotus feet of those great souls known as the gopīs
on my head. When will the day come when I shall take
birth as a creeper in Vṛndāvana, so that I can take the
dust of the lotus feet of the gopīs on my head? Those
great souls gave up society, friendship, love, their very
relatives—even the Vedic principles—to surrender to

Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Mukunda. Such devotion as exhibited by these exalted inhabitants of Vṛndāvana is only hinted at in the *Vedas*.” (Bhāg. 10.47.61)

The *gopīs* are superior to the Lakṣmīs in Vaikuṇṭha:

*na tathā me priyatamo brahmā rudras ca pāṛthiva
na ca lakṣmī na cātmā ca yathā gopījano mama*

“Not even Brahmā, Śiva, Lakṣmī or even My own self is as dear to Me as are the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana.” (Ādi-Purāṇa)

Rādhārāṇī is the best of all devotees:

*yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇoḥ-tasyāḥ kuṇḍaṁ priyaṁ tathā
sarva gopīṣu saivaikā viṣṇor-atyanta-vallabhā*

“Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is dear to Kṛṣṇa, and Her *kuṇḍa*, known as Rādhā-kuṇḍa is similarly dear to Him. It is the favorite place of Kṛṣṇa. Of all the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the most dear to Kṛṣṇa.” (Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta, 45)

*karmibhyaḥ parito hareḥ priyatayā vyaktiṁ yayur jñāninas-
tebhyo jñāna-vimukta-bhakti-paramāḥ premaika-niṣṭhās-tataḥ
tebhyas-tāḥ paśu-pāla-paṅkaja-dṛśas tābhyāpi sā rādhikā
preṣṭhā tad-vadiyaṁ tadiya-sarasī tām nāśrayet kaḥ kṛtī*

“In the scriptures it is said that of all types of fruitive workers, one who is advanced in knowledge of the higher values of life is favored by the Supreme Lord Hari. Out of many such people who are advanced in knowledge,

jñānis may take to devotional service. He is superior to others. However, one who has actually attained *prema*, pure love of Kṛṣṇa, is superior to him. The *gopīs* are exalted above all the advanced devotees because they are totally dependent on Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental cowherd boy. Among the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the most dear to Kṛṣṇa. Her *kuṇḍa*, or lake, is as profoundly dear to Kṛṣṇa as is this most beloved of the *gopīs*. Who then, will not reside at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and, in a spiritual body surcharged with ecstatic devotional feelings, (*aprakṛta-bhāva*) render loving service to the divine couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, who perform Their *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*. Indeed, those who execute devotional service on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are the most fortunate souls in the universe.” (*Upadeśāmṛta* 10, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī)

The above ontology on the topic of Vaiṣṇava was first compiled in the book *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭhahāra*, under the chapter *Vaiṣṇava-tattva*.

ATOMIC RAY OF VISNU

Devotee: What is the constitutional position of the *jīva*?

Narasiṅha Mahārāja: In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we find this statement;

*jīvera 'svarūpa' haya - kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa
kṛṣṇera taṭasthā śakti bhedābheda prakāśa*

“The constitutional position of the *jīva* is that of an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. The *jīva* belongs to the marginal potency of Kṛṣṇa and as such the *jīva* is considered a manifestation simultaneously one and different from Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. Madhya 20.108)

The *jīva* is called *taṭasthā-śakti* or the marginal potency of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa's potencies are classified into three categories; *antaraṅga-śakti* the plane of Vaikuṇṭha, *taṭasthā-śakti* the marginal entities known as *jīvas*, and *bahiraṅga-śakti* the world of *māyā*, material illusion.

The *taṭasthā-śakti*, the marginal plane, is located on the line of demarcation between the plane of *māyā* and *Vaikuṇṭha*. Marginal means that the *jīva* has adaptability to either side —to *Māyā* or to Divinity. *Māyā* is the land of exploitation and *Vaikuṇṭha* is the land of dedication.

The *taṭasthā* is the Brahman effulgence, the bodily effulgence of Mahā-Viṣṇu and it is living and growing. That Brahman effulgence is the outer covering of the *Vaikuṇṭha* planets and it is the source of infinite *jīvas*.

Brahman is the marginal plane of non-differentiation. That plane is the un-concentrated principle of *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*, existence, consciousness, and bliss. At this stage we find that the *jīva* is an atomic ray or particle of non-differentiated character. The concentrated form of *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa the entity of absolute concentrated intensity.

The living beings, *jīvas*, are His separated parts, *vibhināṁśa-jīvas*. Thus the *jīvas* have inherited a minute proportion of Kṛṣṇa's qualities; therefore, the *jīva* is an embodiment of perception, the perceiver, egoism, the enjoyer, the thinker, and the doer. The constitutional distinction between Kṛṣṇa and the *jīva* is that Kṛṣṇa is Almighty while the *jīva* is atomic.

From that stage, a plain sheet of uniform consciousness, individual conscious units of dedication grow. These units of consciousness, *jīvas*, are endowed with seed adaptability towards both the spiritual and material worlds without ever having had participation or experience of either.

It is not that non-differentiation is the origin of differentiation as conceived by the Māyāvāda philosophers. But because the

marginal position is on the verge of the higher eternal potency, *svarūpa-śakti*, differentiation manifests in that plane of uniformity. *Svarūpa-śakti* is a substance of eternal differentiation and variegatedness. *Svarūpa-śakti* means the internal potency and both the *tatasthā-śakti* and the *antaraṅga-śakti* belong to the superior internal potency of *svarūpa-śakti*. The *bahiraṅga-śakti* belongs to the external potency, *māyā*, which is only a shadow reflection of reality.

Strictly speaking, the *jīva* is marginal and this means that he is in a position to analyze adaptability only. He can go towards the spiritual world and he can come towards the material world. But his ability is minute.

In that marginal state the *jīva* is left to exercise free will. Because the *jīva* is a conscious unit he has free will. Without free will it is simply matter. Free will is all-important, but because the *jīva* is atomic, his free will or discretion to analyze adaptability is defective. He may analyze correctly or not.

In the case of correct analysis of his adaptability the *jīva* can become a member of the eternal world of service to Godhead, *nitya-siddha*, eternally perfect. Or in the case of incorrect analysis of his adaptability the *jīva* falls down to the material world.

The question arises then, why didn't Kṛṣṇa endow the *jīva* with perfect discretion so he would make the proper analysis of his adaptability? If this were so then certainly all the *jīvas* would at once come to the spiritual world and this would create a compulsion among the *jīvas*. Compulsion means interfering with free will. But free will is guaranteed. Some are coming to this side and some are going to that side.

A *jīva* who is falling down from the marginal plane does not directly come in contact with matter. The *jīva* first comes to the stage of *cid-ābhāsa*. Before pure consciousness can evolve to material consciousness it must pass through a hazy stage of consciousness called *cid-ābhāsa*. In the stage of *cid-ābhāsa* the *jīva* becomes conditioned and is thus able to enter material existence. *Cid-ābhāsa* means preparation for a life in the land of misconception.

When there is creation again the fallen *jīva* is impregnated into a material universe by the glance of Mahā-Viṣṇu. To analyze the particular details of the history of the *jīva* is unnecessary. We are concerned only with how the transformation of material consciousness springs from pure consciousness.

The residents of Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka Vṛndāvana are also seen to come to the material world, but that is only in the case of *līlā*, to assist the Lord in His pastimes or to carry out His mission. The Vaikuṇṭha servitors come here and when their work is over they return. Such servants of the Lord, like Jaya and Vijaya and others, even when they come to the material world are never considered fallen souls because they are never forgetful of their actual position. The fallen souls of this world fall down from the marginal position within the Brahman effulgence, never from Vaikuṇṭha.

If one wants to argue that the *jīva* falls down to this material world from eternal *līlā* with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, then that is tantamount to Māyāvāda philosophy because that suggests the fallibility of the Vaikuṇṭha plane. The Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* never admit to even a remote chance of fallibility in Vaikuṇṭha what to speak of Goloka Vṛndāvana.

The residents of the Vaikuṇṭha planets do not have any awareness of material existence, of the worlds of exploitation, enjoyment and suffering. The material worlds actually have no existence other than being a covered state of pure consciousness of the *jīva*. The residents of Vaikuṇṭha being always in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness do not have any experience of matter.

With regards to understanding spiritual subject matters like the origin of the *jīva*, the nature of Kṛṣṇa and the nature of the spiritual world, a *jīva* in bondage is regrettably very slow in these matters. Understanding spiritual subjects largely depends upon the *jīva*'s *adhikāra* or acquired qualifications. Unfortunately, due to his meager *adhikāra* and limited experience the *jīva* all too often attempts to understand spiritual matters in relation to his mundane material consciousness.

What is Brahman, what is Kṛṣṇa, what is Vaikuṇṭha, what is *Svarūpa-śakti*? What are all these things is unknown and unknowable to the conditioned *jīva*. Even those in the neophyte stage of devotional service, *bhakti-yoga*, cannot have a transcendental understanding of these subjects due to their still being covered by *māyā*'s influence. The neophyte is all too often dependent upon crutches like paintings and pictures for his understanding which, although giving him some direction, nevertheless leave him hanging in the mundane conception.

For example: We have seen the artistic rendition of the birth of Brahmā on the stem of the lotus flower that springs from the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. There the lotus is red or yellow color, large in size, and having a very long stem. Thus the neophyte is left to conceive of that lotus in relation to his experience of a lotus flower in this world. What is the actual reality of that

‘lotus’ having sprung from the navel of Viṣṇu and being the birth-place of Brahmā, the artist cannot actually show us. But the conception of the neophyte becomes fixed in the conception that the substance of that lotus is also like the lotus of this world.

In his commentary on *Brahmā-saṁhitā* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has described that golden lotus as *cid-ābhāsa*, the hazy aspect or reflection of divinity. That lotus, he says, “is the residence of the aggregate *jīvas*.” So what is that lotus? Is it simply a lotus flower or is it something much more? We must try to think more deeply into these matters.

The point being made is that the lotus flower, the Brahman effulgence, the Vaikuṇṭha planets or any other thing having spiritual existence cannot be properly conceived of when simply referenced to its mundane counter part in the material world. Realization is required.

The *sāstra* and the self-realized devotees have tried to explain the realized truths about the Absolute Reality from different angles of vision for the purpose of helping the conditioned *jīva* to awaken his original pure consciousness. Still some *jīvas* are insistent on dragging their mundane mind and intellect into the attempt at understanding Reality. Thus the conditioned *jīva* is very slow to catch the real idea given in *sāstra* and by pure devotees.

To enter into proper understanding of the *sāstra* and revealed truths spoken by pure devotees the *jīva* has to put aside all mundane considerations and experiences. Only by advancement in pure devotional service are the pure and unalloyed truths regarding the Absolute Reality revealed to a *jīva*. By argument and word jugglery one wastes valuable time and cannot realize the

truth. On the other hand, to formulate a single line of thought or a single criterion by which all *jīvas* can understand the truth is also difficult. And it is for this reason that the *śāstra* and the *ācāryas* have expressed many angles of vision in an attempt to enlighten the *jīva*, some of which even appear contradictory. However, the more the eyes of the *jīva* are anointed and adorned with the salve of love, the more the Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, will reveal Himself.

The constitutional position of the *jīva* is to serve Kṛṣṇa. As such a *jīva* is never satisfied in material existence despite his wandering from the post of Brahmā down to that of an insignificant ant. When by the grace of Kṛṣṇa the wandering *jīva* meets a bona-fide representative of Kṛṣṇa he can get the seed of eligibility, *bhakti-latā-bija*, and thus he can attain to the stage of *jīvan-mukta* or that of a liberated soul from material existence.

This is what we have understood regarding the constitutional position of the *jīva* as we have heard it from the *śāstra* and from the lips of our spiritual masters.

THE CURSE OF TULASI-DEVI

Devotee: It is stated in a book, *Our Original Position*, Chapter eight, that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī cursed Her dear maidservant Vṛndā-devī (Tulasī-devī) to fall down from Goloka Vṛndāvana to this material world and that this is factual evidence that the *jīva* soul falls from the Lords eternal *līlā*. Is this correct?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: There is a reference in *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* regarding the appearance of Tulasī-devī in this material world due to the curse of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. However, in the writings of the six Gosvāmīs we do not find mention of this pastime. Those sections of the *Purāṇas* that are important for our advancement in pure devotional service have been selected by the Gosvāmīs and they have included those portions in their writings. But we do not find any mention of this so-called curse by our *ācāryas*.

In most cases the *Purāṇas* are written for persons in the lower modes of material nature. The events and stories that we find there are mainly to instruct the fallen souls in a general way or to instill fear and reverence in them for divinity.

Because this narration of the cursing of Tulasī-devī is there in the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* some devotees think that it is a very important *pramāṇa* (evidence) to support the idea of the *jīva* falling from Vaikuṇṭha. But in fact the narration makes no reference whatsoever to a *jīva* falling from grace. The narration strictly pertains to activities amongst the *pārśada* devotees, eternally liberated souls.

There are certain activities of Kṛṣṇa and the Viṣṇu-avatāras mentioned in the scriptures that may be neglected by the pure devotees due to those activities conflicting with their inner emotions, *bhāva*. For example, there is the disappearance *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa in which He is shot in the heel with an arrow. This is even mentioned in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, yet the pure devotees do not take pleasure in discussing this final *līlā* of the Lord. Rather they neglect it.

There is also a section in the *Padma Purāṇa* which is called *Bhāgavata-māhātmyam* wherein the story of Bhakti-devī and her two dying sons Jñāna and Vairāgya, is narrated. In that *Māhātmyam* the process of hearing the *Bhāgavatam* in seven days is also recommended (*Bhāgavata-saptah*). Because these things have been mentioned in *Purāṇas* some devotees have printed this *Bhāgavata-māhātmyam* in a small book and they also attempt to hold the *Bhāgavatam* reading in seven days. But our Guru Mahārāja (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda) did not care for this *Bhāgavata-māhātmyam* because it was not given any mention by the previous *ācāryas*.

It is a fact that the *Purāṇas* and many other Vedic literatures present topics other than those of pure devotional service. These

topics however, are of no concern to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. The *ācāryas* in our Gauḍīya tradition are concerned exclusively with pure devotional service and we follow their lead. We are not interested in just any kind of pure devotional service, but pure devotional service in the line of *rāgānuṅgās*, spontaneous love following in the footsteps of the residents of Vṛndāvana. Where such conclusions are found in the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, etc. the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas whole-heartedly embrace that. Otherwise not.

The *Bhāgavata-māhātmyam* concerns itself mainly with *karmakāṇḍa* and *mokṣa-kāṇḍa*, material benefit and liberation respectively. Therefore, it has not been given any importance by our *ācāryas* despite its seemingly being a glorification of the *Bhāgavatam*. The narration regarding the so-called curse of Tulasī-devī is also in a similar category. It is not given much importance by our *ācāryas* because the narration does not present the conclusions of pure devotional service. In fact the misconception that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī could curse Her most affectionate friend to suffer in material existence is indeed disturbing to one who is awake to the loving affairs of *vraja-bhakti*. It is also a fact that such narrations may even be bewildering and detrimental to the progress of one who lacks the sufficient eligibility or *adhikāra* to understand them.

However, the incident of the curse of Tulasī-devī is not unintelligible for those devotees who have the grace of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. Our first understanding should be that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's so-called cursing of Her dear-most servant to take birth in this material world was not actually a curse but a benediction. Thus, Tulasī-devī would be married to Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu and also the conditioned souls in material existence would get a chance to associate and serve a pure devotee.

Furthermore, it must be understood that the drama was carried out under *yogamāyā* not *mahāmāyā*. *Yogamāyā* is the energy of the Supreme Lord that, understanding the transcendental desires of the Lord and His devotees, makes all the necessary arrangements for their pastimes. In the case of *mādhurya-rasa-līlā* the *yogamāyā* potency is represented by Paurṇamāsī. In any case *mahāmāyā* has no jurisdiction in the realm of divine *līlā*.

Kṛṣṇa appears in this material world through His many expansions such as the Viṣṇu-*avatāras* and He even comes Himself as Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa and as Śrī Caitanyadeva. And to serve the Lord in His many incarnations His eternal associates also descend to the material world. Such is the case of Tulasī-devī. It should not be misunderstood that Tulasī-devī was at anytime under the control of material nature or that she had fallen due to having displeased Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Goloka.

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Tulasī-devī is an expansion of the internal potency of Kṛṣṇa known as *ūrjā*. The internal potency *ūrjā*, also known as *svarūpa-śakti*, never comes under the influence of *māyā*.

In Goloka Vṛndāvana Tulasī-devī is non-different from the *gopī* named Vṛndā who has expanded herself as Tulasī. This Vṛndā-devī is herself an expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and she leads the section of *sakhis* known as *dūtika-sakhis*, or messengers. In the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, Vṛndā-devī is as dear to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as Her own self. Vṛndā-devī is just under Viśākhā-devī in importance and intimacy. The love and intimacy that exists between Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Vṛndā-devī is like a vast ocean of sweetness.

Actually the forest of Vṛndāvana is named after Vṛndā-devī and it is a fact that she gave this beautiful forest as a gift to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In the field of *vraja-bhakti* it is not possible for the aspiring devotee to enter Vṛndāvana without first getting the blessings of Vṛndā-devī. She is so exalted that she is considered one of the principle Deities of Vṛndāvana. The feelings of affection that Rādhārāṇī has for Vṛndā-devī are wonderful. It is so wonderful that Rādhārāṇī once even made an arrangement for Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndā-devī to sit together on the same throne during Their pastimes in the forest. At that time Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī arranged for the wedding ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndā-devī to be performed.

Vṛndāvana is the land of the highest divinity and the sweetest reality. There every word is a song, every step is a dance and the flute is the dear-most companion of Kṛṣṇa. *Kathā gānam nāṭyam gamanam-api vamsi priya-sakhī*. Therefore, the so-called ‘curse’ of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the most exalted Queen of Vṛndāvana, must be a benediction, not a curse. When we think of a curse we naturally think of a hateful exchange between two individuals. However, in the spiritual world no hateful dealings, or envy exists there.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes of love with Their pure devotees cannot be understood by non-devotees, or by persons who are offensive to pure devotees. First we must become favorable in accepting the guidance and blessings of pure devotees, then we can have a correct understanding of the position of Tulasī-devī and how she has come here. But if we think that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī has hatefully cursed Her dear-most servant then we must ourselves be possessed of a hateful mentality.

THE FALL OF KALA KRSNADASA

Devotee: I have read an article wherein the deviation of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa is stated as factual and inescapable evidence that the *jīva* soul falls down from the eternal *līlā* of the Supreme Lord. Is this possible?

Narasīṅgha Mahārāja: To fall from the Lord's eternal *līlā* is not possible. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa from His personal service due to Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa having been allured by gypsies in the region of Mallara-deśa (the area around northern Kerala and southern Karnataka).

Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was a simple and gentle *brāhmaṇa* yet his intelligence became polluted in the association of the gypsies and he became attracted to women. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, being the ideal *sannyāsī*, cannot keep the company of persons who are attracted by women and thus when He returned to Jagannātha Purī He lodged a complaint about the character of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa before Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and rejected him.

The first lesson that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is teaching us in this incident is that as long as one is in this material world one should never deviate from the strict principles of pure devotional service. Māyā is very strong and the only safety for a devotee in this world is to constantly stick to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was a *brāhmaṇa* who was being given the chance to associate personally with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu during His earthly pastimes. We do not find mention anywhere in *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dīpikā* by Kavi Karnaṇapura, that Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was an eternal associate of the Lord who had descended from Goloka Vṛndāvana to assist the Lord in His pastimes. Thus it can be understood that Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was not an eternally liberated soul who fell down from the Lord's association, but rather he was a candidate from this material world and thus he was still susceptible to *māyā's* influence. In any case, had Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa been an eternal associate of the Lord his fall down could only have taken place due to *yogamāyā*, not *mahāmāyā*.

Even if one has the personal association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, or has become a liberated soul, as long as one still has a material body and is in this material world, one should not consider oneself liberated and thus independent of the regulative principles of devotional service. This is the first lesson.

The second lesson is that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu always protects His devotees. Mahāprabhu went immediately to the camp of the gypsies to reclaim Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa. When this happened the gypsies tried to hurt Mahāprabhu with various weapons. But the weapons that the gypsies tried to use against the Lord

turned against them and began to cut them to pieces. Their arms, legs and heads were severed from their bodies. There were loud cries of pain and agony amidst which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu grabbed His servant, Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa, by the hair and took him away to safety.

Once having taken shelter of the Lord's lotus feet, the Lord always protects His devotees. Even if there is some accidental fall down on the part of a sincere devotee the Lord rectifies that immediately.

*api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ
kṣīpraṁ bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

“Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination. He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30-31)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu went immediately to the camp of the gypsies to save Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa from *māyā*. In effect Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not allow Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa to give up His association even though he had been bewildered by *māyā*. After that it was almost one year before Mahāprabhu and Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa returned to Jagannātha Purī. During that time Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa continued to serve Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu both day and night. After returning to Purī, only then did the Lord reject

Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa from His personal association. The Lord did this in keeping with His high standards as a *sannyāsī*.

The third lesson to learn in this incident is that the Lord's devotees are even more merciful than the Lord Himself. When Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was seemingly rejected by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu he soon received the mercy of four great devotees, namely; Nityānanda Prabhu, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Mukunda, and Dāmodara.

The devotees of the Lord are more merciful than the Lord Himself. Sometimes the Lord is very hard or strict, whereas the devotees are more inclined to show mercy. It is said,

*vajrād api kaṭhorāṇi mṛdūni kusumād api
lokottārāṇām cetāṁsi ko nu vijñātum īśvaraḥ*

“The hearts of those above common behavior are sometimes harder than a thunder-bolt and sometimes softer than a flower. How can one accommodate such contradictions in great personalities?”

In some instances Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed His harder than a thunderbolt heart. However, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was there to show supreme mercy. Such was the case with Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa who not only received the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu, but also that of many other eternal associates of the Lord.

At that time Nityānanda Prabhu, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Mukunda, and Dāmodara devised a plan and after taking Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's permission Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was sent to Bengal to inform all the devotees that the Lord had returned from South

India. First Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa went to the home of Mother Śacī and then to the house of Śrī Advaita.

Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa informed all the devotees about the Lord's return from South India and related in great detail all about the Lord's travels. Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa brought great pleasure to all the Vaiṣṇavas and a great festival was held at Śrī Advaita's house.

In this way, by the mercy of the devotees, Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa continued to engage in the service of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It should be remembered also that due to the continued services of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa the narrations about the Lord's tour of South India were available for recording in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; even the narration of how the Lord delivered Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa from the gypsies. Those narrations continue to enliven the devotees even up to the present day. Thus the service of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa continues.

We have mentioned three beneficial lessons for the devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to follow in regard to the Lord rejecting Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa. However, the idea that the incident of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa supports the misconception that the *jīva* falls from Vaikuṇṭha or Goloka Vṛndāvana is not acceptable.

We should not think that the Lord has any hatred toward His devotee. On the contrary, even if there is some defect in the devotee, the Lord does not take that into consideration. All that exists between the Lord and His pure devotees are mutual feelings of love.

It is not possible for the pure devotee to envy the Lord nor is it possible for Kṛṣṇa to reject His pure devotee. Whenever such

dealings do appear to take place it should be understood to be the workings of *yogamāyā*, not *mahāmāyā*.

Nothing is dearer to a devotee than Kṛṣṇa and nothing is dearer to Kṛṣṇa than His devotee (*na me bhakta priya janah*). What more need we say than this?

LOVE OF GOD

Devotee: I have some doubt about Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's explanation of the *jīva*. I would be very grateful if you could please enlighten me on this subject.

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: In summary, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has stated that love of God is dormant in the heart of the *jīva* whereas some of the earlier *ācāryas* have said that there is no *svarūpa-śakti* in the *jīva*. This is the basic difference that some people point to as a defect or concoction of Bhaktivinoda—that he has differed from the previous *ācāryas*.

However, we find a similar understanding in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* by Kavirāja Gosvāmī supporting the conception of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

*nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya*

“Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of living entities. It is not something to be gained from another

source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, the living entity naturally awakens.” (Cc. *Madhya* 22.107)

Kṛṣṇa-prema means love of God (Kṛṣṇa) and ‘*karaye udaya*’ means to awaken. When something is awakened it is assumed that it was previously sleeping or dormant. Thus love of God is dormant in the heart of the conditioned soul in the same way that fire is dormant in wood. When wood comes in contact with fire it will then ignite. That is to say that when a conditioned soul comes in contact with a liberated soul (*guru*) he will then awaken to his eternal life of loving and serving Kṛṣṇa.

Many *bābājīs* and so-called scholars in Vṛndāvana give a different interpretation to the above statement. They say that the *guru* instills *prema* in the heart of a disciple and that before the connection with *guru* no trace of *prema* exists there. Although learned to some extent, these *bābājīs* and so-called scholars are not very deep philosophers. What the main difference between spirit and matter is they do not know.

There are of course many distinctions between matter and spirit, but the final and most important distinction is that matter has no capacity to love. Only the *jīva* can love. This love is perversely manifest in the conditioned soul and purely manifest in the liberated soul. But in either case, liberated or conditioned, the tendency to love is there in the *jīva*.

For the scholars of this world the *śāstra* is the highest truth, but for the devotees the realizations of the pure devotees are more important. The *śāstra* shows the way, but the realizations of the pure devotees are the conclusive truths. The so-called scholars do not realize that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a liberated soul

and that his *bhakti-samādhī* gives us much needed clarification to various topics found in the *śāstra*.

The critics of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura are blind to self-evident truths. They study the scriptures for lifetimes, but they never arrive at the conclusion or the realized knowledge of the scriptures. To instruct such lay students of the *śāstra* Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in his *Tattva-sūtra* as follows:

“This *Tattva-sūtra* is obtained and proved by the eternal realization. Therefore, it can be known as the very essence of the *Vedas*. This is originated from the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya, and hence, is the origin of all the revealed scriptures. Only the Reality has been accepted in this treatise. The divine knowledge is characterized as the Sun whereas all the scriptures (*śāstra*) are rays of that Sun. This saying reveals that no scripture can contain the divine knowledge to the fullest extent. The self-evident knowledge of the *jīvas* is the source of all the scripture. This self-evident knowledge should be understood as God-given. The sages endowed with compassionate hearts have received this self-evident knowledge (axiomatic truths) from the Supreme Lord, and recorded the same in the scriptures for the benefit of all *jīvas*. This recorded portion of this primeval knowledge (God-given to the *jīva*) has been manifested in the form of the *Vedas*.

“The independent cultivation of the self-evident knowledge is always necessary. This is the important thing needed in understanding the truth along with the study of the scriptures. Since the knowledge (divine

knowledge) itself is the origin of the scriptures, those who disregard the root and depend upon the branches cannot have any well-being. Now, it may be argued that, when all the scriptures have been derived of the self-evident faith, where is the need for honoring them? The answer is that, in the conditioned state of the *jīvas*, the real knowledge is covered by the darkness of ignorance. In the devotional cultivation associated with retraction, when the hidden Reality is gradually manifested in the state of *bhakti-samādhī*, the *jīvas* will be realizing the self-evident knowledge.

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

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

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

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

“Scriptural ordinances are intended for the regulation of the ignorant human beings whereas those who are endowed with discretion and divine wisdom are not controlled by them.

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

“In this way; in all the scriptures these two signs can be seen viz., 1) honor of the revealed scriptures in general, 2) secondary importance of the scriptures in comparison to the self-evident faith. But, the authors of

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

“Since knowledge itself is the root of the scriptures, the one who has attained that self-evident knowledge will not be ruled by the scriptures, but only they guide him with advises. In case of ignorant people, this is not so. They must be governed by the rules of the scriptures for their upliftment, if not they will have their inevitable down fall due to the sensual addictions. If it is argued, then, rather than governing by means of tedious rules, let the scriptures help the ignorant people by means of friendly advises. The reason for such an attitude is that the ignorant people do not understand their own

good and bad due to the lack of knowledge. Due to the instinctual habits they will engage in wanton activities.

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

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

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

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

If one is genuinely interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he should know that scholarship does not necessarily lead to real devotion or love of God.

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

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

The search for knowledge is certainly misleading in our ultimate quest for pure devotional service. In fact, although somewhat necessary in the beginning of devotional service, it nonetheless becomes the prerequisite for pure devotional service that one become free from knowledge, *jñāna-sūnya-bhakti*. By knowledge it is meant the spirit of ascertaining the Absolute Truth with a calculative approach, the attempt to capture the infinite in one’s fist. In the ultimate issue Kṛṣṇa is unknown and unknowable.

Śāstra points the way, but only faith can reveal the higher plane. *Jñāna-sūnya-bhakti* refers to the plane of divine love that is free from any calculation and does not consider even the opulence and power of the Lord. This is the standard of pure devotion of the eternal residents of Goloka Vṛndāvana.

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

Kṛṣṇa is the unconquerable (*ajita*) but He becomes conquered (*jita*) by the love of pure devotees not by the knowledge of scholars or the study of many books.

What will make spiritual life successful is that one must learn to love Kṛṣṇa and serve His devotees. That is the happy life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

PARTICLE OF DUST

Devotee: What should be the highest aspiration of a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava? Should one aspire after the position of a *gopī* or a *mañjarī* who can enter the groves of Vṛndāvana to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa? What should be our aspiration?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: We are to conceive of the plane of divine *līlā* or pastimes of the Supreme Lord as infinitely greater than we are. In that subjective plane of reality all things animate and inanimate are superior to us. We are units of finite consciousness, yet we falsely think that we can demand a position in the highest plane of divinity. It is ludicrous. It is heresy to think such.

We want so many things of the higher plane, but we are not fit for that service. We are not ready to pay the price of the highest service, but we think that we are somehow or other qualified for that. We have heard that some position is there in the *mañjarī* section that is most desirable, but we think that leaving all else aside we can simply jump to that position, or march through that world as a soldier and conquer our objective. But it is not like that.

First we must qualify. First deserve, then desire. We want not the position of the master but of the most negligible. First we must aspire for the most negligible position in the subjective plane of divinity, not for the highest position. What is that most negligible position? It is this:

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūli-sadr̥śaṁ vicintaya*

“O son of Nanda Mahārāja, I am Your eternal servant, yet because of my own *karma*, I have fallen into this terrible ocean of birth and death. Please accept this fallen soul and consider me a particle of dust at Your holy lotus feet.” (Śikṣāṣṭaka 5)

The most negligible position one can hold in the relativity of the Absolute Truth is that of a particle of dust in the infinite world of *līlā*. Such is to be the highest aspiration of any Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava in this world. We are not to aspire in the beginning for the service of others —we must first aspire to be accepted into that domain by the Lord and His personal associates.

If we say that we want the highest, it is paramount to sense gratification. ‘We want’ — means sense gratification. I want this, I want that, it is sense gratification. It is not for His pleasure, this ‘I want, I want’ mentality. It is better, for His (Kṛṣṇa’s) pleasure, to prepare one’s self in this life to become a particle of dust or a blade of grass in that higher plane of infinite *līlā*. That is more desirable and such a noble desire will not go unnoticed by the residents of that plane.

*āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
 vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhinām
 yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-paṭham ca hitvā
 bhejur mukunda-pada-vim śrutibhir vimṛgām*

“The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana gave up their husbands, children, and families who are very difficult to renounce, and sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, which are sought after even by the *Vedas* themselves. O! Grant me the fortune to take birth as a blade of grass in Vṛndāvana, so that I may take the dust of the lotus feet of those great souls upon my head.” (Bhāg. 10.47.61)

To become a blade of grass in the plane of the infinite is no small achievement, what to speak of seeing or associating with Kṛṣṇa directly. It is no small thing. Such aspiration is shown to us by Uddhava, the intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa. And taking it one step further, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has shown us that the position held by a particle of dust at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa is the most desirable.

