

Rays of
The Harmonist

THE JOURNAL OF ŚRĪ GAUḌĪYA VEDĀNTA SAMĪTI ❀ WINTER 2000



*“We require to have a
peep into the Truth,
and that Truth must be
had. If we are sincere,
He will expose Himself
to our vision.”*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
(Discourse on the Absolute)

Rays of The Harmonist is a bi-annual journal
of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samitī

Front cover:
Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodarājī and Śrī Girirāja-śilā
in Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple, Vṛndāvana

Front inside:
Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja
and Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Navadvīpa

Back cover:
Kṛṣṇa feeding butter to the monkeys.
Mother Yaśodā chasing Him with a stick.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

1. To protect the *vicāra-dhārā* (current of conceptions) of the *svārūpa-rūpānugā-guru paramparā* as presented in the modern age by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (i.e., to uproot opinions opposed to the genuine conclusions of the *Śrī Gauḍīya-sampradāya*).

2. To promote a cooperative effort to preach the message of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha as per the last instructions of Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvātī Ṭhākura.

Editorial

Every moment presents itself to us, individually and collectively, as a new challenge. Alone, we are not equipped to face the impediments of the present or those that lie ahead. For this reason, empowered transcendental personalities have laboured tirelessly to provide us with clear advice and profound inspiration through the written word. Many points of dissention, of a philosophical or historical nature, which are currently arising in the newly-born worldwide Gauḍīya community, have already been reconciled or dispelled during the preaching campaigns of our previous *ācāryas*. Whenever problems arose in the past, our *ācāryas* have responded brilliantly to the necessity of the hour with authentic solutions. When we examine their writings, we find that most of the battles we face today have already been won for us, and we never fail to be startled by their perennial salience. Unfortunately, most of the articles penned by stalwart champions of the truth such as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, and Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, lie beyond the purview of the non-Bengali speaking world, patiently waiting in the archives of various branches of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha.

In an attempt to remedy this situation, we are presenting herein translations of the authoritative statements of the great luminaries in the Gauḍīya sky so that the English speaking world can avail itself of the vast wealth of their wisdom.

It is also our intention to make available the essays and lectures of some of the most senior and experienced living Vaiṣṇavas, such as Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. These living veterans of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya, with devotional careers of sixty to seventy years, have personally served most of the prominent disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura and, thus, their guidance is not only helpful and invaluable, but positively essential.

Finally, may we add that this journal aspires to follow the spirit of Śrī Sajjana Toṣanī. The word *Sajjana*, *Sat+jana* refers to those who are cent-per-cent dedicated to *sat* — the Absolute Truth, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the combined form of Śrī Yuga, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *Toṣanī* refers to their satisfaction. Thus, *Sajjana Toṣanī* refers to the journal which aims to nourish the devotional sentiments of those who are possessed of the twenty-six Vaiṣṇava qualities. It will in no way cater to the whims of those impostors who repeatedly skate around the fringes of *bhakti-abhāsa* for want of accepting absolute guidance. We are not interested in promoting social harmony at the expense of compromising *siddhānta*. In this world of falsehood, truth appears to be somewhat peculiar, impractical and unpopular. Still, it is warmly received by *sajjana*. If they alone are pleased by our humble offering, then our endeavours will have proven fruitful.

□



Śrī Govardhanā

by Śrīla Raghunā

*saptāhaṁ murajit-karāmbuja-paribhrājat kanīṣṭhāṅguli-
prodyad-valgu-varātakoparimilan-mugdha-dvirepho 'pi yah
pāthaḥ-kṣepaka-śakra-nakra-mukhataḥ kroḍe vrajaṁ drāg apāt
kas taṁ gokula-bāndhavaṁ giri-varaṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (1)*

Govardhana is he who, while resting upon the whorl-like little finger of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus hand like an enamored bumblebee for one week, protected Vraja from the frightful rains which poured forth from the mouth of the crocodile - Indra. Who would not render service to the best of mountains Govardhana, the dearest friend of Gokula?

*indratve nibhṛtaṁ gavāṁ suranadī-toyena dīnātmanā
śakreṇānugatā cakāra surabhir yenābhiṣekaṁ hareḥ
yat-kacche 'jani tena nandita-janaṁ govinda kuṇḍaṁ kṛtī
kas taṁ go-nikarendra paṭṭa-śikharaṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (2)*

Realizing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had protected Gokula by lifting Govardhana, Surabhi, who had been brought there by Indra, established Kṛṣṇa as the lord of the cows, by bathing Him in Gaṅgā water at a nearby solitary place. The water from this bathing ceremony became Govinda-kuṇḍa, which even today gives great delight to everyone's eyes. What intelligent person would not take shelter of that Govardhana, the place where Vrajendra-nandana enjoyed resting?



nāśraya-daśakam

thā Dāsa Gosvāmī

*svar-dhuny-ādi-vareṇya-tīrtha-gaṇato hr̥dyāny ajasraṁ hareḥ
sīri-brahma-harāpsaraḥ-priyaka-tat-śrī-dāna-kunḍāny api
prema-kṣema-ruci-pradāni parito bhr̥janti yasya vratī
kas taṁ mānya-munīndra-varṇita-guṇaṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (3)*

His glories are so great that he is to be embraced within the heart more than the *tirthas* (holy places), such as Gaṅgā, etc. He bestows *bhakti*, supreme auspiciousness, and *prema*. He is loved by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva, Brahmā, Śiva, and the Apsarās; he is splendorously encircled by many ponds, headed by Śrī Dāna-kunḍa; and his glories were sung in a special way by the most venerated sage, Śrī Śukadeva. What person who strictly adheres to their spiritual vows would not take shelter of that Govardhana?

*jyotsnāmokṣaṇa-mālyā-hāra-sumano-gaurī-balāri-dhvajā
gāndharvādi-sarāṁsi nirjhara-giriḥ śṛṅgāra-simhāsanam
gopālo 'pi hari-sthalaṁ harīr api sphūrjanti yat-sarvataḥ
kas taṁ go-mṛga-pakṣi-vṛkṣa lalitaṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (4)*

He is decorated with many waterfalls, and is wonderfully surrounded by numerous ponds, named Jyotsnā, Mokṣaṇa, Mālyahāra, Sumanāḥ, Gaurī, Balāri-dhvajā, and Gāndharva. He serves as a *simhāsana* for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *śṛṅgāra-rasa* pastimes, and provides the setting where Svayaṁ Bhagavān Himself enjoys pastimes as a cowherd boy. He is so charming, due to the presence of many cows, deer, birds, and trees, that He has become the topmost nourisher of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Who would not take shelter of that Govardhana?

*gaṅgā-koty adhikaṁ bakāri-pada-jāriṣṭāri-kuṇḍaṁ vahan
bhaktyā yaḥ śirasā natena satataṁ preyān śivād apy abhūt
rādhā-kuṇḍa-maṇim tathaiva murajit-prauḍha-prasādaṁ dadhat
preyaḥ-stavyatamo 'bhavat ka iha taṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (5)*

Govardhana is more venerable than even Śrī Mahādeva. This is because he devoutly carries on his bowed head the pond which manifested from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, and the priceless jewel Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is superior to even millions of Gaṅgās. He is highly worshipable to the devotees, due to being the perpetual object of Kṛṣṇa's favor. Who in this world would not take shelter of that Govardhana?

*yasyām mādhava-nāviko rasavatīm ādhāya rādhām tarau
madhye caṣcala-keli-pāta-valanāt trāsaiḥ stuvatyās tataḥ
svābhīṣṭaṁ paṇam ādadhe vahati sā yasmin mano-jāhnavī
kas taṁ tan nava-dampatī-pratibhuvan-govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (6)*

Becoming a boatman, and seating the *rasa*-filled Śrīmatī Rādhikā in His boat, Śrī Kṛṣṇa steered the boat into the middle of turbulent waters. When Rādhikā became fearful due to the shaking of the boat, and prayed to Him for protection, He collected from Her as a rescue-fee the fulfillment of His amorous desires. Mānasa-Gaṅgā, the river where this pastime took place, always flows at Govardhana, who facilitates the meeting of the youthful Divine Couple. What pious person would not take shelter of that Govardhana?

*rāse śrī-śata-vandya-sundara-sakhī vṛndāścitā saurabha-
bhrājat-kṛṣṇa-rasāla-bāhu-vilasat-kaṇṭhī madhau mādhavī
rādhā nṛtyati yatra cāru valate rāsa-sthalī sā parā
yasmin kaḥ sukṛtī tam unnatam aye govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (7)*

Surrounded by extremely beautiful *sakhīs* who are worshipable for hundreds and hundreds of Lakṣmīs, and embellished with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's brilliantly fragrant arms around Her neck, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the beloved of Mādhava, danced in the *rāsa-līla* during *madhu māsa*, the spring season. Even today that place is celebrated as the second *rāsa-sthalī*. What pious person would not take shelter of that Govardhana, the place of such exalted pastimes?

*yatra svīya-gaṇasya vikrama-bhṛtā vāca muhuh phullatoḥ
smera krūra-dṛganta-vibhrama-śaraiḥ śaśvan mitho viddhayoḥ
tad yūnor nava-dāna-sṛṣṭija-kalir bhaṅgyā hasan jimbhate
kas taṁ tat-prṭhu-keli-sūcana śilam govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (8)*

Govardhana is where Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, pleased by the audacious words of Their friends, and repeatedly pierced by each others' laughter as well as by the showers of Their arrow-like sidelong-glances, displayed the ever-fresh *līlā* of the tax quarrel, and where the entire atmosphere vibrates with the bliss of Their ever-new pastimes. Who would not take shelter of that Govardhana?

*śrīdāmādi-vayasya-saṣcaya-vṛtaḥ saṅkarṣaṇenollasan
yāsmiṁ go-caya-cāru-cāraṇa-paro rīrīti gāyaty asau
raṅge gūḍha-guhāsu ca prathayati smāra-kriyām rādhayā
kas taṁ saubhaga-bhūsitāṣcita-tanuṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (9)*



Govardhana is where Śrī Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Baladeva, Śrīdāma and other friends, took the cows out to graze and sang 'rī, rī' in a sweet voice. Govardhana is where, after making an arena of amorous battle within a secluded cave, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed Cupid's sports with Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Who would not take shelter of such an immensely fortunate Govardhana?

*kāḷindīm tapanodbhavām giri-gaṇān aty-unnāmac-chekharān
śrī-vṛndāvīpinām janepsita-dharam nandīśvaram cāśrayam
hitvā yaṁ pratipūjayan vraja-kṛte mānaṁ mukundo dadau
kas taṁ śṛṅgi-kirīṭinaṁ giri-nṛpaṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet (10)*

Neglecting the sun-god's daughter Yamunā, other very high mountains and Nandīśvara, which is the shelter of the residents of Vraja and the fulfiller of their hearts' desires, Śrī Kṛṣṇa honored and worshipped Govardhana, the crown-jewel of mountains, for the protection of Vṛndāvana. Who would not take shelter of that Govardhana?

*tasmīn vāsadam asya ramya-daśakaṁ govardhanasyeha yat
prādurbhūtam idaṁ yadīya-kṛpayā jīrṇāndha-vaktrād apy
tasyodyad-guṇa-vṛnda-bandhura-khaner jīvātu-'rūpasy' tat
tośyāpi alaṁ bhavtv iti phalaṁ pakvaṁ-mayā mrgyate (11)*

May this *daśaka* (poem of ten verses) satisfy that most elevated, exalted jewel and the all-in-all of my life, my Gurudeva Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. It is by his mercy that this *daśaka*, which grants one residence near the extraordinarily beautiful Girirāja Govardhana, has manifested from the mouth of such an old and blind man as myself.

□

Śrī Guru-bhakti

by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

The *jīva*, blinded by the delusion of *māyā*, and bound in the wide-spread network of material existence, wanders here and there. Having been captivated in the hope of happiness, he searches for such happiness in knowledge, intelligence, wealth, honour, etc., but by no means can he make himself happy. In this way many lives of the *jīvas* pass. As a result of earning stocks of *sukṛti* in many births, *śraddhā* for *bhajana* is transmitted within the heart of the *jīva*. Only in *bhajana* is there any possibility of his attaining happiness. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān, and the *jīvas* are His eternal servants. *Śraddhā* is the very strong and determined faith that, by performing *bhakti* unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all the sufferings of the *jīva* are dispelled, and he becomes situated in *kṛṣṇa-dāsyā*, his constitutional position. Possessing such *śraddhā*, the *jīva* very soon takes the shelter of the lotus feet of a *sad-guru*. Then, by virtue of Śrī Guru's grace alone, he attains all types of perfection.

The boundlessly merciful Vaiṣṇavas are the supreme friends of the fallen *jīvas* in this world. Knowing the *jīvas* to be averse to Kṛṣṇa, they preach *bhakti-tattva* to them. Developing *śraddhā* in *bhakti-tattva*, the *jīvas* take shelter of a Vaiṣṇava's lotus feet. As Śrī Guru, he now instructs them on *bhagavad-bhajana*. When the disciple exhibits suitable qualification, having developed singleness in purpose and expertise in *bhajana*, Śrī Guru bestows his mercy

upon him by granting the power to view the storehouse of transcendence—Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such is the endless mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas. As Śrī Gurudeva, the Vaiṣṇava blesses the extremely fallen and insignificant

jīva, who is filled with hundreds of *anarthas*, tormented by *māyā* in various forms, and completely drowned in the ocean of material existence, with a place at his feet. He himself accepts the burden of this *jīva*'s life, which presently is devoid of *bhajana*. By the example of his own supremely pure character and strong *bhajana*, Śrī Guru captivates him and transmits potency into his heart. The disciple imbibes this strength and gradually moves forward along the path of *bhajana*. There is, indeed, no extent to the unlimited mercy of such a Guru. It is endless and wonderful, and for this reason Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has written:



*śrī guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
lokanātha lokera jīvana
hā hā prabhu kara doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
ebe jaśa ghuṣuka tribhuvana*¹

*caṅṣu-dāna dilā jei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya-jñāna hṛde prakāśito
prema-bhakti jāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa jāte,
vede gāya jahāra carito*²

Śrī Guru can be distinguished according to his

¹Gurudeva is an ocean of mercy, the friend of the fallen, the life and soul of everyone. O master, be merciful! O Gurudeva, give me the shade of your lotus feet. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds.

²He gives me the gift of transcendental vision and enlightens my heart with divine knowledge. He is my master birth after birth. From him emanates *prema-bhakti*, divine loving devotion, by which ignorance is destroyed. The Vedic scriptures sing of his character.

two functions as *dīkṣā-guru* and *śikṣā-guru*. *Dīkṣā-guru* is he from whom the *mantra* is obtained, and *śikṣā-guru* is he from whom *bhajana-śikṣā*, instruction on how to progress along the devotional path, is received. A disciple should show equal respect to both, and he should understand that both are the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's *śakti*. If he maintains a different opinion towards them, the disciple will be an offender.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi, 1.44-45.47) it is said:

*yadyapi āmāra guru—caitanyera dāsa
tathāpi jāniye āmi tāṅhāra prakāśa³*

*guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe
guru rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-
gaṇe⁴*

*śikṣā-guruke ta 'jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa
antaryāmī bhakta, śreṣṭha—ei dui rūpa⁵*

To consider Gurudeva to be directly the Supreme Personality of Godhead is an offensive mentality, because such an idea leads to the conception of the *jīva's* oneness with *Īśvara*—like that of a *māyāvādī*. However, if one performs *bhakti* with the understanding that *Śrī Guru* is the special manifestation of *Śrī Bhagavān* Himself, or His *śakti*, then there will be no fault. "Śrī Bhagavān, who is the embodiment of *prema*, has manifested Himself within *Śrī Gurudeva* and has given me initiation." If this thought remains in the mind of the disciple, he will be blessed. He will then nurture firm faith in the words of *Śrī Guru* and develop unshakeable devotion to him.

Those *jīvas* who are possessed of faith should take shelter of a *sad-guru* with great care and effort. Having compiled information from various *śāstras*, Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmi has given the symptoms of *Śrī Guru*, and the symptoms of a disciple, in his book *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. The purport of all such words of *śāstra* is that one who has a strong character stemming from *bhakti*, who is a *viśuddha-*

bhakta (a supremely pure devotee), and the best among the *bhagavatas* is alone the guru of the *jīvas*. And only that disciple who is free from sins, who is pure-hearted and submissive is fit to receive instruction. If this advice is ignored, surely *anarthas* will appear on the path of devotion.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said in His own words: *yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā sei 'guru' haya and guru yatha bhakti śunya tatha śiṣya-gana*—"He who is enlightened in the science of Kṛṣṇa is Guru," and

"Where the Guru is without *bhakti*, his disciples will be the same." Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's words always remain true in all respects; in this there is no doubt.

