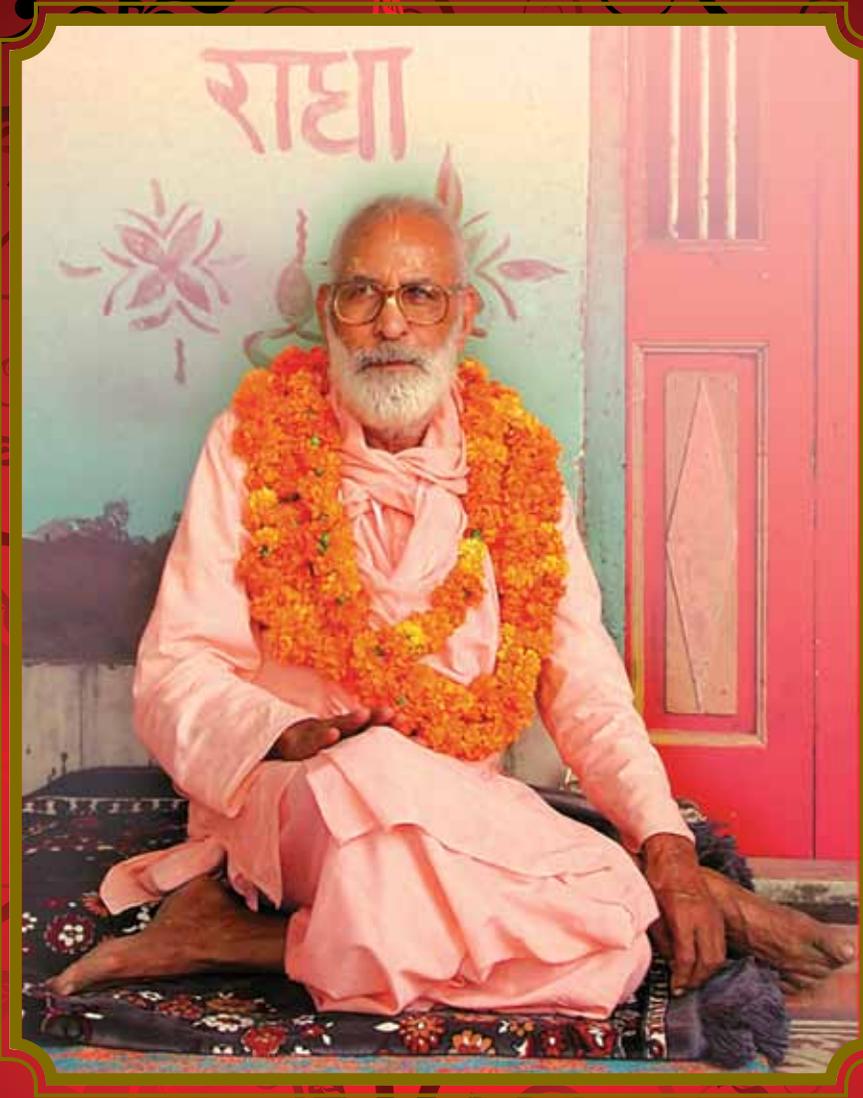


ISSN 0973-2772

Rays of The Harmonist

SPECIAL ON-LINE EDITION

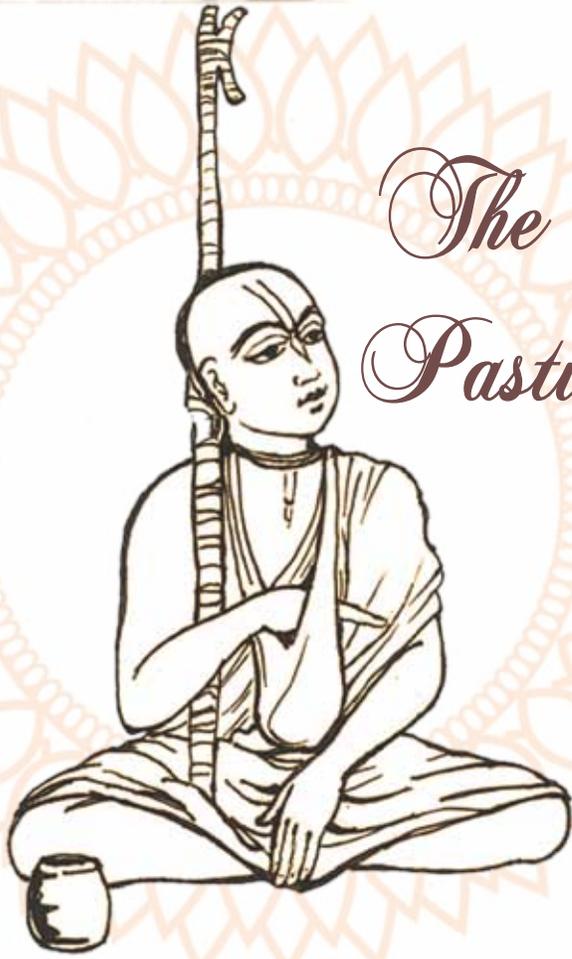
No. 24 * In Honour of the Badger Puṣpa-samādhi Ceremony, 2011



Entering Nitya-līlā

The Concluding Transcendental Pastimes of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja





The Real Significance of the Pastime of Illness Manifested by the Mahā-bhāgavata

by the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Sometimes, people wonder: Do any symptoms of disease ever manifest in the bodies of the *mahā-bhāgavatas* or not? If so, is their pastime of illness the same as the illness of ordinary living entities? *Sādhus* and *mahātmās* are sometimes seen to be afflicted by bodily ailments, but do they experience misery resulting from attachment to a material body, as ordinary living entities do?

The Mahā-bhāgavata's Every Act is Transcendental

The *mahā-bhāgavata* is not an ordinary living being, bound to suffer the results of his previous actions (*karmā*). His wanderings and residence in this world are solely for the welfare of the world – that is, for the welfare of all living beings. The illness enacted by the *mahā-bhāgavata* should never be equated with suffering born of the threefold worldly miseries.

While manifesting the perfect ideal of *vipralambhamaya-bhajana*, or *bhajana* suffused with deep feelings of separation, the *mahā-bhāgavata* actually deceives those who are extremely antagonistic to Bhagavān and those who are offenders. But simultaneously, he confers the opportunity to serve upon those who are *sevonmukha* (inclined to render service). And he demonstrates throughout his life the perfect ideal of following the instruction “serve Śrī

Hari with intense endeavour and enthusiasm, even amidst worldly tribulations.”

The Real Disciple and the Imposter

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda – the very root of the wish-fulfilling tree of *prema* (*prema-kalpataru*) an eternally perfected (*nitya-siddha*) associate of Bhagavān and the crest jewel of the clan of *mahā-bhāgavatas* – enacted a pastime of illness. During this *līlā*, the *sevā-vṛtti*, or service attitude, of his disciple Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda manifested fully.

On the other hand, another disciple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda, named Rāmacandra Purī, was the epitome of offending the lotus feet of *śrī guru* and Bhagavān. During Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī's pastime of illness, the tendency exactly opposite to service stirred within the heart of Rāmacandra Purī. When he would hear his *gurudeva's* cries of lamentation in separation from Kṛṣṇa, he would think, “Why is Gurudeva weeping if he has fully realized *brahma* (absolute spirit)? It seems that he is crying due to being afflicted by illness. Or, like an ordinary living being, that he is attached to his body.”

This is narrated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 8.21):

*tumi—pūrṇa-brahmānanda, karaba smarāṇa
brahmavit hañā kene karaba rodana?*

[Śrī Rāmacandra Purī said:] You should remember that you are completely one with transcendental ecstasy (*brahmānanda*). Why is it that you are weeping despite being *brahma-vit*, one who knows the Absolute Truth?

Rāmacandra Purī even thought that Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who is Svayam Bhagavān Himself, was an ordinary living being addicted to gratifying his tongue, but such material conceptions could never enter the mind of Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda. This establishes the excellence (*vaiśiṣṭya*) of Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda, the real disciple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda, over Rāmacandra Purī, a hypocrite and a disciple in name only.

*īśvara-purī gosāñi kare śrī-pada sevana
sva-baste karena mala-mūtrādi mārjana*

*nirantara kṛṣṇa-nāma karāya smarāna
kṛṣṇa-nāma kṛṣṇa-līlā śunāya anukṣāna*

*tuṣṭa hañā purī tāñre kaila āliṅgana
vara dilā kṛṣṇe tomāra ba-uka prema-dhana*

*sei haite īśvara-purī premera sāgara
rāmacandra-purī haila sarva-nindākara*

*mabad-anugraha-nigrāhera ‘sākṣī’ dui-jane
ei dui-dvāre śikhāilā jaga-jane*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 8.28-32)

Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda served Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda in many ways, including cleaning up his stool and urine with his own hand. Śrī Īśvara Purī was immersed in remembering Kṛṣṇa’s name, and he would constantly speak out loud the names and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī cherished the most. Pleased with Śrī Īśvara Purī for how he performed these various services, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda embraced him and gave him a benediction: “May you receive the wealth of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-prema*.” From that time on, Śrī Īśvara Purī became a blissful ocean of *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, Rāmacandra Purī became exceedingly bent on fault-finding. Śrī Īśvara Purī received Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda’s abundant blessings, while Rāmacandra Purī was the recipient of his stern admonition. Therefore, these two personalities, Śrī Īśvara Purī and Rāmacandra Purī, illustrate an exalted personality’s object of blessings and discipline, respectively. By these two examples, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda instructed all living entities throughout the world.

Because Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda attentively followed the instructions and teachings of his *śrī-gurupāda-padma*, he

"Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda – the very root of the wish-fulfilling tree of *prema* (*prema-kalpataru*) an eternally perfected (*nitya-siddha*) associate of Bhagavān and the crest jewel of the clan of *mahā-bhāgavatas* – enacted a pastime of illness. During this *līlā*, the *seva-vṛtti*, or service attitude of his disciple Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda manifested fully."

came to understand that the sickness pastime enacted by a *mahā-bhāgavata* is not like the illness of conditioned souls, who are forced to endure the reactions of their previous activities. Nor is his illness pastime a severance from *bhagavat-sevā* (service to Bhagavān) as a result of being bound in a corporeal form. The *mahā-bhāgavata*, who is fully engaged in *bhagavad-anuśilana* (perpetually endeavouring to serve Bhagavān out of love for Him) considers himself to be fully bereft of service. Indeed, he laments, “I am completely unable to serve Śrī Bhagavān.”

When The Vaiṣṇavas Appear to Be Miserable, They are in Fact Experiencing the Highest Bliss

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Antya-līlā* 8.19) quotes Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, who, weeping, would say, “*mathurā nā pāinu bolī’ karena krandana* – I could not obtain Mathurā-*maṇḍala!*” His acute and intense eagerness was to satisfy Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s desires to the fullest extent. This indeed is the pinnacle of *bhajana*, or a true mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa (*vipralambha*). Therefore, Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, the Vyāsa of *śrī caitanya-līlā*, has said:

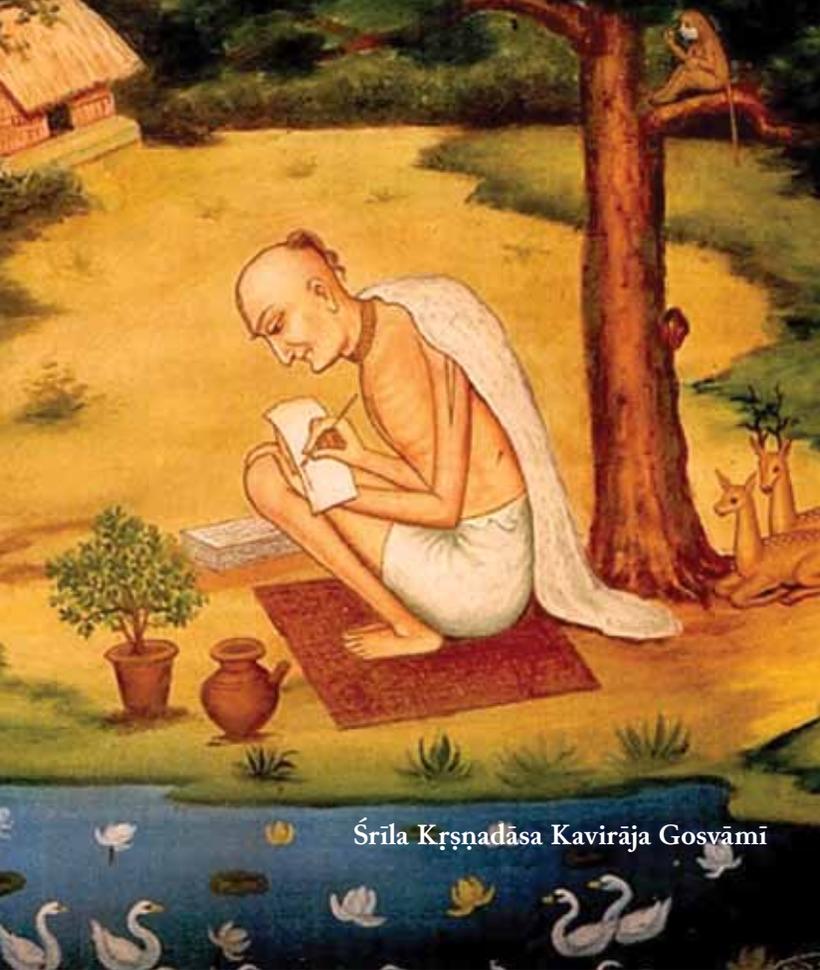
*yata dekha vaiṣṇavera vyavahāra-dubkha
niṣcaya jāniha sei parānanda sukha*

*viśaya-madāndha saba kicchui nā jāne
vidyā kūla, dhana-made vaiṣṇava nā cine*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 9.240–241)

You should know for certain that whatever material misery a Vaiṣṇava is seen to experience, is for him an experience of the highest bliss. Ignorant men, blinded by sense enjoyment, do not understand the slightest thing about these transcendental matters. Because they are intoxicated by pride in their knowledge, family lineage and wealth, they cannot identify a Vaiṣṇava.

