

Divine Guidance

His Divine Grace

Swami B.S. Govinda

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Nabadwip Dham

*Divine
Guidance*

by

His Divine Grace

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswami Maharaj

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

*Divine
Guidance*

From Holy Lectures and letters

by

His Divine Grace

Srīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswami Maharaj

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Foreword

This is the third book in the *The Divine Servitor* series. The first two books of the series—*The Divine Servitor* and *Dignity of the Divine Servitor*—were particularly intended as a substantial means of glorifying our Śrī Āchāryyadev Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj on the occasion of his Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 1990 and 1991.

1992 saw a marked increase in mail, and written offerings by the many devotees. Consequently a separate *Śrī Gauḍīya Darśan* book of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā offerings was published for the satisfaction of our Śrīla Āchāryyadev and the devotees of this Mission.

This present book—*Divine Guidance*—is compiled exclusively from lectures and letters by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. I pray that it may be accepted by His Divine Grace as well as by the devotional community worldwide.

All credit goes to His Divine Grace for his perfect capacity and intention for our spiritual advancement.

Also to Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj for his invaluable advice and energy throughout; to Śrīpād Bhakti Svarūpa Tridaṇḍi Mahārāj for his long hours of transcribing; and to Śrīpād Mādhavānanda Prabhu and the many devotees who have given considerable assistance in so many ways.

If anything is lacking in this book, please know clearly that it is due only to my own failings. But certainly within these pages there is much of eternal value, and I request the reader to focus upon the substance given by our Divine Master, and overlook the shortcomings in its being relayed in the printed form.

Asking that all the Vaiṣṇavas may accept my obeisances,

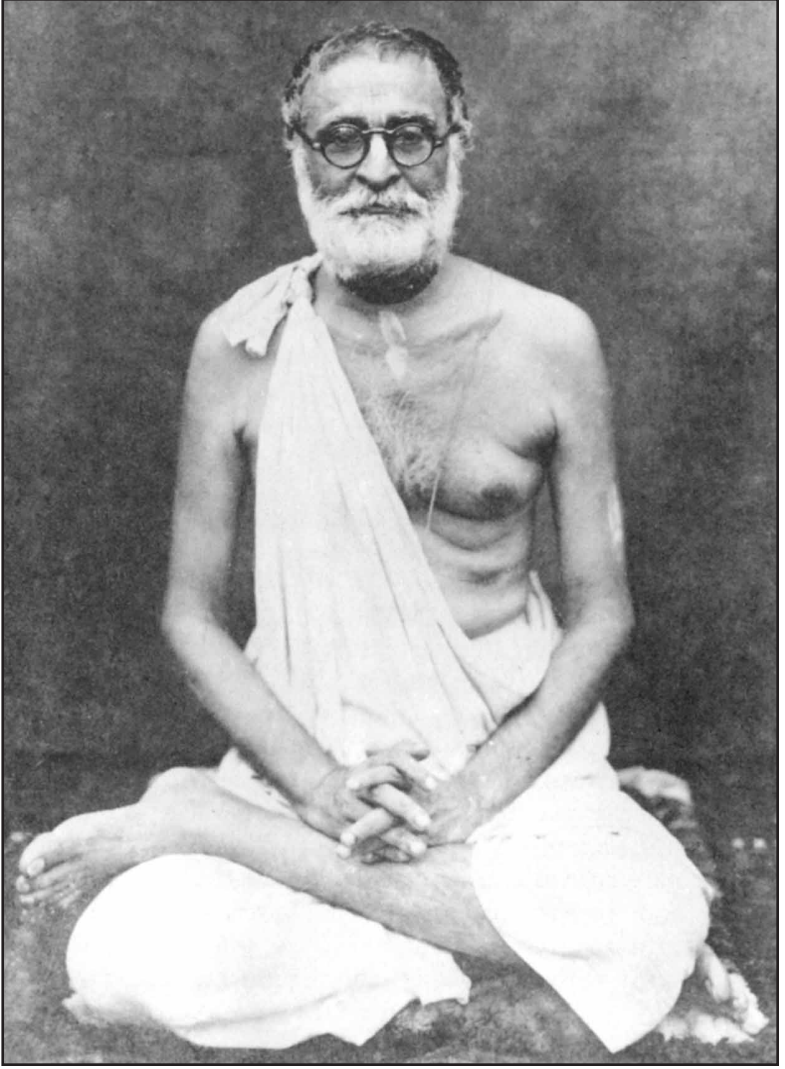
Humbly
Mahānanda Dāsa Bhakti
Rañjan
Kṛṣṇa-Ekādaśī,
May 1993



His Divine Grace
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His Divine Grace
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Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh,
Nabadwīp

Divine Guidance

First Section

Lectures

by

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Chapter One

Utilising Our Fortune

A lecture by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswāmi Mahārāj

By the mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu we are all now present at His place of pastimes, Śrī Nabadwīp-Dhām, a very auspicious and transcendental place. Mahāprabhu appeared in Śrī Māyāpur and played here in the nine islands of Nabadwīp: Antardwīp, Simantadwīp, Godrumadwīp, Madhyadwīp, Koladwīp, Modadrumadwīp, Jahnūdwīp, and Ṛtudwīp. These are the nine islands and everywhere here Mahāprabhu's pastimes are going on, they are eternal. Vṛndāvan Dāsa Ṭhākur said:

**adyāpiha caitanya ei saba līlā kare
yā'ra bhāgye thāke se dekhaye nirantare**

Those pastimes of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu are still going on, and those who are very fortunate can see that through their transcendental vision. Everything is always covered by illusion, Māyā, and to our eyes this Nabadwīp-Dhām is also covered by that illusion. There are two types of Māyā: Yogamāyā and Mahāmāyā. Yogamāyā is always giving nourishment to her Lord, whereas Mahāmāyā prevents any disturbance from entering that plane.

Our soul is now covered by illusion: we are attracted by the *Chāyā-śakti*, the shadow-power of Kṛṣṇa, therefore we now live far from that transcendental world. But when Kṛṣṇa will

bestow His mercy upon our head, Māyā will remove the illusion from us and we will be able to see the transcendental *Dhām* and we shall also be able to serve there.

The Māyā-*śakti* is very heavy for us because we are very tiny souls. She is always attracting us through her illusion. In one way, it is for our rectification, no doubt, but it is not a happy position for the conditioned souls. However, we will get relief from this environment if we try to know our position, and what is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we do this, then by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotee we will get strength to come out from the illusory environment, and, when we try, Kṛṣṇa will help us. That assistance comes to us through His devotees.

Everything comes through the proper channel. Sometimes direct mercy comes from the upper level, but normally, or generally, it comes through the established proper channel:

**sādhu-sāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha hay
sei jīva nistare, māyā tāhāre chāḍaya**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līla 20.120*)

The mercy of the *sādhu* and Guru takes us to the transcendental level. When we can stand firm in our position there, then Māyādevī will leave us. It is necessary to try to preach this type of conception. As much as we have it ourselves, we are to distribute this clear vision and give it to others. Everywhere there is some possibility, from the lowest level up to the highest; everyone can try to give some good to others. Actually our only life's goal is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is coming through *sādhu*, Guru and Vaiṣṇava. It comes from their mercy through our sincere activity of service to them.

You are fortunate to be connected with such knowledge. Somehow or other, you have received some experience and

inspiration, and that is why you have come here, and you are trying to increase your mood of devotion as much as possible. Many devotees constantly feel disturbances from many things. From within themselves they are subject to *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *mātsaryya*: lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness, and jealousy. The only way to gain relief from such a position has been given by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu:

**vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhiraḥ
sarvvām apimām pṛthiviṁ sa śiṣyāt**
(*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*)

It is necessary to try to control these tendencies within us, and it is only possible through service. When the mood of eternal service to Kṛṣṇa will reveal itself in our heart, then everything else will leave us. At that time our intention will always be directed only for the service of Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava.

The Scriptures say, *sādhu-saṅga!* A *sādhu* is one who is a perfect servitor. He is always engaged in service to Kṛṣṇa with his full energy. One who has no desire for himself or anything except service to Kṛṣṇa—he is a real *sādhu*. *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* says:

**kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niškāma, ataeva ‘śānta’
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali ‘aśānta’**
(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.149*)

Aśānta means people who are always disturbed by the illusory environment. However, one can automatically get relief from the reactions of his bad activities if he can have no desire for his own purpose but can constantly try to give satisfactory service to *sādhu*, Guru and Vaiṣṇava.

Many of our friends always feel disturbances from their mundane activities. But they can control them very easily; the method is to try very intensely and exclusively to engage themselves in service to Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. Such service goes directly to Kṛṣṇa. If they try in that way they will get relief from the illusory environment.

We are always between hopefulness and hopelessness! Hope comes when we are correcting ourselves in line with the transcendental world, but when we are disconnected from that level, then a hopeless position comes to us. It is, therefore, always necessary to keep connection with that transcendental level, and if we try in the way of service we will gain relief very easily.

**kāma eṣa krodha eṣa, rajoguṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahā-śano mahā-pāpmā, viddhy enam iha vairiṇam**

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 3.37)

There are three kinds of qualities or modes of nature (*guṇas*) always playing within our body and mind: *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*. Of these, *sattva-guṇa* sometimes can give a good result for our practising life, but the true practising life is mainly beyond the three qualities of nature, and that is called *nirguṇa*. Kṛṣṇa advised in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*: “You always try to stay in the level of *nirguṇa* where these three, *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*, have no play.”

Sattva-guṇa can give us auspiciousness and take our mind to an auspicious level, but Kṛṣṇa consciousness lives beyond even that. Attachment to Kṛṣṇa is necessary. Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu quoted:

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate**

**tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

Hankering is the main thing necessary to gain that transcendental knowledge. When that will reveal itself in our heart fully, other disturbances will automatically leave us, just as when the sun rises in the east, all darkness is dispelled from our section of the Earth. So it is necessary for us to have hankering for *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

We can see in the *Vedas* many varieties of auspicious practising moods. The *Vedānta*, *Purāṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, etc. are all always indicating the *nirguṇa* plane and trying to take us to that level. If we cannot stay in that *nirguṇa* level we will not receive the full result, therefore our activity, mood, and everything, whether *viddhi* or *rāga*, should always be such as to try to take us to that higher level. But we must *want* it, then we can go there, otherwise not.

**bhukti-mukti-sprhā yāvat
piśāci hṛdi vartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra
katham abhyudayo bhavet**

When attachment and attraction for mundane things live within our heart, they are called *piśāci*, witches. If witches have us under their spell, then how can *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* live there? Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī says it is not possible. Still, if we try with our best mood of service to attain that position, we must get it. It may be sudden or it may be after a long time, but if we try we must get that position, there is no doubt. That attempt is called *sādhana*. *Sādhana* is 'the means to the end.' Generally our *sādhana* guides us to the upper level, and prevents us from falling down to a lower level.

Śravaṇam-kīrttanam, etc. is *bhakti-sādhana*, but other kinds of *sādhana* exist under the guidance of different departments of Vedic knowledge, such as *yoga-sādhana*, *jñāna-sādhana*, *karmma-sādhana*, etc. The intention of all these types of practice is to take us to a higher position. But the topmost position, and the actual need for our supreme transcendental benefit, is only *bhakti-yoga*. Without *bhakti-yoga*, other kinds of *sādhana* such as *bhukti* or *mukti* cannot give us the proper result. So if we try to practise *śravaṇam*, *kīrttanam*, *smaraṇam*, *vandanam*, etc.—the nine kinds of *bhakti-sādhana* under the guidance of a proper *sādhu* then we will easily receive the good result.

This *navadhā-bhakti-piṭha* is Nabadwīp-Dhām. Each of the nine islands of Nabadwīp gives some special facility for our practising life. This place, Koladwīp, is called *pāda-sevana kṣetra*, the place where we can gain direct connection with Kṛṣṇa through the worship of His lotus feet. But if we really want that then we should sincerely try to get it through the expert—then easily we can have His connection.

In the Scriptures we can see that Kṛṣṇa's devotee always tries to satisfy the devotees. That position is the supermost position, but at present we are living in another position, that is, *mano-jagat*, which means the mental world; and that mental world has grown up from the *Māyā-jagat*, the illusory environment. First we must try to disconnect ourselves from the mental world, and fully surrender to Kṛṣṇa, then we will receive help from Him.

**kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane**

From Kṛṣṇa comes inspiration to attain the transcendental world. He will send a *sādhu*, a Guru, a Vaiṣṇava, and through them we will receive some light and strength—easily we shall

be able to practise with their help, and attain our destination.

There is no doubt that all of you here are fortunate to have a connection with the transcendental world and to have hankering, otherwise why would you have come here? You must try to achieve that transcendental plane through your mood of service, and you will get it very easily if you try in the proper way. The proper way is to satisfy Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas.

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj established this Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh he simply wanted a place to practise devotional life along with a very few followers. But now it has grown in a very big way, and day by day in order to help others, it is growing bigger. But the line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is a very exclusive devotional line.

If we want to serve Śrīla Guru Mahārāj exclusively and not see anything else, we will be relieved of all troubles. We must try to serve Guru very attentively, for only then will we get that chance, otherwise we will be cheated. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was very simple-hearted. He did not want to cheat anyone, and that is why he did not make many complications. In his life he only showed Kṛṣṇa and *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. We are also trying to proceed within the line of his vision, but if his mercy will not act within us, we will not get that. So in an exclusive way we must try to satisfy Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Then he will be very happy.

Under the guidance of our mind we may try many things, but that is not really *bhakti*. Our mind is always going this way and that way. The fickle and mad mind can do anything, but a good result will not always come from that. If we do good things then a good result will come to us, if we do not, then a bad result will come to us; such is our position. We will gain relief from the illusory environment only if in an exclusive way we try to follow our Gurudeva.

Many people can say many things, also the *śāstras* are very vast! All the Scriptures are full of knowledge no doubt, but they are so vast that we cannot discover from them what is good for us. But the *sādhu*, Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas simply try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, and if we follow them, we will easily get the full result of all scriptural advice. Therefore we shall try to proceed in a simple way. Mahāprabhu has also instructed us that it is not necessary to do many things—just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, engage in Vaiṣṇava-*sevā* and do *Prasāda-sevā*:

**sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrttana, bhāgavat-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrttira śraddhāya sevana**

**sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga
kṛṣṇa-prema janmāya ei pañcera alpa saṅga**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.128 & 129*)

Try to satisfy the servitors of Kṛṣṇa and you will easily receive the result—*Kṛṣṇa-prema*, through them. This path is very simple—chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*, and engage in *Vaiṣṇava-sevā*. Don't look this side or that, but give your attention only to the service of Gurudeva and the Vaiṣṇavas, and that will be helpful for you.

Devotee: In the West one of the most common questions the devotees ask is how they can have a service connection. What service can they do? We tell them that they can help the *Maṭh* in various ways and give some service donation and in this way engage themselves in connection with here. But especially in the West, life is very full and there is always the opportunity of complete engagement in *Māyā*—there are newspapers, television, radio, etc. The devotees have their work, their family, and so many things. So they want to know how they can feel they have a constant *sevā* connection; some *bhakti* connection

going on daily. As well as giving to and helping the Central *Maṭh*, what can they do?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: I am thinking they know better than myself—that is, they are doing it, and they are trying to serve! Still, it is true: how will they feel connected? In which way will they serve? And what is that service?

