



**Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja
Recalls His Early Years**

**Also
Separation and meeting
Excerpts from his Lectures**



Impressions of Bhakti (First Edition)

First printing – 2011 (5000 copies)

Second printing – 2014 (5000 copies)

Printed at Spectrum Printing Press Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi

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Acknowledgements

IMPRESSIONS OF BHAKTI

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WWW.MYGVPCOM

The printing of *Impressions of Bhakti* is financed by an endowment fund established by Raghuvir dāsa and Vrajeśa dāsa (Vancouver).

Cataloging in Publication Data--DK

Courtesy: D.K.Agencies (P) Ltd. <docinfo@dkagencies.com>

Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, 1921-

Impressions of Bhakti: Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja recalls his early years ; also Separation and meeting, excerpts from his lectures / [translation, Rādhikā Dāsī].

p. cm.

Includes verses in Sanskrit (roman)

Translated from Hindi

ISBN 9781935428367

1. Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, 1921- 2. Vaishnavites--India--Biography. I Radhika Dasi. II Title.

Foreword

Śrīla Gurudeva, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, is an eternal associate of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We read in *śāstra* that such associates are *tri-kāla-jña* and *sarva-jña*, meaning that in the past, present, and future, nothing in the Lord’s material or spiritual creation remains unknown to them. We read in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.6, purport by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda): “A person who is cent-percent engaged in the service of the Lord is the emblem of all knowledge. Such a devotee of the Lord in full perfection of devotional service is also perfect by the qualification of the Personality of Godhead. As such, the eightfold perfections of mystic power (*aṣṭa-siddhis*) constitute very little in his godly opulence.”

By their own life’s example, such pure devotees reveal the stages acquired in the gradual development of pure devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They teach us what to do, and what not to do, in order to advance in *bhakti*. They also teach us the importance of acquiring *sukṛti*, spiritual credits accrued by knowingly or unknowingly engaging in acts of devotion, and *saṁskāras*, impressions on the heart attained from the *sukṛti* of this and previous lives.

We can understand the divine nature of Śrīla Gurudeva’s pastimes from the words of his own *guru mahārāja*, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja (quoted from *Rays of The Harmonist*, No. 23, 2011): “The eternal form of the *ācāryadeva* is composed of knowledge

and bliss and remains constitutionally unchangeable, just like a dramatic performer who appears to go through various transformations during his performance but remains the same unaltered person. On the stage of this world, the *ācāryadeva* merely acts out birth, death, and so forth, all of which we can perceive using our knowledge-acquiring senses.”

Śrīla Gurudeva enacted his divine disappearance pastime on December 29, 2010, thus throwing the world of devotees and spiritual aspirants into an ocean of separation mood and desire for meeting. In his honor, a *hari-kathā* festival was held in New Braja, Badger, California in June of 2011, and *Impressions of Bhakti* was prepared for distribution at the festival, to honor his transcendental pastimes in this world.

Impressions of Bhakti is comprised of a transcription of Śrīla Gurudeva’s dictation on February 23, 2003 in Olpe, Germany, on the topic of his own life history. He spoke in Hindi, and his talk was later translated from a cassette recording by Rādhikā dāsī of Russia. The booklet also includes excerpts from his lectures on the subject of meeting *śrī guru* through the mood of separation.

We desire the qualification to glorify his causeless mercy everywhere. To this end, we find inspiration in the cogent words of our most worshipable Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (spoken on the divine disappearance day of his *guru maharaja, mahā-bhāgavat* Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja), which exemplify the exalted mood of a real disciple:

