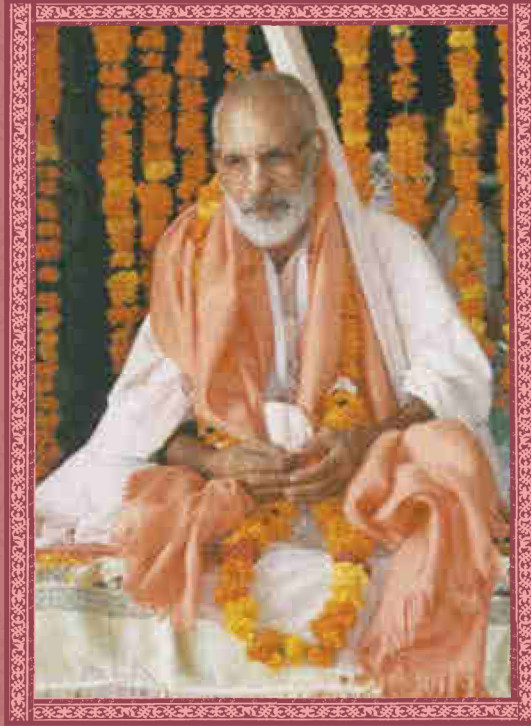




# Śrī Guru Vandana

IN VENERATION OF ŚRĪ GURU



*In honour of the centennial vyāsa-pūjā of*  
**Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja**



*Rays of*  
**The Harmonist**

*Vyāsa-pūjā*: worship (*pūjā*) of that *guru* who is a true representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva, compiler of the Vedic scriptures. It is also known as *guru-pūjā*.

*Vyāsa-pūjā* day celebrates such a *guru's* appearance in this world. On that day, a sincere disciple deeply reflects on his or her dedication to *śrī guru*: "Am I actually progressing toward performing the ideal of *vyāsa-pūjā* – offering *śrī guru* my very self, not just on this day but moment-by-moment?"

Such self-assessment is aimed at reinvigorating our conviction, our own spiritual practice. It affords a festival of absorption as we contemplate the significance of *śrī guru* and offer him homage.

The resultant surrender is the actual performance of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*.

# Śrī Guru Vandana

IN VENERATION OF ŚRĪ GURU

## Śrī Guru Vandanā – In Veneration of Śrī Guru

ISBN 978-1-63316-180-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021932029

First printing: 1,000 copies

Śrīla Gurudeva Centennial, 11 February 2021

Printed at Spectrum Printing Press Pvt. Ltd. (New Delhi, India)

© 2021 Gaudiya Vedanta Publications. Some rights reserved.



EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE NOTED, THE TEXT (NOT THE DESIGN, PHOTOS, ART, ETC.) IN THIS BOOK IS LICENSED UNDER THE CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION—SHARE ALIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE.

To view a copy of this license, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at

[www.purebhakti.com/pluslicense](http://www.purebhakti.com/pluslicense) or write to: [gvp.contactus@gmail.com](mailto:gvp.contactus@gmail.com)

Photos of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda on page vii © Bhaktivedānta

Book Trust International, Inc. Used with permission. [www.krishna.com](http://www.krishna.com)

[WWW.MYGVP.COM](http://WWW.MYGVP.COM)

Manohara dāsa and Manmohinī dāśī from Austria, and also another generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous, donated toward the printing of Śrī Guru Vandanā in sweet memory of our most beloved Śrīla Gurudeva.



*śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ*

# Śrī Guru Vandana

IN VENERATION OF ŚRĪ GURU

on the occasion of the centennial appearance day of  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Rays of The Harmonist



VRINDAVAN • NEW DELHI • SAN FRANCISCO



# Table of Contents

The Bhāgavata-guru-paramparā (from the 15th century to the present) .....	viii
<b>Preface</b> .....	ix
Śrī guru in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.....	ix
Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja .....	ix
Early Life .....	ix
A life of dedication .....	x
Final Pastimes .....	xi
<b>Part One: Śrī Guru-tattva</b> .....	1
Śrī Śrī Guru-caraṇa-smaraṇāṣṭakam	
Śrī Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura .....	3
Śrī Guru-svarūpa - The Form and Personality of Śrī Guru	
Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.....	7
Śrī Guru-pūjā	
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja .....	13
Dīkṣā-guru and śikṣā-guru .....	13
Vaiṣṇava-sevā is guru-sevā.....	13
A true disciple gives his life in the service of Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas .....	14
Shining examples of guru-sevā.....	14
Becoming the servant of guru does not mean serving one's own aims .....	16
The nature of nirguṇa-vastu, the transcendent reality .....	16

## First, Accept Shelter at Guru's Lotus Feet

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja.....	19
The example of the archetypal chaste wife .....	19
Establishing a relationship is pivotal .....	19
Accepting a genuine guru .....	20

## Guru-dāsa

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja.....	23
Hari-dāsa-varya – the best of the servants of Hari .....	24
Māyā-dāsa – servant of the illusory energy.....	26
Types of guru-dāsa .....	27
Ekalavya, the so-called disciple.....	28
Karna, the tāmasika disciple.....	30
Bhīṣma's enactment as a rājasika disciple .....	31
Aruṇi and Upamanyu, the sāttvika disciples.....	32
The prayers of Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura.....	34
Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī .....	36
The service of Govinda.....	37
Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī – the best of rūpānugas .....	39

## Part Two: Homages.....43

### From Respected Vaiṣṇavas

Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Govinda Mahārāja.....	45
Śrīmad Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Mahārāja .....	48
Śrīmad Bhakti sundara Sannyāsī Mahārāja .....	51
Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Sādhu Maharāja .....	53
Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Viṣṇu Mahārāja .....	56
Śrīmad Bhakti Vidagdha Bhāgavata Mahārāja .....	59

### Excerpts from the offerings of Dīkṣā & Śikṣā Disciples

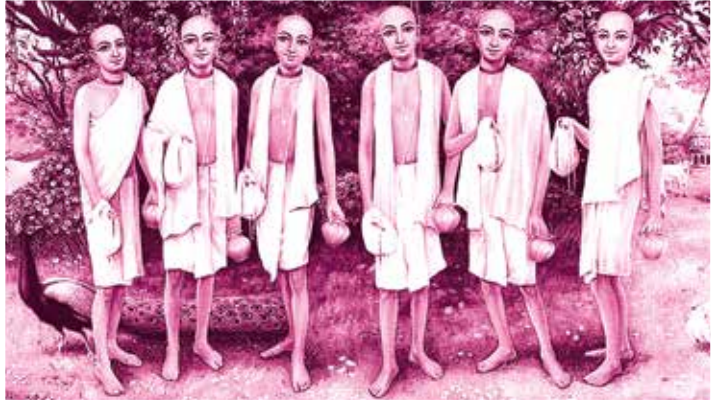
Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Bhāgavat Mahārāja .....	63
Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Vaikhānas Mahārāja.....	65
Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Bhāgavata Mahārāja.....	67
Śrīpāda Bhaktivedanta Sādhu Mahārāja.....	69



Sundara-gopāla dāsa .....	71
Gīridhārī dāsa .....	74
Vanamālī dāsa .....	76
Śyāmasundara dāsa .....	77
Muralī-manohara dāsa .....	78
Rāmānanda dāsa .....	81
Śrīyukta Umā dīdī .....	84
Śrīyukta Yaśasvinī dāsī .....	91
Premavatī dāsī .....	95
Kundalatā dāsī .....	96
Viṣṇu-priya dāsī .....	101
Keśava dāsa .....	102
Ūśā dāsī .....	103
Ajay-kṛṣṇa dāsa .....	104
Indumukhi dāsī .....	105

# The Bhāgavata- guru- paramparā

(from the 15th century  
to the present)



The Six Gosvāmīs:  
Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Jīva, Gopāla-bhaṭṭa, Raghunātha dāsa



Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya  
and Śyāmānanda Prabhu



Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī  
Ṭhākura



Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa



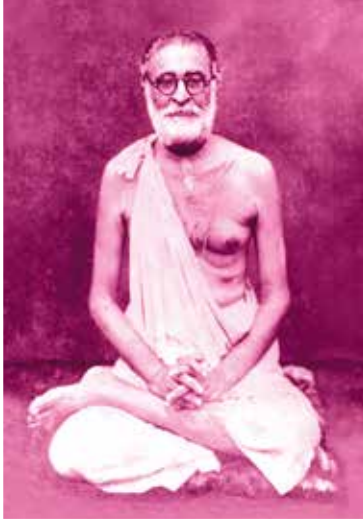
Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī



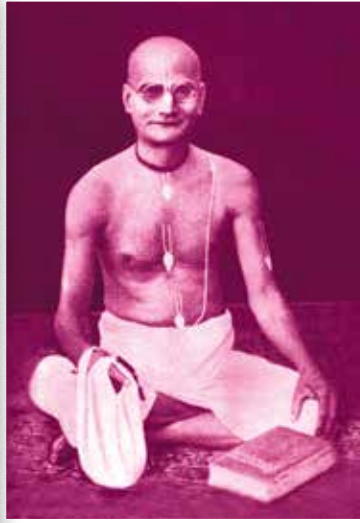
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura



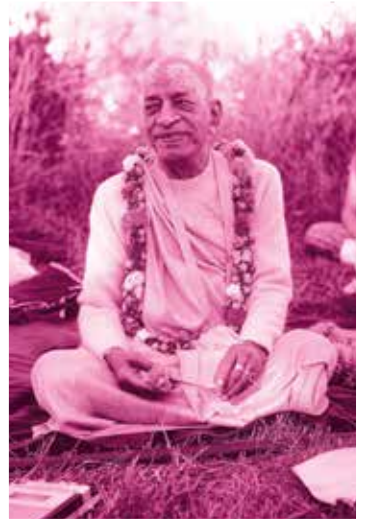
Śrī Gaura-kīśora dāsa Bābājī



Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta  
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda



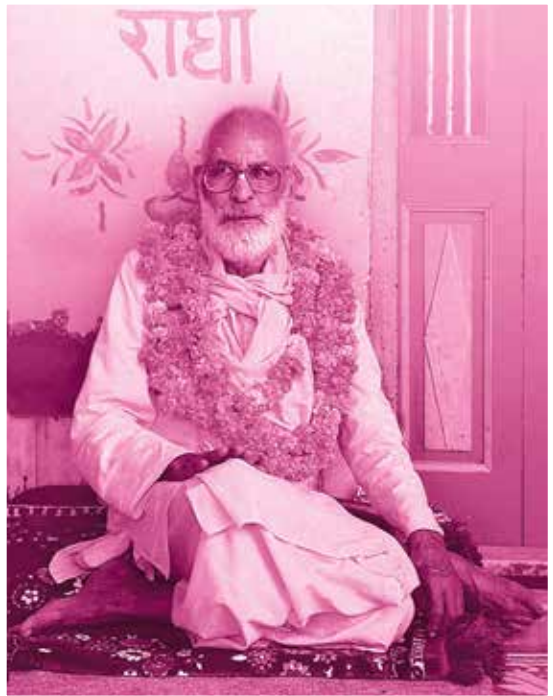
Śrī Śrīmad  
Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja



Śrī Śrīmad  
Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja

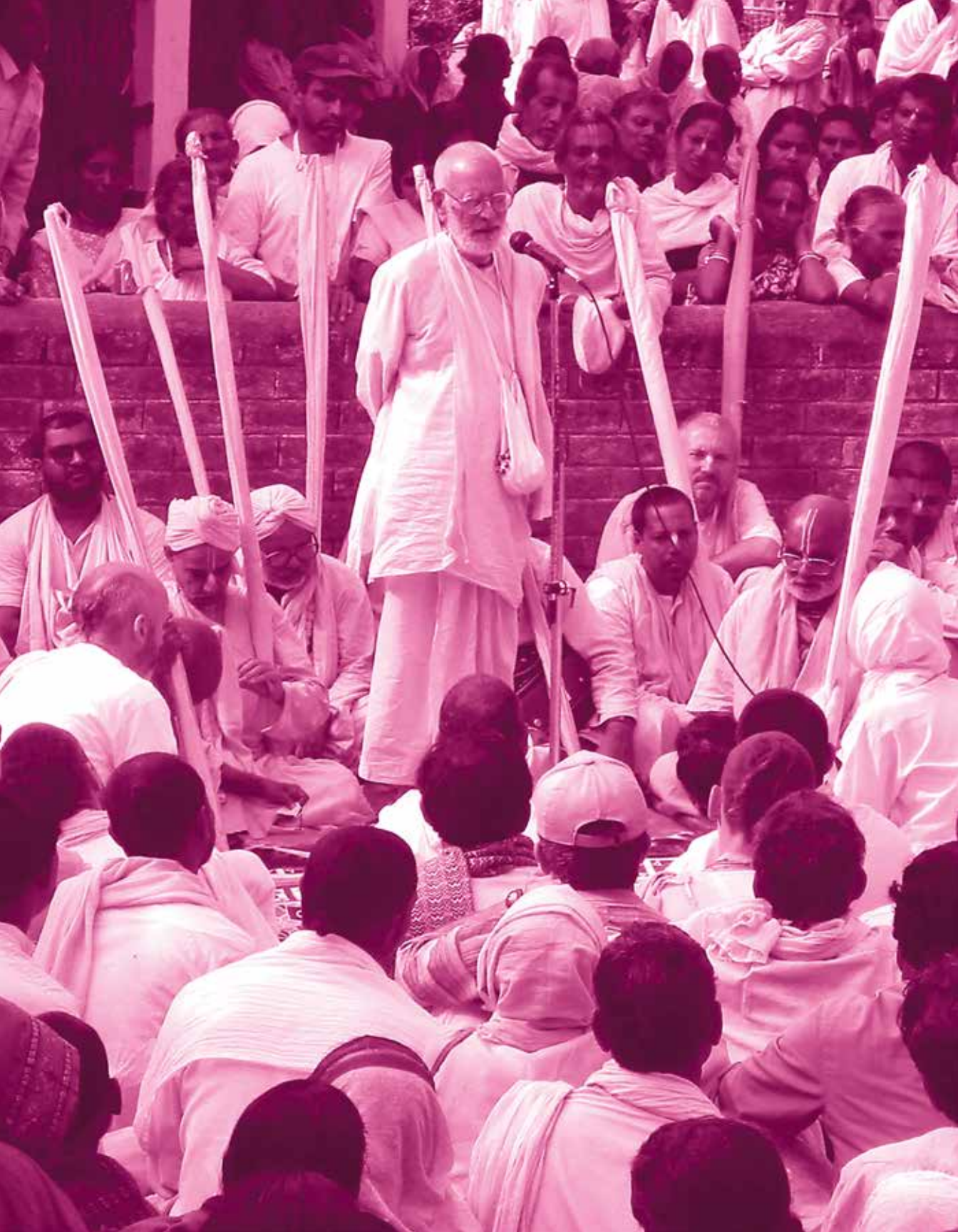


Śrī Śrīmad  
Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja



Śrī Śrīmad  
Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja







# Preface

## Śrī guru in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

**T**he term *śrī guru* in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu specifically refers to a divine personality who carries Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message and effectively delivers that message to the living entities of this world.

But that message is not merely a coherent stringing together of words and teachings. It carries a potency that comes from *śrī guru*'s perfectly embodying Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's superlative definition of *uttamā-bhakti*: *bhakti* that is devoid of any selfish, ulterior desires and not eclipsed by impersonal knowledge, fruitive work, or anything else; *bhakti* that is executed with perpetual, ardent endeavour meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa

and performed out of loving affection for Him (*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11).

When such empowered personalities come before conditioned souls, their words, weighty with the significance Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes, have the power to enter the inner recesses of a person's consciousness, uplift it and direct it towards aspiring for *uttamā-bhakti*. There is nothing more miraculous in this world. When Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda was once asked if he could perform a miracle, he pointed to the enthusiastic, new devotees sitting before him and said, "These are my miracles."

## Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

### Early Life

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja appeared in a family of Śrī Vaiṣṇavas in the village of Tivārīpura, in the Buxar district of Bihar, India, in 1921, on the dark moon day of the lunar month of Māgha (January–February). He was given the name "Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Tivārī". As a young child, he was self-satisfied and was nicknamed Bholānātha, a name for Lord Śiva meaning "god of the innocents".

Typical of many a saintly person, he was devout from childhood and would accompany his father to recitations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. Significant among his childhood memories were seeing a *saṅkīrtana* party of thousands of people chanting the *mahā-mantra* at a festival held in honour of Hanumānjī and reading about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in a history book, which showed a picture of Śrīman Mahāprabhu absorbed in *nāma-kīrtana*.

It may seem that pure Vaiṣṇavas live lives like ordinary people and then at a certain point, take to the devotional path. And so it is said that they “met their *guru* on a certain date”, for example. But what actually transpires at that certain point in time is the manifestation of their inherent pure devotion and their perfect service to *śrī guru* and Kṛṣṇa. Narrations of their lives are understood in that way.

Upon entering adulthood, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja was awarded a position in the police department and entered family life, but soon, his inherent dedication would manifest, leading him in a different direction, and he would abandon all worldly ties for good.

The disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had assumed a vigorous responsibility for spreading his mission. Prominent among them was Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī (later, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Gosvāmī Mahārāja), who journeyed to the Dumka district of Bihar, where he discoursed in Bengali for an entire week on the glories of Prahāda Mahārāja. Although Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Tivārī did not know Bengali, he attended his classes. English was their only language in common and was therefore the means for their discussions on *bhakti* at that time.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja said that at the end of those seven days, he became completely renounced at heart. Soon after, he met his beloved *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and his complete dedication to him was unveiled.

## A life of dedication

The next part of Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's life is cherished by those who witnessed his powerful devotion and by those who were touched by his mercy.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's veneration for his *guru* was exemplary, and wherever he travelled, he spoke regularly on his *gurudeva*'s and predecessor *ācāryas*' glories and philosophical conceptions.

He and his two dear godbrothers, Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja, knew nothing but service to their *śrī guru*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. These three served him together, received *sannyāsa* from him at the same time, on Gaura-pūrṇimā day, 1952, and remained close lifelong friends, as they took increasing responsibility for the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti that Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja had founded. They were called “the three pillars” of that society and it thrived under their affectionate leadership. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja travelled extensively throughout India, speaking on the teachings of Mahāprabhu and serving the prominent disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

In 1959, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja served as the priest in a momentous *sannyāsa* ceremony. On that occasion, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja conferred *sannyāsa* upon his dear godbrother Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedānta Prabhu, giving him the name “Śrī Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja”.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, as he was later known, heroically pioneered the deliverance of pure *bhakti* to Western shores. For this, the entire world will be eternally grateful. He had asked Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja to help his disciples, and he willingly gave his time to any of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda's disciples and followers who came to him. Then, in 1996, on the request of devotees worldwide, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja journeyed abroad. In the next fourteen years, he left India on such tours more than thirty times.

His dedication to delivering the teachings of his predecessor *ācāryas* resulted in the translation of over sixty Gauḍīya texts into Hindi, sometimes with the *ācāryas'* commentaries and sometimes with his own. His books, now in many languages, are appreciated not just by those in various Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas *saṅgas* but by spiritual seekers worldwide.

## Final Pastimes

From 1946 to 2010, when he left this world in Śrī Purī-dhāma, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja remained continuously engaged in *guru-sevā*. The external loss of his perceivable association had a profound impact on the devotee community.

Inevitably, so much has changed in the ten years that have passed since then, but that dynamic embodiment of Mahāprabhu's compassion continues to give guidance in the form of his teachings and life example, through the sacred books he translated and

commented upon, through his immortal presence in the lives of those devoted to him, through the tangible connection he made and continues to make with his disciples and followers, through the large repertoire of wonderful *kīrtanas* he and our *guru-varga* gave emphasis, through the vast treasury of audio files of his classes, morning walks and *darśanas*, and through the video files that remind us of him.

*ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana*

O Gurudeva, may your fame now be proclaimed throughout the three worlds!

Aspiring to serve Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas

The publication team

on the vyāsa-pūjā day commemorating the centennial appearance of  
*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda*

Śrī Śrīmad

Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

11 February, 2021



*Translation of articles and homages  
from Hindi and Bengali: Śrīvāsa dāsa*

*Fidelity check: Amala-kṛṣṇa dāsa*

*Editing: Vaijayantī-mālā dāsī, Vicitri dāsī*

*Proofreading: Madhukar dāsa, Mañjulālī dāsī*

*Layout & Design: Kṛṣṇa-karūṇa dāsa*

*Acknowledgements: Viṣṇu dāsa (Houston),*

*Sundar-gopāla dāsa (England),*

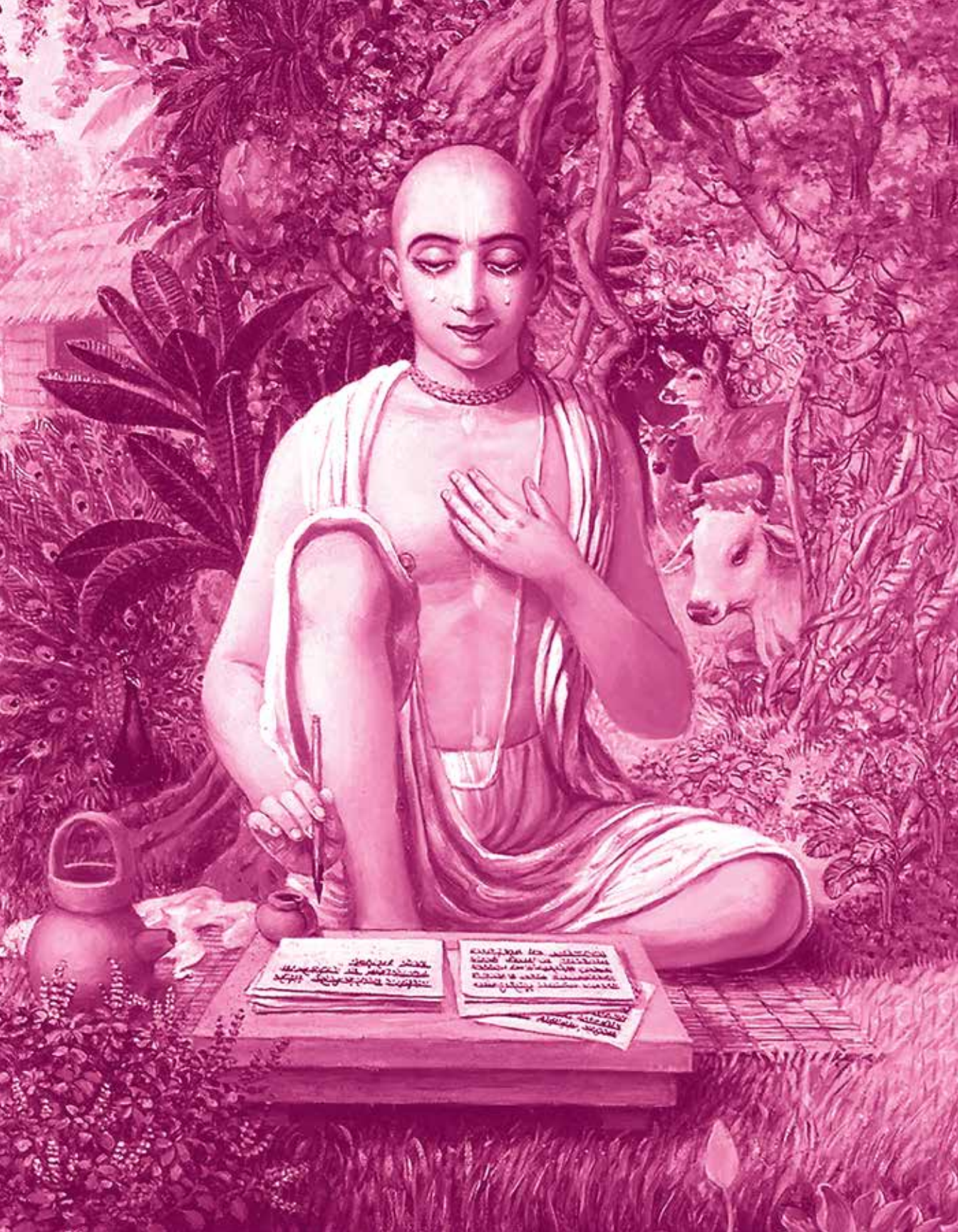
*Indupati dāsa (Alachua)*





PART ONE:

# Śrī Guru-tattva



# Śrī Śrī Guru-caraṇa-smaraṇāṣṭakam

Eight Prayers in Remembrance of the Lotus Feet of Śrī Guru

By Śrī Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

[from *Śrī Stavāmṛta-lahari*]

Every morning, during *brahma-muhūrta*, Vaiṣṇavas sing Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Śrī Gurvāṣṭakam* in glorification of *śrī guru*. In this *Śrī Śrī Guru-caraṇa-smaraṇāṣṭakam*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura glorifies his own beloved *guru*, Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa Cakravartī, thus conveying the moods and conceptions with which to meditate on and worship our own *śrī guru*.



*prātaḥ śrī-tulasī-natiḥ sva-karatas-tat-piṇḍikālepanam  
tat-sā mukhyam-atha sthitiḥ smṛtir-atha sva-svāmīnoḥ pādayoḥ |  
tat-sevārtha-bahu-prasūna-cayanam nityam svayam yasya tam  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varaṁ vande nipatyāvanau || 1 ||*

Every day, in the morning, he bows to Śrī Tulasī-devī and with his own hands, he coats her altar afresh [with a mixture of cow dung and soft dirt]. Thereafter, he stands before her, remembering the lotus feet of his worshipable Lords, the Divine Couple (Yugala-kiśora). For Their service, he picks variety of flowers from the creepers and trees daily with his own hands. I fall to the ground and venerate with utter delight that Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa, the foremost of teachers.

*madhyāhne tu nīṣa-pāda-kamala-dhyānarcanānnārpaṇa-  
prādakṣiṇya-nati-stuti-praṇayitā nṛtyam satam saṅgatiḥ |  
śrīmad-bhāgavatārtha-sīdhu-madhurāsvādaḥ sadā yasya tam  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varaṁ vande nipatyāvanau || 2 ||*

At midday, he meditates on his worshipable Lords' lotus feet, performs *arcana*, offers Them delectable edibles, circumambulates Them, bows down to Them, praises Them, dances in an effusive expression of love and, in the company of saintly personalities, constantly relishes the sweet nectar of the confidential meanings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I fall to the ground and venerate with utter delight that Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa, the foremost of teachers.

*prakṣālyāṅghri-yugam nati-stuti-jayam kartum mano'ty-utsukam  
sāyam goṣṭham-upāgataṁ vana-bhuvo draṣṭum nija-svāminam |  
premānanda-bhareṇa netra-putayor-dhārā cirāt yasya tam  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varaṁ vande nipatyāvanau || 3 ||*



In the evening, as he beholds his Lord returning from the forests to Vraja, his mind becomes exuberant to wash his Lord's lotus feet, bow to Him, offer Him praises, and call out cheers of "Jaya! Jaya!" The cups of his eyes, brimming with the ecstasy of *prema*, release endless streams of tears. I stretch out on the ground in bliss before that Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa, the foremost of teachers.

*rātrau śrī-jayadeva-padya-paṭhanam tad-gīta-gānam rasā-  
svādo bhakta-janaiḥ kadācid-abhitaḥ saṅkīrtane-narttanam |  
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-vilāsa-kely-anubhavād unnidratā yasya tam  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varam vande nipatyāvanau || 4 ||*

At night, he reads Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's poetry [*Śrī Gīta-govinda*], and sings the songs therein [with the appropriate rhythm (*tāla*) and cadence (*laya*)]. At times, he even relishes *rasa* with the devotees, and sometimes, he whirls around, dancing as he performs *saṅkīrtana*. Sleepless, he constantly experiences the playful pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. I delightedly prostrate upon the earth before that foremost of teachers, Śrī-Rādhā-ramaṇa.

*nindety-akṣarayor-dvayam paricayam prāptam na yat-karṇayoḥ  
sādhūnām stutiṁ-eva yaḥ sva-rasanām-āsvādayaty-anvaham |  
viśvāsyam jagad-eva yasya na punaḥ kutrāpi doṣa-grahaḥ  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varam vande nipatyāvanau || 5 ||*

His ears have never become acquainted with the two syllables *nin* and *dā* (criticism), for every day he engages his tongue in exclusively relishing the praises of saintly personalities. He trusts the whole world and never attributes fault to anyone. I ecstatically throw myself to the ground before that foremost of teachers, Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa.

*yaḥ ko 'py-astu padābjayor-nīpatito yaḥ svīkaroty-eva tam  
śighram svīya-kṛpā-balena kurute bhaktau tu matvāspadam |  
nityam bhakti-rahasya-śikṣaṇa-vidhir-yasya sva-bhṛtyeṣu tam  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varam vande nipatyāvanau || 6 ||*

He accepts whoever falls at his lotus feet and quickly, by the strength of his mercy, propels them on the path of *bhakti*, deeming them most worthy. To his servants, he perpetually teaches, in prescribed sequence, the secret precepts of *bhakti*. Happily, I fall to the ground before that foremost of teachers, Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa.

*sarvāṅgair-nata-bhṛtya-murdhni kṛpayā yasya sva-pādārpaṇam  
smitvā cāru kṛpāvaloka-sudhayā tan-mānasodāsanam |  
tat-premodaya-hetave sva-padayoḥ sevopadeśaḥ svayaṁ  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varaṁ vande nipatyāvanau || 7 ||*

If one of his servants prostrates before him, with all eight bodily limbs on the ground, he mercifully offers him his feet, placing them on his head. Laughing gently and enchantingly, he suffuses that servant with the ambrosia of his merciful gaze, making his mind indifferent to the sense pleasures of the world. In order to rouse divine love in that servant, he personally teaches him how to serve his lotus feet. To that Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa, foremost of teachers, I joyfully bow down on the earth.


*rādhe! kṛṣṇa! iti pluta-svara-yutaṁ nāmāmṛtaṁ nāthayor  
jihvāgre naṭayan-nirantaram-aho! no vetti vastu kvacit |  
yat-kiñcid vyavahāra-sādhakam api premnaiva magno'sti yaḥ  
śrī-rādhā-ramaṇam mudā guru-varaṁ vande nipatyāvanau || 8 ||*

“Rādhe! Kṛṣṇa!” he calls out, in long, protracted cries, causing the nectar of His Lordships’ names to dance endlessly on the tip of his tongue. What is most astonishing is that he knows nothing of how to act in worldly matters because he is always immersed solely in *prema*. With great rejoice I bow down upon the earth to that foremost of teachers, Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa.

*tvat-padāmbuja-sīdhu-sūcakatayā padyāṣṭakam sarvathā  
yātām yat-paramāṇutām prabhu-vara! prodyat-kṛpā-vāridhe |  
mac-ceto-bhramaro 'valambya tad-idaṁ prāpyāvilambam bhavat  
saṅgam mañju-nikuñja-dhāmnī yuṣatām tat-svāminoḥ saurabham || 9 ||*

O foremost of masters! O overflowing ocean of mercy! This hymn of eight verses fully reveals the honey of your lotus feet. I pray that the bee of my heart may relish those lotuses and, very soon, by the influence of your association, find in the charming abodes of the *nikuñja* groves the fragrance of your Lords, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

**|| iti śrī-śrī-guru-caraṇa-smaraṇāṣṭakam sampūrṇam ||**

Thus concludes Śrī Śrī Guru-caraṇa-smaraṇāṣṭakam 



# Śrī Guru-svarūpa – The Form and Personality of Śrī Guru

By Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

All scriptures are divided into three categories – *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* – and their purport is understood from those three perspectives. According to those who do not accept the independent existence and experience of any entity other than the *advītiya-brahma* (*brahma* that is one without a second), nothing but *brahma* exists. These *jñānīs*, who understand the absolute as an undifferentiated entity, know everything to be *brahma*. According to them, *guru* is not different from *brahma*. These persons do not accept the path of worship with surrender (*upāsana*), or *bhakti*.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu, however, has conveyed that the path of *bhakti* is the purpose of the scriptures. According to Him, *tattva* (Reality) is *acintya-dvaita-advaita*, or simultaneously different from *brahma* and situated within *brahma*. There is nothing besides *brahma* [as *brahma* is one without second], but through variations of *śakti* (energy), a single entity is characterized by different functions, depending on the nature of the *śakti*. The notions of the Māyāvādī intellectuals pertaining to the nature of reality is called *nirviśeṣa-jñāna* (knowledge of the featureless aspect of the Absolute). The *tattva-jñāna* revealed by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, however, is *saviśeṣa* (possessed of unique characteristics).

Although one entity (*vastu*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is manifest in six different *tattvas*:

(1) *guru-tattva*, (2) *bhakta-tattva*, such as Śrīvāsa, (3) Advaita's *tattva* – His *aṁśāvatāra*, or partial incarnation, (4) Nityānanda's *tattva* – His *svarūpa-prakāśa*, or manifestation of His very self, (5) *śakti-tattva* – Gadādhara and others, and (6) His own *tattva* as Svayaṁ Bhagavān, the Original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

These six *tattvas* are indeed none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. In that case, *guru-tattva* is also Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. If one accepts inconceivable simultaneousness and difference – *acintya-bhedābheda* – then all six *tattvas* are Bhagavān, yet they are mutually distinct. Śrīvāsa and other *bhaktas*, Śrī Gadādhara and other *śaktis*, the *aṁśāvatāra* Advaita, the *prakāśa-svarūpa* Nityānanda, and *gurudeva* – these five *tattvas* are non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Indeed, all five are also separate from Him, as they represent *dāsa-tattva* (the principle of servitorship).