It is necessary first to surrender to Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, and second, to follow their directives. Service is: “What they advise me to do—I will do that.” And, what is necessary for the satisfaction of Guru? Guru is always giving some instructions to the disciple and if the disciple tries to serve his Guru accordingly then he will receive the desired result. If my Guru will say, “You preach village to village,” if I go village to village, that will be service for me. If Gurudev says, “You try to make a centre here for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness,” and I try to do that with heart and soul, that is my practising life. Everything depends on the satisfaction of Guru.

In the same way, where there is no Guru present but other Vaiṣṇavas are there, service to the Vaiṣṇava will also go to Guru, and he will be pleased by that. The Guru must be perfect, otherwise the result will not come out perfectly. So when the devotees are working in their country, they should try to follow the instructions of Guru. They will try within their circumstances to do as much as possible for the satisfaction of Guru and Vaiṣṇava. Otherwise, what will they do?

Everyone everywhere spends their life for eating, sleeping, enjoying, fearing and protecting themselves, and then dying—taking birth and dying. But that is not really life.

Real life is that we can do something of eternal value. If anyone can do something in connection with the eternal world, they will receive an eternal result. That connection

comes through transcendental knowledge, consciousness and activity; so we have no other way than to follow the instructions of Guru.

If I think the eternal life is good, and I want it, I must follow my instructor. If he is a perfect devotee, what he will say will be good for me; otherwise, if my instructor is not perfect, the result also may not be good.

So, East or West, South or North, everywhere it is necessary to follow Gurudeva as perfectly as possible. 'Follow' means that his order is sufficient for me: "Do this, and you'll be satisfied." But strong faith is necessary there, otherwise it will not be possible to follow in a perfect way.

Everything is connected with faith. The Guru is connected with the faithful plane, and when he will give that connection to his disciple, that is also within the faithful plane. Otherwise, so many things can give an auspicious result and a pious future birth, but *bhakti* is not of that character.

bhaktis tu bhagavat-bhaktaḥ saṅgena parijāyate

It will grow with the activity of the *ātmā*, so now our activity will be to follow the practitioner's life.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj—Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda—said, "First you chant the *Mahāmantra* without counting; then chant by counting on beads, then take *Harināma*. Before taking *Harināma* you must first practise for six months or one year." But actually this is not the real position of the practitioner. The real process is that when you get the beads from a perfect Guru, from there you will get the power of the *mantra*—the *Mahāmantra*—and his order will give you strength to chant. If you engage attentively in that chanting, you will get a good result. But when he wanted to advise the general mass to chant, but they did not know anything—

they had not even heard 'Hare Kṛṣṇa' before—what was he to do? Some sort of practising was necessary.

When a young boy first tries to write something, he just makes a mark or a line, then he gradually gains some finer control of his hand and soon we can see an 'A' or a 'B' taking its proper form. Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj tried to encourage the Westerners in this way, and no doubt it is one kind of process. It depends upon the mood of the practitioners, and if they will get some clear feelings then immediately they will try to chant the *Mahāmantra* perfectly, and at that time help will come from the upper level—Kṛṣṇa will help in the form of Guru.

So for one who is very active and tries always to be engaged, the instructions of Guru give some work to him, and through that work his mood to practise and increase his *bhakti-yoga* will develop. That work can itself immediately be in the category of *bhakti-yoga*. If someone can practise properly, and if his inner hankering wants that; immediately that job can be transformed into *bhakti*.

Everything depends on the mood of the devotee. Someone may go for collection, someone else may cook, another may clean, but everything depends on the individual's mood whether it will be *karma* or *bhakti*. If someone will follow his Guru's instructions in a surrendered mood, it will be *bhakti*, otherwise it will be pious *karma*. If anyone will follow the instructions of the Scriptures and Guru he will always receive a good result, but that is not necessarily *bhakti*. It is a big difficulty for everyone if they are not conscious of their purpose. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj always emphasised the word 'consciousness'—everything is living within consciousness.

The result depends on the devotee's mental position. So first he must try to cleanse his heart. Kṛṣṇa said in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

**yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi, yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya, tat kuruṣva mad arpaṇam**

Kṛṣṇa has clarified everything for us and given us a very easy way: “Everything you do, and everything you want to do—whether eating, sacrificing, going anywhere, etc.—connect everything with Me, then that will be *bhakti*.” First it is necessary to finalise what our need is, and what is the process to achieve it. If we need *bhakti-yoga* to Kṛṣṇa, and if we do not want to stay within the illusory environment, and if we feel the necessity to go to the transcendental world—our own home—then with full heart we must try to achieve that. We shall try to search out that place where it is available and whole-heartedly try to follow the instructions we receive there. This is the main thing for everyone, but circumstances can take us in many ways and to many places. We must try to proceed steadily within our track and not allow ourselves to go out of the track. This is our necessity.

Devotee: Mahārāj, I have a question. When Śrīla Prabhupāda left the world, many of his disciples in the name of exclusive worship of him went on with their devotional service, but they made many mistakes and their service sometimes went in a wrong way. Later, many persons in the name of exclusive worship of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj also made many mistakes and sometimes their actions went in a wrong way.

So, I want to know from you, what does it mean to serve the *uttama-adhikāri* devotee? Why do those persons make such mistakes, and how can we properly understand the correct position?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: It is in some way coming from one’s fortune. One who has good fortune will not leave his track. What he received from his Gurudeva, he will try to follow, and

his endeavour will always be within the proper track.

Your question is good for everyone: after Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj left, why have some of his devotees gone out from their track? Also after Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, some are going out of track. But why?

It depends upon their *sukṛti*—their spiritual fortune. We see that they served Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj or they served Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but actually they did not get the proper way, the real service connection. At that time, however, by the influence of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj that shortcoming was covered. The disciples did many activities enthusiastically but they actually did not know what devotional service is. When Gurudeva disappeared, his influence of covering the shortcoming in the disciples also withdrew with him. At that time some of the devotees got back their previous subtle position, and they became confused. Ultimately it depends upon their own *karma*, their good fortune, and also the quality of their practising life—these three will contribute towards a good result.

It is necessary for the devotees to know very clearly what they want to practise, then they will not go off the track—and in that also their own good fortune and good activities are necessary, otherwise they will not reach their goal. We must be able to recognise what is what. It is a fact that even when Kṛṣṇa was present, not everyone could understand Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śiśupāla and Dantavakra had the chance to be with Kṛṣṇa but they could not understand who He was. Also many saw Kṛṣṇa on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, but they did not understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So some fortune must work behind ‘seeing’.

After Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj left, the illusory environment

came with more force. When Kṛṣṇa left from this mundane world, at that time also the illusory environment again asserted itself strongly. Whenever a great soul disappears, some disturbance is caused by the illusory environment and it tries to catch and conquer the heart of the weak devotees—not only the weak devotees, but the good workers also. It will try to conquer them. But those who are fully surrendered to their Guru will not be captured by that illusion, and those who are good followers will also not fall into that illusion. Those who are not settled within their own track will easily leave their position, and to some degree this has happened.

We can live with a *sādhu* and take his association, but we may not get real *sādhu-saṅga* merely by living with him. Bugs may live in the bed of a *sādhu*, lice may even be so close to him that they live in his hair and take his blood, but they are not engaged in *sādhu-saṅga*! So, the unfortunate souls leave the track. Otherwise the true path is a very easy thing.

One instruction Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used to always give me when I first came to him was: “What I shall instruct, you will follow, and what your mind will say, you don’t follow.” But I thought; “My mind is not always giving me bad advice, sometimes it is giving good suggestions to me.” But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj told me not to follow even what I thought was the good advice of my mind. “That means you must fully depend upon me. My need is that you must fully depend upon me.” Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said in this way, “What does your mind tell you? You think it sometimes says good advice and it sometimes says bad. But you are not to follow even the apparently good advice. If you take the association of your mind, you must give some return to him; therefore it is not necessary to take association of your mind, instead take my instruction for yourself.”

It is a very easy instruction but we cannot always follow

it, therefore we receive some trouble. When we forget Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's order we receive much trouble. Behind this, two things are acting: one is fortune, and the other is our activity. Good fortune is necessary, and that comes through *sevā*. Good fortune grows through *sevā*. One who can do real *sevā* will receive a good result. However, one who does 'sevā' but is always thinking about his own interest must be ignored by *bhakti*, and *bhakti* will not go to him. He may live so long and stay for many years in the Gauḍīya Mission, but he may not get that *bhakti*.

There are many examples not only in the Gauḍīya Mission, but such disturbances can be seen everywhere in history. It is present in Christianity, in Mohammedanism, etc. And in Hinduism there are many channels: Śrī Rāmānuja, Śaṅkarāchāryya, etc.

There is a famous story of how one day Rāmānujāchāryya's *sannyāsī* disciples quarrelled over something which appeared very big, but actually was very small. It was a very small matter, but they quarrelled fiercely. Someone had moved around the clothes the *sannyāsīs* were to wear. One of them became very disturbed and a quarrel began. Rāmānuja then showed through the example of a *gr̥hastha* devotee how one should serve his Guru. In the Scriptures we can see this and many other examples. Śaṅkarāchāryya also showed a similar example.

Actually, our spiritual journey depends upon clear consciousness. One who has some clear consciousness from his Guru will not leave the track; otherwise everyone has some possibility of deviating.

It is necessary to stay within the proper line of knowledge. We must have the conviction "We shall follow our Guru blindly." We hear from many places that, 'What our Guru gave

is sufficient; it is not necessary to take advice from others.’ And it is mainly very true. If I have no big idea, and no big, wide vision, then I must follow my Gurudeva in a very simple way. Sometimes that will work very nicely, but it is not always true—because if a Guru will say one thing, or give one advice, then there is no doubt that if there are five disciples, each will take it in a slightly different way. Each of their minds will play upon that idea in a slightly different manner, so they will understand it in five ways. Maybe in the beginning they were not very different from each other, but whatever small differences exist will become more prominent as it comes down through three or four generations. By that time it may even become completely separate from Śrī Gurudeva’s conception. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has mentioned:

**evam prakṛti-vaicitryāt bhidyante matayo-nṛṇām
pāramparyyena keṣāñcit pāṣaṇḍa-matayo pare**

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has given a very good example of this: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. When Guru gives some knowledge, that is the thesis, but when that knowledge has come out from Gurudeva, an antithesis must also come out from some other quarter. With the thesis, the antithesis will also grow, side by side. And synthesis comes when both will come into harmony. The synthesis then becomes established as the thesis, and again an antithesis will grow to oppose it. In this way, if five disciples hear from one Guru, five kinds of ideas will grow. Their ideas also depend upon their *sukṛti*. If they do not go off the track we can say they have good *sukṛti*, and that *sukṛti* comes through their service. Therefore Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “What I shall instruct, you follow that, and what your mind will say, don’t follow it!”

It was for this reason that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not recommend us to read many things. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura also discouraged much reading. Also, especially for those in the *Maṭh*, there is no excess time for reading. Our time is all service time. There is no excess time in our hand, so how shall we try to earn ‘other knowledge’ and how can we spend our time for collecting that knowledge?

Someone is studying in Sanskrit, someone in Bengali, someone else is studying in English—and spending time. They are showing a post-dated cheque, that “After getting that knowledge I shall serve!” But before that it is possible you may die, so why don’t you think like that? Therefore Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not give us the chance to study.

At first Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did give some chance to me because I was unqualified. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave me some opportunity to study, but when some proper knowledge came to me, then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said it was sufficient: “It is not necessary to read more, now you do *sevā*.”

We tried to do *sevā* as much as possible, heart and soul, and we have seen that gradually everything is revealing itself in our heart. We are not trying to collect knowledge from the Scriptures. I read *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* only a few years ago but I joined over forty-five years ago! It was just during the last days of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that I read *Brahma-saṁhitā*.

One day I put the question to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: “Mahārāj, in which way does the *jīva*-soul come out from the *Taṭasthā-śakti*?” I heard the reply many times, but I could not catch it, so I again questioned Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: “The creation of the world, and the creation of the *jīvas*—in which way does it happen, Mahārāj? Again please explain this to me.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “Oh-oh, have you not read *Brahma-saṁhitā*?” I replied, “No, Guru Mahārāj, I have not

read it." I knew many *ślokas* from *Brahma-saṁhitā*, having heard them from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but I had not read the book. Then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, "Read it and you will see the answer to your question very clearly explained there in the first section." He also gave a brief explanation.

That question was very difficult. The *jīva*-soul is transcendental, but the *Māyā-śakti* produces material things. Her activity is always within the material world but the *jīva* is transcendental, and Kṛṣṇa is transcendental. So in which way can the transcendental and material combine together to produce the creation? That was the question. But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj replied with this *śloka*: *tal-liṅgam bhagavān śambhuḥ*. Kṛṣṇa throws the vision, and *prakṛti* is impregnated—*mayādhakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ, sūyate sa-carācaram* (Bg. 9.10). And in the middle position, that 'throwing' is done by Śambhu. That is his position.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj instructed, "Read *Brahma-saṁhitā*, you will be able to see everything explained there." And when I read *Brahma-saṁhitā* I was surprised to see: "Oh, all knowledge is inside this book, but I did not read it before. The whole of the knowledge that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is giving us—everything is contained here." Then the idea came to me that we must try to publish this *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* and we shall distribute it to everyone.

Actually, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj emphasised service to Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, and by their mercy that knowledge will reveal itself in our heart. We can say that now we know something of the news of the transcendental world. 'Know' means 'feel.' We can say we have some feeling, and by following the process you must also get those feelings.

I believe that everyone has some feelings, otherwise

they cannot come in this line, especially in the *Maṭh* of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—the line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. The devotees have feelings, but perhaps they cannot always feel them clearly. Feelings must sometimes come to all of you, otherwise it is not possible to remain in this devotional track. But the main thing in the teachings of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is to serve the Vaiṣṇavas, and to follow your Guru; in this way you will get everything.

Many disciples of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj lived within his Mission. When they came in the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu they were very fortunate no doubt, but later their activities sometimes caused them much trouble. Sometimes they did not know what was what and sometimes they did not receive guidelines directly from their Guru. They had heard some things, but not others, so they lost the proper devotional temperament, and what they were doing began to go in the chamber of *karma*, but not in the chamber of *sevā*. In that way they thought, “We are satisfied. This is transcendental knowledge!”—easily some of them were cheated by Māyā.

One who always thinks: “There exists more than this, and I need that,” and who always tries to search for it and try to get it, such a person will not be cheated.