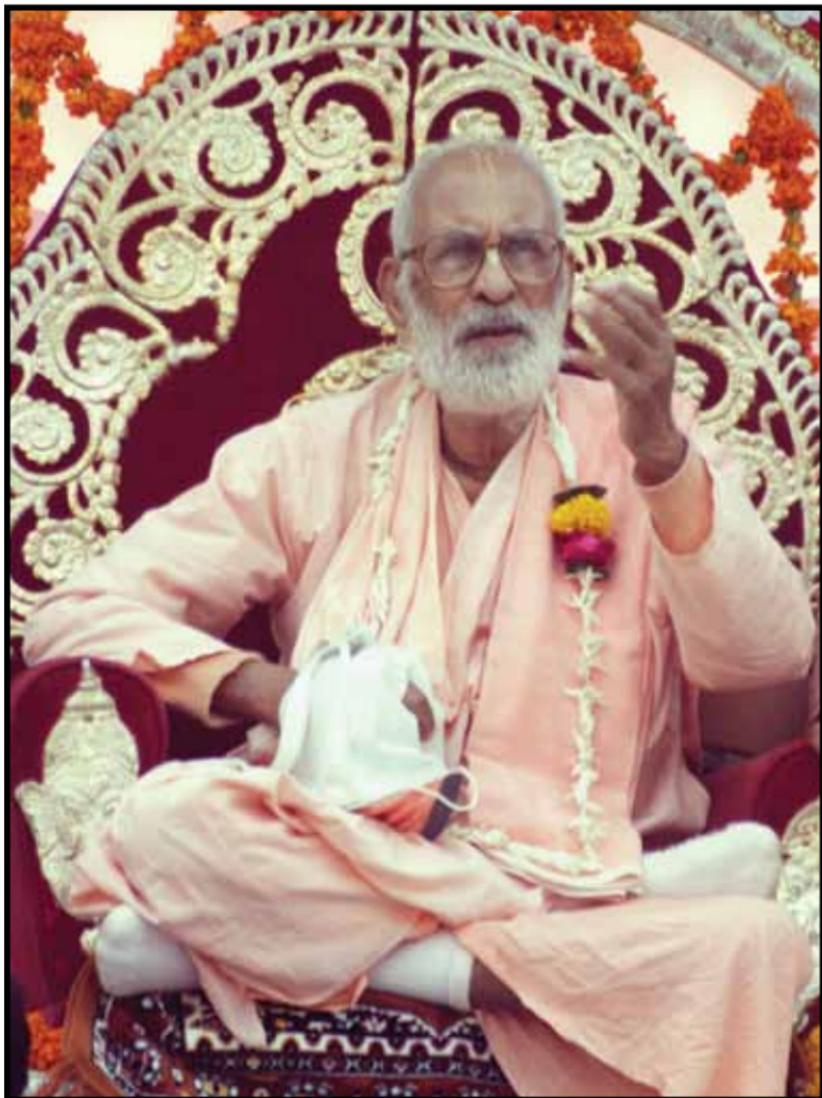
In order to speak all the teachings that have somehow entered through the pathways of my ears by the mercy of

the lotus feet of my *gurudeva*, may I possess millions upon millions of tongues, millions upon millions of heads, and millions upon millions of years to live. Then I will sing about his unparalleled compassion with millions and millions of tongues and millions and millions of heads for millions and millions of years. Only then will I have truly performed *guru-pūjā*.

(quoted from *Rays of The Harmonist*, No. 23, 2011)

Your aspiring servants,
The editors

* Footnotes that are not otherwise referenced are written by the editors.



Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Impressions of Bhakti

I was born in 1921 on the Amāvasyā (dark-moon) night in the month of Māgha (January–February). This is what my parents told me. My father’s name was Paṇḍita Bāleśvarnāth Tivārī and my mother’s name was Śrīmatī Lakṣmī-devī. They were both devotees of the Śrī *sampradāya*, initiated according to all rules and regulations, and both were expert in devotional music. My father was also expert in wrestling, singing, and all types of social affairs. He was humble, well-bred, and most importantly, highly religious and conversant with Vaiṣṇava principles.

At the time of my birth, my family’s *guru* (*kula-guru*) gave me the name Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Tivārī in accordance with the sign of the zodiac. From my birth I was very simple-hearted and innocent. My mother told me, “You would not cry; you would remain seated wherever you were placed. For that reason everyone called you Bholānātha (a name of Lord Śiva meaning ‘god of the innocents’).”

As my parents were very religious, I was also religious, even from my early childhood. To possess *bhakti* is not merely a result of practice for one birth, but many births. Throughout my childhood I was always chanting, “Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, Rāma.” Thus my fortune must have been the result of impressions in my heart (*saṁskāras*) due to taking good association and being of religious temperament in my previous births.

As a child I used to attend religious festivals with my father and hear classes on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, and other scriptures. In the evenings, when my father had finished his family duties, he would sometimes personally recite Tulsi dāsa's *Rāmāyaṇa* to me, and sometimes *Mahābhārata* – from beginning to end. At that time many village people would also come and listen to him with faith.

My impressions were such that even in my childhood I would cry for hours whenever I read the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Tulsi dāsa, and whenever I stopped crying, I would start reading again. I became especially immersed in emotion upon reading about Rāmacandra's exile, His abandoning Sītā, and Sītā's entering Pātāla. I became so immersed that I used to see the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa in my dreams, and I would also see Hanumānjī performing his various services. In one dream, at 4 o'clock in the morning, I saw Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā, and Hanumān descending from an airplane right before my eyes, their divine effulgence radiating everywhere. But then, when I went to touch their feet, they disappeared. At that time I became so blissful.