It is said in the *śāstra* that the guru will examine the disciple for a considerable amount of time, and the disciple will also observe the guru's character. In this manner, after understanding the purity of each other, both of them will establish a relationship. The guru-disciple relationship is not only for a few days; it will continue to exist even after this life. If the disciple cannot take shelter of a *sad-guru*, (even after having searched with great care), then he becomes deviated from the path of the supreme goal due to the fault of neglect. If the guru is unfit, the disciple, having abandoned him, should accept a *sad-guru*. If the disciple is fallen, and *Śrī Guru* is unable to reform him, he can give

him up.

It is appropriate for the disciple to follow with determined faith whatever instruction is given to him by *Śrī Gurudeva*. If the disciple fails to do so, and hears different instructions from various people, due to the fault of unnecessary hankerings, he will be unable to do *bhajana*. If it appears that *Śrī Guru* has given an order contrary to *śāstra*, then, with a simple heart, the disciple should express himself at his feet

*Simply by his desire,
that Gurudeva
who is the topmost
of bhagavatas
can transmit potency
within the heart
of the disciple
and thus make him
a param-bhagavat.
Naturally, however,
such inclination
does not arise
in Śrī Gurudeva
to instill that potency
in an unfit disciple.*

³Although I know that my spiritual master is the servant of *Śrī Caitanya*, I know him also to be a direct manifestation of the Lord.

⁴According to the deliberate opinion of all revealed scriptures, the spiritual master is non-different from Kṛṣṇa, who, in the form of the spiritual master, delivers His devotees."

⁵One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the personality of Kṛṣṇa, who manifests Himself as the Supersoul and as His greatest devotee."

and then reconcile it with the words of *śāstra*. However, if one does not carry out Śrī Gurudeva's directions with special care and firmness, the disciple by no means can attain His mercy.

Simply by his desire, that Gurudeva who is the topmost of *bhagavatas* can transmit potency within the heart of the disciple and thus make him a *parama-bhagavat*. Naturally, however, such inclination does not arise in Śrī Gurudeva to instill that potency in an unfit disciple. That disciple who carries out the instructions of Śrī Guru with great vigilance soon becomes qualified to receive the wealth of Guru's mercy. Only then can he realize the real meaning of *guru-kṛpā*.

As long as *anarthas* remain in the process of *bhajana*, the disciple should continue to move forward on the path of *bhajana* as instructed by Śrī Gurudeva, prudently following the laws and prohibitions of *śāstra*. When, by the mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, one crosses over the ocean of *anarthas* and arrives in the realm of *niṣṭha* and *ruci*, Śrī Guru's mercy flows very forcefully. At that time Śrī Gurudeva becomes the very wealth of his life. *Mamatā*, possessiveness, appears in the heart of the disciple towards his Gurudeva, and gradually attachment towards *bhajana* increases. As the attachment for *bhajana* increases, *mamatā* ripens and expands, and an unprecedented *dāsya-rasa*, service mood towards Gurudeva, unfolds. At that time, with great attention the disciple fully offers his life at the feet of his Gurudeva.

As long as natural affection for Gurudeva does not rise in the disciple, it is imperative for him to render service unto Śrī Gurudeva to obtain his mercy. To fastidiously carry out the words of Śrī Gurudeva is his principal *sevā*. Many people do not exhibit any determination to execute the instructions of Śrī Gurudeva. However, they seem to remain very busy in some way or another, trying to massage the feet of Śrī Gurudeva or fanning him. If these services are done with natural inborn affection, much benefit is derived. However, if the disciple retains some insincerity within the heart, which manifests as a hope that, "By this type of *sevā* I will become dear to Śrī Gurudeva," then it will not be at all helpful for him. One cannot become dear to Gurudeva in that way. It is the carrying out of the order of Gurudeva that confers great satisfaction for the disciple. Massaging his feet and fanning him are surely not bad. The result of that type of service is that one develops the strength to follow the instructions of Śrī Guru, and by that alone one obtains his mercy. Self-satisfaction is ultimately achieved as a result of the *sevā* which is performed with natural, innate *prīti*, or affection.

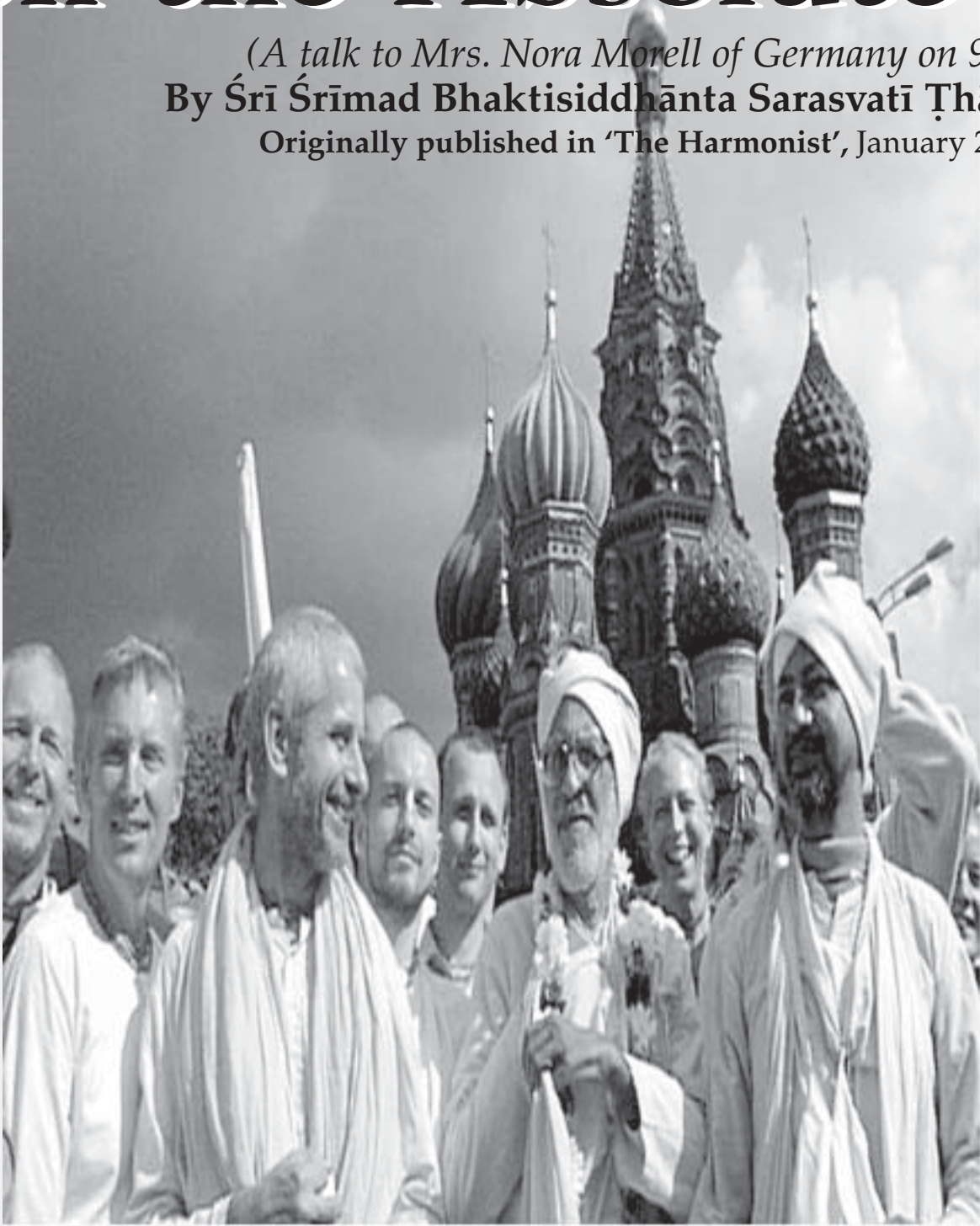
□ (Translated from Śrī Gaudīya Patrika)

Discourse

W should have firm faith in the Divinity. We are absolute infinitesimals. We require to associate ourselves with the Absolute. If we show our diffidence to do so, we are likely to be entangled in the ephemeral matters of this world. Our friends are for a few days only. They will leave us at any time when they are called. All our efforts should tend towards the association of the Divinity and we should not undertake any work for our temporary purposes. We are His dependents. Infinitesimals as we are, we require to have our final place in Him. We should carry out all our activities for His purpose only. We should not think that we have any other thing to do. Unlike the ordinary people, we should only engage in the process of tending everything to Him for His service. The external gross body is meant to remain for a hundred years and no more. Our mental speculations are conducted during our present human form. Although we have a very strong determination to associate with the personal nature of things, we are obliged to leave this mortal coil and to cease our transactions with the external world.

e on the Absolute

(A talk to Mrs. Nora Morell of Germany on 9-1-36)
By Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Originally published in 'The Harmonist', January 20, 1936



If we wish to associate ourselves with the Absolute, all non-absolute propaganda for our temporary purposes should be abandoned as far as possible; otherwise we will be led to become materialists only. That non-absolute propaganda will instigate us to entangle ourselves with worldly thoughts and ideas and we will be thinking of physical developments instead of associating ourselves with the Absolute. We are all absolutes though infinitesimally small. Because we have shown diffidence—we have proven our indolence to associate with Him—so, like shooting stars, we have been simply thrown off from Him. We have rebelled against that Entity. To go back to Him, it is essentially necessary that all our associations and movements should tend to His service.

First of all He should be designated. What is He? What form should He have? How are we to go back to Him? When we come to know that He keeps Himself aloof from everything in this phenomenal world, we feel the necessity of associating with Him. This association can be had if we can eliminate the external impediments, which are like screens, between the Absolute Infinity and the absolute infinitesimals.

Our mental speculations should not be confused with that very thing. Our mental speculations are meant for associating with the phenomenal objects. Some philosophers thought it fit that our mental speculations should tend to Him in His abstract Form, instead of His personal nature, but here we have got His personal feature for the purpose of associating ourselves with Him. We cannot have this association by any sort of privations. The phenomenal objects are undesirable things. Although they have some effect on us, they are all transient and will not hold good to us till the end of time. We do not think, like materialists, that our existence will cease. The materialists think that everything will stop when we die—that all our troubles will end at death. This miserable idea should be thrown off. We should engage all our activities to associate ourselves with the Absolute, as we are absolute infinitesimals. We are not the body, nor the mind, nor the external atmosphere. We require disassociation from these. These undesirable situations should be eliminated at all costs; otherwise, we will prove ourselves to be meant for the ordinary purpose of this world.

Lower animals are used as food by many people. In ancient times, when cannibalism was prevalent in the world, people used to take human flesh. They thought that the human body was meant for their consumption. Later on, when civilization made

progress, people gave up cannibalism but went on taking the flesh of lower animals. In India, persons belonging to the higher castes do not take animal food. The development of religious thoughts has rather stopped the practice of cruelty to animals in many ways. Science has now proved that vegetables too have life and can feel pain and pleasure. But it is not meant that we should commit suicide by abstaining from taking any food. This problem is solved when food is meant for the purpose of the Absolute.

Everything has come from Him, everything will go back to Him, and everything is meant for His service. All animate and inanimate objects have come from Him and are meant for His service only. If we purloin these things, we would be deceiving the Absolute. We are absolute infinitesimals and are deluded by the ordinary manifestive character of mundane phenomena. We require to get rid of this delusion. We require to have a peep into the Truth, and that Truth must be had. If we are sincere, He will expose Himself to our vision. Whatever we do, we should do it for Him—for His eternal purpose, instead of indulging ourselves in transitory transactions. Our function is not to carry on our works for our purpose. We should not be the recipients of the fruits of our enterprises. It is better for us that whatever we do should be done in His favor and for His service. We are servitors. If we keep dogs, we would be servants of dogs; if we keep horses, we would be servants of horses, and if we become altruists, we would be servants of human beings only. But the Absolute should be served at all costs.

Most people are at a loss to understand what they should do and what they are meant for. They only see the superficial side of things. The external side of things is quite deluding. As intelligent men, we should be very careful. We require to penetrate into everything properly. Our view should not be obstructed by the morphological representation of things, nor by the ontological, metaphysical side of things.

The methodical arrangement of phenomena should not be restricted to our ordinary purposes of living only. We require a peaceful life. We do not require to be troubled by the undesirable elements of this world. Sometimes we find a little peace by keeping rules and regulations and observing civic principles, but we are again put into trouble by the misunderstanding of the people from outside.

There is some agency working on the background which is not exposed to our present senses. Our sensuous nerves are quite ineligible for the purpose of associating with the Truth. The appear-

ance of things—of devotion and truth—often deceive us. The external features, the morphological and ontological phases of things, are sometimes found to be detrimental to our cause when we require to come in touch with the Absolute. We have the facility of the last ten thousand years experience. We can thus judge and discern the best method for our adoption, instead of indulging ourselves in that way the people are transacting their business right and left.

Our senses reciprocate with the objects of mundane phenomena, and super-sensuous or transcendental objects are simply neglected. The eternal representations, the eternal manifestations and the eternal aspects are fully neglected. We aspire to have the fullest advantage of coming in touch with all desirable things, but in our present life we find that we are troubled by many distressful agents. We find that all these are treacherous and only lead us to satisfy our senses. This non-absolute propaganda should cease. Whatever we do, we should make it a point that we should not be diffident or indolent in offering our services to the Absolute.

The word 'absolute' is explained in different ways. We have experience of the non-absolutes and undesirable objects of material phenomena, and our very mind is found to be of a non-absolute nature. The mind discerns things only for the purpose of the senses, but the Absolute is delineated as One Who has reserved the right of not being exposed to human senses. The human senses can mix—or rather reciprocate—with phenomenal objects. If the Absolute were an object of mundane phenomena, we would be lording it over Him. But that is not appropriate. We should pose ourselves as His servitors. We should not think that we are enjoyers and He is the predominated object of our enjoyment. He is never so.

We are obliged to pass through undesirable situations. We require to get rid of all these things.

Our inner impulse should be to have access to that region where all objects will offer us special opportunity of having association with the Absolute. We should set apart some time to make progress towards the investigation of Transcendence. Our purpose should be to associate with the Fullness, with the Eternity, with the purity, with the Best of desirables, and not to mix with temporary things of delusive nature. We should not have a crippled idea of

Godhead. We should wait for the transcendental message to come to us in full. We would have then an opportunity to associate with Him.

There are three thoughts. First, the *karmis* or fruit seekers think they should work for the gratification of their senses. Secondly, the *jñānis* or impersonalists wish to merge in the Absolute in order to get rid of all troubles but always fail at the end. Thirdly, the devotees have got a different determination.