Though *śrī gurudeva* is the servant of Caitanyadeva, he is Bhagavān's manifestation, or *prakāśa-svarūpa*. Therefore, Bhagavān is indeed *gurudeva*. Though *gurudeva* is a direct manifestation of Bhagavān, he is Kṛṣṇa Caitanya's beloved servant. *Śrī gurudeva* is not mortal, not temporary. Though he is different from Kṛṣṇa as His servant, he is a being so dear to Kṛṣṇa that he is non-different from Him. Because he is a *bhakta*, he is superior



to Kṛṣṇa. To regard him as the same as Kṛṣṇa would reduce his status.

[Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, Chapter 6:]

*kṛṣṇa-sāmye  
mādhurya āsvādana* | (103)

In equality with Kṛṣṇa, one cannot relish  
His sweetness.

*kṛṣṇer samatā haite  
baḍa bhakta-pada* | (100)

Greater than equality with Kṛṣṇa is the  
position of His devotee.

*bhakta abhimāna mūla śrī balarāma* |  
*sei bhāve anugata tāra amśa-gaṇa* || (88)

The root of identification as a devotee is  
Śrī Balarāma. His expansions follow that  
mood.

*nānā bhakta-bhāve karen  
sva-mādhurya pāna* | (110)

Through the moods of countless devotees,  
He relishes His own sweetness.

*āpanāke karen tā ra dāsa abhimāna* ||  
*sei abhimāne sukhe āpanā pāsare* |  
*kṛṣṇa-dāsa-abhimāne je ānanda-sindhu* |  
*koṭī brahma-sukha nahe tāra eka-bindu* ||  
*mui je caitanya-dāsa, āra nityānanda* |  
*dāsa-bhāva-sama nahe anyatra ānanda* ||  
(42–45)

Advaita Ācārya thinks of himself as Śrī  
Caitanya's servant. In the bliss of that  
conception, he forgets himself. The ocean

of ecstasy one relishes when identifying  
as Kṛṣṇa's servant is such that even the  
bliss of being one with *brahma* multiplied  
a million times cannot compare with even  
one drop of it. "I am a servant of Caitanya,  
as is Nityānanda." Nowhere is there bliss  
to compare with the mood of servitude.

*sei kṛṣṇa avatīrṇa caitanya-īśvara* |  
*ataeva āra saba—tāra kinkara* || (84)

That Kṛṣṇa incarnated as Lord Caitanya.  
Hence, all others are His servants.

All of these verses are also applicable  
in relation to Kṛṣṇa and *gurudeva*. If the  
*bhakta*, Kṛṣṇa, and *śrī gurudeva* are only non-  
different, the path of *bhakti* does not survive; it  
becomes the path of *nirbheda-brahma-jñāna*  
(knowledge of the undifferentiated Absolute).  
The Vaiṣṇavas of the four *sampradāyas*  
and Śrīman Mahāprabhu do not regard *śrī*  
*gurudeva* as a mortal, but although they regard  
him as Bhagavān, they have made it known  
that he is Bhagavān's devoted servant. The  
*karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and *bhaktas* all see *gurudeva*  
as Bhagavān; no one views him in a mundane  
light. However, though the pure devotees see  
*guru* and Bhagavān as non-different, they  
know *gurudeva* to be Kṛṣṇa's dear one.

The foremost of *śrī rūpānuga ācāryas*,  
Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, has written the following  
in *Bhakti-sandarbha* (213) for the benefit  
of devotees on the path of *vaidhī* who have  
not yet developed *ruci*: "*śuddha-bhaktāḥ śrī-  
guroḥ śrī śivasya ca bhagavatā-saha abheda-  
dṛṣṭim tat-priyatamatvenaiva manyante* —

the pure devotees regard the perception of seeing *śrī guru* and Śrī Śiva as non-different from Bhagavān to be an expression of how dear they are to Bhagavān.”

As proof, our *ācārya* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has provided clear evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.30.38) in regard to knowing *gurudeva* to be Bhagavān's dear one:

*vayaṁ tu sāksād bhagavan bhavasya  
priyasya sakhyuḥ kṣaṇa-saṅgamaṇa |  
suduścikitsasya bhavasya mṛtyor  
bhiṣaktamaṁ tvyādyah gatiṁ gataḥ sma ||*

[Commentary by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī:] *tava yaḥ  
priyaḥ sakhā tasya bhavasya | atyantam-  
acikitsasya bhavasya janmano mṛtyoś-ca  
bhiṣaktamaṁ sad-vaidyam tvāṁ gatiṁ prāptā  
ityeṣā | śrī śivo hyeṣāṁ vaktṛṇāṁ guruḥ | śrī  
pracetasah śrīmad-aṣṭa-bhujaṁ puruṣam ||*

The sons of Prācīnabarhi, the Pracetās, are disciples of Śrī Śiva. This verse is found among the prayers they offered once they had invoked Bhagavān's eight-armed form to appear by their *Rudra-gīta*. The Pracetās said, “O Lord, by the power of a short duration of association with Your dear friend Śiva, we have attained You, the primordial goal, who are the best physician to remedy the incurable affliction of birth and death in material existence.” In this verse, the Pracetās identify their *guru*, Śiva, to be Kṛṣṇa's beloved friend.

The foremost of *ācāryas*, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is most prominent among the *śrī rūpānuga ācāryas* on the path of *rāgānuga*. He states:

*na dharmam nādharmam  
śruti-gaṇa-niruktaṁ kila kuru  
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pracura-  
paricaryām iha tanu  
śacī-sūnuṁ nandiśvara-pati-  
sutatve guru-varaṁ  
mukunda-preṣṭhatve smara  
param ajasraṁ nanu manaḥ  
Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā (2)*

O mind, engage neither in the *dharma* prescribed by the Vedas nor in any of the *adharma* prohibited by them. Just practise rendering profuse service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa here in Vraja. Know the son of Śacī to be the son of the king of Vraja; and always remember *gurudeva* to be most dear to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has written:

*yadyapi āmāra guru caitanyera dāsa |  
tathāpi jāniye āmi tāhāra prakāśa ||  
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 1.44)*

Though my *guru* is the servant of Caitanya, still I know him to be His manifestation.

Here, though, *śrī gurudeva* is not Śrī Caitanya, he is Caitanyadeva's manifestation. The pure devotee who is *guru* to the world is the manifestation of Caitanyadeva. Though Nityānanda Prabhu is the root of the *viṣṇu-tattva*, He takes on ten forms to serve Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Narottama has written in *Prārthanā* (5.11):

*suvarṇera jhāri kari',  
rādhā-kunḍa jala puri',  
dūhākāra agrete rākhibo |  
guru-rūpā sakhi bāme,  
tribhaṅga bhaṅgima-ṭhāme,  
cāmarera bātāsa karibo ||*

In a pot made of gold, I will fill water from Rādhā-kunḍa and place it before Them both. As my *guru* in the form of a *sakhi* stands to my left, and He [Kṛṣṇa] stands in His exquisite threefold-bending posture, I will fan Them with a *cāmara*.”

*hena nitāi bine bhāi,  
rādhā-kṛṣṇa pāite nāi,  
dr̥ḍha kari' dharo nitāir pāya |  
se-sambandha nāhi jā'ra,  
ur̥thā janma gelo tā'ra,  
sei paśu baḍa durācāra ||*

Without Nitāi, O brother, you cannot attain Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Firmly catch hold of Nitāi's feet [as one's refuge]. One who does not have that relationship with Him has been born in vain. Such a person is worse than an animal.

Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura has written:

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

*Gurvāṣṭaka (7)*

Though all the scriptures state that *gurudeva* is Bhagavān Himself, and the same is understood from the Vaiṣṇavas,

*śrī gurudeva* is Bhagavān's dearly beloved servitor, Kṛṣṇa's *prakāśa-svarūpa*. I bow down to him.

Śrī Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī was the disciple of Śrī Gopāla-guru, who was the disciple of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, an associate of Śrī Gaura. After observing the behaviour of supremely pure, exalted Vaiṣṇavas, he wrote in his *Paddhati* text (delineating the methodology of worship), which is highly revered by pure devotees, as follows: “*śrī mahāprabhu-śeṣa-nirmālyena śrīvāsādi-pārśadān pūjayet, tathaiva tad-bhaktān śrī-gurvādīn bhaktitaḥ* – With the remnants of items offered to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, one worships Śrīvāsa and other associates, or *bhaktas*. In this way, with heartfelt devotion, one should utilize Śrī Gaura's remnants to worship *śrī gurudeva* and the devotees.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*:

*guruke sāmānya jīva nā jānibe kabhu |  
guru kṛṣṇa-śakti, kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha, nitya prabhu ||*

Never think of *guru* as an ordinary living entity. *Guru* is Kṛṣṇa's energy, Kṛṣṇa's dear-most servitor, and one's eternal master.

To think that *guru* is Kṛṣṇa is the belief system of the Māyāvādīs, not of pure Vaiṣṇavas. The *sādhaka* devotees should be particularly cautious in this regard. If even a trace of Māyāvāda enters one's *sādhana*, it will all be spoiled.

If one sees *śrī gurudeva* with a Māyāvāda mentality, one will feel the necessity to

demonstrate that *śrī gurudeva* is Īśvara, but if one gains divine vision by the special mercy of an exalted soul (by the mercy of *guru*), then one realizes the existence of *viśeṣa-dharma* (the function of variety) within *īśvara-vastu* (the entity of Godhead). Then, through verses like *vande gurun*, one develops taste in aspiring for the guidance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

*kṛṣṇa, guru-dvaya, bhaktāvatāra, prakāśa |*  
*śakti—ei chaya-rūpe kareṇa vilāsa ||*

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 1.32)*

As Kṛṣṇa, as two types of *guru*, as His devotee incarnation, as His manifestation, and as His energy – in these six forms, He enjoys pastimes.


From this *mahad-vākya*, or statement of an exalted personality, it is understood that the difference due to variation of *śakti* is eternal. It will not do to keep it concealed by the artistry of linguistic expression. It is with a mind to make *guru-tattva* fully explicit that Śrī Kāvīrāja Gosvāmī Prabhu has written, “*yadyapi āmāra guru caitanyera dāsa...*”

Hence, the foolish and the adept – both types of readers – can easily understand that, in reality, *śrī guru* is not Īśvara but Śrī Bhagavān’s servant. If one deals with him as if he is material, one will never, at any point in time, obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. One should always think of *gurudeva* as spiritual, as existing in a transcendental, eternal form.

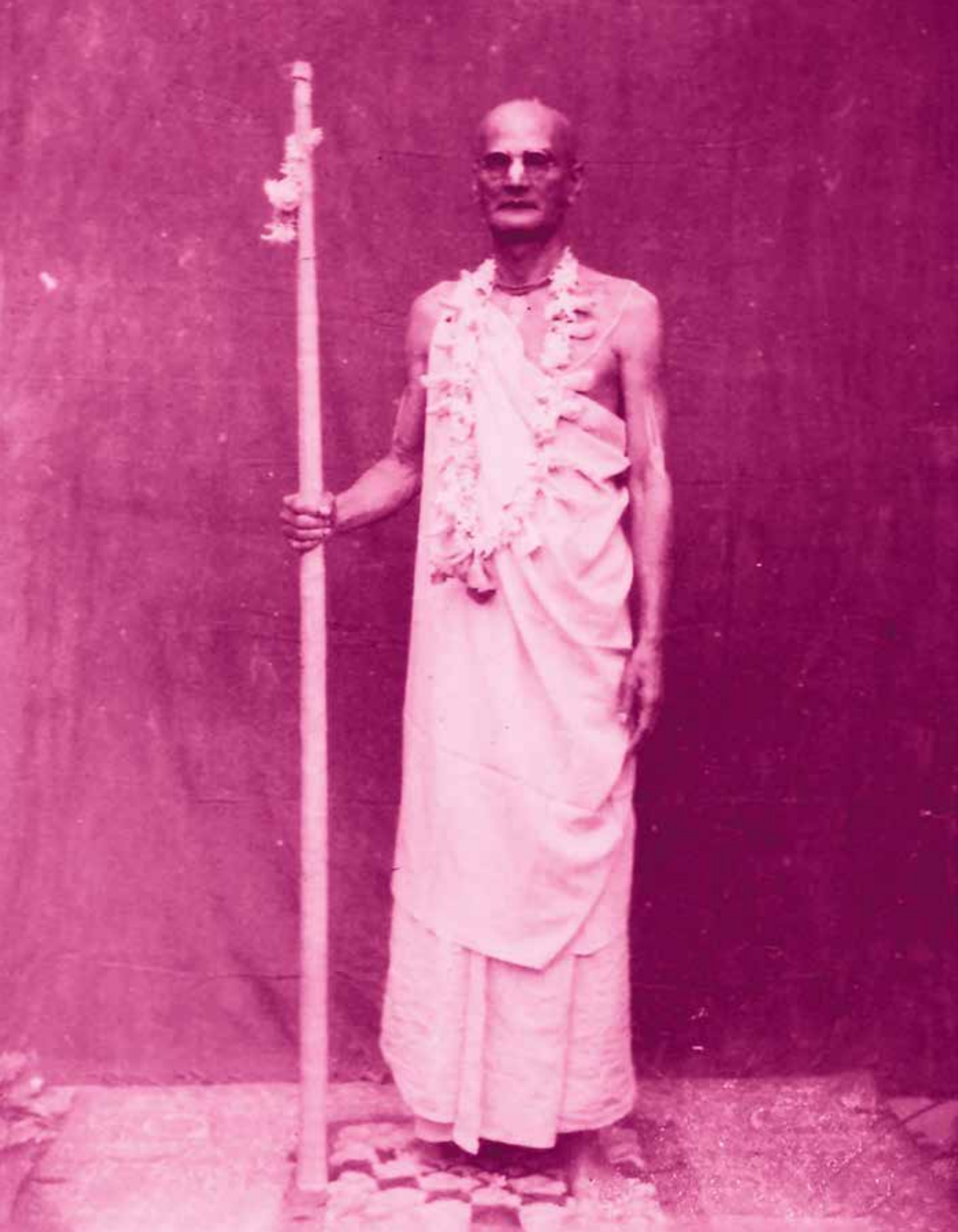
If one comes to know that one’s *guru* engages in misconduct, is greedy for wealth, hankers for material pleasures or liberation, has illicit relations with women, is not a

devotee of Kṛṣṇa, is duplicitous, violent, and is a non-Vaiṣṇava who makes a livelihood from granting *mantras* in a pursuit for profit, worship, and prestige, then one should know one will not attain *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* under his shelter. It is certainly imperative that one fully abandon that unworthy cheat and take shelter of a transcendental *guru* who is acquainted with the *tattva* of Kṛṣṇa and who is not mortal.

Ācārya Śrīmat Prabhu Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who is venerated throughout all fourteen planetary systems and is the foremost of Śrī Bhagavān’s associates, is supremely worshipful for all present and future exalted and esteemed Vaiṣṇavas who have and will have attachment to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya. No concocted sky-piercing screams that contradict what he has laid down in writing in regard to the *tattva* of *gurudeva*, in his treaty *Manah-śikṣā*, as per the footsteps of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhus, will ever produce any worthy result. *Śrī gurudeva* is Mukunda’s *preṣṭha* (cherished one) *parama-priya* (supremely dear one); hence, he is not Mukunda.

Every Vaiṣṇava acquainted with *tattva* can understand from what Śrīla Prabhu Narottama dāsa has taught in his prayers, specifically in regard to *guru-tattva* in songs like “*Nitāi-pada-kamala*”, that *gurudeva* exists eternally at the root of the *sandhinī*, *hlādinī*, and *samvit-śaktis*. If we dump on his shoulders the mere designation of *samvit-śakti*, then ours will become the belief system of the Māyāvādīs or *bāulā-sahajiyās*. 

Translated from *Śrīla Prabhupāder Prabandhāvalī*





# Śrī Guru-pūjā

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

A summary of a talk given on the Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā of  
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākūra Prabhupāda  
at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuñchurā  
3 February, 1961

## Dīkṣā-guru and śikṣā-guru

Another name for *śrī guru-pūjā* is *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*. Vyāsadeva delivers *śikṣā* (teachings), so he is *śikṣā-guru*. *Guru* is of two types: *śikṣā-guru* and *dīkṣā-guru*. From the perspective of the path of *arcana*, worship of *guru-pādapadma* [or one's *dīkṣā-guru*] is to be performed first.

Even though *śikṣā-guru* and *dīkṣā-guru* are one – “I know the *śikṣā-guru* to be Kṛṣṇa's own nature – *śikṣā-guruke ta jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa*,” at the same time, it is one's duty to worship one's *dīkṣā-guru* before any other.

If one deliberates on this minutely, one can see that the *guru* who gives *mantra* is primary. He who rescues one from *manana-dharma* (the tendency of the mind to accept and reject) or the very means by which he rescues, is *mantra*. Because *śabda-brahma* alone delivers us from *manana-dharma*, the *mantra-guru* [*dīkṣā-guru*] is certainly primary. It is one's duty to worship the *mantra-guru* first because he bestows the *mantra* to attain Kṛṣṇa. Veda-vyāsa has been accepted as *śikṣā-guru*. The *śikṣā-guru* is he who assimilates all teachings and then imparts them.

*Śikṣā-guru* gives instruction on how to serve the *dīkṣā-guru*. One who is averse to giving instruction on service to the *dīkṣā-guru* cannot be called a *śikṣā-guru*. He cannot even be a Vaiṣṇava, as he has not learned how to honour the *dīkṣā-guru*. Imagine how such so-called teachers would treat their *dīkṣā-guru*! Not qualifying to be called a real *guru* is a separate topic. A false (*asad*) *guru* is always to be given up.

## Vaiṣṇava-sevā is guru-sevā

Service to the Vaiṣṇavas is service to *guru*: “*chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra peyeche kebā* – who has ever gained deliverance by abandoning service to the Vaiṣṇavas?” Doing what the Vaiṣṇavas want, acting in accordance with their desires, is *vaiṣṇava-sevā*. Service means pleasing the object of one's service. If one has not done that, one has not performed service. Therefore, scripture mentions: “*guror-ājñā hy avicāraṇīyā* – *guru's* order is to be followed without deliberation.” The disciples' sole duty is to follow the *guru's* orders without deliberation. “*Mārabi rākhabi jo icchā tohārā, nitya dāsa prati tuyā adhikārā* – Slay me or protect me;

whatever you wish. You have full rights over your eternal servant.” A disciple’s sole desire should be the *guru*’s delight. To please him, a genuine disciple is ready to accept all manner of difficulties.

### A true disciple gives his life in the service of Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas

The servant that is determinedly dedicated to his spiritual welfare is compared to one who, in the corporeal realm, gives his life to serve his country. For the disciple to give his life in the service of Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas is the greatest vow. If the disciple is not prepared to do this, he must know he has not honoured his discipleship. The real symptom of a disciple is that he has offered everything at his *guru*’s lotus feet. “May everyone in the world, not just me, become the servant of my *guru*.” A genuine disciple should desire such an attitude. To serve *śrī guru*, a real disciple gathers the best flowers [souls] in the world and places them on his offering tray. It is this self-surrendering tendency that is *guru-pūjā*, or *sevā*. Such a tendency is not of this world, being born of Vaikuṇṭha ideals.

Excellent service to *gurudeva* is possible only for those who are *jīvan-mukta* (liberated in this life). *Guru-sevā* cannot possibly be rendered by those ensnared in the mundane flow of thought that is characteristic of materially conditioned living entities. When Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī was discussing the *Bhāgavata* in Naimiṣāraṇya, all the *ṛṣis* (great personalities who had realization of transcendence, *brahma*) gathered there to listen. Even those with realization of *brahma* pray for the mercy

of a *guru-sevaka*. It is not the servant of Hari who is topmost; it is the servant of *guru*. That is why sixty thousand *ṛṣis* surrendered to *guru-sevaka* Sūta Gosvāmī and became thirsty to hear *Bhāgavata* from him. Even *ṛṣis* revere and worship a *guru-sevaka*.

### Shining examples of guru-sevā

Those bathed in the current of impersonalist thought quote, in relation to *guru-tattva*, the following statement, which is written in *Ajñāna Bodhini*<sup>1</sup>: “*anavagata svāt* – *guru* is unacquainted [with *brahma*].” In this way, the impersonalists teach and learn how to disrespect *śrī guru*. They think of *guru* as *a-guru*, or *laghu* [meaning “light” instead of weighty, or significant.]. How can a person be worthy of the title *guru* if he is *anavagata*, “unacquainted”, if he is *atattva-darśī*, “not a seer of the Truth”?

The account of Śaṅkara’s display of yogic power in the case of Ānandagiri is worth noting.<sup>2</sup> Padmapāda disrespected *guru*.....

<sup>1</sup> The book by Śaṅkarācārya is *Jñāna Bodhinī*, or “knowledge awakener”. Since here, “knowledge” refers to knowledge of Bhagavān’s impersonal feature, and “awakening” refers to an attempt to become one with that feature, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja has referred to the book as *Ajñāna Bodhinī*, or “ignorance awakener.”

<sup>2</sup> There was a certain disciple of Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya who was illiterate. Śaṅkarācārya used to give class on the bank of the Ganges, on the Bhāgīrathī River in Badarikāśrama. There was such a strong current in that part of the river that even an elephant could not cross it. Śaṅkarācārya used to give class daily, and his disciples in attendance were very learned and eager to hear his teachings. He especially had four



“ It is not the servant of Hari  
 who is topmost;  
 it is the servant of *guru*.  
 That is why  
 sixty thousand *ṛṣis*  
 surrendered to *guru-sevaka*  
 Sūta Gosvāmī  
 and became thirsty to hear  
 Bhāgavata from him.  
 Even *ṛṣis* revere and  
 worship a *guru-sevaka*. ”

very scholarly, renounced and famous disciples [of which Padmapāda was one].

That illiterate disciple [Ānandagiri] used to engage in many menial services, like washing his *guru's* clothes and cooking his meals. He was once washing clothes on the opposite side of the Ganges from Śaṅkarācārya's class. Class-time came, and all disciples were present except him. Śaṅkarācārya was waiting to give class. He had not started speaking, and all the scholarly disciples asked him, “Gurudeva, why are you waiting?” He replied, “I am waiting for that disciple.” They said, “He is not literate. He will not understand what you say anyway. Please begin class. We do not want to waste our time.” Still, Śaṅkarācārya continued to wait.

*sevaka* Ānandagiri, thus acting improperly. By Śaṅkara's wish, Ānandagiri praised his *guru* (Śaṅkarācārya), astounding everyone. Padmapāda prayed for forgiveness from that *guru-sevaka*. Service to *guru* is the cause of all auspiciousness. We must indeed remember this. Padmapāda himself exhibited the ideal of service to *guru* when he rescued his *gurudeva* from the clutches of the Kāpālikas.

Rāmānujācārya's disciple Kureśa perceived King Kṛmikaṇṭha's enviousness of his *gurudeva's* preaching and that he was planning to kill Rāmānujācārya [because King Kṛmikaṇṭha had summoned Rāmānujācārya to a debate]. [Risking his life,] Kureśa went to the debate in his *guru's* place and defeated that king. Only disciples with such a disposition are successful in their service to *guru*.

*Jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda also experienced a similar incident. Since Prabhupāda propagated Śrī Rāmānuja's system of *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa*, he is referred

Soon that illiterate disciple came, running very fast, and bowed down to the lotus feet of Śaṅkarācārya. At once, he began to pray to Śaṅkarācārya with very elevated philosophical *stava* and *stuti*. His prayers were so scholarly, in fact, that the four highly qualified disciples could not understand what he was saying.

They now realized the glories of their *gurudeva*. By the mercy of the *guru*, an illiterate person can become a very high-class, learned devotee, knowing all *siddhānta* (established philosophical conclusions).

From a class given by  
 Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,  
 8 February, 2005, Hawaii.

to as a second *svarūpa* of Rāmānuja. For the service of *guru*, it is necessary to give everything, including oneself. Once in Kuliya, during Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, there was a dreadful attack on Śrīla Prabhupāda and the pilgrimage party, and the pastime of Rāmānuja and Kureśa again took place. Śrīla Prabhupāda embodied Rāmānuja at that time, and the mood of Kureśa manifested in one wretched and lowly *akiñcana*<sup>3</sup>. The ideal of service to *guru* is visible in the pastimes of all celebrated *ācāryas*.

### Becoming the servant of guru does not mean serving one's own aims

“Service to *guru* will provide me conveniences. I will find an excuse for my laziness by exerting dominion over other servants.” This is not the mentality of a *sevaka*. The confidentialities of *bhajana* are only to be discussed with Bhagavān's [or *gurudeva*'s] dear ones. It was from Sūta Gosvāmī, therefore, that Śaunaka and other *ṛṣis* inquired about topics of supreme auspiciousness. Real knowledge is not attained even after studying Veda, Vedānta, and the Upaniṣads. Hence it is said, “*āviriñcād-amaṅgalam* – even up to the realm of Brahmā, inauspiciousness prevails.” The ideas expressed in Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's *kaivalyaṁ narakāyate* verse evidence the futile nature of [impersonal] knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> *Akiñcana* means “without material wealth” or “one whose sole possession (desire) is Kṛṣṇa's happiness”. This statement reflects the author's humility, as it was he in whom the mood of Kureśa manifested.

The knowledge of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is real knowledge, and therein lies the culmination of knowledge. And it is solely on the strength of *guru*'s mercy that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is realized.

“*Harau ruṣṭe gurus-trātā, gurau ruṣṭe na kaścana, tasmāt sarva-prayatnena gurum eva prasādayet* – If Hari is displeased, *guru* will save you. If *guru* is displeased no one will save you. Therefore, let all of your efforts be to please *guru*.” [The true disciple thinks:] “Let the Earth sink to Rasātala, my resolute vow is to dedicate myself to bring satisfaction to Gurudeva.”

Ananta Vāsudeva, Sundarānanda, and others are glaring examples of the disciple's dire predicament when he acts in opposition to *gurudeva*. In the end, Ananta Vāsudeva had to change his name to Purīdāsa.

“The servants of *guru* are always objects of my greatest respect – *gurur sevaka haya mānya āpanāra*.” *Sevakas* who have taken shelter of a bona fide *guru* surely honour other *sevakas*.

### The nature of nirguṇa-vastu, the transcendent reality

Today is the day of *śrī guru-pūjā*. *Śrī gurudeva* is *nirguṇa-vastu*, *brahma-vastu*, an entity transcendental to the modes of material nature. Only the servant of *nirguṇa-guru* is worthy of the title of *brahmacārī*. The supremely benevolent *nirguṇa-guru*'s glory is such that though he descends within the modes of material nature, his supramundane (*aprākṛta*) transcendental nature remains always and everywhere. In service to Bhagavān's devotees,

*prakṛti* (nature) and all the basic elements assume a favourable disposition. If the genuine disciple can somehow establish a connection with that transcendental *guru-pādapadma*, then the modes of the material energy can attack him no longer.

*Nirguṇa-vastu* Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in this earthly realm. A transcendental, or *nirguṇa*, entity is neither born nor destroyed. The functions of birth and death exist only within material nature. If one utters the word *janma* (birth), a stream of mundane thoughts floods the canvas of the mind. Uttering the word *avirbhāva* (appearance) is somewhat of an improvement, but that too creates doubts in the heart. There is something contemptible, inferior, in birth and death. *Nirguṇa-tattva*, or truth that is not of this world, appears in this realm specifically to deliver the conditioned living entities from the current of Earth-bound conceptions. It is for this reason that Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared in Puruṣottama-kṣetra, the *nirguṇa-kṣetra* (the realm beyond the modes of material nature). A transcendental entity only wanders within the realm of transcendence.

Worldly rules or ideals do not aid in the attainment of transcendental reality, *aprākṛta-vastu*. That which is the ultimate impropriety and the opposition of morals in the eyes of the world, is, in the worship of Bhagavān, considered to be of particular merit. The best example is the *gopis'* exclusive mood of *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The seekers of ultimate benefit, the *pāramāthika-gaṇa*,

in full harmonious service to Bhagavān and His devotees relinquish mundane precepts in every instance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda endlessly displayed an attitude of non-cooperation with demoniac worldly society. He could never tolerate transgression of Vaiṣṇava *maryādā*, or covenant. Hence, he did not hesitate to refute face-to-face worldly seminal *gurus* in their behaviour with liberated personalities. He never compromised with untruth.

It is thus essential for us to wait to encounter that *guru-pādapadma* who is dedicated to Truth, who is fearless and powerful. It is inappropriate to accept as one's *guru* a person who himself is under the sway of illusion and lowly. It is only by the touch of a transcendental entity (*nirguṇa-vastu*) that the *jīva's* contemptibility is demolished. Destroyed are all the vices of that living entity who is sheltered at the lotus feet of a *mahāpuruṣa*. The appearance and appearance places of Bhagavān and His devotees are beyond the modes of material nature (*nirguṇa*) and transcendental (*aprākṛta*). We are to align ourselves wholly and without deliberation with the spirit of the *mahājanas*, great personalities who have gone before us, and follow their teachings and instructions. Only then will auspiciousness await us. Else, "we will have to remain in our current state of darkness – *je timire, se timire-i*." ❀

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*  
Year-13, Issue-2





# First, Accept Shelter at Guru's Lotus Feet

## Ādau Guru-padāśraya

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

### The example of the archetypal chaste wife

We can see in a worldly context [in traditional Indian culture], that prior to marriage, a young woman does not occupy herself with the daily affairs of her future husband's household. The first thing she and her guardians focus on with great effort and endeavour is developing her and her future husband's relationship. First a relationship is established with her husband, and then she moves into her husband's home. She is then observed venturing to live in a manner that serves the needs of her good husband and his kin. If, before developing a relationship with her husband, a young woman goes to great effort, without purpose, to preoccupy herself with the duties of her husband's household, those undertakings prove not to be the cause of auspiciousness; rather, they invoke the sins and indiscretions of sensual impulses [by behaving like a married woman without being married].

Therefore [on the spiritual path], it is first of all necessary to establish our relationship with Bhagavān. Bhagavān is our eternal husband, and it is *śrī gurudeva* who makes our relationship with that husband. *Śrī gurudeva* is therefore referred to as *sambandha-*

*jñāna-dātā*, or he who grants transcendental knowledge of relationship. *Sambandha-jñāna* alone is called initiation (*dīkṣā*) or divine knowledge (*divya-jñāna*).

Any household activity the young woman enacts prior to developing a relationship with her husband is likened to playing with dolls. It is imitation, devoid of actual purpose and is but a fleeting mental amusement. She does not actually serve her husband by doing so. And if a woman is married but is averse to forming a relationship with her good husband, the performance of her household activities is just to satisfy her own senses. In the case of the virtuous *gr̥ha-lakṣmī*<sup>1</sup> (household goddess of fortune), however, who has a relationship with her husband, because her every household task is performed with a desire to please him, it fosters auspiciousness and creates peace.

### Establishing a relationship is pivotal

In his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.34, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has clearly shown the profound difference between the performance of service by devotees

<sup>1</sup> This term refers to a chaste woman in her in-law's house.

of Bhagavān (*bhagavad-bhaktas*) and the apparently identical conduct of sense enjoying non-devotees (*viṣayī-abhaktas*). The sense enjoyers do everything, their bathing, dining, etc., starting with passing urine and stool in the morning, for the pleasure of their own senses. Meanwhile, the devotees of Bhagavān engage in those very same activities for the purpose of serving Bhagavān, which only culminate as limbs of *bhakti*. Externally, there is no difference between the behaviour of those devotees who are endowed with *sambandha-jñāna* and those of the sensualist workers. The sole difference lies in their inner conviction and purpose. A devotee with *sambandha-jñāna* performs all activities for the pleasure of Bhagavān or for the sake of service, while the *viṣayī* performs those same activities to attain his own pleasures and comforts in this world and the next. In this context, only *sambandha-jñāna* is favourable for the service of Bhagavān. Any condition devoid of *sambandha* creates an unfavourable mood.

Therefore, we must first of all become equipped with *sambandha-jñāna*. *Abhidheya*, or discernment of duty and its execution, follows *sambandha*. *Sambandha* and *abhidheya* are interconnected like the limbs of the body. If one is not functioning properly, it affects the movement of the body as a whole. Without relationship, the practice (*abhidheya*) cannot be discerned, and without executing the practice, the relationship is not solidified. The goal, *prayojana*, is only attained after the practice is perfected.

A virtuous wife never loves her husband so that others will praise her, nor does she desire jewellery, garments, and ornaments in exchange for her love. She serves her husband specifically for his happiness. Her good husband's satisfaction is her only objective (*prayojana*); his happiness is her happiness. Likewise, fully relinquishing one's own interests and accomplishing Bhagavān's pleasure is the *mūla-mantra*, or core refrain, of the devotee's life. Bhagavān's pleasure is the core goal of a devotee who has a relationship with Him.

### Accepting a genuine guru

Saints and scriptures state: “*ādau guru-padāśrayaḥ* – first, take shelter of the lotus feet of *guru*” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.74). For one who wishes to attain *bhakti*, the first and foremost duty is to take shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide (*sad*) *guru*. In order to understand one's ultimate welfare, a person who is inquisitive about the truth will take shelter of the feet of a *pāramāthika sad-guru* (genuine spiritual master) who is well-versed in the core imports of *śāstra* (*śabda-brahma*) and who has realization of Parabrahma [Bhagavān].