Throughout my school years, I ranked first or second in my class in academics. In sports, especially in high school, I won first place awards in the one mile and five mile races, and in long jump, high jump, cycling races, and boating. No one dared enlist his name for a long race unless he planned to compete for second place, because everyone knew, "Nārāyaṇa will come first." I also participated in musical programs and debates in Sankrit.

Once, when I was sixteen or seventeen, my *kula-guru* gave a series of classes on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in our Tivārīpura

village. As a great Sanskrit scholar, he would recite every *śloka* in a melodious voice and then explain its meaning to the crowd of pious listeners that had gathered from the neighboring villages. On those occasions, I had the opportunity to render personal service to him – decorating the lecture hall, preparing his seat, placing the *Bhāgavatam* on his lectern, and then listening to his lectures very attentively. My father also contributed greatly to these programs, by organizing the daily *ārati* of the *Bhāgavatam* and then distributing *prasāda* at the end of each program.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes were completed after one month, at which time a magnificent *yajña* was held, followed by a grand feast of the Lord's *mahā-prasāda*. My *kula-guru* showed me much affection for my services, and he left a great impression on my life. In this way I became increasingly immersed in the moods of devotion and gradually acquired a taste for *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

The Mahaviri Jhaṇḍa Festival (in honor of Hanumānjī) once took place on the banks of the Gaṅgā near my village, in Ahalyāvalī – the area where Śrī Rāmacandrajī had liberated Ahalyā from Gautama Ṛṣi's curse, where Viśvāmitra's residence was situated, where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa killed the demones Tāḍakā, and where Rāma shot His arrows at Mārīca and Subahu in order to protect Viśvāmitra's *yajña*. It was a great festival, at which many thousands of people gathered. Various games and wrestling matches were played, which were attended by numerous good sportsmen, and my father also participated as he had versatile talents.

It was at this festival that I heard and saw, for the first time in my life, a *nagara-saṅkīrtana* with thousands of people

dancing and singing, “*hare rāma hare rāma, rāma rāma hare hare / hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare.*” That *nagara-saṅkīrtana* had a great impact upon me.

When I was in class nine of high school, I received a book that was entitled *The Life History and Precepts of Nimbārka Vaiṣṇavācārya* as a prize for winning a Sanskrit debate. As I read about the *ācārya’s* perfect Vaiṣṇava demeanor, his deeds, his attachment for *harināma*, and his rigorous *sādhana*, I now began to acquire real taste for *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. It was from this book that I learned that all the Lord’s potencies are present in *harināma*.

I liked history very much, and I used to get top marks in that subject. In one of the history books, I once read a brief description of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When I saw His picture, with His long wavy hair, and when I read about His absorption in *kīrtana*, I was very deeply impressed and influenced.

I was betrothed at the age of sixteen or seventeen, while I was still studying in high school. However, according to Indian custom a wife joins her husband only after the official marriage ceremony, when they are mature. Thus, when I became twenty-one or twenty-two years old, a marriage festival was held for me, and at that time my wife came to live with me. But very soon after that, I left.

[An aside] You can write a little bit regarding the time and place of the marriage, but do not elaborate. [See endnote]

After high school, because I was good at sports, without any effort I was able to get a position in the police department. The police station was located in the Dumka district of Bihar,