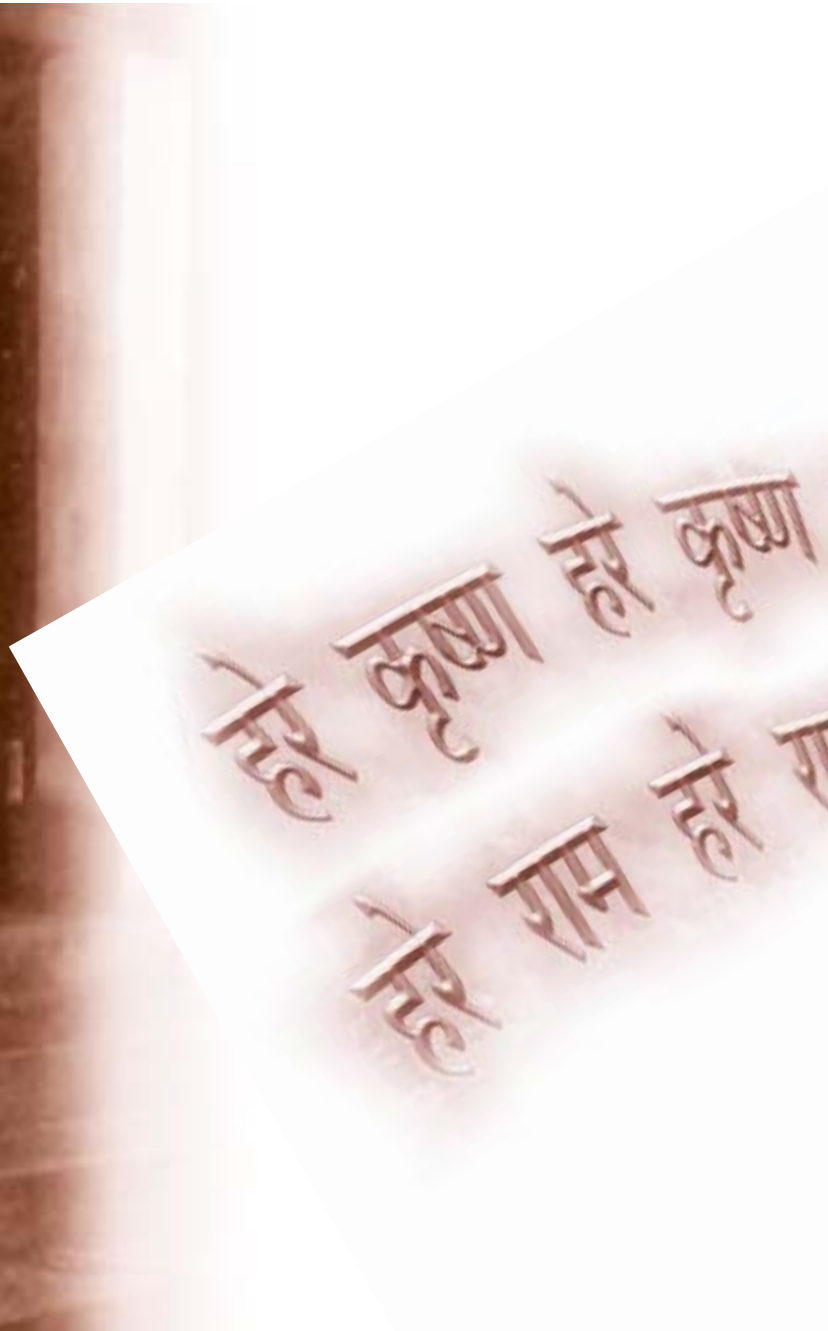
We are very small. Some overwhelming influence comes upon us and we are troubled. We should therefore take recourse to the Absolute Infinity. We should not be acting like shooting stars in flying away from Him, but we should go back to our original place. There the

transcendental nature is eternally present, but here the phenomenal objects are meant for a few days only. So we should have some eternal determination and aim for guidance. We can ignore all these influences of nature, all influences of scientific discoveries, if only we have the mind to associate with the Absolute Whole.

There are many things concealed, or hidden, and not revealed to us, and these are to be received through our aural reception. Our auditory nerves are to be allowed to be touched by sound waves from the transcendental messenger so that we can make progress towards that Transcendence. □

Our inner impulse should be to have access to that region where all objects will offer us special opportunity of having association with the Absolute. We should set apart some time to make progress towards the investigation of Transcendence.





We know that one who has *śakti*, potency is indeed *śaktimāna*, the possessor of *śakti*. Therefore, that sound (word) which is endowed with *śakti* is *śaktimāna* Himself. What is the doubt in this? Since material sound is of an unconscious, inert nature, its potency is limited and it cannot act independently. However, sound vibration of the transcendental world has inconceivable *śakti*. Being free from any tinge or obstruction of *māyā*, transcendental sound is non-different from the source of the sound Himself and, being unprecedentedly potent, can accomplish that which is extremely difficult to accomplish. In

Śabdera Śakti

The Potency of Transcendental Sound Vibration

By Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

other words, it can make
the impossible possible. It is said in the scripture:

*nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś
caitanya-rasa-vidgrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ¹
(B.R.S. Eastern Wave 2/108)*

*kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra²
(C.c. Ādi 17.22)*

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has manifested Himself
in this world in the form of śabda-brahma. Śabda
brahma Śrī Hari is a completely nirguṇa entity. We
humans born in this world of the material modes

¹The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is a transcendently blissful wish-fulfilling jewel, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa's name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name, it is not subject to any material condition, and it is not less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa's name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with māyā. This is because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.

²In this Age of Kali, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has incarnated as His holy name, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered.

of nature are, therefore, not able to realize Him, nor are we able to experience His unlimited *śakti* and sweetness. Being born of the material modes, our material senses are specifically qualified to experience only material form, taste, smell, sound and touch. The substance which is born of material modes, the senses, cannot help us to approach the entity which is beyond the modes—Bhagavān. Therefore, by these material senses we only experience mundane and temporary objects. If, with our material senses, we remain absorbed in worldliness, then it is completely impossible for us to revive our conscious state. Therefore, while not transgressing the limits of the bare necessity of our association with material objects, it is proper for us to strive in the direction of realizing the *nirguna* entity. Is it improper for us to remain restlessly anxious to realize our own *svarūpa* as well as that of our *ātmā's* supreme relatives, Hari, *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas? Will our fellow friends not give any consideration to these thoughts? If one cannot develop his consciousness to the state of his constitutional po-

sition, what is the benefit of his attaining human birth?

It is said that realization of the *nirguna-vastu*, transcendental reality, comes in only one way—through our ears. In order to bestow mercy upon us, the spiritually enlivening and potent *hari-kathā* or *vaikunṭha-śabda* from the lips of living and spiritually enlightened *sādhus* appears in this world (the realm of human perception). If we wholeheartedly receive that Bhagavān coming in the form of *śabda* through our ears, then, after passing through the path of the ears, this *śabda-brahma* enters the core of our heart. Then, having completely destroyed the dirt and darkness of the heart, He Himself undoubtedly establishes His transcendently pure throne therein.

The *nirguna* entity or sound can come to this world of material modes out of His own sweet will. That entity or sound appears in this material realm for the supreme welfare of the whole world. This *vaikunṭha-śabda* appears in this world by means of *śrauta patha*, the *guru paramparā*. It floods

out as rivers through the lips of Śrī
 Gurudeva or Vaiṣṇava, both
 of whom are the
 embodiment of
saccidānanda
 (spiritual
 strength,

***The sound which enters
into our ears
through the śrauta patha,
guru paramparā,
has such a super-mundane
and enchanting power
that, once it enters the heart
through the medium of the ears,
it causes the constitutional
spiritual nature
of the human being
to blossom.***

knowledge and bliss). Therefore, the spiritualized tongue of the *sādhu*, which is chastely engaged in *bhagavata kīrtana*, is called the mother of Śrī Nāma.

Many people have the opinion that when this *nirguna* sound comes to this world from the transcendental plane, it has to accept the form of an entity born of the material modes. However, one can easily understand that this speculative, unchaste conception is anti-devotional and opposed to conclusive scriptural truths. The efforts of such people to secretly establish the supremely beautiful and all-potent controller of *māyā* as subordinate to *māyā*, or to doubt the unlimited all-potent nature of Śrī Bhagavān, is the display of their foolishness. Therefore, it is said that since the supreme absolute reality as *śabda-brahma* is the supreme independent autocrat, His transcendental nature is never lost. The sound vibration emanating from the lips of a *sādhu* is fully conscious, spiritually enlivening, and unlimitedly powerful. On the other hand, whatever is spoken by people like us, whose senses are composed of

inert matter and born of material energy, is all worldly. Material sound emerges from the material sky, remains there for some period of time, and finally merges back into the material sky. This sound vibration will take us to hell. This type of sound vibration pervades the material sky for the purpose of sense gratification, and it manifests only to put us in trouble. Eating, drinking, sleeping, indulging in sex and after that dying are the only activities of this world. However, the sound which enters into our ears through the *śrauta patha, guru paramparā*, has such a super-mundane and enchanting power that once it enters the heart through the medium of the ears it causes the constitutional spiritual nature of the human being to blossom. This transcendental sound comes to this universe of fourteen planetary system, from Vaikuṅṭha, after penetrating through Brahmāloka. It liberates the *jīva* from *māyā*, and captivates him in the transcendental loving service of Śrī Bhagavān. Passing through Virajā and Brahmāloka, it again takes him back to Vaikuṅṭha. This is the *śabda-śakti* or potency of the *nāma*. Transcendental sound alone is the worshipable entity, and the only support for each and every *jīva*. Apart from surrendering to this *śabda-brahma*, there is no other means of deliverance or welfare for the *jīva*. Therefore, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*prabhu kahe, kahilāma ei mahāmantra
iha japa giyā sabe kariyā nirbandha³
(C.B. Madhya 23.76-77)*

*ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabār
sarva kṣaṇa bala ithe vidhi nāhi āra⁴
(C.B., Madhya 23.78)*

*ki bhojane ki sayane kibā jāgaraṇe
aharniśa cinta kṛṣṇa balaha vadane⁵
(C.B., Madhya 28.28)*

³Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, 'I have given you this *mahā-mantra*. All of you should continue to chant a fixed number of rounds.

⁴By chanting this *mahā-mantra*, every one of you will attain all types of perfection. Continue to chant at every moment. There are no hard and fast rules for chanting.

⁵While eating, sleeping or being awake, day and night, you should engage your mind in thinking about Kṛṣṇa and your mouth in chanting His name.

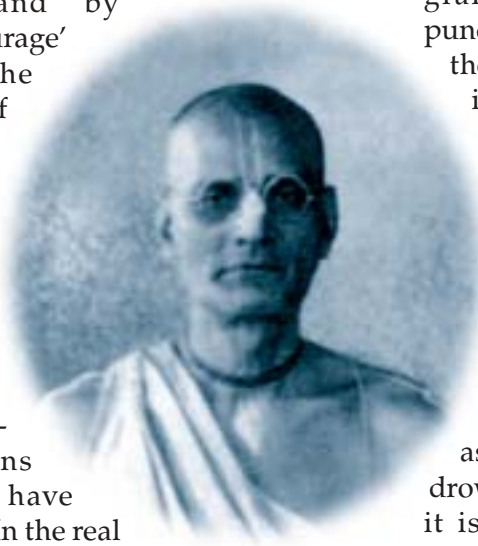
*kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa*⁶
(C.c. Ādi 7.73)

*kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra
nāma haite haya sarva-jāgat-nistāra*⁷
(C.c. Ādi 17.22)

*nāma binā kali kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva mantra sāra nāma ei śāstra marma*⁸
(C.c. Ādi 7.74)

*kubuddhi chāḍiyā kara śravaṇa-kīrtana
acirāte pābe tabe kṛṣṇa-prema dhana*⁹
(C.c. Antya 4.65)

By neglecting or remaining indifferent to this *śabda-brahma*, and by showing one's 'courage' by adopting the impure sound of this mundane world, one will definitely be put into trouble. If one is not fortunate enough, he cannot understand the glories of this *śabda*. Unfortunate persons think that they have heard *hari-kathā*. In the real sense, however, they have not heard at all. They are completely deceived. If, by good fortune, we develop a service attitude for *bhajanīya vastu Śrī Bhagavān*, only then will this *hari-kathā* enter our ears. In other words, only then can we hear it, retain it, and understand it. Therefore, our foremost duty is to give full attention to that source, the self-realized soul (whose intrinsic function of loving Kṛṣṇa has fully awakened),



from whom the spiritually enlivening *hari-kathā* is manifesting. In this world there are *lākhs* and *lākhs* of societies, whose members are simply exercising their tongues and minds in *anuvāra-visarga*, the matter of grammar and punctuation [ie. they are wasting their energies in grammatical calculation]. They cannot realize the real meaning of the spiritually enlivening sound coming down from *paravyoma*—the spiritual sky. Despite acting as speakers of *hari-kathā*, day by day they are drowning in the pool of sense enjoyment. Hence, it is imperative to completely give up bad association, *asādhu saṅga*, and discuss scripture (*śabda-brahma*) in *sādhu saṅga*. As the *śāstra* says:

*Therefore,
our foremost duty
is to give
full attention
to that source,
the self-realized soul
(whose intrinsic
function
of loving Kṛṣṇa
has fully awakened)
from whom
the spiritually
enlivening
hari-kathā
is manifesting.*

*tato duḥsaṅgam utsrjya
satsu sājjeta buddhimān
santa evāśya chindanti
mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*¹⁰
(Ś.B.11.26.26)

(Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrika*) □

⁶By chanting the Kṛṣṇa-mantra one can obtain freedom from material existence. By chanting Kṛṣṇa's name, one will attain His lotus feet.

⁷In this Age of Kali, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has appeared as His holy name. By chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered.

⁸In this Age of Kali there is no religious principle other than the chanting of the holy name, which is the essence of all Vedic mantras. This is the purport of all scriptures.

⁹Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, "Give up all your illogical, anti-devotional thoughts, for they are unfavorable for getting shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Meticulously engage yourself in chanting and hearing. By this, you will very soon achieve the supreme wealth—Kṛṣṇa prema.

¹⁰An intelligent person should therefore reject all bad association, and instead take the association of saintly devotees whose words cut off the excessive material attachment of one's mind.

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Explanation of the Fifth Verse

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

*idaṁ te mukhāmbhojan avyakta-nīlair-
vṛtaṁ kuntalaiḥ snigdha-raktaiś ca gopyā
muhuś cumbitaṁ bimba-raktādharaṁ me
manasy āvirāstāṁ alaṁ lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*

“He deva! Your extremely blackish (dark blue) lotus face, covered by Your glossy and slightly reddish curling locks, is kissed by Yaśodā Maiyā over and over again. May Your supremely captivating lotus face, which is beautified by Your lips as red as ripe *bimba* fruits, always remain manifest in my heart. Millions of other attainments are useless to me.” (Śloka 5)



Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī explains in his commentary:

“Among all the limbs of Kṛṣṇa’s Śrī Vighraha, Satyavrata Muni is particularly interested to see His supremely enchanting lotus face. To reveal this inner desire, he speaks the śloka beginning with *idaṁ te...*”

Satyavrata Muni desires to have the *darśana* of Śrī Vighraha (the form of Bhagavān). Among various forms, he is desirous to see this particular *murti* and not any other, and he is clearly expressing this to Bhagavān. In having *darśana* of Bhagavān, there are two considerations. In one instance, the devotee prays to Bhagavān to show him that *murti* which he is qualified to see. The other case is when the devotee has already decided which particular form he wants to see. When they clearly express their desires for a particular form, it is suggestive. A question may be raised here. Does such a

suggestion or proposal not show a lack of surrender? The answer is “no.” They are expressing such desire with the help of that intelligence which is bestowed by Bhagavān alone. If they speak anything without using the intelligence bestowed by Bhagavān, it will be erroneous. However, if they speak anything using the intelligence granted by Bhagavān, it is fully appropriate. We have to understand this factor. Anything devoid of *anugatya*, being under the guidance of the *guru* and *guru-paramparā*, will be a hindrance in one’s progress or advancement of *bhakti*.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī further says, “Sometimes in his deep meditation, Satyavrata Muni experienced the indescribable beauty and sweetness of his *iṣṭa* (worshipable Deity) through a momentary vision. *Mukhāmbhojam*. Your face is like a very beautiful, fully blossomed lotus, which steals away all types of suffering and is the embodiment of supremely blissful *rasa*. May this lotus face appear in my mind time and again.”

What are the characteristics of that lotus face? He continues, “That face is supremely blackish, and is covered by *snigdha*, soft, glossy and curling locks of hair. Just as the lotus is constantly hovered over by bumblebees, Your lotus face is covered by curly locks. It is kissed over and over again by a *gopī*, Śrī Yaśodā (or Śrī Rādhā). May that lotus face, which is repeatedly kissed by the supremely fortunate Śrī Yaśodā, appear in my mind even one time.”

The word *sadā* (forever) is mentioned in the previous verse. When applied in this verse, the

meaning can also be accepted: “May that lotus face always remain manifest in my mind. May it remain manifest forever in my mind and not disappear from there—not even for a moment.”

Does such a stage come in the life of a *bhakta*? Yes, it comes.

*grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe
bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe
amāni mānada hāṣa kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā la’be
vraje rādhā kṛṣṇa-sevā-mānase karibe¹*
(C.c. Antya 6.236)

What is the reason for using the word ‘*sadā*’ (forever) here?

Does it mean that the *bhaktas* never eat or sleep?

At least they have to take rest for 2 to 4 *daṇḍas*. How they will take rest in this case? When they rest, how do they perform *harināma*?

Those who are able to keep Bhagavān on the path of their remembrance twenty-four hours a day are *Vaiṣṇavas*—they are *guru*. The parameter is set like this.