If, at the time of accepting a *pāramāthika-guru*, one considers conventional concerns, one cannot grasp the actual Truth [Absolute Reality]. *Bhakti-sandarbha* advises, “One should relinquish a conventional, worldly, and family *guru* who is unqualified and take shelter of a *pāramāthika-guru*.” *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* states, “If, without knowing the mandate

of scripture, a person accepts an un-bona fide *guru* as his *guru*, as per familial and social conventions, then as soon as he becomes aware that he will attain the hellish planets with the *mantra* this kind of *guru* has given him, he should again, in accordance with scripture, accept *mantra* from a Vaiṣṇava *guru*.”

Those whose dedication to the pursuit of Truth is particularly deficient often think that if one gives up a bogus *guru* and accepts a bona fide *guru*, one will necessarily commit the offence of giving up one's *guru*. However, all sacred Smṛti scriptures give the mandate to relinquish such a bogus *guru*. The ideal conduct of previous *ācāryas* also supports this conclusion of all the scriptures.

Many still say, “[The quality of the milk is not affected] regardless of what the milk is like, even if it is from a disreputable milkman, or [the quality of the *mantra* is not affected] regardless of what the *guru* is like, even if he is bogus. And if the disciple has *bhakti*, then by dint of that virtue, even a bogus *guru* will appear bona fide to the disciple.” The marketplace is rife with so many concocted *sahajiyā* riddles like this that are conjured up to justify all such blather. The Śruti and Smṛti scriptures, however, do not support all these self-absorbed mental speculations.

Individuals seeking spiritual welfare are impelled by the ideal example set by *śrī gurudeva* or the *ācārya* and gradually enter the kingdom of *bhājana*. A real *ācārya* is one who conducts himself according to scripture and thereby establishes his disciples in proper

conduct. One who is deviant and bears malice towards Vaiṣṇavas can never be worthy of the title *ācārya*.

The notion that by the supreme strength of the disciple's *bhakti*, even the *guru*'s faults transform into virtues is a thoroughly erroneous conclusion, an *apasiddhānta*. One who has flaws is *laghu* [light, as opposed to *guru*, meaning “heavy”] and is not worthy of the title *guru*. A bona fide *guru* cannot have any fault.

One who is *śāsita*, disciplined, is *śiṣya*, a disciple, and one who administers discipline is *guru*. It is thus the duty of a person who seeks his spiritual benefit to one-pointedly take shelter of the lotus feet of a genuine *pāramārthika-guru* who is acquainted with the truth of Kṛṣṇa, regardless of his material caste, family, and scholarship or worldly dealings.

Some say: “In stating that a non-Vaiṣṇava can never become *guru*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* has proven to be sectarian.” The validity of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*'s statement becomes evident, however, by deliberating upon it minutely.

No one but the lineages of pure devotees accept the eternality of *bhakti*, the *bhaktas*, and Bhagavān. The *karmī*, *jñānī*, and *yogī* lineages have never accepted the eternality of *bhakti*. Though they deem *bhakti* to be the means (*upāya*) to fulfilling their ambitions, none accept it as the attainment (*upeya*). They state that *bhakti* is necessary until *mukti* is attained.

If one is to accept *bhakti*, one must accept the individual existence and eternality of

*bhakti*, the *bhakta*, and Bhagavān. However, the fact that “real *bhakti* begins after liberation” can be found in the *bhakti* scriptures.

Śrī Bhāgavata (1.7.10) states, “Even sages who are *ātmārāma*, content in the experience of their soul, engage in unconditional devotional service to Śrī Hari.” Liberated personalities adopt bodies of their own accord for all eternity and perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān. They accept the eternality of Bhagavān, as well as that of *śrī gurudeva* and the Vaiṣṇavas, both of whom are non-different from Bhagavān, and they accept the eternality of Bhagavān’s abode, name, form, qualities, pastimes, etc., even after they are liberated.


If one takes shelter of an eternal reality, one attains just that – an eternal reality. No one can attain an eternal reality by taking shelter of a temporary reality. The Vaiṣṇavas, therefore, take shelter of the eternal truth.

Śrī *gurudeva* is an eternal reality. He exists for time eternal as the personification of all that is dear to Bhagavān (*bhāgavata-preṣṭha*). The disciple renders service to Kṛṣṇa for eternal time under that *guru*’s guidance. It is thus the sole duty of everyone to take shelter at the feet of such an eternal reality, or a *vaiṣṇava-guru*.

When we say “Vaiṣṇava”, no one should assume that the external appearance is what makes one a Vaiṣṇava. One who is adept in the steadfast practice of *amānī-mānada* – giving respect to all without expecting respect from others – and truly engaged in performing *hari-kīrtana* is a non-duplicitous pure devotee. He alone is an actual Vaiṣṇava.

As practitioners of *bhakti*, we will first of all convey to Bhagavān, in a mood of utter anguish, our piteous pleas for attaining shelter at the feet of a genuine spiritual master (*sad-guru*). Seeing our overpowering anguish, Bhagavān will send a *mahānta-guru* to set us on the right path. We would never be able to gain *darśana* of a transcendental *sad-guru* by following our own minuscule intelligence.

If we consider as *guru* that person who caters to our mind and to what is popularly called *dharma-karma*, or religious activity, and who supplies fuel to our performance of such activities, then our lives will go in vain, having been driven down the wrong path. If instead of service to Bhagavān, one seeks a clandestine sort of sense gratification, then the moment one sees some Vaiṣṇava-hating *prākṛta-sahajiyā*’s pretentious gestures of emotion, mundane erudition, and other external tactics by which to deceive people, one will think him to be a supreme *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇava. Accepting such a pretentious non-Vaiṣṇava as *guru*, one will thus become forever cheated of the path of pure devotion.

If one genuinely wants to serve Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas, Śrī Bhagavān will appear before him as the *mahānta-guru*. Exclusive *niṣṭhā* in Kṛṣṇa is the defining characteristic (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) of the *mahānta-guru*. The cherished aspirations of the *bhakti-sādhaka* find perfection only in the shelter of such a bona fide *guru*’s lotus feet. 

Translated from Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā

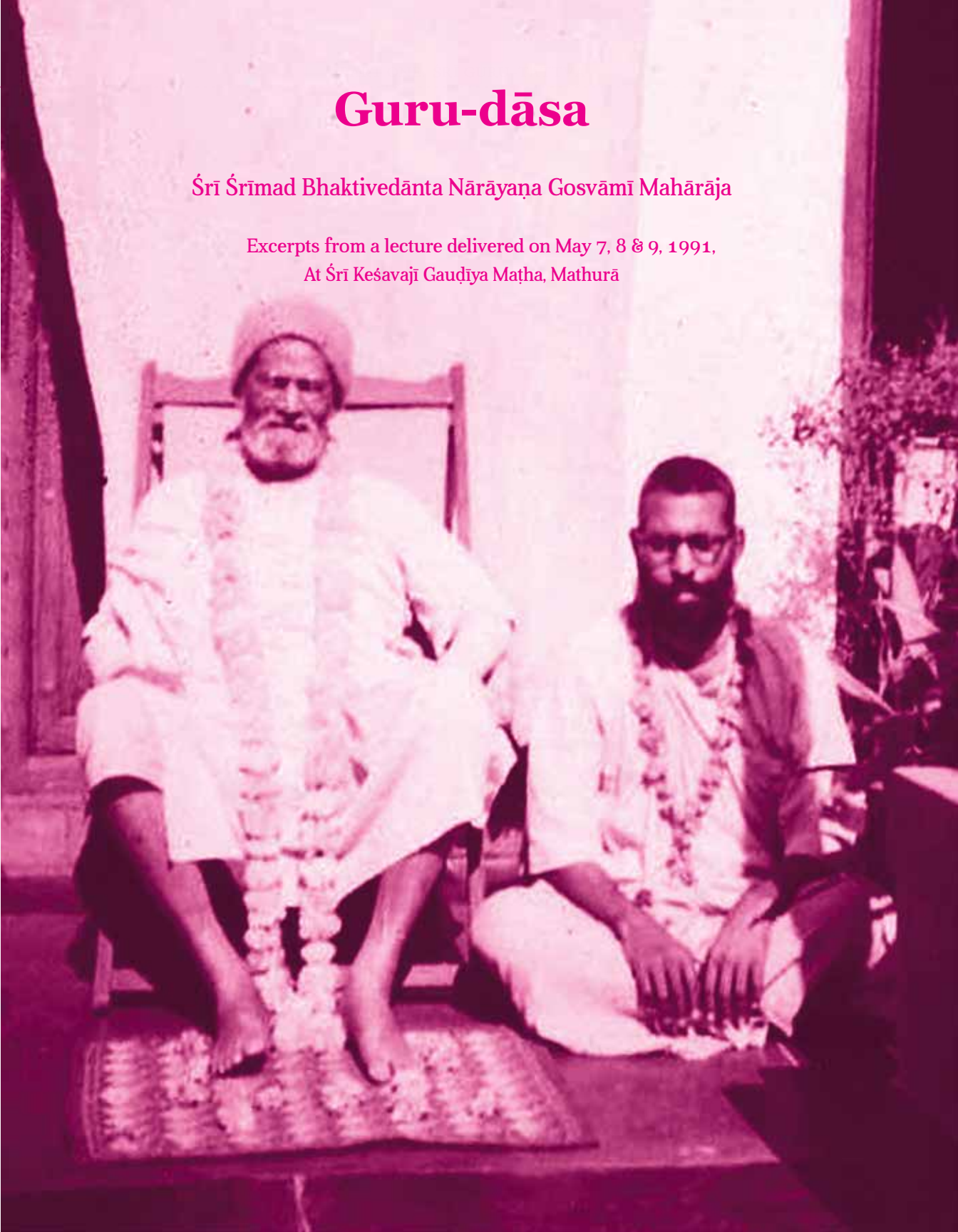
Year-16, Issue-3



# Guru-dāsa

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Excerpts from a lecture delivered on May 7, 8 & 9, 1991,  
At Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā



Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, Uddhavajī, and Gopakumāra were having a discussion, and Nāradaajī became overwhelmed with bliss as he offered his respects to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, remembering each pastime and uttering its name. And thus he mentioned *Veṇu-gīta* [wherein the *gopīs* are glorifying Girirāja-Govardhana with the verse *hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varya* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.21.18)]. For some days now we have been discussing this, especially the insights of our Gosvāmīs, of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, that arose in their hearts by the mercy Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu alone is the root of these conceptions. If He had not come and if He had not infused their hearts with inspiration, then such understandings would not have been revealed in the world. This is why Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, before commencing any activity of *bhakti*, be it studying *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, discussing *nitya-līlā*, or reading any other *grantha*, are sure to propitiate Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and accept the shelter of His feet. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī or Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī or any of the Vaiṣṇavas in their guidance are always sure to glorify Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in one way or another and express their gratitude before proceeding. Those who do not embrace a sense of indebtedness to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are simply not Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

## Hari-dāsa-varya – the best of the servants of Hari

Other people may very well regard Girirājajī to be Bhagavān and view worship of him as the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or others. However, in our *sampradāya*, he is seen only as *hari-dāsa-varya*, because there can be nothing more authoritative than the words of the *gopīs*, especially when among the *gopīs*, it is from Śrīmatī Rādhājī

Herself, from Her own lips, that we find this statement, "... *śrī rādhikā-vaktra-candrāt* – [O Girirāja, your sweet title, *hari-dāsa-varya*] issued forth from the moon-like face of Śrīmatī Rādhikā."<sup>1</sup>

Should Rādhikā say one thing and Kṛṣṇa another, we will accept what Rādhikā says. Kṛṣṇa is sometimes unreliable. Sometimes He will just tell people to their face what they

want to hear. If there are two *gopīs*, He will meet one and tell her she is His most beloved. Then, He will see the other *gopī* and tell her that it is she who is truly His favourite. What He says to Rukmiṇī, He will say to Satyabhāmā. He will tell everyone what they want to hear. This is why Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says that we do not trust the words of people who live in Mathurā.<sup>2</sup> We do not trust that part of Kṛṣṇa who lives in Mathurā. But we have full conviction in Śrīmatī Rādhikājī, in what She

“Girirāja accepts even our *kapaṭatā*, our deceitfulness. If we submit our everything at his feet, he will surely bestow *kṛṣṇa-prema* upon us.”

<sup>1</sup> Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *Śrī Govardhana-vāsa-prārthanā-daśakam* (8)

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.65, *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary.

has said, what has issued forth from Her lips, that Girirāja is *hari-dāsa-varya*. This is why we regard Girirāja to be the greatest servant of Hari.

Once, [when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was residing in Purī] a Vaiṣṇava from here [Vraja] gave Mahāprabhu a small necklace of *guñja* berries and also a *śilā* of Girirājaji. Mahāprabhu was very delighted to receive that *śilā*, so much so that He could not decide whether to keep it on His head or to rest it on His eyelids, whether to keep inside it His heart or outside. Nor could He decide what to do with it. “Should I bathe it with ocean water or should I ask for some Gaṅgā water from Śrī Paramānanda Purī’s well and bathe it with that or with My tears?” He could barely determine where to keep it, how to worship it.

He did serve it, seeing Girirāja to be Kṛṣṇa and the *guñjā* necklace to be Rādhā. He would pick eight *tulasī-mañjarīs*, each with a beautiful soft bud in the centre of two soft leaves, and offer some water. He served with *bhāva*. Just by seeing Girirāja, He would be reminded of all that transpired at Govardhanagiri, He would remember the *gopīs*, He would remember everything. For Him, *bhāva-sevā* was natural. For us, presently, *bhāva-sevā* is very, very difficult.

After some days, He gave the *śilā* to Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, for He saw, “Oh, he is a worthy boy.” And He told him exactly how to worship it. “You are a *niṣkiñcana* Vaiṣṇava. You do not have the money to make a golden altar, to build a temple, to provide *rāja-bhoga* offerings and *chāpāṇna-bhoga*,

[56 preparations] ten or however many times daily. All this is not possible for you. You just offer these eight *tulasī-mañjarīs* and water; render *bhāva-sevā*.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu served Girirāja in His own mood, but how did Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī serve? He served Girirāja as one who gives *prema* for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. He has written somewhere, or perhaps Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written, that in Vṛndāvana there are two personalities who can give *prema* for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa: Girirāja-Govardhanaji and Yamunaji. Both are mentioned as those who grant such *prema*. This was how he served Girirāja, and it is this form that is beneficial for us.

If someone sees Kṛṣṇa Himself as Girirāja, then it is somewhat problematic. Kṛṣṇa cannot give Himself fully to anyone, because He does not belong to Himself. Everything that was His – His body and belongings – He gave to Śrīmatiji. He has nothing left to give. That is why, if these personalities [such as Girirāja and Yamunā] are inclined to give something, they have the power to give Him in His entirety. Kṛṣṇa cannot give Himself fully.

It is for this reason that this mood of service is mentioned in our *sampradāya*. Hence, we too shall serve Girirāja in this manner as he who grants *prema* for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. By serving him, one can attain that *prema*. He is the giver. “*Nirupadhi-karuṇena śrī-śacīnandanena tvayi kapaṭi-śaṭho 'pi tvat-priyeṇārpito 'smi* – The causelessly merciful Śrī Śacīnandana, who is most dear to you, has offered me to you. I am *kapaṭa* (deceitful), but

whatever I am, I am yours, so, please accept me.” Girirāja accepts even our *kapaṭatā*, our deceitfulness. If we submit our everything at his feet, he will surely bestow *kṛṣṇa-prema* upon us.

And suppose we do think that Kṛṣṇa is Girirājaji. Does Kṛṣṇa mean more to us, or does Śrīmatījī? Who is the object of our worship? “*Mad-īśā-nāthatve vraja-vipina-candram vraja-vaneśvarīm tām-nāthatve* – the moon of Vraja’s forest (Kṛṣṇa) is the Lord of the life of my mistress, who is the Goddess of Vraja’s forest.” Rādhājī is our *ārādhya*, our worshipful deity. We aim to please Her, do we not? By pleasing Her, everyone will be pleased. This is why the topic of *hari-dāsa-varya* is mentioned. That is our objective.

But to become *hari-dāsa-varya*, there are some prerequisites. We must look to the light, to that which is not darkness: “*Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya* – don’t go to the darkness.” Sleep, laziness, madness, what are these? They are darkness. “*Jyotir gamaya* – go towards the light.” *Hari-kathā* is the light.

Before becoming the servant of Hari, there are some other endeavours we must make. First we become liberated: “*Āge haya mukti tabe sarva-bandha-nāśa, tabe se haite pāre śrī-kṛṣṇera dāsa* – first liberation occurs and all bondage is destroyed, then one can become the servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa” [Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, *Madhya-kaṇḍha*, 17.106]. And even upon becoming Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s servant (*dāsa*), still something remains to be done. Although everything is implied here – becoming Kṛṣṇa’s *dāsa*, Rādhā’s *dāsa*, etc., – it

is a general statement. Just saying “Kṛṣṇa’s servant” does leave something wanting.

## Māyā-dāsa – servant of the illusory energy

To properly understand this matter, we will have to come down the line somewhat; we will have to descend. To where? First is *māyā-dāsa* (servant of the material energy). All the people of the world are *māyā-dāsa*. How is it that they are *māyā-dāsa*?

“*Kṛṣṇa bhuli sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha, ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha* – having forgotten Kṛṣṇa, the living entity has been averse to Him since time immemorial, and so *māyā* inflicts upon him the sufferings of material existence” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 20.117).

“*Piśāci pāile yena mati-cchana haya, māyā grasta jīvera haya sei bhāva udaya* – When the witch catches him, his awareness is covered. The state of conditioned existence then arises for the soul thus gripped by illusion.”

“*Kabhu rājā kabhu prajā kabhu vipra śūdra, kabhu duḥkhī kabhu sukhī kabhu kīṭa kṣudra* – Sometimes he is a king, sometimes a citizen, sometimes a priest, and other times a labourer. Sometimes he is happy, sometimes sad, and sometimes he is a small bug” (Śrī Prema-vivarta 6.3, 5).

“*Brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva, guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija* – wandering throughout the universe, a fortunate soul, by the grace of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa obtains the seed of the vine of devotion.”



“*Māli haiyā kare sei bīja āropana, śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana* – becoming a gardener, he plants that seed and irrigates it with the water of hearing and chanting” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 19.151, 152).

Nowhere else is there such a beautiful description of this process, be it in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Vedas or the Upaniṣads. If you want to read something about *bhakti*, then you must read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. To understand *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhās* are absolutely necessary. And to understand the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhās*, we also need to attain the mercy of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s *Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, otherwise, we will not be able to understand these books at all. In addition, to explain all of these books, we have the writings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and others. Ours is a huge and weighty fortune, but at least we have come in contact with this *dhārā*, or current [line of thought]. If not today, then maybe tomorrow, we will be able to become immersed in it. Just how immensely fortunate are we!

So, first of all, we are *māyā-dāsa*. What does *māyā-dāsa* mean? Servitude to *māyā* entails that our consciousness is engrossed in this body and all that pertains to it – wealth, followers, children, family – all the objects of our attachment, all that is there in this *saṁsāra*. As long as we are entrapped here, all of this will surely remain with us in one form or another.

When the soul receives the mercy of *sādhū* and *guru*, or Kṛṣṇa and *guru* – *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija* – he begins to rise somewhat. When he rose above being a servant of *māyā*, he developed some *sukṛti* (spiritual merit). Then he had some association with *sādhū*s, obtained the mercy of *guru*, and now he has become *guru-dāsa*. The first stage is *guru-dāsa*. What can he attain beyond the material energy if he is a servant of *māyā*? Whatever one may try to do, if it is without *guru*, one will not be successful. Hence, one has to become *guru-dāsa*.

### Types of *guru-dāsa*

There is not just one type of *guru-dāsa*. First is *śiṣya-bruva*, one who is a disciple only in name, just as there are *brāhmaṇa-bruvas*, so-called *brāhmaṇas*. After that, there is the *tāmasika-dāsa*, or a disciple in the mode of ignorance. Then comes the *rājasika-dāsa*, a disciple in the mode of passion, after which comes the *sāttvika-dāsa*, a disciple in the mode of goodness. These disciples are the *kaniṣṭhas* and *madhyamas*. Beyond them is the *nirguṇa-dāsa*, a disciple who is beyond the modes. This kind of disciple is referred to as *uttama*. And after this, there is something else. The living entity will then become *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*, a servant of Kṛṣṇa.

To understand this topic, first understand what *śiṣya-bruva* is. He is not a servant of *guru*, but he says he is. *Guru-bruva* (being a *guru* in name only) is also mentioned. He does not have any real qualities of a *guru*, but he pretends to, and to gain physical and worldly pleasures, he makes disciples. That is a *guru-*

*bruva*. Someone who has no connection with the spiritual realm is called a *guru-bruva*.

A *śiṣya-bruva* is one who does not have any real relationship with *guru*, but because he wants to kill someone or because he has a rivalry with someone and is envious of someone, he duplicitously takes shelter of *guru*, bringing with him his *tāmasika* motives. Instead of serving *guru*, he strives to achieve his own purposes, like a counterfeiter exchanging fake notes.

I was reading in one of Prabhupāda's articles how previously, a *guru* [before giving initiation] would wait at least one year while examining the disciple, and the disciple would also wait and observe the *guru*. After this period, once they were both satisfied, having developed a mutual relationship of a spiritual nature, the *guru* would offer the disciple *dīkṣā* and the disciple would accept. That is why the problems that happen nowadays did not happen back then. Currently, the disciple quickly makes a decision, and so does the *guru*. This is not the correct procedure. It is a lifetime after lifetime relationship, not just a one or two lifetimes relationship. And it is on the basis of this relationship that *kṛṣṇa-prema* or the position of *kṛṣṇa-dāsa* or any other spiritual thing is attained. Those who have a proper foundation will achieve those results.

### Ekalavya, the so-called disciple

Droṇācārya was teaching Arjuna, Bhīma, Nakula, Sahadeva, Dharmarāja, Duryodhana and his brothers. A hundred Kaurava brothers and five Pāṇḍavas – Droṇa had a hundred and five

disciples. He taught all equally, but still he had more affection for Arjuna.

Ekalavya, a hunter's son, could not tolerate Arjuna's prestige. He was the atheistic type, the jealous type.

It was recommended that a *guru* should make sure that his disciples were from good families and not accept disciples from low-class families. If a disciple was not of reputable character, if there was no certainty of his family heritage, what his conduct and beliefs were, or who his parents were, then he should not be given *dīkṣā*. A *guru* must be discerning. I saw a similar thing in my time as a policeman employed by the government. They had a process of review before appointing a person. The CID [investigating agency] would come and look at your diary and see what your family was like, what your mother and father were like. They would investigate everything.

So this Ekalavya came to Droṇācārya and said, "Mahārāja, Prabhu, Gurudeva, from this day forth I choose you as my teacher. Please teach me this *dhanuṣa-vidyā* (knowledge of archery)."

"Why do you want to learn archery?" Droṇa asked. Ekalavya fell silent. Droṇa asked him several times, but he did not respond. All Ekalavya could think of was defeating Arjuna. He was friends with Duryodhana, just like Karna was. His heart was wicked. *Guru* can see the subtle body. Droṇa could tell his intentions were not honourable. "He wants to take this knowledge from me, but with it he is going to destroy the world." "Sorry," he said, "we do not have a place for you here. This is where we

teach princes, those whose backgrounds and characters are familiar to us. We do not teach anyone else.” He thus dismissed Ekalavya, who left feeling much aggrieved. He went into the forest and made a deity of Droṇācārya and started taking ‘lessons’ from that deity.

Sometime later, when the princes’ education had progressed, Droṇa took them into the forest one day to test them, to see who had learned what and how well. As they reached the forest, a dog started to bark at them, loudly. Suddenly, its barking stopped completely. “Why did it stop?” they wondered. “Let’s go see.” They saw that the dog’s mouth was full of arrows, but there was not a single scratch on its mouth. “Who could have shot these arrows so perfectly as to not injure the dog at all and yet stop its barking?” they thought. They estimated the direction the arrows had come from and searched a short distance till they came upon a dark-skinned youth, a rugged character, standing there with bow and arrow. As soon as the youth saw Droṇācārya, he bowed down before him. “Who are you?” Droṇa asked.

“I am Ekalavya,” he replied.

“You shot these arrows?” Droṇa asked.

“Yes, I shot them.”

“You are very talented. Who did you learn from? Who is your *guru*?”

At this, he paid Droṇa full prostrated obeisances and said, “You are my *guru*.”

“I never taught you,” said Droṇa.

“Look at this,” he said, “I have a deity of you here. I took lessons from this deity.”

“Oh, so you are my disciple.”

“Yes,” said Ekalavya.

“Well, you have learned a lot, but you never offered any *dakṣiṇā* to your *guru*. Give me *dakṣiṇā*.”

“Whatever you ask, I will give. This whole body is yours.”

“Then cut off your right thumb and give it to me,” Droṇa said.

Ekalavya did not hesitate for even a second. He cut off his thumb and gave it to Droṇa, who simply took it. He did not say, “Oh, you are such an exalted disciple. You gave me your thumb.” There is no description of anything like that in *Mahābhārata*. It just says that he took the thumb and left, taking the five Pāṇḍavas with him. But it does say that as Droṇa returned from the forest, he was filled with dread. Why? “This is the very sort of person I did not want to teach,” he thought. “And yet he learned all of these skills. This does not bode well. It will not bring good to the world.”

When that same Ekalavya grew up, prior to the *Mahābhārata* war, he fought with Kṛṣṇa, wanting to kill Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas. Kṛṣṇa cut off his head with His *sudarśana-cakra*. Whose heads does Kṛṣṇa cut off with His *sudarśana-cakra*? What kind of evil characters are they? Ekalavya was one of them.

Once one has offered oneself to *guru*, then whatever *guru* says, the disciple must do, without second thought. This is the duty of the disciple. Droṇa told him, “I will not teach you, for you are not suitable.” But Ekalavya insisted on learning. What Droṇa had said was said for a reason, for the good of the world, and Ekalavya disobeyed that instruction.

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments that those who are *karma-jaḍa* (engrossed in fruitive works) will view Ekalavya as the model *guru-sevaka*. Their intelligence has been ruined. Devoid of the capacity to make proper judgement, they see only the gross aspect of existence. They will not venture into the inner aspect, which is why they do not believe there is such a thing as spirit. This is the case of the *śiṣya-bruva*, the so-called disciple.

### Karṇa, the tāmāsika disciple

Now, let us proceed to the *tāmāsika-sevaka* or *guru-dāsa* [a disciple in the mode of ignorance]. Take Karṇa, for example. He saw how good an archer Arjuna was and was jealous of him. He ended up being humiliated in a contest in which he competed with Arjuna. At the end of the contest, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha said to him, “You came here to prove yourself as equal to these royal princes, but first tell us what your lineage is. You have shown us your skill in competition with Arjuna, aiming as well as he does, shooting the eye of the fish. Whatever he did, you have done. Everyone is amazed. But since you have come to compete with him, tell us this: Whose son are you? These are the sons of Pāṇḍu and these are the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. So whose son are you? Tell us the name of your mother and father.”

Karṇa could not say.

“What? You do not know who your mother and father are?”

“I am Rādheya,” he said. “My mother’s name is Radha.”

“Oh, you are his son, the person who drives the chariots? He is a *sūta-putra* (one of mixed caste). So, you are also a *sūta-putra*.

A *sūta-putra* has no right to compete with princes. Leave this place, immediately.”

That is when Duryodhana stood up and gave Karṇa his crown, saying, “He is the king of Aṅga-deśa and my best friend. You must respect his place here among us.” But in front of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, none of this worked and Karṇa, embarrassed, left.

Where did he go? He went to Paraśurāma. “To defeat even Bhīṣma, I have to learn from his *guru*,” he thought.

Paraśurāma asked him, “Whose son are you? What caste are you from?”

He said, “I am the son of a *brāhmaṇa*.”

“Very well then,” said Paraśurāma.

Karṇa did not say he was a *kṣatriya*, otherwise Paraśurāma would have reacted adversely. He told him he was the son of a *brāhmaṇa*. *Ṛṣis* and *mahārṣis* are very simple and straightforward. Paraśurāma believed him: “Why would he lie? And he has come to learn knowledge of sacred weapons. He has come for a virtuous purpose; it is only right to give

“ ***Bhakti is of one kind only: uttamā-bhakti.***  
Likewise, there is only one kind of *guru-sevaka*, but according to the various moods of devotion individuals have or what they are concerned with, they are given different names. ”

him the knowledge he seeks.” So Paraśurāma taught him everything, the *brahmāstra* and every other *astra*.

Karṇa was about to complete his studies and leave his *guru*’s *āśrama*. It was just a few days before his return. One afternoon, the great sage put his head on Karṇa’s lap and took a nap. It was the monsoon season and an insect, a *vajra-kīṭa*, climbed on to Karṇa’s leg and bore into it, coming out the other side. A stream of blood gushed from his leg, but Karṇa did not move. The blood touched Paraśurāma’s head. Feeling something warm, he woke up. “What is this?” He saw blood everywhere. “Where did all this blood come from? This insect bore into your leg and you did not say a word?”

“No,” he said, “I did not want to disturb you.”

“You cannot possibly be a *brāhmaṇa*,” said Paraśurāma “You are definitely a *kṣatriya*. *Brāhmaṇas* do not have such tolerance to pain. A *brāhmaṇa* would surely have woken me up. Tell me the truth, otherwise I will curse you right now. Whose son are you?”

“I am a *sūta-putra*,” he told him.

“Why didn’t you tell me this before? And why did you want to learn weaponry? Tell me the truth.”

“To defeat Arjuna.”

“You did not tell me this to begin with. You are not a real disciple. You lied to me. Go! Because you lied to me, when the time comes that you really need this knowledge, you will forget everything you have learned. Until then, yes, you may have use of it. Just as you have treated me – hiding the truth – I will treat you.”

*Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy-aham* – as one surrenders unto Me, I reciprocate in turn.

This [keeping grudges and envy within the heart] is typical of the *tāmasika* mentality. Karṇa is an example of one in the mode of ignorance serving *śrī guru*.

Let us proceed a step further. to the *rājasika* disciple. What is a *rājasika* disciple? It refers to one who serves *guru* to obtain pleasure, luxury, indulgence, a wife or husband.

In the discussion between Kapiladeva and Devahūti, there is mention of *rājasika*, *tāmasika*, and *sāttvika-bhakti*. This gradation of the modes pertains to *bhakti*. Depending on the mode of the practitioner, *bhakti* is referred to by different names. In fact, *bhakti* is of one kind only: *uttamā-bhakti*. Likewise, there is only one kind of *guru-sevaka*, but according to the various moods of devotion individuals have or what they are concerned with, they are given different names.

### **Bhīṣma’s enactment as a *rājasika* disciple**

Bhīṣma Pitāmaha vowed that he would not marry: “I will remain celibate my whole life. I will not accept the throne.” However, to get his brother married, he won the three daughters of the king of Kāśī – Ambā, Ambālikā, and Ambikā – and brought them back to Hastināpura. Two of them married his brother, but the other refused and said, “I will marry only you. It is you who won us; therefore, I want to marry you. You must marry me.”



Bhīṣma, however, told her he could not marry her. She turned to everyone in the assembly for help, but none could help her. Bhīṣma was very formidable, very strong, so she went to his *guru* and began to weep pitifully.

“Why are you crying, daughter?” asked Paraśurāma.

At that time, Bhīṣma was known as Devavrata. “Devavrata won me in the *svayamvara*” [a ceremony in which a woman selects her husband], she told him, “and then he brought me to Hastināpura. But he brought me here to marry his brother. I want to marry him, yet he won’t marry me. Please talk to him. When he won me, I gave him my garland. I will only marry the person I gave my garland to.”

She was weeping profusely. Paraśurāma felt compassion for her. He summoned Bhīṣma, his disciple, and asked him, “Why won’t you marry her? You won her, yes?”

“Yes,” said Bhīṣma.

“Then why won’t you marry her?”

“Because I won her for my brother. I defeated everyone at the *svayamvara* and abducted these princesses, but I did this for my brother.”

“I don’t know anything about that,” said Paraśurāma, “But if you won her, you should marry her.”

“But I made a vow to my father that I will not marry, that I will not take the kingdom. I made that vow in regard to the kingdom and marriage. I will not marry her.”

“Then why did you go to the *svayamvara* and take her away by force? Were you not

thinking about your vows then? Who will take responsibility now?”

Bhīṣma still refused. Paraśurāma insisted: “Either you marry her or you fight with me.”

When Bhīṣma heard this, he became so happy. He had found a way out. “I will fight you and die, but I will not marry.” And so they fought. In the end, neither of them could win. Brahmā and others had to come and mediate a truce. Bhīṣma never married. But he did not obey his *guru*. Why? Did his justification have any spiritual merit? No. This type of person is the *rājasika* disciple. Bhīṣma enacted this to exemplify a *rājasika* disciple.

## Aruṇi and Upamanyu, the *sāttvika* disciples

In the *sāttvika* category are the examples of Aruṇi and Upamanyu:

What did Aruṇi do? On the order of his *guru*’s wife, amid torrential rain, in the middle of winter, in the freezing cold, he went to repair a broken dam in the field. His *guru*’s wife had told him the flooding water was going to damage their home. So again and again, he kept trying to fix the dike, but it kept breaking. The flow of water was very strong. He kept building up the dirt, but it kept getting washed away. Finally, he saw there was no option but to lay himself across the breach. Some water still escaped but much less. He lay there like that all night. By morning, he was practically lifeless, freezing and covered in dirt. His *guru* came looking for him. “Aruṇi, where are you? Aruṇi?”

In a faint voice, with all a dying man could muster, he called out weakly, “Gurujī, I am here.”

“Where?”

“Over here...”