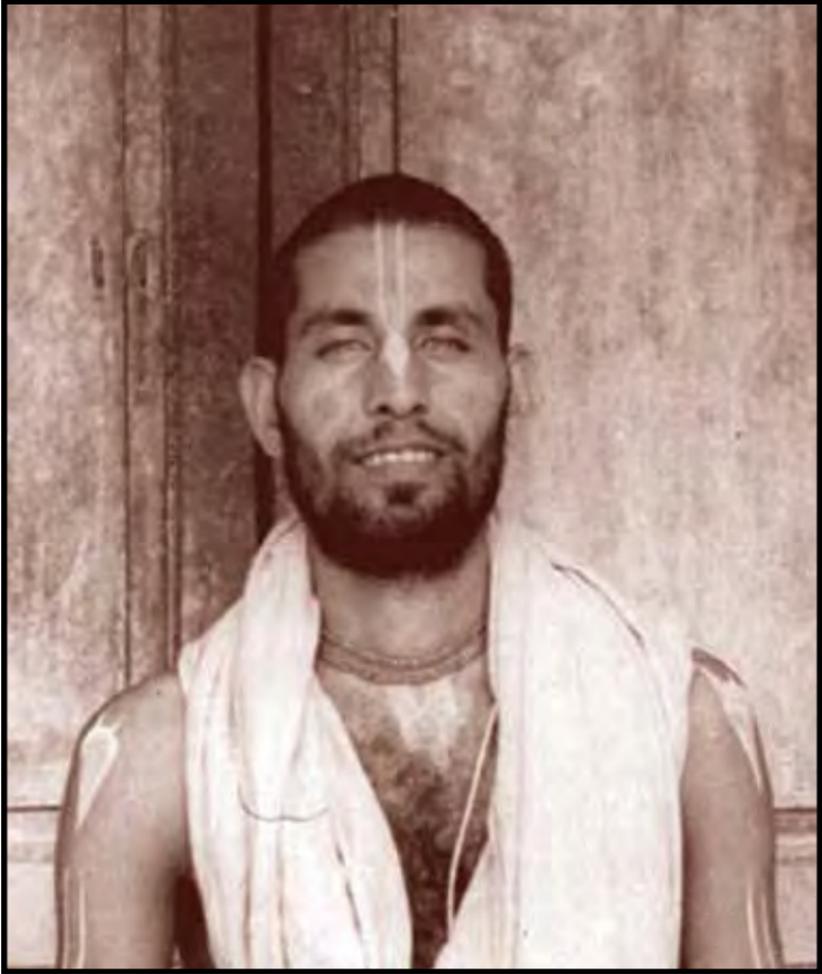
at Shahad Gañja, on the banks of the Gaṅgā. All the officers there were happy with me, including the chief superintendent, who was a very religious Bengali.

About three years after I began my employment at the police station, the chief superintendent was visited by a party of about ten devotees from Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Navadvīpa. Among them were *prapūjyā-caraṇa* Śrī Śrīmad Narottamānanda Brahmācārījī, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti-kuśala Nṛsimha Mahārāja, and Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa (who later became *pūjyāpāda* Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja).

The speaker, *pūjyāpāda* Narottamānanda Brahmācārījī, narrated the life history and glorified the character of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja in the superintendent's house for seven days. Although at that time I did not know Bengali very well, I would sit through the lectures, and in reciprocation with my faith *pūjyāpāda* Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmācārījī became very affectionate towards me. After each lecture, he would leave aside all food and drink to sit with me and speak *hari-kathā* in English throughout the night.

[Śrīla Gurudeva's servant, Śrīpād Mādhava Mahārāja adds, "Pūjyāpāda Narottamānanda Brahmācārī did not know Hindi and Śrīla Gurudeva did not know Bengali, so they spoke in English."]

Pūjyāpāda Narottamānanda Brahmācārī was a very learned person, and he was especially a learned scholar in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. After listening to his *hari-kathā* for those seven days and receiving his affection, I became completely renounced at heart. I wanted to leave my government position and go with the devotee party, but I could not get permission



Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja
as a *brahmacārī* in his *guru mahārāja's maṭha*

because of the chief superintendent's and everyone else's affection for me. They would not let me go.

The superintendent asked me, "Why do you want to go? You will soon be promoted." I immediately thought of an excuse to leave, and replied, "This is true, but I want to start my own business, so there will be no loss in my going."

When I also told him that in the future I want to do *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, he asked, "Do your parents agree to this?" I replied, with the understanding that Gurujī and the Vaiṣṇavas were my actual parents, "Yes, they do." I then resigned and left that place, but I did not go home. I went directly from there to Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa to meet my *guruji*¹.

I arrived at the Navadvīpa-dhāma railway station at twelve midnight, and wondered, "How will I be able to find the *āśrama* in Navadvīpa? I don't even know the address. Who can I ask at this late hour?"

I didn't know how Gurujī knew I would be coming that day, but he knew and Narottamānanda Brahmācārījī also knew; so they had sent *pūjyāpāda* Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, lantern in hand and accompanied by another *brahmācārī*, to find me. The sight of the two of them approaching made me very happy. Together with them I arrived at the *maṭha* easily, where I saw Narottamānanda Brahmācārījī, my *guruji*, and many other Vaiṣṇavas. That day was the eve of Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*.

The person in charge of the *maṭha* at that time was Śrī Narahari Ṭhākurājī, a god-brother of my *guruji* and an extremely dear disciple of his *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta

¹ Śrīla Gurudeva had heard about his *guru mahārāja* from *pūjyāpāda* Narottamānanda Brahmācārī and had corresponded with him by mail.

Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Because Śrī Narahari Ṭhākuraḥ took care of everyone in the *maṭha*, especially the children, he was affectionately called ‘mother of the *maṭha*.’ He would chant *harināma* throughout the day and night, binding his *śikhā* to a ceiling beam at night so that he would not fall asleep while chanting. Wherever he would go during the day, he continuously chanted *harināma*. I was a recipient of his abundant love and affection.

