

śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

Śrī Hari-kathāmṛta

Volume Two

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Śrīla Gurudeva's Summer 1997 Preaching Tour*

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Translated by Prema-vilāsa dāsa with lots of help from various members of Śrīla Gurudeva's family. Placed as an offering into Śrīla Gurudeva's hands on May 6, 1997.

Chapter One

The Disappearance Day of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Today is the anniversary of the day of separation from my Guru Mahārāja. It is the day of Śarada-pūrṇimā and the first day of the month of Kārttika. In the evening of this very day, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa was preparing to perform the *rāsa* dance in the autumn season, my Guru Mahārāja entered Kṛṣṇa’s eternal pastimes (*aprākṛta-līlā*). This month of Kārttika is very important in many respects. In this month Yasodā bound Kṛṣṇa to the grinding mortar, the *gopīs* worshipped the goddess Kātyāyanī, the *rāsa-līlā* took place, Akrūra took Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā, the *gopīs* felt great anguish in separation from them, and Kaṁsa was killed in this month.

The presiding goddess of this month is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Rādhikā is also known as Ūrjeśvarī, or the *īśvarī* of *ūrja*, *śakti*. She is the root of Kṛṣṇa’s *hlādinī-śakti*, *antaraṅga-śakti* and *svarūpa-śakti*. There are numerous *śaktis*, and Rādhikā is both the root and pinnacle of them all. She is even the source of Yogamāyā, Candrāvalī and the eight primary *sakhīs*. She is Kṛṣṇa’s very *svarūpa* and is actually non-different from him.

In the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find the words *tejo-vari-mṛdāṁ*. In their commentaries on this verse our preceptors have written that *tejo* means Kṛṣṇa’s *teja* or *śakti*. Without the mercy of Kṛṣṇa’s *śakti* we cannot perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. Our *gāyatri-mantra* is also a prayer to this *śakti*: “*bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo nahḥ pracodayāt*—may that potency appear in our hearts in its entirety.” As long as we haven’t attained the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, we cannot become fully established within the kingdom of *bhakti*. All the *ācāryas* in our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, which follows Rūpa Gosvāmī, are in the camp of Rādhikā; they all consider Rādhikā to be their goddess. In his *Upadesāmṛta* Rūpa Gosvāmī has written that Rādhikā is our worshipable goddess, and that the one who is most dear to her very life is Kṛṣṇa. Everything that we do is for the pleasure of Rādhikā. If Rādhikā is pleased, then automatically Kṛṣṇa will be subjugated.

This month is known as the month of Rādhā-Dāmodara. In books such as *Vidagdhamādhava*, Kṛṣṇa himself has clearly said, “My *guru* in the matter of love is Śrīmatī Rādhikā.” If during this month one offers Rādhikā *pūjā* or prayers, Kṛṣṇa will be subjugated. This is the special feature of this month. Many people only follow the vow of Kārttika and don’t follow the entire vow of Caturmāsya. Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself used to follow Caturmāsya, and from my point of view those who don’t follow the conceptions of Caitanya Mahāprabhu have problems in their devotion. My Guru Mahārāja instructed us to display in the temple the picture of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Prabhupāda when he was following the vow of Caturmāsya, when his hair was long and he had a beard. And I have always honoured this instruction. Everyone should follow the full vow of Caturmāsya; there is no great difficulty in doing it.

This month belongs to Rādhikā, and the fact that my Guru Mahārāja entered into the eternal pastimes in this month is a special and noteworthy occurrence. My Guru Mahārāja had one distinct characteristic: within him was immense *guru-niṣṭhā*, resolute faith in and devotion for his own spiritual master. *Guru-niṣṭhā* is the very backbone of *hari-bhajana*. Without *guru-niṣṭhā* no one can perform *bhajana*. My *guruji* was always at once prepared to give his life for his own spiritual master. Once in Navadvīpa the *sahajiyas*, *bābājis* and *smārta-brāhmaṇas* who were opposed to Prabhupāda’s preaching attacked and tried to kill him. As everyone fled, there was practically a stampede. At that time my *guruji*, who actually closely resembled Prabhupāda, traded his own white cloth for Prabhupāda’s saffron cloth and cleverly arranged for Prabhupāda to escape to Mayapura. Examples of disciples like this who are literally prepared to risk their own lives for their *gurus* are very rare indeed.

Whenever Guru Mahārāja would hear something that was opposed to Prabhupāda’s conception, he would fearlessly refute it. There was a disciple of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura named Sītānātha who was a *sahajiyā*. In an article in which he wrote against Prabhupāda, he said that Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees know only external aspects of spiritual life and have no familiarity with *mādhurya-rasa*. He said that they don’t describe confidential topics such as the *rāsa-līlā* and have never tasted *rasa*. Immediately Gurujī wrote five articles in Gauḍīya Patrikā refuting his statements. Then Sītānātha and his followers tried to bring a court case against Gurujī, but Gurujī opposed them vehemently. He went to their lawyer in Medinipura and told him that he would prove that these people are *sahajiyās*, that they keep illicit relationships with women and that they don’t know anything about true worship of the Lord (*bhagavat-bhajana*). In the end they had to beg forgiveness from Gurujī and drop their case.

On another occasion followers of the Nimbarka *sampradāya* wrote in their magazine that Caitanya Mahāprabhu became a disciple of Keśava Kāśmiri and accepted both *gopāla-mantra* and *kāma-gāyatrī* from him. When I showed the article to Gurujī, his face became red with rage and he said that he would write something in response. He wrote, “There was never any *ācārya* named Nimbarka. Their commentary on Vedānta, which they say was written by Nimbarka, is a fabrication and was actually written by someone else. That commentary did not exist previously, because it is not mentioned in the writings of Jīva Gosvāmī or Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and neither Rāmānuja or Madhvācārya ever mentioned anyone named Nimbarka in their writings. If there was someone there, his name was Nimbāditya, not Nimbarka, and because he was a *sampradāyika* Vaiṣṇava, I honour him. But an *ācārya* named Nimbarka has never taken birth.”

When the followers of Nimbarka read this, they filed a court case against Guruji asking for damages of five *lākhas* of rupees. But their lawyers eventually advised them, “To catch a worm you are entering a hole, but a snake may emerge from this hole. You should quickly drop this case because Keśava Mahārāja is a great scholar and it will be very difficult for you to win this case.” So they dropped the case and begged forgiveness from Guruji. In this way Guruji refuted the ideas of anyone who dared to oppose Prabhupāda’s conception.

Another time, Pūjyapāda Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja was holding a meeting to commemorate the installation of deities at his new temple in Vṛndāvana. Many people came to the meeting, including some followers of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission. While addressing that assembly, Guruji said that Vivekananda was not a *sādhu* but a rogue. The *siddhānta* of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission is that all is one and when you fly high up into the sky, everything below appears the same. Guruji then said, “Only a blind man could say that a mountain, a river and a donkey could be considered equal. A person who can see would not say this. Our vision should be that Kṛṣṇa is the topmost aspect of Bhagavān. All spiritual paths are not the same and they don’t all lead to the same destination. The only way is *bhakti* and only the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can lead one to Bhagavān. This has been confirmed in lines such as *bhaktir eva bhūyasī: bhakti* is the best path of all. Without accepting the path of *bhakti*, no one can ever attain Bhagavān.”

Upon hearing this, the followers of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission went to Mādhava Mahārāja and said, “Who is this? Why is he speaking this way? Please forbid him from speaking any further.” Mādhava Mahārāja replied, “He is my senior godbrother; I cannot tell him to stop saying these things. You can try speaking to him if you like, but I assure you that he will only defeat you.” In the end they were silenced and left there. This was Guruji’s manner of preaching; he was a very fearless devotee.

Prabhupāda had numerous disciples, and they were all fearless. One prominent disciple of Prabhupāda was Siddha-svarūpa Brahmācārī, who later became Pūjyapāda Siddhāntī Mahārāja. Once Siddha-svarūpa Brahmācārī went to East Bengal, what is now Bangladesh, and while preaching in an assembly there, said that Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagor were both goats who didn’t know anything about true *dharma*. Those who were listening in the assembly became very upset and there was great commotion. Afterwards Pūjyapāda Tirtha Mahārāja, who was in charge of the preaching there, sent a telegram to Prabhupāda saying that Siddha-svarūpa Brahmācārī had spoiled their preaching there by making these statements and that now everyone was opposing them. Prabhupāda replied, “He has done *lākhas* of rupees worth of preaching there and now I am also coming there. I will prove that these two gentlemen have no connection with *dharma* and are both rogues.” Like this so many of Prabhupāda’s disciples were fearless preachers.

Another of Prabhupāda’s prominent disciples, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, was residing here in India and no one knew of him. Prabhupāda wanted him to go to

Western countries to preach. He was initially afraid to take *sannyāsa* because he would have to leave his family and possessions. He came here to Mathurā and Guruji told him, “You should take *sannyāsa*, you are a very qualified devotee. Especially you are a scholar in English and can preach well in English.” Eventually he took *sannyāsa* here in this *maṭha* and went to America to preach. All he took with him was an old, worn-out book and his translation of the first canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in three volumes. He had no money with him, his only clothes were torn and he travelled there on a cargo ship. Upon arrival he sat in a park in New York City and chanted the *pañca-tattva mahā-mantra* and the *mahā-mantra*, and from there his preaching started.

He said that the Christianity which is prevalent there is not real Christianity. He said until they accept *sanātana-dharma*, the Christians won’t even be able to properly preach their own doctrine, and instead it is actually we Vaiṣṇavas who preach pure Christianity. Numerous scholars from India had gone there previously, but none of them could preach *sanātana-dharma*. Vivekananda went there and only took their theory, the Christian conception that the poor man is Nārāyaṇa. He also preached that all paths lead to the same goal. He didn’t preach the message from India that Kṛṣṇa is the highest spiritual conception and that he can be achieved through *bhakti*. This is the conclusion of the Vedas, Upaniṣads and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He only preached voidism—everything emanates from the void and eventually returns to the void. Vivekananda made only a solitary female follower but Svāmījī brought thousands of youths and scholars here to India and here and everywhere they preached the conception of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They came from all countries and now *sanātana-dharma* is being preached in many, many languages. Through the medium of Svāmījī, Prabhupāda fulfilled the prediction made by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that soon Western people would come to India and, joining hands with their Indian brothers, would wear *tulasī* beads around their necks, keep *sikhās* on their heads and chant the *mahā-mantra*. The root cause of all this is Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, and his disciples had such immense *guru-niṣṭhā* for him.

After Prabhupāda departed this world, there was a great crisis in the Gauḍīya Maṭha and many devotees left the institution. Accompanied by many prominent disciples of Prabhupāda, Guruji left and began residing in Bagh Bazaar Maṭha in Calcutta. He had no money at all and one day a godbrother came there. This devotee’s name was Nārāyaṇa Mukherjee, and he later took *sannyāsa* from Mādhava Mahārāja. He was a very pure devotee. I personally met him and he was very affectionate to me. He had a good appetite and could eat a lot of *prasāda*. Guruji knew this and thought, “How will I feed him?” It was the day of Ekādaśī, Guruji had no money and there were about forty other disciples of Prabhupāda with Guruji there at that time. As Guruji was worrying about what to do, a sparrow dropped a small bundle nearby and it made a sound as it hit the ground. Guruji opened it and saw that it contained coins totalling six anna, which

would be equivalent to about fifty rupees today. He took that money and with it had some *sandēśa* made along with some other preparations and he managed to feed everyone. Meanwhile, he learned that his godbrother Pūjyapāda Giri Mahārāja had sent him one hundred rupees from Burma. Gurujī began weeping in delight, and after that he began preaching with great vigour. When a devotee has *guru-niṣṭhā* and *bhagavat-niṣṭhā*, then Bhagavān and others will help him, and we can see how it happened in this instance.

Once, while sitting at Prabhupāda’s *samādhi* in Mayapura, Gurujī said, “I never met Rāmacandra Bhagavān, I never met Kṛṣṇa, I never met Rāmānuja or Madhvācārya, I don’t know Rūpa Gosvāmī or Sanātana Gosvāmī, and even Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura I have never met. These personalities have never benefited me directly. From time immemorial I have been wandering in material existence, taking birth in unlimited species. But Prabhupāda, being so compassionate, attracted this fallen person and showed me the path of *bhagavad-bhakti*. No one else did this for me.”

Whatever idea or concept would come up, he would always view it from the angle of Prabhupāda’s teachings. It was Gurujī’s self-imposed regulation to definitely go see his *sannyāsa-guru*, Pūjyapāda Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, every year after the Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and I always accompanied him. One year many important *sannyāsīs* such as Jajavara Mahārāja, Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja, Purī Mahārāja and Madhusūdana Mahārāja were also there and they were discussing different points of *siddhānta*. Then they began discussing a point from this verse from Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Upadeśāmṛta*:

*kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta
dikṣāsti cet praṇatibhiḥ ca bhajantam īsam
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-sūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā*

“One who takes *kṛṣṇa-nāma* just once by calling out ‘O Kṛṣṇa!’ is a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* or neophyte devotee. One should consider him to be his family member and silently respect him. One who, fully understanding the principle of *dikṣā*, has accepted initiation from a qualified *guru* and in accordance with the Vaiṣṇava conventions performs *bhajana* of Bhagavān is a *madhyama-adhikārī* or intermediate devotee. One should respect such a devotee who is adorned with the proper spiritual conception by offering *praṇāma* unto him and so forth. One who is conversant with the science of *bhajana* as described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vaiṣṇava scriptures and who performs exclusive *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee. Due to his undeviating absorption in Kṛṣṇa, the pure heart of such a devotee is free from faults such as the tendency to criticise others. He is expert in *bhajana*, meaning that he mentally renders service (*mānasa-sevā*) to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes which take place during the eight

segments of the day (*aṣṭa-kāliya-lilā*). Knowing him to be the topmost association amongst those who are of the same inner ambition and affectionately disposed, one should honour him by *praṇipāta* (offering *daṇḍavat-praṇāma*), *paripraśna* (making relevant inquiry) and *sevā* (offering loving service).”

Both Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Prabhupāda have written commentaries on this verse, and from the external angle of vision there appears to be some difference between them, though in reality they are in agreement. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that anyone who chants *harināma* just once should be considered to be a Vaiṣṇava. But in his commentary, Prabhupāda says that one who chants *harināma* having been duly initiated, having achieved some *sambandha-jñāna* and having become free from the influence of *anarthas* should be respected as a Vaiṣṇava. Why? Because those who chant without having been initiated by a genuine *guru* and without having achieved any *sambandha-jñāna* always chant *nāma-aparādha*. So these *sannyāsīs* were discussing this point, and most of them agreed with Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s opinion. Then Gurujī said, “I have one thought on this point. The *guru* of all of us is Prabhupāda. None of us directly knew Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, nor do any of us know Rūpa Gosvāmī or Sanātana Gosvāmī. Our acquaintance is solely with Prabhupāda. He is the one who opened our eyes and led us into the realm of *dharma*. Therefore, it is through Prabhupāda that we can obtain a proper understanding of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s teachings. Because Prabhupāda fully understands Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s conception, he can reveal it to us. So in all circumstances it is proper to first honour and accept what Prabhupāda has written. Besides, in his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura concurs with what Prabhupāda is saying here.”

Hearing this, all the *sannyāsīs* there were obliged to accept what he was saying. There is nothing greater than *guru-niṣṭhā*, and due to Gurujī’s resolute faith in him, Prabhupāda empowered him to preach his instructions everywhere.

This lecture was spoken on October 11, 1992 at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā.



Chapter Two

Concerning Guru-tattva . . .

Tomorrow is the day that *nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja appeared in this mortal world. On his birthday my *gurudeva*, starting with his own *guru*, would display his faith in all the *ācāryas* in our *paramparā*. Bhaktivinoda Thākura invented a system (*paddhati*) for worship of the *paramparā*. He collected much of it from the Śāṅkara *sampradāya* when he lived in Puri. Included within it are *kṛṣṇa-pañcaka*, *guru-pañcaka*, *vyāsa-pañcaka*, *ācārya-pañcaka*, *pañca-tattva-pañcaka* and two others, which all together make seven *pañcaka* for worship. For instance, *vyāsa-pañcaka* is the worship of Vyāsa and his four disciples headed by Jaimini and Sumantra. Each *pañcaka* consisted of five personalities, and in this way he worshipped thirty-five personalities in the *paramparā*. Why did he do this? By considering oneself a *guru* and not honouring the *paramparā*, one cannot attain the *kṛṣṇa-prema* that is passed down through the disciplic succession. That *kṛṣṇa-prema* is not an object of this world but of Goloka-Vṛndāvana.

*nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam
pibata bhāgavataṁ rasam ālayam
muhur aho rasikā bhūvi bhāvukāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.3

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

From Kṛṣṇa this fruit passed to Brahmā, then to Nārada, Vyāsa, Śukadeva and through the link to the *gurus* of present times. The flow never stopped along the way, and for this reason we respect all the *gurus* in the succession. If we honour one but not another it will be the logic of half a hen. “I only accept what my *guru* said and wrote”—everything is spoiled for anyone who thinks this way. We should always recognise the entire *guru-paramparā*. Suppose someone honours his father but not his grandfather—but has he considered from where his father came? So this mentality is not correct. The *bhajana* of one who does not have a link with the *paramparā* all the way back to Kṛṣṇa will be useless. For this reason, on his birthday the *guru* is not so eager to arrange for

worship of himself. Arranging for the worship of himself would not be *vyāsa-pūjā*. *Vyāsa-pūjā* is the arrangements that the *guru* makes on his birthday for worshipping the entire line of *ācāryas* emanating from Vyāsa.

Ordinarily, people believe that they can simply chant the *mahā-mantra* or any other *kṛṣṇa-mantra* such as *kṛṣṇa śaraṇam mama* and concentrate solely on their own *guru* without caring for any succession of *gurus* before him. The *bhajana* of such people will never reach perfection. They may believe otherwise, but they are wrong. They think, “What necessity is there of a *paramparā*?” But one must come in a line. *Sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrāste niṣphalā matāḥ*: there are many *mantras* which have come from sources outside the genuine *sampradāyas*, and they are all bogus. Why? The money which worldly people obtain through their employment can also be obtained by performance of *bhajana*. But by performance of this type of *bhajana* one’s *anarthas* will not be eradicated and one will not attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*. There is so much discord and strife in this world for the attainment of worldly objects. But what did devotees like Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī do? They completely abandoned all worldly possessions; to them they had no meaning. Otherwise, these possessions would have disturbed their *bhajana*. For this reason they paid no attention to worldly objects. Those who desire the attainment of worldly objects in their spiritual practice can be sent into the Śukrācārya *paramparā*: “Go! Be the *ācārya* of *śukra* (semen).” From this *śukra* comes birth, death and everything that is associated with them. These people are finished, trapped in that. We will not move in that direction; we will remain on the straight path illuminated by our *guru-paramparā*.

In the Śāṅkara *sampradāya* there is also worship of Vyāsa. Who is Vyāsa? Using a compass situated in one central point you can expand from that point by drawing a circle. The points in the arc are called *vyāsa*. He who delineated Kṛṣṇa’s *nāma*, *guṇa*, *rūpa* and *līlā* in this world is called Vyāsa. By spreading narrations of Bhagavān’s pastimes in this world, he eradicated the *jīvas*’ ignorance and led them to love of God—this is Vyāsa. He who carries out these same activities while sitting on the throne of Vyāsa is known as an *ācārya*. The worship of such a great personality is called *vyāsa-pūjā*.

Before Vyāsa appeared, there were five sages who had propounded their philosophies in scriptures. There was Cārvaka, Kapila who propounded *sāṅkhya*, Karṇāda who propounded *vaiśeṣika*, Jaimini who propounded *mīmāṃsā* and Patañjali who propounded *yoga*. The name Cārvaka comes from the components *cāru* and *āka*. *Cāru* means “unlimited beauty.” He propounded that there is nothing greater in life than to eat, drink and be merry, associate with the opposite sex, obtain abundant wealth and belongings and be comfortable. Most people accepted this, but then Patañjali came and said, “By following this philosophy, you will ruin yourself.” He taught that although it appears to be sweet, none of this can really be beneficial for us. Patañjali taught that by practising *yama*, *niyama*, *prāṇāyama*, *dhyāna*, *dharāṇa*, *samādhi* and so forth all material distress will

be mitigated. Then Vyāsa came and taught that all of this is incorrect. Following these philosophies may correct us a little, but ultimately they will not mitigate our suffering or take us to the highest attainment. The *jīva* is a conscious particle of Bhagavān, and by forgetting him the *jīvas* have fallen into this world. The *jīvas* will attain happiness only when they turn towards Bhagavān by serving a genuine spiritual master.

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
iśād aṭetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.37

“Misunderstanding himself to be a product of the material energy, the *jīva* becomes overwhelmed with fear. Deceived by *māyā*, his position becomes reversed—instead of being the servant of Bhagavān, he becomes opposed to him.”

First one must surrender his soul at the feet of a *guru*. How did the *jīva* come to this world? By forgetting Bhagavān. Solely due to forgetting Bhagavān, all his intelligence became covered and he was cast far away from Bhagavān. There is *vikṣepātmikā-māyā* and *āvaraṇātmikā-māyā*. The *jīva* is cast far away and his *ātmā* is covered. Being far away from Bhagavān, he comes in *dvitīyābhiniveśa*. What does this mean? Disregarding the service of Bhagavān, he becomes engaged in trying to obtain pleasure for himself. This is called *dvitīyābhiniveśa*. When such a person abandons his material desires and surrenders to a *guru*, the *guru* helps him by giving him spiritual knowledge and eventually establishes him at Bhagavān’s feet. How far can such a person go? Along this path automatically all his material distress will be nullified. After this he can go to Vaikuṅṭha, then above there is Ayodhyā-dhāma, above there he enters into Goloka in Dvārakā. Present there are *sānta-rasa* and *dāsyā-rasa*. Above there he arrives in Vṛndāvana, where there is *sakhya-rasa*, *vātsalya-rasa* and finally he attains *mādhurya-rasa* by the mercy of the *guru*.

Vyāsa gave all of this in his writings, and especially, to increase peoples’ interest in this, he described Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam*. In the other cantos he described *jīva-tattva*, *māyā-tattva* and *bhagavat-tattva*. In the middle of the Tenth Canto, in chapters twenty-nine through thirty-three, there are five *prāṇa*, or life-air. In the middle of them comes the central life-air, chapter thirty-one, the *Gopī-gīta*. Some rare and fortunate *jīvas* become attracted to this. He described it in a way that was so beautiful that a comparable description cannot be found in any other scripture. A *jīva* who is fortunate will endeavour to understand this topic. Next, how will such a person factually attain it? There are two aspects: one is serving Kṛṣṇa when together with him and the other is serving Kṛṣṇa as the *vraja-vāsīs* do when they are separated from him. The latter is called *vipralambha*. Attaining this is the ultimate purpose of our lives. But

sadly our entire lives seem to pass engaged in menial works without associating with *sādhus* who can bestow this upon us.