His *guru* came over and saw the state he was in. “Why are you lying here?” he asked.

“I tried... I could not stop the water, so I lay down.”

His *guru* raised him up and embraced him to his chest, blessing him to have instant realization of all the Vedas and Vedānta. Aruṇi became a *mantra-draṣṭā ṛṣi*, a sage and seer of the *mantras*.

Upamanyu’s case was somewhat similar. His *guru* told him, “Stop eating so much! I order you. You are getting so fat. Do you drink milk from the cows?”

“Yes,” said Upamanyu, “After the calf drinks, then I drink what is left.”

“Don’t drink milk any more,” his *guru* said.

Sometime later, his *guru* asked, “You’re still getting fat. Are you continuing to drink cow milk?”

“No, I’m not.”

“Then what are you eating?”

“Well, when the cows are sitting down to chew their cud, there is some foam that forms on their mouth. I take this foam and eat that.”

“What? You’re eating foam from the mouth of cows? From tomorrow, don’t do that anymore.”

“Yes, as you command,” said Upamanyu.

The next day, he did not eat anything. He was so hungry, he ended up eating some leaves from a plant, but the leaves made him blind and he fell into a well. In the evening, the cows returned [from the pasturing grounds]. The *guru* and his wife noticed that the cows

had returned but that Upamanyu had not. “Where did he go?” they wondered. His *guru* went out looking for him. “Where are you, Upamanyu? Where are you?” As he was searching everywhere, night fell. Finally, the *guru* heard him calling from the well.

“Guruji, I fell in the well.”

“How did you fall in? Wait, hold on.” He brought a rope and hauled him out of the well. “How did you fall in?”

“You told me not to drink milk, so I stopped doing so. Then you told me not to eat the foam from the cows’ mouths, so I stopped doing that. But I was so hungry I picked some leaves from a plant that were leaking a sap resembling milk and drank a few drops, but that sap made me blind.”

“You followed my orders. You did not eat. You did exactly what I said. May all the Vedas and Upaniṣads manifest to you.” Thus he was blessed with Vedic knowledge and his eyes were also healed.

But what is Veda? What does Vedic knowledge mean here? The Vedas are comprised of three divisions. “*Evam trayī dharmam anuprapannā gatāgataṁ kāmā-kāmā labhante* – thus, following the three divisions of Vedic knowledge, they attain repeated birth and death, pursuing their desires” (*Gītā* 9.21). Once they enjoy the heavenly planets, they have to come back to this world. The three divisions of the Vedas are centred around *kāma* and are for those who are *sakāma*, who have desires for worldly happiness. Hence, these two [Upamanyu and Aruṇi] are referred to as *sāttvika*.

Let us proceed somewhat higher. Here, we enter the *Bhāgavatam*. This is where *nirguṇa-bhakti* or the example of *nirguṇa-dāsa* begins. Up till now, we have discussed the *sāttvika*, *rājasika*, *tāmasika*, and *bruva* categories of disciples.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes how Sudāma and Kṛṣṇa, on the order of their *gurvī* (the wife of their *guru*, Sāndīpani Muni), went into the jungle to collect wood. It started to rain. It was winter too. All night they stood there, holding their bundle of wood on their heads. They did not return to the *āśrama*. When morning arrived, Sāndīpani Muni came with a lamp, looking for them. “Are! Kṛṣṇa, Sudāmā? Where are you?” All night they had been standing there getting soaked but holding the bundle on their heads. Who did so? Kṛṣṇa Himself, with Sudāmā. When their *guru* found them, he asked, “Why didn’t you come back?”

“It was raining,” they said, “We didn’t know which way to go, which way was flooded and which was not. Water filled all directions.”

“You could have set the bundle down and found your way.”

“If we had set the bundle down, the wood would have gotten fully soaked, and then how would *Gurvī* be able to cook? If it’s a bit wet, it can still be used, but had we set the wood down, it would have gotten waterlogged. We had to keep it on our heads.”

“I see,” their *guru* replied. And he blessed them with knowledge of all the sixty-four arts. These arts are still considered part of the Vedic knowledge, but they are spiritual. Kṛṣṇa is in this

story [to show the importance of *guru-sevā*], is He not? The two of them did not consider their own personal gain or loss. They only acted to serve their *guru*. This is an example of *nirguṇa-dāsa*. Sudāmā’s *bhakti* is *nirguṇa* and he attained *bhakti* for Nārāyaṇa, meaning for Kṛṣṇa as Dvārkaḍhīśa. He obtained great wealth, but also utter detachment from it, as well as special *anurāga*, attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

### The prayers of Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Thākura

Now, having reached the *nirguṇa* stage, let us proceed a bit further, for we have still not found our *abhīṣṭa*, our cherished objective. Hence we proceed to this verse:

*cintāmaṇir jayati somagirir gurur me  
śikṣā-guruś ca bhagavān śikhi-piccha-mauliḥ  
yat-pāda-kalpataru-pallava-śekhareṣu  
līlā-svayaṁvara-rasaṁ labhate jayaśrīḥ*

What kind of *guru-dāsa* is the author of this verse? Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Thākura refers to Cintāmaṇi as his *guru*. Which *guru*? The *guru* that showed him the path. Anyone who shows us the path to enlightenment, no matter who they may be, even if they are a prostitute, is to be honored as *guru*, as our *patha-pradarśaka* or *vartma-pradarśaka-guru*. It is not possible for us to repay those who have shown us the path. They were inspired by Kṛṣṇa Himself to send us here [to the society of Vaiṣṇavas], so we are indebted to them, to anyone who might have helped us [spiritually] prior to establishing a relationship with our *guru*. Gratitude is synonymous with Vaiṣṇavism.

Those who have no sense of gratitude have not the slightest trace of the quality of a Vaiṣṇava in them.

First, Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura pays his respects to Cintāmaṇī, then to his *dikṣā-guru*, Somagiri, and last of all, he pays obeisances to his *śikṣā-guru*, Śikhi-piccha-mauli, Kṛṣṇa who wears a peacock feather on His head. Kṛṣṇa was the one who, as *caitya-guru* and as *śikṣā-guru*, inspired him in his heart, who roused all of the moods of *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* within him. Śrī Bilvamaṅgala gives more emphasis to *śikṣā-guru* here, because his *śikṣā-guru* is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Still, in this world especially, we are indebted to *dikṣā-guru*. How else do we make a connection with Kṛṣṇa? Even if Kṛṣṇa Himself is the *śikṣā-guru*, we still have to give our respects to our *dikṣā-guru*. If we are so indebted to our *varṭma-pradarśaka-guru*, are we not indebted to the person who has given us *dikṣā*? We cannot honour our *patha-pradarśaka-guru* and then not honour our *dikṣā-guru*.

These two, *dikṣā-guru* and *śikṣā-guru*, are to be regarded as Kṛṣṇa's [*rūpa* and] *svarūpa*. One should not think one is less than the other. Sometimes the *dikṣā-guru* is more exalted in terms of personal qualification. Sometimes *śikṣā-guru* can also be more exalted. For example, we have our [*dikṣā*-] *guru*, but if we think of Kṛṣṇa as our *śikṣā-guru*, then who is more exalted? If we think of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as our *śikṣā-guru*, then who is superior? And if Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is our *dikṣā-guru*? Then what? One cannot neglect *dikṣā-guru*. There is a saying in Bengali: "Don't

be like a cow climbing over the trough to get to the grass; you will injure yourself." This should not happen. [In other words, we have to respect both equally, but always *dikṣā-guru* first, even if *śikṣā-guru* is in fact superior.]

Sometimes, in the realm of *bhajana*, *śikṣā-guru* becomes more influential than the *dikṣā-guru*, as in the case of Śyāmānanda Prabhu, or Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa, as he was known. He sought some advice from his *guru*, Hṛdaya-caitanya, who told him to go to Vṇḍāvāna and take shelter of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. There he studied the scriptures under the tutelage of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and developed one-pointed devotion for Śrīmatī Rādhājī. But he gave each of his *gurus*, Hṛdaya-caitanya and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the respect they deserved. This is how it should be, otherwise we will be ruined.

With our *śikṣā-guru*, the relationship is somewhat like *rāgānuga* [more natural, spontaneous]. There are many things we cannot say to or ask our *dikṣā-guru*, who is like a father. We feel some shyness, some hesitation, is it not? But our *śikṣā-guru* is like our father's younger brother, an uncle, or *cācā-guru*, one might say. The things we cannot say to our *guru*, we can express to him. We can interact with him more in a mood of equals.

So, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmījī is *śikṣā-guru* and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is *dikṣā-guru*. If Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Kṛṣṇa are *śikṣā-guru*, then how should we interact with Them? *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also *śikṣā-guru*. It is said, "*vande 'haṁ śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurun vaiṣṇavānś ca, śrī-rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-*

*raghunāthānvitam tam sa jivam* – I bow to the feet of *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas, Śrī Rūpa and his elder brother [Śrī Sanātana] with their entourage of Śrī Raghunātha dāsa, Śrī Jīva, and others.”

And after that there are even more *śikṣā-gurus* mentioned: “*sādvaitam sāvadhūtam parijana-sahitam kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devam, śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānvitāmś ca* – I bow to Śrī Advaita, Śrī Nityānanda, to Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His associates, to Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Their associates headed by Lalitā and Viśākhā.” These are all *śikṣā-gurus*. In the realm of spiritual life, we must heed all of these details.

The moods expressed in the prayers of Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura are spiritual and immaculate. Even among that which is *nirguṇa*, this is *uttama*, topmost. But still there is something lacking.

## Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

Now let us go to the time of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Bilvamaṅgala was from a previous era. Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He did not make any disciples, did He? Still Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says He is my *guru*. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī says He is my *guru*. The world says He is my *guru*. They do, do they not? Yes, it is said quite often, and it’s true to some extent.

In Benares, He infused Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s heart with everything. Externally, He gave him everything and inspired him internally as well. As *caitya-guru*, He inspired Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in his heart, yet

He also gave him direct instructions: What is the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*? The *jīva* is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. How to serve Kṛṣṇa? What is our relationship with Him? The kind of instructions He gave on *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* in three chapters [of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*] have not, to this day, ever been given anywhere in this world. Can there be any *guru* greater than this? This is *guru-tattva*, real *guru*. Did even Sāndipani Muni give this sort of instruction to Kṛṣṇa? Did any of the *gurus* we mentioned earlier ever give this calibre of instruction? Hence, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the real *guru-tattva*. And if anyone is to become the servant of such a *guru*, then that person is the topmost *guru-dāsa*.

Even still, however, something remains to be said. Prior to this, in Prayāga, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had given instructions to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Therefore, how does Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pray? He says, “I was prompted to write *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by His mercy – *hr̥dī yasya preraṇāya, pravartito ’ham varāka-rūpo ’pi*.” “I am *varāka*,” he says. *Varāka* means what? It means insignificant. “By whose mercy, by whose inspiration, I was engaged in writing books like *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*...” Who gives inspiration? *Caitya-guru* gives inspiration. So, he says, “I bow to that *guru*, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself advented as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī also offers his obeisances to another *guru*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. He thought of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī



as his direct *dikṣā-guru*, so he writes a verse for him too: “*viśrāma-mandiratayā tasya sanātana-tanor-mad-īśasya* — Sanātana is my worshipful master. I bow to him. Why? This *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is dear to Kṛṣṇa, so it is like a temple for Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī to take rest within. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhur bhavatu sadāyam pramodāya* — it is for his delight that I have written this.”

Thus, both of these personalities and another, a third personality, Śrī Kavi Karṇapūra, saw Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as their *guru*. What did Mahāprabhu give Kavi Karṇapūra? He gave him His toe to suck on. What did Kavi Karṇapūra produce? What book did he write? *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campuḥ*. And at a very young age, as a small child, he composed such beautiful verses about Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s love, with every imaginable poetic embellishment, such that he had everyone biting on their fingers in sheer amazement. It was that little boy that became Kavi Karṇapūra. This is called being a disciple.

But now, to conclude this topic, let us go just a little further.

## The service of Govinda

Śrīman Mahāprabhu, during His final days, was living in Purī at the home of Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita, at the Gambhirā, absorbed twenty-four hours a day in a state of *bhāva*, ecstasy. Who was serving Him? Śrī Govinda, and also a small boy, Gopāla, who later became Gopāla-guru. They were both serving Him, but Govinda is better known. Śrī Govinda, as per Mahāprabhu’s wish, was taking

*prasāda* to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura every day, because Haridāsa Ṭhākura would not come near the temple of Śrī Jagannātha.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu had relationships like this with those He loved, with those He had such affection for, and Govinda had a connection only with them. Those Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not have any relationship with, Govinda too had no relationship. A disciple should be like this. Whoever has a relationship with his *guru*, whoever is dear to his *guru*, he has a relationship with that person.

Govinda took care of everything in regard to Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Who does the body of Mahāprabhu belong to? Govinda. One day, he went to serve Mahāprabhu, to massage His feet, and Mahāprabhu was sleeping across the doorway, deliberately. Śrī Govinda draped a chaddar over Him to enter the room and do his service. Mahāprabhu slept there like that for two hours or so, on purpose. When He woke up and saw Govinda, He asked him: “Why didn’t you go today to take *prasāda* [with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura]?”

“I came in and there was no way to get out,” Govinda said.

“But how did you come in?” Mahāprabhu asked.

“Prabhu,” he replied, “to serve You, I placed a cloth, an *uttariya*, on Your limbs and stepped over You to come in.”

“So why did you not go back the same way?”

“When I did that to come in, it was for the sake of Your service. For my own service, how can I do the same?”

Just see what one must do to be a disciple. One has to give up any sort of concern one has for oneself. For the service of one's *guru*, for one's worshipful master, one has to sacrifice all that one has. One has to give it all up, like *tilāñjali*, oblations of sesame seeds. Even against one's own desires, one has to serve. Then it will be *guru-sevā*. Otherwise, one can cut one's name from the list of servants of one's *guru*. This is how one should be, or else one will come into one of the categories we have discussed.

Govinda's service is most remarkable. It is something beyond even praise, something we perhaps cannot even touch. What is that exactly? Govinda said, "Why do Rāmānanda Rayā and Svarūpa Dāmodara come here even at night to see Mahāprabhu?"

Govinda did not like them coming. Why? When they were not there, Mahāprabhu was somewhat peaceful. Whenever these two came, then all night, He was weeping. [Govinda is saying,] "They weep and make Him weep. They don't sleep and they don't let Him sleep." But Govinda cannot say anything to them. Govinda was hearing everything, and hearing Mahāprabhu cry made his heart cry too. What grand and weighty service is this? Until we reach that flow, that *dhārā*, we cannot understand this kind of service. What glorious service is that? When a

person's master is the foundation of his whole life, when a person is sad when his master is sad and happy when he is happy, then such a person can render *guru-sevā*. This is what is meant by *hari-dāsa-varya*. People like this can be called *hari-dāsa-varya*.

Therefore, we must know that Govinda is not inferior. He does not seem to have expertise in scripture. He displays neither oratory eloquence nor expertise in singing *rāgas*, *rāginis*, *ālāpas*, etc. But we have to examine what kind of desire he has to serve Mahāprabhu in his heart and the mood with which he does so. Simply and spontaneously, he has shown us the ideal of service to Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Even Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya had some doubt in regard to such a servant. "Why did Īśvara Purī accept this *śūdra* disciple? And how

can you accept his service?" he asked Śrīman Mahāprabhu. "What will people say?" And this was when Sārvabhauma had already gained a mood of *bhakti*. Still, he asked this question. Mahāprabhu responded, "My Īśvara [My master, Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda], ordered me to accept him. My *guru* is independent; the ordinances of the Vedas and *śāstras* have no control over him. Therefore, I had no further consideration in this regard."

In this context, Mahāprabhu said, "*Gurur kiṅkara haya mānya āpanāra* – one must

“Guru is the foremost of the Vaiṣṇavas. If someone is a genuine *guru-sevaka*, he will surely be a *vaiṣṇava-sevaka*.”

revere the servant of *guru*” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 10.142). If we wish to perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān, we must revere whoever is serving *guru*. We are to honour even a dog that serves our *guru*. Keep this mood. If, for even one day, a person has served our *guru*, then we are indebted to him. Śrīla Prabhupāda [Sarasvatī Ṭhākura] has said, “He who is a *sevaka* of the Vaiṣṇavas is the *sevaka* of *guru*.” Without being the servant of all of the Vaiṣṇavas, we cannot be the *sevaka* of *guru*. We will not even know what *guru* is. Does Bhagavān exist separately from His devotees? Is *guru* separate from his *sevakas*? *Guru* is the foremost of the Vaiṣṇavas. If someone is a genuine *guru-sevaka*, he will surely be a *vaiṣṇava-sevaka*.

Every genuine Vaiṣṇava who is more advanced than oneself, who is *rasika* and who knows *siddhānta* is to be regarded as *guru*. The division is only here, as within *para-tattva*, in Goloka Vṛndāvana, there is no *guru-tattva*. There, everyone is *sakhī-tattva* or *sakhā-tattva*, Kṛṣṇa’s associates. Here Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is *guru*, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is his disciple. There, they are all friends, although there is somewhat more regard for Rūpa Mañjarī. Nothing faulty exists there. The notion of superior and inferior does not exist there. And even in this *līlā*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has referred to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as *praṇamya* (venerable). He offers his obeisance to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, stating that it is only by his mercy that one may obtain the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu or Kṛṣṇa.

## Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī – the best of rūpānuga

The era following Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is that of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana. In that period, they are the *gurus*, and the disciples are Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa, and others. Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is *rūpānuga-vara*, foremost of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. All of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s teachings condensed are embodied in Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. In *Bhakti-rāsāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains the process of *sādhana* for many types of *sādhakas* and, from a *taṭasthā* (impartial) perspective, describes all of the *rasas*. But is Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī himself *taṭasthā*? Is he in all of the *rasas*? No, he has his own *rasa*, which is what? *Mañjarī-bhāva*.

What is *mañjarī-bhāva*? *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* describes the types of *sakhis*: *sakhī*, *nitya-sakhī*, *prāṇa-sakhī*, *priya-sakhī*, and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhī*. The general *sakhis* are those who are more attracted to Kṛṣṇa; they have affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but somewhat more for Kṛṣṇa, like Dhaniṣṭhā. Some *sakhis* have truly equal affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Although others, such as Lalitā and Viśākhā – the *priya-narma* or *preṣṭha-sakhis* – have affection for both, they have somewhat more affection for Rādhikājī. The *prāṇa-sakhis* and *nitya-sakhis* have more affection for Rādhikā than for Kṛṣṇa. They are always Her *pālya-dāsīs* [maidservants that she She nourishes and maintains]. Where do they live? Wherever Śrīmatī Rādhājī is. They are sad when She is sad, happy when She is happy. When Śrīmatī Rādhājī is in *viraha*, they are

sad, and when She meets with Kṛṣṇa, they are happy. They are constantly occupied at Her feet, following Her orders, rendering Her many types of services. Most of the Vaiṣṇavas in our Gauḍīya *sampradāya* are serving in this mood. And this what Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give.

What did He come to give? *Sva-bhakti-śrīyaṁ*, the beauty of Her *bhakti* (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.4). What is that like? “*Anarpita-carim-cirāt*, that which had not been offered since time immemorial.” *Samarpayitum* means “to [thoroughly] give”. Give what? Now this has to be said altogether; you cannot separate it in the middle or else it will confuse the meaning: *unnata-ujjvala-rasam* *sva-bhakti-śrīyaṁ*, that exalted, brilliant *rasa*, or *bhakti-rasa*, that is *svayaṁ*, Her own. Whose own? Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s. The *bhakti* She has for Kṛṣṇa as a paramour is *unnata-ujjvala-rasa*, and the beauty of that [Her *bhakti*] is what Śrīman Mahāprabhu came to give.

Just as lotus flowers or mango blossoms have buds, or *mañjarīs*, which constitute the very beauty of the flower, so the beauty of Śrīmatī Rādhājī’s love is the *mañjarīs*. Rādhājī’s *rūpa* (form) is so very beautiful. But who is the [personified] *mañjarī* of that *rūpa*? Rūpa Mañjarī. If a lotus flower moves, its blossoms are tossed to and fro even more forcefully than the flower itself. They (the *mañjarīs*) experience even more bliss. This is *mañjarī-bhāva*. Those *sakhīs*, seeking to serve, experience several times more joy than what Śrīmatī Rādhājī derives from meeting with Kṛṣṇa. This happens by means of *uddīpana*, wherein

whatever feelings Rādhājī and Her *sakhīs* are experiencing are conducted into them (the *mañjarīs*) in even greater intensity and in their fullest form. This is called *mañjarī-bhāva*.

This is *sva-bhakti-śrīyaṁ*, the beauty of Her own personal devotion. *Sva* means Rādhikājī, so this *sva-bhakti* refers to Her *mahābhāva*, Her *prema*. That is something no one can access. But they can achieve something of its *śobhā* (splendour); that is *śrīyaṁ*.

The [personified] *mañjarī* of Rādhājī’s *rūpa* (beautiful form) is Rūpa Mañjarī. The [personified] *mañjarī* of Rādhājī’s *bhāvas* (moods of love for Kṛṣṇa) is Bhāva Mañjarī. The [personified] *mañjarī* of Rādhājī’s *vilāsa* (amorous pastimes with Kṛṣṇa) is Vilāsa Mañjarī. The [personified] *mañjarī* of Rādhājī’s *rāga* (ardent attachment to Kṛṣṇa) is Rāga Mañjarī. This is what Śrīman Mahāprabhu came to give.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī adopted Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s own personal moods. Though Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and he also wrote *Bhakti-rāsāmṛta-sindhu*, which outlines *śānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, *madhura-rasa* and the countless moods stemming from them, we have to consider what his own mood was.

[In Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali, 6] Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī offered his obeisances to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in an external manner: *vairāgya-yug bhakti-rasaṁ prayatnair, apāyayan mām anabhīpsum andhaṁ, kṛpāmbudhir yaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhī, sanātanas taṁ prabhuṁ āśrayāmi*. This is an offering of obeisances befitting

one's *guru*, especially one's *dīkṣā-guru*. “Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is an ocean of causeless mercy,” Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is saying, “I did not want *bhakti* and I was totally blind. In regard to *tattva-jñāna*, I was blind. Such was I, not wanting what he gave and totally blind, yet he caught a tight hold of me and poured that *prema* into my mouth. I take shelter of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who is an ocean of mercy. I bow down to him.” Who is an ocean of mercy? *Samśāra-dāvānala-liḍha-loka trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam* – to deliver the living beings scorched by the blazing forest fire of material existence, *śrī gurudeva*, who is an ocean of auspicious qualities, manifests like a condensed cloud of mercy” (*Śrī Gurvāṣṭakam* 1). This condensation of compassion is Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. But this is an external offering of reverence. In Vārāṇasī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu had given Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī instructions on *voidhī-bhakti*, so Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī paid his respects in that mood. But how does he pay *praṇāma* to his *śikṣā-guru*? He does not mention who [of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī] he sees as *śikṣā-guru* and who he sees as *dīkṣā-guru*, but he says:

*tvam rūpa-maṇjarī sakhī prathitā pure 'smin  
puṁsaḥ parasya vadanam na hi paśyasīti |  
bimbādhare kṣatam anāgata-bhartṛkāyā  
yat te vyadhāyī kim u tac-chuka-puṅgavena?*  
Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali (1)

If two people are equals, the formality of obeisances, *namaskāra*, does not work. When they meet, they laugh and joke and tease

each other, like bosom friends. As soon as they see each other, their hearts fill with joy. There is no cordiality on top of that, no need for polite formality: “*Namaskāra, mahodaya, namaskāra* – Greetings to you, great sir, greetings.” There is no need to say anything like that. The two meet, smile, and that's it. *Praṇāma* done. And where there is no *bhāva*, no smile will come, and so this *namaskāra mahodaya* is needed.

Here, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has paid *praṇāma* to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in a way that directly seeks the bliss within Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's heart. He is smiling. In his perfected form as Rati Mañjarī, he saw Rūpa Mañjarī and said something to tease her. “Rūpa Mañjarī, what have you been doing? Everyone praises you so much in this town of Vraja, saying that you are very chaste. There is no lady so chaste as you in all of Vraja. Hasn't your husband gone somewhere to purchase cows? It has been three or four days and I know he has not returned. And I know you don't even look at the face of any man but your husband. Your glance doesn't wander anywhere. But what is this? Am I seeing wrong? Oh, your lips are very red. How red? Like *bimba* fruits. They are very tender, thin and subtle, and they are juicy. So, what am I looking at? It is as if a parrot came and perched on you, thinking your lips were *bimba* fruits, and bit them! But where is your husband? Then how did this happen?” Saying this, she started laughing and smiled at Rūpa Mañjarī. And just like that, this became the father [crest jewel] of all *praṇāmas*. Hearing her words, Rūpa Mañjarī smiled too.




Something like this happens in this world when two friends meet, this teasing and playful dialogue. Where is the *gurutva*, the gravity, in paying *praṇāma* to one's *guru* like this? But really [for one who is qualified] this is true *gurutva*. Even among prayers in the category of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, this *praṇāma* is distinctly that of a *rūpānuga*. This is *rūpānugatva*, being a follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Especially regarding those following the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's conceptions, all or many or most of them will inevitably become *rāgānuga*, but it is very difficult to become *rūpānuga*. *Rūpānuga* is not so easy.

Only if one follows closely in the guidance of certain concepts particular to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, ones that come from his own personality and nature, can one become a *rūpānuga*. Therefore, even among Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, it is extremely difficult to become a *rūpānuga*, very difficult. Our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and especially those under the guidance of our Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, however, are worshipping in this mood.

If a *guru* has this kind of relationship in the spiritual realm and is giving it [in this world], then he is the greatest, most substantial *guru*. Those who realize this will feel such gratitude; they will feel they cannot repay such a debt, not in a whole lifetime and not in millions and millions of lifetimes, not even when they have attained Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

If the disciple does not understand that he is indebted to his *guru*, then is he a disciple?

When he has not understood what his *guru* is giving and why he is indebted, if he does not know what *paramārtha* (the supreme spiritual wealth) really is, and most disciples these days do not, then why would he feel indebted? People may feel indebted if you give them 100 rupees, or if you give them something decorative, an ornament or something. For that, they will feel indebted. But they do not feel indebted for the *paramārtha* they have been given. This means they have not understood what *paramārtha* is. Especially when it comes to all these topics. What will they understand? They can't understand. But slowly, slowly, slowly, when they progress, then they will understand what this *paramārtha* is, what it means to be *rūpānuga* and just how indebted they are. They will not understand so easily in the beginning.

How will we understand now that we are indebted to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī? Only if we enter into this subject somewhat, otherwise not. From what I can understand, on the topic of *guru-sevā*, one who rouses even the slightest bit of greed within us to become a particle of Rūpa Mañjarī's foot dust is a real *guru*, a truly *pāramārthika-guru*. And those who cannot convey such moods do not have any place in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism [in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu]. To those who can, we are forever indebted. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also described these things in his *Siddhi-lālasā* songs. When we read these properly, when we enter into them [their profound meanings], then we will understand. 

PART TWO:

# Homages





ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI SARVASVA GOVINDA MAHĀRĀJA

## Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Daśakam

*kanaka-madhura-varṇaṁ dīrgha-dehaṁ yatīndraṁ  
aruṇita-vasanāḍyaṁ manda-hāsyāṅka-vaktram |  
niyamita-japa-gānaṁ śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-īha vande jāta-śatābdi-pūrtau || 1 ||*

On the occasion of his appearance centennial, I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, whose complexion is charmingly golden and his figure tall. He is the king of ascetics, he wears saffron robes and his face is always lit by a gentle smile as he remains immersed in his vows of chanting and singing *mantras* invoking his worshipable Lords and so forth.

*trinigami-kula-candraṁ śikṣitādhyātma-vidyaṁ  
tripura-bhajana-niṣṭhaṁ kṣānta-cittaṁ kṛtajñam |  
truṭita-bhava-viśādaṁ śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-īha vande jāta-śatābdi-pūrtau || 2 ||*

He is the moon of the Trivedī<sup>1</sup> family lineage, he is deeply learned and established in spiritual knowledge, he is dedicated to the worship of the three sacred abodes of Navadvīpa, Vṛndāvana, and Nīlācala; he is tranquil, best among the grateful, and he is completely free from the despair of material existence. I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.

*diśi diśi hari-gāthā-kīrtanānanda-mādaṁ  
madhura-mṛdula-bhāṣaṁ darśiteṣṭārtha-vādaṁ |  
mahad-anubha-viceṣṭaṁ śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-īha vande jāta-śatābdi-pūrtau || 3 ||*

He fills every direction with an ecstatic festival of *kīrtana*, speaking sweetly and softly and revealing the Gauḍīya tenets as per the purports of the scriptures. His activities are enriched with the most exalted of realizations. I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.

1 This refers to *brāhmaṇas* with knowledge of the three Vedas.

*niveditam-ihā bhaktyā sveṣṭa-deveṣu dāsyam  
vitaritam-ihā śuddham bhakta-dāseṣu vātsyam |  
praṇayita-vara-sakhyam vai satīrtheṣu nityam  
guru-varam-ihā vande jāta-śatābdi-pūrtau || 4 ||*

To his worshipful deities (*iṣṭa*), he has submitted his servitude (*dāsyam*) with full devotion. To his devoted *sevakas*, he has gifted his pure, nurturing affection (*vātsalya*). With his dear godbrothers, he forever maintains the best of friendships (*sakhya*). I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.

*racita-bahu-prabandham mudritāneka-grantham  
prakaṭita-maṭha-kendram kāṣītārādhyā-sevām |  
pracalita-guru-dāsyam śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-ihā vande jāta-śatābdi-pūrtau || 5 ||*

He has written scores of devotional essays, published multiple texts of the Gosvāmīs, and he has manifested many *maṭhas*, the preaching centres of Śrī Caitanya *vāṇī*, to reveal loving service to his worshipful deities. As a servant of his *guru*, he has roamed everywhere in service to him. I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.

*vilulitam-apavādam raupa-darśanena sarvaṁ  
vimala-paramahamsam prājña-vamśāvataṁsam |  
parama-gurum-atīṣṭham śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-ihā vande jāta-śatābdi-pūrtau || 6 ||*

He refuted all opposition by presenting the perfect conclusions (*siddhānta*) of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. As an immaculate *paramahamsa*, he is the ornament of the Prājña lineage and is established in the ideal of his *parama-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.

*bhuvi vitaritam-uccaiḥ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-vādam  
samudita-rati-rūpa-arādhyā-rādhānu-dāsyam |  
vidalita-kali-kalpaṁ śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-ihā vande jāta-śatābdi-pūrtau || 7 ||*



He has effectively propagated Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message throughout the world, thereby abundantly glorifying the service (*dāsyā*) of Śrī Rādhā, the worshipful mistress of Rati Mañjarī and Rūpa Mañjarī. Thus he has outstandingly subdued the persuasion of Kali. I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.


*bhajana-vidhi-rasajñam kṛṣṇa-mādhurya-lubdham  
vidita-nigama-vedyam rāga-raṅgam manojñam |  
madhurita-jana-cittam śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-ihā vande jātā-śatābdi-pūrtau || 8 ||*

Adept in both the method and spontaneous zeal of *bhajana*, he is greedy to relish Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. He is knowledgeable in the essential precepts of the Vedas, charming in his joyful playfulness, and expert at making the hearts of others sweet. I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.

*ramaṇa iti sunāmnā rādhikā-mañjarīṣu  
prathitam-amala-śīlam kuñja-sevānuraktam |  
praṇayi-vinayi-pūjyam śrīla nārāyaṇākhyam  
guru-varam-ihā vande jātā-śatābdi-pūrtau || 9 ||*

He is renowned among the maidservants of Rādhikā by the charming name Ramaṇa Mañjarī. His character is immaculate, and he is deeply attached to serving in the *kuñjas*. He is worshipful for those with affection for him and for those who are gentle. I venerate that foremost of *gurus*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, on the centennial of his appearance.

*ramaṇa-racita-kuñje sevya-rādhā-vinode  
tad-udita-vara-parve jātā-śatābdi-pūrttau |  
daśaka-kusuma-divyārghyeṇa dīnaika-bandhuḥ  
krpayatu nata-dāsam maṅgalaṁ santanotu || 10 ||*

Near Sevā-kuñja, in the *kuñja* fashioned by Śrī Ramaṇa Mañjarī – Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha, where his *iṣṭa* Śrī Rādhā Vinoda-bihārī preside – this bowed servant presents an offering (*arghya*) of these ten divine flowers, praying that Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is the true friend of the fallen, kindly bless him with auspiciousness on this occasion of the festival of his centennial appearance. 



### ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI BIBUDHA BODHAYAN MAHĀRĀJA

All Glories to the Śrī Brahmā Madhva Gauḍīya Sārasvata *sampradāya*. All glories to my beloved grand spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda and my beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura.

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja is a significant *ācārya* in our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world. Since he joined the mission of his *gurudeva*, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Mahārāja was engaged in serving Vaiṣṇavas.

According to his discourses, I know that he was first engaged by his *gurudeva* in serving my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura. He used to often mention an incident about his small water pot (*loṭā*) as follows.

In 1947, my spiritual master was at Chuñchurā Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, which is currently being looked after by Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. His Divine Grace Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja engaged Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja in looking after my spiritual master at that time. My *guru-mahārāja* used to daily bathe in the Gaṅgā. Once, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, at that time a *vanacārī* named Gaura Nārāyaṇa dāsa, accompanied him to assist him. Somehow or another, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's *loṭā*,

which he had brought from his household life, fell into the Gaṅgā's current and floated away, and he felt sad. At that time, my *gurudeva* told him, "If you have so much attachment to the *loṭā*, then how will you be able to establish your attachment to Kṛṣṇa? You are coming here for spiritual practice, which means to fix our attachment on Kṛṣṇa's services." Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja used to always mention this incident in all his *hari-kathā* discourses during the appearance and disappearance festivals of my *gurudeva*.