To achieve the most negligible position in the infinite will require the highest qualifications possible in this present plane. The highest qualifications attainable here for the *sādhaka* (devotee), may earn him the most negligible position in the higher subjective world of *līlā*. It is not a cheap thing.

We must become a slave to His (Kṛṣṇa's) will. Then it may be possible that we are to be taken there by the higher agents of that plane. Otherwise, it is heresy to think that I will get that higher position by my own endeavor. Our *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla B. R.

Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja used to call such a mentality, wild-geese chasing. In reality any aspiration that has no basis in the concept of divine slavery has no practical application in the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. *Smaraṇa*, meditation on *līlā*, and so many things of the *sahajiyā* school are not the qualifications to be admitted there. Only surrender is necessary, the surrender of a slave.

When the necessity arises in the divine *līlās*, then the qualified slave of divinity is admitted to that arena and no others. Without surrender, without the slave’s mentality, we are not qualified for the higher service. So that should be the aspiration of one who understands the nature of the transcendental world —let me become the slave of the Lord.

*āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pīnaṣtu mām
adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ*

“Kṛṣṇa may embrace me in love or trample me under His feet. He may break my heart by hiding Himself from me. Let that debauchee do whatever he likes, but He will always be the only Lord of my life.” (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 8)

This is the slave mentality —I am His slave. His slave in divine love. He is free to do anything and everything as He wishes, I am His slave. But we are not ready to accept that position and that is why we are not qualified to participate in the highest *līlās* of the Lord.

There are many devotees and even *sannyāsis* and *bābājis* who go on with *mañjari-sevā* meditations and other things of that section, when not even the slightest trace of real qualifications can be found in them. Such persons become mundane women in their next life. They are never promoted to the plane of divinity through the process of imitation.

Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī, the *guru* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, used to say, “Simply by entering the maternity room and imitating the sounds of labor one will not give birth to a child. Many events are necessary before that.”

The plane of infinite *līlā* is so charming that even the particle of dust there is worshipable for us. How then shall we approach that plane? *Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava-bhaṅge*— the plane of the highest *rāga* (*līlā*) must always be kept above our heads. With the plane of higher *līlā* above our heads we shall march on, *tad dāsa-dāsa-dāsanām dāsatvam dehi me prabhu*. I am the servant of the servant, of the servant of the Lord’s servant. I want such a position and nothing else. That should be our approach.

This *śloka* ‘*pūjala rāga-patha gaurava-bhaṅge*’ was composed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the *guru* of our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, and it was his desire that this position be preached, not temporarily, but for all time, in all places, in all circumstances, and in very nook and corner of the universe. That was the mission of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He came to fight with all misconceptions about the Absolute Truth—he came to establish the path of divine love, divine slavery.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura could not tolerate it when the higher subject matter was dealt with inappropriately. And what did he consider inappropriate? That the topic of *līlā* was taken to the public eye —this should not be done. Why? Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered such as *aparādha*, an offense against the Lord of love. Invasion of privacy —to take the higher topic of *līlā* to the public is an offense. In the time of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura such was never the indulgence of any member of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, nor did any of his bona-fide disciples venture in that way after his disappearance.

We have heard many narrations from our Guardians (*gurus*) that exemplify how much regard Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had for the higher plane of divinity and how ever so carefully he dealt with that plane. From Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja we once heard that Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not allow his disciples to read (study and discuss) such higher books as *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, *Stava-kusumāñjali*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, and even certain portions of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* wherein the *līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is discussed. Whenever Sarasvatī Ṭhākura heard that someone was reading those books, he took it that an offense was being committed by interfering in the higher *līlās*. So, if such a measure of caution is given by one who on one hand was the most dynamic and progressive preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the 20th century, and on the other hand so cautious in dealing with the higher *līlās*, then how much caution should we, the fallen souls, exercise when approaching such matters? It is only logical that we should follow his example and exercise extreme caution.

A profound example of the mood in which Sarasvatī Ṭhākura approached divinity, was related to us by Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja as follows:

“At the close, before his entrance into his eternal pastimes, in the morning he requested Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja to sing Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī-pada of Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, and Navīna Kṛṣṇa Prabhu to sing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *Tuha dayā sāgara tārayite prāṇī*. This was the commentary on *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. After giving this instruction to sing, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda began to repeat his famous counsel, implicit obedience to the precepts laid down by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī through the medium of the spiritual master is the wealth of our devotion. In this instruction, he outlined the true method of our devotional practices as well as the real disciplic succession. Furthermore, in hearing the song of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (*tuya dayā echana parama adāra*), Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda clasped his hands to his forehead and profuse tears of humility rolled down his cheeks. These personal gestures reminded us of our lamentable plight in not having any attraction for the Holy Name.”

If you want the highest position, then take this example. Keep the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī (Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī) on your head as your supreme wealth and cultivate with every atom of your existence great humility and attachment for the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. This is the highest aspiration of a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava.

HIS LAST INSTRUCTIONS

Just a week prior to the departure of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura from this mortal world (Thursday, January 1, 1937, at 5:30 am) he gave many essential instructions to his disciples. These instructions were later compiled in Bengali verse by one of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's most affectionate associate servants, Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has said:

(1)

*sakale parama utsāha sahakāre
rūpa raghunātha vāṇi pracāra sabāra*

“All of you preach the message of Rūpa and Raghunātha to everyone with great enthusiasm.”

(2)

*rūpānugā-pada-dhuli haite sabāra
(jena) carama ākāṅkṣā citte jāge anibāra*

“May the ultimate desire to become a speck of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Śrī Rūpa remain ever awake in our hearts.”

Comment

It is being recommended here that for all spiritual perfection one should desire to become a ‘speck of dust’ at the lotus feet of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. To achieve even the most negligible position in the subjective plane of divinity will draw the highest benefit for the *jīva*. However, there are some devotees who have raised an objection by stating that we should desire to become *gopis*, that being the highest perfection.

Are we to think that Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, on the verge of entering the eternal *līlās* of the Supreme Lord, has misguided his disciples into some inferior or unknown region? I would think not.

The path of perfection is shown by the *ācārya* and with regards to the followers of Śrī Caitanyadeva, that supreme perfection is found at the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his intimate followers. In his last instructions Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has mentioned several times ‘to be a speck of dust at the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī.’ Is it a novel expression or is it something more? Indeed, such is the most straightforward expression of how to attain life’s ultimate goal, loving devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the divine serving group of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

The highest wealth of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava is that of eternal servitude to the illustrious Queen of Vṛndāvana, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (*Rādhā-dāsyam*). For admittance into the circle of Her intimate servants Śrī Rūpa holds the key. Admittance into Her group will only be possible for one who has caught the

foot dust of Rūpa with all his heart and soul. It is the law of that land. It cannot be otherwise.

(3)

*advaya-jñāna-tattva vraje vrajendra-nandana
(mūla)-viṣaya-vigraha sei sarva-sevya-dhana*

“Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa is the principle of non-dual consciousness. He is the root object of devotion and the treasured object of service for all.”

(4)

*tāñra aprākṛta indriya tarpaṇa uddeśe
āśrayānugatye sabe thāka mile miśe*

“In order to satisfy the transcendental senses of the one, non-dual Supreme Truth, remain united in following Rādhā, the original reservoir of love for Him.”

Comment

In the transcendental land of Vraja (Vṛndāvana) where love (*prema*) is supreme, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Subject-Divinity (*viṣaya-vigraha*) and Śrī Rādhā is the Object-Divinity (*āśraya-vigraha*). The love of Śrī Rādhā (Her capacity to satisfy the transcendental senses of Kṛṣṇa) and that of Her intimate circle of friends is unsurpassed by any other group. Therefore, we should strive to perfect this human life by learning the ways of love by following in the footsteps of the residents of Vraja headed by the *gopīs*, always united under the banner of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

(5)

*sabāra uddeśya eka śrī-hari-bhajana
tāhā sādhibāre sabe karaha jatana*

“Everyone make the effort to perfect your worship of Śrī Hari (Kṛṣṇa); make this the only purpose of your lives.”

(6)

*du’ dinera jāni ei anitya-saṁsāra
ihāte mamatā tyaji hao māyā-pāra*

“Remember that this world is temporary and lasts only a day or two. Give up your family attachment and transcend this world of illusion.”

(7)

*kona-rūpe jīvana nirvāha kari cala
nitya-tattva kṛṣṇa-bhakti karaha sambala*

“Maintain your worldly obligations in whatever way you can, but make the eternal principle, devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the true provision for your voyage through life.”

Comment

In this world of birth and death only one thing has real value and that is devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Whatever else there may be is only an illusion and it is sure to perish today or tomorrow (in a day or two). The world is

temporary and filled with sorrow. Those who desire real happiness will make devotion to Kṛṣṇa the main principle in their life.

(8)

*vipad gañjanā śata śata se lāñchanā
āśuk tathāpi hari-bhajana cheḍo nā*

“Let hundreds of dangers, insults or persecutions come, but despite them, do not give up your worship of Kṛṣṇa.

(9)

*sarva-vighna-vināśana prabhu gaura-hari
avaśya śrī-pāde sthāna dibena dayā kari*

“Lord Gaura-hari destroys all obstacles on the path. He will surely be merciful and give you a place at His lotus feet.”

Comment

This is not only an instruction, but this may be taken as a special benediction also. Those who follow closely the instruction of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are sure to achieve the merciful grace of Lord Gaura-hari (Śrī Caitanyadeva).

On the earnest prayer of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came down to this world from the personal entourage of Śrī Caitanyadeva. It is mentioned in the *śāstra* that a divine personality would advent in this world to consolidate the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*. In *Premya-ratnāvali* by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana a verse is mentioned in this regard from the *Padma Purāṇa* as follows:

*ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti catvāraḥ sampradāyinaḥ
śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakāḥ vaiṣṇavam kṣiti-pāvanāḥ
catvāras te kalau bhāvya hyutkale puruṣottamāt*

“Four *sampradāyas* inaugurated by Lakṣmī, Brahmā, Śiva, and the Kumāras will appear in the holy place of Lord Puruṣottama (Jagannātha) in Utkala (Orissa) to purify the earth in Kali-yuga.”

If one makes a pilgrimage to the most holy *samādhi-mandira* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta in Māyāpura *Dhāma* one will find this *śloka* from the *Padma Purāṇa* written on the wall behind the *mūrti* of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. It was thus understood by the disciples of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and by all the noble Vaiṣṇavas of Jagannātha Purī, Vṛndāvana, and Māyāpura that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was indeed the personality that fulfilled the statement of the *Padma Purāṇa*. This understanding was based not only on the fact that Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had taken his birth at Jagannātha Purī, but it was a self-evident truth that Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had consolidated the teachings of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*. Under the banner of Śrī Caitanyadeva the teachings of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* were preached by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, spreading the Holy Name in every town and village as predicted by Śrī Caitanyadeva Himself.

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

“My Name will be propagated in all the towns and villages of the world.” (Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya 4.126)

In the main temple at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha established by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in Māyāpura, one will find the *śrī-mūrtis* of each of the

four Vaiṣṇava *saṁpradāya-ācāryas* (Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī, Śrī Nimbārka, and Śrī Rāmānuja) at each of the four-corners of the main Deity sanctum of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvikā-Giridhāri.

The service of these four *saṁpradāya-ācāryas* as seen at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha established by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta is the first of its kind in the world. This is indeed unique and certainly echoes the prophecy of the *Padma Purāṇa*.

Also, in the *Sūtra-Khaṇḍa* of Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, we find the mention of a great general (*sena-pati*) who will spread the mercy of Śrī Caitanyadeva outside of Bengal:

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

“Even if the sinners reject religion or flee to other countries, still they will get the mercy. I will send my *sena-pati-bhakta* to go there and deliver them.”

Sena-pati means general and a general must have such intelligence and capacity that he can lead other great men and qualified persons in battle, the battle against *māyā*, illusion. Before the advent of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the pure theistic teachings of Śrī Caitanyadeva were all but lost or destroyed. The situation was so lamentable that even the process of *saṅkīrtana* (congregational chanting of the Holy Name) had been stopped—even in Navadvīpa the sacred land where Śrī Caitanyadeva had appeared. Prior to Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s advent there was no organized preaching to spread Śrī Caitanyadeva’s teachings nor

was there any bona-fide institution to shelter those who wished to sacrifice their lives in devotion to Godhead.

To spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established the Gauḍīya Maṭha and instituted the *sannyāsa āśrama*. He then sent his *sannyāsi* preachers throughout India and to western countries to perform the Gauḍīya missionary activities. In 1965 our spiritual master, the foremost preacher disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, came to the western world to fulfill the order and desire of his spiritual master. Our spiritual master said many times that the great Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement that he was conducting (ISKCON) was actually going on by the order, the desire, and the mercy of his Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. Many times our spiritual master made such statements as follows:

“So far I am concerned, I am a humble disciple of His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who was the original pioneer of spreading this movement in the western world. During his lifetime, up to 1936, he started 64 main centers all over the world, including centers in Berlin, Germany and London, England. His Divine Grace entrusted me to spread this movement in western countries, and since 1965, I am trying in my humble way to spread this movement in this part of the world.” (*letter to Mr. David J. Exley, Chief NGO Section at the United Nations, dated 68-02-21*)

“Actually I am the most unworthy servant of His Divine Grace (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) because I delayed

to execute his order by so many years. But it was better I began late than never, and therefore he has kindly sent to me so many young hearts to cooperate with me in this great movement.” (*letter to Kīrtanānanda, dated 70-05-06*)

In recent years some of the disciples of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda have forgotten the eminent position of their *parama-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Attempting to illuminate the special position of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda some of his disciples have unwittingly omitted the importance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura along with the importance of all previous Gauḍīya *sampradāya ācāryas*. This group of disciples has declared that Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda is the *ācārya* for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas for the remaining 10,000 years of the Golden Age of Kali-yuga. Such is a zealous declaration, but it unfortunately indicates a genuine lack of fundamental understanding of our *guru-paramparā* system by glaringly omitting the importance of our *parama-gurus* and lastly by even omitting the position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.

It is indeed a fact that our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda was an empowered representative of the Supreme Lord, as it is said:

*guruvajñam śirasi-dhāryam śaktyāveśa sva-rūpine
hare-kṛṣṇeti mantreṇa pāścatya-prācya-tāriṇe*

“Taking the order of his *guru* on his head, he became empowered by Nityānanda Prabhu to act as a *śaktyāveśa avatāra*. He distributed the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* all over the eastern and western world, delivering and uplifting all fallen souls.” (Śrīpāda B. S. Govinda Mahārāja, Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha)

Although the above verse is accepted as fact (not only by the disciples of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, but by many of his godbrothers also) it does not nullify the facts concerning the previous ācāryas in the Gauḍīya disciplic succession.

In the ontological line of disciplic succession it is unanimously recognized that Śrī Caitanyadeva is the founder of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Kali-yuga. Thereafter, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda was personally recognized and appointed by Śrī Caitanyadeva as the most qualified devotee to spread *bhakti-rasa* (Kṛṣṇa consciousness). It cannot be otherwise, since it is Rūpa Gosvāmī who in his *siddha-rūpa* is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, the leader of the intimate group of Śrī Rādhā's servants. It is understood by all the bona-fide Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas that Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is the leader (*Founder-ācārya*) of our *sampradāya* for the duration of the Golden Age of Kali-yuga.

To spread the glories of the *rūpānugā sampradāya* (the succession of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī), Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared in this world at the end of the 19th century. Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja has emphasized this in the following words:

“Many heterodox sects came into existence that vocally claimed to be following Mahāprabhu, but in fact were simply using His name to promote their false doctrines. The Lord Himself could not tolerate deviation from the truths of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava doctrine and He would be greatly pained by misrepresentations of the divine relations between the Lord and His devotees. For this reason, Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rūpa Gosvāmī appeared again at the desire

of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, to preserve and protect the doctrines taught by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Preaching these doctrines of pure devotion, these two great souls gave great joy to the Lord Himself and to all of His followers in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school.” (*Of Love and Separation*, pp. 89)

Certainly it must be said that all the dedicated disciples and followers of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are of no less importance than their *guru* since they carry forth the same message. Yet it does not look good if the future generations of devotees omit the importance of the previous *ācāryas*. Therefore, it must be said that all of them are glorious.

(10)

śrī-kṛṣṇa-vimukha heri adhikāṁsa jana
śuddha-kṛṣṇa-sevā-kathā nā kare grahaṇa
hayo nā utsāha-hīna tāhāte kakhana
cheḍo na jīvātu tava nījera bhajana

“When you see that most people are indifferent to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and show no interest in selfless service to Kṛṣṇa and in talks about Him, don’t be discouraged. Most of all, never give up your *bhajana*, your life and soul.”

(11)

nija sarvasva kṛṣṇa — kathā śravaṇa-kīrtana
chāḍiyā dāridrya kena karibe varaṇa

“Why would you accept the poverty of a life without hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, your sole wealth?”

Comment

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also mentioned in one of his songs:

nāma binā kichu nāhiko āro, caudda-bhūvana-mājhe
(*Aruṇodaya Kīrtana 1, Gītavali*).

“There is nothing except the Holy Name within all the fourteen worlds.” Whatever we find in this material world such as wealth, prestige, power, kingdoms, and so many things actually have no permanent existence, it is all a temporary illusion. The Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is non-different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself and therefore it is eternal. The Holy Name is not destroyed by time nor is the Holy Name under the three modes of material nature. The Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is purely transcendental as stated in *Padma Purāṇa*:

nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇas
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
‘bhinnatvam nāma-nāminoḥ

“The Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendently blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa’s Name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa’s Name is not

contaminated by the material qualities, and there is no question of it's being involved with matter, Kṛṣṇa's Name is always liberated and spiritual; it is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the Name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical."

Therefore, who other than a person who has lost all intelligence, would give up the chanting of the Lord's Holy Name?

(12)

*kṛṣṇa-pāda-padma māga jīvera kalyāṇa
acire purābe vāñchā sarva-śaktiman*

"Beg for Kṛṣṇa's lotus-feet, the ultimate benediction for all living beings. The Lord is all-powerful and will quickly fulfill your desire."

(13)

*asamartha nahe kṛṣṇa dhare sarva-bala
(kṛṣṇa)-sevakera vāñchā kabhu nā haya viphalā*

"Kṛṣṇa is not incapable. He is omnipotent and His servant's desires never go in vain."

(14)

*tr̥ṇapekṣā hīna dīna āpane mānibe
tru-sama sahya-guṇa bhūṣita haibe
amāni mānada haye sadā nāma labe
śrī-nāma-bhajane sarva-pradhāna jānibe*

“Please always chant the Name of the Lord, being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree. Give all respect to others and demand none for yourself. Make the worship of the Holy Name the most important aspect of your devotional life.”

Comment

Here we find paraphrased the third verse of *Śikṣāṣṭakam*:

*tṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

Humility is often described as the crest jewel of the Vaiṣṇava qualities. Humility is indeed the quality of a devotee that most attracts the Supreme Lord. We have seen that knowledge, austerity, power, becoming an author, or even a world preacher are sometimes easily achieved, but those who have developed real qualities of humility are rare souls in this world.

Our *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī used to say that humility means to be submissive to the order of our *guru*. Humility does not mean to be complacent or obedient to the commands of the rogues and thieves, the non-devotees. We must eagerly take the instruction of our *guru* on our head as our life and soul. We must be ready to sacrifice everything and anything for his satisfaction. We must not project ourselves in any light, but we should strive always to be a transparent *via media* for our *guru* to work through us. That is real humility.

(15)

*śrī-caitanya-pravartita saṅkīrtana-yajña
ihāte laiyā dikṣā bhajibena vijña*

“A wise person will worship the Lord after taking initiation in the sacrifice of the Holy Name inaugurated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and His associates.”

(16)

*sapta-sikha nāma yajñānale ātmāhuti
viśeṣe kalite ei śāstrera jukati*

“Offer yourself up to the seven flames of this sacrificial fire. The scriptures say that this is especially the religious principle for the Age of Kali.”

Comment

In his purport to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam* of the first verse of *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has mentioned seven stages of perfection that may be compared to the seven flames of the *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name. The seven stages of perfection in chanting of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa are as follows: (1) Chanting of the Holy Name cleanses the mirror of the heart. (2) The chanting of the Holy Name protects the devotee from material existence. (3) The chanting of the Holy Name bestows the highest benediction on the living entities. (4) The chanting of the Holy Name is the source of all transcendental knowledge. (5) The chanting of the

Holy Name expands the ocean of transcendental bliss. (6) The chanting of the Holy Name cures the disease of material existence. (7) The chanting of the Holy Name is the essential ingredient in every devotional service.

Therefore let the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa be victorious all over the world.

(17)

*karma-vira dharma-vira haye kāja nāi
jñāna-yoga-tapa-ādi paṭhe kaṣṭa pāi*

“We do not seek to become heroes performing great works or religious deeds. We will become distressed if we take up the paths of knowledge, works or austerities.”

Comment

This material world is the plane of exploitation where the conditioned souls perform works for enjoying the senses. A little superior to the plane of exploitation is the plane of renunciation where one acquires knowledge and sometimes performs severe austerities for liberation. Superior to both the plane of exploitation and the plane of renunciation is the plane of dedication. Dedication alone is the inherent nature of the living entity.

*jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya — kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’
kṛṣṇera ‘tataṣṭha-śakti,’ ‘bhedābheda-prakāśa’*

“It is the living entities constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa because he is the marginal energy

of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one and different from the Lord.” (Cc. *Madhya* 20.108)

Therefore, if a devotee takes up the path of either exploitation or renunciation he will surely meet with distress. Dedication to the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone can fully satisfy the soul.

(18)

*śrī-rūpera pada-dhūli jānaha svarūpa
sei se sarvasva tāhe nā hao virūpa*

“Know that your true identity is to be a speck of dust at the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Prabhu; don’t go against this identity, which is your treasure.”

(19)

*rūpānugā-varya hana śrī-bhaktivinoda
se bhaktivinoda-dhārāya bahe śuddha moda*

“Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the best of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. The pure joy of devotional service comes in the stream that started with him.”

Comment

As we have heard from our *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, it was not possible for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to conceive of Kṛṣṇa without the intervention of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in him. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has said:

“We have seen that Prabhupāda took Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as *guru* from the internal consideration. His outside and inside was filled with Bhaktivinoda, not in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense. He installed Deities of Vinoda-Vilāsa, Vinoda-Rāma, Vinoda-Ānanda, and Vinoda-Prāṇa in many *maṭhas*. We saw his attempt also through his *gurudeva*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, to approach Rādhā-Govinda and Mahāprabhu. It was inconceivable, not possible without Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s influence in him.” (*Follow the Angels*, pp. 163)

(20)

*bhakti-rasāmṛta-pūrṇa sei pūta dhārā
kakhano habe nā ruddha śata-vighna dvārā*

“That stream is holy and full of nectarine flavors of devotion. Even a hundred obstacles will never obstruct it.”

(21)

*se dhārāya haiyā snāta buddhimān jana
bhaktivinoda-mano’bhiṣṭa karaha pūrāṇa*

“Intelligent persons who have bathed in the waters of that stream should endeavor to fulfill the heartfelt wishes of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.”

(22)

*bahu yogya kṛti-vyakti āchaha tomarā
hao sabe āguwān esa kari tvarā*

“Amongst you are many capable and worthy individuals.
So all of you quickly come forward and take up this
task.”

(23)

dante tṛṇa dhari ei jāci punaḥ punaḥ
śrī-rūpa-pada-dhūli jena hai janma janma

“Taking grass between my teeth, I pray repeatedly that I
may become a speck of dust at Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s lotus
feet, birth after birth.”

Comment

This humble prayer at the feet of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī appeared again and again on the lips of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura just prior to his departure from this mortal world.

On the evening before his pastime of entering the eternal *līlā* of the Supreme Lord, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura requested Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja to sing his most favorite *bhajana*, ‘Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī-pada.’ This song was sung by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja at which time tears of love glided down from the eyes of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and he clutched his hands to his chest in feelings of great separation from the most cherished object of his worship.

(24)

ihā vinā anyākāṅkṣa nahuka hṛdaye
ei vāñchā sarva-hṛde hauk udaye

“Other than this, I pray that no other desire will manifest in my or anyone else’s heart.”

(25)

*e saṁsāre thāka-kāle āche nānā bādhā
tāhe muhyamān kabhu nahibe sarvathā*

“While living in this world, we encounter many difficulties; but there is no need for us to be ever bewildered by these difficulties.”

(26)

*bādhā mātra dūra karāi nahe prayojana
atahpara kibā labhya cinte vijñā-jana*

“We need make no effort to remove any of these obstacles. What is necessary for us, while we are still here, is to learn what is beyond —what will be the nature of our eternal life.”

Comment

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often said that he admitted to no deficiency in this world except the lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we can remove the ignorance that covers the living entities eternal identity then in that one stroke we can remove all the problems of the world. There is no need to endeavor independently to solve the problems of the world. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only and final solution.

(27)

*nitya-ātmā āmi mora nitya sei jivana
ekhani hauk tāra tattva-nirdhāraṇa*

“Let me realize at this very moment the nature of my eternal spiritual identity and my eternal life in the spiritual world.”

(28)

*ākaraṇa-vikaraṇera vastu āche jata
cāhi vā nā cāhi emana kahibe vā kata*

“There are so many things that attract and repel us. There is no end to the things that we want and don’t want.”

(29)

*ei duhuṇ mimāmsā śighra kari matimān
nitya-tattva kṛṣṇa-bhakti karaha sandhāna*

“We have to resolve what exactly we do or do not want and decide to search out our devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, the eternal truth.”

Comment

Human life is a rare opportunity to make progress in spiritual life. If after coming to the human form of life one neglects the chance to make spiritual progress then it must be considered that such a person is the most unfortunate being.

*emana durlabha mānava-deho
pāiyā ki koro bhāva na keho
ebe nā bhajile yaśodā-suta
carama poribe lāje*

“You have achieved this rare human body. Don’t you care for this gift? If you do not worship the darling of Mother Yaśodā now, then great sorrow awaits you at the time of your death.” (Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, *Arunodaya Kirtana 1, Gitavali*)

The intelligent human being should understand that this mortal world is not his eternal home. This mortal world is a foreign land where there is danger at every step, *padam padam yad vipadām na teṣām*. Therefore, with great determination one should make devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa the sole aim in life.

(30)

*o duwera yuddhe jadi jayī hate cāo
(tabe) aprākṛta nāmākṛṣṭa hale rakṣā pāo*

“If you wish to conquer over attraction and repulsion then you should remember that by becoming attracted to the transcendental Holy Name, you will be delivered from them.”

(31)

*kṛṣṇa-sevā rasa-kathā tabe ta bujhibe
tuccha saba rasa prati gṛhṇā upajibe*

“Then you will understand the nature of service to Kṛṣṇa and the taste of His divine topics. Then you will feel nothing but disgust for the other insignificant pleasures of this world.”

(32)

*kṛṣṇānuśilana jata vardhita haibe
(jaḍa) viṣaya-pipāsā tata kamite thākibe*

“As you increase cultivating your consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, your thirst for material sense-objects will decrease.”

Comment

In Kali-yuga chanting the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is the only recommended process for spiritual perfection, as stated in the *Bṛhad-nāradiya Purāṇa* (3.8.126):

*harer nāma harer nāma, harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva, nāsty eva gatir anyatha*

“In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.”

There are nine processes of devotional service; *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, *arcanam*, *vandanam*, *dāsyam*, *sakhyam*, and *ātma-nivedanam*. In each of these processes the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is the central ingredient. Greater importance is given to the Holy Name than to any other process of devotional service. In fact without being sufficiently

established in purely chanting the Holy Name, some processes, like *lilā-smaraṇam* (remembering the *lilās* of the Lord) may even be injurious to our spiritual development.

(33)

*baḍa-i kaṭhina tattva kṛṣṇa-kathā haya
āpāta camaka-prada jaṭilārtha-maya*

“The philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very perplexing. In the beginning it seems startling and full of complex details.”

(34)

*nāmi hate tānra nāma adhika karuṇa
āśraya laile tattva kareṇa jñāpana*

“The Holy Name is more compassionate than the Lord of the Name Himself. If one takes shelter of the Name, then it unravels all these philosophical complexities.”

Comment

Taking shelter of the chanting of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa presupposes one having taken shelter of the *guru* (*guru-pāda-āśraya*) and having received *hari-nāma-dīkṣā* from him. One must chant the Holy Name with firm faith in the spiritual master and then all the complexities of the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy will automatically be revealed.

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

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord (His Holy Name which is non-different from Him) and the spiritual master are all the imports (complexities) of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” (Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 6.38)

(35)

*nitya-prayajana modera kṛṣṇa-prema-dhana
tāhā anubhave kāma bādhe sarva-kṣaṇa*

“The treasure of love for Kṛṣṇa is the eternal goal of our lives. At every moment, personal desires interfere with our realizing it.”

(36)

*nāmāśraye sei bādhā haya apanita
kṛṣṇa -prema-rājye vāsa haya abhīpsita*

“By taking shelter of the Holy Name, all these obstacles are removed and we can obtain the fulfillment of our true desire, to dwell in the realm of pure love of Kṛṣṇa.”

Comment

Śrī Caitanyadeva has stated that the fifth goal of life is love of Kṛṣṇa, *prema pumārtha mahān*. Nothing else should be the goal of one's life. Sense gratification and the cultivation of all things not actually related to Kṛṣṇa's service such as astrology, palmistry, reiki, gemology, crystal worship, UFO abductions, conspiracy theories, women's liberation, channeling, past-life regressions, I-ching, *haṭha-yoga*, boji-stones, colonics, blue-green algae diets, grape fasts, self-urine therapy, hollow-earth theories, pyramids, ouija boards, pendulums, exorcisms, numerology, tarot cards, copper-plate *bābās*, tantric practices, Machiavellian politics, Coveyan management systems, Nostradamus, new-age prophecies and self-proclaimed *ācārya-ships* are actually a waste of time because they do not directly foster love of Kṛṣṇa. If we want love of Kṛṣṇa, then we should take to chanting the Holy Name as our life's occupation. Unfortunately, the above mentioned non-Kṛṣṇa related topics have become very popular among many so-called Vaiṣṇavas including some *sannyāsis* and even *gurus*.

In the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and also during the time of our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda there was no other focus for their disciples other than chanting the Holy Name and distributing the chanting of the Holy Name to the fallen souls. Now in the absence of these great personalities many 'isms,' false doctrines and non-Kṛṣṇa conscious practices have all but consumed a major section of the western Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. If the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement wants to truly get back on track then it would be advisable for its members to again take up the Holy Name as the central focus and abandon all activities not recommended in *śāstra* by the previous *ācāryas*.

It is especially disheartening to see senior disciples and *sannyāsis* of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda traveling around the world delivering seminars on astrology, rekhi, UFOs, channeling and other non-Kṛṣṇa conscious topics. The fact of the matter is that the dovetailing process of our material propensities and material desires is slowly but surely suffocating the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Due to extreme attachment to these non-Kṛṣṇa activities it is difficult these days to find the association of devotees who are prepared to make the necessary self-sacrifices to improve this movement.

(37)

*e jagate keha nahe anurāga-pātra
athavā virāga-pātra nahe anumātra*

“In this world no one is the special object of my affection, nor do I have the slightest hostility towards anyone.”