This instruction is given for all of us. In no circumstance should we forget Bhagavān for even a moment.

“*Vraje rādhā kṛṣṇa-sevā-mānase karibe*” How

shall we do this? Our mind is very wicked and uncontrolled. How is it possible? It is said that even in our dreams we should see Rādhā-Govinda. But what do I see in my dreams? A snake, a fish, a leopard, a bear, etc. When does Bhagavān come in my dreams? How shall I have His *darśana*? How shall I have His constant

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In no circumstance should we forget
Bhagavān for even a moment.*

¹Do not talk about worldly matters, and do not hear about them. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely. Do not expect honor for yourself, but offer all respect to others. Always chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and within your mind render service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in *Vṛndāvana*.

remembrance like an unbroken flow of oil? *Bhaktas* are able to remember, and *abhaktas* (non-devotees) are not. Remembrance occurs for one who is a realized soul. Only the *nitya-siddha* or *nityā-mukta mahātmas*, whose *citta-vṛtti*, inclination of the mind, is like this, can have constant remembrance. They remember Him and have *darśana* of His *līlā* at all times. It is not possible for an ordinary human being.

‘*Aṣṭa prahar yāma sevā*,’ service in the eightfold pastimes of the Divine Couple, is possible for those who keep Bhagavān in their hearts for *aṣṭa prahar* (24 hours), and do not leave Him even for a moment. Only for such a person is *aṣṭa prahar yāma sevā* recommended. Those who perform *yāma sevā* will also perform *smaraṇa* (remembrance). Such persons are very rare. As far as we are concerned, we have not even properly undergone the processes of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*. Without that, how is *smaraṇa* possible? For us such *adhikāra* (qualification) has not yet come. If we can properly perform *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, then we can do *smaraṇa*. Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, in the poem *Vaiṣṇava Ke*, gives instruction to the mind. He has said, ‘*kīrtana-prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe*.’ By the influence of *kīrtana*, one will be able to do *smaraṇa*. We cannot bring remembrance forcefully, that is, without *kīrtana*.

Just as by performing *sādhana-bhajana*, by performing worship of Kṛṣṇa, *vairāgya*, renunciation, comes on its own, remembrance is exactly like that. It cannot be brought through any artificial means or conceptions. It will come automatically by following the process.

*vāsudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ
jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam²
(Bhāg. 1.2.7)*

Here *vairāgya* and *jñāna* are not mentioned as limbs of *bhakti*. However, those who engage in *bhakti* will naturally develop them. We have to understand this concept.

Satyavrata Muni further glorifies the lotus face of Bhagavān by using another adjective—*bimba-*

raktādharām. This means one whose two lips are as red as the *bimba* fruit. He prays, “May that lotus face appear in my mind. Only then will I feel blessed. *Lakṣa-lābhaiḥ—lākhs* and *lākhs* of other types of attainments and gains are useless for me.” The topmost attainment for Satyavrata Muni, for whom *lākhs* and *lākhs* of other goals are insignificant, is that lotus face of Kṛṣṇa which is kissed by the greatly fortunate Yaśodā. His desire is that this beautiful face may appear in his heart.

We, the conditioned souls of this world, do not perform any activity without foreseeing a reward or hope of profit in it. If profit is foreseen by us, we endeavor to advance in that field of activity. This is the rule of enterprises. “I have started a business. I must earn profit, and I should not experience loss.”

Śāstras make us understand that we will not

**By the influence
of *kīrtana*,
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We cannot bring
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always be able to get profit by desiring it. While desiring to earn profit in business, many times we have to bear loss. This should also be kept in mind. Then what shall I do? *Śāstra* says: *upayam cintayet praṁśaḥ tvapāyamapi cintayet*. Just as we think about the means for success, those who are wise also consider the ill-effects. At all times, good and bad, favorable and unfavorable, are to be considered well in advance. Then only will any activity be executed perfectly, and this is confirmed in *śāstra*.

*karmāṇy ārabhamāṇānaṁ
duḥkha-hatyai sukhāya ca
paśyēt pāka-viparyāsaṁ
mithunī-cāriṇām nṛṇām³
(Bhāg. 11.3.18)*

In this world, all of us perform *karma*, reward-seeking activity, but not everyone gets the same type of result at all times. We desire more, but achieve less. Then what should we do? What is the purpose of performing *karma*? All of us know that we perform *karma* for two reasons, as we desire two types of results: *duḥkha-hatyai sukhāya ca*. “All my suffering and pains may be eradicated, and I may attain happiness and peace.” All of us know this. But *śāstras* inform us that, despite desiring in such a way, it will not always happen as we want. *paśyēt*

²By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world.”

³Accepting the roles of male and female in human society, the conditioned souls unite in sexual relationships. Thus, they constantly make material endeavors to eliminate their unhappiness and unlimitedly increase their pleasure. But one should see that they inevitably achieve exactly the opposite result. In other words, their happiness inevitably vanishes, and as they grow older their material discomfort increases.”

pākaviparyasām. The result may be exactly the opposite. This should be understood from the very beginning. We desire something very grand, and if we do not achieve it, and we undergo loss, we can die of heart failure.

Do not die like this. You are a *jīva* whose *dharma* is to search for the eternal life. You should live according to the occupation of your *ātmā*. We have not come to die; we have come to save ourselves to enjoy eternal life. What is the meaning of saving ourselves? *Śṛṅvantu viśve amṛtasya putraḥ*. “I am the son of *amṛta*, immortality personified. Therefore, I have to live an eternal life—not a temporary life full of death.”

A question comes: “Why do we not want to die?” This is answered in the scriptures. Bhagavān is inexhaustible, eternal and immortal. The *jīvātmā* is also inexhaustible and immortal. Therefore, we do not want to die. Sometimes, being troubled by worldly sufferings and pains, we say out of frustration and anger that we want to die.

*aie mātra bhikṣā dau hari / āja yena ekebāre mari
bhāgyavān tāḍātāḍi mare / abhāgāre yame bhaya kare⁴*

These are the expressions of worldly poets. However, their expressions are only verbal, and are not from the inner heart. From the core of our heart, no one of us wants to die. Why not? The *jīvātmā* is inexhaustible and eternal, and, therefore, there is no question of its death. The suicidal cases which occur these days are simply incidental; no one ever wishes to die.

Once an old lady was making efforts to die. She had no one in this world. She used to maintain herself by collecting wood from the forest, and, after selling it in the market, she would use that money to make offerings for her Ṭhākuraḥ and accept the remnants. She once collected a lot of dry wood and tied them in a bundle, but in that forest there was no one to help her lift that bundle on her head. She thus condemned her life. She thought, “How is it possible to live amidst such sufferings? He Yamarāja, where are you? Please take me with you!” When

she repeated this twice or thrice from the core of her heart, Yamarāja personally came before her. He said, “O my dear old mother, in this world no one likes me, nor does anyone ever call me. Why have you called me with such great earnestness?” The old lady replied, “Since you have come here, please lift this bundle and put it on my head.” Yamarāja asked with anger, “Have you called me simply for this? No one calls me for such petty things, nor is anyone able to see me with these two eyes. I am Yamarāja. However, as you are asking, I am putting this bundle on your head.” After that, Yamarāja left. Did the old lady really want to die? Never.

Many such examples are there in the *śāstra*. One poet has spoken:

*marna re tuhu mora śyāma samāna
marite cāhina āmi sunder bhuvane⁵*

Many people talk like this, but the reality is that no one in this world wants to die. This is because we are actually part and parcel of Bhagavān, who is inexhaustible and eternal. We atomic conscious entities emanate from the infinite conscious entity, Bhagavān. Therefore, we don’t want to die.

We have to perform *sādhana bhajana* to attain Bhagavān. This is all right, but how shall we do this? How many ways are there? How quickly we can enter it? We have to understand all such processes. However, particularly in the age of Kali, the only process is *nāma-sankīrtana*.

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā⁶
(Bṛhad Nārādīya 38/126)*

*kṛṣṇa nāma bhaja jīva āra saba micche
palāite path nāhi yama ācche picche⁷*

*sādhū saṅga kṛṣṇa nāma aie mātra cāhi
sāmsāra jinite āre kona vastu nāhi⁸*

*aei ghora samsāre, padiyā mānav nā nāve dukhera śesa
(Translated from Sri Gaudīya Parīka) 19
sādhū saṅga kari, hari bhaje yadi, tabe aṅṅa haye kleśa⁹*

⁴O Lord Hari, I only want to beg You that I may die immediately and not suffer as I die. Those who are fortunate die very quickly, while those who are unfortunate (impious)—even Yamarāja is afraid of them.

⁵Hey Death! For me you are like Śyāma (I want to embrace you); however, seeing the beauty and allurements of this world I don’t feel like dying.

⁶In this age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no means for self-realization other than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari.

⁷O *jīvā*! Engage yourself in *kṛṣṇa-nāma bhajana*, because everything else in this world is false. If you think that you can live happily by avoiding *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, it is your foolishness. Yamarāja is always chasing you.

⁸I only want *sādhū saṅga* and *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Except for this, there is no other means to conquer over this material world.

⁹The *jīvā*, fallen in this fierce material existence, is undergoing unlimited miseries. If, however, he performs *hari-bhajana* in the association of *sādhū*, then only can his sufferings be stopped.

What is our Duty?

A lecture given by Pujyapāda
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja
Kartika, 20.10.96, Vṛndāvana

First of all, I want to present one idea to you. Although machines are good for nothing in the spiritual world, you are always using machines. It is the main source of your spiritual *sādhana*. You are trying to get spiritual education with the help of a tape, but it is not useful in spiritual life. You cannot accept this. You are always trying to record it, and practise it as you practise singing *sa re ga ma, sa re ga ma*. It is all right, the tune is good, but it is not in the spiritual world. This sort of *sādhana* is good for nothing in the spiritual world. Spiritual life depends on spiritual objects, not on the material machine. It cannot help you realize *śāstras* like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Has Śukadeva Gosvāmī taped the words of Vyāsadeva?

We are reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* but we cannot understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by reading only. If you hear sounds uttered by any Vaiṣṇava, you cannot give your heart unless and until you are graced by that devotee. Understanding is attainable only by the grace of that devotee—not by imitation.

Mother Yaśodā calls Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “Lālā, ājao. My dear child, come here.” He immediately comes. You can tape this sound and utter it by practise as performed by a singer. You can utter the exact sound, but will Kṛṣṇa come by that sound? What is the fault? What is it lacking? *Bhakti*, devotion. Utterance is useful only if it is mixed with devotion. It is useless by simply taping, or by simply reading *sāstras*. I can present one incident concerning Lord Kṛṣṇa. In Vṛndāvana He used to go with the other boys to take the cows to the grazing fields. Once the *sakhās* told Him, “You always show us Your power. You can kill *rakṣasas* and ghosts, but can You kill that demon who is now pinching our belly? We are very hungry. Can you remove him? Kṛṣṇa told them, “Yes, if you act according to my words, it can be done. You have to go to that place where the *brāhmaṇas* are presently performing sacrifices. Go there and tell them that Śrī Balarāma and I have come here, and we are very hungry.”

The cowherd boys did as Kṛṣṇa suggested, and begged some food from those *brāhmaṇas*. However, the *brāhmaṇas* paid no attention to the boys’ words. They thought, “We are *brāhmaṇas*. We are performing a sacrifice. We are trying to feed Kṛṣṇa by this sacrifice.” Although Kṛṣṇa was personally begging food from them, they could not understand what they should do. Disheartened, the boys returned.

They said, “Now we are feeling more hungry by coming and going such a long distance.” Then Kṛṣṇa requested them, “Try a second time. This time you will not be refused. You will be successful. Go to the wives of those *brāhmaṇas*. But this time you should first mention My name, not Baladeva Prabhu’s name. These ladies have more regard for Me than for Baladeva.”

The boys went there and told everything to the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*. Hearing that Kṛṣṇa had come, and that He was begging something to eat because He was hungry, they became deeply moved. They took the best food from their kitchens and started on their way. The *brāhmaṇas* checked them by saying, “What is this? Our wives are running on the road! They did not take permission from us, and still they are going!” They immediately stopped their sacrifice and came to the road, saying, “We have not given you any permission to go anywhere. Why are you leaving?”

Their wives replied, “There is no necessity to



take permission from you in this case. We are going to Lord Kṛṣṇa. We were always performing sacrifice only for Him! We will not hear any objection. This time we will not obey you. You cannot save us from death, but Kṛṣṇa alone can save everyone. A father cannot save even his son from death, but all of us are saved by Kṛṣṇa.”

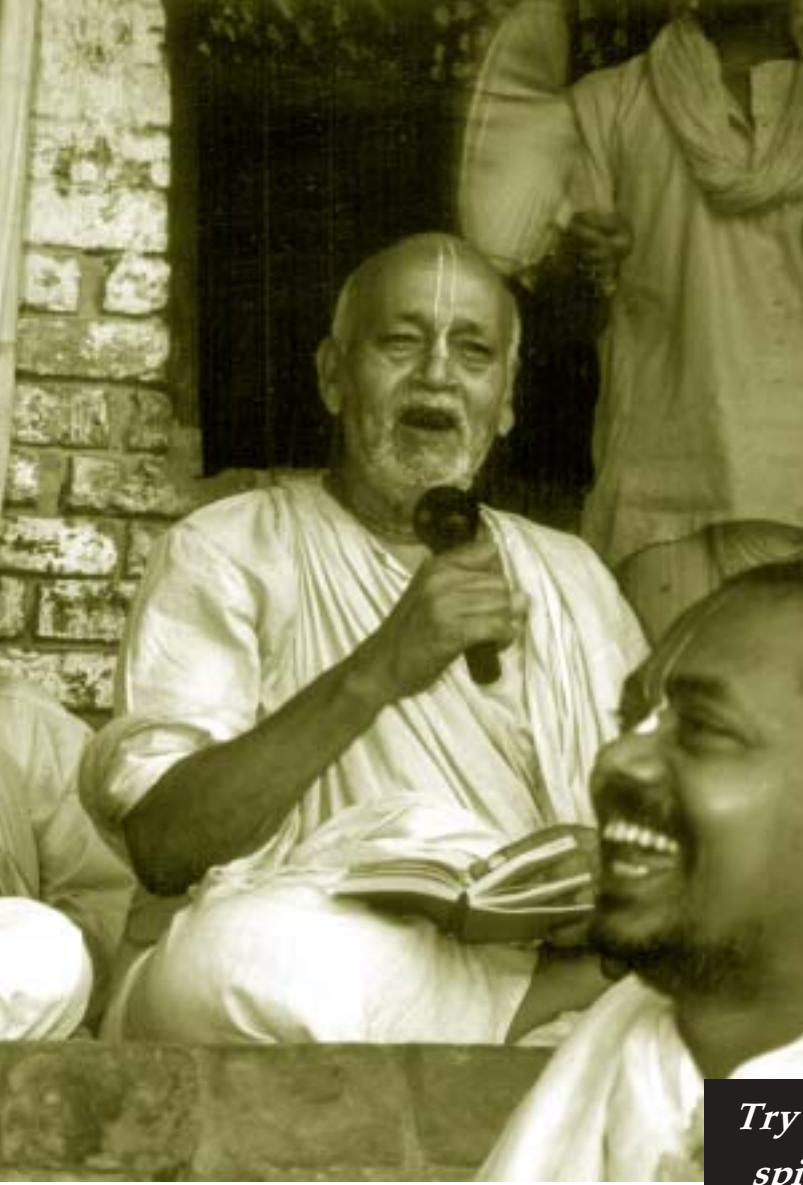
*gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt
pitā na sa syāj janani na sā syāt
daivaṁ na tat syān na patiś ca sa syān
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum¹*
(Ś.B. 5.5.18)

For this reason the prime duty is to serve Kṛṣṇa and no one else. Kṛṣṇa tells in *Gīta*:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ²*
(B.G.16.66)

¹One who cannot deliver his dependents from repeated birth and death should never become a guru, a relative, a father, mother, demigod, or husband.

²Abandon all varieties of religion and surrender unto Me. I shall protect you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.



One of the *brāhmaṇas* forcibly locked his wife in a room where she gave up her life and went to meet Kṛṣṇa in that way. However, the other *brāhmaṇas'* wives did not pay attention to their husbands' words and approached Kṛṣṇa with their offerings of food. Kṛṣṇa replied, "You are doing the correct thing; no ill can come from this." Then Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and all the boys ate their food. After eating, Kṛṣṇa said to the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*, "Now you have to go back." "Why?" they replied, "We have come to You ignoring all our duties to our husbands, our parents and to our relatives. They will no longer accept us. How shall we go back to them?"