Those who are absorbed in accumulating empirical knowledge consider Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s enacting the pastime of having a fever, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu’s



Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī

"Those who are absorbed in accumulating empirical knowledge consider... Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu's enacting distress due to old age, to be the same as the destined suffering of living entities... Those who think like this are extremely unfortunate and they are deceived, kicked by imperfect knowledge...."

enacting the pastime of being covered with sores, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu's enacting distress due to old age, to be the same as the destined suffering (*prarabdha-bhoga*) of living entities bound by their karmic reactions. Those who think like this are extremely unfortunate and they are deceived, kicked by imperfect knowledge, which is based on sense perception.

The Extraordinary Compassion of the Mahā-puruṣa

The *mahā-puruṣa* enacts such pastimes only to help the living entities realize the temporary nature of their life of suffering and grief and to consequently become intensely enthused and engaged in rendering profuse service to Śrī Bhagavān.

If the personal associates of Bhagavān did not display an intense effort to perform service to Śrī Hari by enacting pastimes such as appearing in a lowly family or undergoing various calamities, afflictions, dangers, sickness or lamentation, then the conditioned souls, fallen and arrested in the material prison-house of three-fold-miseries, would never be inspired to begin to turn their faces toward their own auspiciousness.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's conversation with Śrī Uddhava known as *Uddhava-gīta* (11.28.25), Śrī Bhagavān says:

*samāhitaiḥ kaḥ karaṇair guṇātmabbir
guṇo bhaven mat-suvivikta-dhāmnah
vikṣīpyamāṇair uta kim nu dūṣaṇam
ghanair upetair vigatai raveḥ kim*

For one to whom My personal identity as the Supreme Lord has been completely revealed, what virtue or fault is there if such a liberated person's senses are either fully focused or entirely distracted? Indeed, of what importance is it to the sun if there are clouds in the sky or not? In the same manner, even when, according to external vision, all the senses of the liberated *mahā-bhāgavata* are perceived to be agitated and distraught, still, he is not overwhelmed by them. Nor do they cause him the slightest disturbance.

When an ignorant person cannot see the sun because of the clouds in the sky, he considers the sun to be covered, but in reality this is not so. His vision of the sun has simply been blocked, for the sun, self-luminous and forever pure, is never affected by clouds. Similarly, the senses of a liberated personality are never distracted, but because our own senses are agitated, we perceive the liberated personality, who is incessantly engaged in *hari-sevā*, to be afflicted with disease and lamentation and to be full of disturbance.



"For the welfare of the living beings attached to their bodies, the deity form of the Lord (*śrī-arcā-avatāra*) appears as if dependent, although He is fully self-satisfied..."

Bestowing a Unique Opportunity to Serve

On the other hand, one who knows that the *mahā-bhāgavata* is not really affected by any kind of suffering, illness or lamentation, may out of weak-mindedness come to the conclusion that there is no reason to serve him. "Why should I serve those who are not actually suffering? Instead I shall attend to those who are really in distress." If we are impelled by this type of thinking, we will become another Rāmacandra Purī.

Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda knew that his *śrīla gurudeva* was detached and unaffected by illness and lamentation, and that actually, he was absorbed in *vipralambha-bhajana*. Still, with his own hands, Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda cleaned the excrement of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī. By doing so he instructed the people in general that *śrīla gurudeva* enacts the pastime of sickness to give his disciples the opportunity to serve him in that condition. If the disciple fails to avail himself of such an opportunity, he will miss the chance to perform service to the *mahā-bhāgavata*, who is, in reality, always self-sufficient.

For the welfare of the living beings attached to their bodies, the deity form of the Lord (*śrī-arcā-avatāra*) appears as if dependent, although He is fully self-satisfied. He appears as if ignorant, although He is fully omniscient; He appears

to be powerless, although he is replete with all power; He appears to need protection, although He is the supreme protector; and He displays the form of subordination to His devotees, although He is the Master of all masters.

Unless the Lord takes such a position, the living beings who are immersed in bodily consciousness would have no opportunity to render personal service to Him.

Although the *niskīncana mahā-bhāgavatas* are completely free from the mentality of expecting anything from this world, and although they are completely liberated from bondage, which is born of all the effects of the three modes of material nature, they nevertheless appear to be like one in a diseased condition, who has expectations of others and dependence on them. Their purpose is purely to bestow an opportunity to render service upon those living beings who are *sevonmukha* – possessed of an inclination to serve. This alone demonstrates their extraordinary compassion upon the inhabitants of this world.

Because of the *mahā-bhāgavata*'s acts of compassion, the conditioned souls in this world are saved from the fruitless toil of serving distressed persons who are simply full of *anarthas*. Rather, by availing themselves of the opportunity to serve a *mahā-bhāgavata*, they become completely freed from the mentality of either considering whether to desire

the fruits of their action or to renounce them. It is solely with this purpose in mind that the *mahā-bhāgavata* bestows such opportunity upon the conditioned souls. It is only by serving, satisfying and fulfilling the needs of the *mahā-bhāgavata* that the living entities obtain their highest auspiciousness.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu writes in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, verse 5:

*kr̥ṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta
dikṣāsti cet praṇatibhiḥ ca bhajantam īśam
śusrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-sūnya-br̥dam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā*

This verse means that if someone's lips have chanted Kṛṣṇa's name just once, the *madhyama-adbikārī* will offer him respect within the mind. If someone has received *dikṣā* and is engaged in devotional service (*hari-bhajana*), then the *madhyama-adbikārī* will show him respect by offering obeisances and so forth. And upon meeting the *uttama-adbikārī* – who neither sees nor knows anything apart from Kṛṣṇa, who is free from all critical tendencies and who is adept in *bhajana* – the *madhyama-adbikārī* will honour him by rendering service to him in all ways, for he knows that among those who are like minded and affectionately disposed toward him (*sajātiya-āśraya-sniḡdha*), there is no association more exalted than such a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

"If, however, one dishonours a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee of Bhagavān by seeing with mundane vision any fault in his nature or body, then one will be deprived of service to such an exalted Vaiṣṇava."

The Form of the Mahā-bhāgavata is Devoid of Any Flaw

If, however, one dishonours a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee of Bhagavān by seeing with mundane vision any fault in his nature or body, then one will be deprived of service to such an exalted Vaiṣṇava. Therefore, in *Upadeśāmṛta*, verse 6, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu states:

*dr̥ṣṭaiḥ svabhāva-janitair vapuṣaś ca doṣair
na prakṛtatvam iha bhakta janasya paśyeta
gaṅgāmbhasām na khalu budbuda-pbena-pankair
brahma-dravatvam apagacchati nīra-dharmaiḥ*

Devotees who are constantly absorbed in *hari-sevā* while being situated in this material world should not be viewed with mundane vision. In other words one should not consider them to be ordinary conditioned souls. The imperfections visible in their natures, such as birth in a low caste, harshness and lethargy, and the imperfections

visible in their bodies, such as ugly features, disease and deformities, are precisely like the appearance of bubbles, foam and mud in the Ganges. Despite such apparent pollution in the water of the Ganges, she does not lose her nature of liquefied transcendence. Similarly the apparent imperfections seen in the nature and bodies of the self-realized Vaiṣṇavas, who always exist on the transcendental plane should not be seen from a materialistic point of view.

All the endeavours of the *mahā-bhāgavata*, or liberated personality, are meant for the service of Kṛṣṇa. He is not impelled to act by either an enjoying mentality or a mood of renunciation. If a doubt arises in a person who hears Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta's account of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī's passing stool and urine, because he is bewildered by such activities of the *mahā-bhāgavata*, the answer is given by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Śrī Uddhava-gītā* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.28.30–31):

*karoti karma kriyate ca jantuḥ
kenāpy asau codita ā-nīpatāt
na tatra vidvān prakṛtau sthito 'pi
nivr̥tta-tr̥ṣṇaḥ sva-sukhānubhūtyā
tiṣṭhantam āśīnam uta vrajantam
śayānam ukṣantam adantam annam
svabhāvam anyat kim apīhamānam
ātmānam ātma-stha-matir na veda*

Inspired by their previous impressions, all living beings perform activities (*karma*) until the

very moment of their death, and they are affected by the results of that *karma*. A learned person, however, although situated within the body, clearly knows the difference between bondage and liberation and is completely free from all worldly desires because of his realizing the bliss of serving Bhagavān in a favourable mood. His actions never result in his receiving a material destination. Those whose consciousness is always absorbed in service to Bhagavān – whether they are standing or sitting, moving or resting, eating grains or excreting, or whether they are performing any other activity that is natural for the body – are never attached to their bodies. 🌸

Translated by the *Rays of The Harmonist* team
from *Śrī Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā* Year-7, Issues 11–12
Originally published in Bengali in the weekly *Gauḍīya*,
Year-12, No. 45

om viṣṇupāda astottara-sata

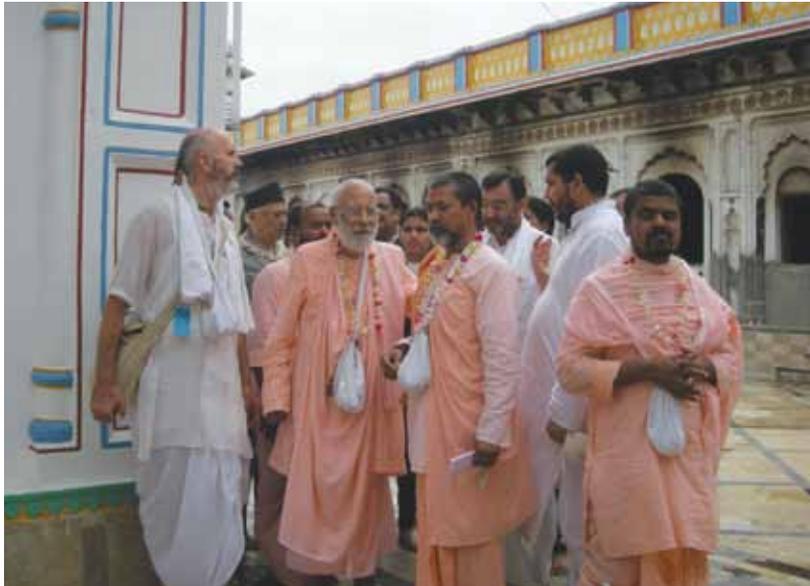
*Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa
Gosvāmī Mahārāja entered
Śrī Śrī Rādhā Ramaṇa Bihārījī's
naisa-līlā (night pastimes)*



based on a report by
Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta
Siddhanti Mahārāja
and Śrīman Sañjaya dāsa
Brahmacāri (who were in
the personal service of
Śrīla Gurudeva from
September 2010 until his
divine disappearance)

On Wednesday, 29 December 2010, shortly before dawn on the auspicious *kṛṣṇa-navamī-tithi* of the *pauṣa-* (*nārāyaṇa-*) *māsa* – the appearance day of *om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja – at 3 a.m., in the Śrī Jayaśrī-Dāmodara Gauḍīya Maṭha, which is located at Śrī Cakra-tīrtha, the sacred appearance place of Śrī Jagannātha-Baladeva-Subhadra in Kṣetra-maṇḍala Jagannātha Purī, he who was an intimate associate of *nitya-līlā praviṣṭa aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who in turn was the intimate and dear associate of *jagad-guru om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda, the protector of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*; he who was best among the one-pointed followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, who fulfilled the innermost desire of *kali-yuga pāvana āvātārī* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the saviour of the most fallen in this age of Kali; he who was the crown jewel of the clan of *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas in present times; he who was acclaimed Yuga-ācārya; and he who was the president-ācārya of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti Trust: *om viṣṇupāda paramahansa svami aṣṭottara-śata* **Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja** by his own sweet desire entered Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa-Bihārījī's *naiṣa-līlā* (night pastimes), in the Lord's own eternal abode, thus submerging those servants who had taken shelter at his lotus feet in an ocean of intense separation from him.