Comment

The spiritual master (*sad-guru*) is not partial to a particular disciple. The spiritual master is an ocean of mercy and according to what degree a disciple surrenders at his lotus feet, the spiritual master will award him Kṛṣṇa consciousness accordingly. There is no question of partiality on the part of the spiritual master.

Some disciples are of the opinion that a physical proximity with the spiritual master is what makes one dear to the spiritual master. Such foolish disciples do not know that it is by following the *vāṇī* (instruction) of the *guru* that one obtains his divine grace. Some times the disciple thinks

foolishly that just by serving the institution of the spiritual master, even though neglecting his instructions, that all perfection will be achieved. They sometimes say, “Just stay in the boat—it does not matter how bad things are—if you just stay in the institution you are going back to Godhead.” However, such ‘boat people’ may be in for a rude awakening at the end of life. Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī has the following to say in this regard:

“If we wish to show our love and faith for our spiritual master, it will be by following these teachings. However, rather than giving full attention to the desires of the spiritual master, we may focus on serving his body or the extensions of his body represented by temples and āśramas. If we do so, we will never be free of the pitfall of seeing the *guru* in purely human terms (*martyasādhīh*). The Lord can only be seen through the path of transcendental sound (*śrutekṣita-pathaḥ*) and the spiritual master, being His manifest representative, is also perceptible through divine sound vibrations.” (*Of Love and Separation*, pp. 91)

(38)

sakala vyavasthā ethā kṣana-sthāyi haya
ethā-kāra lābhālābha vicārāha naya

“Whatever arrangements we make in this world are momentary. There is no need to waste time thinking about gain or loss here.”

(39)

*sabākāra labhya sei eka prayojana
śrī-kṛṣṇa -padāravinde prema mahādhana*

“The only thing anyone should strive for is the one supreme goal of life. That is the treasure of love for Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.”

(40)

*tad-uddeśya sabe mili hao yatnavān
eka-dhyāna eka-jñāna hao eka-tāna*

“So, join together all of you and strive for this goal. Work together harmoniously, with a single thing in mind and a single understanding.”

Comment

Sādhū-saṅga is our strength. We must keep the association of saintly persons who are advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If such association is not readily available, then the *śāstra* is our next best friend. Sometimes devotees do not understand how one can have a *śikṣā-guru* (instructing *guru*) outside the formal institution of his spiritual master. Such disciples do not understand that the *guru-tattva* principle does not come under the sway of any institutional consideration or society consciousness. Kṛṣṇa is independent of any social consideration and He sends His representative to save the fallen souls as He sees fit. Kṛṣṇa is not under the power of our voting committees.

There are some people who think that the *guru* (Kṛṣṇa's representative) must appear in India, in a particular society, or in a *brāhmaṇa* family, but such persons are victims of a poor fund of knowledge. Such persons do not know that birth in India, belonging to a particular society, or being born in a *brāhmaṇa* family are all material designations. Such considerations have no jurisdiction in the *guru-tattva*.

It is also commonly misunderstood how one can simultaneously have love for his *dikṣā-guru* and also for his *śikṣā-guru*. Love is poorly understood these days as affection for one's *guru* and hatred for all others. If someone says he has love for his *guru* but cannot see the representation of Kṛṣṇa in any others (and thus no love for them) then it becomes doubtful if such a person actually has a *guru* other than in name only. For as it is said, *vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalam śrī-gurun vaiṣṇavams ca*. The principle of *guru* is *śrī-guroḥ* and *śrī-gurun*. It is both singular and plural. There is no difference between one's *dikṣā-guru* and *śikṣā-guru* for both have been declared as equal manifestations of Kṛṣṇa and love for both is appropriate. The *dikṣā-guru* represents Madana-mohana and the *śikṣā-guru* represents Govinda-deva. One should not discriminate between the two, otherwise one makes an offense. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, ch. 1)

(41)

*ekoddeśya aikatāne avasthita hao
mūlāśraya-vigraha-sevāya adhikāra lao*

“Working together with the same purpose, you will become qualified for the service of Rādhārāṇī, the original reservoir of love for Kṛṣṇa .”

Comment

If we cannot cooperate with the Vaiṣṇavas in this life then what chance will we have to cooperate with them in the spiritual world of eternal pastimes? The inability to cooperate with the Vaiṣṇavas and especially with the senior Vaiṣṇavas is actually a manifestation of one's envious nature due to association with the objects of sense gratification.

To achieve harmony and cooperation among the Vaiṣṇavas it is essential that one give up all types of material sense gratification, desire for name, fame and power, and humbly take up the mood of *Vaiṣṇava-sevā* (service to the Vaiṣṇavas). However, sometimes envious persons themselves take up the responsibility of uniting the Vaiṣṇavas, but their goal is actually to lord it over (to control) the Vaiṣṇava community, not to serve them. Seeing through the ill motives of these envious persons the advanced Vaiṣṇavas never cooperate with such diabolical schemes.

(42)

*rūpānugā-cintā-srota hok pravāhita
tā hate svātantrya kabhu nahe samihita*

“May the stream of ideas promoted by Rūpa Gosvāmī and his followers ever flow. We must never try to be independent of his doctrine.”

(43)

*sapta-jihva nāma-saṅkirtana-yajña prati
kakhano virāga jena nā haya arati*

“May we never become indifferent or disinterested in the sacrifice of the Holy Name with it’s fire of seven flames.”

(44)

*ekāntānurāga tāhe thāke vardhamāna
tabe ta sarvārtha-siddhi pūrṇa manaskāma*

“In the performance of *saṅkīrtana*, if your single-minded devotion goes on increasing, then all your desires will be fulfilled and all your goals achieved.”

(45)

*śrī-rūpānugā janera pāda-padma dhara
ekānta bhāvetē tāṇdera ānugatya kara*

“Take hold of the feet of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and follow them with exclusive commitment.”

(46)

*(śrī)-rūpa-rāghunātha-kathā parama-utsāhe
nirbhaye pracāra kara sarva-siddhi jāhe*

“Preach the message of Śrī Rūpa and Rāghunātha fearlessly and with great enthusiasm. Through this preaching, you will attain all perfection.”

Comment

The highest ideal of the Gauḍīya *saṁpradāya* is found in its entirety in the message of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and it is fully

exemplified in the aspirations of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is taken to be the disciple of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. What Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī taught has found its fullest expression in the heart of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī (our *prajoyana-ācārya*) who has shown us the highest aspiration, *Rādhā-dāsyam*. *Rādhā-dāsyam* or *Rādhā-pāda-sevā*, service in the camp of Śrī Rādhā, is the highest aspiration or achievement of a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava.

As the teacher, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī was himself the abode of ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa, yet we will want to see what effect his teaching had in his disciple. It was found to have had its fullest effect in Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, who in the climax of his spiritual aspiration prayed as follows:

*āsābharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathāñcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi
tvam cet kṛpāmayaḥ vidhāsyasi naiva kiṁ me
prāṇair vrajema ca varoru bakarīnāpi*

“With that hope I am somehow passing my days, flagging my days, dragging my life through these tedious times only for that hope. That hope is sustaining me, the nectarine-ocean of hope is attracting me and sustaining me. Somehow I am dragging my days to my only safety. Otherwise, I have lost the direct association of Mahāprabhu, Svarūpa Dāmodara and so many other great souls, and still I am living. Why? I have a particular ray of hope. And the prospect and quality of my hope is very great and high. But my patience has reached its end. I can’t endure it any longer. I can’t wait. I am finished. I can’t wait any more. At this moment if you do not show your

grace to me, I am finished. I shall lose the chance forever. I shall have no desire to continue my life. It will all be useless. Without Your grace, I can't stand to live another moment. And Vṛndāvana, which is even dearer to me than my life itself—I am disgusted with it. It is painful; it is always pinching me. What to speak of anything else, I am even disgusted with Kṛṣṇa. It is shameful to utter such words, but I can have no love even for Kṛṣṇa, until and unless you take me up within your confidential camp of service. Such a charm I have come for. I have seen the clue of such a charm within the service of your camp. Without that, everything is tasteless to me. And I can't maintain my existence even in Vṛndāvana. And even Kṛṣṇa, what to speak of others, has no charm for me.” (*Translation by Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī, Śrī Guru and His Grace, p. 150*)

As we find in Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī we should expect to find the efficacy of the teaching of a particular *ācārya* in at least one of his disciples if not more. But as it so happens, after the disappearance of a great *ācārya* there are always those who cannot recognize the advanced Vaiṣṇavas and thus conclude that the books of the previous *ācārya* are all that is necessary. Their assumption is that one need not accept initiation from a living *guru*, but one can achieve the perfection of life just by reading books and serving in the temple or *āśrama* of the previous *ācārya* (*Founder-ācārya*).

When Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura disappeared from this mortal world a certain section of his admirers proclaimed that since the Ṭhākura had so extensively written on the topic of

Kṛṣṇa consciousness that it was not necessary to accept a living representative in the line of Bhaktivinoda. To this Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remarked that if one does not take shelter under the guidance of a true follower of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda then the attempts to understand him simply through reading books and singing songs will be baffled.

Again after the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura a group of devotees proposed the same idea. Since Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had written and preached so extensively on the topic of Kṛṣṇa consciousness what need was there for persons to initiate and carry on the disciplic succession in that way. Their reasoning was that just by reading the books of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura everything was there. This conception however was not given space to grow by the advanced disciples of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who in turn continued to carry on the disciplic succession.

Then again after the disappearance of our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, the same situation has occurred. A certain section of his disciples are convinced that no further succession of *gurus* is necessary. Convinced by seeing the many who tried to become *gurus* fall down, these disciples advocate an ‘ism’ known as *ṛtvik*.

Once when discussing *ṛtvikism* with Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja he remarked that the *ṛtvik* conception was “the death of the *sampradāya*.” The *ṛtvik* conception however has not so easily been dispensed with as in previous times. Unfortunately, it seems that the *ṛtvik* conception has caught hold of the very life force of our *guru*’s formal institution (ISKCON). In the absence of senior Vaiṣṇavas and having rejected any available senior

association outside of the formal society, its members now toggle between the *ṛtvik* conception on one hand and the covered *ṛtvik* system (GBC as the ultimate spiritual authority) on the other. The *ṛtvik* conception means Prabhupāda takes you back to Godhead and the covered *ṛtvik* conception means the GBC is the body of Prabhupāda and the institution takes you back to Godhead. Unfortunately both these concepts are mental concoctions.

The institution of our Guru Mahārāja at present seems to be bereft of a proper understanding of *guru-tattva*. If there is a correct understanding there, somewhere within its members, then it certainly hesitates to raise its head for fear of excommunication or even decapitation.

We do not mean to alarm our readers or to offend anyone, but the fact of the matter is that devotees should remember with firm faith the words of their *parama-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as given in his last days. One should endeavor to carry on the disciplic succession as he envisioned it.

*rūpānugā-cintā-srota hok pravāhita
tā hate svātantrya kabhu nahe samihita*

“May the stream of ideas promoted by Rūpa Gosvāmī and his followers ever flow. We must never try to be independent of his doctrine.”

MAHAPRABHU AS PRABHUPADA

In the western Vaiṣṇava community it is often assumed that the title ‘*Prabhupāda*’ only refers to Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda. There are however 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 the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Gosvāmī and for them the title *Prabhupāda* refers to Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Prabhupāda is not a title applicable only to Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda or even to only Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Nor is the title *Prabhupāda* simply a nondescript or generic term applicable to any and all spiritual masters. Since the title *Prabhupāda* 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 *Prabhupāda* we will ultimately come to the conclusion that the title *Prabhupāda* indicates one who represents the deepest

flow of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* in terms of *rāgānugā-bhakti* and *rūpānugā-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 recognized with the title *Prabhupāda* such as; Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī 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 later being the original Prabhupāda.

*kāśī-miśra kahe, āmi baḍa bhāgyavān
mora gr̥he ‘prabhu-pādera’ habe avasthāna*

“When Kāśī Miśra heard the proposal, he said, ‘I am very fortunate that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Lord of all *prabhus*, will stay at my home.’”(Cc. *Madhya* 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 *prabhus* 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 Svāmī 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 *prabhus* 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 *Om 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* due to Their being 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 'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ sahacari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-murali-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-viṣṇāya spṛhayati*

“My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Kṛṣṇa on this field of Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamunā beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within the forest of Vṛndāvana.” (Cc. Antya 1. 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 sometime, 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 which was so much liked by Mahāprabhu and also the verse:

*tuṇḍe taṇḍavini ratim vitanute tuṇḍāvali-labdhaye
kaṛṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambini ghaṭayate kaṛṇārbudebhyah spṛhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgana-saṅgini vijayate sarvendriyāṇām kṛtīm
no jāne janitā kiyaḍbhir 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 therefore all the senses become inert.” (Cc. Antya 1. 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 realizations. The wonderful descriptions of Rūpa Gosvāmī are superb arrangements to express transcendental loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Hearing these verses will plunge the heart and ears of everyone into a whirlpool of supreme transcendental bliss.”

The significance of the praises of Rūpa Gosvāmī offered 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. Both Lalitā and Viśākhā are eternally the very intimate associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Lalitā and Viśākhā are considered the personal expansions of the serving mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, thus they are the two chief assistants in the *mādhurya* love affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Directly serving under Lalitā-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 most respectfully and attentively.

When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are in secrecy, in a private place, the older *sakhīs* do not like to approach the Divine Couple at that time for fear of causing a slight disturbance. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa may feel some shyness in the presence of the older *sakhīs* at that time. But the younger *gopīs*, the *mañjarīs*, can enter there without disturbing the free mixing of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This *mañjarī* group of servitors in the *mādhurya-rasa* is headed by the *gopī* named Rūpa Mañjarī. To perform their service, the *mañjarīs*, headed by Rūpa Mañjarī, sometimes go to that place where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are intimately engaged in divine love dalliances. Such a high and intimate scope of service is available to no other group

of servitors than that of the *mañjaris*. 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* (*rūpānugā 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 *rūpānugā-sampradāya*. There, our fate and our fortune is located. Now we have to conduct ourselves in such a way that naturally we can connect with that highest, purest spiritual conception, from here. We must not allow ourselves to be satisfied with anything less than this highest ideal. That should be the highest goal of our life.”

So, the real meaning of *rūpānugā-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 and praying again and again and again to be accepted as a speck of dust at his lotus feet, to be enlisted in his group of servitors. That is *rūpānugā-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 *rūpānugā* line.

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

*sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vāñchā-siddhi,
 sei mor vedera dharama
 sei brata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa,
 sei mor dharama karama*

*anukūla habe vidhi, se-pade hoibe siddhi,
 nirakhibo e dui nayane
 se rūpa-mādhurī-rāśi, prāṇa-kuvalaya-śaśi,
 praphullita habe niśi-dine*

*tuwā adarśana-ahi, garale jārālo dehi,
 ciro-dina tāpita jivana
 hā hā rūpa koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
 narottama loilo śaraṇa*

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

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

By the power of those feet my activities will become favorable to devotion, spiritual perfection will be achieved, and with these two eyes I will be able to actually see. The exquisite beauty of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī’s divine feet will shine like the brilliant moon

upon the lotus of my heart both day and night, thus giving relief to my afflicted soul.

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

The conclusion is that, although etymologically *Prabhupāda* means a spiritual master at who's feet many qualified personalities have taken shelter —it must be that the ontological meaning of *Prabhupāda* is one who knows the heart of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one 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.

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

BHAKTIVEDANTA

Devotee: We have heard it said that Śrīla Prabhupāda (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja) received the name *Bhaktivedānta* from his *guru*, Śrīla 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 Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja. Can you please say something to clarify this issue?

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

In later years, after the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, our Guru Mahārāja was engaged in writing articles for a Bengali journal published by his godbrother, Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī

Mahārāja. Gosvāmī Mahārāja and other leading Vaiṣṇavas of the time were so impressed with the writing and preaching capabilities 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 when awarding titles to deserving disciples, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta had never given the name of his *gurus*, Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja or Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to anyone. Accordingly, some of the senior disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta 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 recognized by all present that our Guru Mahārāja was a strong preacher in the line of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and that the inspiration of Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja to bestow an honorific title upon our Guru Mahārāja was directly inspired by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta.

In the days of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, certain senior disciples were often called upon when some particular point or issue was in need of clarification — Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was among those select few disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta 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 titles *Bhakti-siddhānta* and *Bhakti-vedānta* are synonymous in meaning. Thus the adjustment was made in keeping with the original inspiration felt by Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

From that time on our Guru Mahārāja became known amongst his Godbrothers as *Bhaktivedānta*. This occurred in Calcutta in 1939.

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 not so for everyone— the event was so spiritually moving that Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja decided for the future to name all his *sannyāsi* disciples *Bhaktivedānta*— a title synonymous with *Bhaktisiddhānta*. This standard is still carried out among the disciples of Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja even to this day more than half a century later.

In contemporary times, our Guru Mahārāja was the first person in the line of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta to receive the title *Bhaktivedānta* (1939).

In 1959 when our Guru Mahārāja accepted *sannyāsa*, Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja retained our Guru Mahārāja's title *Bhaktivedānta*, given by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and then gave our Guru Mahārāja the *sannyāsa* name 'Svāmī,' which was chosen from the list of 108 names of *sannyāsīs* authorized by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta in *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭhahāra*. Our Guru Mahārāja then became known as A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja or simply as Svāmī Mahārāja amongst his Godbrothers.

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

In the Gauḍīya tradition, the prefix *Svāmī* is added to the *sannyāsa* title. However, if our Guru Mahārāja had strictly kept this tradition then his name would have been written thus: ‘Svāmī A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī.’ In a letter to his disciple Rāyārāma Dāsa, our Guru Mahārāja explained something of the complexities of his name as follows:

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

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*. However, this has only been done by one of

our Guru Mahārāja's senior disciples and that is Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Tripurāri Mahārāja.

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 the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

There are now many *Bhaktivedāntas* in different parts of our *sampradāya*, but as for fulfilling the purport of *Bhaktivedānta* our Guru Mahārāja has set the standard in all respects and it behooves other Vaiṣṇavas with this honorific title to strive 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.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Devotee: In an article entitled *Śrīla Prabhupāda: The Founder-ācārya of the Golden Age*, it is constantly emphasized that the formation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's institution is the beginning of the Golden Age of Kali-yuga, and Śrīla Prabhupāda is the ācārya for the Golden Age. Furthermore, the phrase, "For ten thousand years my books will guide the world," is 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 (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda) the ācārya for the Golden Age?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: I think that the author has been carried away by his own sentiments. In the manuscript of reference, many statements are out of context, or rather statements are made with the bias of *āmāra guru jagat-guru*, 'my guru is jagat-guru.' Such statements have no universal application, however well intended their author.

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 he 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 writings, books, 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 *Veda-Base Folio* to “my books.” None of them includes the famous quote about the 10,000 years, even remotely. In the *Prabhupāda Lilāmṛta* we find the quote. Satsvarūpa Mahārāja 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.” 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 Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not take credit for his own writing, but rather took pains repeatedly 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 translations of those of previous *ācāryas*. Indeed they are, but one would never know it unless one took the trouble to examine the texts of the previous *ācāryas*. In a recorded room conversation, Feb

26, 1973 Śrīla Prabhupāda says: “They are not my books. I am simply translating.”

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 recognize his ‘*svāmī*’ is a prostitute. Mahāprabhu made this statement as an admonishment to Vallabhācārya, who failed to recognize 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 heads our *sampradāya*. He is the *ācārya* of our *sampradāya*.

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

“When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Śrī Caitanyadeva, give me shelter under his lotus feet.”

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 '*rūpānugās*,' the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

*mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya
rūpānugā-janera-jīvana*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Who is the undivided form of 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 *rūpānugā*. This is confirmed in the Bhaktivedānta Purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 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 '*rūpānugā*' 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 *rūpānugā*.

The Six Gosvāmīs (headed by Śrī Rūpa) scrutinizingly 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, as follows:

*nānā-sāstra-vicāraṇaika-niṣṇau sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau
lokānām hita-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane mānyau śaraṇyākarau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-bhajanānādena mattālikau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Six Gosvāmīs, who are very expert in scrutinizing all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honored all over the three worlds, and they are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the *gopīs* and are engaged in the transcendental loving service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.” (*Ṣaḍ Gosvāmyaṣṭakam*, text 2)

Therefore it must be concluded that the books of the Six Gosvāmīs are indeed intended to guide the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s translations and commentary on them must also be of the same quality — ‘my books will guide the world.’

A similar position is held by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, in that he was empowered to write the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

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

“By their mercy, all these devotees ordered me to write of the last pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because of their order only, although I am shameless, I have attempted to write this *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.” (Cc. Ādi, 8.72)

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we also find mention that Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura was the Vyāsadeva of *Caitanya-līlā*, and therefore no intelligent devotee could possibly dismiss the writings of Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura as nonessential. Actually, without being empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, no one can write transcendental literature. And 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 literatures the world has ever known. All such literatures are meant to guide the world.

*kali-kālera dharma kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*

“The fundamental religious system in the age of Kali is chanting of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement.” (Cc. *Antya-līlā*, 7.11)

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 coming to 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 have been the greatest enemy of many of those souls who once served the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and who once received the blessings of Mahāprabhu on their humble heads. It is truly unfortunate that, in the two and a half decades since the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, some proud and arrogant disciples have brought about more disgrace to Śrīla Prabhupāda, to his movement, and to the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* than fell upon the whole of Vaiṣṇavism during the past 5,000 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.

In the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* we find mention of a 10,000 year period in which Vaiṣṇavism and the cult of Śrī Caitanya will flourish in the world. Afterwards, darkness and ignorance will consume the world.

In the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* the Supreme Personality of Godhead, while speaking to Gaṅgā-devī, describes the dawn of the Golden Age, by first mentioning those who worship the Lord by *mantra*. This reference to those who chant *mantras* as the central focus of their worship indicates Śrī Rāmānuja and Madhvaite *brāhmaṇas*.

*man-mantropāsakas-pārśad bhasmi-bhūtāni tatksanāt
bhaviṣyanti darśanāccha snānādeva hi jāhnavī*

“ Thereafter O Jāhnavī, by the sight and touch of those who worship Me by My *mantra*, all those sins will be burnt.” (Text 51)

Mantra refers to *gāyatrī* and other *mantras*, but not to the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa (*nāma*).

Next, the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* directly indicates the advent of the Golden Age inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with the performance of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* (the chanting of the Holy Name) and the recitation of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

*harer-nāmāni yatraiva purāṇāni bhavanti hi
tatra gatvā sāvadhānam ābhiḥ sārddham ca śroṣyasi*

“There will be chanting of the Name of Hari and reading of the (*Bhāgavata*) *Purāṇa*. Reaching such a place, attentively hear.” (Text 52)

It is strongly indicated that even the most sinful persons will become Vaiṣṇavas by the chanting of the Holy Names, and due to the presence of such purified Vaiṣṇavas, the whole planet will become a place of pilgrimage.

*tathāpi vaiṣṇavā loke pāpāni pāpināmapi
pṛthivyām yāni tīrthāni pūṇyānyāpi ca jāhnavi*

“O Jāhnavī, the whole planet will become a pilgrimage site by the presence of Vaiṣṇavas, even though they had previously been sinful.” (Text 55)

Such a blissful condition is then predicted to last ten thousand years.

*kaler daśa-sahasrāṇi mad bhaktaḥ samti bhū-tale
eka-varṇa bhaviṣyanti mad bhakteṣu gateṣu ca*

“For 10,000 years of Kali-yuga, such devotees of Mine will fill the whole planet. After the departure of My devotees there will only be one *varṇa* (outcaste).” (Text 59)

*mad bhakta-sūnya pṛthivī kali-grastā bhaviṣyati
etasminnantare tatra kṛṣṇa-dehādvinir gataḥ*

“Devoid of My devotees, the earth will be shackled by Kali. Saying this, Kṛṣṇa departed.” (Text 60)

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned this same concept of the ten-thousand year period of the Golden Age in his *Bhāgavatam* commentary (Bhaktivedānta Purports) canto 8, chapter 5, text 23, 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 500 years ago provide the opportunity for the fallen souls of Kali-yuga to take to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.”

The fact that there will be devotees of the *saṅkīrtana* movement spread throughout the planet is also an indication that there must be someone, or several personalities, who will spread the Holy Name around the world.

*prthivīte 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 Names will be preached.”
(*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 4.126)

It is a fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the one who conducted a preaching mission beyond the borders of India, which marveled the Vaiṣṇava world. Many of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s godbrothers remarked, ‘We could not imagine how the prophecy of Mahāprabhu was to be fulfilled.’ The godbrothers were simply wonder-struck that ‘Svāmī Mahārāja’ (Śrīla Prabhupāda) had done it! Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja commented, “It is wonderful that Kṛṣṇa always acts through someone. Svāmī Mahārāja has done a miracle! We are happy, we are glad, and we are proud.”

Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura mentions, in the beginning of his book *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, that in the future there will appear a *sena-pati* (a great general), who would cause an inundation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. In the opinion of

many devotees, that personality was Śrīla Prabhupāda, A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī. 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.

Indeed Śrīla Prabhupāda was a humble servant of his *guru*, and this is simply one amongst his many qualifications. This is the reason why he was chosen and empowered by *guru* and Kṛṣṇa to perform the service to the *saṅkīrtana* movement that he accomplished.

However, greatly learned scholars and pure devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who know the purport of the scriptures, have understood the *senā-pati* in *Caitanya-maṅgala* to refer to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Between 1918 and 1936, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura caused a wave of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to swell up in Bengal that would indeed inundate the whole world. The sound of the *kīrtana* raised by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura conquered all the ten directions, silencing the atheist non-believers, the impersonalist speculators, and the imitationist *sahajīyā* sections of pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas.

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 passing away from this world, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that he desired to spend at least ten years preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the western countries. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was unable to do this before his disappearance in 1936. However, through his intimate disciple, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's last desire for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the west was fulfilled. Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda

continued the work of the *senapati* 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 A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda is the *senapati* spoken of in *Caitanya-maṅgala*. Such an objection shows a lack of understanding of the *guru-paramparā* and of the position of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura 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 the Supreme Lord Jagannātha to send His personal representative to fulfill the prophecy of Mahāprabhu that the Holy Name would be spread in every town and village. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prayed for the Supreme Lord to send such a personality from among His eternal associates. In response, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared as the fourth son of Bhaktivinoda.

Devotees often overlook this ecstatic piece of transcendental knowledge (mentioned above) 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 *senapati* 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*, my *guru* is *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 real transcendental vision of His Divine Grace. Such *kaniṣṭha* disciples are all too often found to be in the category of *guru-bhogī* (one who tries to enjoy 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 the methods of concoction or sentimental exaggeration. The transcendental position of His Divine Grace can only be realized when one attempts to see how Śrīla Prabhupāda was accepted (connected) in the *paramparā* of great masters, and what qualifications earned him that illustrious position. The bona-fide disciple earns this right of divine vision of the *guru* through a lifetime of service and dedication at the lotus feet of the spiritual master, and not by any amount of mundane speculation. There is no other way to the truth than this.

DELIVERER OR INSTRUMENTAL GURU?

Devotee: We read an article where the author begins by establishing certain well-known scholars from the Rāmānuja and Madhva *sampradāyas* (most notably Śrī Raṅgapriya Svāmī Deśikācārya and Vidyāvācaspati Bannanje Govindācārya) as authoritative sources of transcendental knowledge regarding *guru-tattva*. In that article the author tries to establish that Śrīla Prabhupāda (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda) is the deliverer *guru* for the duration of 10,000 years whereas the present day *gurus* and all *gurus* in the future are only instrumental *gurus* who assist the deliverer *guru*. Is this in any way correct?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: We have personally had the pleasure to meet Śrī Raṅgapriya Svāmī Deśikācārya and Bannanje Govindācārya 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 with regard 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* accepted 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 illusioned, is itself conclusive evidence for this statement. While Madhva omitted the section of *Bhāgavatam* known as *Brahmā-vimohana-līlā* from his version, the illusion of Brahmā was accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī, the original commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*, and 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* among the Gauḍīyas is indeed of limited value in the ultimate issue. Although it may appear to be helpful to some devotees at this present time, as 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 *siddhānta* than those of Madhva. In the conception of Rāmānuja, *śaraṇāgati* plays the essential role, as it does in the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Regarding topics like *dīkṣā*, *arcana*, and *saṁnyāsa*, 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 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.

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

It is true that Madhvācārya and Rāmānujācārya each hold unique positions in their respective *sampradāyas* as *uddhāraka-guru* (*deliverer-guru*). Correctly speaking, however, the *deliverer-guru* of the Rāmānuja sect is Nammālvār, one of the twelve Ālvārs from whose writings Rāmānuja drew his doctrine of *śaraṇāgati* (surrender).

Although Rāmānuja regarded himself to be an *upakāraka-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 *Vedānta-sūtra*. However, it can also be said that one who knows the answer to this question knows the secret of the *guru-paramparā*.

The *uddhāraka-guru* position 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 (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja) 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 such. That was accomplished by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and hence we (even Śrīla Prabhupāda, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) are all known as *rūpānugās*, followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Without being a *rūpānugā*, one cannot be a *prabhupādānugā* (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-mano-bhiṣṭam sthāpitam yena bhū-tale
svayam rūpaḥ kadā māhyam dadāti sva-padāntikam*

“When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Śrī Caitanyadeva, give me shelter under his lotus feet.”

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

Actually, Śrīla Prabhupāda (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja) 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 worshipable Deity of our *sampradāya*. But this too, many devotees do not understand. Actually 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 *guru* of any kind, either *uddhāraka* or *upakāraka*! There are no short cuts. This is also not understood by the institutionalized 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 *sampradāyas*; one has to be born a *brāhmaṇa*, and this is often a contention in the Madhva and Rāmānuja *sampradāyas*.

An interesting point to note here is that the proponents of Śrīla Prabhupāda as the *deliverer-guru* are prepared to inquire from advanced scholars outside our *sampradāya*, who know nothing of the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Six Gosvāmīs, for a solution to their problems. But they refuse to inquire from advanced scholars and devotees who are surrendered souls at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya 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.

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 offenses 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 20 years ago (1978) by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja. Unfortunately, many of the devotees in leadership positions in the western Vaiṣṇava communities have 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 summarizes 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 conception that the institution established by Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *sampradāya* separate from the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is possibly the biggest deviation from the principles of pure devotional service to have occurred in our *sampradāya* since the reject sons of Advaita Ācārya began to preach impersonalism.

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE GURU

Devotee: What are the types of disciples who become manifest after the disappearance of the *guru*?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: There are gradations and sub-gradations of all things, but basically the disciples of the *guru* manifest in three main categories: *kaniṣṭha*, *madhyama*, and *uttama*. The gradation in the development of *śraddhā* (faith) may be taken as the basic differentiating factor in these three types of disciples.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple has very little *śraddhā*—his faith in the instruction and spiritual teachings of the *guru* is very meager and he has no faith in the Vaiṣṇavas.

*mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇya-vatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate*

“For those who have amassed very few pious activities, their faith in *mahā-prasāda*, in Śrī Govinda, in the Holy Name and in the Vaiṣṇavas is never born.” (*Mahābhārata*)

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple worships the physical form of his *gurudeva* and may shout “Jaya Prabhupāda!” at the top of his lungs, but such glorification of the *guru* is lip-deep only, because the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple has no proper service attitude, faith, or surrender.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple proclaims his *gurudeva* to be the only bona-fide *guru*. Having rejected the ontological position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as the *ācārya* of the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple thinks, “Because my *gurudeva* is the “Founder-*ācārya*,” the efficacy of the *guru-paramparā* is no longer applicable. All other branches and sub-branches of the *guru-paramparā* are all rendered useless.”