Kṛṣṇa replied, "No, no, there is no offense on your part. Look at the sky where the *devatās* and the goddesses are. They approve of your actions. I

assure you, you will not be disregarded by your husbands. Indeed, you will be accepted. Quickly go there."

The wives said, "But how can we go back? You should keep Your promise. Then we shall go. You have said: *yat gatvā na nivartante tad dhāmam paramam mama*. If anybody comes to You, he never returns. These are Your own words. So You cannot tell us to go back now. You must keep Your word."

What was Kṛṣṇa's response to them? "Do not speak in this way. Indeed, you have served Me, but you are not in a position to keep My constant company."

The wives asked, "Why do You speak like this? Are we not fit to keep company with You and Your *gopīs*? Please consider that daily we are offering You delicious food, *mantras*, *arotika*, and other nice things."

Try to understand that in spite of so many loving offerings, qualification to stay with Kṛṣṇa is not attained. More is required. We are always wishing to keep company with Lord Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. But is it so easy? Devotees such as the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* were refused. Even Brahmā was afraid to stay in Vṛndāvana; indeed, even Uddhava was afraid. He was thinking, "No, I am not fit to keep company with Kṛṣṇa. I would

Try to understand that in spite of so many loving offerings, qualification to stay with Kṛṣṇa is not attained. More is required.

be blessed if I could become a creeper here." Then, ask yourself, "Who am I?" There is so much *sādhana bhajana* to be performed. There is much *sādhana* left for us:

*ādau śraddhā tatha sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato' nartha-nivṛttiḥ syat
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

*athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudaṣcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāvo bhavet kramaḥ³*

(B. R. S. 1.4.15-16)

³In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter, one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus, one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of *sādhana-bhakti*. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Which books should first be read by students in class one, class two, class three, class four? Are the books of any class suitable for them? Should they read any and all? I am thinking, "This is the best book! I can get advanced knowledge by reading it!" But it is not fit for you. For you it is best to start with the books of class one and class two. According to our ability we shall accept our *sādhana*. Do not become impatient by seeing the performance of the higher-class students. In every stage, *adhikara*, or eligibility, should be considered:

*naitat samācarej jātu
manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād
yathārudro 'bdhi-jam viṣam⁴*
S.B. 10.33.30

One who has not attained eligibility like Rudra, Śiva, should not drink the ocean of poison. But if I try, thinking, "I shall also drink it," then you will die. We should think and do what is prescribed for us at our level and not aspire for that which is prescribed for those devotees who have advanced to a higher stage. *Ādau śraddhā tatha sādhu-saṅgo*. We are not possessing that *niṣṭhā*. We are serving our mother, serving our father, serving our brothers, serving our country, and serving the poor men as God. We are serving everybody! Granted, we are also trying to serve Kṛṣṇa, but not in the same manner as we perform the duty toward our wives. They are most obedient. We can give all our earnings to them. But can you give all your earnings to Kṛṣṇa? Then

ask yourself, "Who is dear to us?" We can give everything we have earned to our child, to our son, to our daughter, but not to Kṛṣṇa. Only a five-rupee note can we offer to Him. But to my wife, I can give even my body! Without any hesitation the key of my suitcase can be given to her. To a *sādhu*, however, who will take the money and use it in the service of God, no key will be given.

Then comes *niṣṭhā*. Have you attained that *niṣṭhā*?

*śraddhā-śabde—viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya⁵*

Have you attained that qualification? First of all *anartha-nivṛtti*, then *niṣṭhā*. Even if we attain *niṣṭhā*, the good taste or *ruci* is not yet available. We chant Kṛṣṇa's Name, but not with so much eagerness, not with real intensity, because it is

not giving us pleasure, *ruci*.

Without any liking we are uttering the

Name. Guru-

deva has

told us to

chant;

śāstras

have

pres-

cribed

for us to

chant

Kṛṣṇa's

name, so we

are chanting,

considering that

after-wards it will be

good for us. But in this case we

should not culture the confidential affairs between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. At this stage, these confidential *līlās* are not prescribed for us.

Then, after *ruci*, taste, we will attain *āsakti*. *Āsakti* is much stronger than *ruci*. At the stage of *ruci* we can think, "This *rasagullā* is very sweet and very delicious. If I get it, I can immediately swallow the whole thing." This sort of liking is attained, but *āsakti* is deeper. *Āsakti* means, "If I do not get it, then I will steal it. By any means I will obtain it."

⁴One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison.

⁵*Śraddhā* is the confident, firm faith that, by rendering transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa, one automatically performs all subsidiary activities. Such faith is favorable to the discharge of devotional service.

Then, after that, *bhāva* manifests. What kind of *bhakti* are we practicing? *Vaidhī-bhakti*. It is not devotion. It is devotion for Kṛṣṇa by the tongue only. Still we are thinking ourselves to be devotees. Very great devotees. Try to examine yourself. In what position are you? What are you doing? Are you chanting? We have given up eating meat, smoking and drinking liquor; thus, we are thinking that we have given up so many dear things. But can you give up your dearest possession or your wife? That is very difficult.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gīta: sarva dharmān parityajya*. All other kinds of services should be given up. *Kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*. Every kind of duty is performed by serving Kṛṣṇa. This type of faith is called *śraddhā*. *Śraddhā-śabde—viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya / kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*. We can give up something for the satisfaction of our senses but not for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa's senses. What is the position of the *gopīs*? There are no such devotees as the *gopīs*. In His own words Kṛṣṇa says:

*kānta-bhāve nijāṅga diyā karena sevana
ataeva madhura-rasere haya 'paśca guṇa'⁶
(C.c. Madhya 19.232)*

That devotee who possesses this sort of *prema* is very high, very high. This is rarely attained. But are we such high devotees that we are always thinking of the *gopīs* who are performing their *līlās* with Kṛṣṇa? We think that we are the greatest devotees. Followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu are the greatest devotees. Yes? But not all! In the educational system there are various classes such as the first class, the second, etc., while others with so much *adhikara* are in the tenth class. All are not equal. We are far from our goal. We should try to study those books which are prescribed particularly for us. And there is one thing, a panacea that is prescribed for all in every stage. That medicine can be used for any patient in any stage of life. Such a thing which is good for us all is given by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. But Kṛṣṇa did not give this in charity. What is this gift? *Nāma-prema*. This gift was given not by Kṛṣṇa, but by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, so He is greater than Kṛṣṇa in that regard.

*anarpita-carim cirāt karunayāvātirṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah⁷
(C.c. Ādi 1.4)*

For this reason Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī uttered this *śloka*. Who knows God? Rāmacandra is God, but what did He teach us? Duty to our parents, duty to our relatives, duty to our subordinates and our superiors. He is *maryāda* Puruṣottama. *Maryāda* means duty. Lord Rāmacandra did not teach that sort of devotion—*anarpita-carim cirāt*. This is the highest duty which Mahāprabhu has given to us all, but Lord Rāma did not accept it. The sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya wanted to serve Him as His devoted wives, but He did not accept that. “No,” He said, “I cannot accept it. I have got only one wife. I cannot accept more than one.” This is *maryāda*. But Kṛṣṇa is *vyābhicārī*; He has bad character from the mundane perspective. In ordinary eyes He has done wrong and Rāmacandra's behaviour is correct. One wife should be accepted, not many. This is *maryāda*. But what has Kṛṣṇa done? He accepted innumerable ladies as His companions in His *līlā*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu also accepted two wives as a duty in human life, but He was always thinking in His mind about the innumerable *gopīs* and the behavior of Lord Kṛṣṇa. How Kṛṣṇa was charmed by them and enjoyed with them. For this reason Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya Mahāprabhu are one and the same *tattva*, absolute truth. But one thing is more precious in Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *līlā*—He is a teacher for the lowest *adhikārī* and also for highest. He has given one medicine which is applicable for the lowest and for the highest. One medicine will serve all the purposes. In the lowest stage, it is the best medicine, and in the highest stage it is also the best. The *baddha-jīvas* can chant Kṛṣṇa's name. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa... And Rādhārāṇī is always chanting His name, even if She has given up Kṛṣṇa and is in now a remote place, She is chanting His Names—not liking the person Kṛṣṇa, but liking His Names. *Nāma* is such a thing. *Nāma* is good for the lowest and good for the highest. But we are so unfortunate that we are not realizing the glories of the *nāma*. We are always suspecting everything. Only if we chant the Lord's Name will we be able to appreciate this.

⁶On the platform of conjugal love, the devotee offers her body in the service of the Lord. Thus, on this platform the transcendental qualities of all five *rasas* are present.

⁷May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love in the mood of the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Kṛṣṇa's Name and Kṛṣṇa Himself are one and the same; there is no difference.

*'eka' kṛṣṇa-nāme kare sarva-pāpa nāśa
premera kāraṇa bhakti kareṇa prakāśa⁸
C.c. Ādi 8.26*

In the bud of a flower, not all the qualities of the flower are seen, but in due course of time the flower will expose itself. Such is the position of the Name. Name can show all the qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is no difference between Lord Kṛṣṇa and His Name. But we are not so careful in that *nāma-bhajana*. It has been uttered in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ yasya
sarva-pāpa praṇāśanam
praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas
taṁ namāmi hariṁ param⁹
S.B. 12.13.23*

There is no greater *sādhana* than this *nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ*. So you should try to always chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's name in the proper way, with the proper intensity. There should be no misunderstanding—simply by uttering the Name we can attain the best qualities and the best stage. By this chanting we can attain every stage. The devotees in every level of devotion are chanting *harināma*; they never give it up. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī has not given it up. Even Mother Yaśodā always chants Kṛṣṇa's name. Everyone is chanting: Nārada Muni is chanting; Śivajī is chanting, "Rāma, Rāma, Rāma; Brahmā is chanting—all the great devotees are chanting. While traveling in South India, Caitanya Mahāprabhu is chanting these Names:

*Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! He!
Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! rakṣa mām!
Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! pāhi mām!
Rāma! Rāghava! Rāma! Rāghava! Rāma! Rāghava! rakṣa mām!
Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! pāhi mām!*

Nāma is such a thing that it is fulfilling our every demand. But we are so unlucky that we do not regard that which is suitable for us.

*etāvātālam agha-nirharaṇāya puṁsām
saṅkīrtanaṁ bhagavato guṇa-karma-nāmnām
vikruśya putram aghavān yad ajāmilo 'pi
nārāyaṇeti mriyamāṇa iyāya muktim¹⁰
(Ś.B. 6.3.24).*

Even if in the beginning one chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* with offenses, one will become free from such offenses by chanting again and again. One becomes free from all sinful reactions if one chants day and night, following the recommendation of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

We can get rid of our *aparādhas* by chanting the Name only. We do not have to chant anything else. We do not perform any sacrifices. Only the Name is sufficient. This is the teaching of Lord Caitanya: *nāma bhajana*. It is good for every devotee at every stage, in any position, however low, however high. So we are praying to Him that He may bless us, that we can chant the Name in that manner.

Any kind of devotee, whether he is a devotee of Lord Rāmacandra, Nārāyaṇa or any other *avatāra*, *Matsyā*, *Kurmā*, *Varāha*—everyone can chant this Name, this *mahāmantra*. Amongst all the *mantras* this is *māhan*, the greatest *mantra*. So you are so lucky that you can practise that *mantra*.

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā¹¹
(C.c. Ādi 7.21)*

⁸One pure name of Kṛṣṇa vanquishes all sinful activities. Thus pure devotional service, which is the cause of love of Godhead, becomes manifest.

⁹I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, Hari, the congregational chanting of whose holy names destroys all sinful reactions, and the offering of obeisances unto whom relieves all material suffering.

¹⁰Therefore it should be understood that one is easily relieved from all sinful reactions by chanting the holy name of the Lord and chanting of His qualities and activities. This is the

only process recommended for relief from sinful reactions. Even if one chants the holy name of the Lord with improper pronunciation, he will achieve relief from material bondage if he chants without offenses. Ajāmila, for example, was extremely sinful, but while dying he merely chanted the holy name, and although calling his son, he achieved complete liberation because he remembered the name of Nārāyaṇa.

¹¹For spiritual progress in this Age of Kali, there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative to

In this iron age, no other teaching is prescribed for us: no *karma*, *jñāna* or *yoga*.

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā nāmanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vāṅ-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām¹²
(Ś.B. 10.14.3)*

Mahāprabhu's teaching begins from this place. But there are teachings much higher. Mahāprabhu asked Rāmānanda Rāya, "Please tell me, I want to hear from you." Before that, He rejected everything.

*prabhu kahe, "eho bāhya, āge kaha āra"
rāya kahe—"jñāna-śūnyā bhakti—sādhyā-sāra"¹³*

By these paths we cannot attain that sort of devotion. What, then, is that education which is prescribed for us? What should be done along with chanting? Neither *karma* nor *jñāna*. They are strictly rejected.

Teachings should be given according to the qualification and the standard of the student. Confidential topics of the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa should not be cultivated in the lower standards. When he will reach the higher standard, then he will enter these topics. Do the *gopīs* have material bodies? No, they are all spiritual personalities. Their own bodies have been totally sacrificed, and they do not think that their body is their own. It is Kṛṣṇa's property. With this type of understanding they try to save their bodies. They keep their body in the position of their service, not in the position of their own enjoyment. Currently our body is kept only for our own satisfaction and the enjoyment of our senses. It cannot be considered the same as the *gopīs'* bodies. Their bodies are spiritual, but our bodies

are material. Matter cannot stay in Vaikuṅṭha or in Goloka Vṛndāvana. The jewels there are not found in this world; they are also transcendental. Everything there is transcendental. The *gopīs* are not material. When in bodily conception of life, if we think of ourselves as *gopīs* and perform just a little service, that is considered a blunder. This is not taught by our superior masters, nor by any Vaiṣṇavas. The highest possessors of devotion are none other than the *gopīs*.

Prema bhakti is the mature stage of *bhāva-bhakti*. *Tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ / athāsaktistat bhāvas tataḥ premābhhyudaṣcati*. After *bhāva*, *prema* will appear. If we try to get *prema* in this stage, we will get *kāma* instead. First give up the habit of *kāma*, the satisfaction of our own senses. Those who are thinking about the satisfaction of their own senses cannot achieve devotion to God. That is not devotion. If we are applying that *kāma*, and we are thinking that we are the greatest devotee—like the *gopīs*—it is a great blunder.

So let us proceed in the proper way. Do not be so greedy. It is a matter of higher qualification. In whatever stage one is, one must not give up practicing. This birth is the best birth. In this life or in any life, we should not give up. We should keep the company of the Vaiṣṇavas who are our protectors, who can save us from any evil. They are our only favorable masters. *Kṛṣṇa nāma* is only possible for him who can keep the company of pure devotees. You attain any

qualification by the company of that type of devotee with whom you associate. So we pray to Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu to keep us in close connection with that pure devotee who will guide us properly towards Him, so that we may attain that pure devotion. □

*But one thing is more precious
in Caitanya Mahāprabhu's līlā—
He is a teacher for the lowest adhikārī
and also for highest.
He has given one medicine
which is applicable for the lowest
and for the highest...
The baddha-jīvas can chant Kṛṣṇa's name.
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa...
And Rādhārāṇī is always
chanting His name,
even if She had given up Kṛṣṇa
and is in now a remote place,
She is chanting His Names—
not liking the person Kṛṣṇa
but liking His Names.*

the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.

¹²Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, completely discard the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.

¹³Pure devotional service without any touch of speculative knowledge is the essence of perfection.

A portrait of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, an elderly man with a shaved head and a white tilak on his forehead. He is wearing a brown dhoti and a garland of colorful flowers (yellow, pink, and white). His eyes are closed, and he has a serene expression.