In the time of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, everything went on under his influence, and at that time very few could understand what their actual position was. He told: “I am ISKCON; you follow me,” and they tried to follow him but they did not know which part they should follow, this part or that part! As his mission became larger, the devotees’ mood of service was not always steady. It was a great difficulty for many of them. Sometimes they were very sad, sometimes very enthusiastic—many stages are there. The different stages a devotee goes

through are given in the Scriptures: *utsāhamayī, ghanataralā, byūrabikalpā, viṣayasaṅgarā, niyamākṣamā, taraṅgaraṅgiṇī,*

In the beginning the practitioners feel much enthusiasm and do many types of service, but later their service mood goes flat. Then some wave may come in their mind and by that wave some mood of suspicion arises. After that comes some connection with the plane of mundane enjoyment, and, side by side with it, a connection with the transcendental world. They then become somewhat confused. Crossing that stage, first *niṣṭhā*, steadiness, and then *ruci*, taste, comes and they gain more strength. At that stage all hindrances go behind them and they can proceed steadily. These stages of devotion are explained in the Scriptures.

So, we may feel or see outwardly that someone may be doing *sevā*, service, but it is not always actual service. *Sevā* gives more *sevā*, so why is more *sevā* not coming? Seeing the symptoms, we can say that some were not doing actual *sevā*, therefore after the disappearance of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj they underwent some difficulty.

We must be conscious, therefore, about our position and about our service, then we will not be deviated from our position. But even if some deviation does come, if we are sincere we can emerge from that position also.

**bhūmau skhalita-pādānām, bhūmir evāvalambanam
tvayi jātāparādhānām, tvam eva śaraṇam prabho**

When a baby tries to walk, he sometimes falls down on the ground, but by taking help from the ground, again he tries, and after a few days he can walk very easily. Not only that, but after growing up more he will be able to run very fast. He gets everything; but first he must try, otherwise he will not gain anything.

When we live within this body, there is the possibility of deviation everywhere. Deviation will not come to attack us if we do not listen to the demands of our mental and physical bodies—otherwise, deviation is possible for everyone.



Chapter Two

On the Way to Śrī Purī-Dhām

A lecture by
His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Tomorrow you are going to a special place of pilgrimage. There you will see that the servitors of the Jagannāth temple, known as *Pāṇḍās*, hold a very special position. There is a saying, ‘if you love me, love my dog.’ It means, if you love me, you will also show your love to my dog; then I will know that you really love me. Lord Jagannāth has given the *Pāṇḍās* the position of controllers there, so whatever they do, we have no say in that.

Mahāprasāda is available all over the world, but in Jagannāth-*kṣetra* it is different. There the *Pāṇḍās* don’t let just anyone go inside the temple. They especially do not let anyone enter the temple whom they consider to be low-class or *mlecchas*. But when *Mahāprasāda* comes out of that very same temple, then they will eat it out of the hands of the most low-class people, the *mlecchas*. This means that they follow some customs. They follow a custom that was introduced by Lord Jagannāth.

Rāmānujāchāryya wanted to break that custom, but what was the result of that? Rāmānujāchāryya wanted the worship of Lord Jagannāth to be done in the *vidhi-mārga*. There are some rules and regulations in the *Vedas*, and especially in the *Manu-saṁhitā*, and he wanted the worship to be done in a bona fide way following these rules and regulations. He

thought the way the *Pāṇḍās* were doing the worship was not the customary way, the *mantras* they were using were not the right ones, and he wanted that the worship be done in the right way. All the scholars there were defeated by him. The next day, the final meeting was supposed to take place, and the King would have been forced to introduce the Vedic way of worship. While Rāmānujāchāryya was sleeping that night, his bed was thrown three hundred miles away to Kūrmakṣetra. In the morning he wondered where he was, and found that it was Kūrmakṣetra. In those days there were no aeroplanes. It was not possible that someone chloroformed him at night and carried him away by aeroplane. But Rāmānujāchāryya really saw that he was in Kūrmakṣetra, with his whole entourage; Lord Jagannāth had transported them Himself. Lord Jagannāth also gave him a dream in which He told him, “The way I am being served here will continue. Please do not interfere. Go from here.”

It is hard to find accommodation in a special place like this. But by the influence of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and the mercy of Lord Jagannāth we found some accommodation there, and now we have been able to acquire a bit more space. Now Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s desires are fulfilled, so we can see that Lord Jagannāth has some special goodwill towards us. Before, I could not go there in spite of a lot of effort, but now Lord Jagannāth is dragging me there every now and then.

I do not know if tomorrow I will be able to go with you. I am praying to Lord Jagannāth, because I know I will only be able to go if He takes me there, not otherwise. But He has attracted all of you. That is why you have all come here, and joining with the *sādhus* and the devotees of this *Āśrama*, you have found the opportunity to go there. You see, money is needed in every situation in life. To survive and go through

our daily lives, money is always spent. Yet money is not everything. There is no guarantee that if I have money I will be able to go. This is a truth that has been proved many times in my life. You all pray to Lord Jagannāth that He will take us safely there, and then bring us all back safely to where we are doing our respective *sevā*. This is our only prayer today. We have nothing else for which to pray.

We are not going sightseeing but we are going to a place of pilgrimage, a holy place. Going there will purify us—body, mind, and soul. We are going to the shore of the sea. Mahāprabhu has said, “From today this ocean has become a *mahā-tīrtha*.” As it is, the ocean is a great place of pilgrimage, because the waters of all the holy rivers merge there. In addition to that, at the disappearance of Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākura, Mahāprabhu danced with his body in His arms, and when He bathed his body in the ocean, Mahāprabhu said, “From today the ocean has really become a great place of pilgrimage.” Why?

It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

**bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās
tīrthī-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni
svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.13.10)

Those who always carry Gadādhara, the Supreme Lord, in their heart—if they cannot purify the places of pilgrimage then who can? They are places of pilgrimage personified, and they have no need to go on pilgrimage.

Then why do they go to places of pilgrimage? The really sinful people contaminate the places of pilgrimage. Everyone and everything has a particular capacity. We also have a par-

ticular capacity, that is, the burden of our sin is so great that even a place of pilgrimage cannot digest it. This is how a place of pilgrimage automatically becomes contaminated. At that time the great personalities who carry the Supreme Lord in their heart, appear there. As soon as they bathe in the holy water, the water becomes clean, as if a purifying agent has cleansed it. That is their natural capacity. Mahāprabhu has demonstrated the supreme example of this. Mahāprabhu said that the ocean at Puri became the greatest place of pilgrimage when He bathed the body of Haridās Ṭhākur there. Haridās Ṭhākur used to chant three hundred thousand names of the Lord every day. He even purified the animate and inanimate environment around him when he chanted aloud. His purity was beyond question.

The Western devotees who have come to India will not be allowed to enter the Jagannāth Temple, but still they go there again and again, because they are attracted by Mahāprabhu's Pastimes in Jagannāth-Dhām.

Of all the places, Mahāprabhu chose Jagannāth-Dhām, which is non-different from Kurukṣetra. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur has said that Kurukṣetra is the highest place of worship for us. Why? Where the hankering is greatest, that is the highest place of fulfilment. If you do not have hunger, you will not be able to enjoy even a sumptuous feast. If on the other hand you are starving, even rice with salt or spinach will taste like ambrosia. In my childhood I had malaria, and my doctor recommended something called, '*poḍer bhāt*.' Do you know how *poḍer bhāt* is made? A little bit of rice is boiled over a fire that is fuelled with a few cow dung patties, and it takes a very long time to boil. So the rice was boiling for hours and I was looking at it, thinking when I will be able to eat it.

This demand that comes from inside is the highest thing

for us. This is called hankering, and this is *rāgānugā-bhakti*.

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

The kind of devotion which is, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ* in which one's entire consciousness is soaked in the nectar of loving devotion for Kṛṣṇa—is not ordinary devotion. The demand of such love is also not a small demand.

The Lord Himself says,

**sādhavo hṛdayam mahyam
sādhūnām hṛdayam tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti
nāham tebhyo manāg api**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 9.4.68)

The Lord is telling Durvāsā Muni, “There is nothing I can do. My pure devotees have bound Me with their love, and I have also bound them with My love. Thus we are indebted to each other. I cannot be impartial.”

In more recent times Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj said this: “I cannot be impartial because I have taken *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj.” Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj was a Godbrother to our most worshipable Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Before he took *sannyāsa* he was a very famous and influential *brahmacārī* called Vinoda Brahmachārī. When some *brahmacārīs* wanted to take over our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Maṭh, there was need for a mediator. So they decided to request Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj to become a mediator. When they went to Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj with that request, he told them, “You are all my

Godbrothers, and so is Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. But I have done something, I have taken *sannyāsa* from him. I have offered my head at his lotus feet, therefore I cannot be impartial. So how can I be a mediator?"

Then they said, "Then you should know there will be bloodshed there. We are ready to give our lives."

Hearing this, Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj said, "If you are ready to give your lives, then someone there will also be ready to take your lives, because I won't be able to be impartial, as I have already sold myself to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj."

Then they went to Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj, but still their purpose was not served. Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj told them directly, "If you bring two Nepalis, I will bring fifty Sikhs. I have taken *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, therefore I am indebted to him."

The Supreme Lord is indebted to His devotees in the same way. He cannot be impartial.

**mayi nirbaddha-hṛdayāḥ
sādhavaḥ sama-darśanāḥ
vaśe kurvanti mām bhaktyā
sat-striyaḥ sat-patiṁ yathā**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 9.4.66)

Kṛṣṇa says, "My devotees charm Me with their *sevā*. Their only demand is to serve Me. They don't want anything else." If in the process of *sevā* they feel some joy or happiness, then they think they have committed some offence; they feel they are probably in the mood of enjoyment. Just to see that, Kṛṣṇa gives them a lot of *sevā*. He gives them so much *sevā* that they become intoxicated with it. Kṛṣṇa thinks, "What is this? Rādhārāṇī becomes so ecstatic by seeing Me? What is the

depth of that ecstasy? How can I measure it? I cannot measure it, because I cannot become Rādhārāṇī.” Then:

**śri-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kidṛśo vānyaivā-
svādyo yenādbhuta-madhurimā kidṛśo vā madiyaḥ
saukhyam̐ cāsyā mad-anubhavataḥ kidṛśam̐ veti lobhāt
tad-bhāvāḍhyaḥ samajani śacigarbha-sindhau harinduḥ**
(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, 1.6)

(“What is that great glory of Śrī Rādhā’s Love? What is My extraordinary loving sweetness and charm that Śrī Rādhā enjoys? And what is the joy Śrī Rādhā feels by experiencing My sweetness and charm? Yearning to taste these three sentiments, the moon—Kṛṣṇachandra—was born from the ocean of the womb of mother Śacī.”)

In order to taste Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s highest *Rasa* of *Vipralambha*, Mahāprabhu went to Jagannāth-Dhām, which is Kurukṣetra. Why? Because there Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is thinking, “My Lord is tearing My heart apart.” Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī knows that Kṛṣṇa is Her life and soul. But there She sees that He is surrounded by His children, friends, relatives, and queens, and they are all swarming over the whole place. She is just a simple milkmaid who would generally not be given any attention in such a royal gathering. But they gave Her attention, and in a very special way. They requested Her to show them the *Rāsa* dance, which is performed only in Vṛndāvan. When they saw that, they were amazed. They said, “We have never experienced anything so wonderful.” Then Rādhārāṇī smiled. She said, “What have you seen? You have seen a headless body, a dead thing. You have not seen the real thing: that you can see only in Vṛndāvan. Where is that Yamunā? Where are the groves of *kadamba* trees? Where is the chirping of the

peacocks and parrots? And where is the Lord of our hearts, Kṛṣṇa, who plays the flute and herds the cows? None of those things are here, so how can you see the *Rāsa* dance here? What you have seen is the shadow. If you want to see the real thing, you have to go to Vṛndāvan.”

On another occasion Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava what the highest fulfilment of *bhakti* is.

**na tathā me priyatama ātmayonir na śaṅkaraḥ
na ca śaṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr-naivātmā ca yathā bhavān**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.14.15)

(“My dear Uddhava, even Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Śaṅkarṣaṇa, the goddess of fortune Lakṣmīdevī and indeed My own self are not as dear to Me as you are.”) But Uddhava himself was thinking,

**āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāt,
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauśadhīnām
yā dustyajam svajanam āryya-pathaṁ ca hitvābhejur
mukunda-padaviṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.48.61)

When Uddhava went to Vṛndāvan he was so charmed by seeing the *Gopīs’* love, their devotion, their attraction, and their affection for Kṛṣṇa, that he said, “For life after life, I only desire one thing: I want to become a speck of dust in Vṛndāvan. Not only that, I want to be one of those who are worthy of receiving that dust, the plants and creepers of Vṛndāvan, and live here for all eternity. Here in the land of Vṛndāvan, Kṛṣṇa has performed His Pastimes, and His companions, the *Gopīs*, also roam around here. If I can be born as a small creeper so that I may get the dust of their lotus feet on my head, that will be my highest fortune.”

Such are the glories of Kṛṣṇa, and the intense feeling of separation from Him—*Vipralambha*. Mahāprabhu has shown us the highest limit of that *Vipralambha* in Śrī Nilācala-Dhām.

Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit, who kept Mahāprabhu in the depths of his heart, and performed the supreme *sevā*, also lived there. Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* and went to Jagannāth Puri, and by His desire Lord Gopināth became manifest. When you go to Puri you will all see Lord Gopināth there. Both the feelings of Mahāprabhu and the feelings of Gadādhara Paṇḍit were described in a beautiful *śloka* by our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

**nilāmbhodhitate sadā svavirahākṣepānvitam bāndhavam
śrīmad-bhāgavatī kathā madirayā sañjīvayan bhāti yaḥ
śrīmad-bhāgavatam sadā svanayanāśrūpāyanaiḥ pūjayan
gosvāmi-pravaro gadādhara-vibhur bhūyād mad ekā gatīḥ**

The lotus feet of Gadādhara Paṇḍit are our sole treasure. He resided by the ocean of *Vipralambha* which was manifest by his life and soul, Lord Gaurāṅga, who took everything from him. Mahāprabhu was suffering separation from Kṛṣṇa, and His feelings of separation were so intense, that sometimes His body became elongated, sometimes He retracted His limbs like a tortoise, and sometimes His joints became separated.

So Mahāprabhu, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, suffered intense separation from Kṛṣṇa, and He was enlivened by hearing topics about Lord Kṛṣṇa from Gadādhara Paṇḍit: When a person is in intense grief, what does he do? He becomes blinded by his grief, and he cannot decide how he will find some peace, so he drinks alcohol. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit provided such intoxication for Mahāprabhu by enlivening Him with the intoxicating topics of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is how he served the Lord of his heart.

And how were Gadādhara Paṇḍit's own feelings of separation? He is seeing that his beloved Lord is in front of him, and his Lord is suffering so intensely that He is becoming unconscious now and then. All the eight symptoms of separation can be seen in His body, such as perspiring, trembling, tears, becoming stunned, changing of bodily colour, etc., but there is nothing he can do about it. Lamenting this, continuous floods of tears flowed from his eyes.

Whenever Gadādhara Paṇḍit read the *Bhāgavatam*, he became so mad with feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa that his tears would wash away the letters on the page. The proof of this is, when Śrīnivāsa Āchāryya came to him to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Gadādhara Paṇḍit told him, "My dear son, when I was reading *Bhāgavatam* to Mahāprabhu, all the letters in my book were washed away, therefore I cannot now read to you from this book. Please find a book somewhere. Mahāprabhu instructed me in my dream, saying you were coming. But you need to have a book. I have memorised everything, but you need a book also." Gadādhara Paṇḍit thus worshipped the *Bhāgavatam* with his tears. Is it necessary to have any ingredients to worship? One's own tears are the best ingredients.