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple thinks that his *gurudeva* is absolute in all circumstances. He is thus unable to understand and properly harmonize the relative and absolute statements of the *guru*.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple has no subjective realization of his *gurudeva* and he does not know anything of the ontological position of his *gurudeva* in terms of *guru-varga* and *aprākṛta-līlā*. He is materially attached to the formal institution of his *gurudeva*, but he is lacking in *siddhānta* or philosophical understanding of the truths (*tattvas*) concerning the Absolute Truth. For all his endeavors the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple simply becomes absorbed in society consciousness, but not God consciousness.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple lacks proper discrimination and he is thus offensive to pure Vaiṣṇavas. He considers his *gurudeva* as non-different from the formal institution, non-different from his *mūrti*, and non-different from his books, but he cannot recognize his *guru* on an internal plane. The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple knows

that, “Everything is in Prabhupāda’s books” but he does not know what that ‘thing’ really is.

On certain holy days the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple expresses his sentiments of how his *gurudeva* saved him from material life, but the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple cannot even follow the four regulative principles. Sometimes however the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple does rigidly follow the four regulative principles, but he does not follow the internal principles of pure devotional service, nor does he have any capacity to recognize the flow of divinity.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple measures everything from the external or relative point of view. The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple prides himself in external achievements of acquiring land, constructing buildings, amassing money and gathering many followers, but he has no concern for or understanding of inner spiritual life. The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple is a *bahiraṅga-bhakta*, an external devotee.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple sometimes thinks that he has become a *rasika-bhakta* and tries to relish the mellow of the higher *līlās* of the Supreme Lord. But due to his lack of genuine qualifications, the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple displeases his spiritual master and creates a disturbance in the eternal *līlās* of the Lord.

Due to management propensities, expertise in business, or often by default (time spent in the mission) the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple rises to a position of prominence and authority within the institution of his *gurudeva*. He then creates havoc and great disruption by turning the spiritual mission of his *gurudeva* into a mundane institution for profit, adoration, and distinction.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple sometimes occupies the living quarters of his *gurudeva* as his own. He strives for more and more control over the institution. He despises the spiritual advancement of his godbrothers and he uses the money collected for devotional service to lodge court cases against his godbrothers simply to further his own selfish ends.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple who is attached to women and attached to the association of women sometimes becomes *guru* in the institution of the spiritual master—he then cheats his disciples by collecting donations from them simply for maintaining his material attachments.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple also sometimes takes *sannyāsa* and becomes a *guru* in the institution of his *gurudeva*, but he later gives it up and marries one of his disciples or engages in numerous other non-devotional activities. The spiritual intelligence of the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple is always bewildered by *māyā*, but he is nonetheless very expert in making excuses why he has failed to live up to, or abandoned his duty to the spiritual master.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple thinks that time and physical proximity with the *guru* enables one to understand the purpose of the *guru*. Such *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciples do not know that only faith and surrender to the *guru* will enable one to know the real purpose of the spiritual master. Physical proximity alone never gains one the *adhikāra* (qualification) to understand the Absolute Truth.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā-deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy-arhah, prakāśante mahātmanah*

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

Not understanding the true purpose of the spiritual master the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple sometimes returns to the university to obtain a degree. He says that if he has a Ph.D certificate then people will take him more seriously when he speaks about the teachings of his *gurudeva*. The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple does not know that if he simply becomes a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, then the whole world will be attentive to what he has to say.

Thus the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple is of no spiritual credit to the greatness of his *gurudeva*. Unfortunately the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple is an embarrassment to his *gurudeva* and thus he misses the opportunity of attaining love of God, *prema-bhakti*.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple believes that despite his not pleasing the spiritual master, the spiritual master will take him back to Godhead anyway. However, due to his many offenses, the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciple does not have the mercy of the spiritual master and thus the eligibility of his going back to home, back to Godhead is highly unlikely.

We should sincerely pray at the lotus feet of *gurudeva* and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu so that they may be pleased to save us from the mentality of becoming a *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri*.

The *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple is greatly superior to the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* as he shows us proper discrimination and places great emphasis on the *vāṇī*, or instruction and spiritual teachings of the

spiritual master. The *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple has *guru-niṣṭhā*, or firm faith in the *guru* and this is confirmed by his engaging in a strong practicing life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple gives preference to substance over form and thus he becomes more and more absorbed in God consciousness and free from the shackles of society consciousness and institutional considerations. Whenever it is necessary, the *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple may sacrifice the relative consideration for the sake of the absolute consideration.

In the beginning, the *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple is interested to carry out the *vāṇī* of his *gurudeva* 'to the letter of the law' but he often fails to understand the 'spirit of the law.' An advanced *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple, however, understands the underlying spirit of the law and thus he does not follow the law simply for law's sake. An advanced *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple can discriminate between relative and absolute instructions given by the spiritual master and he understands how such instructions are to be applied according to time, place and circumstances.

The *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple realizes the non-difference of the plurality of *gurus* in the *guru-tattva* principle and seeks the association of those higher thinking (*uttama*) devotees of the Supreme Lord. Thus the *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple makes spiritual advancement and he begins to manifest the personal character of one absorbed in pure devotional service.

Superior to the *madhyama-adhikāri* disciple is the *uttama-adhikāri* disciple, who due to his advanced faith, has fully surrendered to his *gurudeva*. The *uttama-adhikāri* disciple realizes the subjective nature of the *guru* principle and the ontological position of

his beloved *gurudeva*. Seeking the dust of the lotus feet of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī as life's ultimate goal, the *uttama-adhikāri* disciple fully pleases his spiritual master.

*śrī-rūpānugā janera pāda-padma dhara
ekānta bhāvete tāndera ānugatya kara*

Take hold of the feet of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and follow them with exclusive commitment.”
(Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura)

The *uttama-adhikāri* disciple knows that his *gurudeva* is present by his side at all times. The *uttama-adhikāri* disciple experiences union in separation from his *gurudeva*. The *uttama-adhikāri* so much perceives the continuous presence of his *gurudeva* that he sometime feels that his *gurudeva* has taken possession of every atom of his existence.

The *uttama-adhikāri* disciple tactfully avoids the association of the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri* disciples because it pains his heart to see their systematic destruction of the mission that their *gurudeva* labored so diligently to establish.

The *uttama-adhikāri* disciple can do great benefit to the whole world because he is the abode of all good qualities and the reservoir of love of God.

RTVIKISM

Devotee: Have you read Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Final Order*? And if so then how can you say that the ṛtviks are the 14th *sahajiyā sampradāya*?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: Actually the ṛtviks are not a *sampradāya*. By saying so I am simply using the word loosely. The ṛtvik conception is in the *apa-sampradāya* category or the anti-party section. *Apa-sampradāya* means to preach against the principles and practices of pure devotional service and *sahajiyā* means to imitate the real process of pure devotional service. In this way the ṛtviks have become both *sahajiyā* and *apa-sampradāya* —their process eliminates the real thing and tries to establish an illusory standard under false pretenses.

In the same way one could consider the ṛtviks as Māyāvādīs. Māyāvāda means the philosophy of illusion. There is no actual Māyāvāda philosophy mentioned in the scriptures nor is there any ṛtvik system mentioned in the scriptures. So to establish either of these two conclusions is illusory.

It is a symptom of Kali-yuga that many concocted methods of devotional service will emerge, but these will not be accepted by the intelligent class of devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja) has said, “The next symptom of the age of Kali is that principles of religion, which are spotless white, like the white lotus flower, will be attacked by the uncultured *sūdra* population of the age. They will declare themselves as adherents of no religious principles and many ‘isms’ and cults will spring up in Kali-yuga only to kill the spotless bull of religion.”

Instructions regarding the actual science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the process of pure devotional service have been passed down from *guru* to disciple in the *paramparā* from the most ancient times until the present day. When we are connected with the *paramparā* system, we do not feel the necessity for concocted methods of devotional service because all our anticipations are met by Kṛṣṇa, *guru* and Vaiṣṇava.

Devotee: That’s true but there are no pure devotees present and therefore seeing the situation Śrīla Prabhupāda has introduced a new system of *paramparā*.

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: What you say is all concoction. Have you seen all the devotees of Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu present on this planet? No. But you condemn everyone to your own level of consciousness. Like Duryodhana— he could not see any qualified person anywhere. Whereas Yudhiṣṭhira saw that everyone was more qualified than himself. Persons with the mentality of Duryodhana can never understand who is a pure Vaiṣṇava— yet those like Yudhiṣṭhira always find the company of pure devotees.

The fact is that there are pure Vaiṣṇavas on this planet (always have been, always will be) but you have not taken the time to search them out. Secondly, what you have said about Śrīla Prabhupāda not seeing any qualified person is also not true. He did not see a disciple fit to become the head of his ISKCON society and therefore he requested everyone to work in cooperation with each other (with a GBC at the head). He said, “Together I have some hope that you will do something.” But he did not say that his disciples were unfit to carry on the *paramparā*.

One who introduces new systems, not authorized by the *sāstra* and previous *ācāryas* only creates a disturbance in society.

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

“Devotional service to the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literature like the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, *Nārada-Pañcarātra*, etc., is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. I.2.101.)

Śrīla Prabhupāda never created or concocted new systems. He simply said, “Do as I am doing.”

Devotee: Actually Śrīla Prabhupāda was the first *sannyāsi* to perform the marriage function ceremony for his disciples so that is at least one example of his starting a new system.

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: That is a foolish argument. Performing marriage or not performing marriage ceremonies has nothing to do with the *paramparā* or the process of pure devotional service. That simply comes within ‘ways and means’ to spread

Kṛṣṇa consciousness —it is not a valid example of what we are talking about.

Devotee: Nonetheless, I think it is safe to say that since none of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples are pure devotees that no one should initiate.

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: This is another one of your concocted statements. Show me even one place where Śrīla Prabhupāda has said or written that none of his disciples are pure devotees. You cannot.

On the contrary Śrīla Prabhupāda many times stated the qualifications to become a pure devotee and insisted that this was the only business of his disciples. He did not say, “None of my disciples are pure devotees.” He actually stated many times just the opposite. First we should know what pure devotional service is.

*anyābhlāṣitā śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

“First class devotional service must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and frutiv action. The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11)

Devotee: Yes. But...

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: But what? Do you believe in Śrīla Prabhupāda and what he says or do you think he spoke nonsense? What is your position?

Śrīla Prabhupāda has stated on many occasions that his disciples were pure devotees to the extent that they follow his instruction. The key is there—in your hand—simply follow his instruction. In 1975 Śrīla Prabhupāda commented that he wanted disciples who would follow his instructions and become pure devotees. He said that he would have been satisfied if even one of his disciples had become a pure devotee but that he was fortunate because Kṛṣṇa had sent many pure devotees to become his disciples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda told,

“I want one student who follows my instruction. I don’t want millions. *Ekaś candras tamo hanti nā ca tārāḥ-sahasraśaḥ*. If there is one moon in the sky, that is sufficient for illumination. There is no need of millions of stars. So my position is that I want to see that at least one disciple has become pure devotee. Of course, I have got many sincere and pure devotees. That is my good luck. But I would have been satisfied if I could find out one only.”

Devotee: But the final order of Śrīla Prabhupāda is there.

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: Yes, the final order is there, the first order is there and the second order is there. All the orders are there and all these orders are the same, “Become pure devotee.”

If not even a single disciple (as you are proposing) becomes pure devotee then the mission of the spiritual master is a failure. If no disciple has become a pure devotee then people will begin to rumor that the spiritual masters’ teachings have no potency or that he has no mercy to bless his disciples, etc. So when you say that no disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda is qualified to become

guru then in effect you are saying that Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission have failed. It is intolerable to hear such nonsense —I cannot agree with you.

Devotee: They can become *śikṣā-guru* but not *dikṣā-guru*.

Narasiṅha Mahārāja: Where do you find such statements in the authorized *śāstra*? You are simply speaking without any *śāstric* context. And what you say is only confused logic. The *śikṣā-guru* is categorically in a higher position than the *dikṣā-guru*. The *śikṣā-guru* is the manifestation of Śrī Govinda-deva, the Lord of *abhidheya-tattva* and the *dikṣā-guru* is the manifestation of Madana-mohanaji the Lord of *sambandha-tattva*. The *śikṣā-guru* is categorically higher than the *dikṣā-guru*.

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* the position of *dikṣā* and *śikṣā-gurus* are mentioned. Categorically it is such, but to make discrimination between different *gurus* is an offense. Both are equal manifestations of Kṛṣṇa. If one is a pure devotee according to the measure of the *śāstra* then he is fit to become either *śikṣā* or *dikṣā-guru* or both.

Devotee: But so many, what you are calling pure devotees, have fallen down —a pure devotee cannot fall down.

Narasiṅha Mahārāja: Oh. This is very interesting point that you are making. On one hand you say that a pure devotee cannot fall down but on the other hand you are of the opinion that all living entities in the material world have fallen from eternal *līlā* with Kṛṣṇa in Goloka or Vaikuṇṭha, is it not?

Devotee: Yes. But...

Narasiṅha Mahārāja: So, in the spiritual world, were these fallen souls pure devotees or not? If they are not pure devotees, then how can they be with Kṛṣṇa in eternal *līlā*? Therefore, by your own admission a pure devotee can fall down, is it not?

Devotee: Well....

Narasiṅha Mahārāja: Why many of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples have fallen down you do not know. Despite spending hours together discussing and gloating over their fall down, you still do not know why they have fallen. You do not know the secrets of devotional service. How can a faithful disciple fall from Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially after having rendered so much valuable and intimate service to the spiritual master? You should stop to consider. You should consult the senior Vaiṣṇavas and the scripture and then you will come to know that such disciples can fall down only due to *aparādha* and particularly Vaiṣṇava-*aparādha*.

MY GURU IS RADHARANI

Devotee: I have seen in the song *Prabhupāda Lilā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala-Stotram* that you have indicated Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda was in *mādhurya-rasa*. However, we have also heard from other great souls quoting Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja that Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja has shown affinity for *sakhya-rasa*. This apparently has been shown in Prabhupāda's prayer written on the Jaladuta while he was on his way to the Western world. So my question is, being an admirer of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, how do you harmonize your opinion about the *rasa* of your Guru Mahārāja with that indicated by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja?

Narasīṅgha Mahārāja: What Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has spoken, we should take that upon our head. After the departure of our Prabhupāda, it is appropriate that we should accept the direction of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja. Almost these very same words were uttered about Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja by our Guru Mahārāja in a letter to Śrīpāda Govinda Mahārāja (*Our Affectionate Guardians*, p. 8). To accept Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's opinion is quite natural for anyone who even remotely knows something of

his higher subjective realizations and of 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 strong indication of our Guru Mahārāja 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 Nitāi-Gaura, and he is saying like that, Nitāi-Gaura are Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. It’s almost clear that he comes from that group. And now he’s again there. Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

Such a statement by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja is not to be taken lightly. A short time later there was some objection to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja’s referring to our Guru Mahārāja as being in *sakhya-rasa*. Some of our Guru Mahārāja’s disciples for some reason took objection to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja’s statement. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was shocked by the immaturity of those disciples who objected. 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 extremely neophyte state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

At that time Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja made reference to the effect that because of the special empowerment of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu that our Guru Mahārāja might have couched his *mādhurya* tendencies in deference to Lord Nityānanda.

The idea given by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was that it is possible that our Guru Mahārāja was in *mādhurya-rasa*, but out of

deference to Nityānanda, by whose potency he was influenced for his preaching campaign, Śrīla Prabhupāda may have veiled his *mādhurya* sentiments. Therefore some of the *sakhya* influence of Nityānanda Prabhu was shown outwardly, keeping *mādhurya* in 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 *mādhurya* sentiments in the background. Certainly such is not unreasonable.

To be a follower of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja does indeed mean to adhere to his instructions and opinions. Last but not least, his instruction was that one should come to the plane of eternal truth, by surrender —to know the truth in the core of one's heart, *anurāga*.

Some devotees may be in favor of our Guru Mahārāja being in *sakhya-rasa* while others may favor him in *mādhurya-rasa*, but to establish a right and a wrong in this matter 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 for thinking that he was connected to *kṛṣṇa-līlā* in *mādhurya-rasa*. We have tried to show practically, by those 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 prayed to the Vaiṣṇava *sādhus* asking for their blessings that his son become the servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. (2)

That Śrīla Prabhupāda took *mantra-dikṣā* (initiation) from Śrī Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Vārṣabhānavī-devī Dayita Dāsa also known as Nayana-maṇi 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-kunḍa (the most sacred place of pilgrimage for the followers of Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha Dāsa). (4) That Śrīla Prabhupāda's chosen place of *bhajana* 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 lastly 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 holy places such as Vṛndāvana, Navadvīpa, and Jagannātha Purī as their preferred places of residence/*bhajana*. The *prākṛta-līlā* (external movement) of the pure devotee is not necessarily devoid of *aprākṛta-bhāva* (one's internal feelings of love of Kṛṣṇa). Although the movements of the pure Vaiṣṇava are certainly deeply mysterious and not easily understood, they may nonetheless 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 Lilā-Smaraṇa-Maṅgala-Stotram* indicating the intimacy of Śrīla Prabhupāda in *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa lilā* is as follows.

(1) When choosing to establish his mission ‘The League of Devotees’ at Jhansi, India, Śrīla Prabhupāda chose a building known as *Rādhā Smarak* (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 in 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 prayers to the spiritual master composed by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, in which the glory of the spiritual master as a servant of the divine couple in *mādhya-rasa* (*nikuñja-yuno rati-keli-siddhyai*) is mentioned. (5) Śrīla Prabhupāda’s favorite *bhajana* was “*jaya rādhā-mādhava jaya-kuñja-vihāri, gopī-jana-vallabha*” (This song was sung whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda gave *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* class).

In any case, we have many such remembrances of our divine master that 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 *mādhurya-rasa* circle. We feel it 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.

*namah om viṣṇupādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
svāmī śrī bhaktivedānta prabhupādāya te namah*

*gurvajñam śirasi-dhāryam śaktyāveśa sva-rūpine
hare-kṛṣṇeti mantreṇa pāścatya-prācya-tāriṇe*

*viśvācārya pravaryāya divya kārūṇya mūrtaye
śrī-bhāgavata-mādhurya-gītā-jñāna-pradāyine*

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

“I offer my humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this Earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Taking the order of his *guru* on his head, he became empowered by Nityānanda Prabhu to act as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. He distributed the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* all over the Eastern and Western world, delivering and uplifting all fallen souls. 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. He is constantly engaged in exclusive devotional service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. I offer my humble obeisances unto Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is like a bumblebee always tasting the nectar of the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Govinda.”
(*Pranāma-mantra* composed by Śrīpāda B. S. Govinda Mahārāja upon Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personal request)

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-dharitvena samasta śāstrair*, 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.” (*Follow the Angels*, p. 163)

In summary we may conjecture that our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda is in *mādhurya-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:

“Svāmī Mahārāja has clearly written that his *guru* is Rādhārāṇī, it is there. Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī will be pleased if you help me in this campaign. Is it not written there, *e-puṇya koribe jabe rādhārāṇī khuṣi habe dhruva ati boli 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 greatness is also like that. So, You must come to help me”

Śrīla Prabhupāda Līlā-smaraṇa Maṅgala Stotram

I.

*jayore sva pāriṣada, śrīla svāmī prabhupāda
abhaya amṛta parā gati
tomāra caraṇa padma, dhūli mora śreya-sadma
tāhe mama nitya paraṇati*

All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda. He 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 which are the all auspicious shelter and goal of my life.

2.

*sat jana vandita, mama cira vāñchita
prabhupāda-padme sukha-sevā
tava sevā parasāde, pūrita se hṛdi sādhe
tava guṇa-śobhā mana-lobhā*

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-Līlā-Smarana-Maṅgala-Stotram*, the transcendental qualities and pastimes of His Divine Grace, the topmost servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

3.

*śrī nandotsava-dine, nija sakhi-gaṇa-sane
 premānanda-nimagna śrī rādhe
 sukha icchā parakāśa, dāki nija priya dāsa
 kahilena “pūra ei sādhe”*

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 *sakhis*, 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 fulfill one desire of Mine.”

4.

*āji śubha divasete, mama kṛpāśiṣa sāthe
 avatirne hao dhārāṇite
 śrī kamalā-dhani tathā, tava gaura-sevā-kathā
 pracārila bhaviṣya-vāṇite*

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

5.

*iṣṭa-devī-pāde-nama, tabe he śrī kṛṣṇa-prema
 e dharāra kroḍa dhanya-kore
 avatirna hoile nāmā, śuddha-bhakata-vaiṣṇava
 śrī gaura-mohana-ṭaribāre*

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

6 & 7.

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

*mama putra e abhaya, yena rādhā-dāsa hoiya
nitya-kāla seve rādhā-dhana
parama gaurava-bhaṅge, kīrtana koruka raṅge
tāṇra guṇa bhariyā bhūvana*

Invoking the blessings of the Vaiṣṇava sādhus upon his son, Gaura-mohana prayed to all of them with great sincerity, “O sādhus, O Vaiṣṇavas, please bestow your blessings upon this dear son of mine, who is my life and soul, so that he can become the servant 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, tvadīya karūṇā bole
mililā śrī gurudeva-sāthe
śrī viṣṇu-kiraṇa dyuti, sudīvyā karuṇā-mūrti-
rūpa tumi herilā tāṇhāte*

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.

*bhaya-hīna pracāraka, bhakti sadācāra dakṣa
prabhu bara se dayita dāsa
nija dṛḍha citta-mate, nāma dilā sva-siṣyete
īśa abhaya caraṇa dāsa*

That great divine master Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī Dayita Dāsa (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 Caraṇāravinda 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 which are the abode of all fearlessness and hopes for the pure devotees.

10.

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

In the most intimate place of the *mādhurya* pastimes, namely Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Prabhupāda experienced the full ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Whole heartedly 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.”

11.

*rūpa-sārasvatī-srota, guru icchā-ājñāmata
premabhare kīrtana karite
pradarśilā e jagata, sakala saubhāgya yata
āse gāro guru-niṣṭhā hate*

By singing and preaching with great loving devotion that sublime message of his Gurudeva, which is pure devotional knowledge of the Rūpa-Sārasvatā (*rūpānugā*) 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-dāmodara, śrī jīvera mandira
prabhu-datta nija kūṭirete
āra rūpa-samādhite, vraja-rāga āveśete
bhajana korilā rasa-prīte
suddha-bhakta-ratna-maṇi, rūpe nitya-kāla tini
sethāya rahena virājita*

*yethā rādhā-pada-sevā, dhari rasa-mūrti-śobha
nirantara hana prasphūṭita*

In the temple of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, namely Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira and Śrī Rūpa's *samādhī*, in his rooms given by his divine masters, Śrīla Prabhupāda performed his *bhajana* in the loving devotional mood of the Vraja-gopīs. Śrīla Prabhupāda lives eternally in his place of *bhajana* as the precious gem among the pure devotees

where the loving devotional service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī constantly blooms, personifying the beauty of divine ecstatic mellows.

14, 15 & 16.

parama suhṛda haye, gaura-prema-vāṇī laye
pāścātya deśete āilā yabe
bhāi boli śrī kṛṣṇere, sambodhiyā samādare
prātharnā korilā ei tabe

bhāi tava puṇya habe, rādhārāṇī khuṣī habe
dhruva ati boli tomā tāi
labhive se bhāgya āro, yadi tumi khuṣī koro
bhāgya-devī-rūpa śrī rādhāi

śrī siddhānta sarasvatī-, rūpa dhari se śrīmatī
more ājñā dilā pracārite
se icchā pūrṇa koro, āmāra vacana dharo
tabe pāri tānhāre sevite

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 for 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 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 good 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 fulfill Her desire; then only can I attain success and serve my *guru* fully.

17 & 18.

atula saubhāgya-khani, tānra ei divya-vāṇi
śrī nāma śrī śāci-putrāśraye
śrī svarūpa sanātana, rūpa-prabhu guru-gaṇa
sabe mahā kṛpānvita hoye
āmā-bhakta sabākāre, dena pravesādhikāre
śrī rādhā-sevikā-gaṇ-āṅgane
vṛndāvana-govardhane, kabhu rādhā-kunḍa-pāne
parama abhiṣṭa siddhi dane

The mine of incomparable good fortune is the message of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda: “If someone takes shelter of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the son of Mother Śāci, along with Their 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-kunḍa, blessing them with the supreme fulfillment of the ultimate goal of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

19.

śrī rādhikā priyankarī, śrī kārtika-māsa bari
girirāja hṛdayete smari
tiṅho aprākāṣa hoila, nitya līlā praveśilā
rāje yetā rādhā-saṅge hari

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-līlā*, the eternal loving pastimes of Goloka where Lord Govinda is always effulgently present with His dear-most Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

20.

*ei panthā pradarśane, śikṣā dilā āmārgane
kon vastu-siddhi lakṣya haiya
kori bāsa govardhane, dainya ātma-nivedane
labha śrī rādhikā-gaṇāsraya*

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 shown us the path which leads to the fulfillment of the ultimate aim and object of life—to obtain supreme shelter in the camp of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's associate-servants with humble self surrender, residing always at Śrī Govardhana.

21.

*kabe tāṇa aprākṛta, bhāva-guṇa-bibhūṣita
jivana-caritra-madhurimā
satya kori e vāstave, āmāri sampada habe
e jivane dāni sukha simā*

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 hṛdaya diye, sutivra ākāṅkhā loiye
se āśe rohi mui hina
kabe sei bhāgya habe, e jivana dhanya habe
kabe mor āsibe se dina
prāṇabari pratiṣṭhāne, tāñri kṛpā-śaktyādhāne
labhi eka-niṣṭha tanu-mana
e dina sevaka tāñra, guṇa-gāṇtha-sambhāra
kori yābe satata kirtana*

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.

IS THE GURU OMNISCIENT?

Devotee: Is a pure devotee, the *guru* or an *ācārya*, omniscient?

Narasīṅha 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, Guru-Absolute and Relative*, page 15)

From the disciple’s standpoint, one should consider the *guru* as absolute, as non-different from Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

The disciple says that, because my *guru* knows Kṛṣṇa, he knows everything. But that is a different thing. We do not find the quality of omniscience listed among the twenty-six qualities of a pure devotee, nor is omniscience one of the fifty qualities of a *jīva* soul.

A certain section of devotees like to think that the *guru* is omniscient, that he knows everything, because he knows Kṛṣṇa. This section of devotees will think that the *guru*’s omniscience means that he may be sitting in his institution and in a nearby place

one of the children in his school is being harmed and he 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 not do anything to save the poor child from physical harm they will say that the *guru* does not want to interfere with that child's *prārabdha-karma*. The mistaken devotee may carry on thinking in this way for lifetimes together, but there is no evidence in either *śāstra* or history to support such an idea.

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. The liberated souls are not under the illusion of time. A liberated soul knows that he existed in the past, he exists at present and he will exist in the future. That the *guru* knows Kṛṣṇa, means he is free from the illusion of the effacement of the self (soul). But those who are under the bodily concept of life (conditioned souls) 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 even at that, he wants to save the living entity from the clutches of Māyā, so why would he simply tolerate an assault against a defenseless child who is under his care and shelter in the *gurukula*? Such thinking is only palatable in the lowest section of devotees who have no proper understanding of *guru-tattva* (philosophical understanding of the *guru*'s position).

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

aham vedmi śuko vetti, vyāso vetti na vetti vā

“I know the true purpose of *Bhāgavatam*; Śukadeva, the son and disciple of Vyāsadeva, knows it thoroughly, and the author of the *Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, 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. Such is possible, he may or may not know, *vyāso vetti na vetti vā*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has related an incident in this regard that 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 to write it down. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued to speak for some time but there was no pencil 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, and went to a big man's place there, and such beautiful, new things came out, that I was feeling very much disturbance that I cannot note them. So much so, that I could not attend his lectures also deeply. Only I felt much disturbance to get 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 was to me—he was *gobar* Gaṇeśa. That is Gaṇeśa made of *gobar*. *Gobar* means cow-dung. Gaṇeśa composed of *gobar*. He could not know these things, these thoughts that came. Even I felt the necessity of going through these things, these ideas afterwards.”

“That person to whose house he (Bhaktisiddhānta) went to visit, was technically known as that section who worship *satyam*. 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. *Satya* is not such. What is the relation of Kṛṣṇa and this *satya*? That he was to explain. And he told us that the thoughts that came at that time, he also wants to see it, what an inspiration, what 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. That they are stranger to me, but they passed through me, and I want to see.”

“I (Śrīdhara Mahārāja) 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, our Guru Mahārāja also wants to have them to consult a second time. That was my satisfaction, and at the same time, I was mourning all through, 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 and to particular persons. This is very rarely to be found, few and far between. Gaura Haribol. That is, in other words, it is the wealth, it is the property of our *gurudeva*, and not ours. That should be our understanding, *pujala rāga-pātha gaurava bhaṅge*.”

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

“Sometimes the agent may not know what things are passing through this arrangement. *Vyāso veti na veti 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, Guru Mahārāja was very much pleased with that. In Darjeeling I just showed him, that I have written this poem about Bhaktivinoda. He saw it. At that time one Mahārāja was like his clerk. He, Prabhupāda, dictated and the Mahārāja used to write letters. The Mahārāja was attendant for letter writing. But one letter came from Vana Mahārāja from England with something.

Then Prabhupāda told “who has supplied this to Vana Mahārāja?” The Mahārāja said, “Prabhupāda, you yourself have written this news to him.” “No, no, no. I never wrote this to Vana Mahārāja,” replied Prabhupāda. Then 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 veti na veti vā.*” I just remarked at the time, that “*vyāso veti na veti vā.*”

The narratives related above certainly give us an intimate look into the higher conception of *guru-tattva* via the life and teachings of such an exulted personality as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī 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 come down to the heart of a devotee in the form of divine revelation, that 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 *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Śrīpāda Madhvācārya did not like to comment on the portion known as *Brahmā-vimohana-līlā* (the illusion of Brahmā). Madhva could not accommodate that Brahmā, the original *guru* of our *sampradaya*, could be in illusion. Madhvācārya could not accept that Brahmā did not know everything. But Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted everything in *Bhāgavatam* in-toto.

The following is stated in this regard by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja in *The Loving Search for the Lost Servant*, page 50:

“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 realize that Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are not bound by their descriptions. Kṛṣṇa is not confined within a cage.’

“So for this reason, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not hesitate to give a description of the bewilderment of Brahma (*Brahmā-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 Vedavyāsa, 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* soul or even of the guru. The Supreme Lord has a total of sixty-four transcendental qualities. The *jīva* souls, however, have only fifty of those qualities found in the Supreme Lord and only manifest those qualities in a minute quantity (omniscience is not listed among these fifty qualities).

Above these fifty qualities the Supreme Lord has five more qualities that sometimes partially manifest in personalities like Lord Śiva. These transcendental qualities are: (1) changeless; (2) all-cognizant; (3) ever-fresh; (4) *sac-cid-ānanda* (possessing an eternal blissful body); and (5) possessing all mystic perfection.