I have also seen Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's attentive service attitude, thus inspiring others to become sincere in their services. According to my observation, I saw that all the devotees in his mission feel enthusiasm to listen to *hari-kathā*, which is the heart of spiritual practice. I know from my grand spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura, that if a person has no interest to listen to *hari-kathā*, then there is no surety that he will be able to continue his renounced life under the shelter of *gurudeva* and continue living in the temple. That attitude of Śrīla Mahārāja's disciples makes me really happy.

Apart from that, whenever I invited Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja to attend my spiritual master's appearance and disappearance day festivals, he used to say that Śrīla Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja performed two important services in Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission: one was *mṛdaṅga* and the other

was *br̥had-mṛdaṅga*. By *mṛdaṅga*, he meant that my *gurudeva* was a good *kīrtanīya*. In saying *br̥had-mṛdaṅga*, he meant that my *gurudeva* was adept in publishing various Vaiṣṇava literatures under the guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura.

I also remember several incidents with Śrīla Mahārāja. One year after my *gurudeva*'s physical departure, at the request of two of my godbrothers, Śrīpāda Mādhava-priya prabhu and Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā prabhu (now Śrī Bhaktivedānta Siddhānti Mahārāja), I brought them to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, as they wanted to take *sikṣā* from him. It was around 4 p.m. when I arrived with both of them at Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Vṛndāvana, and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja happily accepted them. Now, they are really doing very nice service to our Gauḍīya mission. I feel proud of my godbrothers and the magnanimity of Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja that he never discriminated between his own disciples and the disciples of other *gurudevas*. He taught all of them equally.

I have even seen that whenever I used to go to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja with some questions, he used to answer with great

care. I used to feel that my spiritual master was speaking through him. However, according to our spiritual relation, I am like his godbrother; therefore, he used to always give me a chair to sit in front of him. I used to feel very shy to accept that chair. I used to humbly tell him,

“Mahārāja, when you joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha, I was not even born. How can I sit on the chair in front of you? My place is to sit under your feet. So please allow me to sit under your feet.” Although Mahārāja did not agree, he was unable to refuse my approach. He would always try to fulfil whatever I requested.

Also, I have seen that Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was representing the teachings of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

and Śrīla Raghunātha Gosvāmī by his example, giving to everybody, without discrimination between Eastern and Western devotees.

Previously, rare exalted philosophical Vaiṣṇava books as *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Gītāgovinda*, *Camatkāra-candrikā* etc. were available in Sanskrit with a brief explanation only in Bengali. Now all the teachings of these rare books are available in the Hindi, English and other different languages by the grace of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. All spiritually

“ All spiritually sincere and inquisitive devotees who want to know all the secret teachings of our previous teachers (guru-varga) and the pastimes of the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa should feel indebted for the publications of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. ”

sincere and inquisitive devotees who want to know all the secret teachings of our previous teachers (*guru-varga*) and the pastimes of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, should feel indebted to His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja for his publications.

I remember one incident through which I appreciated his straightforward attitude with me. In 2008, Śrīla Mahārāja's followers had told him that I was not favourable towards him. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja called me to his temple at Govardhana after Kārtika *pūrṇimā*. It was around 4 p.m. He told me, "Why are you not coming to me? Everybody is coming but you are not."

I explained, "Mahārāja, I am not free from my services. Since my *guru-mahārāja's* physical departure, it is very difficult to manage the temples."

"I understand," he said, "but I heard that you are not favourable towards me. Please talk to my devotees, Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja and others." After that incident, I felt blessed seeing Mahārāja's straightforward simplicity, which is his blessing to me, someone who is like his junior an unworthy godbrother. Thereafter, I returned to our Dāujī Temple in Vṛndāvana.

I remember one more incident from 2009. It was 11 a.m. I had come with thirty Canadian devotees for Govardhana *parikramā*. At that time, I heard that Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was at his Govardhana temple. I took all the Canadian devotees to meet Mahārāja, which his servants mercifully allowed us to do.

I was not prepared to meet him and had only Rs. 500 with me. After all thirty devotees left, I offered the Rs. 500 to Mahārāja, who playfully said, "I expect Rs. 5 *lākhas* from you; not just 500!" I said, "Mahārāja, I don't have that right now. Please accept this for my satisfaction." Then he said, "Okay." He accepted the donation and was happily smiling. I felt great intimacy with Mahārāja.

Once, Mahārāja was physically unwell in Jagannātha Purī. It was two days before the appearance day festival of my *gurudeva*. I went to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja to request him to attend the festival. Although the disciples around Mahārāja said that he was unwell and that he could not attend, Mahārāja immediately told me, "I will come at 10 o'clock to the festival." After two days, on the appearance day festival, it was heavily raining. However, at exactly 10 a.m., Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja appeared at our temple for the festival, along with assistants such as Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja and 20 other male and female disciples. Due to the rains, even the stage was not properly prepared, but Mahārāja was there exactly on time. That *hari-kathā* festival was so glorious and I was so happy. At the end of the festival, Śrīla Mahārāja told me, "Mahārāja, I have some *prasādam* restrictions, but my devotees will take *prasādam* here." Then, Śrīla Mahārāja left for his temple, which is one block away from our temple in Purī, and all the devotees honoured *prasādam*."

All of these incidents remind me of our previous teacher's, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda

Ṭhākura's, instruction, namely that simplicity is another name of Vaiṣṇavism. Internally, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was very simple.

On 29th of December 2010, I was in South Africa. I was in my room in a retreat centre, where a holy name retreat had been arranged by the South African devotees. All the devotees were very enthusiastic to attend the retreat as Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja had just visited South Africa a few months before. Most of the devotees were at the centre. One day in the early morning at 3 a.m., the devotees knocked on my door and told me, "Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has disappeared from this world."

As soon as I heard this, I immediately felt that another guardian of the entire Gauḍīya society had physically left us. However, I believe that in spirit, he is always with us and protecting us from various dangers that come in the spiritual practice. Therefore, as I mentioned above, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja is a significant personality amongst our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. In his cen-

tennial ceremony, I humbly pray to his lotus feet to bestow his causeless mercy on me, on all Gopīnātha Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees, and on all devotees, to inspire us to listen to *hari-kathā* as he had inspired his followers to do, and to serve *guru*, Vaiṣṇavas, and Bhagavān for the rest of our lives with purity. I am especially requesting at the lotus feet of Mahārāja: please inspire me to chant with purity. I always saw that you were holding the chanting beads whenever I came to see you. Please inspire me to chant like that for the rest of my life, just as you were always doing.

Yours in service to Śrī Caitanya's mission,  
Searching for a tiny speck of dust from the lotus feet of the pure devotees,

An unworthy servant of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas,

B. B. Bodhayan

President,

Śrī Gopīnātha Gauḍīya Maṭha 



#### ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI SUNDARA SANNYĀSĪ MAHĀRĀJA

In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Bhakti-vedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja has contributed to the world a global movement dedicated to pure *bhakti-yoga* through published writings and public lectures. He travelled all over India with his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, halting at different places as a means

to remind the people about their Vedic heritage and introduce them to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

*ālokāmṛta-dānāto bhava-mahā-  
bāndhaṁ nṛṇāṁ chindataḥ  
sparśāt pāda-saroja-sauca-payasāṁ  
tāpa-trayaṁ bhindataḥ  
ālāpād-vraja-nāgarasya padayoḥ  
premānam-ātanvato*



*vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṁ  
murdhnā nipatyā kṣītau*

*Śrī Bhāgavatāṣṭakam* (5)  
(Śrī Rasikānanda Prabhu)

By seeing whom the *jīvātma* leaves the unending loop of birth and death, by touching whose lotus feet the three sufferings of material existence, namely *ādhyātmika*, *ādhidāivika*, and *ādhibhautika*, come to an end, by associating with whom one creates an infrangible attachment to Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa – I offer my humble obeisances to such a great devotee.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was such a great soul that masses of devotees from around the world travelled to receive His blessings. His spiritual master awarded him the title *Bhakta-bāndhava*, meaning “friend of the devotees”, because he demonstrated continual dedication to serving the devotees of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community. His service integrity was high and he organized the annual Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* for the holy Kārtika month for five consecutive decades.

On the request of his spiritual master, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja translated most of the prominent books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura from Bengali into Hindi. By doing this, he helped many seekers who were searching for proper guidance in spiritual advancement.

Wherever he went, people would just simply develop love for him. He would always

see any visitors as his friends and used to think, “I must help them.” He was concerned about their happiness, and he wanted to help them so that they would not get trapped in the cycle of birth and death again.


*bahūnām janmanām ante  
jñānavān mām prapadyate  
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti  
sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19)

After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.”

It is very rare to find a great soul who can actually take us to our real home. But in any case, if anyone finds one, then he should ignore all other kinds of relations and instantly grasp his lotus feet. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was such a soul who dedicated his entire life to executing his *gurudeva*’s instruction, and he especially helped the Hindi and English speaking devotees in their spiritual advancement. I pray that we all can get the association of such a *mahājana* and go back home, back to Godhead.

Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu,

Śrī Bhaktisundara Sannyāsī Mahārāja  
President & Ācārya, Gauḍīya Mission  
(Kolkata) 



ŚRĪMAD BHAKTIVEDĀNTA SĀDHU MAHARĀJA

**Remembering the *viśva-vareṇya* “world-renowned”  
*ācārya-bhāskara* “sun-like ācārya” *om viṣṇupāda*  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja  
on the occasion of his appearance centennial**

[Translated from Bengali]

**R**emembering the lotus feet of my supremely worshipful and supremely merciful Śrī Śrīla Guru-pādapadma, Ācārya-kesarī *om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Prabhu-vara, I am attempting to remember some aspects of the exemplary transcendental life of one who is blessed by his mercy alone, *viśva-vareṇya ācārya-bhāskara om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, on the auspicious occasion of the centennial of his appearance. This effort of mine will only be successful if Śrī Guru-pādapadma and he shower their mercy upon me. Hence, before recalling any memories, I pray for the merciful blessings of them both.

The most worshipful Śrīla Mahārājaji appeared in a sacred land in the state of Bihar to a dignified family, in a high class *brāhmaṇa* lineage, thus sanctifying that family.

It is described in scripture: “*kulaṁ pavitraṁ jananī kṛtārthā vasundharā sāvāsatiś-ca dhanyā, nṛtyanti svarge pitara prīteṣāṁ yeṣāṁ kule vaiṣṇava nāmadheya* – the family a Vaiṣṇava appears in becomes purified, his mother feels success, his residence and the Earth itself becomes blessed, and in heaven, his forefathers dance

in jubilation” (*Caitanya-maṅgala, Madhya-khaṇḍa* 31.163).

In reality, *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Mahārāja never had any mundane ego about being born in such a high caste. In his *śrī hari-kathā*, he would often quote the following: “*nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśya na śūdro, nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gr̥ha-patir na vanastho yatir vā, kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda pūrṇāmṛtābdher, gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ* – I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*. I do not belong to any caste. I am neither a *brahmacārī*, *gr̥hastha*, *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsī*. I am, however, a servant of the servant of the servant of the maintainer of the *gopīs*, who abounds in the resplendent sum total of supreme bliss and ocean of complete nectar” (*Padyāvalī* 74).

He would say, “As per this verse, I or we are Bhagavān’s eternal servants and He is our eternal master; this is the specification of our true identity, or *svarūpa*.”

In this context, an instance comes to mind of when he was living in Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha as the Samiti’s General Secretary, giving classes every day in the evening on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Gauḍīya-*

*kaṇṭhahāra*, *Jaiva-dharma*, etc. What is the eternal *dharma* of the *jīva*? In this context, he would request, “Can you all briefly give the answer, in essence, to this question?” Many devotees then gave various answers. Last of all, he said to me, “You give the answer to this question.” In response, I said: “Servitude to Kṛṣṇa is the *jīva*’s eternal *dharma*.” Then he said, “Yes! This is how one should give the essential answer.” In the course of speaking his *kathā*, I have just spoken of myself. For that, you all must please forgive my offence.

I want to give you an example of how he encouraged the *sevakas* by his own conduct during his time in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. As you enter Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha through the main gate, Śrī Narahari Torāṇa, to either side of the gate are flower gardens. On one side is a rose garden, and on the other side is a garden of *rajanī-gandha* (tuberose). In this garden, there were weeds, and no one had cleared them out. In the afternoon, when everyone was resting, Mahārāja took a sickle and started cutting out the weeds. When we came for class, we saw Mahārāja absorbed in this service. “Mahārāja,” we said, “this is service does not befit you; we will do this service.” In response, Mahārāja said, “My *gurudeva* used to say: ‘From cooking, cleaning to reciting *Bhāgavata*, every service befits a real servant.’”

As per the instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the six Gosvāmīs wrote texts on *bhakti*, restored the lost holy sites, established service of the deity, and rendered other such services. Likewise, to fulfil the ambitions of his

*guru-pādapadma*, Śrīla Mahārāja preached and published numerous books in Bengali, Hindi and English on the subject of *bhakti*, starting with *Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī*. In Vraja-maṇḍala, he restored various pastimes places of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra and constructed *śrī maṭhas* and *mandiras*. Thus, manifesting the service of *śrī vighraha*, he preached all over the world the message of *prema-dharma* as practised and preached by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

He was a fearless preacher of the truth and would delineate the real purport of the scriptures. He would not shy from speaking the actual truth. On one hand, he was harsher than a thundebolt in repelling conclusions opposed to scripture, and at the same time, he remains cherished even today within the treasure chests of his godbrothers’ and disciples’ hearts for being affectionate, loving and caring – softer than a flower.

After our Śrīla Guru-pādapadma’s disappearance, his absence overwhelmed our hearts and made us feel an emptiness, but in its place, just as we found Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, we found Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja’s contribution was no less.

At this point, there are a few things I cannot refrain from sharing. He showered his merciful attention on me via spiritually enlightening letters and instructions to establish me in *āśrama* life. When I was a *brahmacārī*, he prompted me to don saffron robes, and then engaged me in preaching for Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā*, and in my accepting

*sannyāsa* also, he was my main source of inspiration. If he had not showered his merciful glance upon this fallen person, then perhaps I would have ended up getting caught in the muddy pool of *māyā*. Hence, I will never be able to forget his causeless mercy.

Though I fail to experience an internal realization of his being a real *vraja-rasa-rasika* or an intimate associate of Vṛṣabhānūnandinī Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Śyāmasundara, externally I have been able to experience it somewhat. When he would, with utmost love, perform *maṅgalācaraṇa*, *vandanā*, *stava-stuti* and *śrī hari-kathā*, then I would feel how much realization there was in his prayers and *śrī hari-kathā*. It was evident he was experiencing those matters internally and had the ability to make others experience them.

Once, during Śrī Dāmodara-vrata, in the course of Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, *parama-pūjyapāda nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, *pūjyapāda* Śrī Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, and other Vaiṣṇavas were present. Our *parikramā* then was conducted from various *dharmaśālās*.

One day while the party was staying in Nandagāon, after the evening *kīrtanas*, as *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārājaṇī spoke in his *hari-kathā* of Śrī Nanda Bābā and Śrī Yaśomatī Mā's love and parental nurturing, their *vātsalya*, he became so immersed in emotion, he could not maintain his composure and began to weep profusely. *Pūjyapāda*

Janārdana Mahārāja and Trivikrama Mahārāja were also crying. Seeing their condition, we too became overwhelmed. What happened that day was not something that can be expressed in language; it can only be experienced.


Many extraordinary events of his transcendental life remain to be told. His intimate and dear ones will describe them to you. I have simply tried to relate a few brief memories.

*Parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja came into this world on the order of Bhagavān for the auspiciousness of souls like me who are trapped by *māyā*. “*Mahāntera svabhāva haya tārīte pāmara* – the nature—of exalted personalities is to deliver the fallen.” Their appearance and disappearance are synonymous. Therefore, on the occasion of his auspiciousness appearance centennial, the reverberations of separation from him are echoing in the heart of this wretch.

O supremely merciful deliverer of the fallen, O transcendent connoisseur of *vraja-rasa*, O you whose very life is Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda, please shower this wretch with the slightest merciful glance and make my life successful.

This is the heartfelt prayer and request submitted at your feet by such a wretch as me.

A servant of the servant of  
Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas,

Bhaktivedānta Sādhū  
Navadvīpa, Nadiyā 



## ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI VICĀRA VIṢṆU MAHĀRĀJA

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya  
jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena  
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

### First meeting

**I**t was in the year 1979 when I was traveling to Mathurā with my *gurudeva*, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Vaibhava Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, that I was blessed to meet His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja for the first time, at Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. I was a witness to their relationship on that day, and I could understand how close and intimate a connection Śrīla Mahārāja had with my *guru-mahārāja*. Present also at that time were Śrīpāda Premānanda prabhu, Śrīpāda Subhānanda prabhu (the late B. V. Tīrtha Mahārāja) Śrīpāda Navīna-kṛṣṇa prabhu (Śrīpāda B. V. Mādhava Mahārāja), and other Vaiṣṇavas that were so sincere and immersed in their exemplary service mood to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. I was deeply impressed by them.

### His relationship with us – temple inaugurations

On many occasions we were fortunate that Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja gracefully accepted our invitation to attend temple openings and deity installations. In the year 1988, Śrīla Mahārāja came to Bhaktivinoda Āśrama (in Ānanda Nagar, Brahmapura, Odisha) for the inauguration of the newly constructed

temple and deity installation function, with all the *maṭha brahmacārīs*. And in 1982, during the Ratha-yātrā festival time, he came to inaugurate the temple and install deities at Śrī Caitanya Candra Āśrama (Aitota, Purī, Odisha). Again, in 1984 he came to inaugurate the temple and install deities at Kovur (West Godavārī, A.P.). In the year 1989, Śrīla Mahārāja came to inaugurate the temple and install deities at Lawson's Bay Colony, Rādhā Nagar, Viśākhapaṭṭnam, Āndhra Pradeśa. On many other festival occasions also, when our *guru-mahārāja* would extend an invitation, we would feel so happy when His Divine Grace would come and grace our temple functions with his divine presence.

### Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā

By the mercy of my *gurudeva*, I once travelled from Odisha to Vṛndāvana for Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, in the company of hundreds of Oriya devotees. It was the month of Kārtika. At that time, I was fortunate to join the *parikramā* group under the expert guidance of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. By eagerly hearing from him during Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, I was able to know many divine pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda. Śrīla Mahārāja was a top class *rasika* Vaiṣṇava, so when he would explain the Lord's divine pastimes, he would become ecstatic, full of divine emotion.

Once during *parikramā*, he was speaking in Hindi, and on his request, I was explaining in the Oriya language. Many pastimes were discussed, and it was my extreme good fortune



that Mahārāja praised and loved me in our *hari-kathā*. When he spoke *līlā-kathā*, he related to me as if I were on Kṛṣṇa's side and he on Rādhārāṇī's side. So, he was 'punching' me, enacting the angry mood of Rādhārāṇī and *gopī-bhāva*. Once in Baelvana, he was narrating the glories of *rāsa-līlā* and how the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī-devī [having heard about the *rāsa-līlā* from Śrī Nārada], came from Vaikuṇṭha to enter the *rāsa* dance. This was all to enlighten us with the glory of Vraja-dhāma. He also explained how Lord Śiva became Gopīśvara but could not enter *rāsa-līlā*. Mahārāja explained in great detail, quoting many verses from *Bhāgavatam* and Gosvāmī scriptures.

After he finished speaking, he ordered me to speak in the Oriya language. Many Oriya devotees were present on the *parikramā*. I repeated Mahārāja's *hari-kathā* just as I had heard it, and I sang one song from *Gīta-govinda* where Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī was explaining *rāsa-līlā*. After finishing the Oriya *hari-kathā*, Mahārāja was so happy that he embraced me. He said, "Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sent devotees from Nilācala to join our *parikramā*." In this way, we were often blessed to relish the *līlā-kathā* of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja in our affectionate relationship during the *parikramā* time.

During the year of Śrī Rūpa Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha's auspicious inauguration, there was a special *parikramā*, and I was in bliss to be there in the association of my *sannyāsa-guru*, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Jīvana

Janārdana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Paryāṭaka Mahārāja, and many other great *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* of Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Being in such excellent Vaiṣṇava association and continuously hearing *hari-kathā* on different topics, there was an extraordinarily attractive, auspicious atmosphere generated.

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja's devotional mood was of deep absorption, so it is difficult to properly explain here in just so many words. Such deep realizations were spoken. I was so fortunate to get such blessings from great *rasika* Vaiṣṇava association.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was a very strict follower of all the principles of the Vaiṣṇava behaviour of our Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. Every day without fail, he followed his daily *sādhana*. I personally witnessed how he was teaching the *brahmacārīs* to practise and understand our scriptures. Every day he was encouraging them, explaining verses from many scriptures and *tattva* from different angles of vision. As an ideal *ācārya*, he was always teaching his followers to maintain purity, and he practised it himself, without fail. I also experienced during Navadvīpa *parikramā* and Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* that he showed all the devotees by his personal example how to maintain one's standing in spiritual life without any difficulties.

Śrīla Mahārāja possessed all the divine qualities of an empowered *ācārya*. Up to the

last breath, he showed the example of *ācāra* and *pracāra*. Even at the advanced age of 80, he travelled to preach abroad. Continuously, and tirelessly, he distributed his *rasa-kathā* for the benefit of Vaiṣṇavas all over the world. He attracted many experienced devotees and new recruits also, and he encouraged everyone to comprehend the higher realms of Gauḍīya *siddhānta*, which is necessary for spiritual progress. He published many of the Gosvāmī's literatures in English, Hindi, Spanish, Russian, and several other languages. He also distributed, without discrimination, the incomparable wealth of *vraja-bhakti* and the actual process to attain it to Western devotees.

In this Kali-yuga the whole world is suffering in different ways, both physically and mentally. No one is peaceful. Financially, the world has become dependent on techno-science. Everyone has a smartphone and internet and is busily engaged with many kinds of media connections. But the naked truth is that in spite of technological advancement, human beings are internally empty, frustrated, and suffering in many ways. They desperately need *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*, *hari-kathā* and *harināma-saṅkīrtana* – now more than ever.

“ Śrīla Mahārāja  
possessed all the  
divine qualities of an  
empowered *ācārya*.  
Up to the last breath,  
he showed the example  
of *ācāra* and *pracāra*. ...  
Continuously, and  
tirelessly, he distributed  
his *rasa-kathā* for  
the benefit of Vaiṣṇavas  
all over the world. ”

The *yuga-dharma* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. Our motto is *param vijayate śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtanam*. But without the presence of such great Vaiṣṇavas as His Divine Grace, it is very difficult to preach in this Kali-yuga. Now, many such great *ācāryas* have gone from this world, leaving it a darker, more sinful place. And the future will be darker by the influence of Kali-yuga. Still, there is all hope for spiritual progress if we always remember, and follow in the footsteps of such a great, pure *rasika* Vaiṣṇava like His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. We pray that he showers his mercy upon us all from the spiritual abode.

On the occasion of the centennial *vyāsa-pūjā* festival of Śrīla Mahārāja, I am thankful to Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Bodhayana Mahārāja [previously Vamśī-vādāna prabhu] who offered me this small service of remembering the glorious life of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja and recalling my cherished memories of him.

In the service of Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas,

Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu

Bhakti Vicāra Viṣṇu Mahārāja

Ācārya, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mission 



ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI VIDAGDHA BHĀGAVATA MAHĀRĀJA

All glory to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga!

## A humble prayer to my well-wisher

All glory to that auspicious day of *maunī-amāvasyā*, 1921. While thousands of pilgrims were taking a holy dip in the Gaṅgā in order to get salvation, a beloved of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha appeared in a Vedic *brāhmaṇa* family in a village on the bank of that holy river. All glory to that fortunate family, who was blessed on his arrival: “*kulaṁ pavitraṁ janani kṛtārtha* – the family was sanctified, the mother blessed.”

Commenting on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.29), Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, “Eternal servants of the Supreme Lord, out of compassion, make Vaiṣṇava forms descend on this mundane platform to deliver those *jīvas* who are under compulsion to suffer their own *karma*, as well as those who are in search for the non-differentiated Brahman, from their respective miserable conditions.” We adore those kind-hearted, celestial wise persons (*divya-sūris*) on this special occasion.

That area is known as Caritra-vana and is situated in Buxar, in the state of Bihar. It was inhabited mostly by Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇavas, or Śrī Vaiṣṇavas. “*Varṇāśramācāra-vatā puruṣeṇa paraḥ-pumān* – By executing *varṇāśrama-dharma*, one worships Lord Viṣṇu. There is no other way to please Him.” This is their doctrine. A person born and brought up in such an environment will have a natural inclination towards the Śrī

*sampradāya*, but after hearing potent *hari-kathā* from the holy lips of the worshipful Śrīla Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja, he abandoned all his previous possessions and aspired to be a *kiṅkarī* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Thus, he exemplified the verse of *Bhramara-gīta* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.47.18) where Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, in Her *citrajalpa*, glorified *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. [“His pastimes are nectar for the ears. Partaking just once of a single drop removes and destroys the influences of duality. Many have thus quickly relinquished home and family as wretched and, becoming wretched and destitute themselves, come to live here like birds, begging for a living.”]

The best athlete and sportsman (because of his special performance in sports, he was employed by the British government in the police department) now took refuge of one of Gaurāṅga’s *priya-jana*, the worshipable Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and became a mendicant, thus refuting the heinous doctrine of Cārvāka that only a physically handicapped person should take to the spiritual path because he is unable to enjoy material happiness. Let us worship that exalted *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, along with the speaker.

Exhibiting an ideal *sādhu* character as demonstrated by Lord Kapiladeva (*Śrīmad-*

*Bhāgavatam*, 3.25. 21–23)<sup>2</sup>, he led an austere life in Mathurā Śrī Keśavaḥ Gaudīya Maṭha, and his indefatigable effort to spread pure *hari-kīrtana* will remain a source of inspiration for all of us. Chanting sixty-four rounds of *harināma* every day without fail, delivering incessant *hari-kathā* in the *maṭha*, publishing books and periodicals in the Hindi language, attending preaching programs in different parts of Mathurā and outside, participating in Navadvīpa-dhāma and Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramās* each year – with all these activities, he was the illustration of “the living *mṛdaṅga*” (as per Śrīla Prabhupāda’s explanation) in the mission of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. On this special occasion of his 100th appearance day, we bow down to that living *mṛdaṅga* and pray for his causeless mercy.

He was a friend of all Vaiṣṇavas. Whenever any *maṭha* in Vraja-maṇḍala received trouble from outsiders, he used to stand by their side and would help in every possible way,

<sup>2</sup> “He is tolerant, compassionate, a friend to all living beings, an enemy of none, peaceful, and as he abides by the scriptures, he is adorned with all saintly qualities. He who engages in an exclusive mood of devotion for Me gives up all activities for Me, renouncing his family and friends. Absorbed in hearing and reciting My pastimes, he does not suffer any misery, as his heart is fixed on Me.”

to protect the *maṭha*. He was friendly to all residents of Vrajabhūmi. Several times, he arranged august assemblies with erudite Vaiṣṇavas of different *sampradāyas* in the Mathurā Maṭha and would present the supremacy of *rūpānuga-bhakti*. The residents of Vrajabhūmi lovingly offered him the title “Yugācārya”. In this way, he demonstrated a unique example of “*vaiṣṇava-maitrī*” (friendship with Vaiṣṇavas).

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has taught us to pray “*kabe jīve dayā, haibe udaya, nija-sukha bhuli sudīna hṛdaya, bhaktivinoda kariya vinaya, śrī ājñā ṭhala karibe pracāra* – When will mercy for conditioned souls arise in my heart? Being oblivious to his own comfort, with a humble mood, Bhaktivinoda will broadcast the order of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.”

Exhibiting this mood of an ideal *ācārya*, the adorable Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, in an advanced age, travelled around the globe several times, inspired thousands of devotees to pursue the *rūpānuga* path sincerely, and delivered thousands of conditioned souls by mercifully accepting them as his disciples. In such a way he distributed the mercy of Mahāprabhu around the world.

In this short span of life, a wretched person like me has had the exquisite fortune

“ On this special  
occasion of his 100th  
appearance day,  
we bow down to  
that living *mṛdaṅga*  
and pray for his  
causeless mercy. ”


of having *darśana* of *Vaikuṇṭha-priya* persons. “*Durlabho manuṣo deho dehinam kṣanana-bhaṅguraḥ, tatrāpi durlabham manye vaikuṇṭha priya darśanam* – the human form of life itself is rare and easily lost in a moment, but I think that to have the audience of those dear to the Lord of *Vaikuṇṭha* (*Vaikuṇṭha* is also one name of the Lord) is rarer still” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.29). They guided me affectionately, and I see no difference in their instructions. When my worshipful *guru-mahārāja, om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, wanted me to accept the *sannyāsa* order, out of extreme indolence, I wanted *bābājī* attire. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja said, “No, you must take the *sannyāsa* order and preach,” and he gave me *sannyāsa* attire.

Delightful Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja used to invite me on different occasions to his *maṭha* and almost every time he told me: “You should never stop preaching. In the future you will have to protect the *sampradāya*.” Therefore, the instructions of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas are the same to me, but “*ekāki āmāra nāhi pāya bala harināma saṅkīrtane*.” I am a feeble person. I do not have enough strength to perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. O Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, from the eternal abode, please bestow a merciful glance upon this miserable soul.

Praying for your causeless mercy,

The servant of the servant of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas,

Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu

Śrī Bhakti Vidagdha Bhāgavata 





## Excerpts from the offerings of Dīkṣā & Śikṣā Disciples



ŚRĪPĀDA BHAKTIVEDĀNTA BHĀGAVAT MAHĀRĀJA

*nāma om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale  
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

*nāma om viṣṇu-pādāya rādhikāyaḥ-priyātmane  
śrī-śrīmad-bhaktivedānta-nārāyaṇa iti nāmine*

**T**he *ācārya* is eternal. He lives through his books and the voices of his spiritual descendants who faithfully repeat his teachings. Those who devotedly adhere to his spiritual instructions feel his presence. By preaching his message with conviction, a disciple arranges for his spiritual master to manifest before an audience and enlighten those who hear that message with sincerity. An *ācārya* is first and foremost a *sat-śiṣya*, an eternal student of his *gurudeva*, always remaining at the feet of *śrī guru* with total unconditional humility. This mood of submissive service qualifies the disciple to be honoured with the title of spiritual master, *ācārya*.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Gurudeva, is a perfect example of a *sat-śiṣya* who performed the role of *sad-guru* as a submissive service to his *dīkṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and his *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Gurudeva demonstrated by his outstanding example how to be a disciple that serves in a mood of completely submissive devotion to his *dīkṣā-guru's* and *śikṣā-guru's* instructions and at the same time never compromises on the orders given by them. Thus, Śrīla Gurudeva

taught us by his example that *guru-niṣṭhā* is the backbone of *bhakti*.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja translated the books that his *dīkṣā-guru* ordered him to render from Bengali into Hindi and then had them translated into English, books such as *Jaiva-dharma*, *Bhakti-tattva-viveka*, and *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*. He also created Hindi purports and commentaries to many classical texts like *Catuḥ-śloki Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Rāsa-pañcādhyāyī*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and *Brahma-saṁhitā*, many of which were translated into English. He gave us many books based on lectures that he delivered in English, which were centered around various themes of *bhakti*: *The Way of Love*, *Secret Truths of the Bhāgavatam*, *The Origin of the Ratha-yātrā*, and many more, and some based on lectures from Hindi: *Nectar of Govinda-līlā*, *Going Beyond Vaikuṇṭha*, and *Bhakti-rasāyana* (based on a portion of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*).

He took the orders of his *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda to heart and preached the message of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness all over the world. While doing so, he resuscitated the spiritual lives of hundreds of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples and

followers and gave them new energy to take up the principles and practices of *bhakti* again. Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja trained and educated the disciples of Śrīlā Prabhupāda and his own new disciples in the West through his lectures, festivals and *darśanas*. He showed us how to execute pure devotional service as Śrīlā Prabhupāda had instructed us to do in *Nectar of Devotion*. Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja taught the disciples of Śrīlā Prabhupāda the inner meaning of Śrīlā Prabhupāda's *praṇāma-mantras* and his mission.

Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja reinvigorated the Badger project, known as New Braja, which was started by some of Śrīlā Prabhupāda's disciples. He established a yearly festival there, with worship of Girirāja-Govardhana, that attracted over 1000 devotees every year. He performed festivals like this on the east coast of the USA in Florida and elsewhere. He performed festivals in Europe, Russia, Australia, Hong Kong, South Africa, and Brazil, celebrating the teachings of Śrīlā Rūpa Gosvāmī and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, elucidating for the devotees the deep, inner meaning of those teachings.

Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja established temples in Govardhana, Vṛndāvana, Navadvīpa, Purī, Bangalore, London, Brazil, and Houston for the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Vinoda-Bihārī and Mahāprabhu and taught us the intimate glories of these deities and the pastimes connected with the Divine Couple in this and other manifestations. Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's glories of preaching all over the world are unlimited.