Without anyone’s instruction or awareness, I began sweeping the floors in the *maṭha*, cleaning the cooking pots, and performing a variety of other services. Shortly after Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* was completed, I received both *harināma* and *dīkṣā* initiations.

Guruḥ soon became satisfied with my *sevā* and saw my taste for *hari-kathā*, and thus he began to keep me with him and engage me in his personal service. I then started to cook for him and wash his clothes, and I listened to his *hari-kathā*. That I had previously been a police officer was a distant memory. Everything from the past was left behind.

In 1945, just before the beginning of Kārtika *parikramā* in Vaidyanātha-dhāma², I went with my *guruḥ* to the Chinchura Gauḍīya Maṭha, where I continued listening to his *hari-kathā* and doing *sevā*. It was there that I met *prapūjyā-caraṇa* Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, and where *guruḥ* engaged me in personal service to Mahārāja. I began rendering him so many services, such as cooking and giving him water for drinking and bathing.

² A holy place famous for Lord Śiva’s Jyotir-linga Temple in Deogarh (the abode of the gods), in Jhārikhaṇḍa, Bihar.

One of my daily services was to accompany him to the nearby Gaṅgā where he would bathe, and I would bring my *loṭa*, my last remaining possession from my previous *āśrama*. One day, while he and I were in the Gaṅgā, the current took my *loṭa*. As it floated away I considered, “This is good. Now my last material attachment has gone.”

In the following year, I again accompanied Guruji to the Vaidyanātha-dhāma *parikramā*. Later, after the *parikramā* was completed, Guruji continued to travel and preach. During that preaching tour, Anaṅga-mohana Brahmācārī, who was living and travelling with Guruji and who would also sing *kīrtana* for him, fell severely ill with tuberculosis. I was appointed to serve him, at which time I would bring him medicines from a long distance and even clean his body after he passed stool. I took care of him in every respect.

One day, as he sat right next to Guruji, he began vomiting blood. I went with Guruji to bring him to a famous homeopathic doctor in Calcutta, and on the doctor’s advice we stayed nearby at Siddhavādī. When that and other treatments did not work, Guruji admitted him to a tuberculosis hospital.

Sometime later, I was at a railway station where I met a cousin from our village who was working as a guard there. When he saw me sitting on the train, he boarded it and embraced me. With great happiness he said, “It’s been so long since you left, and you have not sent us a single message. Where are you residing these days?” I told him my address. I was so simple-hearted that I told him.

Upon leaving me he immediately sent a telegram to my family, soon after which my mother, father, brother, friends,



Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, second from the left, with the *sannyāsa daṇḍa*. Center: his *guru mahārāja*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

wife, and many important people of the village – a crowd of ten or fifteen – arrived at the *maṭha*. Then, as my mother wept loudly, they all made a concerted effort to convince me to return to them. Although I was ill at that time, I told them, “Don’t worry. I will come with you.”

I offered *praṇāma* to Gurujī and went with them to the village. Upon my arrival, my mother and all other relatives performed *pūjā* to Bhagavān in great jubilation, while a band of musicians played on their instruments. *Prasāda* was distributed, and people from all parts of the village – now extremely happy – came to see me.

The next day, my father invited several prominent scholars, as well as the heads of our village and nearby villages, who were wealthy, highly respected, educated, and knowledgeable. He organized a large meeting, attended by a great number of people, including my school friends who came to see me with curiosity.

They all tried very hard to convince me to live at home and continue to follow religious principles there. Many of them cited examples from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Some said that Prahlāda Mahārāja was a *gṛhastha* and that the Pāṇḍavas, also, performed *bhajana-sādhana* while living as *gṛhastas*. All present made the following recommendation to me: “Perform *bhajana* at home, as they all did.”

“But there is no *sādhu-saṅga* here,” I replied. “And therefore there is no one to instruct me in such a way that my *sādhana-bhajana* on the path of *bhakti* can increase. This is unacceptable to me. I cannot live without *sādhu-saṅga*.”

Some others retorted, “Then follow *brahmacarya*, and at the same time remain at home. Be religious, and at the same

time become powerful like your paternal grandfather. Oh, your grandfather was so strong that he would remove bullock carts from the mud. He would untie the bulls and free the carts with his bare hands. When two big buffaloes would fight with the aim to taking each other's lives, he would take a stick in his hand, strike one buffalo on one side and the other on the other side, and cause them both to run in different directions. Become like your grandfather.”

I replied, “The elephant is also strong. But what is the use of strength without *bhakti*? I do not want to become strong like that. I want to become strong in *bhakti*.