‘All-cognizant’ means to know everything or to be omniscient (possess omniscience). According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī this is a quality that even the perfected *jīva* souls do not have. Only Kṛṣṇa is fully omniscient. Only Kṛṣṇa (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*.

SRIDHARA DEVA GOSVAMI

Devotee: There has been some discussion on the use of the honorific title ‘Deva’ as in the name of Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja to the extent that some parties say that it is appropriate while others say that it is not. Could you please say something that would shed some light on this topic?

Narasīṅgha Mahārāja: According to the tradition of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* we cannot find fault with the honorific title *Deva*, as used to address an extremely advanced and revered Vaiṣṇava such as Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

The name Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja was printed on the cover of and in many books of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, such as *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Śrī Kīrtana-mañjuṣa*, *Prema-dhāma-deva Stotram*, *Śrī Guru and His Grace*, *Search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, *Reality the Beautiful*, *The Golden Volcano of Divine Love*, *Loving Search for the Lost Servant*, *Sermons from the Guardian of Devotion*, and more. Furthermore, the name Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī was engraved in the *nātha-mandira* of Śrī Caitanya Sarasvāta Maṭha in 1976. All this was done in the

lifetime of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and was approved by him. So to say, as some persons have said, that the suffix *deva* is an insult to a great *ācārya*, such as Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, has no real basis and is obviously false.

The root of the word *deva* is *diva*, meaning lustrous or shining brightly. Another meaning is to play or to sport. The suffix *deva* in fact is quite common in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* and is used in such names of the Supreme Lord and His devotees as Govindadeva, Baladeva, Gaurāṅgadeva, Puruṣottamadeva, Śukadeva, and Gurudeva, etc.

As a prefix, *deva* has also been in use among the *brāhmaṇa* community in India for many centuries to designate a person with divine characteristics—in the case of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja—divine characteristics and especially, divine intelligence. So either as a prefix or a suffix, the use of the title *deva* may be considered appropriate.

Another example of the use of the word ‘*deva*’ is found in the *guru-praṇāma* prayer to our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda. There it is written, ‘*namaste sārāsvate deve.*’ Here the words ‘*sarasvatī*’ and ‘*deva*’ are joined together under the Sanskrit rule of grammar known as *saṁāsa*. Thus ‘*deva*’ becomes ‘*deve*,’ ‘*sarasvatī*’ becomes ‘*sārāsvate*’ and the first ‘*a*’ in ‘*sārāsvate*’ becomes long. Thus the meaning of ‘*namaste sārāsvate deve*’ means, ‘I offer my respects unto he who belongs to, or is a servant of ‘Sarasvatī-deva.’

The *praṇāma* prayer, ‘*namaste sārāsvate deve*’ was written personally by our Guru Mahārāja for his disciples to chant. So at least for those who profess to be followers of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta

Svāmī Prabhupāda, the use of the word ‘deva’ in glorifying one’s *guru* may be deemed appropriate.

Both the Gauḍīya tradition and the Sanskrit rules of grammar harmonize and support the use of the word *deva* as an honorific title for great Vaiṣṇavas and saintly persons. Indeed, even the Supreme Lord Himself is known as *deva*, so how can it be a demeaning title?

Some will say that *deva* refers to the demigods, but to such persons we say, Kṛṣṇa is the *deva* of such *devas* — ‘deva-deva jagatpate’ — Kṛṣṇa is the God of Gods.

In the *Kāma-gāyatrī* we find, ‘*kāma-devāya vidmahe.*’ In the *Dāmodara-gāyatrī* we find, ‘*tanno devaḥ pracodayāt*’ and in the *Gadādhara-gāyatrī* we also find ‘*tanno devaḥ pracodayāt*’. In each of these instances *deva* indicates the Supreme Lord or His Internal Energy (as in the case of Gadādhara Paṇḍita).

In *Caitanya-līlā* Gadādhara Paṇḍita represents the *guru-tattva* for those devotees following in the *mādhurya-rasa*. This is another bona-fide reason why Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja may be addressed as *Deva* because he has revealed the hidden treasure of *mādhurya-bhāva* (*parakiya-rasa*) in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Chapter 10, Verses 9 & 10) and also he has revealed *Rādhā-dāsyam* (the service of Śrī Rādhā) in the heart of *Gāyatrī-mantra* (*Gāyatrī Nigūḍhārtha*).

In the *Brahma-gāyatrī* we find the words, ‘*bhargo devasya dhimahi.*’ Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has given the meaning, “*Bhargo* represents *Mahābhāva* (Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī) the predominated Moiety, and *Deva*, Kṛṣṇa, is *Rasarāja*, the predominating Moiety. *Deva*

means ‘who is beautiful and playful,’ that is, Kṛṣṇa Reality the Beautiful. He is not a non-differentiated substance, but is full of *līlā*, pastimes. *Deva* means pastimes and beauty combined, and this means Kṛṣṇa.”

So we may understand the word *deva* to mean one who reveals wonderful pastimes of love, Kṛṣṇa. Since Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja is that divine personality who has disclosed the hidden wealth of the *Brahma-gāyatrī*, revealing that ultimately *Gāyatrī* worships Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, he is therefore highly qualified to be honored with the title *Deva*. This is most appropriate.

One who is expert in revealing the inner-most plane of the domain of the Lords confidential pastimes, as is condensed in *Gāyatrī*, is certainly worthy of such a title as *Deva*. Not only is his purport of *Gāyatrī* taking us to Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā* but Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has also concisely manifest Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s divine *līlā* in his Sanskrit composition, *Prema-dhama-deva Stotram*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has begun *Prema-dhāma-deva Stotram* with the words, ‘*deva-siddha-mukta-yukta-bhakta-vṛnda-vanditam*’ and he has sung in each of the seventy verses, ‘*prema-dhāma-devam-eva-naumi gaura-sundaram*.’ Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja is therefore recognized as *Deva* because he has expertly sung the glories of the Supreme Lord, the Golden *avatāra*, Śrī Caitanyadeva.

These are a few of the reasons why the title *Deva* is appropriate in the case of Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja, but still some persons may not be satisfied with the above. Therefore, we requested one of our *sannyāsis* to go to *Navadvīpa-dhāma* to speak with Śrīpāda Govinda Mahārāja, the successor of Śrīla Śrīdhara

Mahārāja and to ask him about the use of *Deva* in Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's name. Śrīpāda Govinda Mahārāja commented that in the last years of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's life that he used to sign letters and other papers as Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī.

So, either from the ontological point of view or from the practical point of view, it seems that *Deva* is an appropriate title for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, used and approved by him personally.

NITYANANDA AVADHUTA

Devotee: It has been stated by some persons who claim to follow the pure line of devotion presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was a *sannyāsi* who later gave up His *sannyāsa* and married the two daughters of Sūrya-vipra. Is this a fact?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: No, this is not a fact. This is an idea that is commonly put forth by the *sahajiyās* and some *bābājī* communities. But it is not a fact. This concocted idea has not been accepted by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura or his followers. One who says that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu gave up *sannyāsa* is an offender to the Supreme Lord. At least it must be concluded that such a person is a victim of a poor fund of knowledge.

An attempt has been made to substantiate that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was formerly a *sannyāsi* by quoting from Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura's Śrī *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, wherein the following verses are found.

kothāya thākila daṇḍa kothā kamaṇḍalu
kothā vā vasana gela nāhi ādi-mūla

“Where was His *daṇḍa*, where was His water-pot, and where were His clothes? Nothing remained with Him.”
 (Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya 5.62)

katho rātre nityānanda hunkāra kariyā
nija-daṇḍa-kamaṇḍalu phelilā bhāṅgiyā

“In the dead of night, Nityānanda roared loudly and broke His *daṇḍa* and water-pot.” (Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya 5.67)

The references here to *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu* are enough to convince the *sahajiyās* that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was previously an initiated *sannyāsī*. Some *sahajiyās* are even of the opinion that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was a *sannyāsī* disciple of Śrī Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, but there is no evidence for this whatsoever. In this regard, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has stated in his purports to the above verses that the *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu* are not only symbols of the *sannyāsa-āśrama*, they are also used by *brahmacārīs*. The *brahmacārī daṇḍa* is made from either *khadira*, *palāśa* or bamboo and when an *upakurvaṇa-brahmacārī* decides to enter householder life, he discards the *daṇḍa*. This is exactly what Lord Nityānanda did.

Some persons are of the opinion that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu held the *sannyāsa* title *Ānanda*, but according to the *Sattvata-saṁhitā*, *Ānanda* is not one of the 108 names of a *sannyāsī*. *Ānanda* is sometimes used by the Advaitin section as a name (such as *Prakāśānanda*, *Svarūpānanda*, *Brahmānanda* etc), but their actual *sannyāsa* title is one of the *daśa-nāmī*; Tīrtha, Āśrama, Vana, Āraṇya, Parvata, Gīri, Sāgara, Sarasvatī, Bhāratī and Purī.

Further evidence to suggest that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was a *brahmacārī* and not a *sannyāsī* is given in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentary to verse 9 of the fifth chapter in the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* of *Caitanya-bhāgavata* as follows:

“*Jagad-guru* Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was a *brahmacārī* disciple of Parivrajakācārya Śrī Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, who enacted the pastimes of subordination to the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*. We find His *brahmacārī* name was Śrī Nityānanda Svarūpa. From ancient times *brahmacārī* disciples of Tīrtha and Āśrama *sannyāsīs* have been addressed as Svarūpa.”

Again, Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura writes:

“The *brahmacārī* name of Nityānanda Prabhu was Svarūpa. Since Svarūpa is the *brahmacārī* name of a Tīrtha *sannyāsī*'s disciple, some people consider Him to be a follower of Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha rather than a follower of Mādhavendra Purī.” (*Purport to Cb. Madhya 5.67*)

The revered Guardian of Devotion Om Viṣṇupāda Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja comments on this topic:

“Nityānanda was not a *sannyāsī*, he was a *brahmacārī*. He performed Vyāsa-*pūjā* in Śrīvāsāṅgana. There some say that He was a *sannyāsī*, but there He had no special garment either for *sannyāsī* or *brahmacārī*. He was very independent spirit.” (*Conversation 81.09.23*)

“That Nityānanda was a *sannyāsī*, it is not a proved fact. The Nityānanda, this is Ānanda, this indicates the affix

added to *brahmacārī*. Ānanda, Svarūpa, Prakāśa, all these types of *brahmacārī*. Ānanda, a name also in the *sannyāsi* we find, but no other title. Ānanda is a part of the name but title, no title of Nityānanda. And also no mention who was the *sannyāsa-guru* of Nityānanda. But *dikṣā-guru* of Nityānanda is Mādhavendra Purī, it is known. *Avadhūta* does not mean who is *sannyāsi*. *Avadhūta* means who is not very particular of his external practices and sometimes commits something wrong which should not be committed, should not be practiced. When lower practices are seen in connection with the high-leveled person then they are considered as *avadhūta*. He is above that but his practices are of lower nature. *Ava* means lower; *dhūta* - that also he can either remove or he can purify.” (*Conversation* 82.02.06)

Furthermore, Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura himself is of the opinion that Nityānanda was not a *sannyāsi* and has written:

kibā yati nityānanda kibā bhakta jñānī
yā’ra yena mata icchā nā bolaye keni

“Some may consider Nityānanda to be a *sannyāsi*. Others may consider Him to be a devotee or a *jñānī*. They may say whatever they like.” (*Cb. Ādi* 9.223)

Another so-called evidence used to try to establish that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu took *sannyāsa* is found in *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Madhya* 13.15.19:

ājñā śire kari’ nityānanda-haridāsa
tataḥkṣaṇe calilena pathe āsi hāsa

*dohāna sannyāsi-veśa-yāna yāra ghare
āthevyathe āsi' bhikṣā-nimatraṇa kare*

“Taking the order of Śrī Caitanya upon their heads, Nityānanda and Haridāsa immediately went out, laughing together in a happy mood. Wherever they went to beg, the householders would extend invitations to them as they were both dressed in the robes of *sannyāsis*.”

If we are to take it that the above verse proves that Nitāi was a *sannyāsi*, then following such logic we must also believe that Ṭhākura Haridāsa was a *sannyāsi*! Actually, neither were *sannyāsis*.

Due to the social etiquette of that time, it would have been unthinkable for a Muslim such as Haridāsa to take the vows of *sannyāsa*, since only those born in *brāhmaṇa* families could formally take to the renounced order of life. Simply because they were dressed as mendicants does not necessarily mean that they had actually accepted *sannyāsa*. This type of unorthodox behavior was common with Śrī Nityānanda Avadhūta and on that day he had dragged Haridasa Ṭhākura into His plot.

If indeed Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu had formally taken *sannyāsa*, why is there no mention of such an important event in any Gauḍīya literature? Why is there no mention of his *sannyāsa-guru*?

Apart from the fact that the idea for the *sannyāsa* of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is not supported by any bona-fide *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya *saṃpradāya*, it is also not in line with the divine

character of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that He would have permitted Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu to give up his *sannyāsa* or associated with Him if He had done so.

It is well known that Śrī Caitanyadeva strictly adhered to the principles of *sannyāsa-dharma*. His strictness as a *sannyāsī* was exhibited in the pastime of His chastisement of Choṭa Haridāsa, who committed suicide because of a small breach of *sannyāsa-dharma*. So why then would Mahāprabhu turn around and associate with Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu if he was a fallen *sannyāsī*? Mahāprabhu Himself has stated the following:

*prabhu kahe 'vairāgi kare prakṛti sambhāṣaṇa
dekhite nā pāron āmi tāhāra vadana'*

“The Lord said, I cannot tolerate seeing the face of a person who has accepted the renounced order of life but who still talks intimately with a woman.” (Cc. Antya 2.117)

*kṣudra-jīva saba markṭa-vairāgya kariyā
indriya carāñā bule 'prakṛti' sambhāṣiyā*

“There are many persons with little in their possession who accept the renounced order of life like monkeys. They go here and there engaging in sense gratification and speaking intimately with women.” (Cc. Antya, 2.120)

*prabhu kahe — 'mora vaśa nahe mora mana
prakṛti-sambhāṣi vairāgi nā kare darśana'*

“The Lord said, ‘My mind is not under My control. It does not like to see anyone in the renounced order who talks intimately with women.’” (Cc. *Antya* 2.124)

Claiming to be a follower of Śrī Caitanyadeva or a follower of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and in the same breath, claim that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was a fallen *saṁnyāsī* is totally absurd.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came to re-establish the system of *daivi-varṇāśrama*, in particular to re-introduce *tridaṇḍi-saṁnyāsa* in the Gauḍīya line for the purpose of preaching love of God. But those persons who oppose Sarasvatī Ṭhākura have tried to minimize his contribution by creating false stories to show that even Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu gave up His *saṁnyāsa*. One important point that the *sahajiyās* conveniently overlook is that in order to preach love of God, Śrī Caitanyadeva Himself accepted *saṁnyāsa*.

In order to attain the mercy of Śrī Caitanyadeva, one must first beg for the mercy of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. If one concocts imaginary proofs that simply degrade the position of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, then such a person is truly most unfortunate.

HEARING FROM A RASIKACARYA

Devotee: Is it true that to make advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness one should hear from a *rasikācārya* (a spiritual master advanced in relishing mellows of pure devotion) on the level of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: One who has lived in either Vṛndāvana or Navadvīpa for some time knows that the *sahajiyā* section is quite fond of this sort of explanation. But such emphasis is not entirely fact.

*ācāryera mata yei, sei mata sāra
tānra ājñā laṅghi' cale, sei ta' asāra*

“The order of the spiritual master is the active principle in spiritual life. Anyone who disobeys the order of the spiritual master immediately becomes useless.” (Cc. Ādi 12.10)

Devotees who know the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness have accepted the above verse as conclusive. This verse states the active principle in spiritual life, the key to spiritual advancement. If one

pleases the spiritual master, then one very quickly advances in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but if one displeases the spiritual master by neglecting his order, then one becomes *asāra* or useless.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41, states that it is the duty of a disciple to strictly follow the orders of his spiritual master.

Śrī Viśvanātha writes as follows:

“The instructions that my *gurudeva* has given me about *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *smaranam*, *pāda-sevanam*, etc. of Śrī Bhagavān are my very *sādhana*, my very *sādhya* and my very life. I am unable to relinquish them in either the *sādhana* stage or in *sādhya*. My single desire and only engagement is to follow them. Besides this, I have no other desire or engagement, even in my dreams. There is no loss for me, whether by following these instructions I attain happiness or misery, or whether my material life is destroyed or not.”
(*Bhagavad-gītā*, published by Gauḍīya Vedānta Samitī)

This is the open secret of success for advancement in spiritual life. One must have firm faith in the orders of the spiritual master and follow his orders wholeheartedly. The *Vedas* also confirm:

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

“To one who has staunch faith in the words of the spiritual master and the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the secret of success in Vedic knowledge is revealed.” (*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

It appears that many devotees are now confused about the process of advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and think that simply by hearing *rāsa-līlā* from a ‘*rasika-guru*’ that all their troubles will vanish. Perhaps this is an attractive proposal for those who are merely sentiment mongers, but the serious candidate in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should know that sooner or later such discussion of *rāsa-līlā* in an unqualified assembly certainly leads to *sahajiyāism*.

To support their claims of righteousness in hearing *rāsa-līlā*, the *rasika-gurus* of the sentiment-mongers like to quote the following *Bhāgavatam* verse in support of their speculation:

*vikṛīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito’nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ paraṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv-apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

“A transcendently sober person who, with faith and love continuously hears from a realized soul about the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa in His *rāsa*-dance with the *gopīs*, or one who describes such activities, can attain full transcendental devotional service at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus lusty material desires, which are the heart disease of all materialistic persons, are for him quickly and completely vanquished.”
(*Bhāg.* 10.33.42)

While commenting on this verse in his *Anubhāṣya* commentary of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya 5.45, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has mentioned that *dhīraḥ* means to come to the stage of controlling the six senses (*ṣaḍ-vega-jayi*).

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also says that *anuśṛṇuyāt* means hearing continuously from the lips of Śrī guru without interruption and not being obstructed by the intervention of material conceptions. It is the opinion of our most revered Guardians that not being obstructed by intervention of material conceptions means that one has come to the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*.

Similarly, according to our *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Jīva Gosvāmī's conception of *dhiraḥ* is the same as that of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

“In his writings, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has laid stress on the word *dhiraḥ*, meaning ‘self-controlled’. To hear these elevated subjects, one must enter into the culture of sense-control, otherwise he will be destroyed.” (*The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, commentary to verse 10.10)

In this same line of thought Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja explains the teachings of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as follows:

“In Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary to the above verse from the *rāsa-līlā*, (*vikriḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ*) it is written:

*ata eva śraddhānvita iti śāstrāviśvasinaṁ
nāmāparādhimaṁ premāpi nāṅikarotīti bhāvah...
ayaṁ śrī-rāsaḥ śrīr api nāṣa yam*

*śāstra-buddhi-vivekādyair api durgamam iksyate
gopīnām rāsa-vartmedaṁ tāsām anugatīr vinā*

The word *śraddhānvitaḥ* indicates that ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa does not come to those who do not believe the scriptures or who persist in committing offenses against the Holy Name. And even Lakṣmī cannot enter into this *rāsa* dance. Without exclusively following in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, even those who believe in the scriptures and the very intelligent cannot enter onto this most difficult path of sacred rapture chalked out by the *gopīs*. For this reason, our most revered Śrīla Prabhupāda never approved of open discussion by the unqualified of the divine *rasa*, which is beyond the attainment of even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, and always gave priority to the chanting of the Holy Name.

The unique characteristic of Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching was that even though he often spoke about the highest realms of devotional perfection, he always took care that none of his disciples got ahead of themselves and skipped necessary intermediate steps in the stage of practice to engage in *anadhikāra-carcā* (discussion of matters for which one is not qualified)... If one attempts the cultivation of *rāga-mārga* prior to gaining the proper qualifications for such a practice and at the same time pays less attention to the chanting of the Holy Names, he is like a person who tries to pick the fruit without climbing the tree. He will only get the damaged fruit that has fallen to the ground. Prabhupāda characterized those who engaged in such *anadhikāra-carcā* as *prākṛta-sahajīyās* and rebuked them for their entering into realms for which they were not qualified..." (*Of Love and Separation*, Chapter 3)

When Lord Kṛṣṇa kills a demon, that demon immediately attains liberation and whenever Kṛṣṇa performs His pastimes of love, the perverted form of love, namely lust in the heart

of the living entity, is also vanquished. Yet hearing the *rāsa-līlā* of Kṛṣṇa and His intimate love affairs with the *gopīs* is not recommended as a method of practice (*sādhana*) for the neophyte devotees.

Kṛṣṇa killed many demons before He manifested His pastimes of love with the *gopīs*. According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the demons killed by Kṛṣṇa represent various demoniac tendencies in the hearts of the living entities. Tṛnāvarta represented the personification of argument; Vatsāsura represented the form of boyhood offenses; Bakāsura represented the personification of cheating religion; Aghāsura represented the form of cruelty; Dhenukāsura represented the ass of blunt judgment; Kāliya represented the personification of malice and Pralambāsura represented the personification of impersonalism. All these demons were killed by Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, one should first rid one's heart of those demoniac tendencies before attempting to hear the love affairs (*rāsa-līlā*) of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is only logical.

Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda has mentioned in his *Bhāgavatam* commentary (2.2.12) that unless one is freed from material sex desire, one should not read or hear topics past the second canto of *Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes as follows:

“So purification means getting free gradually from sex desire, and this is attained by meditation on the person of the Lord as described herein, beginning from the feet. One should not try to go upwards artificially without seeing for himself how much he

has been released from the sex desire. The smiling face of the Lord is the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and there are many upstarts who at once try to begin with the Tenth Canto and especially with the five chapters that delineate the *rāsa-līlā* of the Lord. This is certainly improper. By such improper study or hearing of *Bhāgavatam*, the material opportunists have played havoc by indulgence in sex life in the name of *Bhāgavatam*. This vilification of *Bhāgavatam* is rendered by the acts of the so-called devotees; one should be free from all kinds of sex desire before he tries to make a show of recital of *Bhāgavatam*. Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura clearly defines the meaning of purification here as cessation from sex indulgence. He says, *yathā yathā dhis ca sudhyati viṣaya-lampatyam tyajati, tathā tathā dharayed iti citta-suddhi-taratamyenaiva dhyāna-taratamyam uktam.*”

“And as one gets free from the intoxication of sex indulgence by purification of intelligence, one should step forward for the next meditation, or in other words, the progress of meditation on the different limbs of the transcendental body of the Lord should be enhanced in proportion to the progress of purification of the heart. The conclusion is that those who are still entrapped by sex indulgence should never progress to meditation above the feet of the Lord; therefore recital of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* by them should be restricted to the First and Second Cantos of the great literature. One must complete the purification process by assimilating the contents of the first nine cantos. Then one should be admitted into the realm of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.”

It was also related to us by Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, that his Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, was very strict about reading or hearing even the baby pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, what to speak of reading or hearing the amorous pastimes of the Lord with the *gopīs*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never recommended such as a method of practice. Therefore, we find that the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never indulged in such matters in the course of their preaching activities. Higher topics were always reserved for the most qualified devotees of the Lord. The pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa were never taken to the public or to the ears of the neophyte devotees.

There is actually no difference between purely chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa save and except that chanting the Holy Name is the safer position. Therefore it is advised that one should hear the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja was also fond of saying, “Take full shelter of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa and there will be less commotion and more promotion.”

Just consider. If while still subject to sex desire one tries to hear the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but fails to control the mind and at that point allows some unwholesome thought to enter, then a great offense will be committed. We have heard from Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja that when such an offense is committed against the *līlā* of the Supreme Lord, the guardians of that plane will take note and the offender may be barred from entering there forever. Certainly this should be taken very seriously. To save us from such an unfortunate end,

the recommended process to achieve purification is *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, chanting the Holy Name and not *smaraṇam*, the process of remembrance of *līlās*.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, our Guru Mahārāja and many other stalwarts have all given stress to *kīrtana* as the most effective process for this age.

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

“The age of Kali, the repository of all evils, has but one glorious characteristic; in this age, those who simply chant the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa are liberated and reach the Supreme Lord.” (*Bhāg. 12.3.51*)

*nāma-saṅkīrtanam yasya, sarva-pāpa-pranāśanam
praṇāmo duḥkha-samanas, tam nāmami hariṁ param*

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

*bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
kṛṣṇa-prema. ‘kṛṣṇa’ dite dhare mahā-śakti
tāra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana
niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana*

“Of all forms of divine service, nine forms are superior, which with great potency bestow upon

devotees love of Kṛṣṇa, and their personal relationship with Him; and of the nine, the best is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name. By offencelessly taking the Holy Name, the treasure of love for the Lord is attained.” (Cc. Antya 4.70-71)

Not only is the process of *kīrtana* recommended by *śāstra* (scripture), all other forms of devotional practice are subservient to *kīrtana*.

*yadyāpy anya bhaktiḥ kalau karttavya
tadā kīrtana-akhya-bhakti-samyogenaiva*

“In the Kali-yuga, of the nine basic forms of devotional practices, the forms other than *kīrtana* certainly should be practiced, but they must be conducted subserviently to *kīrtana*.” (*Bhakti-sandarbha*, *saṅkhyā* 273)

It may be argued that unless the Holy Name is chanted purely it will not have any effect, whereas the pastimes of the Lord are immediately relishable and purifying. But this is a faulty argument. Even before the Holy Name is chanted purely it has a purifying effect. *Nāmābhasa* is the stage of chanting before *suddha-nāma* (pure chanting) is reached. Continuous chanting during the stage of *nāmābhasa* gradually gives us promotion to *suddha-nāma*.

The pastimes of the Supreme Lord are supra-mundane and cannot be understood or relished by the mundane mind and senses which are covered with lust. Thinking of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa when one is still a conditioned soul, what to speak of when one is suffering from sex desire, is more or less a dreamy thing. That is to say that

such so-called neophyte meditation has no actual touch with the plane of reality in which Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are situated. In other words, coming in contact with the *līlā* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is not a thing of this world. One must cross many lower planes before coming to the transcendental platform.

*upajiyā bāde latā 'brahmānde' bhedi' yāya
 'virajā' brahma-loka' bhedi' para-vyoma' pāya
 tabe yāya tad upari 'goloka-vṛndāvana'
 kṛṣṇa-caraṇa' -kalpa-vṛkṣe kare ārohaṇa*

“The creeper of devotion is born, and grows to pierce the wall of the universe. It crosses the Virajā River and the Brahman plane, and reaches to the Vaikuṇṭha plane. Then it grows further up to Goloka Vṛndāvana, finally reaching to embrace the wish-yielding tree of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.” (Cc. *Madhya* 19.153,4)

This is the death-blow to the sentiment mongers. They want *rāsa-līlā*, which is situated in the highest plane of divinity, but they want that experience through intellectual adjustment, not by paying the actual price. In the language of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura such persons are known as *pukūra-curiwāle*, pond thieves.

We find that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would sometimes become absorbed in thoughts of the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa. When the Lord came in contact with that plane of consciousness He manifested ecstatic symptoms such as trembling, faltering of the voice, and becoming unconscious. He would sometimes sweat blood, and His limbs would sometimes contract within His body. The Lord manifested these symptoms as a result of coming in connection with the transcendental plane.

Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja used to say;

“Only we are to conjecture the ideal. But if we think that we have got that, it is finished. We have got something else. It is such a thing, *adhokṣaja*. Any force of our mind or intelligence can never catch it. *Avān mānasa gocara*. It exists transcending our mental speculation and also the consideration of our judiciousness. But still it exists.”

Purification of the mind and senses is required if we want to progress to the transcendental plane and that purification is most substantially achieved by taking shelter of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. That was the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-saṅpanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

“Let there be all victory for the chanting of the Holy Name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which can cleanse the mirror of the heart and stop the miseries of the blazing fire of material existence. That chanting is the waxing moon that spreads the white lotus of good fortune for all living beings. It is the life and soul of all education. The chanting of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life. It gives a cooling effect to everyone and enables one to taste full nectar at every step.”

One gentleman has written in a recent publication that anyone who says that we should not listen to the narration of *kṛṣṇa-līlā*

with the *gopis* is certainly an atheist. But if we were to follow that line of thinking then even the *mahājanas* (great devotees) would have to be considered atheistic. The fact is that those with high regard for divinity always deal with divinity with the greatest caution, such that offense should not be committed. The neophytes should therefore not concern themselves with the narration of the *lilās* of Kṛṣṇa as much as they should concern themselves with the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. One should first surrender to the Holy Name. And if one is a disciple of a bona-fide spiritual master he should first concern himself/herself with the instructions of that spiritual master. That is the way of advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

ANARTHA NIVRTTI

Devotee: Several months ago you wrote an article called, “Hearing from A Rasikācārya” wherein you put great emphasis on the qualifications of the person who hears *hari-kathā* of a confidential nature. The emphasis was on *anartha-nivṛtti*, overcoming mundane impediments in the heart. Some persons have complained that you give too much importance to *anartha-nivṛtti* when in fact if we simply sing songs and discuss about the Lord’s confidential *līlās* that we will become purified. Does this sound agreeable?

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: Certainly not. Personally we feel that minimizing *anartha-nivṛtti* simply amounts to begging the question and nothing more.

Anartha thākara kāle līlā-gāna kore na, “While still contaminated with *anarthas*, one should never sing songs about the Lord’s confidential pastimes.” This verse was composed by our *parama-guru* Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī*, a masterful discussion of one hundred defects of the *sahajiyā* school.

Although many devotees now propose that purification (*anartha-nivṛtti*) can be easily dismissed in favor of *rasa-vicāra* (hearing *rāsa-līlā*), such a standpoint is taken by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to be symptomatic of the *sahajiyā* practices.

Of course, such devotees are fond of quoting the last verse of the *rāsa-līlā* chapter of *Bhāgavatam* wherein it is stated as a benediction that even one with lusty desires becomes purified by hearing with great faith the Lord's pastimes with the *gopīs*. However, the bona-fide *ācāryas* always stress the Holy Name (with great faith and surrender) as the central focus in devotional life. To date no one has shown us where an *ācārya* has established a method of practice for conditioned souls based only on the principle of hearing *līlā-kathā*.

Jīva Gosvāmī has been quoted as stating that hearing *rasa-kathā* is one of the most powerful forms of *sādhana*. This is certainly true, but qualification of the hearer is still required. All the bona-fide *ācāryas* since the time of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī have promulgated respect for the developmental practices of *bhakti-yoga*, and they have cautioned us to avoid jumping over any particular stage.