Personally, Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja pulled me out of the dark well of married life and brought me back to the lotus feet of my Śrīlā Prabhupāda, engaging me in his service. He blessed me to understand the intricacies of this process of pure *bhakti* and blessed me to be a *sannyāsī* and preacher for the *saṅkīrtana* mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There are numerous intimate exchanges that I had with him, but one story above all stands out in my mind and heart.

I was preaching on Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's behalf in Catania, Sicily, as a *sannyāsī*. During that time, there was a *ṛtvik* temple there. The head of the temple came to one of my classes in someone's home, and he liked that I was presenting the philosophy like Śrīlā Prabhupāda did, so he invited me to come and give a lecture at the *ṛtvik* temple. All the *ṛtvik* disciples came and I explained to them about the *guru-paramparā*, the *śikṣā*- and *dīkṣā-guru*, and the deep relationship that Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja had with Śrīlā Prabhupāda. Later that year, at the *hari-kathā* festival in Venice, Italy, all the devotees in the *ṛtvik* temple met Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and immediately surrendered to him and became his disciples. Later that year in September, I returned and was told by some devotees in Catania that they had Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's picture on the altar but not Śrīlā Keśava Mahārāja's picture. I then spent two days preaching the glories of Śrīlā Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja and his intimate relationship with Śrīlā Prabhupāda as Śrīlā Prabhupāda's *sannyāsa-guru*. I sang the

songs that Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja wrote and explained the Rādhā-Vinoda-Bihārī Tattvāṣṭakam poem that he wrote. After that, they framed a picture of Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja and placed it on the altar.

I related this story to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and he was very pleased. Then, when the first day of Kārtika came and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja performed the worship of Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja to honour his disappearance day, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja garlanded the photographs, applied sandalwood paste, and performed *ārati* to his beloved *gurudeva*. At the end, he offered *puṣpāñjali* flowers at the feet of Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja and the *paramparā*. When he finished, he turned around and looked for me behind him in the crowd. Upon seeing me, he called me to come stand next to him, took my hand and filled it with flowers. Then he said, “Now you offer flowers to my *guru-mahārāja*.” This was significant, for he

had given me access to his beloved *gurudeva* and I was overwhelmed with emotions upon receiving this blessing. Yet he understood my heart perfectly, telling me once, “I know that only your Svāmī Prabhupāda is in your heart.” I told him that I saw my Śrīla Prabhupāda in him. He said that is all right. However, I knew that whatever progress I had made in the second part of my life was due to his association and bringing Śrīla Prabhupāda back into my life in a deep and meaningful manner.

On this centennial celebration of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, I am offering this *puṣpāñjali* of his glorious preaching work as a world *ācārya* and praying for his mercy that I might again make some advancement in the process of devotional service.

Your Servant,

Svāmī B. V. Bhāgavat



#### ŚRĪPĀDA BHAKTIVEDĀNTA VAIKHĀNAS MAHĀRĀJA

**D**earest Śrīla Gurudeva,

Please accept my humble and loving obeisance at the dust of your lotus feet. By this I mean I am offering my respect and gratitude to you and to those who are near and dear to you and serve you with faith and love.

When Mahāprabhu pacified Mukunda after appearing to reject him, He assured Mukunda that he is always with Him as His

eternal servitor and that those that associate with and serve Mukunda are similarly blessed.

*janma janma tomarā pāile mora saṅga*

*tomā sabāra bhṛtye o dekhibe mora raṅga*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (2.10.287)

You have My association birth after birth. Even all your servants will see My pastimes.



In Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's commentary, he writes, "When the Lord performs His pastimes in this world, His associates come with Him and engage in His service. Persons who are counted as servants of those associates also receive the opportunity to realize those pastimes of the Lord."

Your teachings and literary contributions to the world are vast and will be increasingly appreciated and understood in the years to come. Out of all that I have heard and seen and tried to understand, something stands out most to me, and that is your quality of deep compassion and unconditional love for all, especially for those who desire to enter the service of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, under the shelter of our divine guardians in the line of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha. Your own *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, gave you the title "Bhakta-bāndhava" which means one who has a mood of great friendship and love for the devotees. He saw your natural faith and attachment to the service of *śrī guru* and to those who are dear to *śrī guru*.

We became the recipients of that natural affection when, on the request of our beloved *guru*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, your friend and *śikṣā-guru*, you left Mathurā-Vṛndāvana-dhāma to help his disciples and again shower the world with the sweet nectar of the confidential teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

From our first meeting, I felt the power of your love, infused with kindness and humility. I had not sensed that since the time

of our Śrīla Prabhupāda's manifest presence on the planet. To me and many of my godbrothers and godsisters, it was clear that Śrīla Prabhupāda was with you and speaking through you.

At first, I simply wanted to bask in that affection and enjoy the newly awakened taste for hearing and chanting the holy names of the Lord. Gradually, through your association and the example of those who were close to you, an awareness of something more came into my heart. That was a particle of the meaning of Mahāprabhu's prayers; "*gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*," and "*amāninā mānadena*."

You revealed that success in *bhakti* comes by rejecting the desire for personal fame and prestige and instead, seeking to honour and serving *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas. This is what you showed the world, and this is how I want to live my life, to emulate your mood of humble service to Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. I have no qualification for this, but once before I expressed a desire to you for something very high, and you smiled happily, thumped me on my chest three times and laughing, replied, "Very good, very good, very good." In the following years you have always nourished my tender *bhakti* creeper and shown me unconditional support during my imperfect endeavours. You have given me the name Bhaktivedānta to reinforce my connection with my Holy Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda and with you. At that time, you told me that you will always help me so that I can one day fulfil the real meaning of that title.



Now, in honouring your divine appearance day, I am begging to be an instrument in your eternal service to our exalted *guru-varga* and to the Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavīs who follow them. I pray to embrace with full enthusiasm and compassion, Mahāprabhu's desire to uplift all the conditioned souls

of this world. I have no qualification but pray that one day soon I may be counted among your near and dear in this spirit.

Your insignificant servant

Bhaktivedānta Vaikhānas ❶



ŚRĪPĀDA BHAKTIVEDĀNTA BHĀGAVATA MAHĀRĀJA

*Jaya om viṣṇu-pāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī*

*Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja kī jaya!*

On the auspicious occasion of your disappearance in the year of your auspicious hundredth birth anniversary I beg to offer my prostrated *daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* at your auspicious lotus feet and pray for your causeless mercy. Everything in connection with you is auspicious and meditating upon those feet eradicates the darkness of the ignorance of this material world. By the instructions of our *śāstras* such as *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 22.54, we have heard that a mere moment's contact with a pure *bhakta* can award all perfection. Thus, the number of opportunities which you have awarded to the conditioned souls of this world is incalculable.

The cause of my fortunate meeting with you, O *paramārādhya-tama* Gurudeva, and my subsequent engagement in your service was the grace of my *dīkṣā-gurudeva*, *om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī, our Śrīlā Prabhupāda,

who mercifully first blessed the Western world and indeed all of the major countries of the world with his lotus feet. Without his mercy, as expressed in his *darśanas*, morning walks, lectures and especially through his voluminous books, I would have been fully incapable of comprehending the teachings of Śrīlā Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

Śrīlā Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, our Gurudeva, was like Nityānanda, a *guṇa-maṇi* – jewel of exalted qualities. One of these was his devotion to *nāma*. *Nāma-gāne sadā ruci*. The most prominent symptom of *bhāva* is a taste to always chant *nāma*. Practically from the very time he joined the Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa until his apparent departure from our presence, he would chant a minimum of one *lākha nāma* and often two *lākhās* or more. His servitor, Navīna Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī, told me that Śrīlā Gurudeva did not like to be disturbed while chanting, thus we surmise that

he felt deep attachment to *nāma*, realizing the identical nature of *nāma* and *nāmī* (the name and the possessor of the name, Kṛṣṇa Himself). He also instructed us to do likewise. Especially I know that he wanted those who were engaged in book publication to do their *sevā* only after completing their *nāma-sevā* of one *lākha*.

Out of service to his *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, and our *guru-varga* he was always engaged in translating books by our disciplic succession such as Vedavyāsa, Śrīla Rūpa and Raghunātha Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Many important literatures were out of print, so he printed them for the benefit of the Vaiṣṇava world.

Since Gurudeva's mission was to fulfil the heart's desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, for many years he organised a three day festival of Rūpa Gosvāmī *kathā* on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *tirobhāva-mahotsava*, inviting all senior preachers of Vṛndāvana to participate. It was successful and indeed helped to create unity.

Gurudeva wrote a small book of five essays, *Five Essential Essays*, to help eradicate misunderstandings about important truths of Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* that had arisen in modern times.


For me and all others, the false ego is the greatest obstacle to advancement. In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna about the 8 elements: 5 gross and 3 subtle. While describing the subtle elements, he says *mano buddhir eva ca ahaṅkāra iti* with a special stress (*eva ca*) on *ahaṅkāra*. Thus false ego is a difficult obstacle. Gurudeva is renowned for giving help in removing this *ahaṅkāra*.

Gurudeva is renowned for his explanation of the verses concerning Mahāprabhu's descent from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 4, which describe His coming as *rasika-śekhara* to taste *unnatojjvala-rasa*, the *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and for being *parama-karuṇa*, supremely merciful by awarding *rāga-mārga bhakti* to humanity, for the attainment of *sva-bhakti-śriyam*, the beautiful embodiments of the leaves and *mañjarīs* who enhance the beauty of the golden creeper of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This is the highest possible attainment for the *jīva*. This was awarded to us by Śrīla Gurudeva. He also informed us of the inner meaning of Mahāprabhu's name: *mahā* and *prabhu: rasa-rāja*.

Once Gurudeva said words to the effect that if he should perform any wrong thing against the principles of *bhakti* he should be rejected. This humble statement is meant to encourage us to become *ācārya*. The word *ācārya* is defined in *śāstra*: *ācaratīti ācārya* – one who sets an example for his disciples by his actions is known as *ācārya*. His example was spotless for all time. He had no private life that was remotely different from his preaching.

Gurudeva's preaching was so immense and broad that I feel incapable to speak about it, nor is there time available at my disposal. Fortunately, Gurudeva left so many exalted devotees who can make up for my unlimited defects.

Jaya Gurudeva!

Tridaṇḍī-svāmī Bhaktivedānta  
Bhāgavata (choṭa) 



## ŚRĪPĀDA BHAKTIVEDANTA SĀDHU MAHĀRĀJA

**D**ear Śrīla Gurudeva,

Please accept millions of my  
*daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* unto your  
lotus feet.

*nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api  
śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ  
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm  
māthurīm goṣṭhavāṭīm  
rādhā-kunḍaṁ giri-varam  
aho! rādhikā-mādhavāśāṁ  
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā  
śrī gurum taṁ nato 'smi*

Śrī Mukta-carita (4)

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

I offer *praṇāma* to *śrī guru*, by whose abundant mercy I have obtained the topmost name of Śrī Hari; the *dīkṣā-mantras*; [the service of] Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his older brother, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī; the vast abode of Śrī Mathurā, Vraja, Rādhā-kunḍa, and Govardhana; as well as a desire for [the loving service of] Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava.

Śrīla Gurudeva, you have given everything to this completely unworthy person filled with all kinds of inauspicious qualities. You have dragged me out of the terrible hell of material enjoyment and made me a recipient of the greatest gift of *rūpānuga-bhajana*.

Śrīla Gurudeva, you were always telling us to remember that we are in Vṛndāvana, where Yamunā is flowing so graciously (“kal-kal-kal”), birds are chirping, bees are humming, and peacocks are dancing, while the Divine Couple are seated on a golden throne, Kṛṣṇa pressing His flute to His lips, and Rādhikā offering Him betel nuts... When you were giving devotees *dīkṣā-mantras* in Gopīnātha Bhavan, you were pointing to the scenery behind the window and saying, “You should always remember Vṛndāvana. Just like this....”

You were putting so much hope into each and every one of us. “Be strong; don’t be weak” – you were saying like a *mantra* to all, in every single festival. “I have great hope in you. I want you to preach my mission” – you were saying to devotees individually.

Śrīla Gurudeva, you are the best of the *rūpānugas*. By your teachings, you presented the conceptions of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī to the world so vigorously, straightforwardly, and sweetly that no one in the world could resist that. Yes, everybody was taking, even surprisingly. “We couldn’t even think before it means *that!*”

You have demonstrated practically what *vaiṣṇavatā* is. You were so deep, so high, so ferocious in battle for Mahāprabhu’s conceptions, and simultaneously so gentle and loving for your lion cubs. Even for your daughters you were saying, “I want my

daughters to be like lionesses. Not like ‘miaow, miaow, miaow’....”

You were showing us how Kṛṣṇa is playing His flute, and you were personally showing how Rūpa and Rati Mañjarīs are glancing and moving while the Sevā-kuñja picture was being painted.

The family atmosphere you created was unforgettable. “We are a family,” you were telling us. When we were introducing a new person to you, he or she immediately could feel that mood.

In the song of your own composition, *Śrī Guru-caraṇa-kamala bhaja man*, at the end, you sing:

*tana-mana-jīvana, guru-pade arpaṇa,  
(sadā) śrī harināma raṭan*

Offering my body, mind, and very life at the feet of Gurudeva, I incessantly sing *śrī harināma*.

You taught us by your own example how to hold your life in your palm and offer it to *śrī guru*.

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād  
īśād apetasya viparyayo ’smṛtiḥ  
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ  
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.37)*

Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord, called *māyā*. When the living entity thus turns away

from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul.

You made us learn this *śloka*, as well as many others. You were so caring about your *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs*, particularly stressing that they should learn proper *tattva* and *siddhānta*.

You were telling every one of us to preach, each and every one. Sometimes you were even saying, “If you don’t preach, don’t tell you are my disciple!”

You were offering all of us, like wonderful fragrant flowers, to the lotus feet of Girirāja Govardhana, to Yamunā-devī, Gopīśvara Mahādeva, Vṛndā-devī, Paurṇamāsī Yogamāyā, and all the Deities of Vṛndāvana, and certainly Their Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī.

Today, on the eve of the 10th anniversary of your divine disappearance from this world, as well as your 100th *vyāsa-pūjā*, this fallen and unworthy servant, remembering your lotus feet, is crying and begging for strength to be always able to meet your divine expectations. Please let me hold my life in my palm and offer it to your lotus feet, Śrīla Gurudeva!

Dīna hīna,

Bhaktivedānta Sādhū 

## SUNDARA-GOPĀLA DĀSA



**D**ear most worshipable Śrīla Gurudeva, I am offering my *koṭi, koṭi daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* at your lotus feet.

It has been ten years since you left our physical vision, but I am so unfortunate that I am not feeling any separation or lacking in my life. Now I have been given an opportunity to offer *śraddhā-puṣpāñjali* at your lotus feet on the most auspicious occasion of the centennial of your appearance.

Even though a *baddha-jīva* is not capable of glorifying a transcendental personality like you, still for my own purification I am writing something.

### Your magnanimity

Your love and affection extended beyond your direct disciples – anyone who came to you for shelter immediately got your love and teachings without hesitation. When we hear the classes that you spoke to the senior devotees of ISKCON, the love you have for them is clearly felt. It also showed how you revealed your heart to them, considering them to be senior devotees who had practised Kṛṣṇa Consciousness for a long time, and it showed your eagerness for them to advance further on that path of *rūpānuga-bhakti*.

You mentioned in your morning walks that, just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa reciprocates according to one's devotion, a *guru* reciprocates depending on the disciple's surrender. Similarly, whoever came to you with a desire to learn and advance,

you nourished them according to their situation and always enthused them to advance further in *bhakti*.

Devotees who were involved in publications at the other Gauḍīya Maṭhas mentioned how you provided support and any material whenever they requested it. Similarly, your books were put on the Internet and can be downloaded by anyone without any costs.

### Taking Responsibility

In one of your classes, you mentioned that one who doesn't take responsibility is like an animal. You yourself showed throughout your life the proper way to take responsibility, starting in the early years of maintaining Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha (including its residents, your godbrothers, and later the disciples of Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja) and then publishing *granthas* and magazines, engaging in local preaching, handling court cases, and more. Responsibilities increased as you assumed the role of accepting disciples. The size of the *parikramās* increased, but you were never deterred. Instead, you became so pleased at seeing so many pilgrims glorifying the Lord and engaging in *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*. You took responsibility for whoever came to you with a desire to advance in spiritual life.

In addition to accepting the responsibility of your ever-increasing society, you also took the responsibility of protecting the *sampradāya* against allegations, through



publishing *Prabandha Pañcakam* (*Five Essential Essays*), challenging the *bābājīs* when you visited Rādhā-kuṇḍa (who used to say that the line of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda doesn't follow a proper *guru-paramparā* or follow the six Gosvāmīs), and protecting the *rūpānuga-dhārā* through your publications like *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Śrī Rāsa-pañcādhyāyī*, *Śrī Gītā-govinda*, etc. You mentioned that even though not many devotees are qualified to read some of the *granthas*, still something should be available in the *rūpānuga-dhārā* or devotees will read the many editions available in the market and be misled instead. You gave ample warnings that one has to tread these topics very carefully, as evidenced by including Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's foreword to your introduction to *Śrī Gītā-govinda*.

## Your natural humility

We try to be humble in our activities especially when associating with senior devotees, but you displayed your natural humility in all circumstances.

Once you performed a pastime of having back pain during the Murwillumbah festival in 2005. The local devotees requested a local physiotherapist to make a house call. When he arrived on the first floor where you were staying, he was carrying a small medical bag. You indicated your displeasure to us that we didn't greet the physiotherapist at the door and carry his bag for him. You then indicated to us to set up the massage bed (i.e. before the physiotherapist did). We were amazed at how

respectful you were to him, and then after the check-up, you instructed us to carry the physiotherapist's bag to his car.

Even though you had tens of thousands of disciples all over the world including doctors, lawyers, scientists, etc. and you received the "Yugācārya" award, still nothing affected you.

In his *kīrtana*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura expanded on the explanation of the *trṇād api sunīcena śloka*:

*jīvana-nirvāhe āne udvega nā dibe  
para-upakāre nija-sukha pāsaribe* (4)

*hōile-o sarva-guṇe guṇī mahāśaya  
pratiṣṭhāśā chāḍī' karō amānī hṛdaya* (5)

*kṛṣṇa-adhiṣṭhāna sarva-jīve jānī' sadā  
karōbi sammāna sabe ādare sarvadā* (6)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kīrtane Jādi  
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

In the course of leading your life, do not give anxiety to anyone else. For the benefit of others, forget your own comforts. Even if you are a great soul endowed with all good qualities, relinquish the desire for honor and make your heart humble. Knowing Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be situated within all living beings, always respect and show affection to all.

You are the embodiment of this *śloka*.

## An important component of Mahāprabhu's mission

I am extremely unqualified in trying to express what you have given, and this will be explained

in more detail by your senior disciples who have realized what you have given.

You explained how all the *ācāryas* in the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give what Mahāprabhu came to give as explained in the *śloka anarpita-carīm cirāt*. Under the direction and inspiration of Mahāprabhu, each *ācārya* emphasised a special aspect of this mission. Being empowered by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, you emphasised the goal of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, especially *rūpānuga-bhakti*, and how to attain that goal.

By speaking about the *ācāryas* during their respective *tithis* as well as by presenting their articles/*hari-kathā* in your magazines, you indicated that we should not neglect or ignore their instructions, as they are all beneficial for us in achieving our goal and in particular, are a foundation for properly understanding and applying your message and instructions.

However, it is sufficient to say that you are an important part of fulfilling Śrīman Mahāprabhu's desire. It is very rare for one in the modern era to obtain genuine greed to become a *rāgānuga-bhakta* if one doesn't follow your teachings as delineated in your publications and *hari-kathā*, what to speak about attaining perfection as a *rūpānuga*.

Thus you wanted all your publications and *hari-kathā* to be easily accessible and available to all. But it is my great misfortune that I was unable to take to your conduct and teachings with gravity. My conduct is not befitting a devotee, let alone your disciple.

You often used to say, "I am always with you. Don't fear. If you have any doubts, you can call me. I will remove all your *anarthas*." You even showed that these statements are true, but I never paid attention to your words, and root of the problem is that I was maintaining the conception that you are a mortal being.

On Guru-pūrṇimā 2008, you mentioned in your *hari-kathā* that "merely placing a garland on the neck of *śrī guru* or offering at his feet a few flowers and fruits, some money, sweets, or cloth does not mean that real worship of the *guru* has been performed. The real *vyāsa-pūjā* is to surrender oneself completely at the lotus feet of *śrī gurudeva* and to fulfil his desires. This means that one should completely offer one's independence at the lotus feet of *śrī guru* in a mood of surrender: 'O Śrīla Gurudeva, I am offering everything that belongs to me at your lotus feet.'"

I know that I am unable to really perform *vyāsa-pūjā*, so I am trying to be under the guidance of your one-pointed devotees. They are in reality performing your *vyāsa-pūjā*.

On this auspicious occasion of your appearance day, I am praying that I can become qualified to become a true worshipper of your *vyāsa-pūjā*, not only once a year, but at every moment of my life.

Your unworthy servant,  
Sundara-gopāla dāsa  
(Fiji / Australia) 



GIRIDHĀRĪ DĀSA

## A True Personification of Guru-tattva and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Saṅkīrtana Movement

*śrī śrī guru gaurāṅgau jayataḥ*

I offer my humble obeisances at the lotus feet of *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Rūpānuga Ācārya-varya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

A genuine Vaiṣṇava is very rare. A fully self-realized Vaiṣṇava is rarer yet, and what to speak of one who has understood the Supreme Absolute Truth. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says, “Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavour for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.” This is certainly the case with our Śrīla Gurudeva. He is a perfect being who truly knows God.

Śrīla Gurudeva, while on this planet, was the perfect living and breathing example of the *guru-tattva* we so often hear and read about in *śāstra*. His every word and action was a spotless example of a genuine *guru*. It is difficult explaining this to those who haven't physically met him, but his every movement and mannerism somehow communicated his internal state, a state of absorption in another realm, another reality.

Śrīla Gurudeva demonstrated the full range of attitudes pure devotees are said to have. A simpler reading of *śāstra* will tell us that a true *guru* or Vaiṣṇava never speaks

harshly or criticizes anyone. But those of superior understanding know that *śrī guru* is not only as soft and gentle as a lotus but also as bold and shattering as lightning. Śrīla Gurudeva wasn't the static flatterer *guru* so many want. No. He was often the dynamic chastiser *guru* so many need.

Due to our ignorant nature and aversion to pain (even the good kind), we sometimes view *śrī guru's* words as harsh, when really, they are his mercy. In fact, a big point of saintly association is exposure to these cutting words. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.26.26 it says, “... only saintly personalities, with their powerful and virtuous instructions, can cut our unholy, material attachments from the heart.” The cutting of our *anarthas* hurts, but we need it, just like a diamond in the rough requires extensive polishing.

Śrīla Gurudeva's glories are unlimited. So, choosing what to focus on is quite the task. However, two things stand out to me. First is his understanding of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's heart, His innermost moods and desires. Many of Śrīla Gurudeva's disciples are far more qualified to elaborate on this topic, and so I will not. But it suffices to say that Śrīla Gurudeva's mission was absolutely in line with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana*

movement 500 years ago. Fools sometimes deride Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lineage as an unfortunate deviation from the 'real thing', based solely on petty external customs. Sadly, they cannot see that every single thing our *guru-varga* (and Śrīla Gurudeva in particular) does is a direct service and fulfilment of Mahāprabhu's desire. *Patita-pāvana* Śācinandana Gaurahari bestowed the highest treasure to the most fallen; our Śrīla Gurudeva followed this example.


The second distinct characteristic of Śrīla Gurudeva was his absorption in *harināma*. If we think about it, all the strenuous preaching efforts, all the books and book-distribution, all the debating and philosophizing, all the *siddhānta*, all the endeavours to visit the *dhāma* (and hopefully reside there), all the *sādhu-saṅga* – all of it – is to either convince people to chant or make conditions more favourable for chanting the holy names. Realizing Nāma Prabhu through constant chanting in the association of pure devotees – with full understanding of *sambandha-tattva*, *abhidheya-tattva*, and *prayojana-tattva* – is the whole point of everything we do in devotional life.

Śrīla Gurudeva demonstrated this clear understanding. He knew what was truly essential. He was absorbed in the chanting of *harināma* constantly. If he wasn't, he was speaking *harikathā*, which is in fact *nāma-kīrtana*. And if he was doing anything else at all, it was only to convince us to engage in this process.

Connecting with the Absolute through His sound vibration is the only method. It is the only way. *Harer nāmaiva kevalam*. Chanting and hearing *harināma* is what we are all about. *Harināma* is eternal. It isn't simply a means to an end; it is the topmost activity in the topmost reality, now and forever. It is God in sound form.

Sometimes my awe for our (Śrīla Gurudeva's disciples') good fortune takes the form of disbelief. I genuinely tell myself, "It's too good to be true. We can't be this lucky. Is this for real?" Sometimes I doubt, but *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas are so merciful they remind me, remind us, that this impossibly good fortune is real. And yet, time and again, we forget. This the nature of the *jīva*: forgetfulness. Therefore, on this most special occasion, I pray to the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva, our *guru-varga*, and the Vaiṣṇavas, that the awareness of my good fortune is never lost on me. In a world where everyone is more and more enthralled by the say-so of their material senses, mind, and intellect, I pray to Śrī Guru that his light of knowledge will illuminate both my dark heart and the path towards the youthful *nṛtya-gītā-nāma-priyā* Śrī Gaurasundara and His beautiful pastimes. I pray to Śrīla Gurudeva that someday I will embody the verse *trṇād-api sunīcena*, such that Nāma Prabhu will mercifully dance on my tongue. And lastly, I pray that I may always serve by Śrīla Gurudeva's side.

Dāsānudāsa

Giridhārī dāsa (Costa Rica) 



## VANAMĀLĪ DĀSA

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya rādhikāyaḥ-priyātmane  
śrī-śrīmad-bhaktivedānta-nārāyaṇa iti nāmine*

*Jaya Śrīla Gurudeva!*

What can I say to you who are my everything? I remember your being there for me when I was disillusioned, lost, and feeling weak. You made it very clear to me what your position was, what my position was, and how even though we were worlds apart spiritually you were willing to reach out with love to me. You brought me back to that child-like appreciation for Kṛṣṇa consciousness that I knew as a young man. You renewed my faith by reassuring my troubled intellect, which had become poisoned by cynicism.

You did this by speaking the nectarean teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as they were meant to be taught, with purity and impeccable example. With the gentle caress of your *hari-kathā*, and your loving, sincere guidance and friendship, you touched my heart, which had become darkened and hardened to the sweetness of spiritual life. And now you are taking me on a tour of the revealed scriptures – Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and yours. You are showing me many of the hidden gems that reside within their pages.


You are also taking me on a tour of the *dhāmas*, revealing the pastime places that are so dear to your heart because they are so dear to the Divine Couple, especially Śrīmatī

Rādhikā. You encourage me to bathe in the dust of those holy places, which I do with great happiness knowing that your foot dust is also residing there.

You are showing me the unlimited sweetness of the holy name. You have given me these names imbued with the potency of your loving mood. I am eternally praying to develop some appreciation for this great gift that you have given me. I know that by chanting these names under your guidance eventually all spiritual *rasas* and *tattvas* will be revealed.

You are revealing to me that not only do you dwell in my heart but also in the hearts of all your sincere followers. Thank you, for great sweetness and solace can be found in their association.

Oh, what a conundrum! I cannot stop trying to glorify you; yet I am incapable of doing so. You are my everything. The reality is that I have no life separate from you. Please allow me to fully appreciate this fact and live my life in your service.

Your unworthy disciple,  
Vanamālī dāsa  
(New Zealand) 





## ŚYĀMASUNDARA DĀSA

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya rādhikāyaḥ-priyātmane  
śrī-śrīmad-bhaktivedānta-nārāyaṇa iti nāmine*

**1**996 started as the most difficult year of my spiritual life, but soon became the most blessed.

My family and I were fortunate to have been able to associate with His Divine Grace *om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He made such a great impact on our lives and sparked the light in our hearts that truly brightened our spiritual lives. We had never heard or seen anyone preach so furiously as Śrīla Gour Govinda Gosvāmī Mahārāja, so loving and inspiring, all at the same time. He was truly a great inspiration to us all, a *mahā-bhāgavata* who took His followers to a higher level, eagerly wanting to hear more and more of His divine message. But in February of 1996 we received a call telling us that this great soul had concluded his pastimes in this world. We felt such deep sadness and despair. It broke our hearts knowing that we would never be able to associate with our beloved Śrīla Gour Govinda Gosvāmī Mahārāja again. I was still young at that time. It left a great big hole in our hearts. I became confused and remember how I went outside, crying in the rain with great pain of separation. I felt like no one would ever be able to inspire me again as Śrīla Gour Govinda Gosvāmī Mahārāja did.

Sometime after the departure of Śrīla Gour Govinda Gosvāmī Mahārāja in 1996, we started hearing whispers about a great *mahā-*

*bhāgavata* preaching with the same passion as Śrīla Gour Govinda Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He was a great personality who preached the same message of love and didn't hold back. His name was Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. "Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa" is all I could think of. We all started to get inspired again and wanted to hear more of his glories. And by the mercy of *śrī guru* and Gaurāṅga we got to meet this great soul on his very first tour to the West, in Holland.

I remember my family and I, together with a few other devotees, went to Amsterdam airport to receive this *mahā-bhāgavata* we had heard so much of. When we arrived at the airport, we went straight to the gate from where he would come out. Back then you could see all passengers through a big glass wall, waiting at the baggage claim. Right there we saw Śrīla Gurudeva sitting and waiting. He looked so peaceful, so serene, like a lotus flower above the water, not being contaminated by its surroundings and just floating above it. When Śrīla Gurudeva came out of the gate, we all started to do *kīrtana*, singing the *mahā-mantra* with *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* jumping up and down in *dhotis*. I will never forget the look of surprise on our (soon to be) Śrīla Gurudeva. He was so happy, so pleased to see how the devotees were chanting *harināma* at the airport. He could not stop smiling while we

did *harināma* all the way to the car. I will never forget this moment of pure joy and love and am grateful I could take part in it.


Once we arrived at the accommodation where he was scheduled to give lectures, he just sat on the ground in the corner of a big room. He was sitting there, peacefully chanting, looking at everyone that was coming in, looking with His blue piercing eyes. And I remember the rays of the sunlight fell right on him, giving him a beautiful radiance. I can't explain what I felt at that moment. I just knew in my heart that he was truly a special soul, not like any of us, but a pure transcendental entity. When Śrīla Gurudeva stopped chanting he started his *hari-kathā* by glorifying Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja with so much love and dedication. By hearing this, any drop of doubt which was there in our hearts vanished instantly. Right then we were convinced that our beloved Śrīla Gour Govinda Gosvāmī Mahārāja had mercifully sent us on this path right into the loving arms of our Śrīla Gurudeva. I, together with my family and other devotees, took initiation in the days after. Gurudeva declared: "This is not Holland;

from now on this is Holy-land!" We were all so happy hearing this; so much love he had given us! Although I met Śrīla Gurudeva many times after, this first encounter is still my most beloved memory of Him.

My dear beloved Śrīla Gurudeva, although I still feel unworthy of your mercy, I'm always grateful for all that you have given me, my family and all the devotees you loved and cared for. Your legacy has had and will have a great impact on the current and future generations through your teachings, books and excellent senior disciples. All who have associated with you or heard about you have decorated their memories of you like jewels in their hearts and now are expressing this globally by the initiative of the centennial sevā team.

Dear beloved Śrīla Gurudeva, I am forever indebted to you. May your merciful effulgence always shine upon us all. *om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā, cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ.*

I offer my *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* to your lotus feet.

Śyāmasundara dāsa  
(Holland) 

#### MURALĪ-MANOHARA DĀSA

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī guruve nāmaḥ  
nama om viṣṇu-pādāya rādhikāyaḥ priyātmane  
śrī-śrīmad-bhaktivedānta nārāyaṇa gosvāmī iti nāmine  
vande 'ham śrī guru-varaṁ śrī rūpānuga-pravaraṁ  
vraja-rasa-rasikaṁ ca kṛpā-mūrtiṁ nārāyaṇam*

I offer my prayers of adoration to that exalted *śrī guru* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is the very form of compassion. He is the best among the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and is perfectly adept in relishing *vraja-rasa*.

I most humbly offer unlimited *daṇḍavat praṇāmas* at the lotus feet of my *dīkṣā-guru*, His Holiness Mahāviṣṇu Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, to my dear most *śikṣā-guru* His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, and to our entire *rūpānuga guru-varga*.

It is an auspicious occasion of immense joy and jubilation to have the privilege to glorify my venerable *śikṣā-gurudeva*, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, on the most auspicious occasion of his centennial celebration. Śrī Gurudeva, our spiritual master, who like a generous *prema*-laden cloud poured upon us, without discrimination, a rain of nectarean teachings from the ocean of love of God, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined manifestation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has explained that to be a *rūpānuga* (follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī) means to proudly identify as being a servant of the topmost *rūpānuga*, namely those bona fide *gurus* coming in his line, the *paramparā*. Those devotees who have taken shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who have taken shelter of *mādhurya-rasa* (the mood of transcendental amour between Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa), and who proudly maintain their self-conception that they are the servants of the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī are known as *rūpānuga*. It is most befitting to

say that Śrīla Gurudeva is also a *rūpānuga* in the highest sense, to an amazing superlative degree, as exemplified by his pastimes in this material world.