The lotus feet of this Gadādhara Paṇḍit are our ultimate destination. Our worshipable Deities are Gaura-Gadādhara, and the supreme demonstration of their *Vipralambha* was seen in Nilācala-Dhām.

In *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāj has given such deep meanings of the *ślokas* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and he has exposed such great inner wealth from them that it is beyond our imagination. When Mahāprabhu sees Lord Jagannāth in *Rathayātrā*, He prays like this:

āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam
 yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
 saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
 geham juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 10.82.49)

(“O lotus-navelled one, Your lotus feet, eternally held as the object of meditation within the hearts of the greatest *yogīs* of profound intellect, are the only resort for delivering those souls fallen into the well of material life. May those holy lotus feet graciously appear within the hearts of we ordinary household ladies.”)

And in *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* we find these ślokas:

anyera hṛdaya—mana, mora mana-vṛndāvana,
 ‘mane’ ‘vane’ eka kari’ jāni
 tāhān tomāra pada-dvaya, karāha yadi udaya,
 tabe tomāra pūrṇa kṛpā māni

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-lilā, 13.137)

(“Speaking in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘For most people, the mind and heart are one, but because My mind is never separated from Vṛndāvan, I consider My mind and Vṛndāvan to be one. My mind is already Vṛndāvan, and since You like Vṛndāvan, will You please place Your lotus feet there? I would deem that Your full mercy.’”)

prāṇa-nātha, śuna mora satya nivedana
 vraja—āmāra sadana, tāhān tomāra saṅgama,
 nā pāile nā rahe jivana

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-lilā, 13.138)

(“My dear Lord, kindly hear My true submission. My home is Vṛndāvan, and I wish Your association there. But if I do

not get it, then it will be very difficult for Me to keep My life.”)

**pūrve uddhava-dvāre, ebe sākṣāt āmāre,
yoga-jñāne kahilā upāya
tumi—vidagdha, kṛpāmaya, jānaha āmāra hṛdaya,
more aiche kahite nā yuyāya**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.139*)

(“My dear Kṛṣṇa, formerly, when You were staying in Mathurā, You sent Uddhava to teach Me knowledge and meditation. Now You Yourself are speaking the same thing, but my mind doesn’t accept it. There is no place in My mind for all these superficial things. You are artful and gracious, and You know well my heart—it does not befit You to speak to me in this way.”)

**nahe gopī yogeśvara, pada-kamala tomāra,
dhyāna kari’ pāibe santoṣa
tomāra vākya-paripāṭi, tāra madhye kuṭināṭi,
śuni’ gopīra āro bāḍhe roṣa**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.141*)

(“The *Gopīs* are not like the mystic *yogīs*. They will never be satisfied simply by meditating on Your lotus feet and imitating the so-called *yogīs*. Teaching the *Gopīs* about so called meditation is another kind of duplicity. When they are instructed to undergo mystic *yoga* practices, they are not at all satisfied. On the contrary, they become more angry with You.”) What intense feelings of separation the *Gopīs* had! “What are You saying to whom?”

**deha-smṛti nāhi yāra, saṁsāra-kūpa kāhān tāra,
tāhā haite nā cāhe uddhāra**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 13.142*)

The *Gopīs* are saying, “People worship You to be delivered from material existence, but that is not our kind of worship. We do not want to be delivered. We do not even remember our bodies. What do we care about material existence? And You are saying we will be delivered from material existence!”

Āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ: “Those processes are only for people who want to be delivered. Your lotus feet are our only goal.”
Tāhān tomāra pada-dvaya, karāha yadi udaya, tabe tomāra pūrṇa kṛpā māni.

In Nilācala-Dhām, there has been the utmost cultivation of such intense feelings of *Vipralambha*.

**caṇḍidāsa, vidyāpati, rāyera nāṭaka-gīti,
karṇāmṛta, śrī gīta-govinda
svarūpa-rāmānanda-sane, mahāprabhu rātri-dine,
gāya, śune—parama ānanda**

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 2.77)

(“He also passed His time reading the books and singing the songs of Chaṇḍidās and Vidyāpati, and listening to quotations from the *Jagannāth-vallabha-nāṭaka*, *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* and *Gīta-govinda*. Thus in the association of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu passed His days and nights chanting and hearing with supreme ecstasy.”)

So tomorrow you are going to that place. Lord Jagannāth has attracted you by His mercy. We will all feel our goals fulfilled there, and if we can humbly offer ourselves, then we will become complete.

**om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate**

**pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate**

(Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Invocation)

We may be very small, but He is infinite. If we can establish a relationship with the infinite, then just as when you subtract zero from zero, zero remains, similarly when you subtract infinity from infinity, infinity will remain. So we can become complete. So please go to Jagannāth-Dhām with such feelings in your heart.

There is happiness and misery everywhere—at home and outside. I definitely know that you do not care too much about such things. But still, at times such feelings come to us because we have material bodies. This body is like a spoiled brat that does not like to tolerate any inconvenience. The more comfort it gets, the more comfort it wants. But comfort is our enemy. There is no need for such comforts in our life.

As elephants, we have eaten so many jungles, and our hunger was not satisfied. As pigs, we have eaten mountains of stool, and our hunger was not satisfied. For life after life we have searched for comfort, but we have not found it. So now we must separate ourselves from such comforts and search for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Ocean of Pleasure, the Personification of all Mellows. We can have Him in our vision by initiating ourselves in *bhakti-yoga*. This will fulfil our highest mission, and this should be the object of our greatest desire.

Please, you all go there with such desires in your heart. I am sure there will be some inconveniences. Our *brahmacārī* Prabhus are all very respectable and affectionate, and they will try their best to give you all facility, but still you may face some austerity.

Please go with such desires to Lord Jagannāth, that by His mercy He will appear in our vision, and He will give us the dust of His Holy Dhām, so that we can travel there. This is our only desire and prayer.

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



Chapter Three

On the Way to Śrī Vṛndāvan-Dhām

A lecture by

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

When Mahāprabhu would hear the name of ‘Vṛndāvan,’ He would become ecstatic in *Bhāva*, in *Prema*, and would lose His senses in Divine Love. While describing His travels in Vṛndāvan, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāj Goswāmī said, “I cannot even express His mood.”

When Mahāprabhu was in Purī-Dhām during the time of Lord Jagannāth’s *Rathayātrā*, Svarūpa Dāmodara would sing and the Lord would dance in ecstasy. Mahāprabhu Himself would not sing so much, but Svarūpa Dāmodara would sing, and He would dance.

In one way Vṛndāvan is a very difficult place—whether going, leaving, moving around or living there, everyone must be very careful. When Jagadānanda Prabhu wanted to go to Vṛndāvan, Mahāprabhu gave him four instructions:

**śighra āsiha, tāhān nā rahiha cira-kāla
govarddhane nā caḍiha dekhite ‘gopāla’**

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 13.38)

“If you want to go to Vṛndāvan, you can go, but don’t stay too long. Don’t climb upon Govarddhan Hill even to see the Gopāla Deity there, and always stay with Rūpa and

Sanātana. Take their guidance and don't leave their association." These were three of His directives and the fourth was, "Don't imitate the *Vrajabāsīs*."

Jagadānanda Prabhu was Mahāprabhu's good friend and is considered an incarnation of Satyabhāmā. He was extremely attached to Mahāprabhu and sometimes would show his affection in unusual ways. Mahāprabhu instructed him: "Don't imitate or intimately associate with the *Vrajabāsīs*."

Jagadānanda Prabhu knew everything about the rules and regulations for living in the Holy Dhām but Mahāprabhu showed Himself as thinking he was not so qualified. He therefore gave some instruction, "Jagadānanda wants to go to Vṛndāvan alone but I do not feel that it is good." In this way He checked him many times.

Lastly Jagadānanda was very sad to see Mahāprabhu's renounced mood. He could not tolerate it, so he did not want to always stay with Mahāprabhu. Instead he wanted to go to Vṛndāvan. At that time Mahāprabhu gave these four directives to him and gave him permission to go: "You can go, but do not stay for long because everywhere there is some work of illusion, Māyā. Māyā covers everything in this mundane world. It may be Vṛndāvan, Nabadwīp, or Purī, but everywhere there is some covering of Māyā, and if you stay too long in such places you may be attracted by Māyā's work and so make some offences to the *Dhām*."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says in his book *Śrī Nabadwīp-bhāvataṅga: jaḍamaya bhūmi jala dravya yata āra*. What we see in Nabadwīp-Dhām, that is all *jaḍa*, mundane. But actually inside of that mundane form, when Māyā will mercifully remove the cover, we will see the real form of the *Dhām*.

Even to see the outside of the *Dhām* is beneficial, but if we make *aparādha*, offence, it is detrimental to our spiritual life.

And if we cannot see properly the real transcendental *Dhām*, at least we should try not to see the opposite thing—to see it as only mundane.

When Mahāprabhu experienced *Mahābhāva* for seven days in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit's house, the different devotees saw Him in different Forms. Devotees of Rāmachandra saw Mahāprabhu as Rāmachandra, devotees of Viṣṇu saw Him as Viṣṇu; others saw Him in the Form of Nṛsimhadeva, and yet others saw Him as different incarnations of Viṣṇu.

In that gathering Mahāprabhu restricted Mukunda Prabhu: "I shall not give you *darśan*."

Mukunda remained outside the house, weeping. Seeing him crying, the devotees reported to Mahāprabhu, "Mukunda is very sad and he wants to end his life by drowning in the River Ganges. He does not want to maintain his body if he cannot see Your Form. He is continually crying outside."

Mukunda sent a message with the devotees asking Mahāprabhu, "When shall I see Your Form?"

Mahāprabhu answered, "After crores of births he will be able to see Me."

Hearing this, Mukunda became very happy and began dancing outside the entrance, "Oh, after only crores of births I will again see Mahāprabhu! Therefore I have no problem. Crores of births I can tolerate to again have His *darśan*."

Hearing that, Mahāprabhu was happy and said, "Now he has already crossed those crores of births and he can see Me—he can come immediately."

So the devotees called Mukunda: "Oh Mukunda, come, Mahāprabhu is calling you."

But Mukunda said, "Mahāprabhu said 'after crores of births,' then how can I go there now? If I go now I will not be able to see the real Form of Mahāprabhu. Only after crores of

births shall I be able to see, but not now—if I ‘see’ Him now, that will not be really seeing Him, it will be illusion. So why shall I go there? I do not want to go there now.”

Real vision is necessary, and that is the main thing. Otherwise, seeing the Deity, the *Dhām* or anything else is only an exercise of the eye; it is not actual vision and we shall not gain real benefit from that. But Mahāprabhu said, “Now his crores of births have gone, and he can come and see Me.”

Mukunda very much chastised himself that he had done wrong, and so had caused Mahāprabhu to at first refuse him entrance. Mahāprabhu then showed His real Form to him.

The main thing is that without devotion and transcendental knowledge we can neither see the real Vṛndāvan-Dhām nor the real *Nāma*, *Rūpa*, *Guṇa* and *Līlā* (Name, Form, Qualities and Pastimes) of the Lord. All these are transcendental, therefore we cannot see them with our mundane eyes—that is the main thing.

If we go to Vṛndāvan or stay in Nabadwīp the same is true, but still these places are Holy *Dhāms* and they emanate auspiciousness. We can touch a drop of that if we stay there without offence. In that way we can touch the glow of that *jyoti*, that effulgence. The *Dhām* is covered by illusion, but even so, there is some brilliance, and that glow or brilliance of the *Dhām* may touch us if we stay there without offence. But if we stay there too long we may become overly familiar and then that glow may leave us. That glow is something like light, but it is more than that, it is the transcendental world and it is fully conscious.

It was for our instruction that Mahāprabhu advised Jagadānanda, “Do not stay in Vṛndāvan for a long time as there is more possibility of making offence, and do not go upon Govarddhan Hill because this Hill is a form of Kṛṣṇa.”

In the Scriptures it is mentioned that Govarddhan has

two forms: one is as a servitor, and the other form is as Kṛṣṇa Himself who accepts service from the devotees. So Mahāprabhu instructed Jagadānanda, “Don’t go upon Govarddhan Hill, and when you stay in Vr̥ndāvan you must stay with Rūpa Goswāmī and Sanātana Goswāmī. Under their guidance no problem will arise and there will be less chance to make offence. If you stay with them, you will not make any offence there. Staying with Rūpa-Sanātana is also a great responsibility, but by My order you can stay there securely and follow their guidance.”

Later there was a Pastime where Jagadānanda became very angry with Sanātana—but that is their *Līlā*. Actually, Jagadānanda Prabhu is a *pārṣada* (eternal associate) of Mahāprabhu, but Mahāprabhu is always teaching us through His devotees.

The main principle is that when we go to Vr̥ndāvan, we must follow a devotee. To keep ourselves within the proper conception we must take the shelter, *āśraya*, of a real devotee, otherwise if we think, “I will do *bhajan* alone in Vr̥ndāvan,” it may be most unbeneficial.

Many of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura’s disciples wanted to do *bhajan* there, but Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura did not agree with that. Not only that, but after he himself went to Vr̥ndāvan, he expressed: “I am very unfortunate, I did not see there even one proper, perfect devotee.”

There were many *bābājīs* in Vr̥ndāvan at that time, many of whom were famous and widely acclaimed to be *siddha-mahāpuruṣas* (perfected souls). But, with his hands held to his forehead, Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākura said, “I did not see any perfect Vaiṣṇava in Vr̥ndāvan. This is my misfortune.”

So we must be cautious with our knowledge. Knowledge is

a type of power and should be used wisely. This caution has been given to us in the books. But transcendental knowledge is another thing; still, if we can use even mundane knowledge wisely we must gain some benefit. It was for this reason that Mahāprabhu told Jagadānanda Prabhu: “When you are in Vṛndāvan use your knowledge wisely and you will be benefitted. Follow Rūpa and Sanātana Goswāmī; not by imitating their practising life, their *sādhana*, but by following their directives.”

The Scriptures advise us, “You must follow what Kṛṣṇa says, but you are not to try to imitate what He does.”

The advice of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is, “Do not even think to imitate Kṛṣṇa or His powerful devotees. Lord Śiva digested an ocean of poison, but you have no capacity to do that. If you try, you will die.”

We have much news of the transcendental world such as through the Scriptures, but only when we can use that wisely and properly will we be benefitted, otherwise we will be the losers. Everywhere there is some danger, so we should always exercise caution.

Vṛndāvan-Dhām is transcendental, though the word ‘transcendental’ does not seem sufficient to properly describe it. We can say ‘spiritual world’ but that is also insufficient. Vṛndāvan-Dhām is *Cinmaya-dhāma*, it is *transcendental*, it is *conscious*, but it is also more than that.