In *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī outlines the gradual process to spiritual realization:

*prathamam nāmaṇ śravaṇam antaḥkaraṇa-suddhy-artham apekṣyam /
suddhe cāntaḥ-karaṇe rūpa-śravaṇena tad-udaya-yogyatā bhavati /
samyaḡ-udite ca rūpe guṇānām sphuraṇam sampadyate /
sampanne ca guṇānām sphuraṇe parikara-vaiśiṣṭyena tad-vaiśiṣṭyam
sampadyate / tatas teṣu nāma-rūpa-guṇa-parikareṣu samyak sphuriteṣu
līlānām sphuraṇam suṣṭhu bhāvati //*

“First it is expected that one should hear the Lord’s Names in order to purify the heart. Once the mind and intelligence have been purified in this way, one can hear about Kṛṣṇa’s form, through which one’s qualification to visualize it is obtained. When the form of the Lord has been clearly visualized, one can experience His qualities. Once these have been clearly understood, one develops one’s own individual spiritual characteristics through the particular characteristics of the Lord’s associates. Thus, once the Name, form, qualities and associates of the Lord have been realized, a clear realization of Kṛṣṇa’s activities will follow.”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura confirms:

*adhikāra avicāra rūpānugā kore nā
anartha-anvita dāse rasa-śikṣā deya nā*

“The followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī are never neglectful in assessing anyone’s spiritual qualifications. The followers of Śrī Rūpa never instruct a servant who is engrossed in material impediments about the science of *rasa*.” (*Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī* 56)

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

“The followers of Śrī Rūpa never preach that transcendental attachment is reached before one develops pure faith. The *rūpānugās* never teach that the perfection of devotion can be reached by abandoning

the consecutive order of developmental stages on the path.” (*Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī* 33)

sādhana chāḍile bhāva udaya to haya nā
rāgānugā jānile-i sādhana to chāḍe nā

“If the preliminary practices of devotional service (*sādhana*) are neglected, then the awakening of ecstatic emotions (*bhāva*) can never occur. Even one who has attained realization of spontaneous devotional service (*rāgānugā-bhakti*) should never give up practicing the regulative principles of devotional service.” (*Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī* 63)

The most practical evidence which may indeed help us to arrive at a final conclusion as to with whom and where the higher *līlā* of the Supreme Lord can be discussed, might be as easy as walking down Bhaktisiddhānta Road in Māyāpura. The Gauḍīya Maṭha mission with all its branches (including ISKCON) on Bhaktisiddhānta Road, together with Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha and Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Koladvīpa, were originally inspired by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. For close to one hundred years the mission he established has been functioning with its various branches, and in none of those establishments do we find lavish discussions on *rāsa-līlā*, *mañjarī-bhāva*, and all such things going on in public or in the presence of unqualified devotees. Recently, this has become somewhat of a novelty in the western countries among certain groups, but it is far from the standard practices established by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta.

Action speaks louder than words. The missions of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, Śrīla B.

R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla B. D. Mādhava Mahārāja, Śrīla B. S. Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla B. P. Keśava Mahārāja and all others in the illustrious line of the Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata *paramparā* have put into action in all of their institutions the concept of *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*. “The path of *rāga-mārga*, spontaneous love of God, must always be kept above our head, observing a respectful distance.”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja many times commented as follows: “The real existence of Bhaktisiddhānta is there in this verse, *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*.” Although unknown to some devotees in the western world, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja kept the *pūjala-rāga-patha* verse as the motto of his *maṭha*, engraved on an arch above the *kīrtana* hall.

Beginning sometime in 1981, greatly fortunate western devotees began to hear from the lotus lips of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja many of the intricate points of pure devotion and spontaneous love of God (*rāgānugā* and *rūpānugā-bhajana*) following in the line of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha. In the years that followed, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja revealed a great treasure of the inner wealth of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism to the western world. Such noteworthy gems of *siddhānta* were drawn to our attention by the grace of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, such as the *mādhurya* commentary (*Nigūḍārtha*) on *Brahma-gāyatrī* - the acme of dedication as found in our *prajoyanācārya*, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, and the mood of *Rādhā-dāsyam*, *Rādhā-pāda-sevā*, the service of Śrī Rādhā.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja revealed these and many more charming and beautiful aspirations of pure devotion. But with every breath came “*pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*.” Do not

rush ahead, fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Do not become a fool —follow the angels.

Whenever asked about the path of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja always responded in the same way: “*pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge*— The path of *rāga-mārga*, spontaneous love of God, must always be kept above our head, observing a respectful distance.” There was never any other explanation of *rāgānugā-bhakti* coming from the lotus mouth of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja than this.

Once, when Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was asked to speak about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa he replied as follows:

“I am sorry, but we are not to enter into the discussion of such higher and subtle position of the *līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. That is not to be brought into public, and that is the distinction between Gauḍīya Maṭha and the *sahajiyā* section. The *sahajiyās* are trying to imitate all these things, but we have no faith in imitation. The higher *līlā* will come in an individual case, and it will awaken in an irresistible way. When the program of the *sādhana* stage is finished it will come automatically, spontaneously. We are believers in that, and not to know the form already and then we will reach there. That is not the policy accepted by Guru Mahārāja, Prabhupāda. *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also said, ‘Stick to the rulings of the class you are fit for, then you will see automatically.’”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has also quoted the following *śloka*:

yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde
 vindeta bhaktim kṛta-ṣuṇya-rāsiḥ
 tathā tathot-sarpati hṛdya-kasmād
 rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbu-rāsiḥ
 (Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta 88)

“Strictly stick to *Gaura-lilā*, Mahāprabhu, and you will automatically find within your heart that *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi* is flowing. Don’t attempt directly to have it. It will come automatically, spontaneously. Not intellectually you shall approach that, for that will give you a bad prejudice. Not only that, but it will be harmful prejudice and you will have to expend more energy to do away with that layer of misunderstanding. So our Śrīla Prabhupāda did not allow these things. Do your duty in your plane, according to what you deserve, and that will come naturally. That is his instruction all through, not only temporarily, but all through. Don’t do like that, for then you will get *māyā* instead of *yogamāyā*.”

It appears that many western advocates of *rāga-mārga* are not very familiar with the books of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, or with those of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Some may say that Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was only a philosopher, while they themselves are *rasika-bhaktas*, but such a statement is more telling of one’s ambition than of one’s position as a real *ācārya*.

Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge is not merely a warning, so that one might not make a mistake and go forward prematurely, although it certainly is that also. *Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge* is a direction that implies the recognition of an intrinsic

quality, a fundamental aspect of the nature of the soul. The soul (*taṭasthā-jīva*) is not a *pārśada* of Kṛṣṇa or of Rādhā. The position of the *jīva* is that of a humble servitor — a little distant and below.

The place of residence of the liberated *jīva* in the Gauḍīya-*paramparā* is Govardhana, not Rādhā-kuṇḍa. And the service of the *jīva* there is also selected according to the necessity of the master. So to practice *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge* in this life will bring about the greatest fortune for all conditioned souls and prepare us (in the sense of making us fit) for eternal service in the spiritual realm.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja commented that this conception (*pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge*) should be preached in every nook and cranny of the world for all time. It is not something to dismiss so easily. If we do dismiss this instruction, then it is we who are the losers.

It came as a shock to us when one evening, while sitting in Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja's room in Māyāpura, he mentioned that those *sannyāsīs* who want to hear *rāsa-līlā* but are actually not qualified will have to take the risk of becoming mundane women in their next birth. They will not, he said, get the *aprākṛta-gopī-svarūpa*. They will attain just the opposite, the material body of a woman.

Sannyāsa itself is the life of pure devotion, a life of service to Guru and Kṛṣṇa, twenty-four hours a day. Yet we see in these unfortunate times that a man gives up his vows of *sannyāsa*, then enjoys the shackles of marital life for some years, criticizes pure devotees and their followers, and then reappears on the scene

after a decade or two, but this time as a *rāgānugā-bhakta*. We are not impressed.

The real question is why do those who want *kṛṣṇa-līlā* resent it when stress is placed on purity first, *anartha-nivṛtti*? First deserve and then desire. Is it too much to ask? Purity is the price one has to pay. The actual price one has to pay for eternal life is surrender to one's *guru*.

prasanna haile guru sarva-siddhi haya'
gaura-kṛṣṇa-kṛpā tāñre haya suniścaya

“If the *guru* is satisfied with his disciple, then all perfections are possible. Without any doubt, Gaura and Kṛṣṇa's mercy will be showered upon him.” (Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, *Of Love and Separation*, p. 131)

To establish the process of hearing from a *rasikācārya*, some devotees have given evidence from Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. In this regard Śrīla Purī Mahārāja has stated as follows:

“*Āpnāder videśe ek-ti prākṛta-sahajiyā-dol śṛṣṭha ho'yechhe.*”

In your foreign countries there has appeared a party of *prākṛta-sahajiyāism*. And it is not a matter of inventing something; what they speak is there in 10th Canto, in the works of the Gosvāmīs, and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. But the very fact of their speaking such higher topics to unprepared audiences, ignoring the glories of the Holy Name, Who is the only real path to this higher *līlā*, is *nāmāparādha*. Mahāprabhu never did like this. He was relishing these topics with few of His *antaraṅga-bhaktas*,

and He was inspiring masses to perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and Himself performed *saṅkīrtana* with great numbers of people. *Pracāra* should be *nāma-pracāra*. Remember: I don't like pseudo-Vaiṣṇavism. I don't like pseudo-Vaiṣṇavism. I don't like pseudo-Vaiṣṇavism."

So it is safe to say that those who are actually followers of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and also of Śrīla Purī Mahārāja will not go to such places where the intimate *līlās* of the Supreme Lord are being discussed among unqualified persons. We might add that the standard of our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, was no different than that of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla Purī Mahārāja or of any of the stalwart followers of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

There is a fundamental defect in those who quote Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in an attempt to justify their involvement with *rasa-vicāra* (discussions of *rāsa-līlā*), and that is that they are jumping over the head of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

But this is not the first time such a mistake has been made. There is the precedent of Harivaṁśa and his followers. Harivaṁśa was a disciple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī who took support for engaging in *rasa-vicāra* from Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda, but failed to follow Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja explains:

"That sort of deviation is found in many places in the succession. Just as there is one Harivaṁśa, he was a disciple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. But he practically deviated. It is thought that he is supported by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's *guru*,

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, who was a great devotee, and who has written many books: *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi* and many books of high-style writing are there. He supported Harivaṁśa to a certain extent, who was a disciple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. There is a line from Harivaṁśa. Harivaṁśa was not accepted in-toto by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, who was *guru* of Harivaṁśa. Another branch, as if coming down from Harivaṁśa, they are known as *Hari-vamśini*. Theoretically they have recognition of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, but practically there is some deviation. They are more addicted to the *rasa-vicāra* (discussion of *līlā*). But Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, the direct connection (his true followers), they are very careful to deal with this *rasa*, high type. Just as our Guru Mahārāja, he is very cautious about how to deal with the higher *rasa*, *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*. That *rasa* should be kept always over our heads.”

The standard for dealing with the higher subjective plane of reality has been given to us by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He has come down from the eternal *līlās* of Lord Gaurāṅga to show us how to adjust our relationship with the Absolute Truth, the super subjective plane of reality, *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*.

There are no losers among those who accept the path shown by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. When you are qualified you will be accepted in that higher realm: back to home, back to Godhead.

However, if you are not qualified but still insist on engaging in higher topics of discussion, then you are, in effect, creating a disturbance in the Lord’s *līlā*. Unfortunately in your next life you will get the corresponding body in material nature.

It is also stated in the book *Śrī Vraja Maṇḍala Parikrama* by Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, as follows:

“So whenever the Vaiṣṇavas are discussing any topic, it is correct to approach that assembly in a mood of reverence. My Guru Mahārāja (Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja) instructed us never to read the 10th Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.”

“I remember that although he restricted us from reading these particular pastimes it was not because he was forbidding us from reading it; but it was just to make sure that we would be extremely careful in approaching these subjects with the utmost care and reverence without a tinge of mundane contamination.”

“Therefore these topics and this sentiment should be carefully exposed and partially hidden; but nevertheless they must be revealed according to time and circumstance, taking into consideration each individual’s qualifications and eligibility.”

We are not saying one should never hear *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. What we are saying is that one should first be concerned with attaining the proper qualifications necessary to enter such a high plane of existence. It should not be considered cheaply. Why some devotees are so adamantly opposed to the emphasis of attaining the basic qualifications before entering into higher topics prematurely is shocking—when all members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha *sampradāya* know the real standard—first deserve and then desire.

VRAJA BHAVA

Devotee: I was recently invited to a program where it was said that the program would be in the mood of *vraja-bhāva*, so I was wondering how special is *vraja-bhāva* and how does one actually attain it? When I went to the program there were various Hindi *bhajan*s that I had never heard before and also some *bhajan*s of Mīrabāī.

Narasīṅha Mahārāja: What many western devotees call *vraja-bhāva* is available in any village kitchen in Uttar Pradesh, India. There are so many songs sung by the village people in and around Vṛndāvana, but those are not the standard songs of pure devotion, particularly the songs of Mīrabāī. The pure *ācārya* never recommends his disciples to sing such songs.

Mīrabāī has been rejected by the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* as a pseudo-*vaiṣṇava*. There are some people who say that Mīrabāī was a ‘half disciple’ of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, but this is a concoction. Some also say that simply by placing her hands over the eyes of the Rāṇa of Mewar that he obtained Kṛṣṇa *darśana*. Also some devotees say that Mīrabāī merged into the Deity of Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā and never

came out again. But these are simply stories with no ontological backing, which are rejected by the *śuddha-bhakti* school.

Mīrabāi is not accepted as a *śuddha-vaiṣṇava* by the followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Therefore the followers of Bhaktivinoda and Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never teach their disciples to sing the *bhajan*s of Mīrabāi. To teach one's disciple to sing the *bhajan*s of Mīrabāi is tantamount to putting kerosene in the mouth of that disciple —only a bad taste of *bhakti* will be experienced

Our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda sometimes said regarding Mīrabāi, “I have no objection to her songs.” However Mīrabāi's songs were never established as standard *bhajan*s in his mission. As far as the common person is concerned he had no objection. If a common person sings the songs of Mīrabāi there may be some *nāmābhāsa* for that person. But for *śuddha-bhakti* he has never recommended the *bhajan*s of Mīrabāi. Mīrabāi is not in the *śuddha-bhakti* school, what to speak of the *rāgānugā*, *rūpānugā*, or the *rasika* school. Mīrabāi is rejected by the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* as a *bahiraṅga-bhakta*, an external devotee.

Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja comments as follows:

“Our Guru Mahārāja announced, ‘We are *śuddha-śakta*.’ We are worshippers of the potency, not this mundane potency, but the potency wholesale dedicated to the possessor of the potency. Without retaining Her individual independence, cent-per-cent dependent —such potency very very rarely can be conceived. ‘Direct approaches to

Me, that is not proper;’ but approaching through proper channel, through the devotees, that is proper approach. That is real approach; so Gaudīya Maṭha eliminates Mīrabāi and so many other apparent devotees, to be real devotees, because they are mad in praise of Kṛṣṇa, but not so much for the devotees of Kṛṣṇa.” (Feb. 15, 1982, Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha, Navadvīpa-dhāma)

As regards real *vraja-bhāva*, Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66),
sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja

“Give up all your duties and come to Me. And your present duties good or bad, whatever you can conceive from your present position —give up everything and come straight to Me. I’m everything to you.”

Here the word *vraja* is used by Kṛṣṇa to indicate Vṛndāvana, the Lord’s own abode. In Vṛndāvana all the inhabitants are absorbed in the sweet mellows of spontaneous love of God. In a word, they are absorbed in *vraja-bhāva*, the mellows of loving devotion, found only in Vṛndāvana. So the fundamental principle of *vraja-bhāva* is surrender. First surrender to Kṛṣṇa. There must be complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa, otherwise *vraja-bhāva* will not manifest. Surrender means that we have given up all our tendencies to consume (enjoy). The attempt to assert one’s self upon others must also be abandoned. This is real humility. In material life we want to assert ourselves over others and take everything for our own enjoyment. But *vraja-bhāva* is just the opposite.

Neophytes, who have no real understanding of *vraja-bhāva*, sometimes may advertise their program as being *rasika* or as being in the mood of *vraja-bhāva*. Yet these persons have little

or no real understanding of the exalted nature of the love of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, nor do they have a clear conception of the path of attainment, even though they may claim to be following a *rasikācārya*.

In fact, we see that their *vraja-bhāva* is only exhibited on Sundays, while the rest of the week they are absorbed in ordinary mundane activities. Those devotees who are actually tasting *vraja-bhāva* cannot tolerate even for a second to engage in ordinary financial dealings simply for the purpose of extending their material facilities.

Those who actually relish real *vraja-bhāva* embrace a life of renunciation (*sannyāsa*) and reject those things that are unfavorable for devotional service (*prātikūla*). In this regard Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has said:

‘aham-mama’ bhāva-sattve nāma kabhu haya nā
bhoga-buddhi nā chaḍile aprākṛta haya nā

“The Holy Name is never revealed to one who is situated in the bodily concept of life and thinks in terms of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ If one doesn’t reject the enjoying mentality, the transcendental platform will never be attained.” (*Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇi* 4)

anarthake ‘artha’ boli’ ku-pathete laya nā

“One should never mistakenly call material obstacles ‘useful for devotional service,’ thereby following the wrong path.” (*Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇi* 35)

In his *Anubhāṣya* to verse 28 of the last chapter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha edition) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has also written as follows:

“Those who are barren of the treasure of *prema*, propelled by duplicity, declare to the whole world their false attainment of *prema*, although in reality, by an external display of *prema* or by announcing it to one and all, it is positively impossible for such hypocrite destitutes who are deprived of the wealth of *kṛṣṇa-prema* to ever attain it. To make their great fortune known to everybody, adepts of *prākṛta-sahajiyāism* often expose to each other insincere external symptoms of *prema* (such as shedding of tears). Rather than calling such hypocrite *sahajiyās* as *premika*, real *śuddha-bhaktas* go as far as to completely reject their association, knowing it to destroy *bhakti*. *Śuddha-bhaktas* never teach one to designate such persons as ‘*bhaktas*,’ thus equaling them with *śuddha-bhaktas*. At the rise of genuine *prema*, the *jīva* hides her own glory and strives for *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*.”

“The hypocrite *prākṛta-sahajiyā* party in their greed for wealth, women and fame (*kanaka-kāminī-pratiṣṭha*) offend *śuddha-bhaktas* by labeling them as *darśanik paṇḍita*’ (great philosophers), *tattva-vit* (ontology experts), or *sūkṣma-darśi* (acute observers), and in turn they adorn themselves with the titles *rasika*, *bhajanānani*, *bhāgavatottama* (*uttama-bhāgavata*), *līlā-rasa-pāṇonmatta* (intoxicated by drinking sweet mellows of *līlā*), *rāgānuṅgīya-sādhakāgraganya* (the foremost aspirants on the path of *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti*), *rasajña* (the knowers of *rasa*), *rasika-cuḍāmaṇi* (unsurpassed *rasikas*) etc.”

“Having contaminated *bhajana-praṇālī* with the waves of their own materialistic emotions, they become attached to abominable practices; what they actually adore in themselves is pseudo-*vaiṣṇavism*. These kinds of preachers go to describe *aprākṛta-rasa*, making their respective mundane emotions a part and parcel of *kṛṣṇa-sevā*. Unaware of *aprākṛta vipralambha-rasa*, they take *prākṛta-sambhoga*, which in essence is a perverted reflection of *rasa* (*virasa*), as actual *rasa*.”

Those who have *prema* never boast of their love for Kṛṣṇa because the nature of pure love for Kṛṣṇa is that one who has it feels that he doesn't have even a drop of it. Those who say they have *prema*, who say they are *rasika*, and who claim to be the distributors of *vraja-bhāva* are basically cheaters. They have cheated themselves, and they are cheating others. They have deviated from the path of our *ācāryas*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in the introduction to the 4th verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka* in his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states:

*premera svabhāva - yaha premera sambandha
sei mane - kṛṣṇe mora nahi bhakti-gandha*

“The nature of *prema* is such that one who has got real connection with *prema* will think with *dainya* (humility).
‘I possess not even a trace of *bhakti*.’”

The so-called preachers of ‘*vraja-bhāva*’ are always outraged when we speak on such topics according to the standard of our *ācārya* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The *pseudo-vaiṣṇava* says that the jungle (*aṇya*) is cut and now it is time to preach *rasa-līlā*

throughout the world. But such foolish persons do not realize that they are actually living in the jungle and the weeds of misconception have overgrown their creeper of devotion.

When challenged about their false conceptions, the so-called preachers of ‘*vraja-rasa*’ become angry and say that their tears are the proof that they are absorbed in *prema*. Yet these so-called *rasika* and *prema-bhaktas* do not show us that they actually possess any of the other qualities of pure devotion, such as *dāinya* (humility), etc. They only make a show of tears.

In this regard, the Guardian of Devotion, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja, has explained,

“By practicing, one can acquire that mental condition of shedding tears, and one can show many feats as though he were a real devotee. Merely the display of some peculiar external characteristics does not prove the presence of pure devotion. Real devotion is ‘*sudurlabha*’ —a very, very rare achievement.”

Pure devotion is such a rare commodity that it can hardly be attained by one day's devotion per week, especially when that devotion is adulterated with the enjoying spirit and other such gross *anarthas*.

Those who are bona-fide preachers of the religion of divine love, as inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, do not engage in *rasa-vicāra* (discussion of *rasa*) in public. The bona-fide preacher always preaches *nāma-pracāra*, the glories of the Holy Name.

This was emphatically stated by His Divine Grace, Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja:

“In your foreign countries there has appeared a party of *prākṛta-sahajiyāism*. And it is not a matter of inventing something — what they speak is there in 10th Canto, in the works of the Gosvāmīs, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. But the very fact of their speaking such higher topics to unprepared audiences, ignoring the glories of the Holy Name, who is the only real path to this higher *līlā*, is *nāma-aparādha*. Mahāprabhu never did like this. He was relishing these topics with a few of His *antaraṅga-bhaktas*, and was inspiring masses to perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and He Himself performed *saṅkīrtana* with great numbers of people. *Pracāra* should be *nāma-pracāra*.” (Feb. 7, 1996, Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, Gopinātha Gauḍīya Maṭha)

We must be very strict and very, very vigilant about these points. That was the standard of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and that has been followed by his most stalwart disciples, such as Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla B. D. Mādhava Mahārāja, Śrīla B. S. Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla B. P. Keśava Mahārāja, and all others.

In conclusion, *vraja-bhāva* requires complete surrender at the lotus feet of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa. It is not a cheap thing! It requires a life of dedication. When one comes in connection with *vraja-bhāva* he does not go out to conduct business as usual, carrying on life without change, engaging in so many ordinary mundane activities. *Vraja-bhāva* means ‘die to live,’ the absolute abnegation of all things mundane, and that is followed by full submission to *guru* and Kṛṣṇa — that is *vraja-bhāva*. Not simply singing Hindi *bhajan*s — that is only *nāmābhāsa*. It is not *suddha-nāma* or pure devotion.

APPENDIX:

THE STANDARD FOR HIGHER LILA

by Svāmī B. B. Viṣṇu and
Svāmī B. V. Giri

In recent controversies amongst some Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, those who present isolated and unusual examples of preaching as the rule, rather than as the exception to the proper Gauḍīya conception, have simply increased the level of confusion. In particular the subject of the necessity of proper *adhikāra* (qualifications) for hearing higher confidential topics regarding the Lord's *līlā* has been greatly minimized by trying to establish the exception as the rule.

The 'rasikas' have written, "The highest good can be obtained by anyone who faithfully hears *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from a bona-fide *rasikācārya*." They then cite Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura in an attempt to justify the hearing of confidential *līlās* by the unqualified: "A person averse to hearing these *līlās* will never attain perfection. I refuse to hear his name." What they fail to state, however, is that Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, does not say that one who is unqualified to hear such pastimes *must* hear, or *should* hear such pastimes. Being averse to hearing the Lord's *līlās* and being properly qualified to hear the Lord's pastimes are two completely different things. One rejects hearing the *līlā* of

Kṛṣṇa due to the preference of being engaged in *māyā*, illusion, while the latter is concerned with proper qualifications before hearing the Lord's confidential pastimes so as not to make any offense.

In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has stated:

*paramātmā-tattva-jñānai prema-rūpa prayojana, tāhā kṛṣṇa-caritre
dui prakāre askita haiyācche / sākṣāt rasāsvāda anwayarūpe dainandina
nitya-lilāya pāibe / tāhāi aṣṭa-kāliya lilā / asura-māraṇādi-lilāya
vyatireka-rūpe kṛṣṇa-tattva jānā yāya / pūtanā-vadha ihāte ārambha
haiyā kamsa-vadha paryanta asura-vadha-lilā / sei sab lilā vyatireka-
rūpa vraje u nirguṇa goloka-lilāya abhimāna mātra-svarūpe āchhe
/ vastutaḥ tāhārā tathāya nāi evaṁ thākiteu pāre nā / vyatireka lilā
pāṭhe rasika śuddha-bhāva haiyā anwayalilā-rasa āsvādana karite karite
goloka darsana pāiben / esthale saṅkṣepataḥ ei paryanta balilām / viśeṣa
yatna-pūrvaka sādha u prema-rurukṣū puruṣa ihā anusilana kariyā
bujhiyā laiben /*

“The highest knowledge is *prema*. This is revealed in two ways in the activities of Kṛṣṇa. Directly it is obtained through the daily eight-fold pastimes (*aṣṭa-kāliya lilā*). Indirectly it is obtained through the pastimes of killing the demons, from the killing of Pūtanā to the killing of Kamsa. These pastimes exist symbolically in Vraja and only as impressions in Goloka. Actually they are not found there, and cannot exist there. Reading the indirect pastimes, the devotee can purify himself; being purified, he can taste the direct pastimes and perceive Goloka. If the aspirant for *prema* very carefully cultivates in this way, he will understand all these matters.” (Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmrta, Chapter 7, Part 7)

It is a fact that one should hear *hari-kathā* from a bona-fide spiritual master, but the nature of that *hari-kathā* depends on one's qualification. The necessity to hear does not imply that everyone, (specifically the unqualified) must hear *rasa-kathā*. We find no examples of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, Śrīla B. P. Purī Mahārāja, Śrīla B. R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla B. P. Keśava Mahārāja, Śrīla B. D. Mādhava Mahārāja, Śrīla B. S. Gosvāmī Mahārāja and other stalwart disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura speaking on confidential topics to open assemblies of unqualified persons.

A handful of examples have been presented by the *rasika* camp mentioning some non-confidential pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, that have been discussed in private conversations by our *ācāryas*. However, there are no examples found that support the thesis advocating the hearing of *rasa-kathā* by any and all audiences, irregardless of one's qualification or disqualification. The examples cited by the *rasika* camp are actually isolated examples and do not represent the standard rule.

For a correct understanding of the standard rule for hearing *rasa-kathā* one should examine the preaching of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and that of his prominent disciples. A few note-worthy examples are sited herein:

“*Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhāṅge* —Always keep the path of *rāga* above one's head, at a respectful distance. Don't be bold enough to approach directly. My Guru Mahārāja's whole life in a nutshell is expressed in this, his own expression. *Pūjala rāga-patha*, the very nature of our *sampradāya* is this.” (Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Aug. 14, 1981)

“*Pūjala rāga-pātha gaurava bhāṅge*. This is Bhaktisiddhānta-*vāṇī*, the real existence of Bhaktisiddhānta is there.” (Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, video-recording 1982)

As members of the Caitanya Sārasvata *paramparā*, we are all followers of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. As such, we cannot neglect his teachings and we must view the teachings of the previous *ācāryas* in light of his teachings and example. This differentiates us from the *sahajiyās*, who only use quotes of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and the Gosvāmīs to advocate their unauthorized path.

“We must understand the commentary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura through the medium of Śrīla Prabhupāda and we must give prominence to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s commentary.” (*Ācārya Kesari Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, His Life and Teachings*, chapter 4).

“Śrīla Gurudeva especially manifested *guru-niṣṭhā* during a discussion of *tattva-siddhānta* with Parama Pūjānīya Yatirāja Śrīla Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja. On that occasion, he said, “I don’t recognize the path of the previous Gosvāmīs. I simply accept Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda’s line of thought as unerring truth, and I will try to know and understand the previous Gosvāmīs through Śrīla Prabhupāda’s vision. I will first accept the excellence of his explanations and commentaries. *Ācāryera jei mata sei mata sāra*. ‘The order of the *guru* is the active principle in spiritual life.’ (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 12.10). And *anya āra jatat mata jauka charākhāra*. This is my conception.” (*Ācārya Kesari Śrī*

Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, His Life and Teachings, chapter 4, p. 336).

In his lecture, *Śuddha o Viddha Bhakti*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has commented:

atyanta guhyadapi guhya rāi-kānura rasa-gaṇera padāvali yadi āmādera mata lampāṭa-vyakti hāṭe-bājāre ghāṭe-vāṭe-māṭhe yā'ra-tā'ra kāce gaṇa vā varṇana kare, tabe ki uhā-dvārā jagaj-jañjāla upasthita haya nā? bāhya-jagatera pratīti prabala thākite āmarā ye yājana karitece baliyā abhimāna kari, tāhā nirathaka / āmarā ki leśa-mātra-o bhagavānera janya anurāga haiyācche? ekbāra niṣkapāṭe antarātmāke jīñāsā karile bujhā yāya / ihā dvārā balā haitecche nā ye, bhajanera kriyā chāḍiya dite haibe/ balā haitecche ye, adhikāranu-yāyī krama-pathānusāre agrasara haite haibe /

“The songs of Rāi-Kānu’s dealings with Each Other (*rasa*) are the greatest secret of all secrets. If those who are lascivious as ourselves go to sing or describe them in markets and bazaars, *ghāṭas*, roads and fields to each and everybody, won’t it bring nothing to the world but unwanted rubbish? Whatever worship we boast of while our perception of the external world is still strong, is useless. ‘Have I acquired a drop of at least *anurāga* for Bhagavān, genuine desire to give pleasure to His senses?’ This question we should ask our inner self at least once and without deceit, then everything will become clear. By that it is not intended to say that we are to give up *bhajana-kriyā* for good. It is intended to say that one should follow the gradual path of progress according to one’s *adhikāra* (qualification)” (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, *Śuddha o Viddha Bhakti*, April 20, 1926).

“All these days we have not spoken about *lilā*. Why? Because this is our most confidential asset. This is our only *sādhya* (perfection). But, one should not make the mistake of thinking that *anartha-nivṛtti* (overcoming impediments such as lust and greed) is the *prayojana* (goal of life). One thinking like this will never enter into *artha-pravṛtti* (acquiring one’s actual need). For this reason, I will begin speaking about *aṣṭa-kāliya-lilā*. I know that you are not ready to hear it. But we should know such a transcendental ideal exists within the realm of devotion. This is why *anartha-nivṛtti* is essential. After the realm of *anartha-nivṛtti* is *artha-pravṛtti*, pure conjugal service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is transcendental reality. If we do not know of this transcendental realm, then all of our efforts may end in *nirviśeṣa-vāda* (impersonalism). Do not let your day pass in trying for *anartha-nivṛtti*. *Artha-pravṛtti* is also necessary. *Anartha-nivṛtti* is necessary until *artha-pravṛtti* has started. When *artha-pravṛtti* is present then *anartha-nivṛtti* becomes unimportant —*artha-pravṛtti* becomes prominent.”

“Those who have chanted *hari-nāma* for fifteen or twenty years should know such things. The beginners need not hear these topics or they will misunderstand. These topics are for certain audiences, not for all. Also, it is said, *āpanā bhajana-kathā, nā kahibe jathā-jathā*, ‘One should not reveal one’s *bhajana* to others.’ If we disregard this instruction of our previous *ācāryas* then there may be a permanent fall from the realm of devotional service.” (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, from an article in *The Gaudīya*, 1934)

It is clear from this statement of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that one should hear high topics; indeed, one *must* hear such topics. But one must be qualified first, as stated clearly by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, by “fifteen or twenty years of (purely) chanting the Holy Name” —and most of his disciples were required to chant 64 rounds every day. Furthermore, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explains, “The beginners need not hear these topics or they will misunderstand.” How can this be interpreted in any other way?

Devotees should know such a transcendental ideal exists within the realm of devotion and as emphasized by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, *anartha-nivṛtti* is essential to enter that plane.