First Vyāsa gave *pūrva-rāga* in chapter twenty-one, the *Veṅu-gīta*, and later, after the *gopīs* saw Kṛṣṇa, comes the *Uddhava-sandēśa*, *Bhramara-gīta* and so on. In the Eleventh and Twelfth Cantos he described how we can experience these things through the practice of *sādhana*. In the Tenth Canto he did not describe *sādhana*; he only showed what is spiritual greed. In the Eleventh and Twelfth Cantos he showed what is *sādhana*. In the nineteenth chapter of the Eleventh Canto, Uddhava approaches Kṛṣṇa. What condition was Kṛṣṇa in at that time? In a grave mood he was sitting below a *pippala* tree while the Yādavas fought amongst themselves and destroyed their dynasty. Then both Uddhava and Maitreya Ṛṣi came to him. Uddhava had some idea that Kṛṣṇa was going to depart for his own abode, so he asked Kṛṣṇa some questions. Through his instructions to Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa instructs us all on this *tattva*. This chapter is very short but it is very beneficial for the practice of *sādhana*.

As confirmed in the verse *nigama-kalpa-taror* (1.1.3), in one sense the entire *Bhāgavatam* is considered the essence of all the scriptures. Milk itself is considered essence; there is nothing within it which is not usable. By converting it into yoghurt and churning it, butter is produced. Butter is somewhat tasteful to eat, but its essence, ghee, is even more valuable. In the same way, Vyāsa told that everything will come by executing *bhagavat-bhakti*. How will one attain *bhakti*? He said that it will be attained through constantly serving the nectarean narrations of Bhagavān's pastimes. If one chants the holy name but doesn't hear the nectarean narrations of those pastimes from devotees who are more advanced than himself, his *bhakti* will remain incomplete. It will become stagnant. We should hear *hari-kathā* from devotees who are more advanced, in the same line and affectionate to us.

Why have these narrations been described as nectarean? By drinking them one becomes immortal. What is *amṛta*, nectar? *Ānanda*, spiritual bliss. The nectar that the demigods drink extends their lifespans but does not protect them from death. Every day at every moment they are dying and suffering there. By drinking this nectar, their lust, anger and madness merely increase, so it cannot really be called *amṛta*. Liberation has also been referred to as nectar, but there is no real *ānanda* to be found within liberation. What is real *amṛta*? That which can bestow for eternal time a condition of great happiness and *ānanda*. This is *kṛṣṇa-sevā*. Though all types of *kṛṣṇa-sevā* are nectarean (*amṛtamayi*), the *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya* of Vraja are the most intense nectar. Amongst them, *mādhurya* is the ultimate nectar, as described in the *Rāmānanda-samvāda* in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Therefore, Vyāsa says, "Perpetually serve this *amṛtamayi līlā-kathā*, or nectarean narrations of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, and you will definitely achieve *bhakti*." First we should hear it from the *guru*, understand it and then speak it to others. In this way we will definitely

achieve *bhakti*. We should worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala through service imbued with divine love (*premamaṃyī-sevā*). Most devotees serve in *dāsya*, the service mood, and others, especially ladies who live in Vraja, worship a Bāla-Gopāla Deity in the mood of *vātsalya*, parenthood. Above that is the worship received from a *sad-guru*, worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala in the mood of *mādhurya*. The best method of *arcana* is performed by those who are indifferent to the path of rules and regulations and instead offer their worship with *bhāva*. But very few people are qualified to do this. Still, from the beginning of our worship we should try for this method.

We are also advised to worship the *guru* in a mood of *viśrambha*, intimacy—*viśrambhena gurau-sevā*. In my opinion it is not entirely correct to serve the *guru* with this mood of intimacy while still in the stage of *sādhana*. Who is this type of service for? For *sādhakas* who are free from *anarthas*. For those still under the influence of *anarthas*, serving the *guru* with this mood of intimacy will simply become a cause of *aparādha*. In the beginning stage of *sādhana* where we are presently situated, we should serve the *guru* in accordance with the appropriate rules and regulations. If we prematurely adopt this mood of intimacy while serving him, we may even become aggressive towards him. Thinking that he is doing *viśrambha-sevā*, the disciple will say, “Gurudeva, you should do this and that.” Then, if the *guru* doesn’t agree to it, what will the so-called *viśrambhasevaka* say? “I should leave this *guru*; in such an atmosphere the *guru* and disciple cannot remain together.” Then the disciple is finished. So we should remain very vigilant concerning this. Serving with this mood of intimacy is not for our present stage. For now we must follow his orders according to the rules and regulations, and then we will automatically enter into *viśrambha-sevā*.

The components of the word *viśrambha* are *vigita* and *śrambha*. *Vigita* means “devoid of,” and *śrambha* means “awareness of his majesty or greatness.” We should always remaining respectful to him, always remember that he is worshipable, much more advanced and learned than we are, and that there is a great gap between us. Keep in mind that he possesses limitless spiritual opulences and we are ordinary conditioned souls. We should serve him just as Īśvara Purī served Mādhavendra Purī and as Govinda dāsa served Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Jagadānanda Paṇḍita sometimes served Mahāprabhu in the mood of intimacy, but first we must attain Jagadānanda’s level before we can do the same. If we try to do it now, it will cause great problems for us. We should continue with our service according to our own level, always keeping these instructions in mind and remembering how our previous *ācāryas* served. Once we do genuinely enter into serving the *guru* with the mood of *viśrambha*, automatically we will have that mood for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa also. First it comes in *sakhya-rasa*, above that in *vātsalya-rasa* and ultimately in *mādhurya-rasa*.

Vyāsa analysed all of this. He said to hear *hari-kathā*, and how should we hear it? According to our specific taste. Those in the mood of *sānta* will hear narrations of *sānta-*

rasa, those in the mood of *dāsya* will hear narrations of *dāsya-rasa*, and so on. It is the same way for the chanting of Bhagavān’s names. A devotee will chant the names that are dear to him, as Gopa-kumāra did in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*. Very high standard devotees like Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Gopāla-guru and Dhyānacandra in Puri tasted many varieties of beautiful meanings of the *mahā-mantra*. They realised a specific meaning for each name of the *mantra*. Kṛṣṇa’s name appears in the *mantra* four times, and they tasted a separate meaning for each name. The final name of Kṛṣṇa in the *mantra* had the highest meaning. The word *hare* appears eight times in the *mantra*, and they realised a separate meaning for each time it comes, with its last instance having the highest meaning. The name Rāma comes four times, and they didn’t realise merely the same meaning for each instance of it. According to the specific natures of their *bhajana* and their *bhāva*, they tasted particular meanings.

Vyāsa prescribed *nāma-kīrtana*, deity worship, service to the *guru* and service to the Vaiṣṇavas. If one desires *bhakti*, he should abandon all material desires and engage in these four activities. For examples of this, see how in Satya-yuga Aruni left aside personal desires and served his *guru*. See how Baladeva and Sudāma served Sandipani Muni. See how even an ordinary *karmī*, Ekalavya, served his *guru*. His *guru* asked for his thumb, and at once he cut it off and gave it to him. One *guru* said to his disciple, Upamanyu, “I see that you are getting fat. What are you eating to be getting so fat?”

“When I take your cows out to graze, after the calves take the cows’ milk, then I also take some.”

“Don’t do this; the calves will go hungry.”

After ten or fifteen days the *guru* saw that the disciple was still fat. When he asked Upamanyu what he was eating, Upamanyu replied, “I am taking the foam which comes from the cows’ mouths. If I don’t wipe it from their mouths, it will fall to the ground and be wasted. So I wipe it and then eat it.”

The *guru* said, “Don’t do this either!” But the *guru* didn’t tell Upamanyu what he could eat. Still Upamanyu somehow remained alive. The *guru* asked him, “How is it that you are still living?” Upamanyu said he was eating something else, and the *guru* forbade him to eat that also. In this way the *guru* forbade him to eat everything but didn’t tell him what he could eat. Though Upamanyu was very weak, he thought, “Somehow I must live. Otherwise, who will take Gurujī’s cows out to graze?” He climbed a tree, picked a large leaf and sucked the white fluid out of it. Then he fell from the tree and injured his eye. As he stumbled away, he fell into a well.

When after some time Upamanyu didn’t return, the *guru* went searching for him, calling out, “Where is Upamanyu? Where is he?”

Upamanyu heard him and replied, “Gurujī, I am in the well!”

“Why are you in the well?” Then he lifted Upamanyu out.

Upamanyu said, “Gurujī, you told me not to eat, but still I sucked the milk from a leaf.”

Satisfied with Upamanyu’s devotion, the *guru* said, “May the essence of all the knowledge of the Vedas arise within you.” Then the *guru* transmitted full realisation of *brahma—aham brahmāsmi—*into his heart.

What did Vyāsa give Śukadeva Gosvāmī? Śukadeva Gosvāmī was chanting *aham brahmāsmi* in the forest. To entice him back, Vyāsa gave a *mantra* to a hunter and said to him, “Go to the forest and recite this *mantra* describing Kṛṣṇa’s beauty. Many parrots will come into your net.” The hunter did so, and not only did many beautiful parrots come into his net, but Śukadeva Gosvāmī also approached him. Śukadeva said to the hunter, “Go ask your *guru*, ‘If the personality described in this *mantra* possesses such a beautiful form, what is the nature of his personal qualities?’ ”

The hunter returned to Vyāsa and told him what happened. The next day Vyāsa taught the hunter a *mantra* describing Kṛṣṇa’s attributes and told him to recite it in the forest. When the hunter returned to the forest and recited the *mantra*, Śukadeva was attracted and was automatically caught in Vyāsa’s trap. Then the hunter led him to Vyāsa and Vyāsa taught him the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is the mercy of Vyāsa. The entire universe is indebted to Vyāsa. He delineated from the beginning level of causeless devotion (*ahaituki-bhakti*) right up to the highest level of *bhakti* in such a way that no one has ever matched it since. For this reason, on his own birthday the *guru* worships Vyāsa and his entire *paramparā*. It is necessary to worship the entire *paramparā*. Otherwise, if one respects only his own *guru*, eventually he will leave that *guru*. We cannot possibly comprehend the *guru*’s mercy. If we understood it, there would be no question of ever quarrelling with him over worldly things. He is giving us such a great thing. Very few people in this world understand what it is that the *guru* is giving and why it is that we are indebted to him. What did those sages do? They left everything behind to serve the feet of the *guru*. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was immersed in the pleasure of impersonal realisation (*brahmānanda*), but he condemned it and abandoned it. Then he started serving Vyāsa. What service for the *guru* can be done by those who don’t understand the value of what he is giving? Even if a disciple gives his life for the *guru*, it is nothing. Birth after birth we will remain indebted to the *guru*. Even after attaining perfection we will still remain indebted to him. We can never repay him. For this reason, on his birthday the *guru* worships not only his own *guru* but the entire *paramparā*.

In the very first chapter of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 1.34) we find this verse in relation to *guru-tattva*:

*vande gurūn īśa-bhaktān īśam īśāvatārakān
tat-prakāśāṁś ca tac-chaktiḥ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-saṁjñakam*

“I offer obeisances unto the spiritual masters, Bhagavān’s devotees, Bhagavān’s incarnations, Bhagavān’s direct manifestations, his potencies and unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya himself.”

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī described these six *tattvas* in relation to the concept of *guru*. Many people are confused concerning *guru-tattva*. Especially these days there is great debate over the issue of *dikṣā-guru* and *sikṣā-guru*. Most of the confusion concerns this point: “I obtained a certain *guru* in this lifetime. Will I again receive him as my *guru* in my next life or not?” But this is nothing to be confused about. The *sikṣā-guru* is described as follows (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.47):

sikṣā-guruke ta 'jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa

“One should know the *sikṣā-guru* to be the internal form or identity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-svarūpa*).” The *dikṣā-guru* has been described in the following words (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.45):

*guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana sāstrera pramāṇe
guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gaṇe*

“According to the evidence of the revealed scriptures, the (*dikṣā*) *guru* is directly the outward form of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-rūpa*). Kṛṣṇa in the form of the *guru* bestows mercy upon the devotees.”

If the *dikṣā-guru* and *sikṣā-guru* have been described respectively as *bhagavad-rūpa*, the external form of the Lord, and *bhagavad-svarūpa*, the internal form of the Lord, where is the question of him changing? Did he change in any birth? The *guru* will remain the same. Because our intelligence is mundane at present, we cannot understand this point. The *guru* says that he will come in our every life until we are liberated. It is possible that he will come in the same form and it is also possible that he will be in a different form. *Guru* is the very form of Kṛṣṇa, as described in those verses, so it is nothing to worry about. We should continue to do *sādhana* nicely with firm faith in our *guru*. This is our first priority, and if we take care of this, everything will be fine.

There is also evidence that Kṛṣṇa himself becomes the *guru* and descends. We also hear that Rādhikā makes an arrangement by sending her dear devotees to this world. Rūpā Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī performed *bhajana* while respecting everyone. We should also perform *bhajana* in this way. Do we hear that Rūpā and Sanātana ever quarrelled over disciples—“He is my disciple, not yours”? The Six Gosvāmīs didn’t make disciples; only Gopāla-bhaṭṭa made some on the direct order of his superiors. Lokanātha Gosvāmī never accepted disciples. Only upon the great persistence of Jīva Gosvāmī did he accept one disciple, Narottama Ṭhākura. But so many people may be his disciples, as we accept Madhva to be the disciple of Vyāsa. If we are inspired by someone’s writings or narrations of his life and if we follow the conception he taught, then we can be his disciple. If we understand his conception and strictly follow his

instructions, he is our *śikṣā-guru*. Suppose someone goes to Vṛndāvana and always sits near Rūpa Gosvāmī's *samādhi* or one of his *bhajana-sthalis*. If he constantly speaks about Rūpa Gosvāmī's teachings and follows his instructions, will Rūpa Gosvāmī not be his *śikṣā-guru*? Certainly he will. With this verse we offer obeisances to our spiritual masters:

*vande 'harī śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavānś ca
śrī-rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānvitāṁ taṁ sa-jīvam
sādvaitāṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānvitāṁś ca*

Our own initiating *guru* is our *dikṣā-guru* and the remainder of the personalities mentioned in this verse are our *śikṣā-gurus*. So will all these personalities be considered inferior to our *dikṣā-guru*? Certainly not. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is our *śikṣā-guru*, so does that make him inferior to our *dikṣā-guru*? We shouldn't see our *gurus* as being separate from one another. We should continue doing *bhajana* understanding that *guru-tattva* is *akhaṇḍa*, undivided. Then there will be no possibility of any mood of envy or aggression towards any great personality ever entering our hearts.

Vyāsa-pūjā is described in the *Caitanya-Bhāgavat*. It is described there how Nityānanda Prabhu performed *vyāsa-pūjā* by placing a garland around Mahāprabhu's neck. Our *ācāryas* have given a very beautiful conception of how to worship the *guru*. Following this conception, we should go forward in spiritual life. Tomorrow I will speak in relation to my *guru*, *nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī*. When I speak on the life of my *guru*, I automatically speak about Prabhu-pāda also. When we glorify Kṛṣṇa, we also necessarily glorify Rādhā. The best *praṇāma* we can offer to Kṛṣṇa is one in which Rādhikā's name is included. When I speak on the life of my *gurudeva*, the glories of Prabhu-pāda and many other Vaiṣṇavas automatically come within that. In the midst of describing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, what happened? The glories of Rādhikā and the *gopīs* were described even more. Still, those who are blind say that Rādhikā's name is not mentioned there. There are hundreds of verses in the Tenth Canto which could be quoted to prove that Rādhikā's presence is actually there. Practically wherever you look in the Tenth Canto, you will find the glories of the *gopīs* being described. It is simply not possible to glorify Kṛṣṇa without simultaneously glorifying Rādhikā and the *gopīs*.

In the same way, it is not possible to glorify a *guru* without also glorifying his *guru*. Factually, what is the glory of the spiritual master? That he is the excellent servant of his own spiritual master. Someone who never served his own *guru* can never be qualified to be a *guru*, even if he considers himself to be a *guru*. The *guru* is one who surrendered his soul to his own *guru*, who served him constantly and who through that service

fulfilled his *guru*'s innermost desires. One of my *gurudeva*'s most prominent and great qualities was that he gave everything for his own spiritual master. He even risked his life for his spiritual master. His *niṣṭhā* was that there was nothing in life that was more important than *guru-sevā*. If someone ever even slightly criticised Prabhupāda, he could not simply sit quietly and ignore it. In such circumstances some devotees remain patient and keep their composure. This is alright, because it is recommended that one should never become angry. But even within the realm of mundane relationships—if someone hears their mother being verbally abused and doesn't do anything about it, he must be dull matter and not living. Similarly, if one hears either Bhagavān, *bhakta* or *bhakti* being blasphemed and doesn't defend them, then in spiritual life he is dead, not living. We shouldn't tolerate anyone speaking against Bhagavān, the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas or *bhakti*. At such a time our blood should boil. Hanumān set Lanka alight and burned it to ashes—this is *trṇād aṇi sunicena*.

I saw this quality in my *gurudeva* on many occasions. Once in Navadvīpa the *gosvāmīs* and *smārta-brāhmaṇas* tried to impede Prabhupāda's *parikramā* party. They were thinking, "If we allow their preaching to continue, people will no longer worship us. Instead, they will begin worshipping the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Also, they are trying to take Mahāprabhu's birthplace away from Navadvīpa and establish it in Mayapura. We are *gosvāmīs* by caste but they are saying one is a *gosvāmī* only on the basis of his personal qualities. If people hear this, they will no longer worship us." The so-called *gosvāmīs* believed they were worthy of peoples' worship even though some of them were illiterate and knew no spiritual philosophy. Prabhupāda's devotees quoted this verse (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13) to support their position:

cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam
guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ

Kṛṣṇa says, "The four divisions of human society have been created by me on the basis of peoples' inherent qualities and activities." In other words, only one who possesses the appropriate qualities can be called a *gosvāmī*.

This is what those *gosvāmīs* were so upset about. Prabhupāda was attracting very educated boys from cultured families, giving them initiation and leading them into *bhagavad-bhakti*. This annoyed many people. They thought, "Hey! He is ruining such good boys by teaching them *bhakti*! He is telling them that to get married and become absorbed in material life is like committing suicide." For this reason, many people became angry at Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda himself said that people were opposing him at that time simply because they didn't understand what he was doing, and that later on, when they came to understand, they would change their feelings towards him. In reality it happened like this, that later on people understood and appreciated him.

When these *gosvāmīs* attacked Prabhupāda’s party, my *gurudeva* exchanged clothes with Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda didn’t want to give him his cloth to wear, but forcibly Gurudeva took it from him. Then he sent Prabhupāda to Mayapura in white cloth and none of the aggressors knew of it. Later the police came and Gurudeva emerged wearing Prabhupāda’s cloth.

Once someone in the Nimbarka *sampradāya* wrote that Mahāprabhu became a disciple of Keśava Kaśmirī. They said that after Keśava Kaśmirī defeated Mahāprabhu in debate, Keśava Kaśmirī gave him the *yugala-mantra* and led him into the conception of *mādhurya-rasa*. When I took this article to Gurudeva and read it to him, he began shaking with fury. He said sternly, “Bring a pen immediately.” When I returned with a pen, he said, “Write!” Then in Bengali he recited only ten or fifteen lines for me to write. The gist of what he said was that there has never been any *ācārya* named Nimbarka. In the *catuḥ-sana sampradāya* we find the name of Nimbāditya. If there had been an *ācārya* named Nimbarka, then Jiva Gosvāmī, any scholar from the Madhva *sampradāya* or any scholar from any other *sampradāya* would have mentioned him in their writings. Therefore, this Nimbarka is false. Next, we published this in our Hindi magazine and sent it to their mission by registered post. Then there were many exchanges of letters between us and them. They became very disturbed and brought a court case against Gurudeva for damages of five *lākhas*. Then Gurudeva wrote, “In court I will defend myself and prove that there was never any *ācārya* named Nimbarka. Whether or not you will take four *lākhas* of rupees, we will see afterwards.” We published this in our magazine and sent it to them once more. At this point their reputable lawyers advised them to drop the case against Gurudeva. The lawyers told them that they may have thought they were chasing a worm into a hole, but instead a snake would emerge and finish them with its bite. In the end they dropped their case and have remained silent on the issue ever since.

Some *sahajiyā* disciples of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in Mayapura criticised Prabhupāda, saying, “Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees suck only the pit and the skin of the mango. They don’t taste any juice, any *rasa*. We recite the *rāsa-līlā* and other elevated topics but Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī doesn’t know anything about these subject matters.” In response to this, Gurudeva wrote five articles in our magazine. Upon reading them, all these *sahajiyās* became envious and brought a court case against him in Medhinapur. The case named not only Gurudeva but also Narasimha Mahārāja, Vāmana Mahārāja, Trivikrama Mahārāja and myself because we were the editors of the magazine. Gurudeva hired the most reputable lawyer in all of Calcutta and in court this lawyer began roaring like a lion. He said, “I will prove to be true whatever my client has written in his magazine.” Everyone in the opposing party became frightened and the judge eventually told them to ask forgiveness from Gurudeva. Then the judge said to Gurudeva, “And don’t you write anymore.” But Gurudeva replied, “I will definitely

write. I am a *sannyāsī*! I exist for the purpose of doing *bhajana* and for the improvement of society.” After this those *sahajiyās* never wrote anything against the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas again.

In this way Gurudeva was very influential. For this reason Prabhupāda’s dear disciple, Bhakti Saraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja, gave him the title *Pasanda-gajaitā-simha*, which means he who like a lion punishes the elephant of atheism. In reality his nature was like that. He was an expert speaker and writer, and especially in writing he employed very embellished language. You can see in our Gauḍīya Patrikā magazine all the beautiful things he wrote in Bengali. Before I write even a little something, I have to look in at least ten books first. He never needed to look in any book before writing something. His *guru-sevā* was of a very high standard. Everything he did in his entire life—writing, speaking, his conduct, his concepts—were of this high standard. His appearance day is tomorrow, so I pray that he will bless all of us so we can perform *bhajana* with *guru-niṣṭhā* similar to his. Then we will be actually capable of helping others.

This lecture was spoken on February 27, 1994 at Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Vṛndāvana.