Rūpa Goswāmī gave a very nice *śloka* about that world and that type of ecstasy:

**vyatītya bhāvanāvartma yaś camatkāra-bhārabhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bāḍaṁ svadate saraso mataḥ**

He says *vyatītya bhāvanā*, that plane is over and above whatever we can reach with the fullest extent of our knowledge. It is far beyond our understanding; it is inconceivable to

us, but at the same time it is so nice that we cannot even imagine it. But it is our own property and we can get it. Not only can we get it but we *must* get it one day, otherwise we have no hope. Today or tomorrow, or maybe after millions of births, but we must get that. There is no other way for us.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says:

nṛ-deham ādyaṁ sulabhaṁ sudurllabhaṁ
 plavaṁ sukalpaṁ guru-karṇadhāraṁ
 mayānukūlyena nabhasvateritaṁ
 pumān bhavābdhiṁ na taret sa ātmahā

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.17)

We must utilise this chance of our human birth immediately. We now have this human body and it is very suitable for practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness. With other bodies like those of cows, horses or trees, consciousness is insufficient. We are fortunate because now we have a human body—not only a human body, but a civilised human body with developed consciousness having taken birth in a suitable place. We are not as jungle-men. Therefore having this human form with developed consciousness, one who does not take the opportunity to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a suicidal person. There is no certainty whether we will get another chance, so we must immediately take advantage of this opportunity.

Devotee: Śrīla Mahārāj, in the English civilisation we never heard before about Goloka, or *Cinmaya-dhāma*. In English there are no words to properly describe these things. So, how are we to suitably express them?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: In some way we shall try to give a description. We shall try to give some general direction. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī did that also in his verse:

**vyatītya bhāvanāvartma yaś camatkāra-bhārabhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bāḍaṁ svadate saraso mataḥ**

It is beyond your intelligence, beyond your whole civilisation, everything. Perhaps we can know up to the fullest extent of our civilisation, but it is beyond that.

Devotee: Rūpa Goswāmī can express this using Sanskrit and Bengali words, and Your Divine Grace can also. But how shall we translate the word *divya*? If we say *divine*, that indicates only heaven; and if we say *consciousness*, that is only general consciousness. There is no word for Goloka, and no word for *cinmaya*. We need to translate into English, but we don't have the appropriate words, then what shall we do?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: We will always try our best to express everything properly according to our capacity.

Even our own understanding may not be real, actually, although our feelings tell us it is. In my own childhood when I used to hear songs about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *Lilā*, sometimes I would sit as if unconscious while imagining those Pastimes. I would visualise what is happening there, what Kṛṣṇa is doing, what His associates are doing, and many things. Now I think differently, but at that time I thought what I saw was real. And when I would hear or sometimes sing the *Goṣṭhya-lilā* songs (songs about Kṛṣṇa's cowherding Pastimes), I became fully attracted—not only attracted but completely charmed. Captured by that illusion I considered myself as also going with that party for herding cows. That is an auspicious thing, no doubt, but now I can understand it was one kind of illusion, and by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj I was protected from being too much involved with it. In this way no bad reaction came to me.

Now I am worshipping from a distance the whole of that

realm, but at that time I was thinking, and very heavily feeling also, that I was actually part of that *Lilā*. Now I can understand it was something, but not the real thing. So there may be many things, but everything is mixed with the mundane conception.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīpād Jājāvar Mahārāj used to talk together, and sometimes those talks were very heavy. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj always supported the consciousness line whereas Śrīpād Jājāvar Mahārāj always analysed and categorised everything—he would see things from an analytical viewpoint. Analysing may not always be bad; but when you want to stand in the plane of consciousness, and if you can stand there, then you can see everything, otherwise not. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

**vicakṣaṇa kari', dekhite cāhile
haya āṅkhi agocara**

If you want to analyse everything, it will disappear from your view. When you go to put your eye to that subject to look, scrutinise and analyse, it will then disappear. If you take that approach, it will be very difficult for you. But if you stay in the real conscious plane everything will appear before you.

There are two kinds of appearance—real appearance and illusory appearance. Where there is mundane consciousness, something is appearing, but we can say that is illusion. That illusory appearance may sometimes be achieved by the application of the power of the *yogīs*, or by the use of drugs, but it is all illusory. By controlling the senses the *yogīs* can stay in some plane of consciousness but that is not the real Kṛṣṇa conscious plane.

**yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ, kāma-lobha-hato muhuḥ
mukunda-sevayā yadvat, tathātmāddhā na śāmyati**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.6.35)

What we may see through the practice of yoga—*yama*, *nīyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, etc.—is also the shadow, not the real thing. Through yoga, at best we can see only the light of Paramātmā and have some connection with Him. But we cannot attain to the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and the world of Kṛṣṇa through that method.

In *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*, it is said:

**premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi**

“When my heart is full with *Kṛṣṇa-prema* and my eyes are decorated with the love of dedication and they get that transcendental vision, then I shall be able to see in my heart and everywhere those Pastimes of Vṛndāvan.”

Devotion is the necessity. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī clearly says that only by devotion is one able to feel and see everything.

Sometimes devotees would ask Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “What should I think about when I chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra*? Should I think of the Deity, or the devotees, or their paraphernalia?”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would reply, “No, nothing—you only pray to *Śrī Nāma*, ‘Please show Your Form,’ and chant without offence. When that transcendental *Nāma-prabhu* will appear in your heart, your body will also become transcendental, *cinmaya-deha*.”

The Scriptures give us many directions about how to practise devotional life. They are something like instructions from an expert who can make a particular thing. An expert in electronics can build several tape-recorders or radios every

day. It is very easy for him. He is qualified so he can give instructions to others about how to do it: “If you do like this, and this, you will also be qualified and you will find it to be a very easy thing.”

The Scriptures come to us in a similar way. Vyāsadeva and other *ṛṣis* and *munis* are very expert and they express, “If you try to practise in this way, it is very easy.” But actually to go to that plane is very hard. We see that there are many disturbances, many offences, and other obstacles.

When one tries to start a generator, it is first necessary to do some cranking. A lot of power is required and it is troublesome and difficult, but once the generator is running, it can produce full power—maybe a thousand kilowatts or more. At first though, when one tries by hand to start it up for generating power, it is difficult. Similarly, our present stage is hard for us, no doubt, but once we get going it will be easier. In the practising stage one feels something: some happiness, cleanliness, enthusiasm, and many things.

The first class stage, the highest stage, is when we can firmly stay in the plane of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that is the *paramahansa* stage. In many places it is recorded that everything comes from Kṛṣṇa and everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. To be fully in that consciousness is the *paramahansa* stage. When that consciousness will come we shall easily harmonise with everything. In the midst of the whole environment, we shall be able to tolerate everything.

When Kṛṣṇa established the Pañca-Pāṇḍavas in their kingdom, He said to Kuntidevī, “Now everything is settled here. Stay here happily. I am going to see My Dvārakā, My kingdom, and see how things are going on there.” Kṛṣṇa was ready to leave by chariot, and while standing in front of everyone, Kuntidevī approached Him and prayed:

**vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śāsvat
tatra tatra jagad-guro
bhavato darśanaṁ yat syād
apunar bhava-darśanam**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.8.25)

“My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are thinking we are very happy now, but actually it is not so. We are very sad because You are going back to Dvārakā. I do not want this kingdom. I can leave everything if only You will stay here; but now You won’t stay, so rather I am praying that those earlier days of danger will again come to us, and that these present ‘happy’ days will leave! I want those dangerous times because during danger we get Your presence, and with Your presence comes all auspiciousness. Whoever sees Your face will not take birth in this mundane world again.”

The main point is that at first when we start in our devotional life some trouble must come, but once we are running we will go very easily. We shall feel it to be a very easy thing to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When we are established in the faithful plane we will have no problem. Only it is necessary to stay in the faithful plane and then our chariot will run. However, the beginning part is difficult because our soul is covered by *ahaṅkāra* thus we cannot differentiate between the *ahaṅkāra* and our soul. It is therefore necessary to engage in the initial cleansing practices in order to differentiate properly.

**ahaṅkāranivṛttanām, keśavo nahī dūragaḥ
ahaṅkāra-yutānām hi, madhye parvvata-rāśayaḥ**

(Brahma-vaivartta Purāṇa)

The obstruction is our ego, *ahaṅkāra*. *Ahaṅkāra* means false ego, but that definition is not very accurate. *Ahaṅkāra* means a

particular kind of world—a whole world with so many things within it. “My mother, my father, my brother, my wife, my house, my garden, my everything.... And: I can do this, I can do that, I have done it; and before me, my father did this and that....” The *aharikāra* world is a very big world! It is not only ego; to say only ‘ego’ is not sufficient, but it is an expanding world. If we can detach ourselves from that egoistic world then immediately we can establish ourselves in the faithful plane, and after that we will have no problem. Therefore I described the *paramahansa* level as the plane from which, in our earlier analogy, the ‘generator’ is already running. Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came into this world to teach us the practical *paramahansa* class by his conduct, writings and speech.

Many things may be wrong according to the mundane law, but everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (18.17) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna:

**yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo, buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatvāpi sa imāṅl lokān, na hanti na nibadhyate**

(“He who is free from egotism (arising from aversion to the Absolute), and whose intelligence is not implicated (in worldly activities)—even if he kills every living being in the whole world, he does not kill at all, neither does he suffer a murderer’s consequences.”)

The point Kṛṣṇa is making is that no sin will touch you if you stay in that faithful plain of the transcendental world.

Many symptoms come in a practitioner’s life. The first symptom is enthusiasm—and by the inspiration of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj many newcomers were very eager in their peaching: “My Guru said I must preach and he said everything

belongs to Kṛṣṇa, everything is Kṛṣṇa's property and we are the servitors of Kṛṣṇa so we must use everything." In this way they very enthusiastically preached in the West. Within our mundane law it is offensive to take property from a hotel, for instance, but some of them did not care for that. They thought, "They are making offence because they have the mentality, 'It is my property, it is my hotel.' But actually *they* are all thieves, *we* are not thieves."

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj gave the real conception of Kṛṣṇa consciousness no doubt, and if we are one hundred percent pure then we shall have no problem. But if we are not cent-percent pure and if there is any tendency to imitate, some problems must come. Imitation is hard to recognise—and if we cannot recognise what is imitation and what is pure, we will be faced with problems. So it is necessary to differentiate between what is imitation and what is pure.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj spread the wave of Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, and now the time has come for preaching the conception of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. My hope is a very deep hope—I am always hoping in a very big way—and I am always surprised to see in which way Kṛṣṇa consciousness is spreading all over the world.

Mahāprabhu said:

**ṛṥṥhivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma
sarvvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 17.203)

"My Holy Name will be preached in every town and village of the world." It is a miracle that it has happened in only a few years. If we think about it we cannot believe how it is possible. Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj tried very hard for his first year in

America, but he could not successfully achieve anything. For one year he tried so hard to get that generator going; but when it started, then immediately the whole world lit up through Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Maybe sometimes we make some offences, perhaps even forty percent of the time we are making some offence. It is our birthright! Because we have taken birth in this mundane world, we can't help but do some imperfect work. But with so much offence in the world we are astonished and cannot guess in which way Kṛṣṇa consciousness has spread all over the world. Seeing the result of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's preaching we are very much enlivened.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also tried very hard to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When the Gauḍīya Maṭh first started, all the imitation *sampradāyas* became very fearful and they wanted to kill Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mission, and wanted to kill him also, but they were not successful. He tried very hard and established sixty-four centres in India and also sent his devotees outside India to Germany, England and America. He tried in that way but he was not so successful with the overseas preaching. After his disappearance some disturbance came to his mission, but still some of his disciples, like Śrīpād Ban Mahārāj and Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj tried very hard to preach.

Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj was sent by Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to London. At one stage he had no money at all, not a farthing. He had a stove in which it was necessary to put four pennies in order to cook, but even that money he didn't have. He thought, "What shall I do now?" Soon afterwards the cleaner gave him an envelope and explained he had found it under the table, or perhaps in the door, "Please see

what it is." Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj opened it and saw a cheque for 1300 pounds. He was surprised!

Previously he had written to the Mahārāj of Baroda: "I am in much trouble for lack of money, please send me something as a donation"—and now that money had come. His immediate concern was for some breakfast, otherwise with no food he would get sick, but how to realise the money? That morning, as soon as the bank opened, he went to cash the cheque, but as he had no account, the bank clerk asked him for some identification: "You are Mr. Goswāmī? Can you show that?" He had no proof of identity and also being Indian he was perhaps not very conscious about that. However, the previous day he had attended a meeting and his photo was published in that day's newspaper. Suddenly he saw the newspaper lying on the counter and he pointed it out to a bank official, "I attended that meeting, look there is my photo." Then that man immediately gave him the money!

Anyhow, Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj tried very hard in London but was not so successful. Maybe he planted some seeds in the soil of England, but it is very true that he was not successful in achieving anything substantial. Also Śrīpād Bon Mahārāj tried in Germany, France and America but he also wasn't so successful.

Many years later, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj tried and he was successful. He had also tried to preach in India but without much success, but his intention had always been to go to the West to preach and he eventually did so. That history you know: for one year he tried to generate something there. Then it took off by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and Nityānanda Prabhu and its light spread all over the world in such a short time. I am very surprised, and also full of joy in my heart. I

am thinking, "How is it possible?"

When Buddhism, 'Śāṅkarism' or whatever other 'ism' appeared, it took such a long time before they were accepted by the people. Or it would sometimes take the influence of a king or some special event to help a particular conception to spread and be preached widely. In whatever way, it generally took a very long time. But within five to ten years Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj was able to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. And Mahāprabhu foretold it:

**pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma
sarvvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma**

When we see this we feel very happy in our heart and think, "Here a transcendental thing must be present!" We may be able to see or not see, that is another thing, but we can feel it is present there.

So, I am not immediately looking at any fault of the devotees. What the devotees either in the West or East are doing I am thinking they are doing very nicely. I immediately remember Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and feel, "Maybe they are doing a little wrong, but that is no problem."

I do not know what is the will of Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu now, but real Kṛṣṇa consciousness has spread, no doubt, so there is a substantial serving chance for the conditioned souls. And I think that in some way or other it must spread more, and everyone will be benefitted in that way.

We see many *Āchāryyas* in this world. Perhaps they are not all perfect but somehow they are trying and at least they are doing some raw, first cultivation. When cultivating crops there must first be ploughing, then planting the seed, then watering, etc. In that way we can say the work is going on very nicely.

When there is a war, many soldiers die. Also many women, children, property and other things are lost. In a war it is inevitable, it must be so. So this is also one kind of war—with Māyā, Durgā. It is a revolt. Some revolutionary environment has been created by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and others. So some will die or be injured but the gates of Durgā's prison-house have been broken. Otherwise, how is it that people all over the world are chanting 'Hare Kṛṣṇa'? The revolution has already erupted and in the fighting some may be injured and some may die, but the gate has been broken and the prisoners are running to Vaikuṅṭha.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura described the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī in a very respectful way. From his writings we can understand what is our highest destination. At the present time there may be some difficulty in different ways for many people, but this special type of knowledge, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness, will come to the prisoners sleeping under Māyā.