“*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.29) states that without *bhakti* life is useless:

*labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam arthadam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu mṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viśayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

“The human form of life is attained only after numerous births of transmigrating through the millions of species. Although this human body is impermanent, it offers the highest benefit. Therefore, until the body lays down and dies another time, if a man is intelligent he will wholeheartedly and immediately endeavor to fulfill his mission of life and achieve his greatest welfare. He must avoid sense gratification, which is available even in the animal species.”

Then, my seventy-five year old paternal uncle, who was the head of one of the other villages, a very important man,

and a great scholar, asked me, “All right then, since you have become a *sādhu*, can you tell me what is *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*?”

I replied that in order to understand *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda* (specialized non-dualism), one must first know about *kevalādvaita-vāda* (monism) and *śuddhādvaita-vāda* (purified dualism); not only that, but one must also know about *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* (inconceivable difference and oneness). Then, one by one, I began to define *kevalādvaita-vāda* and all the other theories (*vādas*). I told my uncle that *kevalādvaita-vāda*, the teaching of Śaṅkarācārya, is the worship of *nirākāra*, *nirviśeṣa*, *nirañjana*, *nirguṇa brahman*, the Absolute Truth devoid of form, speciality, qualities, and designations. According to Śrī Rāmānujapāda’s theory of *viśiṣṭādvaita*, the *jīva* and the material cosmos are specialties of *brahman*; although all the energies of the Lord are one, each keeps its individuality (*vaiśiṣṭya*). Madhvācārya’s conception is called *śuddhādvaita-vāda* and it stresses on the five eternal differences: the difference between *jīva* (the eternal living entity) and God, between *jīva* and *jīva*, between God and matter, between matter and matter, and between matter and *jīva*. Then, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* states that the one Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests Himself in many forms, and in this way all diversities are in Him and He is in all diversities although He is different from all of them. Thus, by the transformation of His inconceivable potencies, everything is simultaneously one with and different from Him.

I explained that all the other philosophies are *vādas*, meaning theories, but the *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s conception, is *tattva*, a truth. It

combines the ideas of all the other conceptions, and it is marked by the predominance of pure *bhakti*. I told my uncle and all those present that *acintya-bhedābheda* is our conception, the conception of our *guruji*.

Hearing my explanation, my uncle rose from his seat, embraced me, and said, "You have found a real *guru*. You have attained *sādhu-saṅga*. Your renunciation is real and your knowledge of *tattva*, the established philosophical reality, is complete. From now on, I will not say a word to discourage you." The meeting ended in this way, and all the people left.



That's enough for today; later I will tell more. There is no need to elaborate on any events other than those about my life in the line of *bhakti*. Write about me as I have written about my *guruji*. You can follow that example, describing my preaching. You can also discuss how, after coming to the *maṭha*, I went on so many pilgrimages throughout India. I have written about these in my *guruji's* life history. You only need the dates, the years, the what, and the where. I went to Badrinātha, Dvārakā, and South India two or three times.

ENDNOTE

Śrīla Gurudeva was speaking to Prema-prayojana dāsa, whom he had requested to write his biography. Since that time he has requested other disciples to write it. For example, in a video filmed on November 25, 2003 in Cebu, Philippines, he told his disciple Jayanta dāsa from San Diego, "Write just what I have told. Thousands of classes have been recorded; everything is on record. Afterwards [after my disappearance], you should do as I have done for my *gurudeva*."

Separation and Meeting

Attachment Intensifies Through Separation

Śrīla Gurudeva displayed his disappearance pastime on December 29, 2010 for the purpose of extending his causeless mercy. The following is an excerpt of his relevant lecture that was first published in Rays of The Harmonist, No. 15, 2005:

Out of compassion, the Supreme Lord in the form of *śrī guru* expands his manifest pastime. In the same way, *śrī guru* enacts the pastime of disappearing from this world to enter his eternal pastimes. His sole purpose in doing so is to stimulate the full service and full possessiveness of his dependents. Those fortunate enough to have taken shelter of a *rūpānuga-guru* during his manifest presence experience a constant increase in their attachment to serving him. And after his disappearance, their attachment to him continues to increase many times over. Consequently, the fire of separation from him intensifies day by day; by this alone one's *bhajana* remains ever-fresh.

The Height of Intense Separation

The following is an excerpt from Śrīla Gurudeva's discussion on Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Vilāpa-kusumāñjali (Text 7), first published in the same Rays of The Harmonist:

There are two kinds of *bhajana*. The first is performed by chanting and remembering pastimes of separation (*vipralambhā-līlā*) and the second is performed by remembering pastimes

of meeting (*sambhoga-līlā*). Although the *gopīs* and *Vrajavāsīs* always prefer meeting with Kṛṣṇa over separation from Him, He plays with them by making them enjoy *vipralambha-rasa*.