Indications of Departure



Return from Nepal

In August 2009, Śrīla Gurudeva went to Nepal to preach the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as well as to visit the city of Janakapurī to have *darśana* of Śrī Sītā Devī's birthplace. Upon his return to Mathurā, in his arrival address at the Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, he described that cherished journey: “For a long time, I had desired to visit the birthplace of Śrī Sītā Devī, the *śakti* of Lord Rāma, and by her mercy that desire has been fulfilled in the final part of my life. Therefore, I think that with this pilgrimage, I have completed my *darśanas* of all the holy places of the world.”

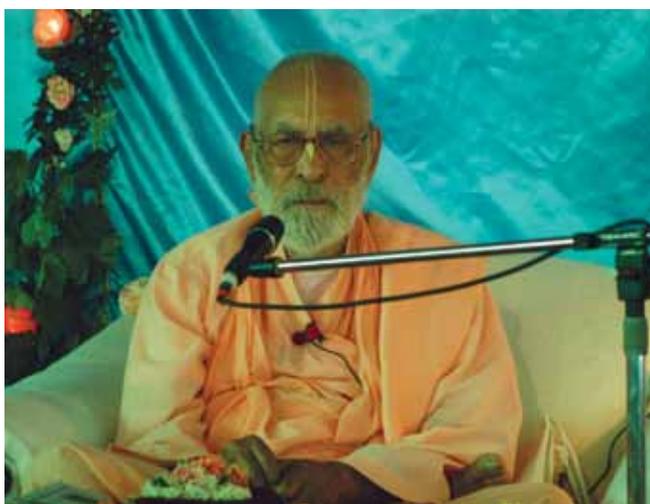
Badger

In June 2010, Śrīla Gurudeva presided at Badger's annual Summer Hari-kathā Festival, delivering a series of heart-rending classes portraying the anguish that Kṛṣṇa felt in separation from the *vrajavāsīs* after He left them to go to Mathurā, and the torment they felt being separated from Him. At the end of what was to be his final class there, he announced, “This is my last journey to America.” Then, to the great dismay of the over eight hundred devotees gathered, Śrīla Gurudeva left the festival a day before its scheduled conclusion.

Thus in various ways, Śrīla Gurudeva began to reveal some of what his supremely worshipful *gurupāda-padma*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa



photos ©Sulatā dāsī



Bihārījī were indicating to him – that he had fully accomplished his assigned service of disseminating Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s teachings (*gaura-vāṇī*) in this world and was soon to enter *nitya-līlā* and present himself to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa-Bihārī for service to Them in Their eternal abode.

Enacting the pastime of illness

In accordance with the unfolding of a divine plan, Śrīla Gurudeva enacted his human-like pastime of illness from the beginning of 2010. In a prelude to the more serious illness that would occur later in the year, on two occasions at the time of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, Śrīla Gurudeva did not come to preside over the evening assembly. Great disappointment filled the hearts of the attending devotees, who yearned to hear transcendental *kathā* from his lotus mouth.

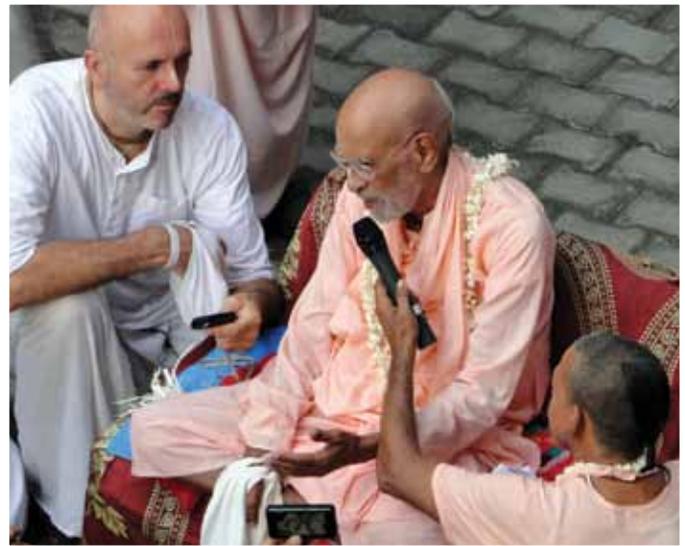
Even though he was noticeably weak during his American and European tour, after he had returned to India and celebrated *guru-pūrṇimā*, Śrīla Gurudeva still planned to fly to Dubai and Russia to participate in *hari-kathā* festivals there. Some devotees expressed concern about this. He had just returned from a world tour and had had little time to rest. Further, he had just given *darśana* to thousands of devotees at three *guru-pūrṇimā* festivals in India. For these reasons, the devotees felt he should not travel again so soon. But Śrīla Gurudeva could not be dissuaded from



going and remained fixed in his determination to fulfil his promise to the devotees in Russia, who for years had been eagerly yearning for his *darśana*, being unable to come to India due to their financial constraints. Upon his return to India, however, after the successful completion of those festivals, he went directly from the airport to the hospital.

Janmāṣṭamī – his last lecture in Delhi

On the request of his doctors, Śrīla Gurudeva stayed in Delhi to regain his health. Therefore, for the first time in fifty-six years, he was not in Mathurā or Vṛndāvana for the celebrations of Jhulana-yātrā; his annual three-day conference honouring Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī on his disappearance day; Śrī Baladeva Pūrṇimā; Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī; and Śrī Nandotsava. Words cannot describe how he lamented not being able to be there. The



transcendental moods he expressed in his last lecture, given on Śrī Janmāṣṭamī at Śrī Ramaṇa-Bihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Delhi, have already been published along with the complete discourse in the Hindi magazine *Śrī Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā* (year 7, number 7).



Arrival in Mathurā and Govardhana

Śrīla Gurudeva completed his medical treatment just after Śrī Nandotsava and immediately travelled to Mathurā. After staying there for two days, he proceeded to Govardhana.

A devotee in Mathurā told Śrīla Gurudeva that in his absence, the Janmāṣṭamī festival seemed devoid of life. He requested Śrīla Gurudeva to be present in Mathurā every Janmāṣṭamī, just like he used to be. At this, Śrīla Gurudeva became very grave. “A new era is about to begin,” he responded. “Everything will be different from now on.” With these words, Śrīla Gurudeva fell silent.

Further manifestations of illness

After a short stay in Govardhana, Śrīla Gurudeva again exhibited manifestations of sickness. He expressed a deep desire to stay in Vraja and to be able to celebrate Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī in Mathurā, but because Govardhana lacks adequate medical facilities, he had to return to Delhi.

As Gurudeva enacted his pastime of illness again and again, the heartbreak his disciples and followers experienced can only be known to them. Everyone simply desired Śrīla Gurudeva’s speedy recovery, by one means or another. Śrīla Gurudeva was scheduled to fly to Malaysia on September 19, but on the advice of his doctors, his journey was cancelled. His servants hastily consulted prominent doctors from India and abroad and began to arrange the best possible treatment in Delhi.

Continuous nāma-saṅkīrtana, parikramās, worship and offerings, and fire sacrifice for the recovery of Śrīla Gurudeva’s health

While Śrīla Gurudeva stayed in the Śrī Ramaṇa Bihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha and received treatment, local devotees and devotees arriving from all corners of the world would perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana* outside his *bhajana-kutīra*, for hours every day. Śrīla Gurudeva would relish their *kīrtana* from inside his quarters. People neglected their jobs, businesses and household affairs with just two things in mind – their concern for Śrīla Gurudeva’s health and how to receive his *darśana*. Sometimes Śrīla Gurudeva’s servants would help him walk to the door of his *bhajana-kutīra*, his arms resting on their shoulders as they walked on either side of him. Upon seeing Śrīla Gurudeva, the devotees would perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana* loudly and would feel such intense emotion that often they could not help but weep. At other times, Śrīla Gurudeva would come out to sit on his balcony and give his *darśana* and blessings to the devotees below.



To pray for his good health, many devotees performed regular *parikramā*, *abhiśekha* with *pañcāmṛta* and worship of Śrī Girirāja. Besides this, Nṛsiṃha *yajñas*, Sudarśana *yajñas* etc., were organized in India and abroad on a daily basis. Everyone’s sole cherished desire in performing these devotional practices was to see that Śrīla Gurudeva gain full recovery of his health, quickly. If his servants caught a glimmer of hope that any medical procedure, alternative or otherwise, would help him, they would try it immediately.

Manifesting transcendental symptoms

During this period of ill health, Śrīla Gurudeva remained absorbed in deep transcendental moods. Sometimes he would utter indistinct words, and other times he would chant his *āhnikā* or *stava-stutis* (devotional prayers) for hours on end. Only upon his servants' repeated efforts to offer him food or medicine would he slowly return to external consciousness, sometimes fully and sometimes only partially. Thus Śrīla Gurudeva would constantly remain in an internal state (*antara-dasā*).

Within Śrīla Gurudeva's *bhajana-kutīra*, his servants would from time to time sing his favourite *kīrtanas*, and sometimes they would read to him from scripture.

One day Śrīla Gurudeva said, "I have collected all the spices, but cannot find the *ubar*." He uttered this over and over. Each time, his servants asked him what this spice was, but Śrīla Gurudeva simply softly uttered the same word again and again. No one present had ever heard of this transcendental spice.

Arrival of respected Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas for Śrīla Gurudeva's darśana

During Śrīla Gurudeva's stay in Delhi, many devotees who had attained the shelter of his lotus feet came daily to take his *darśana*. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas from different *maṭhas* also came for his *darśana*. These included Śrī Gopīnātha Gauḍīya Maṭha's present *ācārya*, Śrīpad Bhakti Vibhuda Bodhāyana Mahārāja; Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's present *ācārya*, Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Paryāṭaka Mahārāja, and also Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Vaiṣṇava Mahārāja; ISKCON GBCs Śrīpad Gopāla-kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, Śrīpad Bhakticāru Mahārāja, Śrīpad Indradyumna Mahārāja, Śrīpad Bhakti Bhṛṅga Govinda Mahārāja, and Śrīpad Vedavyāsa Mahārāja; from Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīpad Bhakti Prapanna Tapasvī Mahārāja and Śrīpad Bhakti Vicāra Viṣṇu Mahārāja. In addition, many *brahmacārīs* and householder devotees from ISKCON and various Gauḍīya Maṭhas came to have *darśana* of Śrīla Gurudeva. *Pūjyapāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vallabha Tīrtha Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the present *ācārya* of Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, and his godbrother, *pūjyapāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Bhāratī Mahārāja, telephoned and expressed to Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja their concerns and prayers for Śrīla Gurudeva's health.