The prisoners were sleeping but now with this consciousness they have woken up, a revolt has broken out in the prison and they are escaping. We are so fortunate that in our time it has happened and we are seeing it. It could have come in the past or it could have come in the future but we are so fortunate to see the revolution happening now. We have seen many things and we have had the association of the Generals and soldiers—that also is our fortune. Now if we can proceed to our destination in a harmonised way that will be ultimately fruitful for us all. Hare Kṛṣṇa.



Chapter Four

Within the Holy Dhāma

Introduction and welcome lecture in Govarddhan,

Śrīla Ragunātha Dāsa Goswāmī always prayed to Girirāja Govarddhan: *nija-nikaṭa-nivāsaḥ dehi govarddhana tvam*. And Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu also said:

**vaikuṅṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād-
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govarddhanah
rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevām viveki na kaḥ**

At first we can see Vaikuṅṭha-Dhām as being a very high place, but above that, the more important place is Mathurā—*janito varā madhu-purī*. Why? Because Kṛṣṇa Himself is born there, that is His *Lilā* there. Nārāyaṇa, though, does not take birth. He has no birth, He has no father and no mother, but Kṛṣṇa has His father and mother—that is within His *Lilā*. And, *vaikuṅṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād...* better than Mathurā is Vṛndāvan, where Kṛṣṇa has His Pastimes with the *Gopīs*. And over that place, is the highest place, Śrī Govarddhan—Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura says; *giridhārī-gāndharvīkā yathā kṛīḍā kaila*.

The most worshipful place, at the foot of Govarddhan, is Rādhā-kuṇḍa; there Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī have Their highest *Prema-lilā*. One who has a little intelligence, he must try to stay in Govarddhan; and if possible, he can stay at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Everyone, though, cannot stay at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, but they can stay at the lotus feet of Govarddhan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said that we can stay at the lotus feet of Govarddhan and every day go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and serve Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, etc. The devotees will stay at Govarddhan and render service in their *Gopī-bhāva*, their transcendental service mood form of a *Gopī*.

The *Gopīs* also stay in Govarddhan. The *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs* stay in Govarddhan, and everyday for their service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa they go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In the night they do not all stay with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; only a few stay, and the others return to Govarddhan and spend the night there up to three o'clock in the morning. Then at four o'clock they start their *sevā* again at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and spend the whole day there. When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa go to sleep, they again return to Govarddhan. At that time only a few, like Rūpa Mañjarī, stay for the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, in order to massage Their lotus feet and give Them some nourishment.

At night They are engaged in Their *Līlā*, and the *Mañjarīs* also help that, but the *Sakhīs* cannot enter that place. Only the *Mañjarīs* can go there at that time. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa is tired and very much in need of a glass of water, but nobody can go inside at that time—only the *Mañjarīs* can go. That is a very high thing, and it is not a matter discussable by us, but it is happening.

Ourselves, we will stay at the lotus feet of Govarddhan and pray to Kṛṣṇa, or rather, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. All the group at Govarddhan are serving Rādhārāṇī—they actually have no connection with Kṛṣṇa. From Govarddhan they go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa and arrange many things. The *Aṣṭakālīya-līlā* happens there, not elsewhere, and one who exclusively wants to serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa will think about these Pastimes. But we shall not think of such things now—with our mundane body and mind we cannot think about that.

**dhāmera svarūpa sphuribe nayane
haiba rādhāra dāsī**

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said that while chanting, chanting, chanting we will forget our body consciousness, and at that time our main form as a servitor to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī will manifest. That is a very high thing; but immediately we will not consider such things because we are sure to make offence to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the devotees. We say ‘Vṛndāvan,’ but Vṛndāvan means all associated places combined—that is Vṛndāvan.

**jaya rādhe, jaya kṛṣṇa, jaya vṛndāvan...
śyāma-kuṇḍa, rādhā-kuṇḍa, giri-govarddhan
kālindī jamunā jaya, jaya mahāvan...**

All these places and more are included in Vṛndāvan. And in this village of Vṛndāvan, Kṛṣṇa is engaged in many different types of *Līlā*. In this place Kṛṣṇa’s *Līlā* is going on in many areas. We are here in Vṛndāvan and praying that we may find somewhere for our ‘Śrīla Śrīdhara Swāmī Sevāśram.’ I do not know where Rādhārāṇī will give us a place, but it is approachable only by prayer. We can only pray: “Please, give some entrance.”

Actually, Rādhārāṇī does not give entrance. Admission is granted by the *Sakhīs*, the girlfriends of Rādhārāṇī. Especially, we are in the group of Lalitādevī and in that group, Rūpa Mañjarī is the head of the *Mañjarī* section, and Lalitādevī is our Mistress. Our prayer is that she will take us and engage us in service. We are very hopeful because Lalitādevī’s mood is very open, something like that of Nityānanda Prabhu. She is very affectionate with all, and she is the head of all the *Sakhīs*.

The *Aṣṭa-Sakhīs*, the eight principal *Gopīs* are: Lalitā, Viśākhā, Citrā, Campakalatā, Tuṅgavidyā, Indurekhā, Sudevī and Raṅgadevī. Lalitādevī is the leader of that group. She has

a special group and through them she arranges for maintaining the service to Rādhārāṇī. She is the head Mistress of our spiritual form. We are now in mundane bodies so we will not think of that, still that is our goal of life. Therefore we must worship that with our full regard, and we must not make any offence in the *Dhām*.

It is very difficult to stay in Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We must have an exclusive service mood to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and that can give us some place here. By the mercy of Lalitādevī, through our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Rūpa Goswāmī, it is possible to get that. And if in that way we try to see everything, then no problem will come to us.

We are so fortunate that we have reached, by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Vṛndāvan-Dhām. Actually Vṛndāvan is in the transcendental world and we cannot reach that transcendental plane with our mundane body. But here we have some special facility by the mercy of Mahāprabhu as well as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. We are like bees who try to take honey from a tightly sealed honey pot; but they may give us some chance to attach with that transcendental world. The pot is solid and the bees cannot remove the seal and take the honey. This is an example only, but still, from it we can understand what our position is like. The bees are on the outside of the bottle, and our position is similar—but we are also near the honey!

We can enter Vṛndāvan-Dhām by the mercy of Rādhārāṇī. But She is engaged with the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and She has no time to see to us, but by the mercy of Her finest, closest and topmost associate, Lalitādevī, we may gain a chance to enter. Lalitādevī is the leader of the group of *Sakhīs*, the friends of Rādhārāṇī; she is very merciful and can give us admission to Vraja-Dhām, Vṛndāvan-Dhām.

But here is one question. Do we want that or not? We hear

about Vṛndāvan-Dhām, but we hear through our mundane senses and with our mundane feelings. Some essence, however, is coming through that and we express, “We like Vṛndāvan-Dhām.” But, like *Śrī Harināma Mahāmantra*, Vṛndāvan-Dhām is also transcendental. If we want to enter there, we need some special mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī through Her associates, and we can only get that with our super-hankering mood.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī said;

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

(*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 8.70)

We can do many auspicious services to the Lord but that is not the cause of the real hankering necessary for service to Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We need to have the association of the associates of Vraja-Dhām, hear the *Līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, and engage in *śravaṇam*, *kīrttanam*, *viṣṇoḥ-smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, etc. With that kind of activity in our devotional path, inspiration can come to us, and by the causeless mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, that kind of devotional hankering can enter our heart; *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ*. It is very rare in this mundane world, but that is our super goal of life. We need it. We cannot touch that ecstatic *Līlā* through our mundane body, but we may understand it a little through our preceptorial Masters' line, the *Guru-paramparā*.

**iśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarvva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam**

(*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1)

“The Supreme Lord, the embodiment of truth, consciousness and joy, is Govinda, Kṛṣṇa. He is beginningless, the origin of all that be, and the cause of all causes.”

That is His position.

**nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigraha
pūrṇa śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma nāmiṇoḥ**

The Holy Name and Kṛṣṇa are non-different. Both are transcendental, therefore through our mundane knowledge and mundane activity we cannot touch that ecstasy. In the *Upaniṣads* it is said:

**nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūrṁ svām**

(“The Supreme Lord is not attained by preaching, by vast intelligence, nor by knowing very expertly the *Vedas*. He is attained only by one who He Himself chooses. To such a person He manifests His own Form.”)

When from the upper level causeless mercy comes and touches a fallen soul, he can understand: “Something is touching me, and that thing is very exalted and auspicious.” An example is that if an ant is running past me and I touch it, the ant can understand it is being touched. All is under my control, not his. When I lift my finger he then thinks, “Oh, whatever came and touched me has now gone away.” In this situation he has no possibility to exert his personality, he has no free-will to control the situation.

Kṛṣṇa is like that. When that Transcendental Knowledge Himself comes down and touches us, at that time, we can understand it, otherwise there is no possibility for us to under-

stand. It is not mechanical. One possibility is there—*yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas* if we take shelter with our full unalloyed devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa must be merciful to us; and that gives us some hope. It is up to the sweet will of Kṛṣṇa, but in this way we can gain some position and enter into the transcendental world.

Why are we doing other types of activities such as worshipping, etc.? It is our practice for devoting everything, including ourselves, unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. In this way we are trying to practise.

But Kṛṣṇa said in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

**sarvva-dharmmān parrityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarvva-pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ**

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

“Totally rejecting all kinds of religion, take shelter of Me exclusively. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins. Do not despair.”

**yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi, yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya, tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam**

(“Oh Arjjuna, son of Kuntī, whichever action you perform, whether general or scriptural; whatever you eat; whatever you offer in sacrifice; whatever you give in charity; and whichever austerity you perform or vow you keep, all that you perform should be as an offering unto Me.”)

There are many *ślokas* like this. Another one is:

**daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etām taranti te**

“This other-worldly, supernatural, external potency of Mine composed of three modes of nature most certainly is difficult to cross. However, those who take shelter exclusively in Me alone, and who completely surrender unto Me, they certainly are able to surpass this almost insurmountable illusion.”

Kṛṣṇa wants full surrender unto His lotus feet, and if we do this He will take our full responsibility, and when He takes us our bodies will become transcendental.

**dikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama**

**sei deha kare tāra cid-ānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tānra caraṇa bhajaya**

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 4.192 & 193)

When the conditioned soul takes shelter unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa takes him and provides for him whatever he may lack. He gives to him whatever is necessary, making him complete in that transcendental position. The main thing is devotion. A fully surrendered soul has no responsibility for himself.

**mānasa, deho, geho, yo kichū mor
arpiluṅ tuwā pade, nanda-kiśor**

**sampade bipade, jīvane-maraṇe
dāy mama gelā, tuwā o-pada baraṇe...**

(Śaraṇāgati)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Whatever I have, everything I am offering unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. I do not know what I have, but whatever it may be please take that for Your service, from this day on I have no responsibility for myself. You may maintain this body or not, this is Your matter not

mine. I shall only try to serve Your holy lotus feet.”

When the conditioned soul takes shelter under the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa takes that conditioned soul as His own property.

**rakṣa karabi tuhuṅ niścaya jāni
pāna karabuṅ hām yāmuna-pāni**

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur said in Śaraṇāgati, “You must save us. It is your duty, I know, so what fear can I have? I can jump into the polluted waters of the Kāliya Lake without fear—I can do anything.”

Here we can see the main thing: faith in Kṛṣṇa. The faithful world, that is the real transcendental world. In that world, faith is the very ground—the very foundation. When we live there with our full faith, we will attain the highest result of highest benefit in life.

One example you may have heard. If a police officer chases some thieves but mistakenly kills someone, all liability for his actions, even his mistakes, goes to the government and not to the police officer. His responsibility is only towards capturing the thieves—that is his duty. This is the main point.

After self-surrender, the result of what we do goes to Kṛṣṇa and does not come to us, but that surrender must be perfect. This is the first quality of the conditioned soul. After that, everything depends on Kṛṣṇa; and only He knows in which way He will take the charge of the conditioned soul.

Through the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees you can understand what is the will of Kṛṣṇa, and what is not. If you try to gain that knowledge and maintain your devotion within that environment, you will have no fear from anywhere.

This advice comes within the category of our primary and secondary education. But the super-position comes by

the mercy of the associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. If we have super-hankering, then it will come to us. Who has some special quality of hankering—hankering for *Madhura-rasa*—he will get it. It is true. Only hankering after that *Lilā* can give us a little chance.

In the pastimes of Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī we can see:

**āsābharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratañ hi
tvañ cet kṛpañ mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiñ me
prānair vraje ma ca baroru bakārināpi**

Śrīla Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī passed his life, some eighty years, in Vṛndāvan-Dhām with this special type of hankering. He showed by his position and through his *lilā* how this mood of hankering can come to the *jīva*-soul—and in what a super way it can come.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu showed all kinds of *Bhāvas*, including *Mahābhāva*, in this mundane world. He tasted it, Kṛṣṇa Himself tasted it, and the auspicious souls can see it as well as His paraphernalia and His associates. For the auspicious soul, everything shows him in which way he will proceed to his destination.

Dāsa Goswāmī said, “I am only waiting for Your mercy. Oh, Rādhārāṇī, if You do not give that, I think my life is spoiled in Vṛndāvan-Dhām. Even, I do not want the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. What shall I do with Kṛṣṇa if Your mercy is not present there? You are the Supreme Servitor of Kṛṣṇa and only under Your guidance do I want that service. Without Your connection I will not get it, I know that, and it is one hundred percent sure.

“Kṛṣṇa has many forms, but: “*Rādhā-saṅge yadā bhāti, tadā ‘madana-mohitaḥ’*” When You are with Kṛṣṇa, we can see that Kṛṣṇa is in His fully ecstatic form. Therefore, I need Your

mercy. My whole time I have spent for Your mercy. My only prayer is, 'Please give Your mercy on my head.' I need to serve Your lotus feet. I do not want the association of Kṛṣṇa without You; such service to Kṛṣṇa has no value. Kṛṣṇa will not be happy without Your service, and I want to do Your service."

Kṛṣṇa says in the *śāstra*:

...mad bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās, te me bhaktatamāḥ matāḥ

("My dear Partha, one who claims to be My devotee is not really so. Only a person who is the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee.")

We can see many *ślokas* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and other places expressing this point.

So Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī says: "Kṛṣṇa Himself is very pleased with the association of His devotees; therefore I need Your mercy, only this is my hope. One day I must get it. But I have passed my whole life here in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and still I do not have it!" In this way, Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī is praying. His ambition is only to serve Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. And it is by the special mercy of the associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that we may get that kind of hankering.

Śrīla Narottama Ṭkākura wrote in one song: *nitāiyer koruṇā habe, braje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pābe*. Nityānanda Prabhu can give us admission there, He can give us the passport. But only the associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī can give us the visa to enter into that world, that faithful service world. So we pray to our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. He is the non-different representation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

**ācāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān, nāvamanyeta karhicit
na marttya buddhyāsūyeta, sarvva deva-mayo guruḥ**

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27)

Kṛṣṇa Himself appears in the form of Guru, but when we will see the real form of Guru, then we will understand that he is the Supreme Servitor of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākur in his *Guruvāṣṭaka* says:

**yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
dhyāyan stuvamś tasya yaśas tri-sandhyaṁ
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

**nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai
yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇiyā
tatrāti-dākṣyād ati-vallabhasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam**

From these *ślokas* we can see the position of Śrī Gurudeva. Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākur said that if we realise in a higher way, we can see Gurudeva as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; that means, the Supreme Servitor of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To gain that vision we need the mercy of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Without such mercy we cannot enter the garden of Reality the Beautiful—that transcendental world.