The followers of the *rasika* camp claim that the only qualification necessary is *lobha* (greed). This is true, but it must be actual *lobha*, which is not a cheap thing. One must be cautious to not mistake mere enthusiasm to hear the confidential *līlās* as actual *lobha*. Imitation of *lobha* does not mean that one actually has *lobha*. Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī comments:

“The awakening of greed (*lobha*) which qualifies one for *rāgānugā-bhakti* is not to be taken cheaply, as if easy to attain.” (*Art of Sādhana*. Chapter 14.)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also makes a similar statement:

“On the path of *rāga*, however, it is necessary to avoid imitation or deception. If that occurs, it produces disturbance and obstacles, though the person may think that his corrupted *rāga* is real *rāga*. Finally, material association turns that *rāga* into material attraction and causes falldown of the *jīva*.” (*Daśa-mūla Tattva*)

One who actually has real greed for hearing *hari-kathā* will reject all mundane activities and engage solely in *bhajana*. It has been observed, however, that a vast majority of the modern day practitioners of *rāgānugā-sādhana* are not inclined to give up their many mundane attachments and enjoying mentality. Rather than dedicating themselves to a surrendered life of *sevā* (service), we find that their hearing of *hari-kathā* is done in a mood of enjoyment, for their own pleasure, and is irregularly performed. When there is the occasional arranged program they come, otherwise material life goes on.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura further explains real *lobha* as follows:

“On attaining greed for the mood of the *vrajavāsis*, no other attraction remains. When that greed arises, the practitioner immediately becomes completely disinterested in sinful action, piety, social duty, neglect of duty, forbidden actions, speculation, and dry renunciation.” (*Daśa-mūla Tattva*)

“In the *vaidhi-bhakti* process, following this gradual method, attainment of *bhāva* takes a long time. However, if greed for the mood of the *vrajavāsis* develops, the material desires are quickly destroyed, since no other desires have a place. Along with greed for Kṛṣṇa simultaneously arises *bhāva*.” (*Daśa-mūla Tattva*)

Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī quotes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in this regard:

“Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda explains that only after one’s mind and intelligence are purified by the chanting of the Holy Names can one hear about Kṛṣṇa’s form, qualities, associates, and finally, pastimes. One who has not yet reached the stage of *ruci*, or taste for devotional service, may prematurely go to a pretender *guru* to take initiation and instruction in *rāgānugā-bhakti*, without first making an effort to chant the Holy Name offenselessly. Such a person may make a pretense of relishing Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā* while still affected by materialistic contamination, but such an attempt will not succeed in bringing him love for the Divine Couple and service for Them in the spiritual abode.” (*Art of Sādhana*, Chapter 14.)

We have seen on numerous occasions where, in the attempt to cultivate *rāgānugā-bhakti*, the proper measure of discretion has been neglected. Sadly, in the *rasika* assemblies the unqualified persons are being encouraged to unhesitatingly ask questions about highly confidential subject matters. Unfortunately, in some of these assemblies the love pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are sometimes being discussed, even up to the point of nudity in the *līlā*. This is indeed a gross violation of the confidentiality of the Supreme Lord’s pastimes.

The confidentiality of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā* is never to be breached. If it is, as is sometimes improperly done, then a great offense is committed. Qualified devotees never discuss the Lord’s confidential *līlās* in a public forum. That is the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* standard.

Although in many of his works, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in great detail on the necessity of engaging in *rāgānugā-sādhana*, he has also stipulated what are the qualifications to do that as follows:

erūpa sabhāy āmi tāhā vyakti karile anadhikārīr pakṣe viśeṣa amaṅgala haite pāre / ucchiṣṭhita satya-samūha ucchapadasta nā haile labhya haya nā / yemata samasta vijñāna-sāstre kramaśah ucchajñāner udaya haya, tadrūpa bhakti-sāstrer u ucchādhikāra-krame guḍha-tattve prāpti haiyā thāke /

“If I explain this topic in the assembly, it could be harmful for the unqualified devotees. Higher truths cannot be attained unless one is situated on a higher platform. Just as higher knowledge gradually arises in all scientific literature, likewise, confidential truths are attained in devotional literatures by proper qualification.” (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Prema Pradīpa*, Tenth Ray)

sajātīyāśaya-snigdha sad-goṣṭhi vyatīta rasālāpa kariben nā / vaiṣṇava jagat-samṛddhi sambandha bhakta-saṅga vyatīta janya saṅga kariben nā /

“One should not discuss topics of *rasa* with anyone except highly qualified persons on the same level of spiritual advancement.” (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta* —Chapter 3. Part 2)

itara viśaye vairāgya prāpta jāta-prema lokerāi rasādhikārī / yāhārā ekhana paryanta śuddha-rati u jaḍa-vairāgya lābha kare nāi, tāhārā rasādhikāra janya —viphalā ceṣṭā karite gele rasake sādhana baliyā kadācāre pravṛtta haibe / jāta-prema puruṣer ye bhāva sahajei haiyācche, tāhāi rasa / rasa-vicāra kevala ei rase ki ki bhāva ki prakāre

*saṁyojita ācche, tāhāra vivṛtti mātra / rasa sādhanāṅga naya, ataeva
yadi keha balen, āisa tomāke rasa-sādhana śikṣā dei, se kevala tāhāra
dūrttata vā mūrkhata mātra /*

“Those who have attained the level of *prema* and are completely detached from worldly pleasure are qualified for *rasa*. Those who have not attained pure *rati* and sense control make futile attempts to become qualified for *rasa* by practicing *rasa*. That taste which arises naturally in a person on the level of *prema* is called *rasa*. The discussion of *rasa* is only a description of how the various elements combine in the different *rasas*; it is not a part of *sādhana*. Therefore, if anyone says that he will teach you the *sādhana* of *rasa*, he is an impostor or a fool.” (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta, Chapter 7, Part I)

*ei raser anadhikāri ke? anadhikārike hari-nāma dāna karā yerūpa aparādha
ei rasa-viṣaya tāhāra nikaṭa vyākhyā karāu tadrūpa aparādha /*

“Who is not qualified to thus taste the nectar of the transcendental *rasa*? As it is an offense to give the Holy Name to an unqualified person, so it must also be an offense to explain the *rasas* to an unqualified person.” (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Jaiva Dharma, Chapter 28)

*ei dainandini aprākṛta rādhā-kṛṣṇa-nitya-lilā pāṭha karibār sakaler
adhikāra nāi / ihā paramādbhūta rahasya —viśeṣa gopane rākhā
kartavya / yini ihāra adhikāri nana, tāhāke ei lilā śravaṇa karāna
ihabe nā / jaḍa-bandha-jīva ye paryanta cinta-tattve rāga-mārga lobha
prāpta nā hana, se paryanta tāhāra nikaṭa ihate ei lilā-varṇana gupta
rākhā kartavya / nāma-rūpa-guṇa lilār aprākṛta-tattva arthāt śuddha-*

cinmaya-svarūpa ye paryanta hṛdaye uḍita nā haya, se paryanta ei lilā śravaṇer adhikāra haya nā / anadhikāri-gaṇa ei lilā pāṭha kariyā kevala māyika-bhāve jaḍiya strī-puruṣa-saṅgamādi dhyāna karataḥ apagati lābha kariben / pāṭhaka mahāśaya-gaṇa sāvadhāna ihayā nārader nyāya aprākṛta śṅgā-rasaṁskāra-lābha kariyā ei lilāya praveśa kariben /

“Not everyone is qualified to read the daily pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. It is esoteric knowledge of great wonder which must be kept secret. One should not let those who are not qualified hear these topics. As long as the soul has not attained greed for the spiritual world on the path of *rāga*, the description of these pastimes must be kept hidden from him. As long as the person has no realization of the pure spiritual nature of the transcendental Name, form, qualities and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, he has no qualification for hearing these pastimes. Hearing these pastimes, the unqualified person will simply meditate on material relationships of male and female, under the influence of *māyā*, and by this he will become degraded. The reader, with great care should attain initiation into the *śṅgāra-rasa* like Nārada, and then he can enter the pastimes.” (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta, Chapter 6, Part 6)

ei madhura rasa-vicāre āmi adhika pramāṇa saṁgraha kari nāi/ kenanā yāhārā ihāte praveśa karibār adhikāra pāiben, tāhārā ei raser sakala kathā śrī ujjvala-nīlamanī granthe evaṁ jaiva-dharme dekhiyā laiben /

“These topics are more elaborately described in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and *Jaiva Dharma*. By consulting those books the qualified person can realize their nature. For fear of

offense by unqualified persons nothing more will be said here.” (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta, Chapter 7, Part 7)

*ye sakala vyakti sthūla-dehagata ye sukhake bahumānana karataḥ
cinnmaya dehagata ei sakala ānanda-vaicitrya avagata hana nāi, tāhārā
e saba kathār prati dṛṣṭipāta, manana u alocana kariben nā / kenanā,
tāhā karile ei sakala varṇanāke māmśa-cāramagata kriyā mane kariyā
haya aślila baliyā nindā kariben, naya ādara kariyā sahajiyā-bhāve
adhaḥ patana lābha kariben /*

“People who have strong attraction for gross material pleasure and cannot understand these topics should not read, think of, or discuss these topics of *rasa*, because they will think that these are all material activities and criticize them. If they do appreciate them at all, they will become degraded as *sahajiyās*.” (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta, Chapter 7, Part 7)

*madhura-bhakti-raske mukhya bhakti-rasa balen / jaḍa-rasa-āśrita
buddhi īśvara-parayāna haile nivṛtti-dharma lābha kare, āvāra ye
paryanta cidraser adhikārī nā haya, se paryanta tāhāder pravṛtti
sambhave nā / sei sakala loker ei rase upayogitā nāi / madhura-rasa
svabhāvataḥ duruḥ / adhikārī sahaje pāoyā yāya nā baliyā e rasa gūḍha
rahasya-rūpe gupta rākhā ucita / etannibandhana ei sthāle madhura-
rasa svabhāvataḥ viśṛtaṅga haile u saṅkṣepe varṇana karibe /*

“A person who is not renounced in this way is not qualified to understand the spiritual *rasas*. Therefore the people in general are not qualified to understand the *madhura-rasa*. *Madhura-rasa* is very difficult to understand. It is not easy to find a person qualified to

understand it. This *rasa* is very confidential. Therefore it is appropriate to keep it hidden from general view.” (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Jaiva Dharma*, Chapter 30)

*adhikāra-hīna-jana-maṅgala cintiyā
kīrtana korinu śeṣa kāla vicāriyā*

‘Considering for the benefit of those who have no qualification for hearing about such things, I have thus ended my *kīrtana* here.’ (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Kalyāṇa Kalpataru* 4.5-8)

In the biography of Śrīla Gaura-kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, the following is written:

“Whoever’s heart is free from the modes of material nature, such that no type of material lust can come, is the only person who is always engaged in determined devotional service unto the Vaiṣṇavas. This type of person, free from all impediments in devotional service, in their hearts the sprout of love of Godhead can actually take place, by hearing about the pastimes of the Lord. But those who have some materialistic desires within their hearts, if they hear pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, then as a result of that, within their hearts, the seed of material lust will manifest. Acting as if they are hearing the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, their material lust simply only grows and grows.” (Śrī Śrī Gaura-kīśora *Līlāmṛta-laharī*)

“When there is rain, weeds grow very quickly. Carefully planted seeds can also grow, but some are destroyed prematurely by a heavy downpour. By hearing a

discourse about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, the seeds of love for Kṛṣṇa bud forth in the heart of those persons who are pure, devoid of material desires and sincerely dedicated to the service of the spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas. Those in whom the seed of lust is found, however, will immediately become lustful upon hearing of the sportive pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. By pretentiously hearing the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, their lust becomes inflamed. The consciousness of the conditioned living being is covered by lust, and thus they take the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda to be the libidinous exploits of a mundane hero and heroine. Those who assume that, because they have faith in the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they are able to experience the transcendental nature of those pastimes, are unaware of their own carnal desires, being overwhelmed by the illusory energy. You cannot understand from their utterances whether the pastimes are transcendental or whether they have proper regard for the pastimes.” (Śrī Śrī Gaura-kīṣora Lilāmṛta-laharī)

Also Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja explains in *Follow the Angels*:

“Our Guru Mahārāja wrote several poems, one of which is *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī*, ‘A Hundred Defects in the Sahajiyā Conception.’ The defects are innumerable, but our Guru Mahārāja put forward a hundred points of the defects in their process of ‘advancement.’ Mainly they are very easy purchasers. They are not prepared to pay the real price.”

A few important excerpts from *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇī* are presented here:

*anartha thākāra kāle rasa-gāna kore nā
anartha thākāra kāle siddhi-labdha bole nā*

“While still contaminated with *anarthas*, one should never sing songs glorifying transcendental mellows. As long as these impediments remain, one should never state that *siddhi* has been attained.”

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

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

*adhikāra avicāra rūpānugā kore nā
anartha-anvita dāse rasa-śikṣā deya nā*

“The followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī are never neglectful in assessing anyone’s spiritual qualifications. The followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī never instruct a servant who is engrossed in material impediments about the science of intimate devotional mellows.”

*asakta komala-śraddhe rasa-kathā bole nā
anadhikāre rase adhikāra deya nā*

“A devotee should never speak on the topics of devotional mellows to one who has weak, pliable faith. A devotee

should never attempt to bestow the qualification for *rasa* upon one who is unqualified to receive it.”

*vaidha-bhakta-jane kabhu rāgānugā jāne nā
komala-śraddhake kabhu rasika to' jāne nā*

“Devotees who are still on the platform of following regulated scriptural injunctions (*vaidha-bhaktas*) cannot yet understand anything about the exalted stage of the *rāgānugās*, practitioners of spontaneous devotional service. Those who possess weak faith cannot yet understand the realm of the *rasikas*, relishers of pure transcendental mellows.”

*svalpa-śraddha-jane kabhu jāta-rati māne nā
svalpa-śraddha-jane rasa upadeśa kore nā*

“Those who possess little faith are never recognized as being highly developed in loving devotional attachment. Those who possess little faith are never to be instructed in topics concerning transcendental mellows.”

anartha-viśiṣṭa śiṣye rasa-tattva bole nā

“The disciple who is still contaminated with these impediments (*anarthas*) is never taught the science of intimate devotional mellows (*rasa-tattva*).”

*jata-rati prauḍa-śraddha-saṅga tyāga kore nā
komala-śraddhere kabhu rasa diyā seve nā*

“When spiritual attachment (*rati*) is manifest, one never leaves the company of those endowed with advanced faith. If immature devotees with pliable faith are presented with a devotional mellow, they will never be able to properly serve it.”

nāma kṛpā nā korile līlā śunā jāya nā

“Without first receiving the mercy of the Holy Name, one should never listen to recitations of Kṛṣṇa’s confidential pastimes.”

*vyavahita līlā-gāne kāma dūra haya nā
aparādha-vyavadhāne siddha-deha pāya nā*

“One who is covered by offenses may sing the pastimes of the Lord, but this will never do away with the lust burning in his heart. By the blockage of offenses, one’s eternal spiritual body (*siddha-deha*) will never be attained.”

In the following letters, appearing in the book *Prabhupāder Patravalī*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura clearly defines the path to attain *rāga-mārga*:

āpnāra pātre sāstra-sāra-saṅgraha darsana kariyā baḍi ānanda lābha karilam. ei sakala kathā cinte bāla kariyā ālocanā karilai jānīte pāriben ye, ālaya haite jāta traṅcade pākā-buddhi prakṛta prastābe phala-pradāne asamartha haya / āmarā kṣudra jīva, vidhi-pather pathik; tabe rāger virodhi nahi / rāger kathā baḍa, tabe āmāder mukhe uhā śobhā pāya na / choṭa mukhe baḍa kathā śunile bhajanānūrāgi-gaṇa hāsya kariyā udāiyā diben /

kṛṣṇa ki vastu, tāhā yāhāra upalabdhi haya nāi, tāhāra anurāga-pathe unnatadhikāra prāptir ceṣṭā-ālasya jñāpak; ihā mahājana-gaṇa pade pade boliyācen /

śrī bhagavān-nāma u bhagavān eki vastu / yāhāder nijer bandavicāre nāma-nāmīte bheda buddhi ācche, tāhāder anartha-nivṛttir janya bhajana-kuśala janer sevā karā nitasta āvaśyaka; ihā dekhāibār janya śrī gaurasunderar pāṛśad-bhakta-gaṇa tāhā varṇana karen / totāpāṭhir nyāya āmarā yadi uhā āudāyite yāi, tāhā haile loka āmādigke ‘prākṛta-sahajiyā’ baliya nirdeśa pūrvaka āmāder ātmastaritā kāmāiyā dibe / prākṛta sahajiyā-gaṇa ei rūpa durgatipakṣe ḍūriyā giyācche baliya sei sakala ‘pañke gauriva sīdati’ dalke rāgānugā-bhaktir mahimā pradarśana karite haile svayaṁ bhajanacatura haiyā apararer maṅgala vidhāna karite haya / sutarām likhita kathāguli āpani bhālo kariyā bujhibār yatna kariben / ‘bhajana’ bahirer vā loka dekhāibār vastu nahe / ucchaisvare hari-nāma kariben, tāhā haile ālasyarūpa bhoga āmādigke grāsa karite paribe nā /

“I was extremely glad to see in your letter the very gist of all the sayings of *śāstra*! After deliberating over the matter nicely in your heart you will find out that precocious thinking born of laziness can bear no real fruit. We are tiny *jivas*, traversing the path of *vidhi*, yet we are not inimical to *rāga*. *Rāga-kathā* is high, but in our small mouth it doesn’t look nice. Hearing such high words from our little mouth, devotees whose life and soul is *bhajana* will laughingly push us away.

Having no idea of Who is Kṛṣṇa, one’s trying to raise oneself up onto the path of *rāga* exposes his laziness; *Mahājanas* proclaim this at every step.

Śrī Bhagavān and the Name of Bhagavān are one entity. One who has conditioned perception of difference between *nāma* and *nāmī* is utterly required to serve devotees accomplished in *bhajana* for rectification of one's *anarthas*; to demonstrate this, the eternal associates of Śrī Gaurasundara have described the kind of *bhajana* such devotees engage in. If we go to repeat it like parrots, people will designate us as '*prākṛta-sahajiyās*' and thus bear down our self-assurance. But if we want to show all these *prākṛta-sahajiyās* mired in their misconceptions the real glory of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, we have to learn the art of *bhajana* ourselves and only then try for others' eternal benefit.

So try to carefully understand what is written. *Bhajana* is nothing external nor any means for showing off. Loudly call out *nāma*, then the spirit of enjoyment in the form of laziness won't be able to swallow us."

āpnāra 24śe tārikher patra pāiyā samācāra jñāta hailām / āpni
vṛndāvane giyā vaiṣṇava-gaṇer nikāṭa ye aṣṭa-kālīya-lilā-smaraṇādir
viṣaya jñāniyāchen, uhā ādaraṇīya, sandeha nāi / kintu yebhāve e
sakala viṣaya anarthamayī avastāya dhāraṇā karā haya, viṣayaṭi serūpa
nahe / śrī hari-nāma grhaṇa karite karite se-sakala viṣaya vyaktivīṣeṣa
jñānite pāren, uhāi svarūper paricaya / anartha-nivṛtti haile svarūpa
uddhudh haya / svarūper udbodhane nityapratīti āpnāte āsiyā upasthita
haya / uhā keha kāhākeu kapaṭatā kariyā śikṣā deya nā vā nirṇaya
kariyā deya nā / tabe niṣkapaṭacite pracur hari-nāma karite karite ye
upalabhdī viṣaya haya, tāhā sādhu-gurur pāda-padma nivedana kariyā
sei viṣayer dhāraṇā suddha u samartana kariyā lite haya / uhāi ekā-
daśa prakāra svarūper paricaya / nānā sthāner avivecaka guru-gaṇa
ye-sakala kathā ayogaya sādhaḱer upara kṛtrimabhāver cāpāiyā dena,

*uhāke siddhir paricaya balā jāya nā / jini svarūpa-siddhi lābha karen,
tini e sakala paricaye svataḥ siddhi paricita hana evaṁ śrī-gurudeva
sei sakala viṣaye bhajanaonntir sāhāya kariyā thāken mātṛa / āmāra
ei viṣaye adhika vaktāvyā nāi / sādhaḥ siddhir unnatikrame ei sakala
kathā svābhāviki bhāve akapaṭa sevonmukha hṛdaye prakāṣita haya /*

“I have noted your letter dated the 24th. The *aṣṭa-kāliya-lilā* about which you have heard from the Vaiṣṇavas in Vṛndāvana should be highly regarded no doubt. But the way in which these pastimes are conceived of in the contaminated state is totally corrupt. Some fortunate individuals are capable of knowing these things after chanting for a long time, for that is the identity of the true self. But it can only be known after one is freed of mental contaminations. With the awakening of this spiritual identity, one automatically has constant cognition of his spiritual form. Those who say that they can teach or reveal this identity are practicing a kind of deception; it cannot be done. On the other hand, if a devotee receives some inspiration after sincerely chanting for a long time, he should go to the *sad-guru* or advanced devotees and ask for it to be confirmed and purified by them. The spiritual identity has eleven aspects (*ekā-daśa-bhāva*). There are many cases of unscrupulous *gurus* who artificially force-feed these designations on unqualified practitioners, but we cannot call this the mark of spiritual perfection. Those who have achieved the perfection of being fixed in their spiritual identity (*svarūpa-siddhi*) have attained such a realization through internal revelation and the spiritual master’s only involvement in these matters is to help the further advancement of a disciple. As a practitioner

progresses toward spiritual perfection, all these things are revealed naturally within the heart that sincerely seeks service.”

*jāhāte śrī-nāmer kṛpā haya, sarvatobhāve śrī-nāmer nikata bāhāi
prāthanā kariben / aṣṭa-kāla-lilā smaraṇa prabhṛti anartha-bukta
avasthār kṛtya nahe / kirtana-mukhai śravaṇa haya evaṁ smaraṇer
suyoga upasthita haya / sei kālai aṣṭa-kāla-lilā-sevār anubhūti sambhava
/ kṛtrim-vicāre aṣṭa-kāla smaraṇa karite nāi /*

“We should constantly pray to the Holy Name for His mercy. One who is still in a contaminated state should not engage in *smaraṇa* of the daily cycle of the Lord’s pastimes (*aṣṭa-kāliya-lilā*). When we engage in chanting the Holy Names, we are simultaneously engaged in hearing and the opportunity for remembering is included in that. One should not engage in *aṣṭa-kāliya-lilā-smaraṇa* on false premises.”

*śrī nāma grahaṇa karite karite anartha apasārita haila śrī nāmai rūpa,
gua, u lilā āpnā haite sphūrta haibe /
ceṣṭā kariyā kṛtrim bhāve rūpa, guṇa, u lilā smaraṇa karite haibe nā /*

“There is no point in making a separate effort to artificially remember the Lord’s form, qualities and pastimes. The Lord and His Name are one and the same. This will be understood clearly when the coverings in our hearts are removed. By chanting without offenses you will personally realize that all perfections come from the Holy Name.”

It is also interesting to note that in an old copy of *Jaiva-dharma* published by the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, in 1953 Śrīla Kesava Mahārāja writes in the introduction:

śrīla prabhupāder vicāra-dhārā anusāre, bhajane kiñcit unnat-adhikāra lābh nā karā parjanta ‘rasa-vicāre’ kāhāra-o praveśa karā ucit nahe / śrīla prabhupāda ‘bhāi sahajiyā’, ‘prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣaṇi’ o anyānya bāhu prabandhādir madhye ihā suspastabhāve vyakta kariyāchen/ athaca etadin jāvat anadhikāri byaktir nikāṭe-o rasa-vicāra-sambalita ei ‘jaiva-dharma’-grantha-khāni samarpaṇa karite haiyāche/ ihā śrīla prabhupāder vicāra-dhārār anukūl nahe/ daivāt tāhār aikāntika preranā-krame tāhāra-i mano’bhiṣṭa pūrana-kalpe, śrīla ṭhākura bhaktivinoder kṛpā-katākṣa-lābhāśāy, tāhār nija-janer preranāy ihā tin-bhāge vibhakta haiyāche/ ‘rasa-vicāra-mūlak’ tṛtīya khaṇḍa āmrā anadhikāri sādhanāner nikāṭa arpaṇ karite icchā kari nā/ tajjanya, atyanta durmmūlyer batsare sāmānya paṭ-ti mudrā grahaṇa kariyā-i 1-m, o 2-ya khaṇḍa ekatre pradatta haibel/

“According to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s line of thought, even if one engages in *bhajana* but is not highly qualified, it is improper to enter into discussions on *rasa*. Śrīla Prabhupāda has expressed this very clearly in such works as *Bhāi Sahajiyā*, *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣiṇi* and many other essays. Nevertheless, even today there are many unqualified persons who are given to studying the portions of *Jaiva Dharma* containing the analysis of *rasa*. According to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s understanding, this is detrimental. Being the worthy recipient of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s merciful glance, and being destined with an increasingly intense desire to fulfill his innermost wishes, he has divided the book into three

sections for his followers. According to his desire we will not be selling the third volume, viz. *rasa-vicara* to the unqualified public. The first two volumes will be available for a symbolic price.”

In his introduction to Professor N. K. Sanyal’s book, *Sree Krishna Chaitanya*, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura writes as follows:

“One who presumes to instruct others without himself realizing the nature of the course of loving devotion, or who, although himself cognizant of the nature of the path of devotion, instructs the disciple regarding the same without due consideration of the aptitude of the latter, is the *pseudo-guru*. It is necessary by all means to renounce the guidance of such a *guru*.”

“Those who, falling into the clutches of the *pseudo-guru* by neglect of the proper exercise of their judgment, deceive themselves by consenting to adopt the higher grade of worship to which they are not entitled, fall under the category of the third class of offenders described above. But those who, even after becoming aware of their unfitness, persist in practicing the higher method of worship, hoping thereby to gain honour and wealth for themselves, commit the offense of religious hypocrisy. Until this defect is discarded, there can be no appearance of the principle of spontaneous liking for Kṛṣṇa. These hypocrites only deceive the world by the display of the external insignia of sectarianism and pseudo-renunciation. Those persons who choose to show their regard for these arrogant persons in consideration of the external marks exhibited by them, failing to attain the

favour of Kṛṣṇa, only prove to be thorns in the sides of the people of this world.”

Those who are proclaimed as *rasika-gurus* as well as their followers, often quote the famous *vikṛiḍitaṁ* verse of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (*vikṛiḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ* 10.33.42) to support their engagement in hearing the *rāsa-līlā* pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The assumption of these *rasika* camps is that even if they are contaminated with lusty desires within their hearts, they will nonetheless be able to relish the Lord’s *rāsa-līlā* if they simply hear from a *rasikācārya*.

Although these *rasikas* have presented their arguments in an apparently scholarly manner, they nonetheless grossly neglect the mood of our *ācāryas* and especially that of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has written further as follows:

“It is not empiric wisdom that is the object of quest of the devotee. Those who read the scriptures for gathering empiric wisdom will be pursuing the wild goose chase. There are not a few dupes (duplicates or imitators) of their empiric scriptural erudition. These dupes have their admiring under-dupes (followers). But the mutual admiration society of dupes does not escape, by the mere weight of their number, the misfortunes due to the deliberate pursuit of the wrong course in accordance with the suggestions of our lower selves.” (*The Harmonist*, December 1931, vol. XXIX No. 6)

Deliberating upon the *vikṛīḍitaṁ* verse, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda writes in his *Anubhāṣya* commentary to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* 5.45:

ye vyakti śrīmad bhāgavata-varṇita kṛṣṇera aprākṛta rasādi-madhura-līlā nijera aprākṛta-hṛdaya-dvārā viśvāsa kariyā varṇana karena vā śravaṇa karena, tāhāra prākṛta manasija kāma sampūrṇa-rūpe kṣīṇa haiyā yāya / aprākṛta kṛṣṇa-līlāra vaktā vā śrotā aprākṛta-rājye-i nijera astitva anubhāva karāya prakṛtira guṇa-traya tāhāke parabhūta karite samartha haya nā / tini jade parama nirguṇa-bhāva-viśiṣṭa haiyā acañcala-mati evaṁ kṛṣṇa-sevāya nijādhikāra bujhite samartha / prākṛta-sahajiyā-gaṇera nyāya ei prasaṅge keha yena e-rūpa mane nā karena ye, “prākṛta-kāma-lubdha jīva sambandha-jñāna lābha karibāra parivartte prākṛta-buddhi-viśiṣṭa haiyā nija-bhogamāyā rājye vāsa karata sādhana-bhakti parityāga-pūrvaka kṛṣṇera rāsādi aprākṛta vihāra vā līlāke nija-sadṛśa prākṛta-bhogera ādarsa jāniyā, tāhāra śravaṇa o kīrtanādi karile-i tāhāra jaḍa kāma vinaṣṭa haibe’ / ihā niṣedha karibāra janya-i mahāprabhu “viśvāsa”-śabda-dvārā prākṛta-sahajiyā-gaṇera prākṛta-buddhi nirasana kariyāchena /

“A person who hears or describes the *rāsa-līlā* and other such pastimes as found in the *Bhāgavatam*, living them in his transcendental heart, then finds the material desires for sensual pleasure wane to nothingness. Because Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are transcendental, one who hears or speaks about them enters into that transcendental domain where the material qualities can no longer influence him. Even while in contact with matter, he is unaffected; his mind remains calm and steady. He is able to understand his own qualifications to serve Kṛṣṇa. No one should think, as do the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, that an ordinary living entity will overcome lust by hearing and chanting these pastimes if he is filled with contaminations

like lust and greed, if he avoids accumulating the appropriate knowledge of the relationships between matter, the individual soul and the Supreme Lord, if he remains fixed in a subjective world centered on his own sensual pleasures, if his intelligence continues to be permeated with material conceptions, if he neglects all the purifying activities of devotional service in practice, and especially if he takes the spiritual love affairs of the Supreme Lord to have the same kinds of sensual motivations that he himself experiences. For this reason, Mahāprabhu emphasized the word ‘faith’ (*viśvāsa*) in order to forestall such *sahajiyā* arguments.” (*Anubhāṣya*, Cc. *Antya* 3.45).

The members of the *rasika* camp have taken exception to our statement that one must “first come to the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*” before hearing *rasa-kathā*. However, our statement is supported by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda’s definition of *śraddhānvitaḥ*. In the word for word translation to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 3.45, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has said that *śraddhānvitaḥ* means ‘aspiring for service with an unflinching purified heart’, ‘*śraddhāya aprākṛta-suhṛt viśvāsenā yuktaḥ sevonmukhaḥ san.*’

It should also be mentioned that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has stressed that the word *dhīra* refers to one who has mastered the six urges of the senses, ‘*śaḍ-vegajayī acañcalaḥ rāgānuṣāṅgaḥ gosvāmī.*’ Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja also confirms this as follows:

“In his writings, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has laid stress on the word *dhīra*, meaning self-controlled. To hear these elevated subjects, one must enter into the culture of sense-control, otherwise he will be destroyed.” (*The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, verse 10.10 commentary)

Śrīla B. P. Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja further explains his Guru Mahārāja’s teachings on this point:

“In Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s commentary to the above verse (*vikṛīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ*) from the *rāsa-līlā*, it is written:

*ata eva śraddhānvita itī sāstrāviśvāsinaṁ nāmāparādhinaṁ premāpi
nāṅgikarotīti bhāvaḥ... ayaṁ śrī-rāsaḥ śrīr api nāpa yam/*

*sāstra-buddhi-vivekādyair api durgamam iksyate
gopīnām rasa-vartmedam tāsām anugatīr vinā*

“The word *śraddhānvitaḥ* indicates that ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa does not come to those who do not believe the scriptures or who persist in committing offenses against the Holy Name. Thus even Lakṣmī cannot enter into this *rasa*-dance. Without exclusively following in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, even those who believe in the scriptures and the very intelligent cannot enter onto this most difficult path of sacred rapture chalked out by the *gopīs*.”