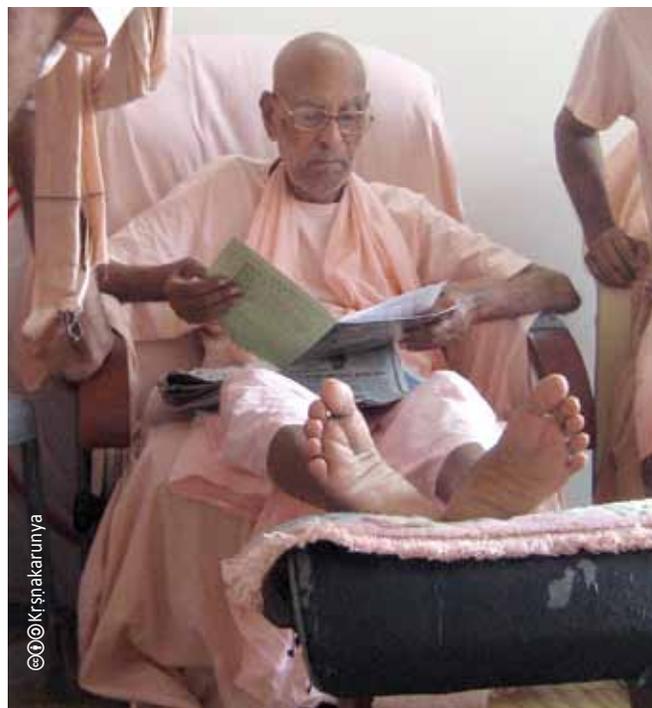
Newly published books offered into Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus hands

Śrīla Gurudeva had been in Delhi for Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's disappearance day. At that time, Rasa-Bihārī prabhu offered the English translation of *Utkalikā-vallarī* to Śrīla Gurudeva, on behalf of Vicitri dāsī. In addition, while he was still in hospital, he was offered *The Distinctive Contribution of Śrīla*



Rūpa Gosvāmī, printed in both English and Hindi, on behalf of Mañjarī dāsī. Later, Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Dāmodara Mahārāja offered him the English translation of *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, and he also offered two booklets on behalf of Śyāmarāṇī dāsī: *Harmony Preview* and *Understanding Śrī Guru*. Śāntī dāsī offered an English translation of *Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, and Śyāmarāṇī dāsī and Vasanti dāsī offered a copy of *Walking with a Saint*. Also, Oriya translations of *Jaiva-dharma*, *Śrī Camatkāra-candrikā* and *Śrī Prema-samputa* were offered to Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus hands by Śrīman Madhumaṅgala Brahmācārī and Śrīman Vamśī-vadana Brahmācārī. Although Śrīla Gurudeva does not read Oriya, he showed keen interest by opening several pages and inquiring time and again, "What is written here?" Vṛndāvanēśvarī dāsī and Kuñja-kalikā dāsī offered Spanish translations of *The Way of Love* and *Manaḥ-śikṣā*. And the Chinese devotees also offered him various Chinese translations. On many of these occasions, Śrīla Gurudeva was not always speaking, but on seeing these publications, his face would invariably brighten and he would shower his heartily blessings by repeatedly raising his lotus hands and bestowing his merciful glance upon the devotees involved in the service of book publishing.

When *Śrī Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā* (year 7, number 7) was offered to Śrīla Gurudeva, he first skimmed through the magazine from cover to cover, and then returned to the article written by Paramgurudeva Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, which he read in full.



The arrival of devotees for Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā

Many devotees from India and abroad began to arrive for the eighty-four *krosa* Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, which is performed during the month of Kārtika. But first, each and every devotee anxiously went to Śrī Ramaṇa-Bihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha to receive Śrīla Gurudeva's *darśana*, and only then did they proceed to Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

Śrīla Gurudeva's instruction to join Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā

The devotees were worried about Śrīla Gurudeva's health and some wanted to remain in Delhi to be near him. However, once Kārtika started, he did not always encourage this. On many mornings and evenings, he would come to the screen door of his *bhajana-kutīra*, either to sit for a few minutes or to stop briefly as he walked, aided by his attendants. If he saw devotees waiting for his *darśana* in the courtyard, often he would ask them why they were there, and he would instruct them to go to Vṛndāvana to participate in Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*. "Your life will become successful by visiting these pastime places," he would say. "I am only unable to attend *parikramā* because of my ill health, but I order all of you to go and participate. Gradually, I am improving and will try to join the *parikramā* as soon as possible."

The kind concern of the devotees

Śrīla Gurudeva's pastime of illness prompted some devotees to speak to his personal servants, expressing their concern that Śrīla Gurudeva was being obliged to remain in Delhi. These devotees felt that it was only appropriate that

he be taken to Govardhana. The devotees' concern was motivated by their great affection for Śrīla Gurudeva, and his attendants understood this. However they could not comply because they felt it their responsibility to do all they could to enable Śrīla Gurudeva to recover his health.

"If Śrīla Gurudeva were to manifest his disappearance pastime in Delhi," the devotees said, "this would be terribly undesirable." Responding to this, his servants pointed out, "Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura manifested their disappearance pastimes in Kolkata. Was that considered a greatly undesirable occurrence? Wherever an eternal associate of Bhagavān like Śrīla Gurudeva resides is indeed Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, Śrī Govardhana, or Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa." But to some they did express their faith that, "At the appropriate time, Śrīla Gurudeva will express his desire to go to Govardhana." Certainly, this came to pass.

Expressing the desire to reside in Govardhana during Kārtika

One day, in the middle of Kārtika, Śrīla Gurudeva told his servants that he now desired to go to Govardhana. Upon hearing his request, they immediately made all arrangements to take him there. On the morning of his departure, the crowd of devotees in the Delhi temple was so huge that it took half an hour for Śrīla Gurudeva to travel in his wheelchair from the elevator exit to the ambulance, a distance of about forty metres. Śrīla Gurudeva held his palm upright, showering blessings upon all. Dr. Ravindra Prakash of Delhi accompanied him on his journey to Govardhana.

Residing at Govardhana in Kārtika



A thousand devotees gathered for Śrīla Gurudeva's *darśana* upon his arrival at Śrī Giridhārī Gauḍīya Maṭha. During the remainder of his stay in Govardhana, his health fluctuated from day to day and he remained in internal consciousness (*antara-dasā*) most of the time.

Manifesting transcendental emotions

From time to time, Śrīla Gurudeva would manifest some of the symptoms of ecstasy mentioned by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Sometimes incessant tears would flow from his eyes, sometimes froth would issue from his lotus mouth, and sometimes he would hiccup continually for hours on end. Occasionally, as if in forgetfulness, he would ask, “Where am I?” or “Is it day or night?” and sometimes he did not recall the names of even his closest servants. Yet at other times, he would exhibit his razor-sharp acuity and catch a servant’s faulty pronunciation of devotees’ names, correcting him by properly pronouncing them himself.

Sometimes, upon seeing the service attitude of the devotees attending him, he would express his appreciation of them, and at other times, he would correct them and tell them how to perform their service. Sometimes he would awaken from sleep and ask, “The *parikramā* has gone to Nandagāon today?” or, “It is Ekādaśī today?” This always astonished those serving him, as they had not given him any information as to what day it was, yet Śrīla Gurudeva had accurate knowledge of what was happening.

Although it was of utmost importance to those attending Śrīla Gurudeva to see to his dietary needs according to the doctor’s instructions, still, he would sometimes inquire, “Will you not give me anything to eat today?” Needless to say, it was with great pleasure that they would immediately offer something to him.

Arranging for darśana of Śrīla Gurudeva

A particular predicament arose during Śrīla Gurudeva’s stay at Govardhana: How could *darśana* be arranged for all the devotees who had come for *parikramā* from India and abroad? It was not possible to allow everyone inside Śrīla Gurudeva’s *bhajana-kutīra*, but the devotees were disconsolate that they could not take his *darśana*. Initially, a system was put in place of allowing devotees to cue up for *darśana* through the side-window. But this did not prove to be successful; the line did not flow smoothly and more often, did not even move at all.

Everyone was bewildered as to how to deal with the situation, until finally, someone made a wonderful suggestion: “Why not put a large LCD screen in the temple room? That way, all the devotees can easily take Śrīla Gurudeva’s *darśana* at the same time.” This proposal was happily welcomed by all, and an LCD screen was quickly arranged. Now the devotees in the temple could have *darśana* of Śrīla Gurudeva in his *bhajana-kutīra*. A small television screen was also placed in his *bhajana-kutīra* so he could also see them.

When Śrīla Gurudeva was not able to see the *sannyāsīs* on his screen (because they were on stage, out of camera

range), he would inquire, “Where are the *sannyāsīs*? I cannot see them.” The *sannyāsīs* happily honoured his request and assembled before the camera. Seeing all the devotees taking his *darśana* from the temple room, Śrīla Gurudeva would raise his hand to bless them. Sometimes, when he was absorbed internally, even though his mere presence or glance gave all blessings, his servants would try to draw him into external consciousness to interact with the devotees.

These *darśanas* filled the devotees with great bliss and they would loudly chant, “*Jaya Śrīla Gurudeva!*” or “*Gurudeva, tumbārī jaya jaya bo!*” Sometimes they would sing “*Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti,*” while at other times, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to the ‘Australian tune’. Singing and chanting in this way, the devotees would often become overwhelmed and begin to weep. For the duration of Śrīla Gurudeva’s *darśana*, no one would move from their places but would simply stare at the screen with unblinking eyes, oblivious to all else.

The predicament of Śrīla Gurudeva’s servants

Although Śrīla Gurudeva’s *darśana* on the LCD screen was well appreciated, how could it compare with directly seeing him, even if only for a moment? Gradually, devotees began to press for this. “Please make some arrangements for direct *darśana* of Śrīla Gurudeva,” they requested. “Taking his *darśana* on the screen does not compare with this.” His personal servants endeavoured to accommodate the devotees as far as they could, but they were in a painful quandary. How could they possibly ensure Śrīla Gurudeva’s personal needs and also satisfy everyone?

They next tried to implement a system of allowing devotees to silently have *darśana* from the window while Śrīla Gurudeva was sleeping, but once he unexpectedly woke up and instructed his attendants to close the curtains fully, without so much as a little opening in them. “I do not want anyone to be upset by seeing me in this condition,” he told them. The attendants had no choice but to comply with Śrīla Gurudeva’s request, and so had to perform their duties in a dimly lit room throughout the day.

The intense desire of the devotees for direct darśana

Seeing Śrīla Gurudeva’s deep internal absorption, his attendants carefully served him in that state, but on occasion, out of concern for his health, they would gently awaken him to external consciousness and attempt to bring him out of the room, saying, “O Śrīla Gurudeva, the doctors suggest that you come out of the room for at least a few minutes and that you sit in the fresh air and meet with the devotees.”

Words cannot describe the condition of the devotees or the enthusiasm and joy that filled their hearts when

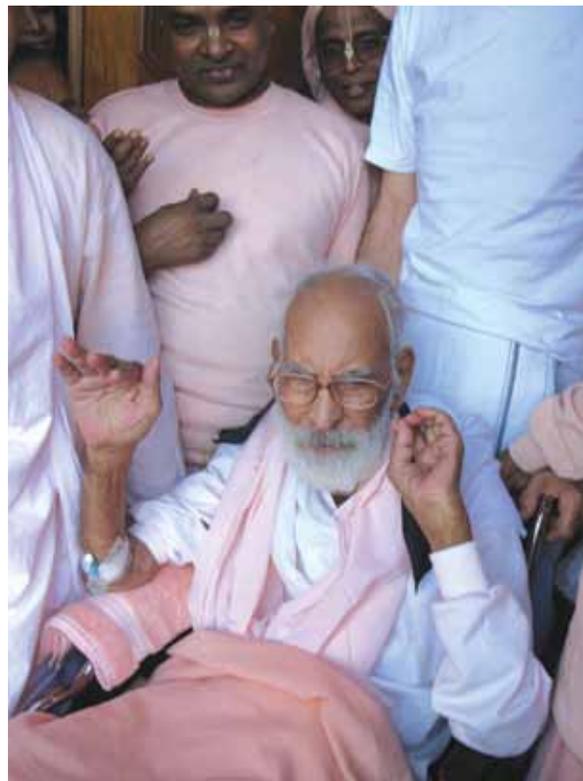


photo © Madhuvrata dāsa

they saw Śrīla Gurudeva come to the open door in his wheelchair, or even sometimes walk there, his hands on the shoulders of devotees on either side of him. On these occasions, he would give his *darśana* for a few minutes. From windows, from the roof, from the garden, from the balcony, even hanging from pillars or however they could, the devotees would position themselves so as to receive *darśana* of Śrīla Gurudeva, as if wanting to record these moments in their hearts forever. Some devotees offered *ārati* to Śrīla Gurudeva with ghee lamps, while others were content to perform *ārati* with their eyes. Wherever Śrīla Gurudeva turned to look, the devotees standing in that direction would consider themselves most blessed. He gave *darśana* like this for two or three days, after which he again entered full internal consciousness.

The Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā performed by Śrīla Gurudeva

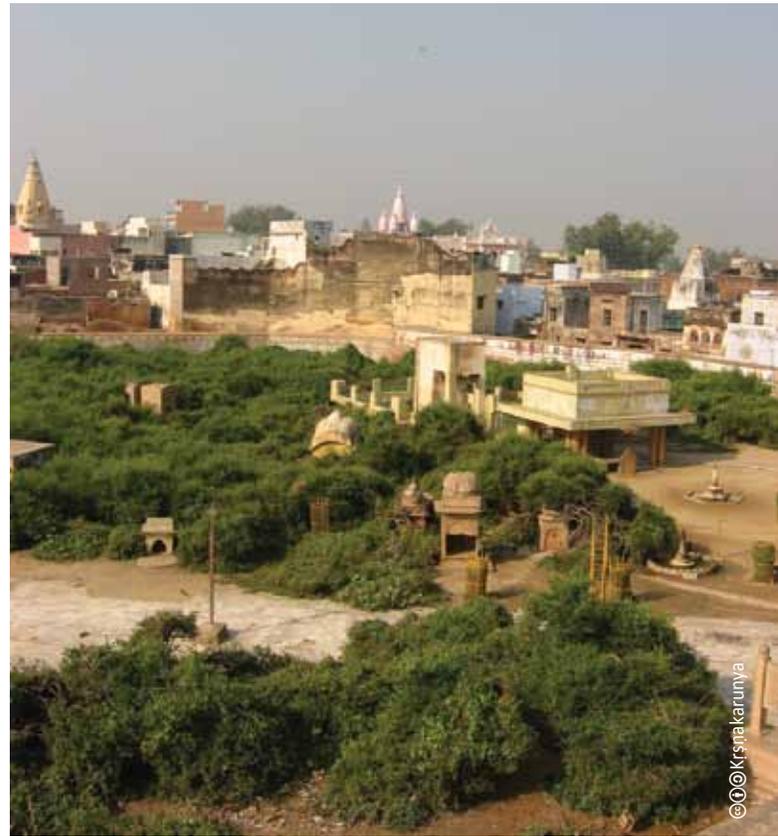
At this time, Śrīla Gurudeva performed an amazing *līlā* for about three days. He was constantly immersed in some type of deep ecstatic emotion. However, one day, he repeatedly urged his personal servants, “Take me to Vṛndāvana. I want to perform Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*.” The *sevakas* tried to pacify him by informing him that all the devotees were now at Govardhana, having arrived there from Vṛndāvana, and he was in fact with the *parikramā* party. Still he continued to insist that they must take him to Vṛndāvana. They



concluded that for him to insist upon this, he must have a confidential reason, so they told him, “Yes, Gurudeva, we will arrange for you to go to Vṛndāvana.” Upon hearing this, he became satisfied and rested for some time.



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Sometime in the evening he would say, “Oh, today the *parikramā* will go to Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira, Sevā-kuñja, Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmsundara Mandira and other nearby places. I cannot go to them all, but I will certainly go to Sevā-kuñja and Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara.” Or, “Today the *parikramā* is going to Māna-sarovara.” It was as if he were directly in Vṛndāvana, performing Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*.

Upon rising the next morning, Śrīla Gurudeva exclaimed, “Oh, this Painṭhāgaon is so beautiful! Śrī Rādhājī’s special glories (*vaiśiṣṭya*) were established here.” It seemed that in his deep ecstatic state, in just one day he had completed the twelve-day *parikramā* that is performed from Vṛndāvana, and had now reached Govardhana.

Śrīla Gurudeva then began to say “I must visit Dāna Ghāṭī, the festival at the bank of Surabhi-kuṇḍa, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, and the other pastime places.” Some time later he said, “Today the *parikramā* is going to Nandagāon and Varsānā. We will also go to Ṭer Kadamba, Uddhava-kyārī and Ūncāgaon.” In this way, also within a day, he completed the eighteen-day *parikramā* that is normally performed from Govardhana.

Every year, immediately after *parikramā*, Śrīla Gurudeva would hold programs in Delhi and go to the dentist. Having thus completed Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, the next morning he said to one of his servants, “Inform my dentist in Delhi that we are coming there, and request him to be ready because in the evening we have the celebration at Śrī Ramaṇa-Bihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha. It is essential that we reach the *maṭha* in time.” Wanting to support Śrīla Gurudeva’s inner mood, although not knowing the reality of that mood, the servant replied, “Yes, I will contact him.”

Later as the servant assisted him in brushing his teeth, Śrīla Gurudeva asked him for the dental floss and when he could not find it, Śrīla Gurudeva concluded, “It must have been packed with everything else in the car going to Delhi. If you find it easily, bring it; otherwise just leave it and in Delhi we will see what to do.”

Thus Śrīla Gurudeva revealed his personal Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā-līlā*, leaving his servants astonished and grateful to have had a glimpse of his internal moods.

The arrival of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja's auspicious disappearance day

Some years before, Śrīla Gurudeva had stated, "Following in the footsteps of my senior god-brother *prapūjya-carana* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, I want to take shelter of the same *tithi* (exact day) to leave this world." These words caused much apprehension in the hearts of all, and as the disappearance day of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja approached, the devotees began to be increasingly anxious that his words might come to pass. In a most earnest attempt to prevent this, almost all the devotees who had come to Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* and also devotees all over the world began to pray intensely to Śrī Girirāja Govardhana, who fulfils all desires. Many stayed awake the whole night performing *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, some sang *stava-stuti*, while some performed *abhiśekha* of Girirāja and others circumambulated Girirāja. To the devotees' great relief, though, in the morning it was reported that Śrīla Gurudeva had slept peacefully that night.

Śrīla Gurudeva's merciful instructions on the occasion of the release of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam



During Kārtika, the first volume of *Śrīmad Bhagavatam's* Tenth Canto, Chapters 1–8, translated by Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Tīrtha Mahārāja and edited by Śrīla Gurudeva, was published. Śrīpad Tīrtha Mahārāja presented the book to Śrīla Gurudeva, who joyfully received it and released it for distribution. At that time, he gave valuable instructions to Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Tīrtha Mahārāja that are pertinent to all his followers:

"When, by my Gurudeva's order, I translated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Jaiva-dharma* into Hindi,

I cited Guru Mahārāja as the editor. In the Introduction, Gurudeva wrote, 'Only because I am the object of the devotees' honour has my name been mentioned as the editor of this book, but actually it is the translator and publisher of this Hindi *Jaiva-dharma*, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, who has indeed accomplished all the functions of the editor and has thus become the object of my special blessings.'

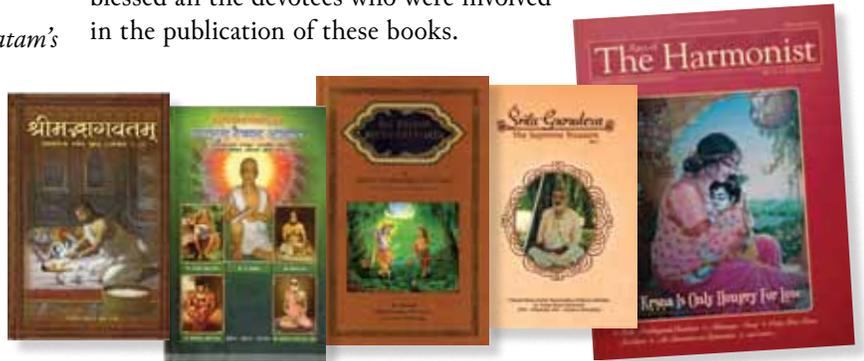
"Although externally I did all the labour to produce this book, which is why Śrīla Guru Mahārāja wrote to that effect, still in my heart I always maintained the conception that the writing was accomplished by Guru Mahārāja only. In the same way, you should never think that it is you who are writing or publishing these sacred *granthas*. Rather, always think that Śrīla Gurudeva has accomplished this book through you for the welfare of the whole world, and that for the auspiciousness of the world, he has sprinkled the rain drops of this transcendental message like a shower of flowers.

"I have almost finished fifty-two chapters of the Tenth Canto. Now complete the Tenth Canto according to our Gauḍīya conception, as you have done here, fully crediting our *guru-varga* (*aśraya-vigraha*) for your efforts and always keeping them in the forefront."

The devotees were overwhelmed to hear his words, full of mercy and blessings.

Offering new publications to Śrīla Gurudeva

During that period, Śrīpad Viṣṇu-daivata Mahārāja, Mañjarī dāśī and Kṛṣṇa-prema dāśa also offered Śrīla Gurudeva the English translation of the second volume of *Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, and the *Rays of The Harmonist* team offered the Kārtika 2010 edition of into his lotus hands. The Hindi publication of *Four Rūpanuga Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, compiled, translated and edited by Śrīla Gurudeva, was also offered to him. Śrīpad Mādhava Mahārāja offered the English hagiography he has written, entitled, *Śrīla Gurudeva: The Supreme Treasure* and Veṅṇu-gopāla dāśa offered a graphic novel *I Am Spirit*. Śrīla Gurudeva was most pleased and blessed all the devotees who were involved in the publication of these books.



Śrīla Gurudeva's auspicious desire

One day, Śrīla Gurudeva said to some of the devotees working on the Hindi publications, “When I leave, continue publishing our books just as they are being printed now. The cycle of progress in publishing our scriptures should never be broken. Whatever books are out of stock should be reprinted immediately.”

Various Vaiṣṇavas arrive for the darśana of Śrīla Gurudeva

There was a constant flow of *ācāryas* and Vaiṣṇavas from different Sārasvata Gauḍīya *maṭhas* and different *sampradāyas* to the Giridhārī Gauḍīya Maṭha to honour Śrīla Gurudeva. It is impossible to name them all, but they include: from Vinoda-vāṇī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Vṛndāvana, Śrīpad Bhakti Vikaśa Govinda Mahārāja; from Govardhana Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīpad Govardhana Dāsa Bābājī; from Śrī Rūpānuga Bhajana Āśrama at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīpad Bhakti Sarvasva Govinda Mahārāja and Śrīpad Mathurānātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja; the present *ācārya* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Maṭha in Vardhamāna, Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Ācārya Mahārāja; from Śrī Bhajana-kuṭī in Vṛndāvana, Śrīmad Gopānanda Vana Mahārāja; the *ācārya* of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, *pūjyapāda* Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Yati Mahārāja, along with Śrīmad Bhakti Sudhīra Dāmodara Mahārāja; from Śrī Gopinātha Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīpad Bhakti Śaraṇa Dāmodara Mahārāja; from ISKCON, Śrīpad Mahanidhi Mahārāja, ISKCON Vṛndāvana's Temple President, Śrī Panca Gauda prabhu and his wife Śrīmatī Gaura Pūrṇimā dāsī, Vice-President Śrī Janārdana Brahmācārī, and Śrī Śruta-kīrti prabhu; from Śrī Vṛnda-kuṅja, Śrīpad Paramadvaiti Mahārāja; Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Gosvāmī Mahārāja's disciple Śrīpad Govinda Mahārāja; many *sannyāsī* disciples of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vaibhava Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja; and several other devotees. Besides these, from Māna-garha (Varsānā), Śrī Ramesh Baba; Sanskrit *paṇḍita* Śrī Vishnu Pandey of

Mathurā and Śrī Shyamdas of Jatipurā; followers of the *puṣṭi-mārga*, as well as other Vaiṣṇava saints also came to have his *darśana*.

Seeing the great efforts of his servants, Śrīla Gurudeva became concerned

Seeing that the devotees were serving him day and night, one day, Śrīla Gurudeva said, “I do not want to live in this world any longer.”

“Please, why are you speaking like this?” they asked him.