Chapter Three

The Appearance Day of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Sometimes we forget the greatness of the *guru*. Also, we try to estimate what he gives us in material terms. We cannot comprehend the nature of the transcendental treasure that the *guru* wants to bestow upon us. We try to measure it or estimate in comparison to worldly items. There is no item in the entire world that can be compared to that which the *guru* gives us. Bhagavān possesses unlimited compassion. When it is all gathered together and assumes an embodiment, that is the *guru*. Therefore, when the Lord desires to bestow mercy, he does it via the medium of the spiritual master, as well as through other Vaiṣṇavas. Bhagavān doesn't directly bestow mercy upon a *jīva*. In general he doesn't transgress this self-imposed restriction of distributing his mercy via the *guru*.

In our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line, the first *vyāsa-pūjā* ceremony was performed by Nityānanda Prabhu when he worshipped Mahāprabhu at Śrīvāsa-aṅgana. First, the devotees there requested that *vyāsa-pūjā* be performed for Nityānanda Prabhu, but he would not accept it. Instead, when Mahāprabhu ordered that *vyāsa-pūjā* be performed, Nityānanda Prabhu placed the garland around the neck of Mahāprabhu. Why did Nityānanda Prabhu do this? *Vyāsa-pūjā* means performing the worship of Vyāsadeva. Vyāsa is *akhaṇḍa*, undivided; in one sense he is *guru* and in another sense he is Bhagavān himself. The inherent activity of Vyāsa is worshipping the Lord. What does Vyāsa do? What does the *guru* do? He worships Kṛṣṇa and inspires others to do the same. Although Mahāprabhu ordered Nityānanda Prabhu to perform *vyāsa-pūjā*, he did not worship Vyāsa. Instead Nityānanda Prabhu worshipped he who is the root of all Vyāsa incarnations, the *guru* of Vyāsa, the source of all spiritual illumination, Kṛṣṇa himself in the form of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. By doing this, millions of Vyāsas and *gurus* were worshipped—this is what Nityānanda Prabhu showed by placing the garland around Mahāprabhu's neck.

By accepting his disciples' worship on the day of *vyāsa-pūjā*, the spiritual master worships Bhagavān by offering their worship of him to Bhagavān. He also engages them in worshipping the Lord directly. There is one point here that we must understand. Any *guru* who accepts worship from his disciples out of a desire to increase his prestige is not a *guru* at all. He is separate from *guru-tattva*. Vyāsa worshipped Kṛṣṇa and Nityānanda Prabhu worshipped Mahāprabhu—this is the inner, confidential meaning of *vyāsa-pūjā*. We are indebted to Vyāsa because he revealed Kṛṣṇa to us. He taught us how to worship Kṛṣṇa and for this reason he is worshipable.

Now I want to speak about my *gurudeva*, *nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-sata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja*. In his childhood, Gurudeva was looked after mostly by his mother rather than his father. His mother was the daughter of a zamindar, or wealthy land-owner, and she was a great believer in discipline. The result of her discipline was that her children all became well-behaved, responsible adults. She never allowed her children to stay out or loiter around after dark; they had to be home before dusk. Once, when Gurudeva was about fifteen, his mother noticed that it was ten o'clock at night and he had still not come home. She picked up a stick and stood by the door. When Gurudeva arrived, she grabbed his hand and lifted the stick. Angrily she said, "Shall I beat you? Where have you been all this time? Tell me." Gurudeva fearlessly remained silent and didn't answer her. Because he didn't answer her, she doubted him and thought that he had certainly been involved in some mischief. She said, "Tell me quickly, otherwise it will only be a question of which part of you I will beat! That way you will never do this again."

Then he began to tell her why he had come home so late. Why didn't he tell her straight away? Because one should never praise himself. One who praises himself dies at every moment. Finally he said, "Mother, you can beat me, but nearby there is a poor, elderly widow who has fallen very ill. During the day I came to know of her condition. I went to see her and saw that she had not eaten for four days and that she had no clothes to wear. What should I have done? I took all the pocket money you have been giving me and purchased some food for her. I also went around begging some clothes for her from our neighbours. I took these things to her and spent the rest of the day looking after her. If I had not done this, she would have certainly died today."

Upon hearing this, the stick fell from his mother's hand, tears came to her eyes and she embraced him. After this she never disciplined him again. She still disciplined her other sons, but not him. From childhood the hearts of saintly persons can be seen to be very soft. If someone's heart has not melted and become soft during childhood, then how will they be soft-hearted when they grow up? This softness of heart is a symptom of *guru*. Having forgotten Bhagavān, the *jīvas* have fallen into the cycle of *māyā* and are suffering various miseries. Seeing this, the spiritual master becomes very unhappy and his heart melts out of compassion for them. Then he gives everything of himself to try and help them.

Once, when Gurudeva was serving his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, a letter his mother had written to Prabhupāda arrived. The letter said, "I have written to my son Vinoda many times asking him to come home one last time but he has never come. Now I am writing you because you are his *guru* and you can order him. I am very ill and will be breathing my last soon. I desire that my dear son Vinoda will come and that I will give up my body while he is here. I am waiting just for this. Please send him here, even if it is just for one day."

Prabhupāda called Gurudeva and said, “Vinoda, listen. A letter from your mother has arrived. She is very ill and desires to see you one last time. You should go to her now. Get yourself ready and then go.” But instead of going, Gurudeva went and hid in a dark room in the *maṭha*. After the evening *ārati* and night had fallen, Prabhupāda asked his other dear personal servant, Paramānanda Brahmācārī, “Vinoda was ordered to go home to see his sick mother. Find out if he actually went.”

Paramānanda Prabhu replied, “No, he didn’t go. He is sitting alone in a dark room facing the wall.”

Prabhupāda said, “Go and call him.”

With some difficulty Paramānanda Prabhu brought him to Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda said to him, “You didn’t go? I told you to go see your mother.”

Gurudeva replied, “Prabhupāda, you ordered me to go there. After millions of births in this material world I have finally come to your lotus feet. My mother loves me dearly. If deprived of the shelter of your feet I were to go to her now while she is dying, she would say, ‘Dear son, I am dying. Keep in mind my final wish. Although they are older than you, your brothers are not capable of looking after our estate. Only you know how to look after our property. You please stay here, get married and look after our ancestral property. Otherwise everything that has been achieved through generations of hard work will be lost.’ I will be obliged to honour her final request. I will be bereft of your lotus feet forever and will have lost the opportunity to continue serving you. Millions of times I have taken birth in this material world, had millions of mothers, given birth to children, possessed property and so forth. To avoid becoming entangled in all of this again, I did not go to her. If I have done anything wrong, please punish me.”

Tears came to Prabhupāda’s eyes and he said, “No. I have nothing to say,” and he fell silent. Was what my *gurudeva* did correct or not? From the mundane perspective it appears that going to his mother at her moment of death would be the correct thing to do, but from the spiritual perspective he did the right thing. There is no greater friend than the spiritual master. If Gurudeva had gone to his mother at that time, he would have never become a *sannyāsī* and *ācārya*. Then myself and thousands of others would have never received their spiritual birth from him. These devotees are not ordinary by any means; they are eternal devotees of Bhagavān’s lotus feet. We can see the ideal of spiritual practice and spiritual conduct in the lives of each and every one of them.

Once, to encourage one of his disciples, Prabhupāda wrote him a letter that said, “In the whole of Mayapura there is no Vaiṣṇava like you. You are an exalted Vaiṣṇava and you are doing a great deal of service.” In reality the man’s conduct was very poor and he wasn’t doing any service at all, but Prabhupāda wrote this just to encourage him. Upon receiving this letter, that man became very proud. He began thinking, “There is no greater Vaiṣṇava in Mayapura than myself. If there is any great Vaiṣṇava, it is me. Not Narahari Prabhu, Vinoda Brahmācārī or anyone else here is as advanced as myself.”

Then he began criticising all the devotees. When Prabhupāda came to know of it, he said, “He has started criticising everyone? To cure his disease I gave him a remedy, but instead his disease has merely increased?” Mahāprabhu said the same thing: “I came to this world to cure the living entities’ disease and engage them in serving Bhagavān. Yet they commit offences, criticise me and now they are making a plan to beat me.” For this reason he took *sannyāsa*. Concerning this man, Prabhupāda said, “He is a great offender. He doesn’t respect any Vaiṣṇava. Vinoda, throw him out of the *maṭha*. Help him gather all his things, place them on a bullock cart and send him away.” Gurudeva offered *praṇāma* to Prabhupāda, then went and hid somewhere. When that night Prabhupāda realised that the man had still not been expelled from the *maṭha*, he called some other devotees and had him thrown out. Later Prabhupāda called my *gurudeva* and said to him, “I told you to throw that man out of the *maṭha* and you didn’t do it—why?”

With folded hands, Gurudeva said, “You are the authority here and you have independent, free will. You told me today to throw that man out, but perhaps in a few days you may be asking me why I did it. You are a very merciful *guru*; all of Bhagavān’s mercy is embodied in you. Please tell me why you had this devotee thrown out of the *maṭha*. It appears that you mercilessly threw him out. Can any *guru* do this?” Prabhupāda replied that he was forced to do this in this situation because the entire atmosphere amongst the devotees could have been spoiled. When a hand is very wounded and there is the possibility of gangrene, if the hand is not amputated the entire body will die. The *guru* can correct anyone but correcting a *vaiṣṇava-aparādhi* is very, very difficult. But even for such an offender generally the *guru* will patiently wait and allow time for his conduct to improve. He will not reject such a person so easily.

There is another story concerning my *gurudeva*’s compassion. In the early days of our *maṭha* in Navadvīpa there was a devotee named Narasimha Mahārāja, who was Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja’s uncle. In reality Narasimha Mahārāja was very beautiful like a *simha*, or lion—very handsome and well built. He was a very small man but very clever. He was very straightforward and never duplicitous. His character was just as a Vaiṣṇava’s should be. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru*:

*antara-bāhire, sama vyavahāra,
amāni mānada ho’ bo*

“However I feel in the core of my heart, I will behave accordingly, totally free from duplicity. Without demanding any respect, I will give all honour to others.”

Once a problem arose in the *maṭha*. A new devotee had come and taken initiation. He would only chant *harināma* and he would not do any service. Narasimha Mahārāja told him to leave the *maṭha* and he was thrown out. Then this devotee stood crying at the *maṭha* gate with his luggage. Someone went and told my *gurudeva* that Narasimha

Mahārāja had thrown a devotee out and that this devotee was standing at the *maṭha* gate crying. Then Gurudeva called Narasimha Mahārāja. Although they were similar in age, Narasimha Mahārāja considered him to be his *guru*. Gurudeva said to him, “Look, all of you got together and made me the *ācārya*. You should all please make the arrangements for all the service in the *maṭha* and do everything else. But please leave one thing only up to me: if someone is to be thrown out of the *maṭha*, it should only be done with my permission.”

Why did Gurudeva say this? He was very compassionate. He didn’t consider it was anyone’s place to finish another devotee’s *hari-bhajana* over a small matter. An ordinary person cannot understand this mentality. Only after thorough deliberation can this point be understood. A scorpion was lying in the water. A *sādhu* came and lifted it out, but in the course of doing that the scorpion stung him. Then the scorpion fell back into the water. After a little while the *sādhu* lifted it out again, and again it stung him and fell back into the water. This process was repeated several times. Then the *sādhu*’s companion said to him, “Why are you doing this? Time and again the scorpion stings you and time and again you lift it out of the water.”

The *sādhu* replied, “Its nature is to sting others and my nature is to help others. If it can’t abandon its nature, how can I abandon mine?” The nature of *sādhus* is like this. Even if a devotee has a bad character, as long as he hasn’t committed *aparādha* the *guru* will not reject him. The *guru* knows that if he were to withdraw his mercy, that devotee would be even more lost in *māyā*. Although the *guru* is very powerful like a lion, he is also very compassionate and merciful.

When Gurudeva would glorify Prabhupāda, sometimes he would suddenly say, “Hā Prabhupāda” and start bitterly weeping. No one can describe what he must have been feeling at times like that. At such times he would point to me and say, “You speak something.” Then I would speak; this was his mercy upon me. When we would go on Navadvīpa *parikramā* with Gurudeva, he would especially glorify Prabhupāda when we visited Prabhupāda’s *samādhi* in Mayapura. Gurudeva’s nature was so magnificent. There he would give incredible descriptions of Prabhupāda’s life. Even when Gurudeva gave just short or informal talks he would express so much unprecedented *siddhānta*. Not just in his speaking, but this happened in his writing also. For the first issue of his Bengali magazine, Gauḍīya Patrikā, he wrote his *viraha-maṅgala*, the composition expressing his separation from Prabhupāda. If any soft-hearted person reads this composition, then certainly their heart melts and they begin crying. He wrote there, “While writing this *viraha-maṅgala*, my hands are trembling. Therefore, I am forced to write slowly. My heart is also trembling, and for this reason I am unable to continue writing.” The same thing would happen when speaking—his voice would become choked with emotion and he would have to stop.

In that poem he gave a wonderful description of Prabhupāda’s qualities. He wrote that as Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s *sakhī* Nayana Mañjarī, Prabhupāda is the supreme jewel in

Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. What is the meaning of Nayana Mañjarī? He is the beautiful sparkle of Rādhikā's eyes. He kindly descended into this world and took *sannyāsa*, becoming known as Tridaṇḍi Svāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Some people said, "He gave himself *sannyāsa* and then refers to himself as *paramahansa parivrājakācārya aṣṭottara-sata* and so on? He must be really arrogant!" *Paramahansa* is actually a title for *sādhakas*. It is just like the president putting on simple clothing, going to a village and proclaiming there that he is a simple civil servant. If the president proclaims himself to be a menial servant, is he praising himself? This is an expression of his humility. Similarly, Nayana Mañjarī is an eternally liberated, primary servant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. If she descends into this world and is referred to as a *paramahansa*, that is a title which is lower than her actual position. Many people don't understand this.

If my *gurudeva* detected a fault in a disciple, he would discipline or chastise him in order to correct him. Without admonishment, the fault would not be corrected. This chastisement is the *guru's* real compassion upon a disciple. It is the *guru's* desire that not even a trace of fault remain within the disciple. This is the real meaning of *dāyālutā*, kindness, but an ordinary disciple cannot understand this. Then whose fault is it—the *guru's* or the disciple's? Suppose the *guru* disciplines a disciple by saying, "Just be a little patient. I will give you *dikṣā* after a few days."

Then the disciple says, "Alright then—I will show you."

"What will you show me?"

"I will not stay here with you any longer."

"Where will you go?"

"I am going back to my home."

"What will you do there?"

"I will live with my wife and children again."

"That is fine, but first you will have to face a beating from your wife for having left her in the first place..."

Oh my! Such a great punishment this disciple has given his *guru*! He was thinking, "Where is the *guru's* kindness?" He couldn't understand the *guru's* kindness. The *guru* desires that the hearts of all become sinless and spotless. Otherwise, how will *bhakti*, which is most difficult to attain, ever come to them? If Kṛṣṇa said to his *guru*, "Guruji, I will not follow orders from your wife. It is midnight on a rainy night in the cold season, and she wants to make me her menial servant who brings her firewood from the forest? What is this? I am the son of King Vasudeva! I don't do these things." But Kṛṣṇa didn't say this—why? The *guru* will see that he is proud of his wealth or position. This pride will have to be eradicated. The *guru* desires that the disciple understand *ṭṇād api sunica*, proper humility, and for this reason he may sometimes chastise the disciple. But many times the disciple doesn't understand this.

The *guru* has such a soft nature that if within a disciple he detects a fault that is unfavourable to progress in *bhakti*, he will try to eliminate it by chastising the disciple.

And what else? If he detects even a little bit of a good quality in the disciple, then as if with a thousand tongues he will glorify that quality to encourage the disciple. I have personally experienced this. One day I started out very early in the morning to do some collection from our *maṭha* in Chinchurah. I passed beyond the village of Naihati and must have travelled forty miles in a single day. I wandered around all day until night fell and all together I collected five rupees. Many of you have probably heard what kind of family I came from. I was more or less the son of a king also. When I offered this five rupees at the feet of my *gurudeva*, he became very pleased and said, “Before today no one has ever collected so much for me! Where did you collect all of this? How did you do it? I am very satisfied with you.” In reality I had collected only four rupees and seventy-five paisa, but I borrowed the extra twenty-five paisa from Trivikrama Mahārāja or Vāmana Mahārāja to make it look better! When all together it was five rupees, I offered it to Guruji. At that time five rupees was enough to support our *maṭha* for an entire month. But for either Guruji or myself, what was five rupees? Still, he glorified my collection to encourage me.

Guruji had a disciple in Assam named Anaṅga-mohana Brahmācārī. In reality he really was *anaṅga*, very beautiful in appearance. He played *mṛdaṅga* and sang *kīrtana* very beautifully. He rendered many services for Gurudeva such as washing his cloth, cooking for him, preparing his bedding and putting up his mosquito net at night and then removing it in the morning. He was also very deep and grave in disposition. Gurudeva loved him very much. Then Anaṅga-mohana Prabhu fell ill with tuberculosis. All the devotees in the *maṭha* avoided him due to fear of being infected but Gurudeva never abandoned him. I can’t even say how much money Gurudeva must have spent on him while he was ill. Many of Gurudeva’s godbrothers criticised him for this, saying, “We collected so much money for the mission but it is all being spent on this sick boy.” Eventually Gurudeva ordered me to take him to a hospital in Madras. There, in his hospital bed, Anaṅga-mohana Prabhu kept singing, “Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are calling me to Vṛndāvana,” and then he left his body. It was simply incredible. At that time I fully realised that he was not an ordinary devotee. Ajāmila received so much benefit by taking one name of Nārāyaṇa for his son at the time of death. But in this instance Anaṅga-mohana Prabhu kept saying, “Hā Rādhā, hā Kṛṣṇa, hā Mahāprabhu.” I had placed a picture of Gurudeva before him and he kept calling “Hā Bābā, hā Bābā” for Gurudeva because he saw Gurudeva as his father. His face assumed a divine countenance at that time. The doctors present there could not understand how he could keep speaking in such a condition. At that time I offered a prayer to his feet, saying, “Prabhu, now you are going to Goloka-Vṛndāvana. Pray to the *īśvara* and *īśvari* of Vṛndāvana and also to Gurudeva for me so that one day they will also call me to join them there. Beg them that one day I will also get *bhakti*.”

I wrote a letter to Gurudeva describing what had happened and he received it while the Navadvīpa *parikramā* was taking place. At least twenty thousand people were there.

Kīrtana was going on and Gurudeva was preparing to give a lecture. Meanwhile Vāmana Mahārāja brought my letter and placed it into Gurudeva’s hands. I wrote there, “You entrusted me with a great treasure, but I was unable to protect it. I am unqualified. With your picture before his face and calling out ‘*Hā Rādhā, hā Kṛṣṇa*, they are calling me to Vṛndāvana,’ he departed this world. I am so ashamed that I feel unqualified to show you my face.” Gurudeva read the letter and was unable to restrain himself. Before thousands of people he broke down and wept bitterly. He had so much affection for his disciples that we cannot even imagine it. By his mercy a devotee who was almost completely uneducated left his body calling out to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in his final moments. This is such a great thing—what would his destination be, if Ajāmila was benefited so much? I feel very gratified that in my life I received the opportunity to serve such great personalities. They are all ideal *guru-sevakas*, servants of their own spiritual masters. We should possess firm *niṣṭhā* for our *guru*. This *niṣṭhā* is the root cause of *bhakti*. By their mercy so many of these realisations concerning the topic of *guru-tattva* have arisen within my heart as if strung in a garland, and this is why I can extensively narrate the glories of the spiritual master.

This lecture was spoken on February 28, 1994 at Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Vṛndāvana.



Chapter Four

Vyāsa-pūjā

To understand what is *vyāsa-pūjā*, first we have to understand who is Vyāsa. The word *vyāsa* means expansion or extension, like when from a central point we draw a circle with a compass. Vyāsa is he who from one spot extends spiritual knowledge and the glories of the Supreme Lord into the universe for the benefit of mankind. In one sense Kṛṣṇa himself is Vyāsa; in this way he diffuses his own glories. The *guru* is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Therefore, the spiritual master has been called *sākṣād-haritvena*: non-different from Hari himself. But this verse (*Gurvaṣṭaka* 7) has not referred to the *guru* as directly being Hari the *viśaya*, the object of love. The *guru* is Hari in the sense that he is a servant of Hari. The word *haritvena* comes from *haritva*, which means possessing the *guṇa*, or attributes, of Hari. He in whom the attributes of Hari have appeared is called *haritva*. When the *guru* is referred to as being *abhinna* or non-different from Hari, it means that the *guru* is very, very dear to Hari. It has been told that both the *guru* and Śāṅkara are *abhinna*, or non-different, from Bhagavān and very dear to him.

Within the category of *guru*, there is the *āropita-guru* and the *svarūpita-guru*. The *guru* in whom these transcendental qualities of Hari are *āropa*, feigned, will not be effective. The *guru* must factually possess these transcendental attributes, and then he is *haritvena*. All of Bhagavān's personal qualities will appear in him to some degree; they are invested within him by Bhagavān himself. Like the Lord himself, there is nothing which the *guru* doesn't know; he knows everything. Nothing remains unknown to him. These attributes of Hari should be visible within the *guru*. The *guru* is he who has achieved factual realisation of the purport of all the scriptures. He can dispel any doubt that a disciple may have. Also, he must have achieved direct realisation of Bhagavān. He must be fully conversant with spiritual knowledge and must have received the direct *darśana* of Bhagavān. He must be detached from material enjoyment; he has no desire for anything material. He keeps all of that far away. This is described in a verse from the Upaniṣads:

*tad-vijñārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samt-pāniḥ śrotriyam brahma-niṣṭham*

The word *śrotriyam* means that he possesses expertise in knowledge of the *śrutis*, and *brahma-niṣṭham* means that he is fixed in transcendence. There are many types of

brahma-niṣṭham; not just one or two. There are also thousands of levels of gradation involved within it. There is *brahma-niṣṭhā* for the impersonal Brahman, for Paramātmā, for Nārāyaṇa, for Kṛṣṇa, and even within the category of *brahma-niṣṭhā* for Kṛṣṇa there are many varieties and gradations. There is *brahma-niṣṭhā* for Mathurā Kṛṣṇa, for Dvārakā Kṛṣṇa, for Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa, and within Vṛndāvana that *brahma-niṣṭhā* comes in the shapes of *dāśya-rasa*, *sakhya-rasa*, *vātsalya-rasa* and *mādhurya-rasa*. Within *mādhurya-rasa* also there are not just one or two kinds of *brahma-niṣṭhā*; there are many varieties of it and many gradations involved. The *guru* must have realisation of the highest conception of *brahma*, and this is why we consider Rūpa Gosvāmī to be our worshipable deity. Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed him in detail in Prayaga and again later in Puri on how Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate conception of *brahma*. Mahāprabhu also described this to Raghupati Upadhyāya. He said that Kṛṣṇa is most beautiful when he is in his *kiśora* age (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 19.106):

*śyāmam eva param rūpaṁ
pūrī madhu-pūrī varā
vayaḥ kaiśorikaṁ dhyeyam
ādya eva paro rasah*

“The form of Śyāmasundara is the supreme form, the city of Mathurā is the supreme abode, Kṛṣṇa’s fresh youth should always be meditated upon and the mellow of conjugal love is the supreme mellow.”