Glorification of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

on his *Tirobhāva Tithi* Varsānā, 14.11.96

*D*o you understand what is *rūpānuga*? Those who are serving Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with *rāga*, following in the footsteps of *rāgātmikā bhaktas* as described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, are *rāgānuga bhaktas*. Still, it may be that they are not *rūpānuga*. Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī was *rāgānugā*, but he was not *rūpānuga*. Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura was also *rāgānuga*, but not *rūpānuga*. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda were also not *rūpānuga*. They were the gurus of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. They are Lalitā and Viśākhā themselves. They are on a higher level, and therefore they do not fall within the category

of *rūpānuga*. Only those who are actually *rūpānugā*, and who are adopting the mood and following the way in which Rūpa Mañjarī serves Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and who in their *sādhana* are in the *anugāṭhā* of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, can be called *rūpānuga*. Someone may be following *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, but in the wake of Subala, Śrīdāmā, and all other *sakhās*, wanting to serve Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the cowherd boys. Such *sādhakas* will be *rāgānugā*, but not *rūpānuga*.

Can you say whether Lalitā, Viśākhā or Yaśodā are *rāgānugā*? Those who are *siddha* and serving Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana are all *rāgātmikā*.

*“He used to love all,
whether they were
qualified or not.
At the first meeting,
everyone became his.
This is the speciality
of any qualified guru.”*



Rāgānugā refers to those *sādhakas* following Kṛṣṇa's *rāgātmikā* associates according to *rāga-mārga*.

If anyone is desiring, "How can I serve Kṛṣṇa like Yaśodā Maiyā or Nanda Bābā?"—what will he be called? *Rāgānugā*, but not *rūpānuga*. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has described all these points in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. *Sādhakas* in the wake of Yaśodā, Nanda, Lalitā and Viśākhā will not be called *rūpānuga*. *Rūpānuga-bhaktas* follow exclusively the way in which Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, or Rūpa Mañjarī, serves both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and always being inclined more towards Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The *rūpānuga sādha* will feel the happiness of Rādhikā,

and suffer in Her unhappiness. Only such devotees may be called *rūpānuga*.

What to speak of *rāgānugā*, Śrīla Svāmī Maharāja has come especially to give this *rūpānuga-bhakti*. He could not give it at that time, however, because his disciples were not on a level to understand. At the present time, I am doing so much hard labor to bring you to a higher stage so that you can understand, but still only very few are able to comprehend something. Very few. About twenty-five years ago, when Śrīla Svāmī Maharāja went to America to preach all these things, he wanted to give this *rāgānugā-bhakti*, but no one was

qualified. It is not the real fact that he only came to preach *vaidhī-bhakti*. This is not true, because all the disciplic *ācāryas* of our Gauḍīya mission were *rūpānuga*. In the line of Nimbarkācārya, the devotees are *rāgānugā*, but of Dvārakā, that is, worshipping Satyabhāmā and Rukmiṇī. They are not like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Only the *ācāryas* coming in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are *rūpānuga*. So how can Svāmī Mahārāja only be coming to preach *vaidhī-bhakti*? I met him in 1946 and had so many dealings with him over the years. I was personally acquainted with him. I know that he did not come only to give *vaidhī-bhakti*; he came to preach *rāga-mārga*.

One speciality I saw in him was that he was very simple and always smiling. Before him, Śrīla Bhakti Pradīpa Tirtha Mahārāja had gone to Western countries, to England. He was a very great philosopher, and he knew all *bhakti siddhānta*. He went to the upper-class society, but Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja would mix with young boys and hippies. I have seen how Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja used to deal with them. He was very funny, and he used to encourage the young boys and girls so greatly. He had no false ego, none at all. He was always smiling and he always spoke in simple language.

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was coming to Vṛndāvana, chanting “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa” and “Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa/ Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa He,” Gaṅgā-Yamunā was flowing from His eyes. He was simply weeping, “Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa.” Tigers, lions, bears and all the other animals came, and they began to chant “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” Where was their philosophy? They did this without knowledge of philosophy. Similarly, Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja went to the West and began to chant “*śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī advaita gadadhāra śrīvāsādi gaura bhakta vṛnda*.” At first he did not try to explain so many difficult philosophical conceptions. He gave the very simple instruction: Chant Kṛṣṇa’s name. From here he began. He used to love all, whether they were qualified or not. At the first meeting, everyone became his. This is the speciality of any qualified guru. We also knew that “My Gurudeva loves me more than anyone.” Everyone thinks like this. I

think that all his disciples used to feel this closeness with him. He used to joke and be merry with everyone, including his disciples. He never thought, “He is my disciple.” Even the young boys used to automatically love him. When I went to the Western countries, I followed in his footsteps. I never discussed any big, big *Vedānta* philosophy. I only told *hari-kathā*, and all became charmed. I think that the deepest philosophy is given in that way. Love is the deepest, most supreme philosophy.

*nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema ‘sādhyā’ kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya
(C.c. Madhya 22.108)*

Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, this love naturally awakens.

Everything is there in our soul, but it is covered by *māyā*. This is the *siddha-prema*. It will not come

by any effort or any *sādhana*. What is there by constitution will come out naturally. No new thing will come. Your name is already fixed there, as well as all your qualities and your form. The *svarūpa* cannot be changed by *saṅga* or by any other means. You will take a form according to what is already in your *ātmā*. It becomes manifest only by *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and *smarana*. It is a fact that if anyone is in *mādhurya-rasa*, he will have very little or no taste at all for *dāsyā* and *sakhya*. Our *svarūpa* will be

***“Some say that
Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja
is only in sakhya-rasa,
and that he therefore
cannot give madhura.
But this is not the fact.
He came only for spreading
the same mission
as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.”***

revealed automatically when our *anarthas* disappear. It will come gradually and automatically.

Some say that Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja is only in *sakhya-rasa*, and that he therefore cannot give *madhura*. But this is not the fact. He only came to spread the same mission as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. He has not come only to give *vaidhī-bhakti*, although at our stage this is the process that we will have to perform. *Vaidhī-bhakti* itself will manage everything. *Bhakti* is not only a quality. It is not *nirviśeṣa*. *Bhakti* is a person, and Kṛṣṇa is controlled by that *prema-bhakti*. Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhikā are both controlled by *bhakti*. *Bhakti* alone can make Kṛṣṇa dance; she can make Rādhā dance, and she can make all the gopīs dance. *Bhakti* herself dances, and she causes all to dance with her.

Prayer to Gaurakiśora in Navadvīpa

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
from *Kalyāṇa Kalpa-taru*

*hā hā mora gaurakiśora
kabe doyā kori', śrī godruma-bane,
dekhā dibe mana-cora*

Oh, my Gaurakiśora (golden youth),
when will You bestow mercy upon me and
reveal to me Your captivating form within the
forest of Godruma?

*ānanda-sukhada, kuñjer bhitorē,
gadādhare bāme kori'
kāñcaṇa-baraṇa, cāncara cikura,
naṭana suveśa dhori'*

When will You appear before me in the
ānanda-sukhada kuñjas as an exquisitely
dressed dancer with a golden complexion and
flowing locks, with Gadādhara Paṇḍita at
Your left?

*dekhite dekhite, śrī rādhā-mādhava,
rūpete koribe ālā
sakhī-gaṇa-saṅge, koribe naṭana,
galete mohana-mālā*

Then You will suddenly appear in the scene as
Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and dance with your *sakhīs*,
wearing an enchanting garland around Your neck.

*anaṅga-mañjarī, sadoy hoiyā,
e dāsī-karete dhori'
duhe nivedibe, duñhara mādhurī,
heribo nayana bhari'*

Oh when, being very compassionate, will
Anaṅga Mañjarī take this maidservant's hand and
offer me at the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava?
Thus, I will behold Their sweetness to my eyes' full
satisfaction.

DĀMODARA VRATA

a lecture given by

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta

Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

*on the eve of month-long Kārttika vrata
at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā
Oct. 26th, 1996*

Dāmodara vrata begins tomorrow. Dāmodara vrata, Urjjā vrata, Kārttika sevā, and niyama-sevā vrata are all the same. We are going to follow this vrata from tomorrow. It commences from either the Ekādaśī after Vijaya Daśamī, or from the Dvadaśī; or from the Purṇimā; and accordingly it is completed on the last Ekādaśī of Cāturmāsya, that is, Utthāna Ekādaśī, or Dvadaśī, or Purnimā. It will be totally completed on Purṇimā. Those who commenced on Ekādaśī, or Dvadaśī, should also do this vrata until Purṇimā. The last five days are called Bhiṣma Pañcaka.

When I joined Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, our holy master *nityā-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja* was performing this Kārttika-vrata in any one of the sacred places like Vṛndāvana, Navadvīpa, Purī, Kurukṣetra, and even Dvārakā, Ayodhyā, Naimiṣāraṇya, and Haridvara.

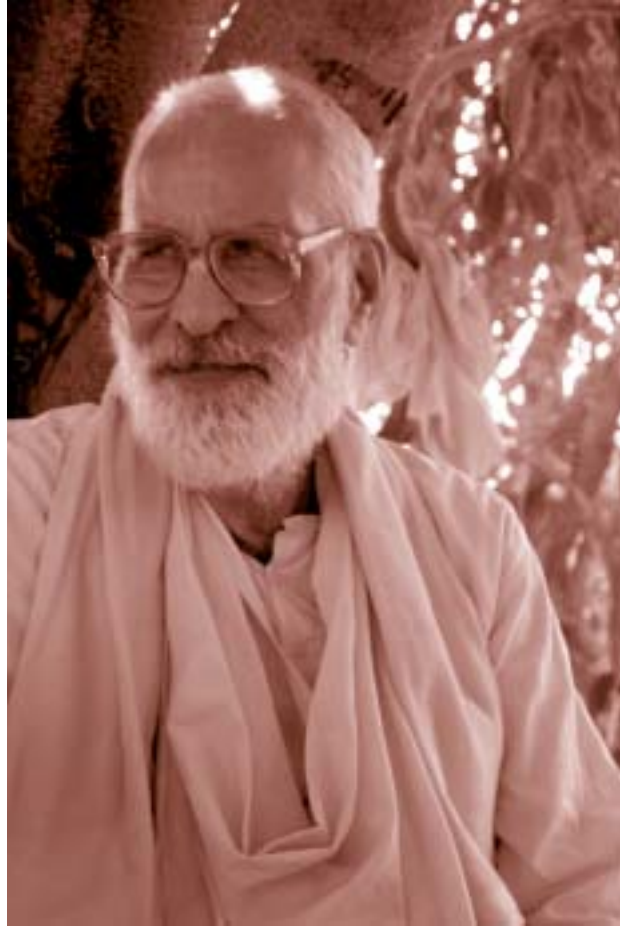
There are some rules and regulations concerning this Dāmodara vrata given in *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and other authentic Vedic literatures. Every day, in the morning or evening, we should sing *Dāmodarāṣṭaka*. For the whole month we should be like *brahmacāris*, only eating very simple *mahā-prasadam*. There are also some rules and regulations

from honoring *mahā-prasadam*. We should not take those things which are to be avoided for this month. For example, we should not take mustard oil, bottle gourd (*laukī*), or *urad dāl*. We should not tell lies; we should try to speak the truth. We should try not to criticize anyone. Always chant *harināma*, in a regular way with regular counting.

Our Gurudeva used to say that Cāturmāsya vrata is not given in the sixty-four limbs of *bhakti* but, Urjjā vrata has been given. Urjjā vrata is part of Cāturmāsya vrata. We should totally follow the four months of Cāturmāsya vrata, and we should especially try to follow this Dāmodara vrata very carefully. There are so many persons who do not follow Cāturmāsya vrata, and, therefore, they are actually not following Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Wherever Caitanya Mahāprabhu went, He followed Cāturmāsya vrata. We see that, when He went to Ranganātha temple in South India, for example, He followed Cāturmāsya vrata there.

In this month of Kārttika, Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana. It was also in this month that Yaśodā tied up Kṛṣṇa. She is seen taking a stick in her hand, warning Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is weeping, although He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, when He saw that Yaśodā Maiyā was coming to beat Him with

*Kṛṣṇa somehow escaped
from His mother.
He ran away
on the very broad road,
and she pursued Him.
Brahmā, Śaṅkara,
and all the lords of lords
cannot catch Kṛṣṇa
even by their pure minds.
And great demons
like Jarāsandha
certainly cannot catch Him.
But Yaśodā Maiyā is a gopī,
and the mother of Kṛṣṇa.
She wanted
to catch hold of Him,
and since she was able
to run faster than Kṛṣṇa,
she caught Him.*



a stick, He told her, “I will not do it again, Mother. Forgive me.” He began to weep and He was not pretending. He really began to weep. He had forgotten His supremacy.

Yaśodā Maiyā is an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa, His eternal mother, and she is beyond the influence of the illusory *māyā*. Due to the influence of Yogamāyā, however, she has also forgotten that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By taking Kṛṣṇa’s name inattentively or carelessly, with no regard or honor, while falling down on the earth—in any way— if one takes the name you will go out of *māyā*. And that same Kṛṣṇa creates millions and millions of worlds. Yet, thinking Kṛṣṇa her own son, she forgets that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and she is ready to punish Him.

Kṛṣṇa somehow escaped from His mother. He ran away on the very broad road, and she pursued Him. Brahmā, Śaṅkara, and all the lords of lords, cannot catch Kṛṣṇa even by their pure minds. And great demons like Jarāsandha certainly cannot catch Him. But Yaśodā Maiyā is a *gopī* and the mother of Kṛṣṇa. She wanted to catch hold of Him, and since she was able to run faster than Kṛṣṇa, she caught Him.

What is the meaning? Kṛṣṇa’s associates love

Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa also loves them. If anyone loves Kṛṣṇa more than He loves him, then Kṛṣṇa will be caught. Otherwise not. So Yaśodā Maiyā was able to run faster than Kṛṣṇa, and thus she caught hold of Him. Kṛṣṇa began to weep, “Mother, spare Me, spare Me. I will not make this mistake again.” This pastime began when Yaśodā Mā was churning yogurt, Kṛṣṇa had been sleeping and woke up crying, “Where is Mother? Where is Mother?” She took Kṛṣṇa in her lap and began to give him her breast milk. Then, seeing that the milk on the stove was about to boil over onto the fire, Yaśodā put Kṛṣṇa down and jumped up to save the milk. Kṛṣṇa became angry, and He broke the pot of yogurt. After this, Yaśodā began to bind Him. This pastime took place in this month.

In this month Gopāṣṭamī will also come. Kṛṣṇa will be in *paugaṇḍa* age, the age of five, and from Nandagāon He begins *gocāraṇa*, cow-herding. At first He took the calves for grazing. When He became older, He took the cows.

The most important pastime of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, *rāsa-līlā*, began in this month. In fact, tomorrow is Śārādiya purṇimā, the first day of Kārttika. Of all the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, this *sārādiya rāsa* is the most special — Kṛṣṇa began to play on

The most important pastime of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs, rāsa-līlā, began in this month. In fact, tomorrow is Śārādīya-purnimā, the first day of Kārttika. Of all the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, this śārādīya-rāsa is the most special.