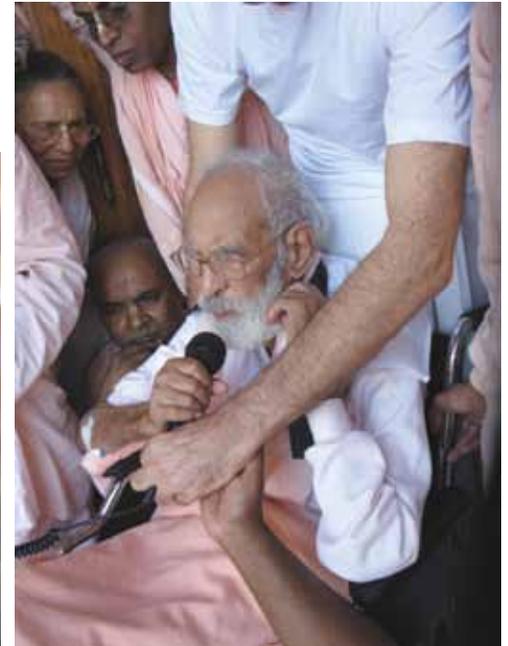
“It is because of me that so many devotees are being troubled,” he said.

“Gurudeva,” they responded, “we experience no trouble in serving you. In fact, being able to render you just a little service is our greatest fortune. We only beg that you please forgive our shortcomings.”

Despite his debilitated physical condition, it was Śrīla Gurudeva who was concerned for us, worrying that we were the ones who were troubled.

Gurudeva's words of benediction at the end of Kārtika

While in Govardhana, Śrīla Gurudeva's health very slowly improved, much to the joy of the devotees. On the full-moon day at the end of Kārtika, he came out of his *bhajana-kutīra* in a wheelchair and spoke to all the devotees assembled there: “Just as you have come to participate in this year's Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, you should all come every year. Within a few months, Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* will also take place, and all of you must also participate in that *parikramā*. I will meet all of you there.” These encouraging words caused the devotees to resoundingly chant “*Jaya* Gurudeva, *Jaya* Gurudeva!” their throats choked with happiness.



Return to Delhi after Kārtika

After Kārtika, Śrīla Gurudeva remained in Govardhana for a few days. Then on the suggestion of Dr. Ray from the Philippines and Dr. Ravindra Prakash from Delhi, Śrīla Gurudeva was again taken to Śrī Ramaṇa-Bihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Delhi. As before, there was a flux of devotees and doctors moving in and out of the temple. One day, Śrīla Gurudeva addressed the local doctor and the doctors who had come from abroad, “You are all endeavouring so hard for me,” he said. “For this I am giving you my heartfelt gratitude.” When they heard this, they replied, “Guruji, it is our supreme fortune that you have appointed us in your service.”

“Do not take me anywhere except the dhāma”

On the advice of Dr. Ray, Śrīla Gurudeva’s personal servants approached him with a request that he travel to Italy for further treatment. They informed him that all arrangements had already been made. In response, Śrīla Gurudeva said, “I have no desire for this, but you can think about it.” Soon after, though, he said in a very grave tone, “Do not take me anywhere except the *dhāma*. I do not want to go abroad. I want to leave my body in the *dhāma*. Take me back to Govardhana.”

“But it is so cold in Govardhana,” they told him.

“Then take me to Navadvīpa,” he replied.

“But it is cold there too,” they said.

“Then take me to Jagannātha Purī,” he said. “Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja also performed his disappearance pastime in Jagannātha Purī-dhāma, and later his servants brought him to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura.

Take me to Jagannātha Purī, also, and if I leave my body there, then take me to Govardhana or Navadvīpa, wherever possible.”

When some servants tried once again to convince Śrīla Gurudeva to go to Italy, he again gravely responded, “It is better that we do not discuss anything more about this. Arrange for me to go to Jagannātha Purī. I am not ready to hear anything else. I am in the advanced stage of my life now and want to depend totally on Bhagavān.” Accordingly, his attendants dropped the idea of going abroad and, following his instructions, began making arrangements to go to Śrī Jagannātha Purī.

It was exactly four days after this conversation that they started for Śrī Jagannātha Purī. The servants encountered two obstacles: first, no plane tickets were available right away; and second, tickets were only available on a date that was not auspicious. The day after giving his order to go to Purī, Śrīla Gurudeva asked, “What is happening about our going to Purī?”

His servants answered, “We have not been able to obtain tickets for tomorrow, and the day after is *navamī*, so we will go on *daśamī*.”

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, “Let us go the day after tomorrow.”

“But we have never travelled on *navamī* before,” they responded, “because it is inauspicious to do so.”

Śrīla Gurudeva said, “We have never travelled on *navamī* before. Let us travel this time and see what happens.”

We could not help but wonder what mysterious plan was hidden in his decision. The trip was arranged on *navamī*, according to Śrīla Gurudeva’s desire.

Absorbed in the moods of Mahāprabhu while residing in the abode of separation (Śrī Jagannātha Purī-dhāma)

On the 30th of November Śrīla Gurudeva arrived at Jayaśrī-Dāmodara Gauḍīya Maṭha, which is located at Cakra-tīrtha in Śrī Jagannātha Purī-dhāma. He was greeted by the devotees there who welcomed him with much affection and proper ceremony. As before, his attendants continued serving him around the clock. From time to time, they would chant *kīrtana* or read from *śāstra* to him in his *bhajana-kutīra*. Whenever Śrīla Gurudeva saw any of them sitting idle, he would say, “Do not be idle. Speak *hari-kathā* to the other devotees. Speaking *hari-kathā* is a limb of *bhakti*.”

One day, while looking across the wide beach toward the ocean, Śrīla Gurudeva said softly, “Previously, whenever



Jayaśrī-Dāmodara Gauḍīya Maṭha



I would come to Śrī Jagannātha Purī-dhāma, I would meditate on Śrīman Mahāprabhu's bathing in the ocean along with His associates. I would also meditate on the words of Śrīman Mahāprabhu at the time of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's disappearance from this world, after He had bathed him in the ocean. Śrīman Mahāprabhu said that now this ocean is a *mahā-tīrtha* (supreme holy place) because it has become the *caranāmṛta* (foot-bathing water) of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. So, I would bathe in the ocean nearly every day. Now, also, I want to take bath with this ocean water. Can you bring some water from the ocean for me to bathe?" From that day onward, Śrīla Gurudeva was bathed every day with water carried from the ocean.

Each morning and evening, he would walk in the corridor of the temple guest house, assisted by his servants who supported him on either side, and he would sit on his balcony to have *darśana* of that most holy of oceans. Simultaneously, he would give *darśana* to the devotees standing on the ground below. One day, as Śrīla Gurudeva gazed at the ocean, he said, "This place is the very spot to which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu floated when He was immersed in *mahābhāva* and His body assumed a form like that of a turtle." Most of the time, however, Śrīla Gurudeva sat quietly. His deep absorption was most apparent.

Another time, when he was looking at the ocean, he asked his servant if he could count the ocean waves. "No." the servant answered, "the ocean waves are unending." "My heart is like that," Śrīla Gurudeva told him. "It is flowing with uncountable waves of moods for the service of Śrīman

Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, and also with waves of affection for my disciples and followers."

One thing was especially noticeable in Śrī Jagannātha Purī-dhāma. If someone offered obeisances to Śrīla Gurudeva, even from as far away as the shore of the ocean, Śrīla Gurudeva would invariably raise his hand to bless them. Furthermore, until the conclusion of his manifest pastimes, he would fold his hands and offer respects to any kind of *prasāda* that was brought to him. Only then would he honour it. At times, Śrīla Gurudeva was so deeply immersed in internal consciousness that his servants had to endeavour for 30–45 minutes to get him to accept just one spoonful of food. This occurrence had repeated itself in Delhi, Govardhana and then also, Śrī Jagannātha Purī.

The book fair in Bhubaneśvara

The annual Bhubaneśvara book fair took place during Śrīla Gurudeva's stay in Śrī Jagannātha Purī. The devotees of the



Jayaśrī-Dāmodara Gauḍīya Maṭha had, as usual, reserved a stall for the purpose of distributing Śrīla Gurudeva's books. Some devotees came to Śrīla Gurudeva to ask his permission and blessings to distribute his books at the fair, and he most happily gave them. After that, he would inquire daily about the book distribution, and whenever he noted the presence of any local temple devotee in his room, he would inquire, "Why has he not gone to the book fair?" When the devotees, Western and Indian alike, heard about Śrīla Gurudeva's daily inquiry, it greatly stimulated their enthusiasm.

Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas from Purī arrive for Śrīla Gurudeva's darśana

In Jagannātha Purī, many *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* from different Gauḍīya maṭhas came to take *darśana* of Śrīla Gurudeva and offer him respects. Prominent among them were, from Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīpad Bhakti Viveka Paramārthī Mahārāja and Śrīpad Bhakti Sambandha Śuddhādvaitī Mahārāja; from Śrī Gopinātha Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīpad Bhakti Śaraṇa Vāmana Mahārāja and Śrīpad Gopinātha Brahmacārī; from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mission, Śrīpad Bhakti Vicāra Viṣṇu Mahārāja and Śrīpad Bhakti Svarūpa Śrīdhara Mahārāja; and from Śrī Nīlācala Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīman Saccidānanda Brahmacārī.

Attaining a complexion similar to Śrī Gaurahari's

As soon as Śrīla Gurudeva arrived in Śrī Jagannātha Purī, he manifested some noticeable transformations. One was that the radiance emanating from his body increased constantly and his complexion became more golden. This caused us to consider that perhaps because he was in deep meditation on his most worshipful Śrī Gaurahari and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, he was attaining Their bodily complexion.

In this way, the days passed.

On the morning of December 27, Śrīla Gurudeva went on to his balcony as usual, and the devotees who had gathered on the beach below performed *guru-pūjā* for the first time. His personal attendants wanted him to return to his room, but Śrīla Gurudeva waited until the *āratī* was finished. He was then wheeled to the landing above the lobby. All the devotees rushed to the lobby to see him there. Again, his servant requested him to return to his room, but Śrīla Gurudeva insisted on remaining where he was. He looked intently at each and every devotee and raised his hand, blessing them all.

The next day, December 28, he remained in his room and did not give *darśana*.

The Closing of his Pastimes

(Antardhāna-līlā)

On the morning of 29 December, 2010, Śrīla Gurudeva woke up very early, at about 2.00 a.m. His servant asked him, "Śrīla Gurudeva, will you drink some water?" "Yes," he replied, and the servant helped him to sit up. Śrīla Gurudeva said that first he wanted to use the washroom, so the devotees assisted him and then helped him back to sit on his bed. Śrīla Gurudeva began to drink the glucose water while the servant held the glass, but straight away he said, "I am not able to sit."

The servant quickly helped Śrīla Gurudeva lay down. Śrīla Gurudeva then asked him to help him turn over, and as the servant did so, Śrīla Gurudeva took a deep breath and his face seemed to change somewhat. Upon noticing fluctuations in Śrīla Gurudeva's pulse and oxygen intake on the monitor, the servant immediately called for Śrīpad Mādhava Mahārāja and Brajanātha prabhu, and within two to three minutes, other servants were also summoned.

Yet despite this alarm, Śrīla Gurudeva seemed very peaceful and as he gazed upon all present, it did not seem at all that he was about to conclude his manifest pastimes.

But then the monitor indicated a drop in pulse and oxygen level and the devotees began to loudly chant *harināma*. Śrīla Gurudeva's tongue quivered as he chanted *harināma* along with the devotees. A few minutes later, just a minute before his departure, he closed his eyes, and gradually his tongue also became still. According to the clock on the wall, it was three in the morning. All present were stunned and in a state of shock.

Devotees gather in Śrīla Gurudeva's room

Gradually all the *sannyāsīs*, *brahmacārīs*, and other devotees who were staying in the maṭha and outside guest houses gathered in Śrīla Gurudeva's room, and upon seeing him, all began to lament. As per Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, Śrīla Gurudeva was bathed with fresh water, anointed with *tilaka* on the twelve parts of his body, and dressed in new cloth. He was then seated in *padmāsana*, or the lotus position. His body was soft and looked so natural it seemed as if he would open his eyes at any moment. Gradually, the winter sun rose and he began to glow golden in its rays.

The devotees began singing one *kīrtana* after another: *Śrī Gurvāṣṭakam*, *Śrī Guru-paramparā*, *Je ānilo prema-dhana*, and Śrīla Gurudeva's favourite *bhajan*s, like *Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada*, *Dekhite dekhite*, *Cintāmaṇi-maya rādhā-kunḍa-taṭa*, *Śrī Nandanāṣṭakam*, *Śrī Rādhā Kṛpakaṭākṣa Stavarāja*, *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, the *mahā-mantra* in the Australian tune that he was so fond of, and many other *kīrtana*s.