His form as Śyāma is topmost, and his form as Śyāma within Mathurā-pūrī is topmost and supreme. The inner meaning of “within Mathurā-pūrī” here means within Vraja. Within Vraja, his *bhāva* at Govardhana is topmost, and at Govardhana, his *bhāva* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa is topmost. Amongst all of this, his form as a *kiśora* is the highest. By my saying *kiśora* here don’t understand that there is only one type of *kiśora* form; there are many varieties. After passing the juncture of the *pauganda* (from six to ten years old) and *kiśora* (from ten to sixteen years old) ages, Kṛṣṇa enters into the first stage of *kiśora*. Subsequently, he gradually reaches the *madhya*, or intermediate, stage, and then he reaches the *vyakta*, or fully revealed, stage of *kiśora*. After this, he reaches the age of *yauvana*, adolescence. The topmost age of *kiśora* that Caitanya Mahāprabhu was referring to is the intermediate when Kṛṣṇa is perhaps thirteen or fourteen years old. At this age Kṛṣṇa expresses his identity by feeling, “I am the *nāyaka*, master, of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*.” This is known as *dhīra-lalita* and so forth.

The *guru* is he who is fully conversant with this conception, who has factually realised it and who has similarly realised Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes that are associated with it. He must also be detached from material enjoyment. If the *guru* does not fit this description, then what can he possibly give the disciple? We especially honour more the conception

of *guru-tattva* that has been given by recent *mahājanas* like Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, all of whom appeared thousands of years after the ancient sages. All the symptoms of a *guru* or *mahā-bhāgavat* Vaiṣṇava have been given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the scriptures twenty-six qualities have been given for a Vaiṣṇava, but some of them are based on the impersonal conception of the absolute. The personal associates of Caitanya Mahāprabhu such as the *gosvāmīs* have given something over and above these twenty-six qualities as the description of a *mahā-bhāgavat* Vaiṣṇava. The twenty-six qualities of a Vaiṣṇava are *kṛpālu* (merciful), *akṛta-droha* (humble), *satya-sāra* (truthful), *maunī* (silent), *akiñcana* (possessionless) and so forth. Amongst these twenty-six, the topmost is *kṛṣṇaika-sāraṇa*, being exclusively surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. But when Rāmānanda Rāya presented this thought to Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Mahāprabhu said, “*eho bāhya*—this is external.” *Śaraṇāgati* is the gateway to the realm of *bhakti* that we have not yet entered. In my opinion we are followers of those elevated *mahājanas* such as Rūpa Gosvāmī, Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Narottama Ṭhākura who are absorbed in *kīrtana*, *śravaṇa* and *smaraṇa* of the *yugala-kīśora* Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. We won’t follow those who are *saraṇāgatas*, merely surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. Yes, they are great personalities, *mahā-bhāgavatas*, *gurus*—that is alright. We offer *praṇāma* unto them time and again, we keep the dust of their feet on our heads and we never think less of them. The ancient scriptures mention twelve *mahājanas*: Brahmā, Nārada, Śambu, Sanat-kumāra, Kapila, Manu, Janaka, Bhīṣma, Bali Mahārāja, Vaiyāsaki, Prahlāda and Yamarāja. But rather than following them, we follow devotees like Rūpa and Raghunātha because in these others we don’t detect the symptom of exclusive *niṣṭhā* for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The devotional sentiments found within the *paramparā* emanating from Mahāprabhu don’t exist within them. One can search for these sentiments within them, but will simply become exhausted and never find them. They are all *mahā-bhāgavatas* and are always fixed in meditation upon the particular four-armed form of Nārāyaṇa whom they worship. But we don’t read anywhere that any of them, not even Nārada, are more devotionally inclined toward Rādhā than they are towards Kṛṣṇa. Nārada is a *mahājana*, a disciple of Brahmā, the original *guru* in our *paramparā*, and he has also been to Vraja, but within him we don’t see the *bhāva* that is possessed by the *gosvāmīs*.

The *guru* is he who possesses this *bhāva* and who gives primary importance to the performance of *kīrtana*. *Smaraṇa*, or remembrance, of Kṛṣṇa’s *nitya-līlā* is generally considered the most important limb of *bhakti* because it is the function of the mind. By the function of the mind *smaraṇa* is performed, but this is Kali-yuga. In this age, the performance of *kīrtana* is emphasised. Only by the medium of *kīrtana* is remembrance accomplished. To see how, take this verse written by Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī as an example:

*bhajāmi rādhām aravinda-netrām
smarāmi rādhām madhura-smitāsyām
vadāmi rādhām karuṇā-bharārdrām
tato mamanyasti gatir na kāpi*

“I worship Rādhā who has lotus eyes, I remember Rādhā who has a sweet smile and I speak of Rādhā who is melted with compassion. In this way, I have no other goal.”

Meditate on this verse and bring this description of Rādhikā into your heart. Also meditate on Kṛṣṇa giving the highest importance to Rādhikā, the mood of their Sevā-kuñja pastimes. By the medium of performing *kīrtana* in line with the moods expressed in verses like this one which are written by the *gosvāmīs*, *smaraṇa* will automatically take place. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda writes:

*kīrtana prabhāva, smaraṇa haibe,
se kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava*

“When by the influence of *kīrtana* one genuinely enters into *smaraṇa*, then he will be capable of performing *bhajana* in a solitary place.”

The *guru* is he who is fully knowledgeable in these matters. The *sādhaka* should find a *guru* who is situated within the line in which he is aspiring. If the *guru* and *sādhaka* don't share the same mood, their relationship will not bear fruit; in other words, the disciple will not enter into the conception given by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The *guru* should be fully realised in regard to that which Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended into this world to give, and then he is capable of giving that same thing to the disciple. Especially, it has been said that the *guru* is not of an ordinary standard. At the very least the *guru* should be a *madhyama* or intermediate *uttama-adhikāri*, and then the mercy which he bestows upon the disciple will be effective. If the *guru* is not up to this standard, then in reality he can only give some general help to the disciple. In such a situation the disciple will not realise the highest things within his heart. It has been said that the *guru* should be of one of these classes: a *kaniṣṭha* or preliminary *uttama-adhikāri*, a *madhyama* or intermediate *uttama-adhikāri* or an *uttama* or topmost *uttama-adhikāri*. Such a topmost devotee has the power to make all spiritual perfection arise within a person's heart simply by placing his hand on their head and bestowing his mercy.

The *kaniṣṭha uttama-adhikāri* is known as *mūrcchita-kaṣāya*, which means that he still has material desires, but they are lying in a dormant condition and are unable to do any harm. An example of this is Nārada in his previous birth as the son of a maidservant. He was engaged in *bhakti-sādhana* and then one day Bhagavān granted him a brief *darśana*. When Bhagavān departed, Nārada began lamenting and then in a voice from the sky the Lord said to him, “As long as you remain in this material body which has been pro-

duced by *karma* and as long as you harbour material desires, you cannot obtain my constant association. Now perform *sādhana-bhajana* by traversing the earth and singing my glories. Preach the glories of my name everywhere.” At that time Nārada was in *mūrcchita-kaṣāya*. All of one’s *anarthas* may have disappeared, but as long as the body produced by previous *karma* remains, there is always the possibility that material desires can come. When one receives Bhagavān’s mercy and performs *bhajana* more and more, when one’s material body no longer remains, when one puts his feet on the head of death and receives the body of a liberated soul, when not even a scent of *anarthas* or material desires remain, then one has become an *uttama* or topmost *uttama-adhikāri*. This is the stage known as *bhagavat-pārṣada-deha-prāpt*, having obtained a spiritual body suitable for rendering service in the spiritual world. Such devotees can give mercy, and on the order of Bhagavān they travel throughout the material world doing just that. Such a devotee has the power to say to someone, “May you have *bhakti*,” and at once *bhakti* will arise within him. The devotee in *mūrcchita-kaṣāya* with great endeavour tells others *hari-kathā* and is also capable of giving mercy. He has this power because all his *anarthas* have vanished and he is completely immersed in glorification of the Lord.

The intermediate *uttama-adhikāri* devotee is known as *nirdhūta-kaṣāya*. The word *nirdhūta* means that not even any dormant desires remain within him; they have all been cleansed away. In the case of Vyāsa, by the mercy of Nārada he was engaged in glorifying Kṛṣṇa more and more. Then everything was washed away from his heart and no *anartha* or anything remained there. Those who have similarly been cleansed of all material impurities are called *nirdhūta-kaṣāya*. An example of this class of devotee is Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Nārada, Vyāsā and many other great devotees were present at the assembly where Parīkṣit Mahārāja was to hear the *Bhāgavatam*, yet it was Śukadeva whom they wanted to hear it from—why? Because he was *nirdhūta-kaṣāya*, having no trace of material desire. Once he passed by several women as they were bathing. Although he saw them as they were naked, it had no meaning to him and he was not affected. Vyāsa sent him to Mithila for instruction, and like an *avadhūta* he arrived there without wearing any clothes. The king had previously given the order to not let him enter. At the first gate the guards stopped him. They said, “Wait here; we are going inside to obtain the order for you to enter,” but they didn’t return for two or three days. Not knowing what was happening, Śukadeva continued waiting there all that time. Then the guards returned and said, “Yes, you can enter now.” So they led him in, but only to another gate. Situated there were many beautiful sixteen-year-old girls who led him around the hundreds of enchanting gardens on the palace grounds. All the while they were trying to allure him with provocative gestures, yet it meant nothing whatsoever to him. Next he was led inside where he was instructed by Janaka. Janaka was also not an ordinary personality. So Śukadeva was *nirdhūta-kaṣāya*, and by the mercy of Vyāsa the *rasa* described in the *Bhāgavatam* arose within his heart. Then he was able to

speak the *Bhāgavatam* before such an exalted assembly. Such great personalities are capable of simply glancing at someone and bestowing upon him all spiritual perfections.

These three classes of devotees cannot perform the function of *guru*; they must come down a little to a lower stage to do that. Such devotees are unable to discriminate between conditioned souls and liberated souls. Sometimes a little semblance of discrimination is possible. What are the activities of such a *guru*? He says, “Perform *hari-bhajana*, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa; that’s all. May all perfections arise within you.” Once Nārada came across a hunter shooting birds and Nārada gave him a little mercy. Nārada had him sit down and chant, and after some time the man broke his bow, threw it away and became immersed in *bhajana*.

These are the three types of most elevated *guru*. If we meet such a *guru*, in an instant we can cross over the ocean of material existence. Such *gurus* are very, very rare but it is possible to find them. If our *saṁskāra*, acquired nature, is sufficiently developed, Bhagavān will arrange for us to meet such a *guru*. Another point here—suppose the association of not one of these three types of *guru* are available to us. So will we just not perform *bhagavat-bhajana* then? Especially at the time of searching for a spiritual master, a *sādhaka* is not very knowledgeable. So from whom will he hear? He thinks, “I am considering now whom to select as my *guru*.” At that time he is completely innocent, but he has a little faith. If he has some *saṁskāra* from his previous life, he will understand something. Otherwise, he won’t be able to understand who is a qualified *guru* and who isn’t. At that time, Bhagavān acts to establish a relationship with a *guru* for him. So if the association of one of these three types of devotee is not available, then one should associate with a *madhyama-adhikārī guru* who is a little inferior to them but who is expert in knowledge of the scriptures, detached from material enjoyment, possesses some direct realisation of Bhagavān and capable of dispelling a disciple’s doubts. By the influence of his good conduct, by giving instruction from the scriptures and by bestowing mercy, such a *guru* can make a disciple progress in spiritual life and eventually lead him to Bhagavān. Such devotees are also fit to be revered as *gurus*.

Besides the *dikṣā-guru*, there are two other varieties of this kind of *guru*: the *śravaṇa-guru* and the *śikṣā-guru*. The *śravaṇa-guru* recites the scriptures to one and leads him to a pure spiritual master. There is also the *vartma-pradarśaka guru* who leads one to a qualified spiritual master. The *śravaṇa-guru* and the *śikṣā-guru* are generally one and the same person. Sometimes the *dikṣā-guru*, *śravaṇa-guru* and *śikṣā-guru* are the same person. Suppose a disciple did not have a substantial amount of association with his *dikṣā-guru* or his *dikṣā-guru* has passed away. At that time he will accept a *śikṣā-guru* who is of the same mood and qualification as his *dikṣā-guru*. One should never disrespect his *dikṣā-guru*, *śikṣā-guru* or *vartma-pradarśaka-guru* because they are of the same mood and intention. If a devotee is not of the same mood as one’s *dikṣā-guru*, then he cannot act as the *śikṣā-guru*. One should never disrespect his *śikṣā-guru* or see him as different from the

dikṣa-guru. The external manifestation of *guru* is known as the *mahanta-guru*, and Kṛṣṇa gives us mercy internally as the *caitya-guru*. The *dikṣā-guru* is Kṛṣṇa's *rūpa* and the *śikṣa-guru* is Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa*: *śikṣā-guruke ta 'jani kṛṣṇera-svarūpa* (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādilīlā 1.47).

In my case, my spiritual master is my *dikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Then, for instance, there is Pūjyapāda Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja who has many disciples. For them he is acting as *dikṣā-guru* but he also gives *śikṣā* to me. So Śrīdhara Mahārāja has become my *śikṣā-guru*, and my own *guru* is my *dikṣā-guru*. If there are any disciples of Śrīdhara Mahārāja who accept instruction from my *guru*, then for them my *guru* has become their *śikṣā-guru*. Who will I consider superior, my own *guru* or Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja? It is likely that my love and affection will be more for my own *guru*. My *niṣṭhā* will be more for my own *guru*—this is correct, and I will serve him with all my heart. But if I say that Śrīdhara Mahārāja is less than him and that Śrīdhara Mahārāja is incapable of serving Bhagavān, it will be a great offence. All Vaiṣṇavas who possess the necessary qualification are *guru*, and we should give them appropriate respect.

Suppose with this mood towards my own *guru* I am engaged in serving him and suddenly Nārada, Vyāsa or Śukadeva were to come here—what should my mood be towards them? I will have to consider at that time whether to possibly disrespect my own *guru* or them. First I should show respect to my own *guru* by taking his permission, and then show them respect which is equal to that which I show my own *guru*. All of these points are explained in the scriptures, and in accordance with them we will go forward in our spiritual lives.

In ancient times, just before the end of Dvārapa-yuga, the scriptures had all disappeared. Brahmā and the other demigods approached Bhagavān and prayed to him, “O Lord, the *śāstras* are disappearing, people are not following the vow of *brahmacarya* as before, and because peoples' memories are not as they were before, they no longer retain what they hear. How will they acquire the knowledge to guide their lives? Please be merciful and ensure that all this knowledge does not disappear.” At that time Bhagavān, seeing that there was no suitable *jīva* he could empower for the purpose, came himself as Vyāsadeva. Sometimes Bhagavān empowers a *jīva* for a specific purpose. When he desires to illuminate knowledge, he empowers a *jīva* to diffuse that knowledge. Ṛṣabhadeva and Kapiladeva are examples of such *jñāna-śaktyāveśa-avatāras*. Nārada is a *bhakti-avatāra*, and through him Bhagavān preaches *bhakti*. Paraśarāma and Pṛthu Mahārāja are also examples of *aveśa-avatāras*. When Bhagavān finds no suitable *jīva* to empower, Bhagavān as Garbhodaśāyī Viṣṇu descends and performs the function of Vyāsa. Specifically he comes to divide the Vedas, manifest the Purāṇas and finally compose the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. For Vyāsa to compose the *śāstras*, a scribe was necessary. So Vyāsa said to Brahmā, “I require a scribe.”

Brahmā called Gaṇeśa and said, “You must do a little writing for Vyāsadeva.”

Gaṇeśa replied, “I am so intelligent that very quickly I will become bored with this.” He hadn’t been informed that Vyāsadeva was actually Nārāyaṇa himself, so he was a little indifferent. Then Gaṇeśa said, “I will do it, but if in the midst of it my pen ever stops writing, I will stop right there and not go any further. I must be constantly engaged.”

Vyāsa replied, “I agree to that, but if you write without understanding, you will not benefit. You must understand everything that you are writing. First understand everything that I say, then write it.”

Gaṇeśa said, “I am like Sarasvatī, a storehouse of endless knowledge. What is there that I cannot possibly understand?”

Then, to keep Gaṇeśa’s constant attention, Vyāsa composed very difficult verses in the Purāṇas and especially in the *Bhāgavatam* that are called *vyāsa-kūṭa*. Two of these verses are the first verse of the *Bhāgavatam*, *janmādy asya yato ’nvayād* and *vadanti tat tattva-vidas* (*Śrīmad-Bhāg.* 1.2.11). The meaning of the entire *Bhāgavatam* comes within the explanation of these two verses. Ask any scholar who is not following the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, “This verse, *vadanti tat tattva vidas*, explains how Kṛṣṇa is *advaya-jñāna svarūpa*—what is the meaning?” They will be unable to reply. Even great scholars are baffled by this *śloka*. Also, at the time when Vyāsa composed this verse, no one had ever heard of such a thing. The nature of these *vyāsa-kūṭa* verses is that they have an ordinary, external meaning and also a much deeper, inner meaning.

After dividing the Vedas, Vyāsa composed all the scriptures and Purāṇas. There are fifty-four Purāṇas all together—Purāṇas, Upapurāṇas and Sakha-purāṇas. After composing all of this, he was still not satisfied. He had not written something that women and *sūdras* could understand, so he wrote the *Mahābhārata*. It is a symptom of his sharp intelligence that he wrote the *Mahābhārata*. What is the meaning of the word *sūdra*? It means one who feels *śoka*, sorrow and so forth, for the material body. *Sūdras* are busy in fighting and quarrelling, so for them he composed *Mahābhārata*. Therein he described Kṛṣṇa’s life story and the war between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. Why were they fighting? For control of the kingdom. It seems that the Pāṇḍavas were also fighting just for the sake of a kingdom, so therefore they were the same as the Kauravas. But did the Pāṇḍavas have any necessity for a kingdom? Definitely not. Kṛṣṇa arranged all of this to relieve the Earth of its burden. Kṛṣṇa’s friend Arjuna said, “What necessity do I have for a kingdom soaked with the blood of my relatives? I will live by begging and perform *bhajanā*.” But Kṛṣṇa forbade him and told him to fight instead. Then Arjuna said to Kṛṣṇa, “I am surrendered to you and will do as you instruct me.” Then so much fighting ensued. Bhīma broke Duryodhana’s thigh and with the blood washed Draupadī’s hair. *Sūdras* who possess *tamasic-bhāva* find all of this tasteful. This book is a medium for teaching people gradually to live peacefully. Then *bhagavat-tattva* is delineated and the reader

can progress spiritually. Situated within that same *Mahābhārata* is the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Gītā* gives instruction on *bhagavat-tattva*, *māyā-tattva* and *jīva-tattva* and nothing more. If someone wants to know more than this, then they have to read the *Bhāgavatam*. For ordinary people, the instructions of the *Gītā* are appropriate to learn and follow first. When after maturing and advancing, they can study the Ph.D. course of the *Bhāgavatam*. There *bhagavat-tattva* is described with *rasa*; this is our worshipable object.

When after having composed all of this, Vyāsa was still not peaceful within himself, Nārada met with him and said, “You appear to be dissatisfied—why? I see that your mind is disturbed and you are feeling sorrowful.”

Vyāsa replied, “I don’t understand why myself.” This is because the patient cannot determine the cause of his own illness. Only a doctor can diagnose it for him. Vyāsa said, “Please tell me, why am I feeling this way?”

Nārada said, “In the scriptures you described *karma*, *dharma* and everything, but you didn’t factually describe the highest feature of Bhagavān. You described all the demigods and incarnations, but you never mentioned that Kṛṣṇa alone is Svayam-Bhagavān. You didn’t describe how Svayam-Bhagavān performs such variegated pastimes in Vraja. You didn’t describe how his mother grabs the ear of that Parabrahma, while in their meditation the *brahmavādīs* cannot catch even a fleeting glimpse of the beams of effulgence emanating from the nails of his lotus feet—what to speak of seeing the rest of him! So please describe all of this, and especially describe how the Lord becomes subjugated by his devotees. You described how devotees worship Bhagavān, but you didn’t describe how Kṛṣṇa, who is Svayam-Bhagavān and the topmost limit of *viṣṇu-tattva*, himself performs *arādhana*, worship, of his devotees in a similar way. When he simply hears the syllable *rā*, his *anurāga*, natural love, increases at once, and upon hearing the syllable *dha*, he is completely overwhelmed. Her name is Rādhā. You didn’t describe her. You didn’t describe how Kṛṣṇa descended directly from Goloka-Vṛndāvana with his eternal devotees to perform these pastimes for the benefit of the souls of this world. Especially you have not described his beautiful *rāsa-līlā* and his *prema*. You didn’t describe how his *prema* has two aspects, *vipralambha* and *sambhoga*. Without *vipralambha*, the pastimes in *sambhoga*, meeting, would not be strengthened. Please describe all of this.”

Vyāsa asked, “But how will I describe all of this?”

Nārada replied, “First purify your heart by practising *bhakti-yoga*. It will purify your heart in such a way that *jñāna*, *karma*, *yoga*, *tapasyā* and *vratas* cannot.”

*na sādhayati mām yogo
na sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
yathā bhaktir mamorjitā*

“My dear Uddhava, the unalloyed devotional service rendered to me by my devotees brings me under their control. I cannot be thus controlled by those who engage in mystic yoga, Sāṅkhya philosophy, pious work, Vedic study, austerity or renunciation.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.20)

Understand the meaning of *tapasyā*, austerity, to be following days of observance such as Ekādaśī. How should we follow *ekādaśī-vrata*? In his *Jaiva-dharma*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained how we should follow *hari-vāsara*, days of observance. The day before we should maintain *brahmacarya* and take *prasāda* only once. *Brahmacarya* means in the ordinary sense “maintaining celibacy,” and beyond that it means “immersing one’s mind in *brahma* or transcendence through the medium of speaking, hearing or reading *hari-kathā*.” On the day of Ekādaśī itself, fast from everything including water, refrain from resting during the day and remain awake all night. What should one do during these twenty-four hours in which he does not sleep? Nothing except be immersed in meditating on Bhagavān, in hearing narrations of his pastimes and in performing *hari-kīrtana*. The following morning, after bathing one should worship the deity, offer respect to all the Vaiṣṇavas and then break his fast. On that day also one should take *prasāda* only once. This is real observance of Ekādaśī, but what can we do? If we don’t eat for even one day, what would happen? On Ekādaśī we take two full meals of *prasāda* and on top of that numerous snacks throughout the day. We also rest for two or three hours in the afternoon!