The *sādhaka* should cultivate the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa by thinking, “I am not seeing Kṛṣṇa, nor am I seeing Śrīmatī Rādhikā, nor *Vraja*. I am not realizing anything and I am unable to serve my *gurudeva*.”

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī showed us how to feel separation from Kṛṣṇa, and especially from Śrīmatī Rādhikā. A *sādhaka* should be immersed in such feelings. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī also lamented in separation from his *śikṣā-gurus*, “I am so unfortunate! First Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu departed from this world, leaving me behind. I then lived in the constant association of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, but he also left this world. Next I caught hold of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita’s lotus feet, but he also departed. From then on I experienced that every place and every dust particle of Jagannātha Purī reminded me of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Gadādhara Paṇḍita and their associates; and therefore I left Purī to come to *Vṛndāvana*.”

In *Vraja*, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī performed *bhajana* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa under the guidance of Śrīla Rūpa and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīs. When Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī entered his unmanifest pastimes, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī lamented as follows in separation from him:

śūnyāyate mahā-goṣṭam / girīndro ’jagarāyate
vyāghra-tuṇḍāyate kuṇḍam / jīvatu rahitasya me

Śrī Prārthanāśraya-caturdaśaka (11)

Now that I am without that person who sustains my life, the land of Vraja seems empty and desolate, Govardhana Hill appears like a great python, and Rādhā-kuṇḍa appears like the gaping mouth of a tigress.

Who Can Realize Separation from Guru?

Although our *gurudeva* has also entered his unmanifest, eternal pastimes, we happily remain in this world. On the occasion of special days, like his appearance or disappearance day, we might remember him, but often we are involved in arranging the festival in his honor, and there is very little chance to contemplate our separation from him. A tear may come to our eye as we speak something about him; but it may not come. If the festival is very elaborate, there is much to manage, such as the *abhiṣeka*, *guru-pūjā*, and distribution of *mahā-prasāda* to the Vaiṣṇavas. Consequently, there is less chance of us finding time to think about him and weep. For the most part, we arrange these festivals for the benefit of the general people who have no intimate connection with him, but on that day we should ensure that a feeling of separation from him enters our own heart. This is called *bhajana*.

Special persons, who have realize their immense obligation and indebtedness to *gurudeva* for all they have received from him, and who have rendered profuse service to him with *viśrambha-bhāva* (spontaneous intimacy) will feel separation from him, and weep. Such devotees will not think, “I am so lowly and my *gurudeva* is so elevated.” One with such awe and reverence cannot weep.

Śāstra states, “*viśrambhena guror sevā* – the *sevaka* performs such intimate service to *gurudeva* that *gurudeva* is always

pleased with him.” The *guru* will not see him as his servant or disciple for a single moment, but instead he will see him as his own heart. Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda (a disciple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī) and Govinda (a disciple of Śrī Īśvara Purī) were servants of this caliber. Although such a relationship with *śrī guru* is rare, it is absolutely necessary for *rāgānuga-bhakti*. In its absence, we are unable to weep like Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

Gradations of Separation

A devotee will experience different degrees of separation from *gurudeva*, according to his level of *bhakti*. When we contemplate the mercy he showed us and his superiority to us, we feel a certain type of sentiment. But when we recall our intimate relationship with him and his immense love for us, we will weep for him incessantly.

Nanda Bābā weeps in separation from Kṛṣṇa, but Yaśodā Mā can weep more than Nanda Bābā can. The *gopīs*, however, can even weep considerably more than Yaśodā. This is because they have a more intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa. We should have such an intimate relationship with our *gurudeva*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and all such personalities. It is then that we will be able to weep for their mercy. Without that intimate service relationship with our *gurudeva*, there is no possibility of us imagining our relationship with Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī or Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa.

Our advancement is solely dependent on the intensity of our service to our *gurudeva*. It is the platform on which all other relationships and experiences develop. If we can weep for

gurudeva, we will be able to weep for Śrīmatī Rādhikā; and if we cannot weep for him, we will not be able to weep for Her. Whatever we have learned we have learned from our *gurudeva*, and we should weep for him from the core of our heart.

How to Lament

How shall we weep? Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given instructions in the sixth verse of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam*:

nayanam galad-aśru dhārayā
vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulakair nicitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati

O Lord, when will tears flow from my eyes, my voice falter, and all the hairs on my body stand erect as I chant Your holy names?