As news of Śrīla Gurudeva's departure from this world spread, devotees from all over Śrī Jagannātha Purī, especially the Gauḍīya *maṭha*s, began to arrive to take his *darśana* for the last time. Devotees tearfully offered *āratī* to Śrīla Gurudeva as they sang *Śrī Guru-carāṇa-padma*.

Within a few moments, news of Śrīla Gurudeva's entering *nitya-līlā* spread throughout the entire planet, anguishing thousands of devotees and plunging them into the heartbreak of separation.

Divine departure on the Appearance day of om viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The day Śrīla Gurudeva departed from this world was the appearance day of his senior godbrother, *nitya-līlā pravīṣṭa om viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī*

Mahārāja. The devotees in Jayaśrī Dāmodara Gauḍīya Maṭha had made elaborate preparations for the auspicious celebration and had invited all Sārasvata Gauḍīya Maṭha Vaiṣṇavas for *hari-guru-kathā*, *kīrtana*, and the honouring of Śrī Jagannātha *mahā-prasāda*. But such a grand celebration did not take place that day.

The fact that Śrīla Gurudeva departed on the very day of his senior godbrother's auspicious appearance indicates that even though he was not informed of when it would be, he was quietly waiting for this day, just as Bhīṣma Pitāmahā waited for the sun to move into the northern hemisphere (*uttarāyaṇa*) to depart.

By this we can understand something of the intimate relationship of those three pillars of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, the three foremost disciples of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja: Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja manifested his pastime of disappearance on the exact date (*tithi*) that Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja departed from this world, and Śrīla Gurudeva manifested his disappearance on the exact date that marked the appearance day of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja.



Concluding his pastimes in the abode of separation (Śrī Vipralambha-kṣetra)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu spent His last eighteen years in Śrī Jagannātha Purī in the association of Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, remaining absorbed in relishing the emotions of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *vipralambha* (mood of separation). Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara would chant specific poetry from Śrī Caṇḍidāsa, Śrī Vidyāpati and other Vaiṣṇava poets in accordance with Śrīman Mahāprabhu's moods in order to nourish His emotions. Thus absorbed in relishing the moods of *vipralambha*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu brought His pastimes to an end by entering into Ṭoṭā Gopinātha. Absorbed in relishing similar moods of separation, Śrīla Gurudeva also concluded his pastimes in this same abode of *vipralambha*, Śrī Jagannātha Purī, at the very spot, Cakra-tīrtha, where Lord Śrī Jagannātha made His appearance.

Because Śrīla Gurudeva manifested his disappearance pastime at Cakra-tīrtha, this *tīrtha* has now become *mahā-tīrtha*, or great holy place, especially for Śrīla Gurudeva's followers. For Śrīla Gurudeva, the *mahā-bhāgavata rasika-jana*, the name *cakra* (wheel or disc) served as a constant *uddīpana* (stimuli) for *cakravartī-līlā*, that is, *rāsa-līlā*.

Thus absorbed at the time of the *rāsa-līlā* pastimes, Śrīla Gurudeva entered that very pastime.

Entering Naiśa-līlā (the night pastimes)

Our supremely worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva entered the eternal pastimes (*nitya-līlā*) of Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa-Bihārījī at three o'clock in the morning. Śrī *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and Śrī *Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta*, by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, describe Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*, or pastimes within the eight divisions of the day. The *yāma*, or part of the day, from 10:48 p.m. to 3:36 a.m., lasting for four hours and forty-eight minutes, is known as *naiśa-līlā* (night pastimes). Therefore, three o'clock in the morning falls within Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *naiśa-līlā*. This segment is the longest and most confidential of the intimate *nikuñja* pastimes. A summary of *naiśa-līlā* is as follows:

At night, when all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's family members are resting, He secretly leaves His palace in Śrī Nandagram and goes to the forest of Vṛndāvana, which at that time is infused by a gentle breeze carrying the sweet fragrance of forest flowers. Humming bees, intoxicated by this aroma, lose their way and fly hither and thither. Swans and herons, pierced



photo courtesy - Vasudeva dāsa

by cupid's arrows, wander the lakes, and birds fly in all four directions, blissfully chirping, "Jaya jaya!" At this opportune time, Śrī Kīrtidā's darling daughter, Śrīmatī Rādhājī, also comes secretly from her in-laws' place in Yāvaṭa to meet Her beloved at Their pre-appointed meeting place.

In Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's sweet meeting, They perform *rāsa-līlā-vihāra* and other pastimes, such as wandering throughout the forest and beholding the astonishing scenery. They also describe each other's beauty, qualities and sweetness; decorate each other with forest flowers; dance, sing, and play musical instruments; enjoy water-pastimes; drink intoxicating beverages; and perform many other such *līlās*.

Upon witnessing these pastimes, which bewilder the entire universe, the wives of the demigods, the heavenly damsels, the wives of the Gandharvas, and others are totally enchanted. They also sing praises of the divine couple, chanting, "Jaya jaya!" as they shower flowers from the sky and play the *dundubhi* drum and other musical instruments.

Tired from the joyful play of *rāsa-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* take rest. The *mañjarīs* bring varieties of fruits and drinks for them. The *sakhīs* then perform the *līlā* of drinking intoxicating beverages and engage in even more confidential pastimes to enhance Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bliss. After this they assist Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's water pastimes in the Yamunā. The *mañjarīs* bring the Divine Couple to the shore and decorate Them. Then, the Divine Couple rest in a forest bower.

At that time, some very intimate *prāṇa-sakhīs* take Rādhā's and Kṛṣṇa's feet, which are supremely charming and more delicate than fresh lotus petals, in their laps, and proceed to massage them in a mood of deep affection, while some other *mañjarīs* fan Them. Others bring *tāmbūla*, a folded betel leaf filled with delicious, aromatic ingredients.

Relaxed by these services of the maidservants, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa become free from Their fatigue and sleep peacefully. Not even Śrīmatī Rādhājī's *priya-narma-sakhīs* have entrance into these intimate services.

While Śrī Śrī Rādhā Ramaṇa Bihārījī rest peacefully, their dear *mañjarīs* offer Them many items of worship, such as *pādyā* – tears of love bathing Their lotus feet; incense – their fragrant breath; lamps – their effulgent moon-like nails; flowers – their love-laden, intimate glances, full of *mamatā* (love imbued with the mood that 'you are mine'); and *āratī* – their life-airs saturated with intense *prema* that has reached the stage of *mahābhāva*; all mixed with the camphor of their smiles.

Summoned by the indication of his *guru-rūpa-sakhī* (his *gurudeva* in *sakhī* form), Śrīla Gurudeva presented himself in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Ramaṇa Bihārījī at that auspicious moment. Under the guidance of Śrī Vinoda Mañjarī (Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja), Śrī Nayanamaṇi Mañjarī (Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda) and Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Rati Mañjarīs, and in subordination to Śrī Lalitā-devī, our Śrīla Gurudeva, in his eternal *mañjarī* form as Śrī Ramaṇa Mañjarī, has entered the *naiśa-līlā* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Ramaṇa Bihārījī and is situated there, absorbed in serving Them in deep ecstasy throughout the eight *yāmas* of the day.

Śrīla Gurudeva came to this planet on the order of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrīmatī Rādhikā to give us *vraja-bhakti* as taught by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and to provide us the qualification necessary to enter these pastimes. He never wanted to give anything less than this. He was really *bhurīda*, the greatest donor, and *namo mahā-vadānyāya*, greatly magnanimous to the superlative degree. We are therefore boundlessly fortunate to have come to his lotus feet.

The journey from Śrī Purī-dhāma to Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma

To attain the eternal association of his most worshipful *gurupāda-padma* and that of his two senior godbrothers, Śrīla Gurudeva, seated in a lotus position (*padmāsana*) in a car adorned with flowers, thus commenced his journey from Śrī Jagannātha Purī to Śrī Navadvīpa. The decorated car left at eight in the morning on the auspicious *kṛṣṇa-navamī* and was followed by six other vehicles full of devotees.

First, Śrīla Gurudeva went to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura at his *samādhi* in Svargadvāra and took leave of him. A devotee brought water from the ocean where Śrīman Mahāprabhu had bathed Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's transcendental body at the time of his disappearance from this world, and this water was sprinkled on Śrīla Gurudeva's transcendental body. From there, he performed *parīkramā* in the car around

the periphery of Caṭaka-parvata, Śrī Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha, Yameśvara Ṭoṭā, Śrī Siddha-bakula and Śrī Gambhīra. After performing *parīkramā* of Śrī Jagannātha-vallabha gardens and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's birthplace, the car finally came to the Simha-dvāra (lion gate) of Śrī Jagannātha's Temple, where devotees had gathered, having collected Śrī Jagannātha-deva's *prasādi-mālā*, sandalwood paste, cloth, *mahā-prasāda* and other such items to offer to Śrīla Gurudeva. Śrīman Mahāprabhu had offered the same items to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura at the time of his *samādhi*. In this way, after bidding farewell to Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His associates in Śrī Jagannātha Purī, Śrīla Gurudeva commenced his journey to Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma.

As the car drove through Bhubaneśvara, Jajapura and other places, many of Śrīla Gurudeva's disciples and followers came to receive his *darśana*, and with intense emotion tearfully offered their *puṣpāñjali* at his lotus feet. On reaching Baleśvara, some devotees offered Śrī Kṣīracorā Gopinātha's *prasādi* garland and *khīra* to Śrīla Gurudeva. This journey from Śrī Jagannātha Purī to Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma took fourteen hours.

The car carrying Śrīla Gurudeva's transcendental form arrived at Śrī Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma at around 10.30 in the evening. As it neared the *maṭha* gate, the devotees who had gathered there, numbering more than a thousand, surrounded the car, sobbing bitterly and chanting "Jaya Śrīla Gurudeva!" There are no words to describe their pain of separation from him. Śrīla Gurudeva was brought into the temple room and seated on the *vyāsāsana* in a lotus pose. The devotees performed his *ārati*, singing *Śrī guru-carāṇa-padma*.

Devotees in India and also overseas journey to Śrī Navadvīpa

Śrīla Gurudeva's speciality was the pure transcendental affection he showered upon all. Such affection, which has no comparison in this world, was a tangible experience of a truly spiritual, selfless loving relationship. Therefore, when devotees within and outside India heard of his entering

nitya-līlā, their hearts and minds raced to him. Everyone that could possibly do so immediately stopped what they were doing and hastily made arrangements to go to Śrī Navadvīpa to receive his final *darśana*. Some devotees arrived before Śrīla Gurudeva, and many others arrived throughout the night.

For the duration of the night on the auspicious *kṛṣṇa-navamī*, Śrīla Gurudeva's transcendental body was placed on the dais in the temple room. As devotees arrived, having travelled by air, train, car, or however possible, they were immediately able to have his *darśana*. One by one, without restriction, they prostrated themselves at Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus feet, offering their heartfelt *srāddha-puṣpāñjali*. Many sat in the temple room throughout the whole night for this last *darśana*, singing *kīrtanas* and *bhajanas* pertaining to moods of separation.

Nagara-saṅkīrtana

The next day, on December 30th, at 8 o'clock in the morning, Śrīla Gurudeva was placed in a sitting position on a palanquin decorated with flowers. Accompanied by thousands of devotees singing *saṅkīrtana*, he proceeded to the nearby Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. An unprecedented scene took place as the inhabitants of Śrī



Navadvīpa who resided on the path of the procession came out of their homes to offer him *praṇāma*, even from a distance. Some offered *āratī* and some cried out, “*Jaya Śrīla Gurudeva! Jaya Śrīla Gurudeva!*”

In Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Gurudeva took *darśana* of his most worshipful *gurupāda-padma*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and his senior god-brother Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, as well as *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Vinoda Bihārī and Śrī Lakṣmī Varāhadeva. In this way, he announced that now he had come to join them in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma.

Śrīla Gurudeva’s godbrothers and the devotees of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha then offered *āratī* to Śrīla Gurudeva. Tears filled the eyes of nearly all at the sight of Śrīla Gurudeva coming before his own *gurudeva*. After taking *darśana* of his *gurupāda-padma* and offering him *praṇāma*, Śrīla Gurudeva proceeded to the steps of Pañca-veṇī, also known as Manipurī-ghaṭa, to have *darśana* and offer his *praṇāmas* to beautiful Gaṅgājī, just as he used to do during his manifest presence at the time of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*. The *saṅkīrtana* party accompanying Śrīla Gurudeva was so large that all who saw it thought they were witnessing the performance of his Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*.