His flute on this day, purnimā, at the beginning of the night, and thus rāsa was performed. When Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the rāsa-maṇḍala, the gopīs were weeping and searching for Him. "Where is Kṛṣṇa? Where is Kṛṣṇa?" In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it has been explained that the gopīs' mood of separation at this time was such that they became one with Kṛṣṇa in anubhāva līlā. They began to ask the trees where Kṛṣṇa was. They cried, "Where

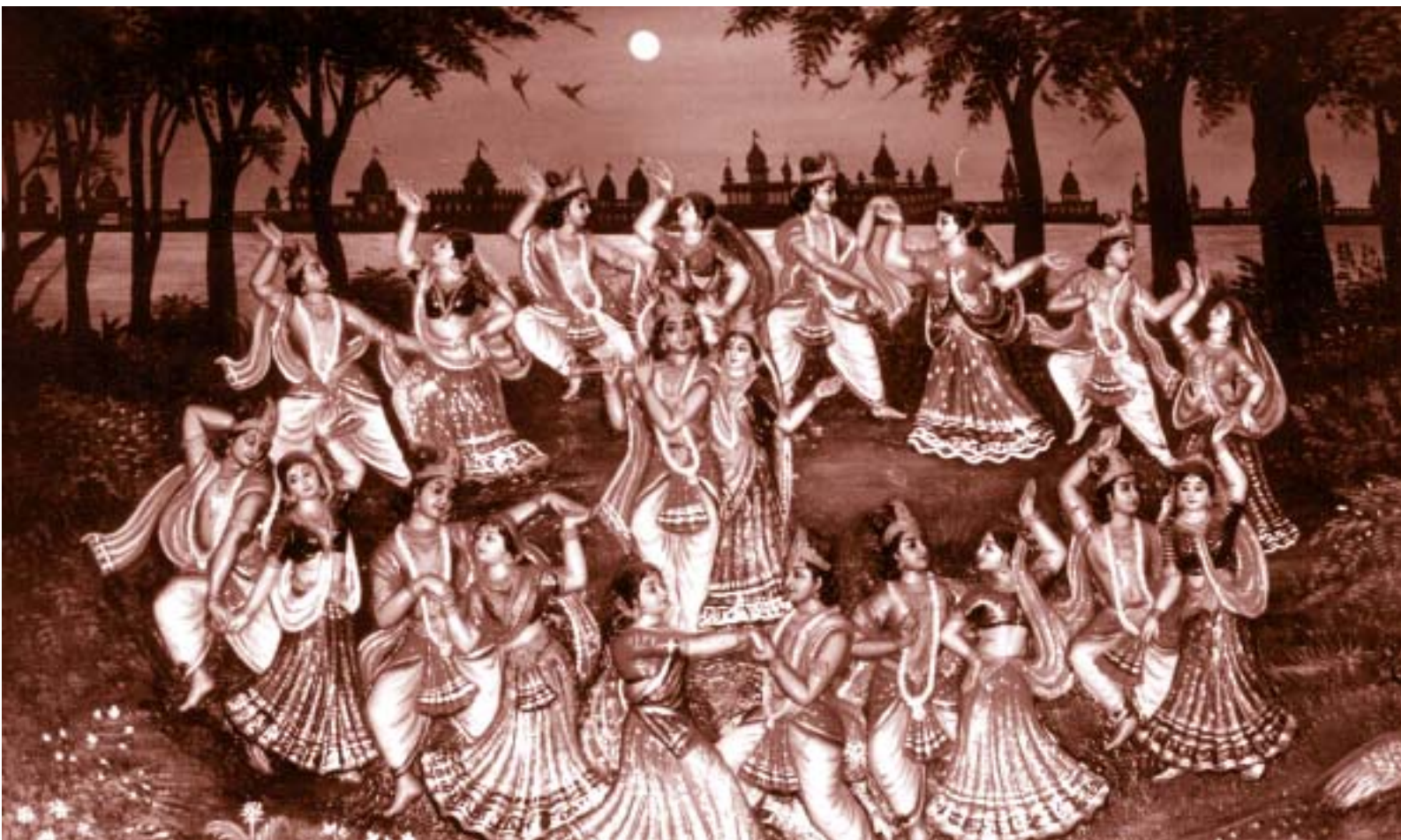
of one night of Brahmā, and at the same time it appeared within one of our nights.

It was also in this very month that Uddhava went to Nandagāon, Vraja, and he tried to console the gopas, gopīs, Nanda Bābā and all other Vraja-vāsīs. And at last, in this month, Kaṁsa sent Akrūra to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from Nandagāon to Mathurā. Kṛṣṇa left Nandagāon and Vraja, came to Mathurā, and killed Kaṁsa nearby on Kaṁsa-tila. In this way, all the prominent pastimes of Kṛṣṇa were performed in this month.

This month is called Dāmodara māsa (month), or Urjā māsa, and there is a reason for this. Kṛṣṇa was controlled by Rādhikā in this month, and He became Dāmodara-Kṛṣṇa. There are two Dāmodaras—Yaśodā-Dāmodara and Rādhā-Dāmodara—and both these pastimes took place in this prominent month.

In our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya, although we worship Yaśodā-Dāmodara, Rādhā-Dāmodara is prominent. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has explained this in a very hidden way. In fact, in all their tikās of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, our ācāryas have also explained this in a hidden way. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda and our Guru Mahārāja have warned us not to tell all these hidden facts openly before the

is Kṛṣṇa? Do you know, O Tulasī tree, where Kṛṣṇa is?" This special līlā was performed for the duration



public. It is the heart and soul of advanced devotees, and is not meant for the general mass. That is why Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has not spoken the name of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Attaining the love of Rādhā-Dāmodara is the only aim and object of our *sādhana-bhajana* and everything that we do.

I want to tell you the speciality of the name Dāmodara. This month is called Kārttika. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the *iṣṭa-devī*, the predominating or worshipful Deity of this month. As you know, Puruṣottama Kṛṣṇa is the special Deity of Puruṣottama *māsa*. Similarly, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the presiding Deity of this month, and therefore it is called the month of Dāmodara. Rādhā-Dāmodara *līlā* and Yaśodā-Dāmodara *līlā* were both performed in this month, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa became controlled by their hearts. Even Nārada, Uddhava, Brahmā and Śaṅkara cannot control Kṛṣṇa. He performed these *līlās* in order to show them that He may be controlled by Yaśodā Māiyā, the Vraja-vāsīs and the *gopīs*.

*itīdykṛtī svā-līlābhīr ānanda-kuṇḍe
svā-ghoṣaṁ nimajjantam ākhyāpayantam
tadīyeśīts-jñēsu bhaktair jītatvaṁ
punaḥ prematas taṁ śatāvṛtti vande
(Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam-3)*

Kṛṣṇa wanted to show that “I cannot be controlled by Hanumān, Śaṅkara, Prahlāda Mahārāja, or even by Satyabhāmā and Rukmiṇī, or even by Uddhava. I can only be controlled by the Vraja-bhaktas, like Śrīdāma, Subāla, and Madhumaṅgala, like Yaśodā Māiyā and Nanda Bābā, like all the *gopīs*, and especially like the most prominent *gopī*.”

In this way our Guru Mahārāja used to say that we should honor the entire Cāturmāsya *vrata* and very carefully observe this Dāmodara month. This is called Urjā *vrata*. What is the meaning of Urjā? Urjā means power, energy, fire, or electricity. In Sanskrit, these are all called *urjā*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the *iṣṭa-devī* of all kinds of *urjā*. Even the power of Kṛṣṇa is Rādhikā. Whatever we see in this world or in the spiritual world—in Vaikuṅṭha, or in Goloka Vṛndāvana—all are manifestations of the *śakti* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. She is *svārūpa-śakti*. Kṛṣṇa can only desire. If He desires anything, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, in so many forms, can fulfill His desire at once. If Kṛṣṇa wants to taste anything, even in thousands of ways, She manifests accordingly and satisfies Him. *Satyam paraṁ dhīmahī*. The *parama satyam* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. *Dhīmahī*—we meditate upon Her. She is the *iṣṭa-devī* of *urjā* and, therefore, this month is especially called Urjā *vrata*.



Śrīmatī Rādhikā
The *iṣṭa-devī* of all kinds of Urjā

This month is also called Kārttika *vrata niyama-sevā*. In order to attain all these realizations in the advanced stage, we will have to start from the very beginning. Everyone should therefore try to adopt the rules and regulations established by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who has written them down in *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written them in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā*. Try to follow all these practices in the beginning stages, and always be in the good association of Vaiṣṇavas. Our only aim is to have the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or Rādhā-Dāmodara, Rādhā-Gopinātha, Rādhā-Madana-mohana, Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. They should be the object of our life—of our whole *sādhana* and *bhajana*.

We should be *anyābhilāṣitā śunyam*; there should be no *anyābhilāṣa*. No other desires should come in our heart except for the service of the Divine Couple. Especially in this one month, try to be in the association of realized Vaiṣṇavas

We are very fortunate that in this month we have the association of *paraṁ puḥyapād* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja. He will guide us in our month-long *parikramā*. Try to follow him. Externally he looks very strict, but you will see that his heart is so soft. I am so



Gahavarvana Parikramā, Varṣāṇā

fortunate that he is my elder god-brother. I treat him as my *śikṣā-guru*, just as I do *param puṅjyapāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja*. He has given me so much mercy. From the beginning he kept me with him and gave me so much *śikṣā*.

Sometimes he also rebuked me, and I accepted him as my Gurudeva.

Try to follow all the rules and regulations. During this month, daily try to offer *pradīpa* (lamp) to *Śrī Mūrti* and *Tulasī-devī*. Try to do

parikramā of *Tulasī-devī* daily. If *Yamunā* is near by, you can go to offer her *praṇāma* and prayers. If your health permits, you can take bath, otherwise simply do *ācamana*. Don't touch any green leaves of trees, and don't step on ants and other insects. Do not kill anything and don't criticize anyone, otherwise your *parikramā* will be ruined. Always chant *harināma* and give honor to *Vaiṣṇavas*. Read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and all other such books. In this way, try to complete your *vrata*.

We are praying to our Gurudeva, *nitya līlā praviṣṭha om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara śata Śrī Śrīmad*



Tulasī-devī

Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, our whole disciplic succession, and also to *Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodarajī*, that we can complete this *Rādhā-Dāmodara* month with all its rules and regulations. Tomorrow we will all go to *Yamunā* for *saṅkalpa*, to take a vow. We will pray, “O *Yamunā-devī*, you are the *sakhī* of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Śrīmatī Rādhikā* and you are especially serving *Rādhā-Dāmodara*. Be pleased with us so that we can successfully complete this *vrata*. *Govardhana*, *Rādhā-kuṇḍa*, *Śyāma-kuṇḍa*, and all may be merciful to us, so that our ambition to serve *Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara* may be fulfilled.” □

This month is also called Kārttika vrata niyama-sevā. In order to attain all these realizations in the advanced stage, we will have to start from the very beginning. Everyone should, therefore, try to adopt the rules and regulations established by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who has written them down in Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written them in Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī in Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā.

Śrī Navadvīpa Maṇḍala Parikramā 2000

Sannyāsa initiations

The spiritually enlivening seven-day Śrī Navadvīpa Maṇḍala Parikramā, organized by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti from its headquarters Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, was successfully completed on 20th March 2000. With the participation of about 15,000 devotees from around the world, most of whom came from Bengal, this *parikramā* is the largest of any *sampradāya* in India.

On the day of Gaura-pūrṇimā, eleven *sannyāsa* initiations and two *bābāji veśa* were given. This was the largest number of *sannyāsa* initiations conferred at one time in the history of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. The Samiti is well known for its strict standards for *sannyāsa*. The prospective candidates are examined meticulously for years to ensure their strong and pure character, *guru-niṣṭhā*, service attitude and knowledge of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*.

The previous and present names of the devotees who received initiations are as follows (from left to right):

- 1) Śrīmān Subala Sakhā Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vana Mahārāja
- 2) Śrīmān Prema Prayojana Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Araṇya Mahārāja
- 3) Śrīmān Gopīkānta Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Janārdana Mahārāja
- 4) Śrīmān Kṛṣṇa Kṛpā Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Madhusūdana Mahārāja



New *sannyāsa* initiates with Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

- 5) Śrīmān Kamalāpati Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Parivrājaka Mahārāja
- 6) Śrīmān Navina Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja
- 7) Śrīmān Gaurāṅga Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Sādhu Mahārāja
- 8) Śrīmān Raghunandana Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Hṛṣīkeśa Mahārāja
- 9) Śrīmān Sajjana Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Sāgar Mahārāja
- 10) Śrīmān Jagadīśa Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Bhāratī Mahārāja
- 11) Śrīmān Śubhānanda Brahmācārī—Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Tirtha Mahārāja

Bābāji veśa:

- 1) Śrīmān Aprameya Prabhu—Śrīpāda Vṛndāvana Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja
- 2) Śrīmān Vālmiki Prabhu—Śrīpāda Aprākṛta dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja □

WITH ŚRĪLA GURUDEVA IN KṚṢṆA'S SQUARE, MOSCOW

Preaching in Russia



On July 28th, approximately twenty-nine years after the historic visit of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja to Russia in the summer of 1971, as a result of which tens of thousands of Russians became devotees of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja blessed that largest country in the world by his presence. About 100 devotees met him at the airport, and about 200 more were waiting for him at a family camp-site near Moscow. The campsite would now be used for Śrīla Mahārāja's nine-day residence and for hosting all the devotees from different cities in Russia, as well as from America, India, Finland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, England, etc.

Śrīla Mahārāja met with hundreds of devotees who had joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement years earlier, some over twenty years earlier, with a yearning to meet and serve Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja, but who had joined ISKCON after his disappearance, and who now felt great hope of this becoming a reality. Some were the original Russian devotees from the mid-eighties who had spent years in the communist government's prisons due to their connection with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and who had later opened temples, preached with vigor all over the country, and helped print and distribute millions of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's translations of Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, etc. They now wept in happiness to see his dearest friend and śikṣā-disciple for the first time.

In his classes Śrīla Mahārāja concentrated on two main subjects: The first was *guru-tattva*, and the second was the gradual development of *bhakti*-from 'I am not this body', to the glory of the holy name,

to Kṛṣṇa's *bala-līlā*, and finally to *Rādhā-dasyam*.

Compassionate to all the devotees who had been forlorn for so many years, Śrīla Mahārāja gave a very powerful class on *guru-tattva*, real and apparent. He explained that the real guru is the abode of *bhakti*, and he has all kinds of serving moods towards Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Conjugal and Mahāprabhu. He can give *sādhana bhakti*, a high class of *rati*, *prema-bhakti* in Goloka Vṛndāvana, and the love and affection of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. If he himself is part of the imagined system of *ritvik* gurus, or he is falling down, then he is actually not guru. A real guru is an *uttama mahā-bhāgavata*, like Nārada Gosvāmī and Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Such a guru can hold up his hand to bless you: "*Bhakti* should come at once." And *bhakti* will come.

All the devotees were charmed by Śrīla Mahārāja's presentations, and his very interesting approach in describing the glories of the holy name was no exception. In his class on August 2nd, he told his audience: "If you are abusing anyone, criticizing anyone, or quarreling with anyone, these sounds will evaporate in the air and it go throughout the whole universe. If you are speaking any nonsense it will not go in vain. It will go throughout the whole world by air. If you take a stone and throw it into a pond, some waves will be created, and they will touch all parts of the pond. This universe is like that pond, and air is everywhere in the universe. When one chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, this will evaporate and create so many waves of air, and those waves will touch everywhere, up to the ends of the world, moving here and there and purifying the entire universe from all these pollutions."



Śrīla Gurudeva
with devotees
in front of
St. Basil's
Cathedral,
Moscow.

On August 3rd, an authentic Vedic fire sacrifice was held for all the 150 new *hari-nāma* and *dīkṣā* initiates. It was presided over by Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihāriju and conducted by Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja and Śrīpāda Araṇya Mahārāja, according to the system prescribed by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī in his *Sat-kriyā sāra-dīpikā*. On August 4th, the last day of his visit, the devotees took Śrīla Mahārāja to downtown Moscow's Red Square, the heart of the former Soviet Union, to take group photos. On this occasion everyone remembered Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja in his own historic photo at St. Basil's Cathedral in Red Square. Śrīla Mahārāja commented several times that he and the devotees were now together only by the mercy of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja.

There are many links between the Russian language and Sanskrit, and between Russian culture and the Vedic culture. The Russian name for Red Square is *Krasnaya Ploschad*. The word '*Krasnaya*,' which is translated as 'red' also means 'beautiful' and 'splendid' and is derived from the Sanskrit word *Kṛṣṇa*. '*Plosched*' means square. Hence, Red Square is really *Kṛṣṇa's* Square

Usually, while walking, Śrīla Mahārāja's hand would be resting on the shoulder of Śrīpāda Madhava Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Vrajanātha prabhu, or any senior devotee. But here, daily, as he elegantly walked through the crowd of devotees after stepping off his *vyāsāsana*, his arms would be slightly stretched out, and, one after another, he would caress and embrace the heads and shoulders of the male devotees. And they would also rush to him, embracing him and/or putting their heads on his chest or in his arms. Now, that night in the auditorium, as he proceeded up the aisle after class and *kīrtana*, everyone rushed to the aisles and he was again embracing practically one and all. As for the ladies, he was carrying a long stemmed rose, and he tapped several of them on the head with that rose. The whole scene was marvelous.