By the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj we are gathered together here and asking for the mercy of the lotus feet of Gurudeva. If Śrīla Guru Mahārāj with his full wave of mercy will break into our hearts, then we must gain admission within that transcendental world.

Many times Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained and praised *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, and every time he would give us some clue: we must follow the service mood of Lalitādevī.

Lalitādevī's mood is twenty-four hours a day continuous service, and such mood spreads throughout her group. Not

only that, but all groups are enlightened by the service of Lalitādevī. So, it is necessary to get their mercy and it is possible only by the grace of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—and not by any other way. This is because he commands the position of the Holder of the *Rūpānuṅga Sampradāya*. He is the super servitor of Lalitādevī, and that servitor is Śrīmatī Rūpa Mañjarī.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave charge of His *Sampradāya* to Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. In this way we are connected, and we must one day fulfil our divine aspiration for their service. This is our only hope.



Chapter Five

The Land of Spiritual Gems

More from within Śrī Vṛndāvan-Dhām

Many devotees are coming to our *Maṭh* from every corner of the world and we are living together. Everyone who comes does not know Bengali, English or Hindi, but they are always very submissive and trying to serve, and they are serving. In which way is this possible? It can only happen by the causeless mercy of Śrī Guru.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj spread his consciousness, the conception which is coming through the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, and you are getting the chance to engage in that line of service. All of you cannot speak even English, but you are doing service. It is sometimes a miracle for me to see. Only the mood of affection and the mood of service can help us, and you have that. It is your property, and to serve you—that is my property. In this way, no problem comes between us.

We are always trying to serve the will and mood of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, that is why we have come here. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj lastly told me, “In the future, do not try to make many *maṭhs*. Managing a *maṭh* is very difficult and all of your time will be taken for that management. So only make a *maṭh* in Purī-Dhām, and if possible, you can try to organise a devotees’ *bhajan āśrama* in Vṛndāvan-Dhām.” That was his desire. And now it is established—Purī, Vṛndāvan, and Nabadwīp-Dhām. With all the devotees I am trying to satisfy Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s will and desire.

I know, believe, and have faith in Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and

that by his causeless mercy we can and must establish here a devotees' *bhajan āśrama*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not say a *maṭh*, but he said, "*Bhajan āśrama*."

Whoever comes to Vṛndāvan must try to do some *sevā*. *Bhajan*, means *sevā*, service. Here we are not doing business. When the mood of service to Vṛndāvan, to Guru and Vaiṣṇava comes, and when the mood of service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa comes to us, then we shall try to stay in Vṛndāvan. Who has this mood, he can stay in Vṛndāvan, and for that type of devotee we must make a *bhajan āśram* here.

Sometimes a few devotees have some intention to stay in Vṛndāvan, but they are staying in Vṛndāvan like a bee on the outside of a bottle of honey. What are they doing? One devotee came to see me recently, he now lives here in Vṛndāvan, but what is he doing? He purchased a cow and he maintains his family—he is doing the same as he was in Bengal. His mood is good because he considers Vṛndāvan to be a very auspicious place, but his conception of Vṛndāvan is very small.

Vṛndāvan is infinitely great and it is inconceivable by our intelligence. We only see the mundane cover and we are not getting admission within the transcendental world of Śrī Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We need admission, and it is our hope that one day we shall get that real vision.

**mātala harijana kirttana-raṅge
pūjala rāga-patha gaurava-bhaṅge**

Taking this *śloka* as our example we shall worship Vṛndāvan from afar. One who reads *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* can know something about Vṛndāvan-Dhām. Actually, Vṛndāvan-Dhām is:

**goloka-nāmni nija-dhāmni tale ca tasya
devī maheśa-hari-dhāmasu teṣu teṣu**

(“First there is Devī-dhāma, then Maheśa-dhāma,
and above Maheśa-dhāma is Hari-dhāma;
and above all is His own home, Goloka.”)

And:

**śriyaḥ kāntāḥ kāntaḥ parama-puruṣaḥ kalpataravo
drumā bhūmiś cintāmaṇigaṇamayī toyam amṛtam
kathā gānaṁ nāṭyaṁ gamanam api vaṁśī priyasakhi
cid ānandaṁ jyotiḥ param api tad āśvādyam api ca
sa yatra kṣīrābdhiḥ sravati surabhiyaś ca sumahān
nimeṣārdhākhyo vā vrajati na hi yatrāpi samayaḥ
bhaje śvetadvīpaṁ tam aham iha golokam iti yaṁ
vidantas te santaḥ kṣiti-virala-cārāḥ katipaye**

(Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā, 5.56)

(“That place where the Divine Goddesses of Fortune
are the Beloved,
and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Male,
is the only Lover;
all the trees are Divine wish-fulfilling trees,
the soil is made of Transcendental Gems
and the water is nectar;
where every word is a song,
every movement is dancing,
the flute is the dearest companion,
sunlight and moonlight are Divine Ecstasy,
and all that be is Divine, and enjoyable;
where a great ocean of milk eternally flows
from the udders of billions of Surabhī cows
and the Divine time is eternally present,
never suffering the estrangement of past and future

for even a split second...

that Supreme Transcendental Abode of Śvetadwīp
do I adore.

Practically no one in this world knows that place
but for only a few pure devotees—
and they know it as Goloka.”)

That is the explanation of Vṛndāvan, actual Vṛndāvan.
Also in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.29), Lord Brahmā says:

**cintāmaṇi-prakarasadmasu kalpavṛkṣa-
lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam
lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyamānaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi**

(“Surrounded by millions of wish-fulfilling trees,
in Abodes made of multitudes of wish-yielding gems,
He who tends the ever-yielding cows
and who is perpetually served with great Affection
by hundreds of thousands of Lakṣmīs—
the Primeval Lord, Govinda, do I worship.”)

In *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* is given a very nice explanation
about Vṛndāvan-Dhām, Goloka-Dhām. *Cintāmaṇi-prakarasadma-
su kalpavṛkṣa*. If we look at the houses in Vṛndāvan we cannot
at present see that they are made of *cintāmaṇi*, but actually
they are transcendental and actual Vṛndāvan is all made of
cintāmaṇi. *Prakarasadmasu kalpavṛkṣa*. *Sadmasu* means all the
houses, and *kalpavṛkṣa* means wish-fulfilling trees. If you want
a fruit such as a mango, from a neem tree, the neem tree will
give you a mango, that is *kalpavṛkṣa*. But what we see with our
present vision is not that!

We think it is a very auspicious place, no doubt, and that it
exists above this mundane world, but with our mundane

knowledge we cannot feel it. We glorify that auspicious place, and therefore sometimes some light may come to us. We think it to be better than other places, no doubt; but we do not see the real Vṛndāvan. But we need that real Vṛndāvan, and we need to have admission there.

**cintāmaṇi-prakarasadmasu kalpavṛkṣa-
lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam
lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyamānam
govindam ādi puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi**

(Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā, 5.29)

In this connection, I can remember an answer given by Pishima, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's sister. Pishima had much regard and affection for Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and he also liked her like his disciple. She was a very strict lady and a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, so everyone respected her, and her opinion was held in very high regard.

One day some curious *sannyāsīs* asked her, "In which way is Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp, running? Are they eating nicely or are they not getting food?"

Pishima gave her reply, "Oh that *Maṭh* is very glorious, you cannot guess it. Lakṣmīdevī herself looks after the grounds and verandah of Rādhā-Govindasundar! This is the actual position of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh there."

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj heard this he said; "Oh, in a very protective way Pishima has expressed it! If she would have said, 'Lakṣmīdevī herself looks after the grounds of Śrīdhar Mahārāj's *Maṭh*,' I must fall into the ocean of offence, but she said, 'She is looking after Rādhā-Govinda's grounds,' and that is good. We can honour that, we can honour her opinion."

Lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyamānam. This is the

mood of our transcendental body: we are always ready, ever ready for service to Kṛṣṇa, and waiting for the order of our Divine Master.

Our transcendental body is very nicely decorated with marks of *tilak* as twelve temples of Kṛṣṇa, and good *Tulasī-mālā* on our neck. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* is on our chest. With that body we are to serve Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of our Divine Master. This is our *dhyāna*, our meditation, and we want that. We are practising in a mundane way, but by the mercy of our Gurudeva, and through our devotion, we must get it. That only, is our hope, and this has been shown by Śrīla Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī.

Already I told you Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī's super-*śloka*, *āsābharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit....* Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī gave another *śloka* that is also very high. He said,

**viracaya mayi daṇḍam dīnabandho dayām vā
gatir iha na bhavattaḥ kācid anyā mamāsti
nīpatatu śata-koṭīr nirbharam vā navāmbhas
tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena**

“He Dīnabandho, He Kṛṣṇa, I am fully surrendered unto Your lotus feet. I do not want anything without Your mercy—that is my life's position. I shall not praise others and I do not desire anything from any other channel. Only I desire the mercy of Your Divine Grace.” In this way, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī also explained the heart of a devotee.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī composed many books. For us, the conditioned souls, he gave many things. Anyhow, our activity must go for the service to Guru, Vaiṣṇava, and Bhagavān, and one day we must attain that transcendental vision. Through such vision we will be able to see everything—Kṛṣṇa-Dhām,

Vraja-Dhām, Vṛndāvan-Dhām. We will get the mercy of the *Vrajabāsis* there, and of Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Raghunātha, and the other Goswāmīs. Through their mercy we must get service to Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is our only hope, and the only goal of our life.



Chapter Six

Sweet Service, Service, Service

Devotee: I notice that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda were engaged in defeating the *brāhmaṇas* by showing that Vaiṣṇavas are above *brāhmaṇas*. In the meetings the stalwart *brāhmaṇas* accepted defeat, but afterwards they all forgot. Is this because it is a hidden treasure and can only be received from the self-realised soul? If it is not the case then after being defeated they would surely remember that Vaiṣṇavas are above mere 'brāhmaṇism' and they would follow that.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Also it is true that so many saw the *Viśvarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa. Karna, Duryodhana, Duṣṣāsana, they all saw the *Viśvarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa and they were stunned. They were surprised at what they saw, but they thought it to be magic: the magic of Kṛṣṇa. Dhṛtarāṣṭra also very eagerly wanted to see that. In *Mahābhārata* he said, "O Kṛṣṇa, everyone is seeing Your *Viśvarūpa*, but I cannot see because I have no eyes. Please give me eyes for five or ten seconds because I want to see that."

Kṛṣṇa replied, "It is not necessary for Me to give you eyes. If I say, you shall see." Then Dhṛtarāṣṭra saw the wonderful Universal Form of Kṛṣṇa. He then bowed down to Kṛṣṇa. But afterwards he forgot everything.

A devotee recently wrote to me with an important question. He asked, "What is the position of Gurudeva?"

We see in the Scripture: *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair*—Gurudeva is non-different from Kṛṣṇa. But elsewhere the

Scriptures give: *ācāryyaṁ mām vijānīyān, nāvamanyeta karhicit*. Kṛṣṇa says, "I am Guru. I reveal Myself in the form of Guru."

And in another place we see that the position of Gurudeva is given as *Sākṣād*-Baladeva—non-different from Baladeva. Gurudeva is non-different from Nityānanda Prabhu; and Nityānanda Prabhu is non-different from Baladeva. The devotee worships his Gurudeva as Baladeva—as Nityānanda Prabhu.

In yet another place the Scriptures say that Gurudeva is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. We can note too, that Baladeva has a form as a *Mañjarī*: Anaṅga Mañjarī.

So what is truth, and how to harmonise it? This was the question posed by that devotee.

It is necessary to harmonise everything, then we can understand what is what. First it is necessary to see what is the position of Kṛṣṇa. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the first position.

When we try to realise the position of Gurudeva, at first we shall see the main glow—that everything emanates from him. And He from whom everything emanates is Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa is not alone. He is *svaśakti śaktimāna*—Kṛṣṇa is with His Power. When Kṛṣṇa and His Power come to play, His form is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. It is not that this is happening just for some time, but it is eternal. It is not that yesterday this happened but the previous day Kṛṣṇa was alone. No. Everything is eternal and transcendental, so everything is living within consciousness, and that consciousness is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the first thing we are to consider.

Also in another place we see:

yadyapi aṣṛjya nitya cic-chakti-vilāsa

Nobody can create His Pastimes, and Kṛṣṇa also does not create them. His Pastimes are eternal, therefore nobody created them. The Supreme Personality with His Power is eternal, and that Power is sometimes attached with Kṛṣṇa and sometimes detached. When detached, still there is full power with Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: That last sentence is very difficult to understand.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: There is power, and there is the powerful. If you detach power from the powerful is there still power with the powerful?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: With the powerful there is full power even though power may be detached from the powerful, and that is called *acintya*, incomprehensible.

Devotee: Do *aiśā* expansions such as *vaibhava-vilāsa* also follow this principle in that He expands into other forms but without Himself becoming diminished?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. An example is given by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī: if from one candle another candle is lit, that second candle is full with its power but without any loss from the original candle.

rādhā-kṛṣṇa eka ātmā, dui deha dhari'
anyonye vilase rasa āsvādana kari'

sei dui eka ebe caitanya gosāñi
rasa āsvādite donhe hailā eka ṭhāñi

(Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.56 & 57)

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the Power and the Powerful, are inseparable, but when They want to play They can exert themselves

separately. He is full with power and She, His Power, is also full with power! This is the point.

When Kṛṣṇa wants to have Pastimes, the first manifestation of His energy is Baladeva, Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa. He comes out from Kṛṣṇa—*prābhava-vilāsa*. From Rādhārāṇī automatically comes Yogamāyā. Yogamāyā and Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa come out at the same time.

Yogamāyā takes charge of the playing ground, like the referee. She makes the rules and regulations, etc. in a way which will please Kṛṣṇa, and by her will everything immediately manifests accordingly.

When Kṛṣṇa wishes to play, immediately everything is manifest and managed by Yogamāyā. Baladeva takes the charge of all administration and He delegates charge to Yogamāyā. From the Powerful comes Saṅkarṣaṇa, and from Rādhārāṇī comes Yogamāyā.

Devotee: Saṅkarṣaṇa is one of the names of Balarāma?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes: Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa—the original Saṅkarṣaṇa.

Devotee: And afterwards so many other Saṅkarṣaṇas are manifested?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes: the Catur-vyūha. There are many expansions of Kṛṣṇa and many expansions of Rādhārāṇī—*prābhava-vilāsa*, *vaibhava-vilāsa*, etc., but in the higher plane are playing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa and Yogamāyā. These four participate there.