Nārada advised Vyāsa to practise *bhakti-yoga*. *Bhakti-yoga* means first there is *śraddhā*, then one’s *anarthas* begin to disappear, then one takes shelter of a *guru* and performs *bhajana*, then serves the *guru* with *viśrambha-bhāva*, intimacy, hears *hari-kathā* from him, learns from him how to practise *sādhana-bhajana* and then engages in the sixty-four types of *bhakti*. It is not that one just purchases a copy of the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* and starts reading it at home. In that case one might study it merely to learn how to better associate with women, and in this way he descends down to the hellish planets. This is not how to practise *bhakti*. Everything depends on the *guru*. Seeing to what degree we are qualified, he will gradually lead us into *bhakti*. Otherwise, being full of *anarthas* and not fully understanding the ABCs of spiritual life, we will imagine ourselves to be *gopīs* and adopt the path of *smaraṇa*. This is opposed to the injunctions of the scriptures. The *guru* will only bestow these elevated topics upon the disciple when he sees that the disciple has become fully qualified for them, when he detects greed for them within a disciple and after he has thoroughly deliberated on it. Nārada obtained his eternal form, but we must consider this—when did he obtain it? Only after performing sufficient *sādhana-bhajana*. So performing *sādhana* is not as easy as we understand it to be.

We should consider all of this and follow the example of Nārada. Then it will happen for us. All of these things should be pursued under the guidance of the spiritual master. These days *gurus* try to give the highest perfection to disciples who are still full

of *anarthas* and who possess no greed or anything. But what did Vyāsadeva do? Within him was the *bhakti* of Vaikuṅṭha. By the mercy of Nārada the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa appeared before him within his heart. Since Nārada is an *uttama-bhagavat* devotee, he bestowed mercy on Vyāsa in the ways that I described before. By merely glancing at Vyāsa, by his instructions and by giving his merciful touch, he invested inspiration within him. These are the three types of mercy. By doing this, he gave Vyāsa everything internally and made so many things appear within Vyāsa. Then, by the practice of *bhakti-yoga*, Vyāsa could easily compose the *Bhāgavatam* as he sat in his *āśrama* on the banks of the Sarasvatī river. Then the *śuddha-sattva* potency appeared in his heart and by the independent will of that *śakti*, within himself he began witnessing the flow of Bhagavān’s pastimes as if they were on a cinema reel. One by one these pastimes appeared to him. He saw Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Dvārakā and even pastimes from the *aprakāṣa-lilā*, which were not manifest in this world. He realised all of this on the basis of the brief *catuḥ-śloki* found in the *Bhāgavatam*, and from that he manifested the entire *Bhāgavatam*. Then, within the *Bhāgavatam* he narrated those pastimes which he had not described in other Purāṇas or scriptures.

*bhakti-yogena manasi
samyak praṇihite ’male
apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇam
māyām ca tad-apāśrayam*

“By the power of *bhakti-yoga*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, being firmly concentrated in meditation with a purified mind, saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa fully endowed with spiritual effulgence, with his plenary portions and with his internal potency of *svarūpa-śakti*. His external potency *māyā*, being of an inferior nature, was seen in the background under his control.” (Śrīmad-Bhāg. 1.7.4)

He saw the *pūrṇa-puruṣa*, Complete Person. *Pūrṇa-puruṣa* means Kṛṣṇa when he is accompanied by the embodiment of his *śakti*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā; without seeing them together, one cannot say that he has seen the *pūrṇa-puruṣa*. And what is the nature of Śrīmatī Rādhikā? She has many *sakhis*, and each of them embodies one of her *bhāvas*. Vyāsa also received *darśana* of the many ways in which they serve the Divine Couple. Vyāsa saw how *māyā* was in the background and how the *jīvas* who had forgotten Kṛṣṇa were trapped in the material energy. He also saw how by taking shelter of holy men they were gradually rectified and moved towards Bhagavān.

*yasyām vai śrūyamāṇāyām
kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe
bhaktir utpadyate puṁsaḥ
śoka-moha-bhayāpahā*

“Simply by giving aural reception to this Vedic literature, the desire to perform *bhakti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, sprouts up at once to extinguish the fire of lamentation, illusion and fearfulness.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāg.* 1.1.7)

This is the kind of spiritual principle he composed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is the meaning of the *Brahma-sūtra*, the objective of the *Mahābhārata*, the purport of the *gāyatrī-mantra* and the essence of the Vedas, as confirmed in this verse (*Garuḍa Purāṇa*, and *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 10.283):

*artho 'yam brahma-sūtrāṇām bhāratārthavinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau vedārthaparibṛmhitah*

Of all types of authorities, it is the spotless evidence. By taking shelter of only this one book we can attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*. After composing the *Bhāgavatam*, his sorrow was mitigated and his innermost desire was fulfilled. Then he somehow enticed Śukadeva Gosvāmī into his trap and taught it to him. Later Śukadeva spoke it before the assembly of Parīkṣit Mahārāja.

Vyāsa is known as Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. His name is Dvaipāyana because he appeared on an island in Mathurā. This island was known as Kṛṣṇagaṅgā and was situated where the Yamunā and Sarasvatī rivers converge. It was covered in jungle. Parāśara Ṛṣi's *āśrama* was on that island and he sometimes had to cross the Yamunā to come to Mathurā. On one such occasion he wanted to cross the river back over to his *āśrama* but night had fallen. Parāśara could have crossed the river by his mystic power, but there was a special reason why he didn't. There was only one boatman present there to take him across. This boatman was actually a young girl named Matsyagandha, who was the daughter of an Apsarā. She had entered the womb of this Apsarā who had been cursed by Brahmā to assume the form of a fish. She was later recovered from the belly of that fish by a boatman who adopted her. Her name was Matsyagandha because her bodily odour was like that of fish. She was a young virgin girl, and she agreed to take Parāśara across the river. When they reached the island, the sage looked at her. As he looked at her, she became embarrassed, but he said, “Don't fear. You will give birth to a son but still remain a virgin. In the future you will marry a king.” Simultaneously a son, tall with a dark complexion, was born to her. Because he was born on a *dvīpa*, island, his name became Dvaipāyana. Vyāsa said to his mother, “Whenever you summon me, I will come at once.” Then he left there to perform austerities.

Some say that he composed the *Bhāgavatam* in the Himālayas at Badarikāśrama on the banks of the Gaṅgā. But it doesn't seem that way. By the mercy of Nārada, he again came to that same place in Vṛndāvana where he took birth and stayed for a long period of time. He travelled all around the *dhāma*, and after obtaining the *dhāma*'s mercy, he could write about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. It is possible that after this he went to

Badarikāśrama. But it was only in the *rasamayī-bhumi*, or land saturated with *rasa*, Vṛndāvana, where those feelings could have entered his heart and he could have expressed them in writing.

In this way, he who expanded or diffused descriptions of the Lord's pastimes in this world is known as Vedavyāsa. He who sitting on a throne narrates those pastimes is also called *vyāsa*, or the *guru*. On the anniversary of the day of his own appearance, my spiritual master, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, would worship each of these *vyāsas* or *gurus* in the disciplic succession. Kṛṣṇa is the first *guru*, then Brahmā, then Nārada, Vyāsa, Śuka and then the *sampradāya* coming from Madhva. In accordance with all the appropriate rules and regulations, he worshipped each one from Svarūpa Dāmodara up to our present-day *gurus*. From Puri, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura brought the *paddhati*, or system of worship, for the spiritual master. As long as my *gurudeva* was present here, I was responsible for doing all of this. For a long time I was stationed in Navadvīpa and I carried it out there also. Now even I don't remember all the regulations and methods for *guru-pūjā*, but we should know them. The day on which the *guru* worships his entire *paramparā* is called *vyāsa-pūjā*. It is not that the *guru* merely accepts worship from his disciple. The *guru* engages his disciple in worshipping the line of *gurus* and then accepts worship from his disciple. Like this, the disciple also worships his own *guru*, and so he should. But in reality we worship the entire line of *gurus* on the appearance day of the *guru*. I saw my *gurudeva* as well as Pūjyapāda Mādhava Mahārāja and others do it this way and this is how it should be done. On the appearance day of the *guru*, the disciples offer *puṣpāñjali* to his feet and the *guru* worships the *paramparā*. We divide our *paramparā* into two sections: before Mādhavendra Purī and after Mādhavendra Purī. We respect the *gurus* who appear before Mādhavendra Purī in the succession. But really it is the *ācāryas* who come after him up to the present-day *ācāryas* who are the recipients of our highest respect because it is from them we have received the most mercy. This is called *vyāsa-pūjā* and we should be careful to never disrespect any *ācārya*, ancient or modern.

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Chapter Five

The Disappearance Day of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

In the lives of Vaiṣṇavas there is no consideration of their caste or creed. Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote somewhere concerning himself, “By keeping bad association I have become a Muslim, a *mleccha*, and a bigger sinner than Jagāi and Mādhāi.” He used these humble words to describe himself. Vaiṣṇavas don’t lie; they are called *parama-satya*, supremely truthful. Because Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote this about himself, some people may believe that truly he was a fallen *mleccha* and an untouchable. They may think, “Sanātana Gosvāmī cannot lie, so it must be true.” Is what Sanātana Gosvāmī has written here correct or incorrect? He has only written in this way in order to instruct the conditioned souls. In material existence the most detestable person is he who maintains pride in his bodily conception of life. I am this body, I am a *brāhmaṇa*, I am a *kṣatriya*, I am a merchant, I am beautiful, I am very qualified, I am pure, I am a scholar—for those who identify themselves in this way, this identification is evidence of their lowliness. Whoever has this mentality is very fallen. So Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote as he did in complete sincerity, and in his behaviour this was also evident. He would not enter the Jagannātha Mandira in Puri, thinking, “If I even touch the dust that lies on the path leading into the temple, then that dust will touch the devotees as they go inside and they will be contaminated.” So he never entered the temple. He stayed far away at the *bhajana-kuṭīra* of Haridāsa Ṭhākura and from a distance offered prostrated obeisances to the *cakra* atop the temple’s spires.

Some people believed that Sanātana Gosvāmī was of a low caste and a fallen Muslim. Therefore, Jīva Gosvāmī wrote in his *Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Sanātana Gosvāmī was a high standard *bharadvāja-gotra brāhmaṇa* from Karnataka. So he was actually a *brāhmaṇa*, but what relation does this have to the soul? It is only a mundane identification. It may have some value from the material perspective, but it has no spiritual meaning. If Nārada Ṛṣi took birth in a low caste family, what difference does it make? But mundane people give this consideration more importance, and for this reason Jīva Gosvāmī wrote about Sanātana Gosvāmī’s high birth. He wrote that Sanātana Gosvāmī was a great scholar and having come from what was practically a royal lineage, was like a king. In that lineage of wealthy *brāhmaṇas* came a gentleman named Sarvajña who had two sons named Harihara and Rūpeśvara. Harihara was expert in weapons and Rūpeśvara was expert in knowledge of the scriptures. When Sarvajña died, Harihara employed his military expertise, seized the province and exiled his brother Rūpeśvara. Rūpeśvara’s son was Padmanābha, and Padmanābha’s fifth son was Mukunda. Mukunda resided in Naihati near Chinchura in

West Bengal, and his son was named Kumāradeva. Kumāradeva had five sons: two older boys, then came Santosh, Amara and Vallabha, who later became Sanātana, Rūpa, and Anupama. All of them were big scholars straight from childhood. It is not mentioned anywhere that either Rūpa or Sanātana ever married; only Anupama married and his son later became Jīva Gosvāmī. All three brothers were employed by the Muslim ruler. Sanātana was the prime minister, Rūpa was the private secretary, and Anupama was the treasurer. They all met Caitanya Mahāprabhu when he came to Rāmakeli, where they lived.

Jīva was the only son of the three brothers, so he received abundant affection. Rūpa was always especially affectionate towards Jīva and treated him as if he were his own son. When Jīva was very young Rūpa took him to Mahāprabhu and Mahāprabhu blessed Jīva by placing his hand on Jīva's head. During childhood Jīva studied, and soon he learned all logic, Sanskrit grammar and theistic philosophy from the books in his father's home. Before Rūpa and Anupama left household life to retire in Vṛndāvana, they divided all the family's wealth and property. Half of it they donated here and there, one-quarter of it they gave to the members of their household and one-quarter of it they deposited with a merchant. This deposited money was later used by Sanātana Gosvāmī to bribe his way out of jail. Both the giving and taking of bribes is bad, but if required for *bhakti*, even a detestable activity is good. Stealing and lying and so forth are immoral, but even a soul as great as Vasudeva told a lie. He took Kṛṣṇa to Gokula and later told Kāṁsa that his wife had given birth to a daughter. So Sanātana Gosvāmī eventually used that money to bribe his way out of jail. At the time of dividing the family's wealth, a sufficient amount was left for Jīva to continue his studies. All three brothers realised he was the only son in their dynasty, so they nurtured him with great affection and also made sure he had whatever material facility he required.

Jīva had a very soft nature, and as he grew older gradually began worshipping deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Making garlands for them and offering *pūjā* to them in different ways, he would become immersed in meditation. He never played games with other children. When he became a little older, perhaps fourteen years, Jīva went to Navadvīpa. By then Mahāprabhu had returned to the spiritual world, and all the residents of Navadvīpa had left and gone elsewhere. Everywhere they looked brought painful remembrance of Mahāprabhu. They saw the *ghāta* where he bathed, the house where his mother lived, and so on. Because Navadvīpa now brought them all great sadness, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Advaita Ācārya and everyone else left there and Navadvīpa became deserted. A few days earlier Nityānanda Prabhu had arrived at Śrīvāsa-aṅgana from Khardaha. When Jīva Gosvāmī arrived there, Nityānanda Prabhu was very pleased to meet such a beautiful young boy. Nityānanda Prabhu placed his feet on Jīva's head and said, "I came here just to meet with you; otherwise I would have stayed in Khardaha." Next he showed Jīva all the places of Mahāprabhu's pastimes in Navadvīpa. Then he showed Jīva great mercy by ordering him to go stay with Rūpa and Sanātana in Vṛndāvana.

On the way to Vṛndāvana, Jīva stopped in Varanasi, where he met a disciple of Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya named Madhusūdana Vacaspati. Madhusūdana Vacaspati was teaching Vedānta there, but not the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, which was famous at that time. Mahāprabhu had earlier refuted that commentary when Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya tried to teach it to him. Then Mahāprabhu instructed Rūpa and Sanātana at Prayaga and Varanasi on the real purport of Vedānta. Madhusūdana Vacaspati was a great scholar, and having studied and understood everything which Mahāprabhu had taught Rūpa and Sanātana, was teaching it there. Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya knew many years before that Mahāprabhu would be going to Vṛndāvana and that he would therefore have to stop in Varanasi on the way, so he thought that they should make Varanasi a suitable holy place for Mahāprabhu. For this reason he had previously placed his disciple Madhusūdana Vacaspati there. So Jīva Gosvāmī would have already been informed of Madhusūdana Vacaspati's presence there by Nityānanda Prabhu or someone else; otherwise, how would he have known of him? Jīva Gosvāmī went to his home and learned all *bhakti-vedānta* from him. He also learned Śaṅkarācārya's commentary, because without learning it, he would have been unable to refute it. After studying all of this and fully understanding it, he proceeded to Vṛndāvana.

There Sanātana Gosvāmī placed him in the care of Rūpa Gosvāmī and he stayed nearby Rūpa Gosvāmī's hut at the Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira. Rūpa Gosvāmī would read to Jīva Gosvāmī everything he was writing. One day while they were in the midst of reading together, an effulgent elderly *brāhmaṇa* arrived there. We know from his age and his scholarship that this must have been Vallabhācārya, and he knew Rūpa Gosvāmī from the time when Mahāprabhu was in Prayaga. He was approximately the same age as Advaita Ācārya, so Rūpa Gosvāmī would have been the appropriate age to have been his son or even younger. He said, "Rūpa, what are you writing these days?"

Hesitating a little, Rūpa Gosvāmī replied, "I am writing a book entitled *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*."

Then Vallabhācārya picked up the book and turning the pages, said, "Very good, I will look through it and correct any errors."

At that time Jīva Gosvāmī was fanning Rūpa Gosvāmī with a leaf from the *tāla* tree. In previous times disciples received the fortunate opportunity to render services like this to their *gurus*. Present-day *gurus* don't require this type of service from their disciples. Soon they may even come out with a machine that will massage the *guru's* feet and perhaps they will even invent a contraption that will cook for the *guru*. In this way there will no longer be any need or opportunity for disciples to render these intimate services to the *guru*. Eventually the relationship between *guru* and disciple will simply not be the same; we see it happening somewhat already. So Jīva Gosvāmī was fanning Rūpa Gosvāmī, but when he heard Vallabhācārya say this, he could not tolerate it and

went to do something else. After some time he took a water pot and went to the river to fetch some water. There he met Vallabhācārya, who was just finishing his midday bath. Jīva Gosvāmī said, “Gosāiji, you said before that you would proofread the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that Rūpa Gosvāmī is writing. If you have found any errors, precisely where are they?”

Vallabhācārya replied, “What will you understand, child? Have you studied Sanskrit grammar?”

“Yes, a little.”

“Then what will you possibly understand?”

“But please just show me any errors you have detected.” When Vallabhācārya showed him an apparent error, a fierce debate commenced between them. Eventually Jīva Gosvāmī established the point in such a way that Vallabhācārya could not refute it and he could not give any answer.

When Vallabhācārya returned to the hut, he asked Rūpa Gosvāmī, “Who was that boy who was fanning you? He is very intelligent and extremely learned in the scriptures.”

Very humbly and with folded hands Rūpa Gosvāmī replied, “He is the son of my younger brother and also my disciple. He does not know how to behave.”

“No, he is a genius and in the future he will be very famous.”

Soon afterwards Vallabhācārya left and Rūpa Gosvāmī thought that there was a problem. When Jīva Gosvāmī arrived with the water, Rūpa Gosvāmī said to him, “You don’t have even enough tolerance that you started quarrelling with an elderly, scholarly *brāhmaṇa* who came to proofread something for my own good? Your nature is not entirely correct; go away from here.”

Jīva Gosvāmī could never disobey his order. If one disobeys his *guru*, he will never be able to enter into spiritual life. If someone says, “Gurudeva, don’t you know me? Don’t you know how I am living and what I am doing?” So what is this? Where is such a person’s faith in their *guru*? The *guru* knows all and he should be seen as non-different from Bhagavān. Even a *madhyama-adhikāri guru* can “take a disciple’s pulse” and tell him many things. Once a man went to see an ordinary doctor. Just by seeing how thin the man was, the doctor concluded that his digestion was disturbed. So this doctor closed his eyes and pretended to feel the man’s pulse. Then he said, “Your digestion is not working well—is that right?” The man nodded in agreement. “You have some gas pains here?” The man replied, “Yes.” And upon hearing the doctor describe other symptoms, the man thought, “Oh, this doctor knows everything.”

In the same way the *madhyama-adhikāri guru* is like a doctor. Merely by looking at someone’s face he can tell what the shortcomings are in that person’s spiritual life. Then what to speak of what a more elevated *guru* can see and know? He can “take our pulse” and tell us everything about ourselves. Don’t ever think that the *guru* is an ordinary

person like myself and that he doesn't know the feelings within my heart. Just by looking at one's face he can tell everything. By examining even one of our thoughts or statements, he can see everything. It is like when we check a pot of rice to see if it has finished cooking. If the one grain we check is cooked, then the entire pot is cooked, and if that one grain is not cooked, then the entire pot of rice is not cooked. So don't ever ascribe mundane intelligence to the *guru*, even if he is a *madhyama-adhikāri*. When even those who follow the path of *karma* accept their *guru* as being non-different from Bhagavān, will we not accept the *guru* in the realm of *bhakti* as the knower of all? Certainly we will; otherwise we will not become perfected in spiritual life.

In his *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmī writes that many times someone will first accept a particular *guru* just because many others are accepting him. When that person becomes a little more learned and hears from that *guru* more and more, then he will realise that he has accepted a mundane *guru* and not a genuine spiritual *guru*. What should he do then? Giving his previous *guru* respect that is appropriate for his position, he will seek out and accept a genuine spiritual *guru*. If he doesn't accept such a spiritual *guru*, he will never advance in spiritual life. Jīva Gosvāmī has explained everything related to all these different levels of *guru* in his *Bhakti-sandarbha*.

So, being unable to disobey his *guru*, Jīva Gosvāmī left Vṛndāvana and went to live in a cave infested with crocodiles in a village named Bhayagaon. Even up until recently many crocodiles were living there, but now none are left. Jīva Gosvāmī remained in the cave doing *bhajana* and crying, feeling bereft of his spiritual master's affection. He stopped eating and taking water, and within a short time he became emaciated. After a few days, Sanātana Gosvāmī came to that village as he was wandering around Vraja. The local people said to him, "Bābā, we always considered you to be a great *bhajanānandī*, but a young boy who is even more of a *bhajanānandī* than you has come to our village. Day and night he calls out the names of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and weeps. We take him food but he won't eat it, and he never sleeps either. Day and night he remains immersed in *bhajana*; we have never seen anything like it."

Sanātana Gosvāmī could understand that this was Jīva. The local people led him to Jīva, and upon meeting they both began weeping. Then Sanātana Gosvāmī took Jīva back to Rūpa Gosvāmī. Sanātana Gosvāmī said to Rūpa Gosvāmī, "What is the duty of Vaiṣṇavas? Being compassionate to others. Yet you renounced this young disciple of yours who is adorned with many extraordinary qualities? You should be merciful to Jīva, but instead you banished him. This was a mistake and you should correct it. I am ordering you to quickly call him back." Hearing this, Rūpa Gosvāmī began crying for Jīva; he loved him so much. Then Sanātana Gosvāmī brought Jīva there and placed him in the lap of Rūpa Gosvāmī. Reunited, both *guru* and disciple wept. After this Rūpa Gosvāmī arranged for Jīva to be treated by the best doctors from Mathurā, and gradually Jīva became strong again. Then Rūpa Gosvāmī began giving whatever he wrote to Jīva for him to proofread.