When one studies carefully his lectures, his question and answer sessions and books, then, only, can one get a glimpse of his vast understanding of the highly confidential subjects of *rāgānuga-bhakti* and *mādhurya-rasa*. Śrīla Gurudeva has written about a hundred books on *bhakti-śāstras*. Also the books he published in Hindi, namely *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, among others, are very esoteric and inspiring.

Since November 1977, Śrīla Gurudeva has unwaveringly carried out the final request by Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja [to help his disciples], providing insightful guidance and loving shelter to all who came to him seeking guidance, and through the medium of his English books, he gave his purifying association and divine realizations to sincere seekers of truth all over the globe. Such was the compassion and non-sectarian attitude of Śrīla Gurudeva.

For more than half a century, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja demonstrated and exemplified the pure, unadulterated life of utter dedication and loving service to his *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and to the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala-kiśora. Śrīla Gurudeva continued to illuminate the path, all over the world for those

who wished to discover and dive deep into the ecstatic ocean of *rādhā-dāsyam*, service to the radiantly beautiful lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dearly beloved, Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Śrīla Mahārāja had very affectionate relationship with Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja, but he also had a deep affection for all his godbrothers, considering them to be extensions of his *gurudeva*, and gave them appropriate respect.

Śrīla Mahārāja was above sectarian narrowness and was therefore dear to all. Mahārāja had endeared all the Vrajavāsīs by his acts of compassion. He renovated many rundown *kuṇḍas*, places of worship within the 84 *kosa* of Vraja-maṇḍala, and performed many social welfare activities for the Vrajavāsīs.

Śrīla Mahārāja always respected the *ācāryas* of other *sampradāyas*; he never belittled them, rather he respected and honoured them. He would also, from time to time, call an assembly of scholars and followers of other *sampradāyas* and offer respect and have discussion. In particular, every year he arranged an assembly to glorify Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, which lasted for several days giving an opportunity to other speakers to glorify him, and he would conclude last day with his own astounding nectarean glorification of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī.

\*\*\*

As time passes on, I find that I have become increasingly aware of your presence

in my life. Even after your departure from this planet I am nevertheless inspired by your immaculate character, instructions and superlative examples and activities. On the wonderful day of your disappearance, I find myself reminiscing about all the special memories of you that are stored in the deep chambers of my heart. We are deeply touched by the kind words of advice in Hindi that you gave my family when you twice graced our humble abode. We cherish happy memories of your association each time you came to preach in Murwillumbah and Brisbane.

Each time Śrīla Mahārāja came to Murwillumbah there were more than 300 devotees from here and worldwide anxiously awaiting to hear the nectarine outpouring of highly esoteric *hari-kathā*. The mere presence of Śrīla Gurudeva electrified the whole atmosphere there. It was a uniquely wonderful sight to behold. Hearing his *hari-kathā*, the devotees gathered there were surcharged with new vigor and enthusiasm for *bhakti*.

Śrīla Gurudeva, we have seen time and again how well-versed you are in the *śāstras*, how convincing you can be and how deep your personal realizations of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrīman Caitanya Mahāprabhu are. You exuded an aura of love and compassion, humility, and with these qualities you have endeared everyone, young or old.

As a humble servitor of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja began to organize the annual Kārtika Vraja Maṇḍala *parikramā*, which he continued to

carry on up to his final days. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja was requested by his *gurudeva*, Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to build temples, *āśramas*, and translate the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura and the Gosvāmīs from Bengali into his native language of Hindi, which he performed with full vigor and enthusiasm.

With deep gratitude, adoration and resolute faith, let us all offer *puṣpāñjali* at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva, who is our well-wisher, humbly begging him to shower his abundant benedictions, thereby giving us *guru-niṣṭhā*, which will enable us to cross this

sea of nescience and give us the eligibility to enter into the realm of *prema-bhakti*, culminating to the highest stage, namely *rādhā-dāsyam* as brought by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and distributed freely by the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

Aspiring for a particle of dust of the lotus feet of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas

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


Your humble servant

Muralī-manohara dāsa

(disciple of Mahāviṣṇu Mahārāja) ❀

## RĀMĀNANDA DĀSA

*śrī śrī guru gaurāṅgau jayataḥ*



**F**irst of all, I offer my most humble *danḍavat praṇāmas* to my *paramārādhyatama guru-pādapadma om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa parivrājakācārya aṣṭotara-śata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja and beg for his causeless mercy and hearty blessings. Thereafter to the entire Rūpānuga Gauḍīya *guru-varga* and all Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavīs, past, present and future.

My only desire in writing is with the aspiration to please Śrīla Gurudeva. If there is anything I have experienced from being with Śrīla Gurudeva it's that being in his presence gives me a joy which, apart from my earlier meeting with Śrīla Gour Govinda Mahārāja, I had never before experienced. Since the soul

is *ānanda-mayo'bhyāsāt*, joy seeking, it is impossible to not want to try and please him. Śrīla Gurudeva was once asked on a morning walk, "How will I know if Gurudeva is happy with me?" His answer was, "You will be happy." I am no *pañḍita* or psychic, but it was easy to understand from the first time I saw Śrīla Gurudeva that the joy I experience in his presence far exceeds any other type of joy or all of them combined.

As a teenager, it was a bit like trying to be a good boy for Santa Claus. The only difference was that trying to be good all year meant chanting my rounds and studying his and Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and in my case specifically, just behaving. This in turn would be rewarded with a glance, a pat on the back,



head or shoulder and in good years, a chat. And the years that I wasn't good he would ignore my existence entirely, until I would get to the point of almost having a mental or emotional breakdown. A simple "How are you?" from him would then fix that in a second.

Now that he has concealed his pastimes in this world, the 'rewards' are also more concealed. In theory, I understand from our *ācāryas* that there is no difference between the Vaiṣṇavas' appearance in this world and their disappearance from it. Both their arrival and departure are their mercy. In Śrīla Parama-gurudeva's (Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's) words, "Compelled by mercy, they come to this world, and it is for mercy's sake that they also leave it." I can see from this statement how I would obviously be attributing fault to the character of my *gurudeva* by saying that he has left us.

However, I do miss how his blue eyes, which while scanning an entire audience, would catch mine, and raising just one of his eyebrows, they would cause me to erupt in a simultaneous joy and fear. I miss how when I would ask him for his blessings, he would say, "My blessings are always with you," conveying to me that it's my endeavour that is lacking, not his blessings (and then later teaching me that my endeavour also is only due his blessings). I miss how he pointed at me and lovingly laughed at all the stupid things I have done, and still do. I miss how he messed up my hair when I clearly spent a long time in the mirror arranging it. But if he has not left me, why am I missing him? My mother once

told Śrīla Gurudeva that she was missing him, and Gurudeva asked her, "Have I not given you *mantra*? Are you chanting those *mantras*? Then how can you miss me?" It is natural that we all experience sadness in the physical absence of Śrīla Gurudeva, but Śrīla Parama-gurudeva's words echo in my mind every time I become sad: "We experience separation when our pleasure is obstructed... The sadness we now feel in his absence because we are not getting those things is merely *kāmanā* (desire) and *bhoga* (enjoyment)." What then does it mean to miss him in the true sense?

Even though we are celebrating the 100th appearance day of Śrīla Gurudeva this year and my heart should be full of joy, I feel sad because I miss him and even more sad because I should not be missing him. In a contrary way, I simultaneously experience so much joy simply by thinking of Śrīla Gurudeva, talking and writing about Śrīla Gurudeva and singing the glories of Śrīla Gurudeva. Śrīla Gurudeva explained so many times to us that *viraha* is nothing but *viśeṣa-rūpena-milana*, or a special type of meeting. And this is how we can still be in the *saṅga* of Śrīla Gurudeva. In fact, as Śrīla Parama-gurudeva explains it is *viraha* (separation) not *milana* (meeting) that is beneficial for us. He explains that one's heart can become over familiar in meeting, but feelings of separation will purify. This makes me wonder again: on the one hand we should not miss Gurudeva because he is always with us, while on the other hand we need to miss him, because this will ultimately burn our *anarthas* better than any other way. What do I

do? How do I miss him in the true sense?

One time in Spain Śrīla Gurudeva asked me to stand up and repeat what Śrīmatī Śyāmarāṇī dīdī had just spoken. I was not able to repeat it and I was chastised by Śrīla Gurudeva for thinking that simply travelling and then sitting in front of him in class while my mind is somewhere else is *sādhū-saṅga*. (He said a lot of more embarrassing things, which I won't repeat...) I took for granted all those years of festivals – winters in Germany, summers in Europe, springs in Navadvīpa and autumns in Vṛndāvana. It was so easy to ask him anything; everything was easy. But now some hard endeavour is required. Luckily, Śrīla Gurudeva explained once during Janmāṣṭamī in Mathurā, that even though we say Mother Yaśodā's ropes for binding Kṛṣṇa were always two fingers too short [the two fingers] representing endeavour and mercy, in reality both fingers are mercy. We cannot make any endeavour in *bhakti* without His mercy. Therefore, with this offering I am praying for a drop of His mercy.

I am begging all you Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavīs for your mercy to help me, because you are the true servants of my *gurudeva* and therefore my true well-wishers, the true worshippers or this 100th *vyāsa-pūjā*. I know that my sadness cannot be true *viraha* because, as Parama-gurudeva says, *viraha* enhances the elegance of service. When some service comes on my path, I should become attached to it, but this is not happening to me. I can see that I have forsaken many devotees in assisting them with their services to Śrīla

Gurudeva. Does this mean I have barred myself from entrance into the realm of true *viraha* and true *sevā*? Or is there still hope for someone like me?

One of the first things I remember that Śrīla Gurudeva said when he came to Holland for the first time was that he had not come to build temples of brick and stone but to build temples in our hearts. He then explained in detail the type of temple and who should reside in it. This seems to be his inner heart's desire for us, his disciples. Not that temples shouldn't be built or that books and the holy name shouldn't be distributed, but that we ourselves should become qualified devotees first. This is one of Śrīla Gurudeva's main teachings for me.

I pray not to fall into a state of lamentation, where one becomes bewildered and thus inactive, bereft of energy and capacity, and afflicted by grief. The words "Don't be hopeless" spoken by Śrīla Gurudeva are circling the globe, allowing us to plug in and absorb those words till the end of time and beyond, to continue reminding us and empowering us, not to be hopeless, ever.

I am blessed with a lockdown, which is forcing me to look even deeper within myself for my Śrīla Gurudeva and my service to him. Please, Śrīla Gurudeva, please help me clean and build a temple in my heart. And all Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavīs, please bestow upon me a fraction of the qualification needed to perform this *mano'bhīṣṭa sevā*, by which I will give joy and experience joy, even more so than being in his physical presence. The prospect

of realizing Śrīla Gurudeva's presence everywhere, especially in my own heart, is the only force that inspires me to keep going, or rather, to finally start. I cannot thank you all enough for spreading Śrīla Gurudeva's

*vāṇī* everywhere I look, online and offline, reminding me of Śrīla Gurudeva over and over again. Without you all, I would be lost.

Yours in the service of Śrī Guru,

Rāmānanda dāsa  
(England) 



ŚRĪYUKTA UMĀ DĪDĪ

*śata-varṣiki vyāsa-pūja utsava-upalakṣa  
śikṣā-guru caraṇa-kamale puṣpāñjali*

### An offering at the lotus feet of my *śikṣā-guru* on the occasion of his centennial Vyāsa-pūjā festival

The personification of Śrī Gaura's mercy is Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and it was for his words alone that the supremely glorious *om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja "Śrīla Gurudeva" was like the *cakora* bird that pines only for the purest of rainwater. The world is becoming wholly blessed as it welcomes the grand and blissful festival of his centennial *vyāsa-pūjā*, which is indeed drawing the attention of all three worlds. On this cherished occasion, it is a festivity of revelations regarding his immortal character, exalted qualities, and peerless compassion that will be diffused on to the canvas of his sincere, confidential servants' hearts.

*sarva mahā-guṇa-gaṇa vaiṣṇava śarīre  
kṛṣṇa-bhakte kṛṣṇer guṇa sakali sañcāre*

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā, 22.75)*

All the exalted virtues in existence dwell in the body of the Vaiṣṇava. All of Kṛṣṇa's

qualities are infused within Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

To which category of Kṛṣṇa's devotees does the above verse apply? To Bhagavān's associates and the perfected devotees. Such devotees are naturally infused with the sum total of all of Bhagavān's qualities, not just twenty-six of them. Here is presented a mere intimation of just twenty-six of those unlimited qualities, of which Śrīla Gurudeva is a treasure house.

#### (1) Akṛta-droha (non-malicious)

Śrīla Gurudeva, whose nature is selfless yet eager for the supreme welfare of all, always acted for the ultimate auspiciousness of all. If ever any recipient of his mercy, due to a shortcoming in their own nature, spoke out against him, he would say, "This is Kṛṣṇa's mercy. He is only helping our preaching." His utter lack of enmity resembles that of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Even

when the Samiti became divided, he never saw anyone to be at fault.

### (2) Kṛpālu (merciful)

Once, a *brahmacārī* under his shelter transgressed his vows and then, with tears in his eyes, came to beg forgiveness. Other disciples, however, requested that he be forbidden from preaching. Śrīla Gurudeva's response was: "He left everything, home and family, and came to perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān. I will forgive hundreds of his mistakes. This *maṭha* is a hospital. Here, some have jaundice, others have tuberculosis, some have cancer. Here everyone is sick. I am the only doctor." He was the personification of forgiveness, compassion, and mercy.

### (3) Sama (equanimous)

No one ever heard him saying, "This person is my disciple, that person is Vāmana Mahārāja's disciple or Gour Govinda Mahārāja's disciple or Svāmī's disciple." No one, be they boy or girl, man or woman, old or young, ever left his doorstep without being inundated with instructions in *bhajana*. He saw every living entity as a servant of Kṛṣṇa. Equanimity and compassion like his cannot be seen anywhere else.

### (4) Nirdoṣa (flawless)

Whenever anyone gifted him with fine quality shoes, shawls, etc., he would immediately offer the item to Śrīla Parama-gurudeva or, in his absence, to *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He was forever untouched by Kali's five vices (gambling, intoxication, illicit sex, violence, and wealth) and

tried to teach his followers to be the same. He appeared in this world to distribute the supreme wealth, not to collect material wealth. In his first formal address in a foreign country, his words were: "I have not come to take anything from you. Rather, I have come to give you something."

### (5) Satya-niṣṭhā (dedicated to truth)

Every moment of his life was rooted in service to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Truth referred to in the words "*satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmaḥ* – I meditate on the Supreme Truth." To this day, mere mention of his name causes *Māyāvādīs*, *sahajīyās* and other oppressors of the truth to tremble. The objective of his life was service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā and he was fully devoted to practising and preaching this truth.

### (6) Mahā-mahā-vadānya (greatly, greatly magnanimous)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu is known as *mahā-vadānya* and His *mahā-bhāgavata* devotees are *mahā-mahā-vadānya*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu's great magnanimity was to gift to the world what had never been offered before: the beauty of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *prema*, as described by the *anarpita carīṁ cirāt* verse (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.4). The fully ripened seedless fruit of that wish-fulfilling vine of Mahāprabhu's magnanimity is Śrīla Gurudeva's great, great magnanimity, which is indicated by the song *yaṅ kali rūpa śarīra na dharata*. To serve this cherished ambition (*mano-bhīṣṭa*) of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Gurudeva would hint at secrets that are only realized when

one's *bhajana* is highly developed. If he had not mercifully revealed the goal and process of Gauḍīya *bhajana*, we would be preoccupied only with accruing the secondary fruits of chanting the *mahā-mantra*.

### (7) Mṛdu (gentle)

An incomparable gentleness was evident in his character. Even Māyāvādīs and those who were duplicitous, envious or arrogant would become charmed by his extraordinary softness. As he cut down misconceptions, he was sure to humbly provide refined considerations in their place. The anger that could be observed in him on occasion was solely for ultimate benefit of the soul. By means of his gentle and philosophically robust talks, he raised the victory flag of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava thought in countless assemblies.

### (8) Śuci (pure)

Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura sings, “*tīrtha jala pavitra guṇe, likhiyāche purāṇe, se saba bhaktira pravañcana, vaiṣṇavera pādodaka-sama nahe ei saba, jā’te haya vāñchita pūraṇa* – The sanctity of water in holy places written about in the Purāṇas is but a ploy to attract people to *bhakti*. No holy water is equal that which has washed the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas, for it fulfils all desires.”

Also, scripture states, “*yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣaṁ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ* – one who remembers the lotus-eyed Lord is pure inside and out.” He was foremost of the pure, swan-like *paramahamsas* for he was, at every moment, bathing in the ocean of remembrance of the lotus-eyed Lord (Puṇḍarikākṣa) and His associates. And again, to quote the words of

Śrī Narottama dāsa, “*tomāra hṛdaye sadā govinda-viśrāma...* – he always carried the source of all holy places, Śrī Govinda, within his heart and was hence a purifier even of holy places.” Nevertheless, to teach others, he was accustomed to various purificatory rites such as bathing after solar or lunar eclipses and performing *ācamana* before making a vow (*sankalpa*) or performing any sort of worship.

### (9) Akiñcana (free from possessions)

In this world, a lack of wealth is called poverty. In the Vaiṣṇava world, however, as Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda has said, “*kanaka, kāmīnī, pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī, chāḍiyāche jāre sei to vaiṣṇava* – only those whom the tigresses of gold, women, and fame leave alone are Vaiṣṇavas.” Having the wealth of love for Kṛṣṇa and abandoning the above vices is the definition of *akiñcanatā*, or a freedom from possessions. Though every luxury itself sought the opportunity to serve him, he was perpetually absorbed in his search for Kṛṣṇa. Even a semblance of the *pratiṣṭhā* coming from being an *ācārya* was never evident in him.

### (10) Sarvopakāraka (a benefactor to all)

Śrīla Gurudeva was much like a transcendental touchstone, but his benefaction was such that it would deprive persons of the luxuries they sought in this world and perhaps the next. He was not merely passively selfless. He actively spent his invaluable wealth [his *bhajana*] and time trying to turn *jīvas* towards Bhagavān. By offering our every inclination to the service of Kṛṣṇa, he displayed his nature as the greatest helper of all.



### (11) Śānta (peaceful)

Śrīla Gurudeva was a treasure chest of profound composure, staying busy during the lulls and staying peaceful amid the commotion. Because of his exclusive surrender to Kṛṣṇa, in his life, he displayed a fully matured peace of mind even in the face of adversity. The ear-splitting noise of Mathurā's all-night worship of Devī and wedding parades, the onslaught of physical ailments, the various calamities that befell the mission, and all variety of threefold miseries could not disturb his service to Kṛṣṇa.

### (12) Kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa (exclusive surrender to Kṛṣṇa)

When parting from Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha occurred, one of his disciples was very upset. To console her, he said, "Why are you upset? Whatever happened was by Kṛṣṇa's wish. So many pilgrims come for *parikramā* that Kṛṣṇa saw one *maṭha* was not enough, so He made a division."

When some created obstacles to his preaching, he would say, "Whatever happens, my tongue will not stop speaking Kṛṣṇa's *kathā*." Kṛṣṇa alone was the essence of his whole life. He never encouraged amulets, charms, appeasement of astrological deities, *vāstu* or anything of the sort. He would say, "No astrological configuration can affect one who does pure *harināma*."

### (13) Akāma (free from lust)

With greatest enthusiasm, Śrīla Gurudeva constructed *maṭhas* like Śrī Rūpa Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Giridhārī Gauḍīya Maṭha,

Śrī Śrī Keśavaṇī Gauḍīya Maṭha (Navadvīpa) and others, which are abodes of *kīrtaniyaḥ sadā hariḥ* (constant *kīrtana* of Hari), the best medicine for our disease of material existence. Bereft of worldly *kāma*, or desires, and adorned with infinite passion (*kāma*) to serve Śrī Gaura's desires, Śrīla Gurudeva was the living personification of the topmost definition of *bhakti* as given in the *anyābhilāṣitā śūnyam* verse.

### (14) Nirīha (desireless)

He would go to great lengths to turn people towards *bhajana* and then would offer them at the feet of Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Though adorned with all the virtues of an *ācārya*, the aspiration for the position of an *ācārya* or any prestige was never perceived in him. When Mathurā residents would invite him to their homes to give *hari-kathā*, he would tell them they need not be concerned with providing *prasāda* or anything for him and the *brahmacārīs* accompanying him.

### (15) Sthira (steadfast)

"First determine the goal of your *bhajana*, and then perform *bhajana* to attain that goal." "To become the *pālya-dāsīs* of Rādhāji is the goal of our lives." With such memorable and nectar-like utterances, he would usher those who were already steady in their practice towards the ultimate steadiness, as he himself was the veritable source of such steadiness. Even when he was out preaching till midnight, he would wake up every day at 3:00 a.m. to chant *harināma*, behold *maṅgala-ārati*, perform

*sandhyā-vandanā*, etc. And until he completed his daily vows of chanting, he would not eat. He was absolutely steadfast in his vows.

### (16) Mita-bhuk (free from cravings of the tongue)

Devoid of any mundane impulse of acquiring items for personal indulgence, his character was thoroughly endowed with *yukta-vairāgya*. He ate a balanced and simple diet, free of any material predilection. One day he chastised me gently: “Never use red chillies in cooking for Kṛṣṇa! His lips and mouth are very tender. He is used to eating yoghurt, butter, cream and other such things. He cannot eat anything too spicy, sour, or salty.” The *prasāda* he accepted had these qualities that are pleasing to Kṛṣṇa.

### (17) Vijita-ṣaḍ-guṇa (free from the six impulses)

He was not only free from *ṣaḍ-guṇa* (lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy) and the six urges [*vaco-vegā* etc.] but also controlled his bodily necessities, emotions, and personal afflictions by engaging them in the service of Hṛṣīkeśa. His impulses, experiences, bodily transformations, etc. were truly reflections of his exalted service to Kṛṣṇa.

### (18) Apramatta (sober)

As he was always intoxicated with the service of speaking *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and bereft of the ego of being the doer, he was never touched by the intoxication of illusion.

Sometimes, he would jokingly say, “*Pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja gives birth to

disciples, and I clean their urine and stool. (By this he meant that his role in service to his *gurudeva*’s mission was to deal with the *anarthas* of young devotees and nurture them with *siddhānta* and *kathā*.)

### (19) Mānada (respectful)

Though eternally situated in the supreme position of being an associate of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, he would accept the blessings of Vrajavāsī *brāhmaṇas*, mothers, and *paṇḍas*. He taught his disciples: “If someone wants recognition, then give it to them. Why hesitate to give them the respect they want? Give them respect and do your *bhajana* without disturbance.” Although capable of any degree of *sevā*, he often encouraged his disciples, saying, “I cannot do as much as you are doing” or “I could do none of this without you.”

### (20) Amānī (humble)

One day, just as he was about to give *hari-kathā*, he said to the listeners, “You people can happily use the word Gosvāmī when saying the names of *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja and *pūjyapāda* Trivikrama Mahārāja, but it would be best if you did not use it with my name. How exalted are Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana and other Gosvāmīs, and where am I?”<sup>1\*</sup>

A reservoir of natural humility, he was a pure Vaiṣṇava, bereft of any hankering for prestige. For many, many years he would get .....

1 As mentioned, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja spoke this in his humility. Since it is incumbent on a disciple to refer to his *gurudeva* with utmost reverence, many years later, he permitted the inclusion of “Gosvāmī” in his name.

angry if anyone tried to perform *guru-pūjā* to him or say *jaya-dhvani* for him.

### (21) Gambhīra (grave)

Once he was sitting by the window of his *bhajana-kuṭīra* in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā, immersed in the depths of a sacred text, when a disciple addressed him and startled him. He looked up, annoyed and with somewhat of a glare. He could be sitting on his *āsana*, taking a stroll, staring off into the distance, sitting with his eyes closed or absorbed in some conversation or activity -- it was hard to know where he really was. Sometimes he would say, “I go somewhere, but then these people catch my feet and pull me back here.”

### (22) Karuṇa (merciful)

His mercy is indescribable. Though women are forbidden from living in Gauḍīya Maṭhas and though I am utterly unworthy, he let me stay in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. Once he said to the resident *brahmacārīs*, “Umā is also a *brahmacārī*.” (*Brahmacārī* means “one who wanders in *brahma* for His service”.) He constantly encouraged and nurtured me in *bhakti* and provided me with every facility. For this reason, I am incapable of seeing any difference between him and my *dikṣa-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

At the fervent request of Western devotees, his heart melted and he set out, in his old age, disregarding every manner of inconvenience, to nourish and deliver the living entities who are gripped by *anarthas* from the threefold miseries of *māyā*. His worldwide preaching,

his *maṭhas* and *āśramas*, and his plentiful collection of books [he published] continue to shower his immortal mercy even to this day.

### (23) Kavitva (poetic)

His Hindi was very charming. His language was the finest of poetry, full of inconceivable feeling, choice words, poetic embellishments, and charming intonation. Examples of this are the *kīrtanas* he wrote: *Śrī Guru Caraṇa-kamala Bhaja Mana* and *Vraja-jana-mana-sukhakārī*.

### (24) Maitrī (friendship)

His incomparable friendship with his two godbrothers Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja was so profound a bond that the world knew these three *ācāryas* as “three bodies with one soul”. He had an extraordinary bosom friendship with Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja that is rarely, if ever, seen anywhere. He maintained friendships with and rendered service to all Vaiṣṇavas in the Śrī Sārasvata line, not just his godbrothers. As a result, he was the recipient of respect and the abode of shelter for devotees in all Gauḍīya Maṭhas.

He was always ready to lend any and all assistance necessary. Once, a group of thugs attacked Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja’s *maṭha* in Gokula and vandalized the deities. Śrīla Gurudeva got the police involved and lent his assistance with legal matters.

Another time, some troublemakers took possession of Śrī Vinoda-vānī Gauḍīya Maṭha near Kāliya Daha, leaving the *maṭha* residents homeless. Śrīla Gurudeva sent Śrīman

Śubhānanda Brahmācārī (Bhaktivedānta Tīrtha Mahārāja) and other *maṭha-vāsīs* to free the *maṭha* from the clutches of those thugs, thus reinstating the *maṭha* residents in their services and protecting the *maṭha*.

### (25) Dakṣa (expert)

Śrīla Parama-gurudeva, *om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottaraśata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Goswāmī Mahārāja, himself would praise the *khicaḍi* Śrīla Gurudeva used to make. At that time, Śrīla Gurudeva was also a renowned *kīrtanīyā*. Though he wielded all manner of expertise in the service of Kṛṣṇa, his speciality was *śrī kṛṣṇa-līlā-kathane su-dakṣaṁ* – expertise in narrating Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. He was expert in everything from managing *parikramās* and running the *maṭha* to deity worship, preaching, cooking, etc.

### (26) Maunī (silent)

Since his talkativeness about Kṛṣṇa was unbridled, he was the crest-jewel of *maunīs*. Others, worldly practitioners of silence, are internally talkative about the objects of the senses, though externally, they may be silent. Śrīla Gurudeva was the complete opposite. He shunned all gossip, as Śrīla Prabhupāda taught, but when it came to speaking *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, he would erupt like a volcano.

“*Aprākṛta-vastu nahe prākṛta gocara* – the transcendental substance is not subject to the purview of material senses.” My *bhajana-sikṣā-guru* was not an ordinary person, a person of this world. The truth that *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* expresses with the words “*janma karma ca me divyaṁ* – My birth

and deeds are divine” applies not only to Śrī Kṛṣṇa but to His associates as well. Hence it is said, “*na devam adevaṁ arcayet* – without becoming divine, you cannot worship the Divine.” In other words, one who is not established in a similar disposition cannot possibly worship or venerate him. While my efforts to glorify him are likened to trying to behold him with the help of a glow-worm, the wise kindly accept it as an attempt to purify myself and my words.

On the occasion of this inspiring festival, I humbly request those who consider themselves to be his followers to allow for some reflection: Why did we take shelter of him? If we do not dutifully follow the process he taught, will we ever be able to grasp his mercy? Will *bhajana* ever be possible without fully matured conviction (*niṣṭhā*) in his tender lotus feet? How much of a spiritual relationship have we developed with him? Do we just repeat the divine knowledge he gave us like parrots, or instruments, or have we absorbed it in our hearts, in our conduct?

Scripture states, “*bhaja dhātu iti sevayām* – the verb root *bhaja* connotes service.” From this, some assume that the efforts of the material subtle and physical bodies constitute *bhajana*. I encourage them to study the difference between *arcana* and *bhajana* described by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda in his foreword to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *Bhajana-rahasya*. If serving *guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas does not rouse an inclination to serve *harināma*, and if serving *harināma* does not rouse an inclination to

serve *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, then that engagement is not actually *harināma* or *sevā*. Without *bhajana*, all one's efforts, such as service, hearing, association, worship, etc., are only toil, because relationship is lacking. People exerting themselves thus are disregarding the *mantra* and *harināma* given by *guru*.

Once, when a disciple who had served Śrīla Gurudeva tirelessly for many, many years ended up returning to his home and getting married, I approached Śrīla Gurudeva and presented the doubts I felt, to which he said, "Because he did not do *harināma*, serving me could not protect him."

Hence, it is imperative to render service in tandem with performing *bhajana*.


One may see that the scriptures stress the importance of *sādhū-saṅga* – *sādhū-saṅga sarva śāstre kaya* – but it is only when one truly associates with a *sādhū*, if for but a moment, that one attains all perfection – *lava-mātra sādhū-saṅga sarva-siddhi haya*. To truly associate with a *sādhū* means "*samyak rūpeṇa*

*gamanam* – to follow them in all respects." Simply being greedy to hear their *hari-kathā* is not the real meaning of *sādhū-saṅga*. Without following the path taken by *sādhū*s, shallow hearing will not be of much benefit. If we have been "associating with *sādhū*s" for years but have not progressed, then how valuable has our *sādhū-saṅga* been?

Hence, without getting involved in illusory affairs, we must engage in serving Śrīla Gurudeva's innermost desires. We must do so with a true sense of relationship and with offerings of our heartfelt tears. To develop such a relationship is why we took shelter of him in the first place. This is the only means to attain his mercy. There is none other.

Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava-carāṇa-sevābhilāṣiṇī,  
(Desiring to serve the lotus feet of Śrī  
Guru and Vaiṣṇavas)

*Ayogya* (unworthy)

Umā 



ŚRĪYUKTA YAŚASVINĪ DĀŚĪ

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāṅjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

**D**ear Śrīla Bhaktivedanta  
Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī  
Mahārāja,

I offer my most humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

This offering is for your centennial celebration, 100 years of divine service. Just like my Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta

Svāmī Prabhupāda, you are still serving, giving and caring for all, by your nectarean books, your sincere followers and your direct mercy.

After my Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world, I still served for many years within his mission but eventually felt that I was not able to access the incredible truths and deep, deep experiences I once had and that I longed to



again touch. At this point I want to stress I am not laying blame anywhere. Others may have had completely different experiences. I am simply recounting my own.

So at a certain point, I prayed and cried to Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Where is what you gave me? I am not able to find it anymore.” I cried daily and deeply, and that is when you, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, somehow came to the very town I was living in, a few streets away in fact, and gave evening classes.

I saw, to my surprise, that you also were “other worldly” as was my Śrīla Prabhupāda but with quite a different personality. I was given some of your books and that was the beginning of my journey with you at my Śrīla Prabhupāda’s side.

As soon as I read your books, everything Śrīla Prabhupāda had said and all my earlier deep experiences fell into place, and a treasure chest of wonders opened before me. Your books fitted one hundred percent with my previous experiences, which was to me amazing. But like pieces of an unmade jigsaw puzzle, they did not make a clear picture. On reading your books I was immediately transported into the divine depths of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own books and the incredible depths of the inner feelings of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s heart. Of course, it is impossible to truly touch on those depths of his heart, but even to touch on a tiny fraction of a ray of those feelings is enough to purify and satisfy us for eternity.

You have been the perfect *śikṣā-guru* for me, because *śikṣā-guru* deepens our relationship with our *dīkṣā-guru*, and that is

what you did. You always told me, “You are Svāmiji’s,” and yes Śrīla Prabhupāda is on the throne of my heart. I would never been able to, or want to, take him off. But you are also now sitting on the side of that throne, along with my Śrīla Prabhupāda, just as your own *gurudeva*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, would have our Śrīla Prabhupāda sit on the same platform as him when our Śrīla Prabhupāda visited. And you will sit there in my heart as his dear friend always. I am so deeply grateful, for my heart was hankering for the depth that is in your books.

So, my dear *śikṣā-gurudeva*, some of the wonderful things I learned from you that I hadn’t understood before putting all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together when I met you and read your books are as follows.

The first thing I came to understand was that Śrīla Prabhupāda had an eternal form in *aprakāṣa-vraja*. Having not read much and having a very simple mind, I had wondered how Śrīla Prabhupāda could be in the spiritual world in an elderly body, although that sounds ridiculous to me now. I just knew I wanted to serve and return to the spiritual world. What that entailed or meant – the process – I didn’t understand at all. I just wanted to go there and serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Second thing: I had always understood that we had to be one-pointed in our *bhakti*, and I had always had an attraction for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, so how did Lord Caitanya (who all the devotees seemed to talk about all the time and very little directly about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa), fit in and I still be one-pointed? I was

always too afraid to ask. In your *Manah-śikṣā* you approach this very point in question and answer form. “So how can we be one-pointed? Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu seems like two.” Answer: “Lord Caitanya is non-different from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. He is just Them in another amazing form, and so we are still one-pointed.”

Third, I learned the three internal reasons for Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s appearance and indeed how He is non-different from Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and all the deep esoteric teachings of this subject matter, which are eternally unlimited and ever expanding.