Śrīla Mahārāja's successful tour of Russia was materialised by seeing the eagerness of the Russian devotees, who, for the last two years, were constantly nourished by the sweet *hari-kathā* of Śrīla Mahārāja, through Ananta Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, Urukrama Prabhu and by Jñānadāsa Prabhu. □

ŚRĪLA GURUDEVA IN JAIPUR

A Historic Visit to the City of Victory

Preaching Report, September 15th – 22nd, 2000

Thirty-eight years after the historic visit of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja in 1962, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja visited Jaipur for 7 days on the request of prominent citizens and the local Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

HISTORY OF JAIPUR AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR GAUḌĪYA VAIṢṆAVAS

In 1727 King Jai Singh II built a new capital city surrounded by fortified mountains specifically for Śrī Govindadevajī and established Him in the heart of the city. At the time of the Muslim rule, the worship of the prominent Deities of Vṛndāvana, which had been established by the Six Gosvāmīs, was in danger. The Muslims even planned to break the *samādhi mandiras* and Deities. However, the Vaiṣṇavas who were in charge of the Deity worship called the pious and devoted King Jai Singh II for help. In this way, six of the prominent Deities were taken to Rājasthāna via Kāmyavāna in the safe custody of the King's army. The King built a huge palace for Lord Govindadevajī with big gardens, fountains, trees, fragrant flowers and peacocks in accordance with the spiritual duty of religious Kings, like Yudhiṣṭira Mahārāja and Ambariśa Mahārāja.

He created another Vṛndāvana within the atmosphere of Jaipur for the pleasure of Śrī Govindadevajī.

Perhaps there was another hidden reason why Śrī Govindadevajī came to Jaipur—He wanted to accept the service of the King and the devoted citizens. Therefore, He made His plans to come here. The devotion of the citizens can be witnessed all year round. At 4:30 am, at the time of *maṅgala arotika*, hundreds of people rush to have the first *darśana* of the Lord. The entire temple hall remains packed during the *arotika* attended by about 2,000 people daily.

Jaipur is significant for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas because of the presence of the Deities of our Gosvāmīs, such as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindadevajī, Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnāthajī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodarajī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's Govardhana-śīla, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja

Gosvāmī's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-
Vṛndāvana-candra,
Śrīla Lokanātha
Gosvāmī's Śrī Śrī
Rādhā-Vinoda
and Śrīla Jayadeva
Gosvāmī's Śrī Śrī
Rādhā-Mādhava.

Furthermore, it was
at Galtā in Jaipur that
Śrīla Baladeva Vidyā-
bhuṣana wrote Śrī
Govinda Bhāṣya on
Vedānta-Sutra to es-
tablish the authen-
ticity of the line of
thought of our Brahmā-
Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya
and its connection with the
Madhva Sampradāya. With his
irrefutable logic and scriptural
evidences, he silenced the opponents
who were questioning the position of
Śrīmatī Rādhikā as the eternal consort of
Kṛṣṇa. In this way, Śrīla Baladeva
Vidyābhuṣana performed a remarkable service for
the Brahmā-Madhva Gauḍīya Sampradāya in
Jaipur.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ŚRĪLA BHAKTIVEDĀNTA NĀRĀYAṆA MAHĀRĀJA'S VISIT TO JAIPUR

- The devotees and prominent citizens warmly and heartily welcomed Śrīla Mahārāja at the railway station as if Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī had inspired them to receive Their intimate devotee.
- For 6 days, from 9 to 11.30 am, Śrīla Mahārāja gave a lecture at the *nāṭya-mandira* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī and in the evening from 6 to 7 pm at the temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnāthajī.
- At the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī Mandira, the *pujāris* would honour Śrīla Mahārāja and Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja by bringing them inside the barricades of the temple at the time of *arotika*.
- The sweet *hari-kathā* of Śrīla Mahārāja captivated and inspired the local people, many of whom took initiation afterwards.
- As the news spread by word of mouth, every day more and more people came to hear Śrīla Mahārāja's enchanting *hari-kathā*.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindadevajī



□ Although the city buzzes with devotional moods for the Lord, the people are unaware of the exalted conceptions of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. In this line, Śrīla Mahārāja discussed the differences between *śuddhā* (pure) and *aśuddha* (mixed) *bhakti*, *āropa-siddhā bhakti*, *saṅga-siddhā bhakti* and *svārūpa-siddhā bhakti*; the qualities of the bonafide speaker and hearer; the different stages of *bhakti*, from *śraddhā* to *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti*, *bhāva* and up to *prema* and *mahābhāva*.

Śrīla Mahārāja spoke from Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, and explained the progressive gradations of *bhakti* which cause Kṛṣṇa to manifest in various *svarūpas* corresponding to the different levels of *bhakti* practised by His devotees.

He spoke about the distinctions between a *jṣānī bhakta* (Prahāda Mahārāja), *śuddha bhakta* (Ambarīśa Mahārāja), *premī bhakta* (Hanumān), *premāpara bhakta* (Paṇḍavas) and *premātura bhakta* (Uddhava).

Finally, Śrīla Mahārāja gave an overwhelming description of the Vrajabāsīs' mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa, which they deeply experienced after He left for Mathurā. Śrīla Mahārāja particularly decried the condition of Mother Yaśodā and the *gopīs*. He also recounted how Uddhava was astonished witnessing the moods of the Vrajabāsīs.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ŚRĪLA MAHĀRĀJA’S LECTURES AT ŚRĪ ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ-GOPĪNĀTHA MANDIRA:

“If we want to know Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana Mohanajī, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindadevajī and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnāthajī, then we have to understand the conception of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If Mahāprabhu and His associates had not come to this world, it would be very difficult to understand these three *vigrahas*. Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself. In *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, His many desires remained unfulfilled. Thus, He came with the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to taste *unnatojjvala-rasa*.

“What is *unnatojjvala-rasa*? We can only understand by making a comparative study of the moods of Śrīmatī Sīta-devī, the queens of Dvārakā and the *gopīs*, especially Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The love of the *gopīs* is causeless, unlike that of Sīta-devī and the queens of Dvārakā.

Specifically, Kṛṣṇa wanted to taste the *praṇaya* of Rādhārāṇī. One cannot understand what is *praṇaya* without having an exalted *guru* like Śrīla Śukādeva Gosvāmī. An ordinary *guru* cannot specify this.

“We have to know the different levels of *prema*, namely *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, *modan*, *mohan*, and *mādan* in order to understand the internal causes for Mahāprabhu’s appearance.

“Kṛṣṇa was seen by many people like Kaṁsa, Cārūna and Muṣṭika, the *sakhās*, Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā, and the *gopīs*. Yet all of them saw Him

differently. Unless one cultivates the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, one cannot completely taste Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *mādhurya*, His sweet beauty.

“Therefore, Kṛṣṇa came as Mahāprabhu with the moods of Śrī Rādhikā so that He could taste His own *mādhurya* to the highest extent. Simultaneously, He wanted to give this world the *śrī*, the beauty of these moods, *maṣjarī bhāva*. This type of *prema* can be attained only by the *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, given to us by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through our *guru-paramaparā*.”

Śrīla Mahārāja was accompanied by his entourage of about 30 *brahmacārīs* from Mathurā and Vṛndāvana and many *grhastha* families from Delhi. *Harināma-saṅkīrtana* and book distribution was organized under the guidance of Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja. He also took the devotees to Galtā and the place of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Kanak Vṛndāvana.

On the last day of the program at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindadevajī Mandira, the organizing committee members expressed their gratitude to Śrīla Mahārāja. They thanked him on behalf of the temple committee and the citizens for his kind visit and for his profound devotional discourses. They requested Śrīla Mahārāja to come every year to bless the people of Jaipur, and have intimate conversations with his *iṣṭadeva* Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindadevajī. □

Hari-kathā in the *nāṭya-mandira* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindadevajī Temple

Performing Ūrjjā-vrata with Śrīla Gurudeva

Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā 2000

Observing *ūrjjā-vrata* or *kārttika-vrata* is the life and soul of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, because this month is the direct manifestation of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's mercy. Dāmodara is the most important month in the year, for many of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most important pastimes took place then. For example, it was during this month that He first went with the calves to the pasturing grounds. During this month, He performed His most attractive pastime of all - namely *rāsa-līlā* - and also went to Mathurā and killed Kāmsa. It is also during the month of Dāmodara that Kṛṣṇa was bound to the grinding mortar by Mother Yaśodā, and on another occasion was bound by Śrīmatī Rādhikā's love. It is essential, then, that we perform the most auspicious activities during this month.

Śrīla Gurudeva has many times recounted how, after the Nava-Vṛndāvana pastime in *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa offered a boon to Śrī Nārada Muni. Nārada was concerned for the supreme welfare of the conditioned *jīvas*, and requested that anyone who comes in contact in any way with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful pastimes in Vraja will get love for His lotus feet. Kṛṣṇa granted his request, and the result, as Śrīla Gurudeva has explained, is that anyone can attain *vraja-prema* if they have *śraddhā* and visit the places of Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes in Vraja, offer *praṇāma* to these places, take the dust on their heads, and offer prayers to the dust.

Our *guru-varga* sings the glories of *vraja-dhūli*, the dust of the places where Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes. Even a single particle of that dust is so surcharged with spiritual potency that it can reveal Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the heart of a sincere aspirant.

In this spirit, our most compassionate previous *ācāryas* - such as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja - have made provision for us to perform Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā in the month of Kārttika,

and our Śrīla Gurudeva and his associates have wonderfully preserved this transcendental tradition up to the present day. They expertly and painstakingly organise this spiritually enlivening one-month *parikramā*, and very cleverly devise means to induce us to taste the nectar of *bhakti-rasa*, although we are unwilling to do so.

Kārttika-vrata begins on the Śaradīya-rāsa-pūrnimā, which is also the Disappearance Day of our Parama-gurudeva Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. The Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā organised by Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, under the auspicious guidance of our Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, and with the blessings of the present Ācārya of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, is unique in the present times. The month-long event offers us a wonderful variety of spiritual benefits, which a sincere *sādhaka* can never afford to disregard: for example, exalted *sādhū-saṅga*; ample and unparalleled *hari-kathā*; wonderful *bhajanas* and prayers; and visiting and revisiting the sacred *līlā-sthalis*, which are imbued with the moods of the pastimes themselves, and of our *ācāryas* who have performed their *bhajana* there.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in his song, *gaura āmāra je saba sthāne karala bhramaṇa raṅge, se-saba sthāna heribo āmi praṇaya-bhakata-saṅge*: "Under the guidance of *bhaktas* in whose hearts *praṇaya*, love for Kṛṣṇa has awakened, I will visit all those places where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed His pastimes." Thus, when we perform *parikramā* with Śrīla Gurudeva, we undoubtedly follow this instruction of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Wherever Śrīla Gurudeva took us in Vraja, such as Govardhana, Rādhā-Kuṇḍa, Varṣāna, Nandagaon, etc., he would speak the glories of those places, being absorbed in tasting the sweet moods of the pastimes. Thus, through his *hari-kathā*, he bestowed upon us a drop of the remnants of what he relished.

Each day of the month-long *vrata* started with *maṅgala-aratika*, and *Tulasī-parikramā*. Every morning and evening, in Śrīla Gurudeva's auspicious presence and under his guidance, all would sing *Śrī Dāmodara-aṣṭakam*, *Śrī Nandanandanāṣṭakam*, *Śrī Rādhā-kṛpā-katākṣa-stava-rāja* and other *bhajanas*. Śrīla Gurudeva explained that by singing these prayers, we gain spiritual strength (*ūrjjā*) for our *sādhana*. He also pointed out that Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has sung, *kṛṣṇa-nāma gāne bhāi*, *rādhikā caraṇa pāi*, *rādhā-nāma gāne kṛṣṇacandra*. Therefore, we attract Srimatī Rādhikā's mercy by singing Kṛṣṇa's *nāmā*, *rūpa*, *guṇa* and *līlā* in *Dāmodara-aṣṭakam* and *Nanda-nandana-aṣṭakam*; and we attract Kṛṣṇacandra's mercy by singing *Śrī Rādhā-kṛpā-katākṣa-stava-rāja*.

For the first fifteen days, Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on *Śrī Dāmodaraṣṭakam*. Although he explains this *aṣṭakam* every year, reading from Śrīla Sanatāna Gosvāmī's *ṭikā*, his explanation is ever-fresh, and its new and profound meanings deepen the impressions of the faithful listeners. His unparalleled way of describing each step of *Dāmodara līlā* is very enchanting, for it simultaneously uncovers the hidden aspects of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, and also imparts valuable instructions to the *sādhakas*.

After concluding *Śrī Dāmodaraṣṭakam*, Śrīla Gurudeva began to explain *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā* from the very first verse, unveiling the deep imports of *guru-tattva*; the relationship between *guru* and *śiṣya*; and the causes of Mahāprabhu's appearance. Śrīla

Gurudeva emphasised that we are fortunate to come in the Gauḍīya line, but if we do not hear about the real cause of Mahāprabhu's coming to this world and His unique contributions, then this conception will soon be lost from this world.

In the evening classes, Śrīla Gurudeva lectured on *Śrī Bhajana-rahasya*, shedding light on many important points of the path of *sādhana-bhajana*. He stated that if we want to perform *śuddha-bhajana*, we must follow in the footsteps of the Six Gosvāmīs. However, in one sense we can follow everyone else if we simply follow Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, because in his life he practised the instructions and style of *bhajana* of Rūpa Gosvāmī. After practising, he gave instructions to others by writing *Jaivadharmā* and *Śrī Bhajana-rahasya*. Writing these two books was like putting the ocean in a pitcher, for they contain all the essential instructions of *śāstra*.

During our stay in Govardhana and Varṣāṇā, Śrīla Gurudeva arranged for us to hear eloquent discourses on *Govardhana-tattva*, *Rādhā-tattva*, and the contribution of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī to this world from his godbrothers Pūjyapāda B.V. Vaiṣṇava Mahārāja, Pūjyapāda B.V. Viṣṇu Mahārāja, Pūjyapāda B.V. Madhusūdana Mahārāja, Pūjyapāda B.V. Sannyāsī Mahārāja, Pūjyapāda B.V. Ācārya Mahārāja and from his disciples Śrīpāda B.V. Tīrtha Mahārāja, Śrīpāda B.V. Mādhava Mahārāja, Śrīpāda B.V. Vana Mahārāja, Śrīpāda B.V. Araṇya Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Rāsānanda Brahmācārī, Śrīpāda Urukrama Prabhu, and other devotees.

Girirāja Govardhana Parikramā



*Hari-kathā at Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa
Gosvāmī's samādhi, Rādhā-kuṇḍa*



While glorifying Govardhana, Śrīla Gurudeva said, "Govardhana is very dear to the heart of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas as he can bestow confidential service to the Divine Couple." Glorifying Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī at Ter Kadamba, Śrīla Gurudeva explained the esoteric meanings of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's *bhajana*, *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī pada*; *Yan Kali Rūpa Sarira*, by Mādhava Dāsa; and Kavi Karṇapūra's verse, *priya svarūpe dayita svarūpe*.

A grand *annakuta* festival was performed at Dāna Ghāṭī. Girirāja Govardhana was offered about 400 preparations, which were prepared under the loving supervision of Śrīpāda Premānanda Prabhu. In Govardhana, Varṣāṇā and Vṛndāvana, devotees performed dramas on Dāna Ghāṭī *lilā*, Uddhava *sandeha*, and the life of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, respectively. These dramas imparted vivid impressions of important pastimes, and also conveyed valuable instruction to the devotees.

On Utthāna Ekādaśī, the disappearance day of Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Gurudeva offered to his Guru- Mahārāja his new Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā book which had just come from the press.

During this year's *parikramā*, devotees missed the presence of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, who could not come because of his health, but who said he was attending *parikramā* by mind and heart.

Altogether, there were about 500 participants from countries all over the world, including Russia,

America, South America, England, France, Holland, and also from Bengal and other parts of India.

During Śrīla Gurudeva's concluding instructions on the last day, he said, "I know that you all have undergone great austerities during this *parikramā*. We could not give you home-comforts, but we have tried to give you the wealth of our heart, which we have received from our Gurudeva, that is, a desire to attain the service of Yugala-Kīśora in the *rūpānuga* line. Don't go from here empty-handed. All of you have had an invaluable transcendental experience, and you have heard high-class *hari-kathā* coming directly from the spiritual realm. This is a priceless treasure, for which you can never repay us. The only way you can repay us is to keep this *hari-kathā* in your heart. Try to practise it in your life, and distribute it to others. Your life will be successful if you render such service to the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu".

Just as Mahāprabhu used to request all devotees to return to their places after Jagannātha Rātha-yātrā, Śrīla Gurudeva also requested everyone to return to their homes, and to practise and preach what they had received during the month. As the devotees departed, many were already feeling separation from this month-long spiritual *saṅga*. With tear-filled eyes they expressed to Gurudeva, "First you have stolen our hearts with your sweet *hari-kathā*, and now you are telling us to go back. But how can we go back without our hearts?" □

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