Around that time Gopāla-bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī compiled a book from what Mahāprabhu taught Rūpa Gosvāmī at Prayaga and Sanātana Gosvāmī at Varanasi concerning *sambandha*, *abhideya* and *prayojana tattva*. What relationship do the *jīvas* residing in this world have with Bhagavān? For how long do we have a relationship with the objects of this world? We are making a household, for how long will it last? We are getting married, for how long? We are making an arrangement for all our assets to be turned over to our sons, for how long? This is all ignorance of *sambandha-jñāna*. Only our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is eternal. We will change in each successive birth but that fact will never change. The constitutional position of the *jīva* is to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. This has been told in the Vedānta, the *Bhāgavatam*, and all the scriptures. The duty of the *jīva* is *abhideya*, and it culminates in the *prayojana*, ultimate objective, which is *kṛṣṇa-prema*. By my saying *kṛṣṇa-prema* here, don't understand that our objective is Kṛṣṇa; rather it is the *prema* that one feels for Kṛṣṇa that is our *prayojana*. There are five types of *prema* for Kṛṣṇa: *sānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya*. Amongst these, it is *mādhurya-rasa* that is the main objective for all *jīvas*. This Caitanya Mahāprabhu told in both places as he explained *vaidhī-bhakti* to Sanātana Gosvāmī and *rāgānugā-bhakti* to Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Later Gopāla-bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī heard everything directly from Rūpa and Sanātana; he considered them to be his *śikṣā-gurus*. Then, going through the writings of ancient Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Madhva and Rāmānuja, Gopāla-bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī also selected different points in relation in *sambandha*, *abhideya* and *prayojana* and compiled everything in a notebook. Later Jīva Gosvāmī learned all of this *tattva* from Gopāla-bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. All the Six Gosvāmīs were such great scholars. Next Jīva Gosvāmī divided all this knowledge into the three categories of *sambandha*, *abhideya*, and *prayojana*. Then he took the volume which contained all the information on *sambandha* and enlarged it. He also took from the conceptions given in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* and the other books by Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs and composed the first *sandarbha*. The word *sandarbha* means “a chest of valuable jewels.” Of the six *sandarbhas* he composed, the first four—*Tattva-sandarbha*, *Bhagavat-sandarbha*, *Paramātmā-sandarbha* and *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha*—all expound *sambandha-jñāna*. What is the *jīva*, what is the illusory energy, what is the objective of the *jīva*—all of this is explained in the first four *sandarbhas*.

In the *Tattva-sandarbha*, the conception of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* is given. What is the meaning of *pramāṇa*? In any dispute, whose words will we accept as being authoritative? Suppose a young boy comes here and says that a fire has broken out at Holi Gate and everything is burnt. Then an elderly gentleman comes and says that a small fire started in a tea shop there. The shop was burnt a little before they extinguished it, but really, it was nothing. Whose words will we accept as authoritative? The man's words, because he is older and more mature than the boy.

This conception of *pramāṇa* relates to many things. Someone may say, “This world is real, we are human beings, and the fact that we are *brāhmaṇas* is *satya*, real. This is my house, this is my father, this is my ancestors’ property and now I am the master of it. I will give up my very life before I relinquish even one inch of this land.” And over all this false identification and proprietorship there is so much fighting and quarrelling going on. Another man will say, “These things are all temporary, so don’t bother fighting over them. Instead do something for your *ātmā* and for Bhagavān, they are permanent.” Which of these two opinions will we accept? Analysing the relationships between Bhagavān, the *jīva* and material existence, Jīva Gosvāmī has given the authoritative concept and explained where we should place our faith amongst opposing arguments. He wrote that the Vedas are the sole authority, and that any other so-called authority is really not an authority at all. That which we perceive with our limited senses and mind may be defective, but the words of the Vedas cannot be defective.

Stool is stool, whether it be the stool of a dog, a donkey, a pig or a man. No matter how exalted a man may be, his stool will still stink. Actually the foulest smelling stool of all is that of humans, because we eat all sorts of manufactured foods and rich foods such as *rabari* whereas most animals subsist on grass and other natural elements. But the Vedas say that although it is stool, the stool of cows is very valuable and pure. If anyone is contaminated, they can touch it and be considered pure. Cow urine is also pure, as is the conchshell, which ordinarily would be considered impure. Any impurity can be purified with cow dung. This is written in the Vedas, and the Vedas were composed by Bhagavān himself, not by any ordinary man. They emanated from the breathing of he who created this world, and whatever has come from Bhagavān is the *pramāṇa*, authority. The Vedas emanated from his breathing and the *Bhagavad-gītā* is his words. Between them which will we accept as the most authoritative? The *Gītā*, because his words are *śabda-pramāṇa*.

In his *Bhagavat-sandarbha* Jīva Gosvāmī has written that there are not two separate things in this world; everything we see has the same source.

*ekam eva paramaṁ tattvaṁ svābhāvīkācintya-śaktyā sarva-
daiva-svarūpa-tad rūpa-vaibhava-jīva-pramāṇa-rūpeṇa caturddhāvatiṣṭhate
sūryāntara-maṇḍala-sthita-teja iva, maṇḍala,
tad vahirgata-tad raśmi, tat praticchavi-rūpeṇa*

The absolute truth is one. He is naturally endowed with inconceivable potency. By the power of this potency he exists within four forms: *svarūpa* (his original form), *tad-rūpa-vaibhava* (all *viṣṇu-tattva* incarnations beginning with Baladeva Prabhu), *jīva* (the living entity) and *pradhāna* (the illusory energy). He is compared to the sun, which also exists in four forms: its original form, wherever the light of the sun falls (the *sūrya-maṇḍala*), its rays and where the sun does not shine, which is compared to *māyā*.

Where there is no *bhagavat-prakāśa*, illumination of Bhagavān and where there is no knowledge of *bhagavat-tattva*, there is *māyā*. We are *jīvas*, and there are two types: conditioned and liberated. Forgetting his inherent nature, the conditioned soul is bound within material existence. There he chases after temporary and fleeting pleasures, and considering the objects of his pleasure to be his own, he is deceived. The liberated souls perpetually serve Bhagavān. By practising *bhagavat-bhakti*, the conditioned souls can achieve the eternal association of Bhagavān and experience *prema*, which is his primary objective. Jīva Gosvāmī examined all of this *tattva*.

Originally there was a book entitled *Brahma-sandarbha*. Jīva Gosvāmī took parts from it and wrote his own *Bhagavat-sandarbha* in which he analysed *brahma-tattva* and refuted the opinions of Śāṅkarācārya. The *jīva* is not Brahman. If Brahman is the absolute truth that is full in knowledge as they say, then how did it separate into billions of living entities and become bound within material existence? Śāṅkarācārya says that it was covered over by *māyā*, so from where did this separate entity they call *māyā* come from? If there is no separate entity known as *māyā* and all is the one Brahman, where could have this other object known as ignorance come from? Refuting all of Śāṅkarācārya's concepts, Jīva Gosvāmī proved that Kṛṣṇa is Parabrahma, the source of Brahman.

He also analysed *paramātma-tattva*, and in the *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha* he explained how Kṛṣṇa alone is Svayam Bhagavān. He explained how Kṛṣṇa is *sarva-śaktimān*, how he is an ocean of *rasa*, how from him the *jīvas* and all else emerge and how the *jīvas* can achieve his eternal association. He refuted the concept that Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa. Using evidence from the Vedas, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas he established that Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān and all other incarnations are his partial expansions. On the basis of scriptural evidence he strengthened Mahāprabhu's conception, which had been established in literature by Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī. In doing so, he established our *sampradāya* upon a firm philosophical foundation. He protected the flowing river of *rasa* by placing large rocks of *siddhānta* on both its banks. In that way no contaminated water of misconceptions could ever enter it.

In his *Bhakti-sandarbha* he explained many subtle aspects of *bhakti*. He delineated the sixty-four types of *bhakti*, and he expertly explained *guru-tattva*. He also explained *guru-pādāśraya*, the process of taking exclusive shelter of the *guru*—how it should be done, what are its rules and regulations and so on. The *guru* will consider the prospective disciple, the disciple will consider the *guru*, and then a circumstance will never arise within the disciple's entire life where he will have to abandon his *guru*. One should not accept a *guru* whimsically, because to change one's *guru* can be very problematic. One should accept a *guru* in whom he will never lose faith; otherwise there will be a problem. One should make sure that he only accepts a *sad-guru*, who is detached from sense enjoyment, who is conversant with all *tattva* and *siddhānta*, who is *rasika*, who is spiritually realised and who is affectionate towards him. One should examine the *guru* care-

fully, even if this means waiting for as long as one year to ensure that he is qualified. The *guru* should not be attached to anything within all of material existence. The most common type of attachment is that for money. There are three things: *kanaka* (gold or wealth), *kāmini* (women) and *pratiṣṭhā* (fame). The word *kāmini* refers to both men's attachment to women and women's attachment to men. If we see a *guru* who is attached to these things, then we should offer *praṇāma* to him but not accept initiation from him. Otherwise, one will come to know of it later and ask him, "Gurujī, what is the conception of Rūpa Gosvāmī?"

The *guru* will reply, "I don't know." So why accept such a spiritual master? One will ask, "What is *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*? What is *prema*?"

He will say, "I don't know these things. I just chant *harināma*."

"Then I will go to another *guru*."

"If you go to another *guru*, all will be ruined for you."

Then one will think, "How could I have accepted such a harsh, spiteful *guru*?" and one's faith will diminish. So one should examine the spiritual master carefully. There is a saying in Hindi, "*pāni pijiye chānkar, guru kijiye jānkar*," which means, "Please only drink water after filtering it, and please only accept a *guru* after getting to know him." One should extensively see and hear the *guru* first to ensure that he will be the correct *guru* for life. Otherwise, it will be like what we see going on these days where people go to a particular temple and are initiated the same day. Someone comes for the first time and sees the great opulence, how the temple is worth millions of rupees and that crowds of people come there daily. Then he thinks, "I will become a disciple here, that will be very nice." Then after a few days of seeing and hearing what is happening there, he understands that it is all adverse to *bhakti*. Some of the Gosvāmīs who run the *mandiras* in Vṛndāvana have great wealth and they regularly quarrel over it. Others steal the expensive ornaments that people donate to the deities. What will happen to those who accept initiation from such *gurus*? Jīva Gosvāmī gave excellent descriptions of both the *dikṣā-guru* and the *śikṣā-guru*. The *guru* is he who in his own life has established the conduct and line of thought that he preaches. By following the ideal he sets in his conduct, following his instructions and chanting the *mantras* he gives, one will feel great gratification and his life be fully successful. Could anyone ever leave such a *guru*?

Jīva Gosvāmī also explained that all *bhakti* is not the same, just as all varieties of water are not one and the same. There is clean water, purified water, contaminated water, sewage water and so forth. Just behind our *mandira* here in Mathurā flows a river of sewage—so this is water, is it not? Are all types of water the same? Similarly there are different varieties of *bhakti*, but not knowing this people in general accept the impure practice of devotion as *bhakti*. To rectify this Jīva Gosvāmī described three varieties of *bhakti*: *āropa-siddhā bhakti*, *saṅga-siddhā bhakti* and *svarūpa-siddhā bhakti*. Some people take initiation from a *guru* but don't associate with the *guru*. When you ask such a person who is his *guru*, he will proudly reply, "*Jagad-guru* such-and-such."

“What are his instructions?”
 “He gave me a *mantra* to chant—*kṛṣṇam śaraṇam mama.*”
 “What else?”
 “Nothing else.”
 “How many demigods do you worship?”
 “Oh, as many as there are in India.”
 Ask another man, “Whose disciple are you?”
 “I am a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.”
 “What do you practise?”
 “Oh, he gave me a *mantra* to chant but I can’t remember what it is.”

So did this person really become a disciple or not? He says he worships Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, but he can’t remember the *mantra*. So what benefit will there be for him? So people in conditions like this accept that which is not *bhakti* to be *bhakti*. They respect all the demigods as being on the same level and don’t recognise the superiority of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Some people consider their activities for the mundane welfare of society to be *bhakti*, and this is *āropa-siddhā bhakti*.

Jīva Gosvāmī examined all these issues in depth in his *sandarbhās*. Until one has read these books, he won’t be able to understand the true nature of *bhakti*. By regularly hearing the knowledge delineated in them and by associating with advanced Vaiṣṇavas, one’s *bhakti* will gradually become *uttamā-bhakti*. One by one he described at length the five types of *prema* (*śānta*, *dāsyā* and so on), and especially he emphasised *gopī-prema* and explained the *sādhana* for achieving it. Much of this came in *Gopāla-campū*; it is a very philosophical book that is simply not of this world. He sat down right there in Goloka-Vṛndāvana and wrote it, and then gave it to this world. He composed so many literatures, and we could spend this entire birth immersed in reading them. In practising the *sādhana* prescribed by them, who knows how many lives we could spend! If we endeavour to enter into these books and if we examine both the personal conduct and conceptions of Jīva Gosvāmī and try to follow them ourselves, our spiritual lives will certainly be successful. May Jīva Gosvāmī be merciful upon us so we can learn all his instructions and begin to perform *bhajana* purely.

This lecture was spoken on January 7, 1992, at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā.



Chapter Six

The Glories of the Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

Yesterday, after lecturing on the Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta for approximately two-and-a-half years, we finally completed this great scripture, but in one sense we are only starting it. If we can establish within ourselves the conceptions given in this book and if we can apply its instructions in our daily lives, our lives will surely be successful. By hearing these narrations from his *guru* Jaimini Ṛṣi, Janamejaya's life became fully successful. If we hear this *kathā* as he did and follow the instructions given therein, our lives will become similarly successful. But if this *kathā* enters our ears and then, as if bouncing off a wall, simply exits our ears without entering our hearts, there will be no special gain for us. Unfortunately, many of us are like this. But after all this time I feel that we have made at least some sincere effort to enter into this exalted scripture, and especially I have come to understand how the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is an unprecedented literature. If someone truly understands the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, then they must have first studied this book. If someone is truly engaged in *sādhana*, then they must have studied this book. If someone is conversant with *bhakti-tattva*, with *rasa* and especially with *vraja-prema*, then they must have certainly studied this book very carefully.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is not a mere sage but one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates, and not an ordinary one at that. He is a very elevated and intimate member of Kṛṣṇa's inner family, those who can even order Kṛṣṇa what to do and what not to do. His *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* consists of two parts, both telling an excellent story of a *parivrājaka*, one who doesn't keep a fixed residence and constantly wanders in search of the essence of life. In the first part the *parivrājaka* is Nārada Ṛṣi and in the second part it is Gopakumāra. In the first part Nārada sets out on a journey to determine who is the utmost recipient of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. First he went to Prayaga, then to a king in South India, and then successively to Indra, Brahmā, Śaṅkara, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Hanumān, the Pāṇḍavas, Uddhava in Dvārakā, and finally the story culminates in the pastime of constructing the Nava-vṛndāvana. There it was revealed that the *gopīs* are the greatest objects of Kṛṣṇa's love, and the best *gopī* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Upon seeing a *mūrti* of Her, Kṛṣṇa went mad. When Kṛṣṇa sees Rādhikā, his beauty and sweetness increase to their highest limit. So Nārada concluded that if in all the three worlds there is someone who is the most dear to Kṛṣṇa, it must be Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

In the second part Gopakumāra tells his own *ātma-kathā*, the story of how he progressed from the first step in spiritual life up to the final destination. He took birth at Govardhana in a family of cowherd people and he was not educated in the least. One day he met a personality who, unknown to him at the time, was a great devotee. He

started serving that devotee by giving him milk, yoghurt and butter and by bringing him water. Then one day with great love this devotee gave him the *gopāla-mantra* and became his *guru*. The *gopāla-mantra* is a *mantra* that can bestow perfection; some call it the *kṛṣṇa-mantra*. After giving Gopa-kumāra this *mantra*, his *guru* fell unconscious without having instructed him on how or when to chant the *mantra* and without explaining the glories of it. Still, Gopa-kumāra's faith was so strong that he was confident that the *mantra* would bestow the fruit of all spiritual perfection upon him. A disciple's faith in the *mantra* given to him by his *guru* should be complete; otherwise the seed that has been planted within him by the *guru* cannot grow. Many times devotees ask the meaning of this *mantra* and how it should be chanted and so on. I asked my own *guru*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, this question, and he simply replied, "Just understand this *mantra* to be capable of bestowing perfection; all else will be revealed by the *mantra* itself." So a disciple should simply chant the *mantra* with full faith, and then his *bhajana* will be proper.

By chanting his *mantra* faithfully, Gopa-kumāra crossed one level after another on the path to perfection. As a *sādhaka* progresses, his devotion is compared to a lotus flower which is gradually blooming and becoming fragrant. As he progresses, he will feel his spiritual pleasure (*ānanda*) increasing step by step and see how the lotus of his *bhakti* is gradually blooming and becoming more and more beautiful and fragrant. But if a *sādhaka* doesn't keep in mind the aim and intention of his *sādhana*, then it will seem that nothing is being achieved and it is all useless. Just as one eats, feels satisfaction and then later feels the desire to eat again, as we arrive at each progressive step in *sādhana* some fruit will be there. But if we are not practising *sādhana* in the correct way, we will not attain these fruits. Due to this many people take up the path but after some time lose hope and go away. Suppose a seed has been planted, and as that seed is watered and grows, weeds will grow alongside it. If not nurtured properly, the seedling will eventually become dried out and stop growing while the weeds continue to grow. Similarly, if a devotee engaged in *nāma-bhajana* doesn't endeavour to remove from his heart whatever worldly desires which may exist there, these desires will intensify and will eventually cover his devotional creeper and destroy it. If a devotee chants "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa" thinking, "I want money, I want money," his devotional creeper will be finished. Some of these desires remain hidden deep within us, and we are embarrassed even to speak of them. Beware—if you want to do *sādhana-bhajana*, then like Gopa-kumāra you should not harbour any desire for anything within all of material existence.

Gopa-kumāra went to South India and became a king. He went to Jagannātha Puri and became the king there. He went to Indrapurī and became Indra. He went to Brahmaloaka and eventually became Brahmā. But he never became infatuated with opulence and never stopped his journey in any of these places. By continuing to chant his *mantra*, all his desires were eradicated and in the end he arrived in Vraja. Similarly, we

shouldn't harbour any material desires. Then the lotus of the *sādhaka's* devotion will continue to bloom but it will only be complete when the devotee enters Vraja. And in Vraja, within the particular section where the *gopīs* are enjoying pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. And amongst the *gopīs* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and in her service the lotus of a devotee's *bhakti* will be fully bloomed, be fully soft and exude its complete fragrance. Then the devotee will be completely satisfied. Until he reaches there, he will never be fully satisfied at heart. He will remain constantly dissatisfied and will desire to keep progressing more and more.

This is what we learn from the life story of Gopa-kumāra. If within one's practice of *bhakti* such eagerness to progress is not there, and such true attachment for the ultimate goal is not there, then one will not be able to properly perform *bhajana*. One should have full determination, a do-or-die attitude. Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī never enjoyed any material opulence; they had no desire for it. Understanding opulence to be an obstacle to their objective, they renounced it. Gopa-kumāra was precisely the same. When he arrived in Vaikuṅṭha, the residents there took his flute away from him and tried to give him a four-armed form and opulences like their own. When he arrived in Ayodhyā, the monkeys there also stole his flute and said to him, "You have such a beautiful human form, so why do you remain dressed in the clothes of a simple cowherd boy and keep a flute?" Then when he arrived in Dvārakā, he was treated in the same manner by the residents there but he always remained indigent.

From his own realisations, Sanātana Gosvāmī is showing us through the life story of Gopa-kumāra what is the real fruit of the *gopāla-mantra* and how to execute *sādhana*. The primary aim of a devotee's spiritual life is to avoid becoming stagnant. We should always desire to make progress, just as we see in the life of Gopa-kumāra. When a genuine *sādhaka* hears the story of Gopa-kumāra, a flame of *mahā-śakti*, great potency, and *mahā-āsā*, great hope, will be lit. As a lighthouse guides ships at sea, the life of Gopa-kumāra will guide the sincere *sādhaka*.

In his entire spiritual journey, Gopa-kumāra only met with his *guru* Jayanta a total of five times. If the *guru* is perfected and if the disciple is so faithful that he is willing to give up his life to follow his *guru's* instructions, then there is no necessity of them meeting more times than that. But the spiritual master must be a perfected *mahātmā* like Jayanta, and who is the *guru*? Kṛṣṇa himself comes as the *guru*; all genuine *gurus* are manifestations of Kṛṣṇa. Jayanta was always thinking how to make Gopa-kumāra progress further in his quest. When necessary, he would appear before him and help him to go further. This is a real *guru*, one who possesses great *śakti*, potency. One who is himself submerged in *māyā* and has no strength in his own *bhajana* is not really a *guru*. When is the *guru* most pleased with a disciple? When he sees that upon hearing his *hari-kathā* the disciple becomes excited and ecstatic in *prema*. Nothing pleases the *guru* more than this, and at that time he gives all his wealth to the disciple.

The *gopāla-mantra* can only take one across the Virajā and up to Siddha-loka. Its efficacy stops there. It eradicates a devotee's *anarthas* and makes *sambandha-jñāna* arise within him. After this how will he progress? By the power of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. So at the appropriate juncture Jayanta gave Gopa-kumāra this *mantra* of Kṛṣṇa's names to chant:

*śrī-kṛṣṇa gopāla hare mukunda
govinda he nanda-kiśora kṛṣṇa
hā śrī-yaśodā-tanaya prasida
śrī-ballavī-jivana rādhikeśa*

Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave the simple *mahā-mantra* for the *jīvas* of this world to chant, and it will definitely take us upwards. A devotee shouldn't have a doubt concerning which *mantra* to chant, the *mantra* which Jayanta gave Gopa-kumāra or the *mahā-mantra*. We should chant and respect whichever *mantra* has been given to us by our spiritual master. There is no *rasa* which remains outside the *mahā-mantra*; all *rasa* and everything else is within it. That is why it is called the *mahā-mantra*. From then on Gopa-kumāra chanted the above-mentioned *mantra* and progressed. *Sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā*: he chanted that name which was most dear to him, and within this *mantra* his favourite name was Yaśodā-nandana. There are no deficiencies within any of the names in this *mantra*, but a *sādhaka* will chant whichever one is his favourite. A devotee in *dāśya-rasa* will feel that the name Rādhā-ramaṇa is not for him, but when a devotee who aspires to be a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā chants this name, feelings of spiritual bliss (*ānanda*) will at once arise within his heart.

In many places in his commentary, Sanātana Gosvāmī explains one special point concerning Vṛndāvana. The residents of Goloka-Vraja have apparently worldly relationships with Kṛṣṇa, considering him to be their lover, son and friend. This is a distinct attribute of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and is not found in any other *sampradāya*. Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, the devotees there are transcendental, and their relationships are also transcendental, but they appear to be worldly. Especially this point was emphasised by Nārada and Uddhava as they were advising Gopa-kumāra in Dvārakā concerning the nature of his internal *bhāva*. Nārada and Uddhava admitted that even they do not possess this elevated *bhāva*, and without it no one can achieve Kṛṣṇa's association in Goloka. The final aim and desired object of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas is this *vraja-bhāva*. Without achieving *vraja-bhāva*, their desires can never be fulfilled.