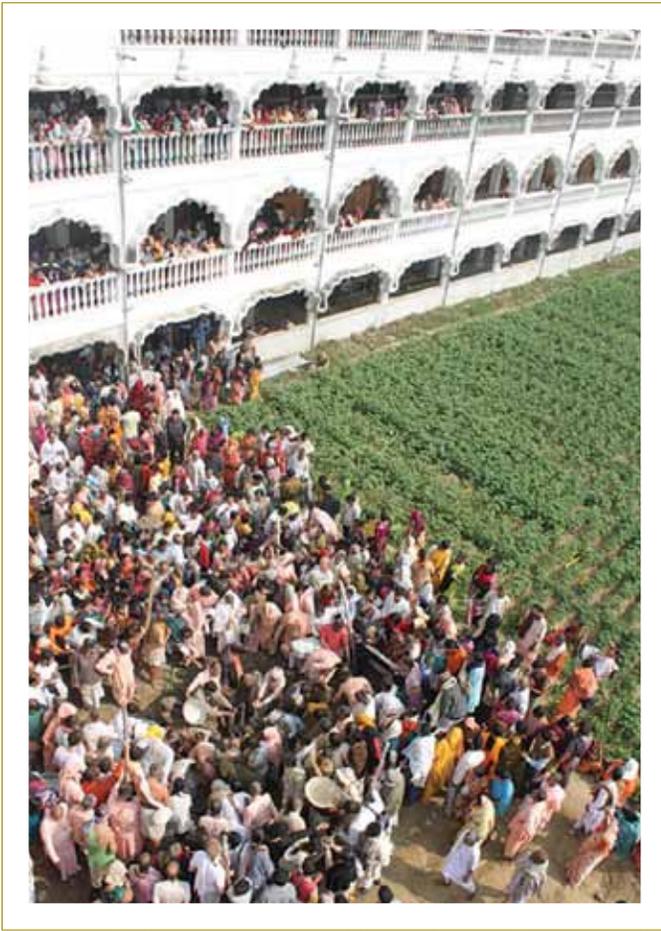
Samādhi

Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Śrī Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha at around 11 a.m. and the devotees reverentially performed *abhiśekha* of his transcendental form with *pañcāmṛta*, Gaṅgā water, rose water, *aguru*, fragrant oils, and other substances. *Tilaka* was meticulously applied in twelve places on his resplendent limbs, and he was dressed in a new cloth. The *samādhi mantra* was then written on his chest with sandalwood paste.

At that time, devotees arriving from various places had the good fortune to make arrangements for his large *bhoga* offering as well as a beautiful *āratī* to him and other ceremonies.

Śrīla Gurudeva entered *samādhi* in Koladvīpa next to his *bhajana-kutīra* at Śrī Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. The followers and disciples of Śrīla Gurudeva who had arrived from India and abroad, as well as the *sannyāsīs*, *brahmacārīs*





and residents of Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa, Śrī Māyāpura and Godruma, were witness to all the ceremonies pertaining to *samādhi*. These were performed in accordance with Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's descriptions of how Śrīman Mahāprabhu placed Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in *samādhi*. Śrīla Gurudeva was placed in *samādhi* adorned with Lord Jagannātha's *prasādi* cloth, *mahā-prasāda*, *dātuna* (twig used as a toothbrush), garland and sandalwood paste. The devotees also offered him *prasāda* from Śrī Kṣīracorā Gopinātha, along with *prasādi* cloth and other items from Śrī Govindadevajī in Jaipura.

With heartfelt faith, devotees who had arrived from all corners of India and abroad observed and directly participated in the *samādhi* ceremony. From the area surrounding the *samādhi* site, from balconies, from rooftops, and from all directions, they offered a shower of flower petals. Overwhelmed in the mood of deep separation, they sang *Je ānilo prema-dhana* and other such *kīrtanas*. Gradually, as the thousands of devotees present looked on, the *samādhi* was filled and covered with the dust of that most sacred holy place (*dhāma-rajā*), and Vṛnda-devī (Tulasī) was placed on top.

In a tender expression of their love for Śrīla Gurudeva, the devotees covered the small *samādhi* mound with flowers, and offered oil and ghee lamps and an abundance of



fragrant incense. They sang *kīrtana* and circumambulated Śrīla Gurudeva, they read the account in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of the departure of *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and they sat close to the *samādhi*, either in silence or softly chanting, as memories of Śrīla Gurudeva flooded their minds.

After the ceremony, the devotees respectfully honoured Śrīla Gurudeva's *mahā-prasādam*. The next day, a temporary structure was erected on the site to serve as a temple. Currently, all *bhoga* offerings, *ārati*, *pūjā-arcana* etc., are daily being performed to Śrīla Gurudeva in his temporary *samādhi* in a regulated manner.

In this way, Śrīla Gurudeva completed his last journey, beginning from Govardhana in Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala to Purī-dhāma in Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala, finally arriving at Śrī Navadvīpa in Śrī Gauḍa-maṇḍala. Śrīla Gurudeva, the present-day Vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma, the topmost Vaiṣṇava, of Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala, Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala and Śrī Gauḍa-maṇḍala, accepted *samādhi* for time eternal in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, which is non-different than Vraja. His *samādhi* and *bhajana-kutīra* at Śrī Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha are located at the *rasa-sthalī* that is situated at the boundary of Śrī Kuliya Hill, which is non-different than Śrī Girirāja Govardhana.

Many years ago, Śrīla Gurudeva himself explained the meaning of *samādhi* as follows: *sama* means 'equal' and *dhi* means 'intelligence'. When a pure devotee departs from this world, attaining a *svarūpa* like that of the associates of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, he attains intelligence, beauty, qualities and so forth like theirs. The worshipful deity of our *paramparā* is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. When our *ācāryas* enter *samādhi*, they attain *sama-dhi*, meaning their intelligence becomes similar in mood to that of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's other intimate associates, under whose guidance they perform direct service to the Divine Couple.

Who will feel separation?

In a lecture on *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* in 1991, Śrīla Gurudeva asked the devotees present, "Who will feel separation? Only those special devotees who feel deep gratitude to their Gurudeva – who are greatly indebted to him and who have served him with intimacy – will feel separation. The mood, 'I am so fallen and my *śrīla gurudeva* is so great,' will not enter the thoughts of such devotees. They will have no mood of awe and reverence for him. If they do, they will not be able to cry for him.

"Separation from *gurudeva* is felt on various levels. When we consider his mercy, magnanimity and greatness, a particular type of mood arises within us. But when we remember how close and dear he was to us, and when we





The secret behind taking samādhi in Navadvīpa

Śrīla Gurudeva entered *samādhi* in *gupta* (hidden) Govardhana, the courtyard of Śrī Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha located in Koladvīpa, which is non-different from Govardhana in Vraja. Just as Śrī Navadvīpa is supremely magnanimous, compassionate, and forgiving, and does not consider any offence, Śrīla Gurudeva is also supremely magnanimous, most merciful and kindly forgiving of all faults. Śrīla Gurudeva accepted *samādhi* in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma to establish the principle that without the mercy of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma – in other words, without the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu – it is neither possible to attain the mercy of Śrī Vṛndāvanadhāma nor the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Furthermore, he wanted to be near by his supremely worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and most dear godbrothers, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja. That is why his *samādhi* is located midway between theirs.

Gratitude

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to any devotee who has ever performed any kind of service to Śrīla Gurudeva, *nitya-lilā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. By Śrīla Gurudeva's all-compassionate mercy, these fortunate souls are destined to receive the all-auspicious grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. 🙏

Based on the Vyasa-puja issue of

Śrī Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā, Year-7, Issue-11&12

Adapted and edited by the Rays of The Harmonist team

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remember his affectionate dealings with us, we are able to cry so much for him. Mother Yaśodā cries for Kṛṣṇa more than Śrī Nanda Bābā does, but the *gopīs* cry even more than Mother Yaśodā because their relationship with Kṛṣṇa is more intimate. We should also have such an intimate relation with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, our own *śrīla gurudeva*, and all our *guruvarga* (superiors). Only then can we cry for their mercy.

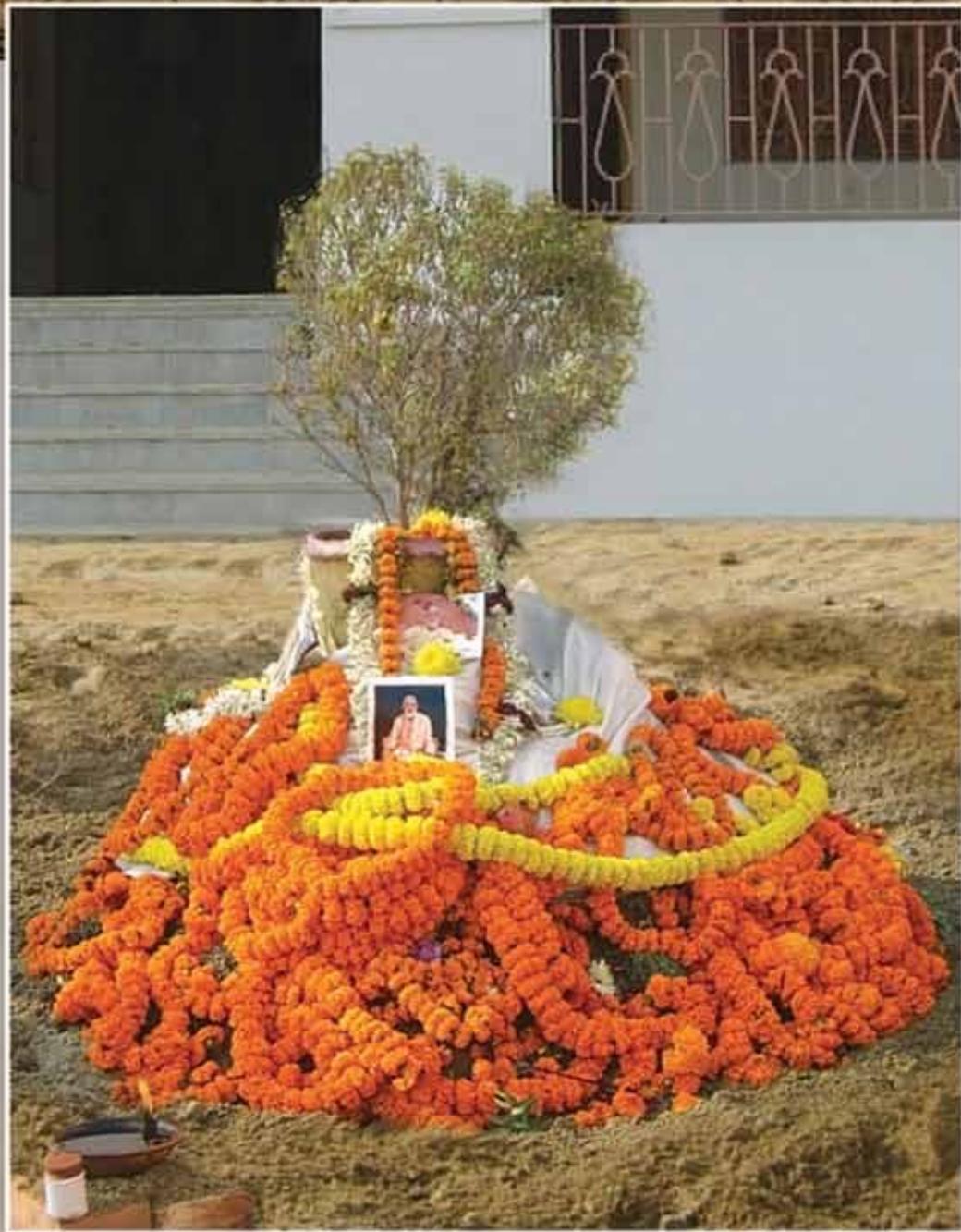
“If we have not developed an intimate relationship with our *śrīla gurudeva*, how will we ever be able to understand our relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and others? Our progress in *bhajana* depends upon our inner closeness with *śrīla gurudeva* and the intimate services that we perform for him. If we are able to cry for our *śrīla gurudeva*, only then can we cry for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī also. On the other hand if we cannot cry for our *gurudeva*, then how will it be possible to cry for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī? That is why our crying for *gurudeva* should be heartfelt.”

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Samādhi of Śrīla Gurudeva



ISSN 0973-2772



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