I also learned an incredibly important point, that, although Śrīla Prabhupāda will always be on the throne of my heart because he saved me, he brought this incredible, high teaching and presented it in such a way that somehow or other I was able to enter that divine path of spiritual revelation. He bent to the floor for us – I can never forget. But there are also other pure devotees serving their own given missions and also deserving of respect, love and appreciation, and they are also are teaching in different ways and by their personal example. And most importantly, I learned that not everyone spoke against our Śrīla Prabhupāda or misunderstood him.

Another very important thing I learned from you, Śrīla Mahārāja, is how to reconcile the seeming differences between the statements of pure devotees. Pure devotees speak on three levels: *apāra-vicāra*, *tattva-vicāra* and *rasa-vicāra*. According to our level we will hear or read things in different ways, noticing certain

statements and not others. Pure devotees present things in their own, individual way, but when understood properly, it is clear that they do not disagree on *siddhānta*.

Besides that, you taught the difference between *vaidhī-* and *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Until I met you, I had no idea that by perfecting *vaidhī-bhakti* one goes to Vaikuṇṭha, and that only *rāgānuga-bhakti* can take us to our goal of Vraja, but now I see that it is very clearly stated in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* purports.

You taught the meaning of greed. Śrīla Prabhupāda also stated from scripture “the only price is greed.” If a serious *sādhaka*, after many years of *sevā*, is not allowed to read further subject matter, he will not be able to develop to deeper levels. Some may be fine with that. No problem; nothing should be false, but if someone is serious and genuinely has that aspiration and taste, they should not be stopped from hearing that subject matter.

For myself, I do not consider myself qualified for *rāgānuga-bhakti*. It may take me lifetimes to get to that level, but what I can truly say is that I love hearing about it, I love reading about it and thinking about it. I know that’s where I want to end up. Right from the beginning it is where I wanted to end up, but now I have more details. Without hearing about this subject matter, there is an emptiness to my practices. This is all totally in line with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports and his guidance in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* on which books to read, and in line with your guidance also, Śrīla Gurudeva.

I am not pretending to be something I am not. There are many more advanced than me on deeper levels, but I am extremely grateful to have a head full and a heart full of divine aspirations as I traverse naturally along the path under the guidance of *sādhū*, *sāstra* and *guru*.

My Śrīla Prabhupāda was so incredibly expert in how he gave Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world in such a way that all could come, some way or another, closer to the reality of their original selves. He tricked so many people and is still gathering masses of people by tricky means, people who have no idea of their own welfare or of his spider's web gradually catching and entangling them in the web of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's loving network. He gave everything, especially in his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. You are also expert in your field and so giving to all, complementing and opening up our Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports. I can only speak for myself, but you have expanded my Śrīla Prabhupāda's glories and shown me that he gave the world and all of us more than I had ever understood. I had seen the "height of the mountain Śrīla Prabhupāda", but I had not understood the "depth of the mountain Śrīla Prabhupāda".

The divine loving sentiments of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa that Caitanya Mahāprabhu came and magnanimously distributed to the world, those sentiments were swelling and surging in Śrīla Prabhupāda's heart at all times as many saw externally over the years when he could not contain his emotions. You, Śrīla Mahārāja, allowed me to understand a small snippet of those inner churnings of Śrīla

Prabhupāda's heart that I previously had not understood. You, Śrīla Mahārāja, helped me put together the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of my previous experiences and make a picture that made things much more clear. You, Śrīla Mahārāja, were the one that Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed to choose to send me to, for further understanding of the path of his teachings. Kṛṣṇa and *guru* are in our heart, they understand us better than we understand ourselves, and they sent me to you. They may send someone else to another pure devotee, and of course, Śrīla Prabhupāda is nourishing all within his mission.

Pure devotees are not competitive or envious in a materialistic way. Whichever way an individual *sādhaka* is guided, as long as the *siddhānta* is correct, does not really matter. So much fighting and arguing for nothing. All are working together for the same goal, to get us out of the material nature and our misidentification and to help us understand our real natures as servants of Kṛṣṇa, and ultimately, for those fortunate souls it applies to, as a servant of Rādhārāṇī (*rādhya-dāsyam*). Better to maturely discuss than fight. It is *māyā*'s trick: divide and conquer.

You, Śrīla Mahārāja, gave me so many understandings. I am truly grateful for all you have given. I close my offering here. Offering my *daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* hundreds of times at the lotus feet of all our predecessor *ācāryas*, my own Śrīla Prabhupāda and yourself, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. I am remembering the kindness you have shown me in writing this for your centennial.

You sit by Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is on the throne of my heart, like two friends together, working together for the same ultimate goal and both showering your loving kindness upon all *jīvas*, especially the devotees.

An afterthought, I could have told some of the sweet pastimes of yours that you were

kind enough to engage me in, but this offering contains, I feel, your true gift both to me and to the world.

Aspiring to become a true servant of the servant of the servant,

A very fallen but deeply grateful soul,

Yaśasvinī dāśī

(England) 



### PREMAVATĪ DĀŚĪ

*vande 'ham śrī-guru-varaṁ  
śrī-rūpānuga-pravarāṁ  
vraja-rasa-rasikaṁ ca  
nārāyaṇaṁ taṁ prapaṇnam*

I surrender myself and offer prayers to that most exalted *śrī guru*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is the best amongst the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and who is always absorbed in relishing *vraja-rasa*.

**F**irst, I offer my most humble obeisances in the dust of the lotus feet of my *dīkṣā-guru*, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Next, I also offer my most humble obeisances in the dust of the lotus feet of *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose glorious teachings found me languishing in America and led me to a path on which my *guru-mahārāja* came and rescued me.

Dear Śrīla Gurudeva, all glories to you on the auspicious occasion of your *vyāsa-pūjā*.

What you told us is so true, that we will never be able to repay our *guru* or our *guru-varga* for pointing us toward this *rāgānuga-pravṛtti* [developing the inclination to do *rāgānuga-bhakti*], which leads to the ultimate sublime benefit. Yet, try we must.

Who are you that you so mercifully 'relinquished your blood' to write books, elucidated with *moonbeams that illuminate the path of spontaneous devotion*, and translate for hours, days, months, and even years, for fallen *jīvas* like me? Some of us, who never even saw the need to go *beyond liberation* are now given an opportunity to take advantage of *the essence of all advice*! You painstakingly traveled the globe, appearing at festival after festival, you spent endless long hours working at your desk, you held thousands of *darśanas*, and so much more in order to instill in us the true *jaiva-dharma*. And with the insight we received from you, we knew we were *walking with a saint*.

You must be *the harmonist* whose divine knowledge helps us to discover the *prameya*<sup>2</sup>

.....

<sup>2</sup> The subject proven by *pramāṇa*, or evidence.

so that we can peacefully reconcile and see *our gurus as one in siddhānta and one in heart*.


You are teaching us to appreciate why *going beyond Vaikuṇṭha* is necessary. Because of your divine encouragement, we endeavor to take seriously the quest for *discerning the true sentiments of the soul*. In that supreme realm is where we'll find pure *bhakti*. In some lifetime, someday, not caring about how far away the *prayojana* seems, we'll possess *niṣṭhā* and will realize that *walking with a saint* all the way to Goloka-Vṛndāvana is the only thing we want to do. This *journey of the soul* is not only to meet the *Butter Thief*. More so you are leading us to the ultimate *pinnacle of devotion* where we can learn the *way of love* and relish the

astonishing taste of *bhakti-rasa* that we'll receive from your “Everything”, your Svāminī who controls *Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Sweetness*.

Alas, Śrīla Gurudeva, on this special event, the 100th anniversary of your divine appearance, I humbly petition you, for I'm desiring that which is rarely achieved. I'm begging you to keep me in your merciful glance birth after birth so that the glorious reality of pure, unadulterated *bhakti* will not just remain a distant dream for me. I have no qualification unless you give me qualification, and my only hope is you.

Running behind you and weeping,

Premavatī dāsī

(Florida) 

## KUNDALATĀ DĀSĪ

### Remembrances of Śrīla Gurudeva on the One-Hundredth Anniversary of His Divine Appearance

*ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*mūkaṁ karoti vācāraṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim  
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dīna-tāraṇam*

**T**o properly glorify *śrī guru*, one must understand who he is. To understand him, one must serve him. And to serve him, one must follow his instructions. As a disciple of Śrīla Gurudeva in name only – someone who has not followed his instructions, not rendered any service to him, and certainly not understood who he is – I have no hope of being able to offer a homage suitable for the occasion of his

centennial *vyāsa-pūjā*. But remembrance of the pure devotee always brings auspiciousness, so for the sake of my own purification, I will endeavour to recount a few of Śrīla Gurudeva's pastimes that he kindly allowed me to witness. May he graciously forgive any faults in my recollection of these episodes and allow the lessons that he sought to impart with them to enter into my heart...

The scriptures of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava canon all extol the virtues of the *sad-guru*. From the Sanskrit verses of the ancient Upaniṣads to the Bengali compositions of Gauḍīya *ācāryas* such as Śrīla Narottama dāsa



Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, they all express the compassion and beneficence of the fully realized personalities who come to this world solely for the sake of delivering the Supreme Lord's mercy and saving the conditioned souls.

I was fortunate to have some exposure to these works from a young age, in the books and lectures of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda. I would often wonder where the “bona fide spiritual master” that Śrīla Prabhupāda frequently mentioned could be found. I used to wish that Prabhupāda could be my *guru*, but he had already disappeared from this world years before I was born. Sometimes I would feel despondent about whether I could ever meet a spiritual master of such a high calibre.

By the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda, my family eventually came to hear of an exalted personality named Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja from several followers of his who attended our home programs. We were immediately attracted by their descriptions of his saintly qualities and also by the copies of his books and lectures that they gave us. Over the course of several months, our desire to meet him grew stronger and stronger.

The devotees encouraged us to go to Śrīla Gurudeva's annual *hari-kathā* festival in New Braja (Badger, California), but there were a variety of obstacles in the way. Just as it began to seem impossible that we would ever have his *darśana*, through a number of incredible circumstances my family somehow reached

Badger in June 1998. We were a few days late to the festival and arrived in the middle of his morning class. He saw us approaching the pandal and interrupted his lecture for a moment to invite us to sit.

And so began Śrīla Gurudeva's affectionate guardianship over my entire family. From that moment on, he would accept us as his own and guide us away from the darkness of material existence and onto the luminous path of *bhakti*. Whether we understood an iota of our good fortune or not, he would forever maintain his loving watchfulness over us.

It continues to astound me that we once had the opportunity to be in the presence of such a transcendental personality. Clearly, Śrīla Gurudeva was not of this world. His body had all the symptoms of a *mahā-puruṣa*, his complexion held a lovely golden radiance, and his all movements were graced with a special artistry and sweetness. His brilliant blue eyes – the features that would immediately draw attention when one encountered him for the first time – were like windows into the spiritual realm. Each of his attributes combined to make an ethereally beautiful figure who could only be an eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

But even more remarkable than his external features were his internal ones. Śrīla Gurudeva embodied every single quality that the learned personalities of the past have related in their poetry and songs. He was fully versed in all philosophical subject matters and could answer any question posed to him with numerous references to both ancient and

modern Vaiṣṇava texts. He was completely renounced from the material world, without even a hint of interest in mundane wealth or prestige. And he was also the personification of humility and unparalleled in his compassion for others.

Indeed, Śrīla Gurudeva's generosity toward the souls of this world defies description. At an advanced age, he went abroad more than thirty times to disseminate the principles of pure *bhakti* everywhere. Although he could have remained fully immersed in his *bhajana* within the holy *dhāma*, he accepted many hardships to travel to some of the remotest locations of the earth and encourage everyone to chant the holy name. His pure association transformed the lives of countless individuals, and his message of love uplifted all who were fortunate enough to hear it.

He showed my family tremendous kindness by staying at our house once each summer during the last few years of his manifest pastimes, thus allowing us to witness his wonderful qualities at close range and in vibrant detail. With ordinary people, when one spends time with them in a familiar environment, all their flaws and hypocrisies become apparent, but with Śrīla Gurudeva it was the opposite experience. The extent of his perfection and the complete alignment between his words and his actions was truly astonishing to behold.

Although he was an eternally liberated associate of the Lord, he played the part of the ideal *sādhaka* to demonstrate how to engage in *bhakti-yoga*. Of course, his standard of

devotional practice was so high that it was totally inconceivable for someone like me.

Every moment of his day and night was devoted to the service of his worshipable *guru-pādapadma*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, and the Divine Couple. Even when his health was fragile, he continued to translate and provide commentary on the sacred Vaiṣṇava texts, as instructed by his spiritual master many decades earlier. To ensure the continuation of pure *bhakti*, he illuminated the most confidential of scriptures and revealed the most unprecedented of spiritual knowledge. The books and articles he wrote constitute a veritable treasure-house for present and future generations of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

I recall how sometimes Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja would leave Śrīla Gurudeva's writing tray outside of his room in order to give him an opportunity for rest. However, Gurudeva would come outside searching for the tray and take it back inside his room himself. It seemed far too heavy for him to carry on his own, and we would try to take it from him, but he always insisted on carrying it himself.

Śrīla Gurudeva was continually under the guidance of his holy master. I remember passing by his door one morning when he was narrating to Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja the instructions that he had received from Śrīla Parama-gurudeva in his dream the prior night. Gurudeva's surrender to his spiritual master was automatic and fixed. Even when he would yawn, he would immediately say, "Jaya Gurudeva."

Among my most cherished memories of Śrīla Gurudeva is his morning lecture on the first day of Kārtika in 2008. This was, of course, also the disappearance day of Śrīla Parama-gurudeva. Speaking in Bengali, he beautifully described how even though he had taken birth in a place of barbarians, his supremely munificent *guru-mahārāja* had saved him from the ocean of material existence by grasping his *śikhā* and placing him in the nectarean service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. He was openly weeping as he described Śrīla Parama-gurudeva's exceptional contributions to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community. Gurudeva's *guru-niṣṭhā* knew no bounds.

Completely dedicated to carrying out the mission of his spiritual master, Śrīla Gurudeva was exceedingly regulated in his daily routine to maximize the time available for his writing and other services. He performed activities at exactly the same time each day, often relying on a tiny old pocket watch that he would carry with him. He was especially punctual about the timing for chanting his *gāyatrī-mantras*.

One time, Śrīla Gurudeva had the door to his room open while doing his *āhnikā* and I had a brief glance at his sitting form, which was the very picture of concentration. Whenever I hear Śrīla Gurudeva's lectures about how we should always chant the *mantras* given to us by our *guru* with great honour and respect, I reflect on the image in my mind of him doing exactly that. Gurudeva was very tall, but in his older age, he had become a little more stooped in posture. However, this was not at all the case when he did his *āhnikā*. He was sitting

up so straight that he appeared to be about 8 or 9 feet tall, and his right arm was at an exact perpendicular angle to his body. He remained perfectly still, so immersed was he in chanting his *mantras* with care.

In the mornings, Śrīla Gurudeva would sing beautiful songs, very softly, in a barely audible voice, that sounded like music descended directly from the spiritual world. In my entire life, I have never heard anything more lovely and euphonic. And in the evenings as he would chant *harināma*, the entire room would be filled with a golden-saffron light that seemed to emanate directly from his transcendental body. There are no words to describe how captivating he looked in those moments.

We hear of the devotion and renunciation of the six Gosvāmīs in Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's *Ṣaḍ-gosvāmyāṣṭakam*. Our Śrīla Gurudeva embodied these qualities as well. He lived so simply, accepting only those things that were absolutely essential to the maintenance of his body. He wore ordinary cotton cloth that was soft from use and repaired where holes had developed. He also took the simplest foods – only a little bit of fruit in the morning, and at noon and in the evening, very plain vegetables cooked with few spices and no ghee. He would never accept anything opulent for himself and always engaged whatever he received in the service of Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

It was evident that money held no attraction for him whatsoever. When I was in Badger in 2008, I was fortunate to observe his interaction with one of his disciples.

She brought him some flowers along with a check for \$68,000. He scolded her a little, saying, “What is this? Didn’t you already give me \$18,000 or \$24,000 just a few days ago?” She explained that she would like to give him everything that was hers. Gurudeva wiped a tear from his eye, and then he tore the check into many pieces and returned it to her hands, explaining, “No, this will not happen. This cannot happen. Even if the money stays with you, it will be mine.” Seeing that she had started to feel badly because he was not accepting her offering, he added, “In the future, you will give me even more, a lot more.”

I heard later that Śrīla Gurudeva’s prediction came true. This devotee understood that he was giving her a test. Śrīla Gurudeva wanted to see whether she had any lingering attachment for the money she was offering. She became resolved in her desire for him to accept her donation, so the next year she gathered up her additional earnings and wrote him a check for \$108,000, which Śrīla Gurudeva mercifully accepted for the construction of his temples in Śrī Govardhana and Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma.

When Śrīla Gurudeva stayed in our house, he demonstrated through his example how simply and without any material attachments he expected us to live as well. My family’s house would be considered small by Western standards, but Śrīla Gurudeva referred to it as a *rāja-prasāda* (palace fit for a king). He also made a remark about a tiny old television set that was in our living room, which we only used for occasionally watching the news. Gurudeva

would brook no compromise on the path of *bhakti* and, through these lessons, instructed us to give up our worldly desires.


Śrīla Gurudeva came to our house four times in total, each visit for about three to five days, including during the summer before his disappearance from this world. We had been requesting him to visit for years, but as he became advanced in age, it seemed an impossibility, so we eventually stopped asking. Then very unexpectedly, he told us himself that he would come to our house the next year when we saw him in Los Angeles during the summer of 2006. Śrīla Gurudeva’s heart was softer than a lotus flower. Whenever someone asked him for a benediction, he could not refuse that person.

Whenever Śrīla Gurudeva glorified his own *guru-mahārāja*, he spoke not only of his inconceivable potencies but also of his loving exchanges with his disciples and followers. Our Śrīla Gurudeva, too, was such an expert in stealing the hearts of his disciples. We experienced this directly the very first time he visited our home. By engaging with us like a member of the family – including teaching my sister and me how to chant, how to sing *kīrtanas*, and how to study the *sāstras*; giving my sister the opportunity to decorate his room and make elaborate garlands for him; allowing my mother to cook for him three times a day; and involving my father in various personal services – he enabled us to feel a happiness unlike anything we have ever experienced, and he took our hearts in his pocket when he left.

I possess neither the intelligence nor the understanding nor the words to venerate a rarefied personality such as our Śrīla Gurudeva. My neophyte endeavour to do so here has undoubtedly been less successful than that of the dwarf who wishes to capture the moon.

*Jagad-guru nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja is a direct associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and also of the Divine Couple. His qualities

are transcendental and unlimited. On the most auspicious occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of his divine appearance on this earth, I pray to him that one day he will bestow upon me the qualification to realize even a drop of the ocean of his glories – and that one day I will develop a speck of understanding of my immense good fortune to have once had the opportunity to take the dust of his beautiful lotus feet upon my head.

Fallen and insignificant,  
Kundalatā dāsī 



#### VIṢṆU-PRIYA DĀSĪ

**D***aṇḍavat praṇāmas* and my sincere humble obeisances at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva, the *guru-paramparā*, and all the devotees.

Śrīla Gurudeva established New Braja Village School in Badger, CA, and I had the incredible blessing of being able to attend the school from my elementary years until I reached high school. I am feeling very nostalgic writing this because while in *gurukula*, all the students would write offerings to Śrīla Gurudeva every year to give to him on his *vyāsa-pūjā* day. As a child I remember writing such things as how I was doing in school, asking how he was doing, telling him *śloka*s I was learning or how I would help make garlands on appearance days. I especially remember writing to him every year, telling him how much I miss him and how I couldn't wait for the next Badger festival so I would finally get to see him again.

Now, writing an offering as an adult, nothing has changed. So I write:

To my dear Śrīla Gurudeva, my ultimate teacher, father, and thief of my heart, I miss you. I know that it's just your physical form that has left this world. I know that you are always with me and will never leave me. But I still miss seeing your side-long glance, your lotus feet, and your smile.

Every day I try to find ways to stay inspired, to stay close to your lotus feet, and see your hand in all aspects of my life. I know you are always with me, protecting me and keeping my heart in your pocket.

You gave me everything. I kind of struck devotional gold. My mother, Nitya Mañjarī dāsī, met you in 1996, just one week after I was born and asked that you take away all her attachments. In reply, you said that you would place Kṛṣṇa in her heart and He would provide



everything. In doing so, you also gave the same to me. You gave me an amazing, inspiring, humble, beautiful devotee mother to put and keep me on the path of *bhakti*. But then if I wasn't lucky enough, you gave me the most perfect community of devotees for a child to be raised in, devotees who are dedicated to you and your mission and especially to keeping us kids on the right path. Then, four years later, you gave me my best friend, my soul mate, Subhadrā devī dāsī, whose friendship has never faded through the years and as such has kept me close to you. Without you, I wouldn't have any of these things and wouldn't be who I am today.

I know you're always here and have never left, but it's been so hard without your

physical presence. That's the real test though, isn't it? – how we are without your physical form in front of us. I never want to lose sight of who I am and everything you've given me. It's been so long since I've written an offering for you; too long, but it is flowing out of me as easy as it is to breathe. Thank you for keeping my heart in your pocket all these years, for guiding me, and for being my father. I want nothing more than to make you proud and continue on the path of *bhakti*.


And so I will end just as I did as a kid: How are you? Where are you right now? Are you having fun? I can't wait to see you again.

Forever your darling daughter,

Viṣṇu-priya devī dāsī  
(Badger) 

## GRAND DISCIPLES

### KEŚAVA DĀSA



**H**are Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Gurudeva!  
*Koṭi koṭi daṇḍavat-praṇāma!*

Do you remember me, my master?

Even before I was born, you interacted with me. I was in the womb of my mother when she was initiated by you and given the *gopāla-mantra*. At that very moment, you blessed me. There is no doubt that whatever good I have has only been given by you.

Śrīla Gurudeva! The second meeting was a life-changing encounter for me. It was when you came to Faridabad. One close disciple urged you to come to our house. That time, we had a small house, and that too on the first floor. You could not climb the stairs, so

your disciples carried you. During this second meeting, I was just 3–4 months old. My mother placed me on your lap Śrīla Gurudeva. You asked my parents, “What is his name?” They replied, “Bhāratendu.” You closed your eyes for a moment and spoke, “His name is Keśava dāsa.” You yourself changed my name and gave me the name Keśava, and this is the greatest wealth I have. Do you remember all this? I don't. My mother told me about all these encounters with you. And I feel blessed whenever I recall all these encounters.

Later, during my childhood, we used to visit you [in Mathurā] every year on Guru-pūrṇimā. There, thousands of people used to

come from all across the world just to have one little glance of you, Śrīla Gurudeva. That time, I was too small to understand the reason for tears coming in the eyes of people there simply upon seeing you, Gurudeva. But now I am understanding your divine personality.

I was 13 years old when you entered *nitya-līlā*. I was unaware of your role in my life back then. I could never develop any feelings or closeness with you until I enrolled for Audio-Sevā two years back in 2018. The statement “We can have real *darśana* through our ears, not through our eyes” became evident to me when every day I started hearing your sweet yet strong words, Śrīla Gurudeva. I started developing a little relationship with you. You started coming in my dreams, blessing me. I felt I was personally associating with you. Nothing was lacking. Your voice is enough to provide one with the topmost association anytime and anywhere in this world.



## UṢĀ DĀSĪ

All glories to *om viṣṇupāda*  
*aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Śrīla  
Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja!

Words are not my best friend, but I will and I must attempt to pen them for our Śrīla Gurudeva. He is a treasure chest that is overflowing continuously with the spiritual knowledge; knowledge that is the truth and knowledge that is deeper than the deepest ocean. When I first came into his association, I was only 9 or 10 years old and had no understanding of who he was. Even as I grew

Unfortunately, I could never understand your glories and things that you have given me, Gurudeva. But still, you made me the most fortunate, by giving me your little, yet life-changing, association.

Like the Sun, who never leaves the Earth bereft of his sunlight, in the same way, Śrīla Gurudeva, you also never keep us bereft of your blessings. I make innumerable offences. Please rectify me. I am constantly begging for your mercy. I wrote some broken lines for you.

I was never qualified to get your mercy; still, you rectified me with all the courtesy. I was never inclined to accept God; still, you outlined the philosophy to this clod.

I can never repay you till the end of the time, but I can pray to serve you with all my might.

Keśava dāsa (Faridabad, India)

Disciple of Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta  
Siddhānti Mahārāja



up, I couldn't make the best of his association. Now after listening to his audio recordings and reading his books, I realize I was so near and yet so far; I realize what I have missed. He went to such lengths to translate and simplify the knowledge for fools like me. The books he has authored, the lectures he gave, are invaluable.

The most cherished memory I have with Śrīla Gurudeva is at *vyāsa-pūjā* at Mathurā Maṭha one time. [While offering prayers to him] I jumbled a few words and had to pause

to open the *Gīti-guccha* (Vaiṣṇava song book). Śrīla Gurudeva didn't get upset or angry. He just chuckled and let me pick up.

The way he raised his hand from far to give blessings, the way he called me his daughter, the way he welcomed us at the *maṭha* entrance on our return journey from Govardhana *annakūṭa*... and so many more snippets of association.

I am glad beyond bounds for getting these once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. At times I feel my Kṛṣṇa consciousness is like waves in the ocean, not steady – improving sometimes and diminishing sometimes. But Śrīla Gurudeva's words keep me away from anxiety:

"I will take you there, no matter how many lifetimes it will take; you just need to have that strong conviction." At the celebration of his centennial, I offer my humble obeisance unto his lotus feet and deeply pray to him to always keep me in his sight, keep giving me his association and the association of devotees, and to keep pulling me forward towards the goal, no matter how bad a child I may be.

Insignificant and aspiring servant

Ūsā dāsī (Dubai / Noida)

Śikṣā disciple and grand disciple

Disciple of Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta

Mādhava Mahārāja 

#### AJAY-KRṢṆA DĀSA



**D**ear Śrīla Gurudeva,  
First of all, I offer my *ananta-koṭi daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* at the lotus feet of my dear most *dikṣā-gurudeva*, *pūjyapāda* Bhaktivedānta Śrī Vana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and in the same way I offer my *ananta-koṭi daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* unto the lotus feet of my dearest *śikṣā-gurudeva*, *om viṣṇu-pāda paramahansa aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Also, I offer my unlimited *daṇḍavat praṇāmas* unto the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, and I offer my unlimited *daṇḍavat praṇāmas* unto the lotus feet of our entire *guru-paramparā* and all *rūpānuga guru-varga*.

I am offering my *puṣpāñjali* to Śrīla Gurudeva for his centennial *vyāsa-pūjā*. Though I have

no qualification at all, I am writing this on the basis of the views of senior Vaiṣṇavas and my own experience of listening to Śrīla Gurudeva's wonderful *hari-kathā*. I am highly fortunate to seek the shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva. Although I never met Śrīla Gurudeva in person, I strongly feel a hearty connection with him through his nectarean *hari-kathā*.

I got connected with Śrīla Gurudeva through the Brisbane Bhakti Saṅga, and I am very grateful to Śrī Prakāśa prabhu and Śrī Acintya-gaura prabhu and family for the same. When I started visiting Bhakti Brisbane Saṅga, I saw a big photo of Śrīla Gurudeva, and felt some sort of connection, thus becoming attracted to Śrīla Gurudeva. I experienced real and pure spirituality there. I regularly had the good fortune to hear Śrīla Gurudeva's glorification by his disciples and Vaiṣṇavas.

In March 2018, I was highly fortunate to participate in Śrīla Gurudeva's Audio-Sevā and this was a milestone for me. From the moment I started listening to Śrīla Gurudeva's *hari-kathā*, I had a tremendous experience that Śrīla Gurudeva, by his *hari-kathā*, was so strongly and forcefully pulling me out of this material life. After that, I do not know what happened to me and I got completely captured by him. I was highly inspired by his sweet *hari-kathā* and could not stop myself. I kept going on and on, listening to his wonderful *hari-kathā*. It was all his mercy and I was highly benefited by this. I am eternally indebted to him. As I mentioned earlier, I never met Śrīla Gurudeva in person, but I feel a deep connection with him through his *hari-kathā*, teachings and instructions.

I always think about Śrīla Gurudeva and wonder how it was possible for him to give such a large number of high-class lectures and to publish so many books? The answer is as he was not an ordinary person. He came from the spiritual world to fulfil his mission.

I feel highly privileged to be in this Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *paramparā* by the mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva. All our *sannyāsīs*, speakers and followers of Śrīla Gurudeva are giving the foremost *hari-kathā*. It is all due to his contribution. Śrīla Gurudeva gave his training, inspiration and mercy to all of his followers.

In conclusion, I truly believe that Śrīla Gurudeva has given us the supreme, topmost thing on the path of *bhakti* and that there is nothing beyond that point to achieve. He is our real eternal master and guardian.

I pray to Śrīla Gurudeva that he always keeps me at his lotus feet and under his guidance.

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubyaś ca  
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca  
patitānām pāvanebhyo  
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

Aspiring for the mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva,

Ajay-kṛṣṇa dāsa (Brisbane, Australia)  
Disciple of Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta  
Vana Mahārāja



### INDUMUKHI DĀSĪ

*Hare Kṛṣṇa! Jaya Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga!  
om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

Oh, how it is possible that Bhagavān has sent such an amazing person as you! Never in my material life have I seen so many amazing qualities in one person! Continuously, year after

year, more and more facets of your transcendental nature are opening and melting hearts around the world, granting amazing spiritual strength of so many kinds: the strength to resist the negative influence of the Age of Kali; the strength to practise *bhakti*; and the hope of gaining spiritual perfection.

The seeker of the Absolute Truth will find in your lectures everything from A to Z, from how to live in harmony with each other to a deep explanation of *tattva-siddhānta*, to the practice of *bhakti* with the highest taste of serving Śrīmatī Rādhikā in the mood of Her maidservant.

I know that there are prayers to Narasimha for protection in difficult situations, but every time I am in danger, when *anarthas* cover my consciousness and there is no way to cope alone, I call on your name. For just as the name of Kṛṣṇa is non-different from Kṛṣṇa Himself, the name of the *guru* is not different from the *guru* himself and is just as powerful. “Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja *kī jaya!*” I exclaim when I listen to your lectures, when I see how your disciples are progressing spiritually, when I feel very bad, and when my heart is weak and needs protection. Just as Kṛṣṇa has all the power, so His eternal associates have all the power to pull us out of the depths of material existence.

Your *praṇāma-mantra* says: *audārya mādihurya...* Oh, how amazing is your sweetness and generosity! It is a spiritual generosity, which opens our eyes, sheds

light on the nature of things, on the Absolute Truth and moreover on the highest mood of serving Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa – *rādhā-dāsyam*. Of course, these are all lofty words and not supported by personal realization, but still your glory is such that even such small and immature devotees like me come to the realization that there is no need to seek spiritual support from anyone but you. There is no need to strive to collect knowledge from different sources but only to listen to your lectures, gathering strength to live in harmony and practise *bhakti*.

Trusting in your inspiring words that even in three lifetimes one can achieve perfection, I pray at your feet in the hope of spiritual development, liberation from *anarthas* and the attainment of eternal service to the Divine Couple.

All glories to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja!

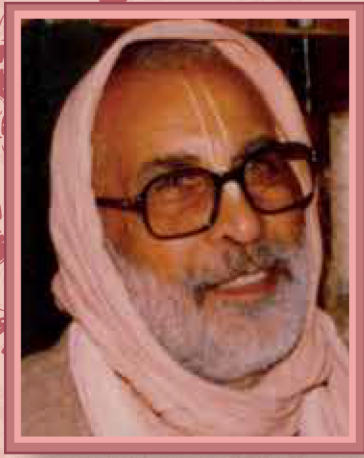
Your eternal servant

Indumukhi dāśī (Russia)

Disciple of Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta

Mādhava Mahārāja 





Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's contribution to the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is significant and unique, and his thorough, explanation of the reasons for Śrīman Mahāprabhu's descent, supported by numerous scriptural references, breathed new life into devotees throughout the world.

Superiors, peers and subordinates testified to his authenticity: his absolute dedication to his own guru and the Gauḍīya line, his relish of refined precepts, his pristine descriptions of *vraja-līlā*, his glorifications of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and devotion to Her, his vast erudition, his immaculate practices and conduct, his utter detachment from this world, his endless compassion for others...

It is for this reason that *Śrī Guru Vandanā*, a compilation in honour of his centennial appearance day, begins with *ācāryas'* writings on *guru-tattva* and ends with homage to him.





The real symptom of a disciple is that he has offered everything at his *guru's* lotus feet. "May everyone in the world, not just me, become the servant of my *guru*." A genuine disciple should desire such an attitude. To serve *śrī guru*, a real disciple gathers the best flowers [souls] in the world and places them on his offering tray. It is this self-surrendering tendency that is *guru-pūjā*, or *sevā*. Such a tendency is not of this world, being born of Vaikuṇṭha ideals.

It is thus essential for us to wait to encounter that *guru-pādapadma* who is dedicated to Truth, who is fearless and powerful. It is inappropriate to accept as one's *guru* a person who himself is under the sway of illusion and lowly. It is only by the touch of a transcendental entity (*nirguṇa-vastu*) that the *jīva's* contemptibility is demolished. Destroyed are all the vices of that living entity who is sheltered at the lotus feet of a *mahāpuruṣa*.

Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja  
Śrī Guru-pūjā



[www.purebhakti.com](http://www.purebhakti.com)