If someone has *bhagavat-anubhūti*, realisation of Bhagavān, their *brahma-jñāna* is covered, just as the rising sun covers the darkness of night. At that time one will desire to render service to a form of Bhagavān who possesses all six opulences, such as Nārāyaṇa or Rāmacandra. The desire to merge into Brahman will only be covered when one hears narrations of Bhagavān's qualities and pastimes. When one hears how Bhagavān was

compassionate to Ajāmila, Gajendra and others, he will see that Brahman is not capable of being so compassionate. “Bhagavān is full in six opulences and he can make the impossible possible”—when in this way one hears the glories of Bhagavān’s names (*nāma*), attributes (*guṇa*), forms (*rūpa*) and pastimes (*līlā*), then automatically his mood of appreciating the impersonal aspect will be covered. Similarly, once one hears of the pure *mādhurya* of Vraja, then his desire for *bhagavat-anubhūti* will be covered. If one is aware of Bhagavān’s six opulences as are Brahmā, Nārada and the four Kumāras, then *vraja-bhāva* will not come to him. If anyone hears this *kathā* from *rasika* devotees, then automatically it will eclipse his awareness of *bhagavat-tattva*. Try not to think that Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān and that Rādhā is Svayam Bhagavatī. Simply hear narrations of his pastimes as they are described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and in this *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*. Abandon this mood of remembering that Kṛṣṇa possesses all six opulences and that he is the cause of all causes and the origin of everything. Try to see how Kṛṣṇa is Dāmodara: if Yaśodā had not bound him to the grinding mortar, he would always be seen as Bhagavān. While taking the cows out to graze, Kṛṣṇa says, “Hey, goad that cow a little.” Then Madhumaṅgala replies, “Why don’t you do it yourself? Do you think that I am your servant?” Kṛṣṇa likes this kind of exchange and his devotees there do also. They only know him as their friend and don’t consider who is superior and who is not. This is the most fortunate thing, and once one hears of this *mādhurya-bhāva*, his attachment for *aiśvarya-bhāva* is eclipsed.

The *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is an unprecedented literature. Just as *Jaiva-dharma* is an incomparable scripture, this book is also. All within this one book *siddhānta*, *rasa*, *līlā*, *sādhana* and *sādyā*, and all Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava *tattva* are fully delineated. And Sanātana Gosvāmī is so kind and merciful that he also wrote his own commentary on it. He wrote the commentary himself so that in the future no one would write a commentary that would misconstrue his *bhāva*. The commentary reveals the inner meanings of many items that come within the original text. In verse 2.3.168 the word *sarasa* is found, and in his commentary to this verse Sanātana Gosvāmī gives eight separate meanings of this word. First he applied it to Nārāyaṇa, then to Rāmacandra, then to Hanumān in *dāsyā-rasa*, then to Subala, Śrīdāmā and so on in *sakhya-rasa*, then to Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā in *vātsalya-rasa*, then to the *gopīs* in *mādhurya-rasa*, then to Candrāvalī and finally to Śrīmatī Rādhikā and her *sakhīs*. In this way he revealed eight beautiful, new and newer meanings of the word *sarasa* that had never been revealed anywhere before. And then, overcome with humility, he writes that he has only given a hint of the full meanings. If any *sādhaka* from any line of faith reads this book, automatically he will move in Kṛṣṇa’s direction. Rūpa Gosvāmī himself has written that Sanātana Gosvāmī gave everything in his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* and in accordance with what is presented there, Rūpa Gosvāmī composed his own literatures. In this way the glories of the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* are unlimited.

This lecture was spoken on February 6, 1992, at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā.



Chapter Seven

The Day Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Took Sannyāsa

Note: All verses quoted here are from the Twenty-sixth Chapter of *Madhya-līlā* of Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavat.

After returning from Gaya, it became apparent that Nimāi Paṇḍita had changed and was a completely different person. He gradually began performing *kīrtana* with the devotees at Śrīvāsa-aṅgana, and he stopped teaching his students. He said, “Every syllable carries the form of Kṛṣṇa and this brings remembrance of Kṛṣṇa to me. In all the verses and commentaries and everywhere else I look, I see that everything is Kṛṣṇa.” Absorbed in this mood, he began weeping. Then he said to his students, “From now on I will not teach you. I am going to Vṛndāvana.”

His students replied, “We refuse to learn from anyone other than you.”

So Mahāprabhu said, “Alright, let’s sing *kīrtana*.” The *kīrtana* began right there in that school, with the clapping of hands and chanting of “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.” Then the whole of Navadvīpa became like one big festival. Mahāprabhu performed pastimes such as delivering Jagāi and Mādhāi, and then gradually he became absorbed in his own *bhāva*. He thought, “I must fulfil the objective for which I have come.” He made up his mind. There were four objectives in his descent into this world: establishing the *yuga-dharma*, inaugurating the preaching of *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, giving that *prema* which had never been given before and tasting the three *bhāvas* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

To accomplish these objectives he required an excuse: “How can I leave household life?” Then he sent the inspiration within the students and scholars of Navadvīpa for such an appropriate pretext to take place. When they came to see Mahāprabhu one day, he was chanting “*Gopī, gopī, gopī*.” They said, “Why are you chanting ‘*Gopī, gopī*’? Why don’t you chant ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa’? Is ‘*Gopī, gopī*’ some *bhajana* or something? We haven’t seen this in the scriptures anywhere.” Lying nearby was a stick, and Mahāprabhu picked it up and chased them away. He was immersed in *vraja-bhāva* at that time, and thinking that they were *gopīs* from an opposing camp, he chased them off. He was not really aware of what he was doing. After running away those students and scholars met together and said, “This son of Śacī has become very troublesome. If he will attempt to beat us, why can’t we beat him? We are no less than him. He has become overly proud due to his learning and his personal beauty. Alright then, we will beat him. If he can treat us this way, we will treat him in the same manner.”

When Mahāprabhu learned of their plan, he thought, “I have descended from Goloka-Vṛndāvana to deliver these people and now, having become inimical to me,

they are committing offences. The time has come for me to leave household life. Sometimes, when a patient suffering from cold and fever goes to the doctor to get some medicine, the patient's symptoms increase rather than diminish. I have brought here the medicine which the people need, but they have become inimical to me. I will not stay here any longer.”

He required an excuse, and now he had one. He decided to leave household life. From symptoms in his behaviour, people gradually began to understand that soon he would be taking *sannyāsa* and leaving. The news reached his mother, and one day she was trying to persuade him to stay: “My dear son, don't abandon the house. You are the stick that supports the blind man; my husband died, leaving me a widow, and my eldest son left to take *sannyāsa*. Who will support me? If you also go, I will die a death without actually leaving my body. Remain here in family life and blissfully sing *kīrtana* with Advaita, Śrīvāsa, Gadādhara and the other devotees. ‘*Jananī chārivā kauna dharma vā vicāra*’ (25)—you are the personification of *dharma*. If you abandon your mother, what instruction on *dharma* will you be giving to this world? And your new wife has just come here. She does not yet fully understand the ways of this world, so what will happen to her if you leave? Your family will be ruined. Remain here in the home; I will not put any obstacle before you. You can do *saṅkīrtana* without leaving family life.”

In this way Śacīmātā spent the entire night trying to persuade him. Hearing this Mahāprabhu wept but didn't say anything; he was immersed in *kṛṣṇa-bhāva*.

The next day Mahāprabhu was thinking that the time to take *sannyāsa* had come. What is the meaning of *sannyāsa*? What passes for *sannyāsa* these days is not real *sannyāsa*. If one completely becomes the colour of Kṛṣṇa, or in other words he becomes completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, if everything is *nyāsa*, completely renounced for Kṛṣṇa, that is *sannyāsa*. When one factually realises that household life is like poison and as a snake automatically sheds its skin, abandons household life without ever looking back even once and becomes completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, that is *sannyāsa*. This is the nature of the *sannyāsa-mantra* also. *Sannyāsa* is not for everyone. The nature of the *sannyāsa* of Mahāprabhu, Mādhavendra Purī, Īśvara Purī and Rūpa Gosvāmī is real *sannyāsa*.

*je-dina caliva prabhu sanyāsa karite,
nityānanda-sthāne tāhā kahilā nibhṛte* (55)

*śuna śuna nityānanda svarūpa gosāi,
e kathā bhāṅgibe save pañca-jana-ṭhāi* (56)

*ei saṅkramaṇa-uttarāyaṇa-divase,
niścaya caliva āmi karite sanyāse* (57)

On the day Mahāprabhu was to leave home to take *sannyāsa* he spoke to Nityānanda Prabhu in solitude. Nityānanda Prabhu is non-different from Baladeva Prabhu, so

Mahāprabhu could not keep a secret from him. Mahāprabhu said, “I cannot remain here any longer. Now I will take *sannyāsa*. Only tell this to five personalities and not to any sixth person. I will definitely depart to take *sannyāsa* on the auspicious day when the sun passes to the north.”

indrāṇi nikate kāṭoyā-nāme grāma,
tathā āche keśava-bhārati śuddha nāma (58)

tāna sthāne āmāra sanyāsa suniścita,
e-pañca-janāre kathā kahivā vidita (59)

āmāra janani, gadādhara brahmānanda,
śrī candraśekharaĀcārya, āpara mukunda (60)

ei kathā nityānanda-svarūpera sthāne,
kahilena prabhu ihā keho nāhi jāne (61)

pañca-jana-sthāne mātra e saba kathana,
kahilena nityānanda prabhura gamana (62)

“ ‘In a village near Indrāṇi named Katva lives the beautifully-named Keśava Bhārati. I will definitely take *sannyāsa* from him. Only tell this to five persons: My mother, Gadādhara, Brahmānanda, Śrī Candraśekhara Ācārya and Mukunda.’ No one else came to know of what Mahāprabhu spoke to Nityānanda Prabhu. Nityānanda Prabhu only informed those five personalities that Mahāprabhu was leaving.”

On the day he was to leave, Mahāprabhu was not overwhelmed in *kṛṣṇa-prema*, calling out, “*Hā Kṛṣṇa! Hā Kṛṣṇa!*” as he usually did. Instead he passed the entire day in performing *kīrtana* with the devotees. Just before dusk he went to a *ghāta* on the Gaṅgā. He was thinking, “From where will I cross the Gaṅgā tonight?” At night he would not be able to see and there would be no boat available. After sitting there for some time and determining from where he would swim across in the night, he offered *praṇāma* unto the Gaṅgā and returned home. At that time his house was filled with guests. They didn’t know he would be leaving Navadvīpa that night but somehow he had attracted them to come there. Mahāprabhu’s body was anointed with *candana* and exuding an exquisite beauty. Mahāprabhu embraced whoever came there. Then he seated them with great love and asked after their welfare. When the local people came to Mahāprabhu’s house that night, even Brahmā himself cannot describe the *bhāva* with which he spoke to them. He glanced at them with great love and gave them the garlands from around his neck. No one could understand the intention behind what he was doing.

āṇana galāra mālā sabhākāre diyā,
ājñā kare prabhu sabhe ‘kṛṣṇa gāo giyā (73)

bola kṛṣṇa, bhaja kṛṣṇa, gāo kṛṣṇa-nāma,
kṛṣṇa binu keho kichu nā bhāvīha āna (74)

ādi āmā' prati-sneha thāke sabhākāra,
tave kṛṣṇa-vyatirikta nā gāiva' āra (75)
ki śayane ki bhojane ki vā jāgarāṇe,
arhaniśa cinta kṛṣṇa bolaha vadane' (76)
eimata śubha-dṛṣṭi prabhu sabhākāra,
uṇpadeśa kahiyā kahena 'jāo ghare' (77)

“Mahāprabhu ordered them, ‘After leaving here, all of you perform *kīrtana* incessantly. Speak only of Kṛṣṇa, worship only Kṛṣṇa and sing only *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Think of nothing else other than Kṛṣṇa. If you have even a little love for me, then do *kīrtana* exclusively of Kṛṣṇa and no one else. While resting, eating, awakening and all day and night think only of Kṛṣṇa and allow only the name of Kṛṣṇa to emanate from your mouths.’ In this way Mahāprabhu instructed them while auspiciously glancing towards them. Then he told them to return to their homes.”

By that time night had fallen, and then Śrīdhara arrived there with a *lauki*. He said to Mahāprabhu, “You didn’t come to quarrel with me today.” Daily Mahāprabhu would visit Śrīdhara’s shop and quarrel with him. Mahāprabhu would take banana-leaf cups, bananas, banana flowers, *lauki* and other vegetables. Śrīdhara would catch hold of his hand and try to stop him and they would quarrel. But on this day Mahāprabhu did not come, so Śrīdhara brought one *lauki* to Mahāprabhu’s home. Receiving this *lauki* Mahāprabhu was very pleased.

nija-mane jāne prabhu kāli calivān,
ei lāu bhojana karite nārilān (83)
śrīdharera padārtha ki haiva anyathā,
e lāu bhojana āji kariva sarvathā (84)

“In his mind Mahāprabhu thought, ‘By tomorrow I will be gone from here, so I will not be here to accept this *lauki* when it is cooked. But what Śrīdhara has brought should not be wasted, so this *lauki* should be prepared and taken tonight.’ ”

Śrīdhara brought this *lauki* with great love. There is no love existing inherently within any object; love is a feeling of the heart. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26):

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

If anyone offers him something with love, even a blade of grass, then he will accept it with great love. Otherwise he will not accept it. Śrīdhara offered him this *lauki* with

love, just as in his previous incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, Sudāmā Vipra brought him some low-grade rice. Sudāmā was ashamed and did not want to offer it to Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa snatched it from him. If something is offered with *prema*, no matter how ordinary it is from the worldly perspective, then it should be accepted. Sometimes people do not understand this point, but devotees understand. With great difficulty in preparing it and with great affection from the heart, someone may bring something to offer. If I say indifferently, “Just put it over there,” they would be very hurt. So don’t see the mundane value of the particular object that is being given; see the love with which it is being offered.

Understanding this, Mahāprabhu instructed his mother to prepare the *lauki* that evening. Someone came and offered Mahāprabhu some milk and then someone else brought some sugar, so Mahāprabhu asked Śacīmātā to take these ingredients and prepare some *lauki-kṣīra*. When it was cooked she offered it to the Deity and distributed it to everyone. Then Mahāprabhu bid farewell to everyone and went to his bedroom to take rest.

There are two differing ideas concerning what happened next. Generally Mahāprabhu would perform *kīrtana* at night at Śrīvāsa-aṅgana, but he didn’t go there on this evening. On this particular evening he stayed at his home. There is a book entitled *Amīya-nimāi-carita* that gives a description of Mahāprabhu’s *sannyāsa* pastime. It differs slightly from the description given in *Caitanya-Bhāgavat*, but the *Caitanya-Bhāgavat* should be accepted as authoritative because its author, Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, is the Vedavyāsa of *gaura-līlā*. It says in *Amīya-nimāi-carita* that on this day Mahāprabhu’s mood was a little different. His body was anointed with *candana*, he was eating some *pāna* that had been offered to the deity, and he had a flower garland around his neck. On this evening he entered directly into the bedroom where Viṣṇupriya was staying. Since the day she married Mahāprabhu, she had never received an opportunity to be with him in this way. Due to shyness she was somewhat afraid of him, and she would always remain at a distance from him because he would chant “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa” and fall on the ground. This she could not tolerate. But on this evening, smiling, chewing *pāna*, his body anointed with *candana* and wearing a flower garland, he came into her bedroom and sat down next to her. Putting his arms around her neck, with his own hands he began stroking and arranging her hair. With a big smile on his face he joked and laughed with her.

Viṣṇupriya was thinking, “Just before a light goes out, it burns a little stronger. I feel that my marriage may be coming to an end today. Earlier I said to Śacīmātā, ‘Mother, I have been crying during the day.’ She replied, ‘Why?’ I said, ‘Today my misfortune has begun. Many fearful emotions are entering my heart today. As I was going for my bath this morning, I stepped on a thorn and my foot began to bleed. Anyway I disregarded it and continued on my way to the river. Upon arriving there I noticed that I had lost my

nose-ring (an ornament representing marriage given to a bride on her wedding day). I searched and searched for it but could not find it. I put my hand to my head and thought, ‘What misfortune will befall me today?’”

So although she was receiving Mahāprabhu’s direct affection on this night, she could not feel herself to be contented and fortunate because she was worrying about what would happen. She should have been happy upon receiving the love of her husband, but it was just the opposite and her face withered in unhappiness. As Mahāprabhu was lovingly conversing with her and decorating her hair, he remembered Yogamāyā. Then sleep began to come to her eyes, as if her eyelids were being held down by thousands of large stones. She couldn’t have opened her eyes even if she tried. Soon she was in deep sleep. Then Mahāprabhu glanced towards her once and left.

That is the description from *Amiya-nimāi-carita*; now I will return to the description given in *Caitanya-Bhāgavat*. On that evening Mahāprabhu retired to his bedroom after taking *prasāda* but sleep did not come to him. Ever since he returned from Gaya he could not sleep. His condition was like that of Śrīmatī Rādhikā when Kṛṣṇa was residing in Mathurā and Dvārakā. He would be crying out in separation and as the night went on his emotions would become more and more intense. As it says in *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, *yugāyitam nimeṣeṇa*—every second felt like a millennium.

*yoganidrā prati dṛṣṭi karilā īśvara,
nikāṭe śuilā haridāsa gadādhara (92)*

“He went into his bedroom and closed his eyes. He remembered Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, and especially Rādhikā’s mood of separation began to flow within his heart. Nearby Haridāsa and Gadādhara were sleeping.”

*āi jāne, āji prabhu kariva gamana,
āira-nāhika nidrā, kānde anukṣaṇa (93)
daṇḍa cāri rātri āche ṭhākura jāniyā,
uṭhilena calicāre sāmāgrī laiṅyā (94)*

“Śacīmātā knew that Mahāprabhu would be leaving that day. Therefore, she could not sleep and remained crying at every moment. Knowing that there were four *daṇḍas*, approximately one and one-half hours, left in the night, Mahāprabhu rose and collected what he was to take with him.”

*gadādhara haridāsa uṭhilena jāni,
gadādhara bolena caliva saṅge āmi (95)
prabhu bole āmāra nāhika kāro saṅga,
eka advītiya se āmāra sarva raṅga (96)*

Simultaneously Gadādhara and Haridāsa both arose. If someone is determined to rise at three o'clock in the morning, then right at three o'clock or even a little before they will awaken. If the reason for awakening at that time is important enough, one will even wake up every hour or so through the entire night and check the time. Because Gadādhara and Haridāsa knew that he would be leaving, they remained alert the entire night. As soon as they heard a sound, they got up. Then Gadādhara said, "I am going with you. I decided long ago that I would not marry and start a household so I would be able to always accompany you."

Mahāprabhu replied, "I don't want anyone to come with me. I am the one *advitīya-brahma*. One enters this world alone and departs it alone."

Gadādhara said, "Even when accompanied by your associates, you are still *advitīya* (meaning unparalleled or without a second). If you refer to yourself as *advitīya*, there is no harm. If a king travels anywhere, his entourage will always accompany him. When Kṛṣṇa is together with Rādhikā and the *gopīs*, his mother, and all his devotees, he is still *advitīya*. They are all non-different and inseparable from him. So I will go with you."

But Mahāprabhu forbade him and went alone.

*āi jānilena mātra prabhura gamana,
duāre vasiyā rahilena tatakṣaṇa (97)
jananire dekhi prabhu dhari tāna kara,
basiyā kahena tāne prabodha-uttara (98)
vistara karilā tumi āmāra pālana,
padhilān sunilān tomāra kāraṇa (99)
āpanāra tilārdheko nā lāilā sukha,
ājanma āmāra tumi bādhāilā bhoga (100)*

Knowing that Mahāprabhu was leaving, Śācīmātā went and sat near the door. Seeing his mother sitting there, Mahāprabhu took her hand and tried to speak comforting words to her. "You raised me from the very beginning and it was only because of you that I studied and became a scholar. Without caring even the slightest bit for your own happiness, since my birth you have been immersed in giving me happiness. I have never done anything for your happiness. In my childhood I broke pots and spread rice and dahl everywhere as children do. I can't say how much mischief I must have done, but you always lovingly nurtured me. Do you remember when I was a child? Father said, 'No! Nimāi will not be educated. Viśvarūpa studied, became a *paṇḍita* and then left home. So Nimāi will not become a scholar; it is better that he remain a fool.' "

As a child once Mahāprabhu went and sat in the heap of household rubbish. Some of their neighbours said to Śācīmātā, "Hey! Your son is sitting in the rubbish, just like a fool."

Śacīmātā said, “Oh, my son! What are you doing? Come away from there.”

Nimāi replied, “Why, Mother?”

“Don’t you know that those are contaminated things?”

“How would I know? You haven’t arranged for me to learn how to read or write, so how would I know what is contaminated and what isn’t? Some of these things are used to prepare offerings for the deities, are they not?”

“Yes.”

“Then how can they be contaminated?”

“No, no—still it is contaminated.”

Then the neighbours said, “Our son has no desire to study but still we send him to school to learn. We see that your son actually wants to study, but you won’t send him to school?”

Śacīmātā said, “Alright, come along, my son. We will have you educated.”

Remembering instances like these from his childhood, Mahāprabhu became overwhelmed with emotion and began weeping. He said, “Mother, I can never repay you.” Really, no one can repay their debt to their mother, and especially the debt to Śacīmātā could never be repaid. One should always remember his parents. Although Prahlāda Mahārāja’s father was terribly cruel to him, he never made any unpleasant remark about his father. One should always respect his parents. And the parents have a responsibility to create an opportunity for their children to practise *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. Otherwise they have transgressed their duty and are then worthy of being renounced. Even one’s *guru* can be renounced if he becomes inimical to Kṛṣṇa.

So Mahāprabhu was exclaiming, “Mother, Mother,” and weeping. Then Śacīmātā said, “My dear son, why are you crying? You should be consoling me at this time.”

daṇḍe daṇḍe jata tumi karilā āmāra,

āmi koṭi kalpeo nāriva sudhivāra (101)

tomāra sadguṇa se tāhāra pratikāra,

āmi puṇa janma janma ṛṇi se tomāra (102)

śuna mātā! īśvarera ādhina saṁsāra,

svatantra haite śakti nāhika kāhāra (103)

saṁyoga viyoga jata kare sei nātha,

tāna icchā bujhivāre śakti āche kāta (104)

Mahāprabhu said, “Even in millions of millenniums I would never be able to repay my debt to you. I will remain indebted to you birth after birth. Your magnanimity itself will have to serve as your compensation. Listen Mother! The whole of material existence is dependent on the Supreme Lord. No one has the potency to be independent. Sometimes people are together and sometimes they are separated; it is all by the will of

Bhagavān. Without his desire nothing is possible. We can desire something, but the fruit of that desire will only come if he desires it to. Who can understand his will?”