“For this reason, our most revered Śrīla Prabhupāda never approved of open discussion by the unqualified of the divine *rasa*, which is beyond the attainment of even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, and always gave priority to the chanting of the Holy Name.”

“The unique characteristic of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s preaching was that even though he often spoke about the highest realms of devotional perfection, he always took

care that none of his disciples got ahead of themselves and skipped necessary intermediate steps in the stage of practice to engage in *anadhikāra-carcā* (discussion of matters for which one is not qualified). If one attempts the cultivation of *rāga-mārga* prior to gaining the proper qualifications for such a practice and at the same time pays less attention to the chanting of the Holy Names, he is like a person who tries to pick the fruit without climbing the tree. He will only get the damaged fruit that has fallen to the ground. Prabhupāda characterised those who engaged in such *anadhikāra-carcā* as *prākṛta-sahajiyās* and rebuked them for their entering into realms for which they were not qualified.” (*Of Love and Separation*, Chapter 3)

Elaborating on the word *varṇayet* (performing *saṅkīrtana* following the path of the *rūpānugās*, viz. the Holy Name, then qualities, then pastimes etc.), Śrīla Purī Mahārāja explains in several articles as follows:

“In *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī outlines the process to spiritual realization:

*prathamam nāmaṇaḥ śravaṇam antaḥkaraṇa-suddhyārtham apekṣyam /
suddhe cāntaḥ-karaṇe rūpa-śravaṇena tad-udaya-yogyatā bhavati /
samyag-udite ca rūpe guṇānām sphuraṇam sampadyate / sampanne
ca guṇānām sphuraṇe parikara-vaiśiṣṭyena tad-vaiśiṣṭyam sampadyate
/ tatas teṣu nāma-rūpa-guṇa-parikareṣu samyak sphuriteṣu lilānām
sphuraṇam suṣṭhu bhavati /*

“First it is expected that one should hear the Lord’s Names in order to purify the heart. Once the mind and

intelligence have been purified in this way, one can hear about Kṛṣṇa's form, through which one's qualification to visualize it is obtained. When the form of the Lord has been clearly visualized, one can experience His qualities. Once these have been clearly understood, one develops one's own individual spiritual characteristics through the particular characteristics of the Lord's associates. Thus, once the Name, form, qualities and associates of the Lord have been realized, a clear realization of Kṛṣṇa's activities will follow." (*Krama-sandarbha* commentary to *Bhag.* 7.5.18)

"Some unscrupulous characters take this verse (*vikṛiḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ*) and others like it to mean that they can neglect the chanting of the Holy Names and spend their time in hearing and discussing the erotic pastimes of the Lord such as His *rāsa-līlā*. These misguided souls think that by hearing about Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā*, in a state of material contamination, they can become purified and thus qualified for *rāgānugā* practice. However, if one does not seek the mercy of the Holy Name first, but artificially tries to appropriate the right to engage in such practices, he is like a pumpkin that ripens too quickly and bursts—he inevitably falls down." (Article from *Caitanya-vāṇī* 18.11, Feb. 1978)

"Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs* are incomprehensible to someone who depends on scriptural injunctions and logical arguments to engage in devotional service; one has to follow the transcendental path of the *gopīs* themselves. These are the indications found in the *Bhāgavata* in the verse beginning with *vikṛiḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ*, 10.33.42."

“The most merciful and worshipable Śrīla Prabhupāda was so kind that he advised conditioned souls like ourselves, whose hearts are filled with all kinds of unwanted desires, to avoid prematurely getting involved in discussing such topics and to simply throw ourselves at the mercy of the Holy Name. The idea is that one should harbor the powerful desire to attain that goal (on the theory that one attains the perfection one seeks — *yadṛṣi bhāvana yasya siddhir bhavati tadṛṣi*) and chant the Holy Name according to the spiritual master’s instruction.”

“If we cannot follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instruction to chant 100,000 Names every single day without offenses, even a fourth of that amount has a positive effect and quiets the mind. And yet there are those who do not even chant that amount and still think that they can engage in discussions of the Lord’s divine pastimes in the hope of being able to relish them. This is pure arrogance!”

(*Of Love in Separation — Meditations on My Divine Master*)

“Our most worshipable spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted Jīva Gosvāmī from the *Bhakti Sandarbha*: ‘First it is expected that one should hear the Lord’s Names in order to purify the inner self.’ (*prathamam nāmnah śravaṇam antaḥkaraṇa-suddhyārtham apekṣyam*).”

“Prabhupāda explains that only after one’s mind and intelligence are purified by the chanting of the Holy Names can one hear about Kṛṣṇa’s form, qualities, associates, and finally, pastimes. One who has not yet reached the stage of *ruci*, or taste for devotional service,

may prematurely go to a pretender *guru* to take initiation and instruction in *rāgānugā-bhakti*, without first making an effort to chant the Holy Name offenselessly. Such a person may make a pretense of relishing Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* while still affected by materialistic contamination, but such an attempt will not succeed in bringing him love for the Divine Couple and service for Them in the spiritual abode."

"The *sādhya-sādhana-tattva* is fully expained in the teachings of Rāmānanda Rāya, but it is clear from the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned above that the practices that lead to the supreme goal of service to the divine couple, are only possible through the purificatory process of chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord. The Lord Himself has confirmed this statement when He said '*ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra*:' From the chanting of the Holy Names all perfections will come to everyone. "All perfections" refers to perfections of spiritual life. Even though the love of the inhabitants of Vraja described by Rāmānanda Rāya is the most secret treasure of the Vedic storehouse of knowledge, the impossible feat of winning this great prize can be accomplished by the mercy of the Holy Name; it can achieve miracles. Mahāprabhu stated to Tapana Mīśra, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's grandfather: "The object and the means to attain it are found through the chanting of the Holy Names," and "As you repeatedly practice the chanting of the Holy Names the seedling of love will sprout and you will then know both the goal of life and the means to attain it."

“Great authorities teach that one should remember the pastimes of the Lord according to the eight times of the day in relation to the eight verses of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. In his *Bhakti Sandarbha* Jīva Gosvāmī states that in Kali-yuga any type of devotional service must be done in conjunction with the chanting of the Holy Names (*yadyāpi anyā bhaktiḥ kalau kartavya tadā kīrtanākhy-bhakti-samyojanenaiva*). One should not give up *kīrtana* to engage in *smaraṇa*.” (*Art of Sādhana*, Chapter 14.)

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja reveals his stance on *rasa-kathā* in the following statements:

“Once Prabhupāda arranged to preach in Vṛndāvana for the full month of Kārttika. He asked Bhāratī Mahārāja at that time to explain the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the story of Prahlāda. He did not ask for narrations about Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, Yaśodā or anything of Vṛndāvana. ‘Preach *śuddha-bhakti* of Prahlāda first. People are ripe in *sahajiyā*, imitation of devotion. Just try to make them understand, to enter the plane of *bhakti*. That is great; what to speak of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* —that is far, far above.’ There in Vṛndāvana the people wondered, ‘What is this? They are explaining *Bhāgavatam*, but leaving aside the Tenth Canto. They are explaining the Seventh Canto, the Prahlāda-*līlā*, the lower portion of *bhakti*. That is wonderful and strange.’”

“I found later on that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself spoke for several days on the boundary line between Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. He read and explained the

Upadeśāmṛta of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. He did not speak about Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or about Kṛṣṇa, but about *Upadeśāmṛta* —the basic teachings. His attention was always focused on the basics, because the fruit will come naturally. ‘Pour water onto the root and the fruit will come up by itself.’”

“Sitting between Rādhā-kunḍa and Śyāma-kunḍa he explained not *Bhāgavatam*, but *Upadeśāmṛta*. *Upadeśāmṛta* contains the substance of Mahāprabhu’s teaching in the language of Rūpa Gosvāmī. Śrīla Prabhupāda explained these topics and not anything of *Govinda-līlāmṛta* or Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*. The higher topics of *mādhurya līlā*, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s amorous pastimes, were left aside.

“Our master did not allow us to read the books where the highest *līlās* are described: *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, *Stavakusumāñjali*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. He did not allow us to study and to discuss them. Rather, he would be very much disturbed if he heard that someone was interfering with the higher *līlās* in those books. He did not like it. There are three chapters of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that we were generally not allowed to discuss fully, including the conversations with Rāmānanda Rāya. Where the *līlā* portion of Rādhā-Govinda is mentioned, we were not to delve. Of course when *parāyaṇa* (consecutive chanting of the whole book) was taking place, we were to go on reading those sections, but without giving any particular attention to the *līlā* of the highest order of *rāga*. That was barred: “Don’t try to come into details there. That

will come automatically when it is time. Do not make it a public discussion. Do not place it in the public eye.”
(*Follow the Angels, Chapter two*)

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja speaks further:

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: “Yes, *Govinda-līlāmṛta* is there, with *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlās*, the eight-fold *līlā* of Rādhā-Govinda. This is for the higher students.”

Devotee: “But in *Jaiva Dharma* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mentions some of the *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlās*.”

Śrīdhara Mahārāja: “Yes, but he has given everything in *Jaiva Dharma* with much caution. Here Jīva Gosvāmī explains, you must listen from a real source. So he will get there the real thing. It is not like lust, just the opposite of lust. So with that attitude you are to approach, *dhīra*. Master of his own senses. He only is qualified to try to accept or listen, to enter into this flavor, not those that are not master of their own senses. And if he does:

*naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy-anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty-ācaran mauḍhyād yathārudro ‘bdhi-jam viṣam*

‘One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison.’ (*Bhāg.* 10.33.30)

“Due to ignorance, anyone may venture to enter into this domain due to ignorance, even in mind, even mentally, *vināśyati* —he will be doomed. If he is not Śiva, if he takes the poison, he is sure to die. And Śiva took the poison and then ornamental thing came in his throat, *nila-kaṇṭha*. By the folded palm, Śiva drank the poison, but it was an ornament to his throat. But if one who is not Śiva, if he takes poison, he is sure to die. So one who is not *dhīra* and who has got no qualification to enter into this domain, he is sure to die. The warning is given in *Bhāgavatam* by Śukadeva Gosvāmī. It is nectar but still properly you must come to it. There is a possibility of mistaking it for your awkward enjoyment. Then you will be doomed forever.” (Room Conversation, Nov. 12, 1981)

“*Duṣṭa phala karibe ārijana*’ — Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura warns that we will get only a bad result if we venture to cross that line. It is *aparādha*. From the lower position, the steps are shown: *śraddhā*, *sādhū-saṅga*, *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, then *anartha-nivṛtti*, when the undesirable things vanish. Then comes *ruci*, then *āsakti*, then *bhāva-bhakti*, the sprout of real devotion. Then *prema-bhakti*, and *sneha*, *mana*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, *mahābhāva* —by such steps we are to approach the highest plane.”

“Our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, asked that we keep Rādhārāṇī in great reverence, ‘On your head, over your head—don’t be bold enough to approach directly: *Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*. Try to keep Her and Her group at a respectful distance, above your head. Don’t rush towards that position. It is not that cheap.’”

“The whole tenor of Guru Mahārāja’s life was such: ‘That is high, very high, and from below we are to honor that.’ We must establish this conception, the proper regard for that higher *lilā*, throughout the entire world: ‘That is too high.’”

“Prabhupāda has ordered such strict behavior, and we also follow that. At so many other places they show the *rāsa-lilā* with dolls, but I never do that. Following what is true to my understanding of my Gurudeva’s will and his words, I do not make any show of *jhulana-lilā* or *rāsa-lilā* or anything of that nature. I find in my heart that this is not pleasing to my Guru Mahārāja. But in so many *mathas* (temples) I see at present, I hear also, that they are doing that, but I strictly abstain from showing *jhulana-lilā* and *rāsa-lilā*. That is too high for us.”

“I must be true to the words of my Gurudeva if I want my realization and not just some sort of popularity. Some may discuss the higher *lilās* to attract people, to make money, or even to develop a favorable field for preaching, but I do not do this. I do not want popularity or any recognition as a higher *ācārya*. I am a student.”

“Still I am a student. I consider myself to be a student, a faithful student. What I heard from my Gurudeva, I try my best to stick to that, to keep my position there as I heard from him. I do not want to mutilate that in any way to suit my purpose. I try not to do that. Of course for big propaganda some may adopt different ways, as they see fit. They are now free. But I am not one to do so, to go on in such a way. I try to follow my Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda.” (*Follow the Angels*. Chapter 2)

“*Pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*. The whole tenor of our Guru Mahārāja, of the nature of his service is herein. Not only for him, but he has extended the banner to all. Come under the banner of such nature of thought about the divinity, an initiation will be safely secured. This verse is the inner life of my Guru Mahārāja.” (Sept. I, 1981)

This verse, *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge*, was repeatedly glorified and emphasized by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja as the embodiment of his Guru Mahārāja’s mood—that of extreme respect for this higher path.

When confronted with the obvious differences between the standards of our bona-fide *ācāryas* and those of the ‘*rasika-gurus*’ the under dupes simply side-step the issue entirely by saying, “Oh, you just don’t understand the inner mood of the *ācāryas*.”

Although *rasika-gurus* claim that they alone know the inner mood of our *ācāryas*, the present *sevaite-ācārya* of the Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha strongly disagrees:

“In my forty two years with Śrīla Guru Mahārāja (Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja) I never once heard him give permission for that (hearing and describing the intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) to us. It was the desire of Guru Mahārāja to tell something about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, of Rādhārāṇī, and others, so we heard from him, but always he told us in a very cautious way. Never did he tell us to read *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* or similar books, but some things he told us, and I know many *śloka*s from *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Vidagdha-mādhava*, *Lalita-mādhava* and others. That is, Guru Mahārāja had me study *kāvya* (Sanskrit

composition), and it is necessary to read these verses to understand the many varieties of Sanskrit metre, language, beauty, *alaṅkāra*, etc. But I can say it is a special case, it is not for all. These books are no doubt the supreme books of our *saṁpradāya*, but they are not for all and everyone's reading. If anyone will read these books then they will become *prākṛta-sahajiyā*, and what will be for them?" (Śrīpāda Bhakti Sundara Govinda Mahārāja, London, Oct. 26, 1993)

Śrīla Purī Mahārāja commented on the development of the *sahajiyā* party in western countries as follows:

"In your foreign countries a party of *sahajiyās* has appeared. And it is not a matter of inventing something—what they speak is there in 10th Canto, in the works of the Gosvāmīs, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. But the very fact of their speaking such higher topics to unprepared audiences, ignoring the glories of the Holy Name, who is the only real path to this higher *līlā*, is *nāmāparādha*. Mahāprabhu never did like this. He was relishing these topics with a few of his *antaraṅga-bhaktas*, and He was inspiring the masses to perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and Himself performed *saṅkīrtana* with great numbers of devotees. *Pracāra* should be *nāma-pracāra*!" (Room conversation 7th Feb. 1996. Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. Śrī Gopīnātha Gauḍīya Maṭha)

"If I spoke here on *Bhramara-gītā*, *Gopī-gītā* and other such high topics, I would fill this room (laughs). This room would be full. But these topics are very high—not for everyone. Śrīla Prabhupāda never spoke like this in

public —these confidential topics. Mahāprabhu only spoke these things with four and a half devotees. Not every devotee.” (Śrīla Purī Mahārāja, Room conversation, Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, Śrī Gopīnātha Gauḍīya Maṭha, 1994)

“Lust can be conquered through chanting and this chanting should be done sincerely. Unless we attain the eligibility, we cannot go into these very esoteric pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Even Caitanya Mahāprabhu through His own example was relishing this *rasa* literature of Caṇḍīdāsa, Govinda Dāsa, Vidyāpati, the *rāsa-līlās* with a very select few. He never went into public to discuss this. Because these pastimes of the Lord, these relationships with the Lord, with His devotees, are very esoteric and have to be understood in that manner.”

“So we are followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and as such, we have to acquire through chanting, the eligibility to come to that platform where we can openly discuss or even discuss with one another, these intimate pastimes with the correct conception. It has to be done with an eager mind, wanting, even hankering, to understand how we can get rid of our lust, anger —rather than discussing this as an entertainment, which is so often done. So chanting means without offences. The ten offences are there, they have been enumerated, so chanting means only when we get rid of our offences. Then gradually this eligibility may come when the six enemies begin to subside.”

“When one comes to that level of consciousness, when the mind is undisturbed by the material influence, at

that time, he can actually begin to start to serve purely. And then all the pastimes can also be meditated upon properly.”

“However, one should not consider chanting to be something very simple —something which is given to the beginners to keep them quiet, or to think that it is not the principle limb of pure devotion. In fact, this is the very basis of pure devotion, because without having proper attachment to the Holy Name or proper understanding of the Holy Name, there is no question of going any further! The only thing that can give you *prema* is pure chanting. There is no other process that can bring you to the level of *prema*.”

“You may feel sometimes a certain attraction, but if this is not steady, you cannot interpret it as *lobha*, which is so rare. You cannot just find it anywhere.”

(*Śrīla Pūrī Mahārāja, Lecture, Vṛndāvana 11th Nov. 1994*)

In a recent barrage of essays, the *rasika* camp has cited some examples in an attempt to support the idea that our Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda spoke of higher topics to the unqualified. The examples presented in those essays were of an exceptional nature, not standard. Actually our Guru Mahārāja never spoke in public about *rasa-kathā* —only to a very few individuals did he ever raise such topics and those too were not of a confidential nature. Our Guru Mahārāja’s main preaching was always from *Bhagavad-gītā*, basic fundamental Gauḍīya philosophy. Here are a few statements by our Guru Mahārāja on this topic:

“Thoroughly study *Bhagavad-gītā*, and after studying *Bhagavad-gītā*, if you are fortunate enough to understand what is Kṛṣṇa, then, Kṛṣṇa says, surrender. That is the beginning of understanding Kṛṣṇa. Don’t try to understand the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs*.” (Class on Cc. Ādi 1.6, March 30, 1975)

“But as far as possible, very cautiously and very rarely we shall present. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s life we see that in public He never discussed about Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā* with the *gopīs*. That was very confidential discussion amongst His own circle, Rāya Rāmānanda, Svarūpa Dāmodara, like that. And He inquired... Even a learned scholar, He discussed about the philosophy, that Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. But when there was a great devotee like Rāmānanda Rāya, He relished *gopīs*,’ I mean to say, intimate behavior with Kṛṣṇa. So we should remember this, that public may misunderstand this. Therefore we have to present these things very cautiously, not very openly. They may misunderstand.” (Discussion with BTG staff, Dec. 24th, 1969)

“We cannot understand the affairs of the spiritual world on the basis of our experience in the material world. The Lord’s pastimes with the *gopīs* are therefore misunderstood by mundane scholars and word-wranglers. The *parakiyā-rasa* of the spiritual world should not be discussed, except by one who is very advanced in pure devotional service. The *parakiyā-rasa* in the spiritual world and that in the material world are not comparable.” (Cc. *Madhya* 13.24, purp.)

“Although Kṛṣṇa is the purest of the pure, mundane people, thinking of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes that appear immoral, themselves become polluted. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore never publicly discussed Kṛṣṇa’s dealings with the *gopīs*. He used to discuss these dealings only with three confidential friends. He never discussed *rāsa-līlā* publicly, as professional reciters do, although they do not understand Kṛṣṇa or the nature of the audience. However, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu encouraged the public chanting of the Holy Name on a huge scale for as many hours as possible.” (Cc. *Madhya* 4.134, purp.)

The ‘*rasika-gurus*’ claim that A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda wanted to give this *rasa-kathā* to everyone. This is clearly not a fact, especially when we take into consideration the lack of *adhikāra* of his audience. All the close disciples of our Guru Mahārāja who were present during his *ācārya-līlā* will confirm that he never spoke on confidential subject matters to mixed audiences, as implied by the *rasika* camp. Rather, he warned against this. Our Guru Mahārāja was a strict follower of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and as such he never strayed from his instruction.

We also find the same advice, as given by our Guru Mahārāja, being given by his godbrother, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja in his *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam-tīkā* as follows:

“*namo’nanta līlāya’ vākye, sādharmaṇataḥ yāhāra līlār anta nāi, sei anantāmāya-līlā bhagavān śrī kṛṣṇa kei namaskāra bujhāya / kintu śrīla sanātana gosvāmī satyavrata munir antarnihita uddeśyer prati dṛṣṭi kariyā evaṁ nija bhāvānusāre ukta vākyer ekati nigūḍh-artha*

nirṇaya kariyāchen / yathā - ‘sri rāsa-lilākei namaskāra’ / ‘ananta’-
 śabde-yāhāra anta nāi vā śeṣa nai; arthāt nitya, aśeṣa vā asaṅkhyā
 ityādi / ‘lilāya’-śabdanti ‘lilā’-śabder caturthīra ekavacana (namaḥ-
 śabda-yoge) / evaṁ ‘lilā’-śabder vyutpatti ei ye, ‘li’ + ‘la’ = ‘lila’ / ‘la’
 - śabder artha - alīṅgana karā —(li-dhātu kvip-bhāve ‘li’) evaṁ ‘la’-
 śabder artha grahaṇa karā (lā-dhātu u = la) / sūtarām ‘lila’-śabder
 dvārāi gopī-gaṇer alīṅgana grhaṇa karā haya yāhāte sei rāsa-kṛidādi
 lilākei namaskāra bujhāitechen / ei janyai ‘ananta-lilāya’ balite,
 tikāra —”gokula viśayikā sarvāpi lilodiṣṭā asye ca nama iti ‘bhāvah’”
 / likhiyā śrī sanātana gosvāmī nijeu ‘madhureṇa samāpayet’ —vākyer
 sārthakatā kariyāchen /

ārau ekati viśaya esthāle viśayabhāve lakṣya karā prayojana /
 dāmodarāṣṭaker antīm śloke śrīla gosvāmīpāda jānāitechen yei śrī kṛṣṇer
 rāsa-kṛidādi lilā sarvāpekṣā śreṣṭha haile u tāhā ‘parama-gopātvena
 anarbhivāñcayana...kiñcideva saṁkete nodiśan praṇamati’ —ihāra
 tātṭharya ei ye, rāsa-lilār parama-gopaniyatva-hetu (satyavrata muni)
 kīṅkaranmātra saṅketa athavā ektū-mātra injita kariyāchen / ihā dvārā
 sprṣṭai pratiyamāna haya ye, yathāne-sekhāne yakhana-takhana rāsa-
 lilār śravaṇa-kīrtana karā nitānta avidhi / śudhu tāhāi nahe, anadhikāri
 vyakti yadi kāma dūra karibār chalanā kariyā rāsa-lilā mane-mane u
 cintā, ācarana athavā anukāraṇa karen, tabe tini rāsa-lilār gaurava-
 hāni karār aparādhe niścayi adhaḥ patita haiben / evaṁ akālapaka
 prākṛta-sahajiyā-vāder nyāya kāmuk u grhāsakta haiyā paḍiben /
 rāsa-lilār śravaṇa-kīrtaner kāraṇa u adhikāri nirṇaya-prasaṅge śrīmad
 bhāgavater sei rāsa-lilāri śeṣe yāhā varṇita haiyāche tāhā viśeṣabhāve
 ālocya / yathā —naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy-anīśvaraḥ
 vināśyaty-ācaran maudhyad yathārudro ’bdhi-jam viṣam / ihāra
 tātṭharya ei ye, ‘īśvara’ arthāt prakṛta-yogyā, kṣamatā-saṁpanna
 adhikāra nā haile maner dvārāu kakhan u rāsa-lilā, cintā, ācaraṇa
 vā anuśilana karibe nā / sāksāt śiva samūdrākhita viśa-pāner ekmātra
 adhikāri / kintu anadhikāri arudra vyakti arthāt apātra ‘mahāpātra’

sājiyā yadi rāsa-lilār śravaṇa-kīrtanarūpa viṣa-pāna karena tāhā haile mṛtyu arthāt āsanna-mṛtyurūpa saṁsāra-baddha-daśā avasyantāri / rāsa-lilā sarva-lilā-cūḍāmaṇi evaṁ tāhāra phala u sarva-cūḍāmaṇi / sūtarām tāhāra adhikāri keu sarva-cūḍāmaṇi haite haibe / ye-kona hṛd-roga-grantha, kāmuk, apātra vyaktir pakṣe rāsa-lilā kona prakārai ālocaniya nahe / ajñatā dūra karibāra janya viśva-vidyālayer sarvoccha śikṣā lābha karā ekāntu āvaśyaka haileu prāthamika vidyāthike athavā alpajña vyaktike sarvaccha śreṇite bhatti haite deuyā haya nā / sūtarām indriyāsakta svalpajña vyaktike rāsa-lilār sarvottama śikṣā deuyā yukti-saṅgata nahe /

‘The statement *namo ‘nanta-lilāya* is usually understood to mean “obeisances unto *ananta-lilā-bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa*,” or He whose pastimes are limitless. But Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī looks toward the esoteric intention of Satyavrata Muni and also according to his own mood of realization has revealed a very confidential purport. Thus, “Obeisances unto *śrī rāsa-lilā*.” The word *ananta* indicates that which has no end; namely perpetual, inexhaustible, countless, and so forth. In the expression *lilāya*, the word *lilā* is of the fourth case ending in the singular number (in conjunction with the word *nāmaḥ*). The derivation of *lilā* is - *li* + *lā* = *lilā*. The meaning of the word *li* is to embrace, and the meaning of *lā* is to accept. Therefore, the word *lilā* is indicative of that sportive pastime in which Lord Kṛṣṇa accepts the embraces of the *gopīs*; thus it is understood to mean in this context that obeisances are being offered unto the *rāsa-lilā* and other associated pastimes. For this reason it is stated *ananta-lilāya*. And as Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has written in his *tikā*, ‘It is suggested to include all the pastimes associated with the realm of Gokula Vṛndāvana. I offer my obeisances unto

all those *lilās*; such a mood is most certainly expressed in this way.’ By writing this, he has himself fulfilled the quotation of *madhureṇa samāpayet*, all undertakings should be completed sweetly.

“Yet another topic is necessarily indicated at this point. Śrīla (Sanātana) Gosvāmīpāda has revealed that the final *śloka* of *Dāmodarāṣṭakam* shows Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes headed by the *rāsa-līlā* to be the topmost of all. He states ‘Since these are the topmost of confidential topics, they are not mentioned directly. Therefore such confidential pastimes are referred to by a mere hint only, as they are offered obeisances in the words *namo ‘nanta-līlāya.*’ The meaning of this is that because the *rāsa-līlā* is the most highly confidential pastime of the Lord, therefore Satyavrata Muni has mentioned it only with the briefest clue or tiniest glimpse. By so doing, he has made it known that it is always inappropriate to casually hear and chant about the *rāsa-līlā* here and there, whenever and wherever. Not only that, but if an unqualified person deceives himself with an attempt to banish lust, but then contemplates, performs or imitates the *rāsa-līlā*, then such a person certainly becomes degraded due to the offense of minimizing the glories of the factually transcendental *rāsa-līlā*. Eventually he will fall down to become a lusty debauchee and attached householder, just like the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* who prematurely dabble in the highest truth.”

In regard to ascertaining who is qualified to hear and chant about the Lord’s *rāsa-līlā*, it is especially noteworthy to examine the statements of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* presented at the conclusion of the *rāsa-līlā* description (10.33.30):

*naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy-anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty-ācaran mauḍhyād yathārudro 'bdhi-jam viṣam*

“One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison.”

“The purport of this is that one who is not an *īśvara* truly qualified by being endowed with divine potency should never even mentally contemplate, perform or imitate the Lord’s *rāsa-līlā*. Only Lord Śiva himself is able to drink an entire ocean of poison. If an unqualified person who is *arudra* (not Śiva) falsely considers himself to be greatly qualified and tries to drink poison in the form of hearing and chanting about the *rāsa-līlā*, then he would certainly die—that is, he would become tightly bound within the death-like condition of *samsāra* or gross material existence.”

“Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa-līlā* pastimes are the crest-jewel of all His pastimes, and the benefits of cultivating such pastimes are the crest jewel of all benefits. Therefore those who are qualified to relish these topics will be the crest jewels among all devotees. The Lord’s *rāsa-līlā* should never be studied in any way by those who are seized by the disease of the heart, who are lusty for personal gratification, or otherwise unfit. In matters of ordinary education, if one wants to dispel one’s ignorance, it is necessary to gradually master the highest knowledge of

the university; but a beginning student or someone of little knowledge is never admitted prematurely into the highest class. Similarly, it is never appropriate to give instructions about the most elevated topic, the *rāsa-līlā*, to persons of little knowledge who are simply attached to the external bodily senses.” (Śrīla B. P. Keśava Mahārāja, *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam-tikā*, Verse 8)

“One day a devotee was studying the commentaries on *rāsa-līlā*, *bhramara-gītā* and so on, and Śrīla Gurudeva said, “The qualification to hear topics such as *rāsa-līlā* will come when *śrī nāma-kīrtana* has freed the heart from *anarthas*, and *suddha-sattva* has appeared there. Otherwise the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda will appear to be the activities of a worldly hero and heroine, and will only give rise to false ideas. The conception of *rasa* is only possible in the *siddha-deha*, the perfect state. It is impossible to perceive *ṣṅgāra-rasa* in a material body. Only a person who is free from the lower types of enjoyment and is in the stage of *bhāva* is qualified to discuss *sambhoga-rasa*.” (Ācārya Kesari Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī — *His life and Teachings*, Part 4, p. 343)

In this essay we have established, with reference to our *ācāryas*, that the serious student in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not attempt to approach the higher topics of *līlā* without the proper *adhikāra*, qualifications. The proper *adhikāra* has been mentioned as three: *anartha-nivṛtti*, *ruci*, and *lobha*. First, one should become purified of any misconceptions, lust, or material desires within the heart, *anartha-nivṛtti*. Furthermore one should have *ruci*, or a real taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, having abandoned the taste for lower

subject matters. And last but not least one should acquire *lobha*, the intense spiritual greed to hear about *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. The wise student does not attempt to omit any step in the progressive development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One who does so is at risk of being lost forever.

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“Those who are barren of the treasure of *prema*, propelled by duplicity, declare to the whole world their false attainment of *prema*, although in reality, by an external display of *prema* or by announcing it to one and all, it is positively impossible for such

hypocrite destitutes who are deprived of the wealth of *kṛṣṇa-prema* to ever attain it. To make their great fortune known to everybody, adepts of *prākṛta-sahajiyāism* often expose to each other insincere external symptoms of *prema* (such as shedding of tears). Rather than calling such hypocrite *sahajiyās* as *premika*, real *śuddha-bhaktas* go as far as to completely reject their association knowing it to destroy *bhakti*.

The hypocrite *prākṛta-sahajiyā* party in their greed for wealth, women and fame offend *śuddha-bhaktas*... and in turn they adorn themselves with the titles *rasika*, *bhajanānandī*, *bhāgavatottama*, *līlā-rasa-pānonmatta* *rāgānugīya-sādhakāgraganya*, *rasajña*, *rasika-cuḍāmaṇi* etc.”
(Prabhupāda Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura)