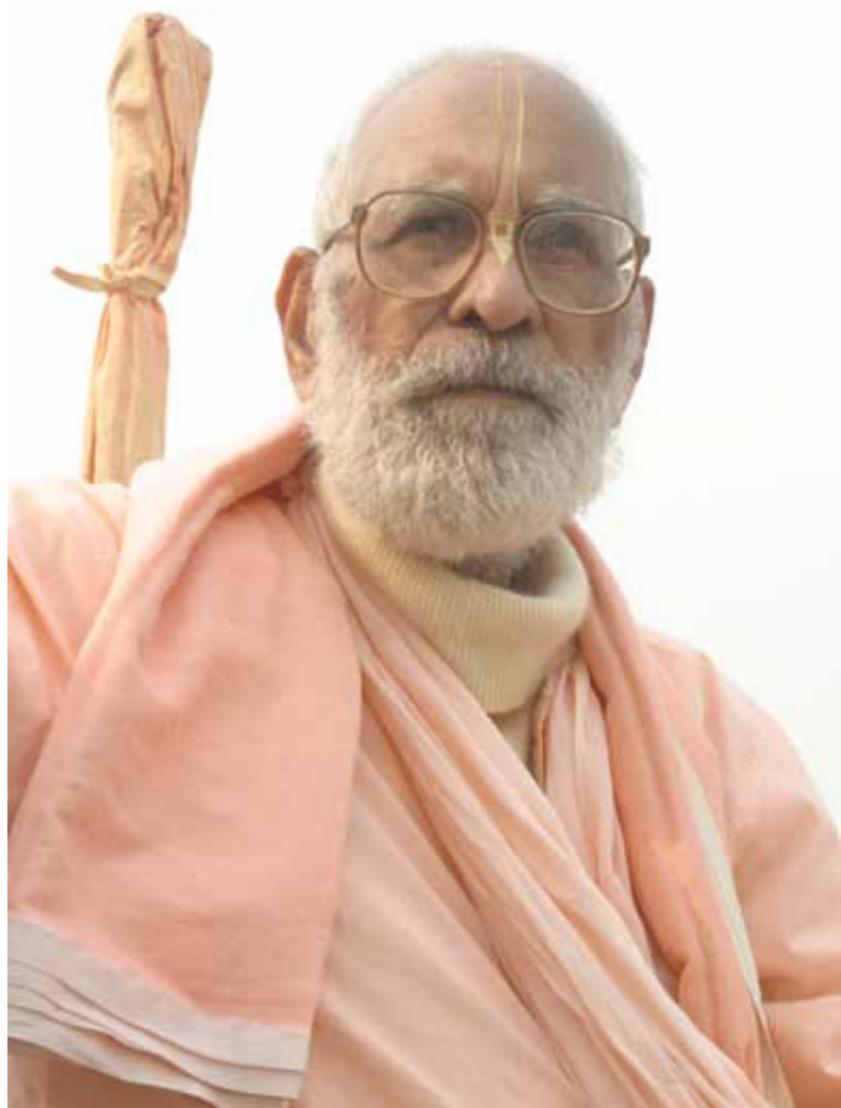
“When will I feel so much lamentation that I weep while chanting the names of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā-Govinda, or Vṛndāvanēśvarī?” Weeping like this is our *dharma*, the essence of our religious principles. One day, by the mercy of those who sincerely feel this mood of separation, and by the grace of our *gurudeva* and our *guru-paramparā*, we will have realization of this fact. This is our real prayer, and while praying, our mood should be “*tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati* – when will I weep while chanting *harināma* and remembering and hearing Your pastimes?” Those who are most fortunate can lament and weep for these moods and thereby experience them.

Remembering Śrī Guru

While softly uttering *harināma*, chanting *harināma*, praying to *harināma*, or simply while remembering *harināma*, we want to experience a mood of separation. If we are not yet doing this, we will have to gradually develop this mood in our practice of *sādhana-bhakti*. By reading about the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates, their moods of separation will enter our hearts and someday we will also experience them. Realization is the result of remembering *śrī gurudeva*; therefore we desire to always remember him. If we do not understand the mercy of *gurudeva*, we will not understand anything.

Our Ultimate Goal

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda writes that meeting and separation eternally stand side by side. Only that person who has some realization of *vipralambha* (separation) can relish and serve *sambhoga-līlā* (the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa). One who has not tasted *vipralambha* cannot relish *sambhoga-līlā*. The main objective, or the ultimate goal, of our *sādhana-bhajana* is to attain realization of the mood of separation. Once achieved, all else can be realized.



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