The purport of what Mahāprabhu is saying here is that “Now I am leaving to take *sannyāsa* because it is the desire of Bhagavān.”

*daśa-dina antare ki ekhane vā āmi,
calileo kon cintā nā kariha tumi (105)
vyavahāra paramārtha jateka tomāra,
sakala āmāte lāge saba mora bhāra (106)
vuke hātha diyā prabhu bole bāra bāra,
tomāra sakala bhāra āmāra āmārā (107)*

Mahāprabhu said, “You will be crying for me now. Suppose I wait for some time. I simply cannot remain in household life; ten days later I would just have to leave anyway. It is Bhagavān’s desire and he is inspiring me to do this, so I cannot remain here. Mother, do not worry because whatever your needs may be, both material and spiritual, I will supply you with whatever is required. Don’t think that I have left the house and abandoned you; I will always see to your needs.” Placing his hand on his chest, Mahāprabhu said repeatedly, “Responsibility for all your needs lies with myself and myself only.”

Upon hearing all of this, Śacīmātā did not answer. She merely stood there motionlessly and cried. Then Mahāprabhu touched her feet and circumambulated her. He glanced at her once more and then cruelly left the house for the last time. His mother could not stop him.

*śuna śuna āre bhāi! prabhura sanyāsa,
je kathā sunile karma-bandha jāya nāśa (112)*

Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura says, “O friends, make your hearts strong, and don’t cry! The situation after Mahāprabhu departed is a matter of great sorrow and is difficult for devotees to tolerate. The whole of Navadvīpa—even the birds and animals—began weeping. Anyone who hears this narration of Mahāprabhu leaving home to take *sannyāsa* will have their attachment to material life severed.”

At approximately three o’clock in the morning, Mahāprabhu arrived at the *ghāta* that he had looked at the evening before. It was very cold. The Gaṅgā was swollen and the current was fierce. Exclaiming “*Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!*” he immediately jumped in and swam across the river to Kanthaka* village. This village is perhaps sixteen or seventeen miles

* The village of Katva is also known as Kanthaka. The word *kaṇṭaka* means thorn, and this village was given this name because like a thorn the pastime of Mahāprabhu’s accepting *sannyāsa* pricks the hearts of His devotees.

from Navadvīpa. Later that morning all the devotees headed by Nityānanda Prabhu and Gadādhara also crossed the river from that *ghāta*. That *ghāta* has since become known as Nirdaya Ghāta. *Nirdaya* means “cruel,” and it is from there that Mahāprabhu departed and cruelly left everything behind.

Later that morning Śacīmātā was still sitting in the same position without having moved an inch. When Viṣṇupriya awoke, she cried out, “Where has he gone? Where has he gone?” Who can even imagine Viṣṇupriya’s condition at that moment? She fell at the feet of Śacīmātā and cried. Advaita Ācārya, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and many other devotees arrived there and saw how everything was now desolate in Mahāprabhu’s absence. They were embracing one another and crying. Even the birds who are generally restless were motionless and quiet. All the residents of Navadvīpa came to the home of Śacīmātā, but there was no one who could console her or anyone else. Śacīmātā said, “What benefit is there in having children? Prabhu has gone away and abandoned me forever.” After this Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* in Katva, and later all the Navadvīpa devotees met with him again in Santipura.

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Chapter Eight

The Gopīs Become Fully Absorbed in Kṛṣṇa

In this world one who performs *bhajana* of Bhagavān is the most exalted; such a person is superior to millions of scholars. And the best of all devotees is he who is an exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Amongst millions of devotees of Nārāyaṇa you may find one such exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa—they are very glorious. Amongst them, those who are more glorious are those who reside in Vraja and serve Kṛṣṇa. Superior to them are the perfected *mahātmās*, and who is perfected? Those who have attained *vastu-siddhi*, being situated in one’s eternal spiritual form. Very exalted are those eternal devotees who are situated in *dāsya-rasa*. Amongst millions of such devotees there may be one rare devotee who serves in *sakhya-rasa*. In this collection of verses known as *Bhakti-rasāyana*, Sanātana Gosvāmī has described the glories of such devotees. Then he glorified even more the devotees in *vātsalya-rasa*, and in the verse we will discuss here he is describing the most exalted devotees, the devotees in *mādhurya-rasa*, the *gopīs*. If in his commentary to these verses he felt that he was unable to fully describe the glories of the cows and the cowherd boys, and if he felt he was unable to fully glorify Mother Yaśodā and her immense affection for Kṛṣṇa as her son as she breast-fed him, then how will he possibly delineate the glories of the *gopīs*? Because what is the nature of the *gopīs*? Devotees like Brahmā and Nārada always desire to take the dust of their feet. In glorification of these *gopīs*, Sanātana Gosvāmī quotes this verse (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.30.43 and *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.7.134):

*tan-manaskās tad-ālāpās
tad-viśeṣṭās tad-ātmikāḥ
tad-guṇān eva gāyantyo
nātmāgārāṇi sasmaruḥ*

“Those *vraja-gopīs* who had fully given their hearts to Śrī Kṛṣṇa would imitate his manner of speaking and his activities. Since they had offered their very souls to him and always sang his glories, they completely forgot themselves and their family interests.”

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the supreme goddess. She is Kṛṣṇa’s *svarūpa-śakti* or *hlādinī-śakti*, and the *gopīs* are her *kāyā-vyūha*, direct expansions. Amongst them, those who are *nitya-siddha* especially obtain her favour. In *prema* the gradations are *sneha*, *praṇaya*, *māna*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *mahābhāva*. All *gopīs* possess *mahābhāva*—this is their exalted position. Their *prema* for Kṛṣṇa is so intense that they have forgotten their bodies, their bodily

relations and everything. “*Tan-manaskā*”—their minds are absorbed in thoughts of him in such a way that they have forgotten all else.

An example of this takes place during the *rāsa-lilā*. From the very beginning Kṛṣṇa danced with each *gopī* and with his own hands Kṛṣṇa wiped the perspiration from each of their lotus faces. As a result most of them felt *saubhāgya-mada*, the pride which arises from awareness of their own good fortune. They thought, “Kṛṣṇa loves me more than he does the others.” Most *gopīs* felt this pride in their own good fortune, but one particular *gopī* displayed *māna*, jealous anger. At that time Kṛṣṇa saw that in those circumstances enjoying the *rāsa* pastime was no longer possible. It was Śrīmatī Rādhikā alone who displayed *māna* and left the arena of *rāsa*. Seeing that she was no longer present, Kṛṣṇa thought, “What purpose is there in continuing with the *rāsa* dance?” The word *rāsa* comes from *rasa*, meaning “devotional mellow,” and here it means “feeling ecstasy within the heart.” So Kṛṣṇa thought, “When she who gives me the highest ecstasy has gone away, how can there be *rāsa*?” So to pacify her and to eradicate the other *gopīs’ saubhāgya-mada*, he left the *rāsa* dance and went to Rādhikā. Then the *gopīs* also left the arena of *rāsa* and began searching for Kṛṣṇa. There are four classes of *gopīs*, and according to their specific *bhāvas*, all four types of *gopīs* were searching for him. After searching for some time, they noticed a trail of his footprints and they became very pleased. They thought that he must be just ahead. A little further on they saw another set of footprints alongside his. Those *gopīs* who were *svapakṣa*, belonging to Rādhikā’s clan, were delighted, and those who were *vipakṣa*, opposed to Rādhikā, were very unhappy, saying, “This particular *gopī* must have certainly worshipped him the best because, leaving all the rest of us behind, he is walking along with her alone.” But the *svapakṣa-gopīs*, recognising the footprints as those of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, were delighted.

By the light of the moon they continued to follow the trail until they reached a dense forest where the footprints could no longer be seen. They thought, “Having seen us following him, he has entered a dense forest to conceal his footprints. He may get thorns in his soft feet! Because it may cause him some pain, we should not go any further and should return now.” Being unable to find Kṛṣṇa, they thought they should return because it was also very dark and there was a frightening jungle ahead. But they were unable to return—why? “*Tan-manaskā*”—their hearts and minds were no longer with themselves. Where were their hearts and minds? With Kṛṣṇa. When they were together with Kṛṣṇa, their hearts would become immersed in his personal beauty and in his mood towards them. In this way they became “*tan-manaskā*.” They were not concerned about their homes and families because they were now *tan-manaskā*, and in reality they were so before this pastime took place. When they lived in their homes before the *rāsa-lilā* took place, what did the *gopīs* used to do? As it says in this verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.21.5):

*barhāpīdam nāṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ
bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapīsaṁ vaijayantīm ca mālām
randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair
vṛndāraṇyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇaṁ prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ*

“The *gopīs* began to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their minds. Accompanied by his cowherd boyfriends, Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered the charming forest of Vṛndāvana. His head was decorated with a peacock feather. He wore yellow *karṇikāra* flowers over his ears, a golden yellow garment on his body and a beautiful, fragrant *vaijayantī* garland about his neck. Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhibited his supremely captivating appearance, just like the best of dancers performing upon a stage. He filled up the holes of his flute with the nectar of his lips. The cowherd boys followed behind him singing his glories, which purify the entire world. In this way, the forest of Vṛndāvana manifested even greater splendour than Vaikuṅṭha, due to being beautified by the marks of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.”

When in their homes they would meditate on Kṛṣṇa as he is described in this verse and on the loving, *rasa*-laden words that he had spoken to them. Being *tan-manaskā*, they would glorify the good fortune of the deer: “*dhanyāḥ sma mūdha-gatayo ’pi hariṇya etā*—how fortunate are those deer who can gaze at Kṛṣṇa with great love.” They would remember this and also how the rivers would offer their everything in the form of lotuses to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Their absorption even reached up to the point where they would consider the girls of the Pulindya tribe to be highly fortunate. In this way, day and night they would be overwhelmed in remembering Kṛṣṇa. Even while living within their homes they would not be thinking of their children, their husbands, their cows, their household duties or even their own bodies. And after the *rāsa-līlā* they became even more *tan-manaskā*—how? *Tad-ālāpā*—they automatically composed songs that described Kṛṣṇa’s attributes and sang them to one another. People often speak of others’ special attributes, especially at the time of marriage and death. When someone dear to a woman has died, friends will glorify that person’s good qualities by composing original verses adorned with metre, rhymes and other poetic devices. Hearing it the woman will begin weeping bitterly. Also at the time of marriage new poems and songs are composed to describe the attributes of the bride and groom. One *gopī* describes to another about how Kṛṣṇa is beautiful, how he walks in such a charming fashion, and they sing about it in such a beautiful melody that the sweetness is further increased. As they do this, they become *tan-manaskā*.

What is the nature of their *ālāpa*, singing? “Kṛṣṇa deceived us and being very cruel he abandoned us”—forgetting all of this they only remembered his good qualities such as how he is kind and beautiful and how much he loves them. In company of other *gopīs* they sing in beautiful voices and melodies about how sweetly Kṛṣṇa plays the flute, how beautifully he speaks with them and how he attracts their hearts towards him. *Tad-*

viceṣṭās—they also became absorbed in Kṛṣṇa’s activities. How? They began imitating Kṛṣṇa’s gait, and lifting a stick and holding it to their lips, they stood in a threefold bending posture as he does and began imitating his playing of the flute. One imitated how Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana by holding her cloth aloft in her left hand in a particular way. As these kinds of feelings came to them, they would imitate a particular pastime and then experience that very pastime within themselves. In this they became completely immersed, thinking “I am Kṛṣṇa.” And just as Kṛṣṇa performs his activities, they would start behaving in precisely the same manner. One *gopī* grabbed another *gopī* who was standing nearby and, imitating Kṛṣṇa’s pastime with Pūtanā, began drinking her breast milk. Forgetting how Kṛṣṇa had committed an injustice to them by having cruelly abandoned them, they imitated his numerous charming activities.

Tad-ātmikāḥ—they became one with Kṛṣṇa’s *ātmā*. His body, his speaking, his movements—all are his *ātmā*. His *bhāva* is also his *ātmā*, and the *gopīs* became immersed in imitating that *bhāva*. *Tad-guṇān eva gāyantyo nātmāgārāṇi sasmaruḥ*—they sang of his attributes more and more, and not his faults such as being a thief, debauchee and so on. Singing of his qualities in this way, they forgot their homes, their bodies and even their own *ātmās*. In this way they became completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa by describing his qualities and imitating his activities.

Previously in this collection of verses Sanātana Gosvāmī glorified the *sakhās* but this *tadātmikā-bhāva* doesn’t exist even within them; it is very difficult to attain this stage. Yaśodā feels intense separation from Kṛṣṇa, but we have never heard anywhere that she becomes *tadātmikā* and begins imitating Kṛṣṇa’s activities. She sings of Kṛṣṇa when separated from him, but she doesn’t imitate Kṛṣṇa as the *gopīs* do in their maddened state of separation from him. This *prema* is so elevated that it doesn’t exist even in *vātsalya-rasa*. Those in *vātsalya-rasa* can only experience up to *anurāga*. *Anurāga* is also very special; it is not ordinary by any means. The *sakhās* in *sakhya-rasa* also experience *anurāga*, but some special *sakhās* such as Subala, Arjuna and Lavaṅga also sometimes experience *mahābhāva*. Even Rukmiṇī and the other queens of Dvārakā don’t experience this. Sometimes they may experience a shadow of it, but they will never completely forget their homes and families and begin imitating Kṛṣṇa as the *gopīs* do. In separation from Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā will fall unconscious, but in a conscious state she will not experience this *bhāva*. This exists solely within the *gopīs*, and that is what Sanātana Gosvāmī is showing here.

In their state of absorption the *gopīs* wouldn’t see any fault in Kṛṣṇa. Real *prema* is such that you don’t see the faults in those you love. In the upper stages of *mahābhāva* like *prema-vaicitra* and so on, this is visible in some places, but not in ordinary *prema*. We see this elevated standard only in the *gopīs*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā says (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 20.52):

*nā gaṇi āpana-duḥkha, sabe vāñchi tāñra sukha,
tāñra sukha—āmāra tātparya
more yadi diyā duḥkha, tāñra haila mahā-sukha,
sei duḥkha—more sukha-varya*

“I do not mind my personal distress. I only wish for the happiness of Kṛṣṇa, for his happiness is the goal of my life. However, if he feels great happiness in giving me distress, that distress is the best of my happiness.”

While speaking amongst themselves the *gopīs* say, “If he left us, then why can we not leave him? Certainly we can leave him.” But the *gopīs* cannot imagine that they would ever really leave him. They understand that a possible reason for his having abandoned them is that perhaps he doesn’t love them as much as he loves others. The *gopīs* understand that he may love someone more than he loves them. Women of this world cannot tolerate this; upon discovering this they would douse themselves with petrol and set themselves afire. For women the greatest unhappiness is for their husband to leave them and love another. The *gopīs* feel that it doesn’t matter even if they die so long as Kṛṣṇa is happy. They say, “Even if he loves another before our eyes, he is still our *prāṇanātha*, the Lord of our lives.”

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

“Let that debauchee (Kṛṣṇa) delight this maidservant who is attached to the service of his lotus feet by tightly embracing me. Or let him trample me, or break my heart by not being present before me. He may do whatever he likes. Even if he sports with other lovers directly in front of me, he is still my *Prāṇanātha*. There is no one other than him.”

There is no other example of this in any scripture, any literature or anywhere else in this world. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is saying this himself; not even his most intimate devotees such as Svarūpa Dāmodara or Rāyā Rāmananda are saying this. If Mahāprabhu had not descended into this world, these feelings would have remained hidden within Śrīmatī Rādhikā and would have never been broadcast in this world.

The *gopīs* say, “If Kṛṣṇa becomes attached to another and we come to know of it, what will we do? We will go to that person, become her maidservant, please her and arrange for her to meet with Kṛṣṇa.” This is possible only for the *gopīs* and not for any others. Even if anyone else were to do it, they would do it begrudgingly, understanding it to be their duty. Uddhava says to the *gopīs*, “In separation from you Kṛṣṇa is very

unhappy. Tell me what message you want me to deliver to him?” When the *gopīs* didn’t answer, again Uddhava said, “What message should I deliver to Kṛṣṇa for you?” He expected them to say, “In separation from Kṛṣṇa we are dying, so Kṛṣṇa should come here quickly.” But the *gopīs* didn’t say this. In the end Uddhava said, “It is alright, I have understood your feelings. I will go to Kṛṣṇa and say that in the agony of separation from you, the *gopīs* are dying and having forgotten them, cruelly you are residing here, enjoying the love of Kubjā and the other residents of Mathurā. Please go there quickly, otherwise no calf, cow, *vraja-vāsī* or *gopī* will be saved.”

But the *gopīs* forbade him: “Don’t say that to him!”

Uddhava said, “Why? You are practically dying, yet you won’t let me tell him?”

The *gopīs* said, “We have heard that Kṛṣṇa is crying in the pain of separation from us, but having heard this, we are so hard-hearted that still we haven’t died. But Kṛṣṇa is different; he is softer than butter. If he hears that in separation from him his calves, cows, mother, father and *gopīs* are suffering terribly, what will he do? He will not be able to live any longer and he will immediately give up his life. So don’t say it. What should you say? Say this: ‘The *gopīs* are very happily passing their lives. Eating, drinking, laughing and dressing nicely, they are not unhappy in the least. They are living in great comfort. If you can forget us, we can forget you also.’ Go there and say this—why? So he won’t worry for us and will continue loving those others there in Mathurā. So he can live freely and peacefully, and so that no suffering will come to him and he won’t worry. If you must say more than this, then say a little today, a little tomorrow, a little the next day—why? If after washing an old piece of cloth you forcefully ring it out, it will tear. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa’s heartbeat has practically stopped in separation from us. If you tell him of our condition, his heartbeat will certainly stop. So beware, don’t tell him. Tell him a little today, a little tomorrow, a little the next day, in a gradual way so that he will be able to tolerate it.”

Upon seeing and hearing all of this, Uddhava became astonished. He thought, “Their *prema* is such a beautiful sentiment and such an elevated *bhāva*! Before today I have never even heard of such a thing. It seems that Kṛṣṇa has sent me here to Vraja to learn this, and in reality Kṛṣṇa recently said to me, “What is *prema*? This you should understand.”

In real love one will not want any inconvenience or difficulty whatsoever to come to his lover. *Prema* that is devoid of this attribute is not real *prema*. The *prema* of today that we see with all these weddings taking place—when the wife leaves the husband and falls in love with someone else, the husband shoots her dead and then kills himself also. Is there any *prema* in this? In the *gopīs*’ *prema* there is not even the slightest scent of selfishness. “If I die, it is nothing. My only concern is that no unhappiness comes to him.” This is pure *prema*. So *prema* for Kṛṣṇa should come from the *ātmā*; *prema* cannot take place within the body. In this world there is no such thing as *prema*, love.

So Uddhava returned to Kṛṣṇa and for one or two days he didn't say anything. Then each time they met he told Kṛṣṇa a little more, and upon hearing it Kṛṣṇa became unsteady. This is real *prema*. Even in the stage of *sādhana* we should be unselfish. If we reach the point where we are doing *bhajana* without any selfish desires, then *prema* will come. *Prema* is also *bhagavat-svarūpa*, a transcendental entity endowed with free will, and in our present condition it will not enter our hearts because we would not appreciate its true value. So when no type of selfishness remains within us, then we will be practising *uttamā-bhakti*. At that time we will be engaged in the *sādhana* of *uttamā-bhakti*, then eventually *bhāva* will come, and finally *prema* will come. In our present condition, being situated near Kṛṣṇa and rendering direct service to him is something that is very far away from us. We can't even imagine what is real unselfishness; we are unable to understand it. But we are doing *sādhana* so that this mood of true unselfishness towards Kṛṣṇa will come to us. While remaining within this world, we should continue practising *sādhana* in the association of those great personalities who have actually become devoid of selfishness. Then we will be able to imagine at least something of the nature of true unselfishness.

No one can say that Kṛṣṇa is cruel. When the *gopīs* met Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra, Kṛṣṇa said, "I understand and you also understand that I am very, very cruel. I abandoned all of you. You renounced the shackles of household life and everything else just for me, but being so cruel I abandoned all of you and went to such a distant land, Dvārakā. Not even once did I inquire after your welfare. I am very ungrateful, you should understand this." At first the *gopīs* simply remained silent. They could not say, "You are cruel." Then they said, "This is simply fate, so why do you say that you are cruel? You have a very soft nature. The *prema* that exists within you is real *prema*. You are not at all cruel. Whatever virtues there are within this entire universe exist within you. You are very benevolent, kind, everything. It is our great misfortune that such a virtuous person as yourself abandoned us. This is the fault of our *karma* and our great misfortune. You are not at fault."

There are two possibilities in these words being spoken by the *gopīs* here. They may be taunting him with sarcastic words or it could be that they are speaking in this way because they have such simple hearts. But in any condition whatsoever there is no possibility of cruelty ever entering Kṛṣṇa's heart. As we examine this instance from our low position in *sādhana*, what can we understand? Why did Kṛṣṇa abandon the *gopīs* and go away, leaving this land of love, Vṛndāvana? Abandoning his mother Yaśodā and making everyone unhappy—why? We cannot understand this now. By practising *sādhana* more and more and eventually attaining an understanding of what is true selflessness, and after that understanding Kṛṣṇa's selfishness, then only will we be able to understand *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Insects are attracted to a lamp and give up their lives on the hot bulb. Why do they do it? Remove a fish from water and it cannot remain alive for long. The *gopīs* are pre-

cisely like this. This is called the *bhāva* of *tan-manaskā* and that is what is being described here. See how the insect gives its own life in the light and how the fish cannot live out of water; similarly a *premi* devotee offers his very self to Kṛṣṇa. This is the real definition of *prema*, so it is not such an easy thing. When by doing *bhajana* more and more we completely overcome our bodily identification and our many bad qualities such as lust, anger, greed, delusion, envy and madness, which are actually the symptoms of selfishness, and when we accept the thoughts and sentiments of the *gopīs* and meditate upon Kṛṣṇa and sing about his attributes as they do, then that *prema* will enter our hearts and we will be able to understand all these things. Then we will have selfless love for Kṛṣṇa. There is no doubt that by attentively hearing these narrations and by following this path of *bhakti* sincerely, the result will be very beautiful indeed.

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