Devotee: The Catur-vyūha are not in Goloka Vṛndāvan?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: No, they are in Vaikuṅṭha. When Goloka Vṛndāvan comes down to this mundane world and shows its flame, those Pastimes can be revealed in Vaikuṅṭha

or anywhere. They have such power; and everything is full, *pūrṇa*. In the *Vedas* it is written,

**om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ, pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya, pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate**

Kṛṣṇa is full, and Rādhārāṇī is full. When the Power comes out from the Powerful, that Power is also full. The play of that plane progresses with the continual cycle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Devotee: Even there? Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said that all problems start from above.

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: But nothing there is bad or wrong. All, whether they are possessors of power or power itself, they worship for the satisfaction of the Supreme Power and Powerful, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

We are trying to satisfy the Powerful, and in the extreme position we can see that Rādhārāṇī holds the highest position of power in trying to satisfy Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: Is this why even Nityānanda Prabhu wants to expand Himself as a *Mañjarī*, Anaṅga Mañjarī: He comes from the Power, but He wants to give service to the Powerful?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Nityānanda Prabhu Himself enjoys *Madhura-rasa* as Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa, Balarāma. But He enjoys *for* the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: Is Balarāma's *Rāsa*-dance of a different mood than Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsa*-dance?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Kṛṣṇa is living in Balarāma's heart. When Balarāma engages in *Rāsa-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsa-līlā* is playing within.

Another example is that a person may become aged by body but the mind may remain young in mood. An aged man may not have the physical capacity to act like a young man, but his mentality remains as a young man's—sometimes he may hold even more of a youthful mentality than a young man!

That power of willing has a position in the Play of Kṛṣṇa, and that is in the form of a *Gopī*. When Saṅkarṣaṇa wants to satisfy Kṛṣṇa in *Madhura-rasa*, he cannot do that in the form of a male body. He must therefore transform and go under the guidance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

We will also find there the form of Gurudeva. What is Gurudeva doing? He is giving service to Kṛṣṇa. For the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa he gives us a rope to rescue us, and he takes us as a flower-offering to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Baladeva is the first Guru. If we can see Baladeva we shall see that He is the first Guru and he wants to take us and offer us to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. We shall see that Baladeva is Gurudeva.

When we see the Power of Kṛṣṇa, we will see that She is the highest and She gives the highest satisfaction to the mind of Kṛṣṇa. She satisfies Him to the extreme. Seeing that, the devotees very much hanker to receive such a chance of service. Immediately they search out the possibility, and they follow the *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs*, and in this way their service goes to Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī gives the highest satisfaction to Kṛṣṇa. She is the master of the ocean of *Madhura-rasa*. She is the proprietor of that property, therefore everyone, even Baladeva, if they want to satisfy Kṛṣṇa supremely, they must go under Her guidance. But Rādhārāṇī does not give anything directly to anyone because She does not have the time. She is always busy for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa and She always wants ingre-

dients for the service of Kṛṣṇa. Her suppliers are the *Aṣṭa-Sakhīs*. The *Sakhīs* not only supply various items for service, but they make many things also. They make many very nice preparations. From potatoes they make thousands and thousands of varieties of preparations for offering. In this way they make many things for the satisfaction of Rādhārāṇī, and Rādhārāṇī worships Kṛṣṇa with these.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa is very naughty and Kṛṣṇa wants to meet with the *Sakhīs*, but they do not want direct union with Kṛṣṇa. The *Sakhīs* do not have that type of mentality; their only concern is with the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. They know that Kṛṣṇa is fully satisfied with Rādhārāṇī, and they supply everything. But Rādhārāṇī, Herself, for the happy, varied play, offers the *Sakhīs* to Kṛṣṇa. She pushes them to have His direct association. And the *Sakhīs* participate with Kṛṣṇa for the satisfaction of Rādhārāṇī, not for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. The *Vṛndāvan-līlā* of Kṛṣṇa goes on in this way.

One who wants the full satisfaction of his transcendental service-life must take the position of a female. Actually all *jīva*-souls are female by intrinsic nature because they are *śakti*—*jīva-śakti*. Obtaining a female form they aspire to join the *Līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. They always pray for the mercy of the *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs*. Kṛṣṇa is not their master, but He is a player, a participant. The *Sakhīs* take the position of master. They know in which way Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied, and they make arrangements accordingly. The *Sakhīs* take the guidance of Rādhārāṇī and try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa accordingly. They are exclusive servants of Rādhārāṇī; they are happy, and Kṛṣṇa is also happy with them in that way.

Devotee: Is there competition?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: No competition for themselves, but

service competition is there. Sometimes there may be antithesis within the auspicious emotions, the *Bhāva*. When Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvan, Rādhārāṇī fainted.

Within the mood of fulfilment of the Ecstatic Play as a whole, sometimes antithesis appears, and that gives even more satisfaction to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī. When Rādhārāṇī sees Kṛṣṇa before Her, She sees one Kṛṣṇa, and She tries to satisfy one Kṛṣṇa. But when Kṛṣṇa hides from Her, She sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere and tries to satisfy Him everywhere. That mood is called *Viraha*.

We can see the Guru's position in many ways, but it is all within the play of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa means the Conjugal Power, and the Powerful, and that is full Kṛṣṇa. It is from that plane that Kṛṣṇa comes down and says, *ācāryyam mām vijānīyān*, "I am Guru."

When Kṛṣṇa says, "I am your Guru," that is not the full conception of Kṛṣṇa. He has many incarnations: He comes as *Yuga-avatāras*, He also shows Himself as a teacher, such as when He became the teacher of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. Kṛṣṇa has many moods and varieties, and one variety of Kṛṣṇa is that He is the Guru, therefore He says, "*Ācāryyam mām vijānīyān, nāvamanyeta karhicit*"

Which means, "When you take shelter unto the lotus feet of your Guru, you will think that it is I, Myself, who has appeared in front of you in the form of your Guru in order to rescue you from the illusory environment and to take you to the transcendental world." Such is the form of Kṛṣṇa that we see manifest there: the *Āchāryya* form.

All aspects of Kṛṣṇa are truth. One truth is that Kṛṣṇa appears as the *Āchāryya* in order to rescue the conditioned souls. When He appears in this way He is very merciful to the conditioned souls. Kṛṣṇa cannot tolerate their painful position

so He appears as the *Āchāryya* in order to rescue them from their unfortunate position: *ācāryyam māṁ vijānīyān*.

But when the liberated souls in the transcendental service world try to serve, they also have a master of their own, and in the line of the Powerful they shall see him as Balarāma, Nityānanda. If they will follow that line, they will go to Kṛṣṇa within that conception. Nityānanda Prabhu and Baladeva will be there as their Guru. The conception comes from that supremely extreme plane where Kṛṣṇa is present with His Power. One step down from this is the form of Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa, and this is manifest for the Play of the Lord. In that realm there are many forms of Guru. His play is enacted with His *Cicchakti* as well as with His *Jīva-śakti*, and, in a negative way, with *Māyā-śakti*.

At one level is Yogamāyā. By the will of Mūl-Saṅkarṣaṇa, all the transcendental world is acquired by Yogamāyā. She has full consciousness about Kṛṣṇa, therefore for the play of Kṛṣṇa she makes everything needed for His satisfaction. The trees, the peacocks, the deer, flowers, and everything; all are expansions of Yogamāyā's power.

Devotee: Does Yogamāyā have a form there as a *Gopī*?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Vṛndādevī is an expansion and representative of Yogamāyā. This is said in the first verse of the song of *Aṣṭakāliya-līlā* composed by Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī.

When the *jīva*-soul obtains the form of a *Gopī*, under the guidance of the *Mañjarīs* she tries to satisfy her masters, and they see that Rādhārāṇī is the Supreme Satisfier of Kṛṣṇa. Under the guidance of Rādhārāṇī they try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. For the service of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī is the supreme Guru.

We are of the *Rūpānuṅga Sampradāya*: we are followers of

Rūpa Goswāmī. Actually we do not consider ourselves to be following properly, but we are trying to be followers. The only destination we can see is in the direction of the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī is so merciful and She can manifest Herself in many ways, so She can also come in front of me—in the form of Gurudeva. What She wants to see is our mood of service.

There is a history I heard from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj at Kusum Sarovar in 1947. When I saw that place, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj told me that one day Rādhārāṇī came there to collect flowers along with Her *Sakhīs* and *Mañjarīs*. They came in a big group and collected flowers. Suddenly Rādhārāṇī noticed a girl of eleven years of age or so and mentioned, “Oh, she is such a beautiful girl. When did she join?”

Lalitādevī replied, “Rūpa Mañjarī brought her from her village and I gave her to the group of Rūpa Mañjarī. She is serving Your Highness through Rūpa Mañjarī.”

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī said, “She is such a beautiful girl and she can do much *sevā*.” And Rādhārāṇī continued with her service activities.

I heard this story from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and I cannot forget this example. Immediately such kind of fortune may come to anyone, and Rūpa Goswāmī can take us in that way. Lalitādevī is also very merciful and she can immediately bestow her mercy upon us.

Rādhārāṇī has many *Sakhīs* but eight are principle. There are thousands of *Sakhīs*, and they have groups. There are thousands of groups of *Mañjarīs*. First we must remember that this matter is to do with the transcendental universe. Within a second it can expand by one thousand yojanas* and more.

I previously had a query within my mind and I asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “Here is Rādhā-kunḍa, but Varṣānā is

many kilometres away, so how did Rādhārāṇī come here every day, and how did she go from Varṣānā to Kusum Sarovar to collect flowers?"

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained, "This is the transcendental world where, for the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, for His satisfaction there is always expansion and contraction. This happens by the will of Rādhārāṇī, and Yogamāyā arranges everything. When the necessity comes, distance becomes very short. And when there is necessity, distance becomes very long such as when the banks of the Yamunā expand. For the service of Kṛṣṇa, everything immediately takes the suitable form to satisfy Him."

In one way, the supreme Guru is in the form of Baladeva. In a general way Kṛṣṇa shows His own path of service and He becomes Guru. In the form of Guru He reveals Himself within the mundane world. His position as Guru is also in the heart of the devotees. Supremely, where there is a variety of extreme services to Kṛṣṇa, that is *Madhura-rasa*. In that plane the highest Supreme Satisfier of Kṛṣṇa is Rādhārāṇī. And that is our line and life's goal.

We only expect that some day it may come by the mercy of Gurudeva. Whether or not we will gain admission there is by the will of my group leader, my Gurudeva.



*A Vedic measurement. 1 yojanas = approx 8 miles.

Divine Guidance

Second Section

Excerpts from Letters

by

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda

Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Hand-carved Gems

Excerpts from letters

by His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

Question: In summary I have the following questions:

1) What are your thoughts about maintaining the standard of behaviour acceptable to an initiated disciple, and about requesting disciples to chant a minimum of sixteen rounds as had been established by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda in the recent past?

2) What is the proper conception of the Gurudeva's order to serve with devotion in a family of devotees, ISKCON, designed by the Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the perpetuation of the disciples' service to the Lord?

3) If an institution, such as ISKCON, has discrepancies, should it not be maintained and given time to mature?

4) Should the devotees working now on your behalf try to lure settled but neophyte devotees away from ISKCON to your service, rather than be encouraged to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and his servants in spreading the glories of the Holy Name and in making spiritual advancement through the vehicle of ISKCON? And should such activities be encouraged by your workers or not?

5) Should the books presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda be distributed by those in your service, even including those who would become your newly first initiated disciples? How else can we avoid minimising Śrīla Prabhupāda's importance to the strength of the *saṅkīrtana* movement than to read and dis-

tribute these books, even side by side with those published by the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Please accept my humble *danḍavat praṇāms* in remembrance of our Divine Masters Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmi Mahārāj Prabhupāda....

Your questions are very clear and relevant, and now I am happy to answer them, but first it is necessary to make ourselves in a little neutral position in order to see the facts (even though some of the facts you have not directly asked for in your questions).

Actually, in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur's time there were many qualified disciples full with independent preaching capacity. I heard this from many sources, also that at any one time they were not unified. Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākur knew it very well, therefore he did not name one particular person as his successor. However, in a special gathering of his disciples one day before his disappearance he showed the hint of his desire through the hearing of the *kīrttan* "Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada" from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and he instructed the devotees: "For the management of the missionary work you are to make a Governing Body with twelve persons, and the secretary of that Governing Body must be the present secretary Kuñja Babu for as long as Kuñja Babu will live."

He also gave some other instructions, but he did not directly appoint anyone as an *Āchāryya* of the Gauḍīya Mission.

At that time Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was no doubt very exalted and an undefeatable preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but his nature was to always keep himself in the background. Also he wanted to serve the Vaiṣṇavas very enthusiastically but he himself did not want to take any position of Guru or member of the Governing Body. Also through that nature and mood he

never tried to come in the foreground of the Governing Body. He felt himself to be indebted to his few special Godbrothers who helped him from the first time in his divine practising life: Śrīpād Vāsudeva Prabhu, Śrīpād Bhakti Sudhākar Prabhu (Professor N.K. Sānnyāl), Śrīpād A.V. Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī, Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj, Śrīpād Mādhava Mahārāj, etc.

Actually Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself did not make Vāsudeva Prabhu an *Āchāryya*, also he was not in a position to have any right to do so, but when it was declared by that special group of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur's disciples that Vāsudeva Prabhu be the *Āchāryya* of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj agreed and immediately felt relief that the responsibility of being *Āchāryya* did not come to him. Furthermore when Śrīpād Keśava Mahārāj heavily proposed his name in the Governing Body, that also he cleverly avoided because actually Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not want to be involved in the management, only he wanted to stay as a humble preacher and friend to all the Vaiṣṇavas. Earlier also, seeing the situation of his Mission, Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur fully depended upon Kṛṣṇa to select the future *Āchāryya* of his Mission. Actually this was the fact at that time.

I read a letter of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj where he apparently blamed Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for appointing Śrīpād Vāsudeva Prabhu, but that was his own idea—and some of the devotees of the Gauḍīya Maṭh's idea—and there is some truth also. But if Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had wanted to take a strong managerial decision, then Śrīpād Vāsudeva Prabhu would not have been able to come out in the forefront easily. But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was of disinterested nature and he did not want to get involved with the management. But later it came out in front of all the devotees that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was the fittest person for the *Āchāryyaship*, but by that time that thinking of the devotees

was too late. When Vāsudeva Prabhu and Sundarānanda Prabhu, Bhakti Sudhākar Prabhu and others tried to keep Vāsudeva Prabhu’s ownership from the anti-group—and heavily tried to do so with violence—then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj wanted to keep aloof, and he unhappily left that Mission. After that he wanted to stay alone with his *bhajan* life. This is the fact, but when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj came out from the Gauḍīya Mission, at that time more than 50% of the prominent devotees also came out from that Mission. We heard this from his divine Godbrothers as well as Śrīpād B.S. Siddhānti Mahārāj.

It was the idea of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and others, and thinking in this way about Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s position, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj mentioned in his letter that if Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj had not stayed in favour of Vāsudeva Prabhu, Vāsudeva Prabhu would not have got that position. It was indirect support to Vāsudeva Prabhu’s Āchāryyaship.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj was a very respectfully intimate Godbrother of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and I consider he has the right to say as he did, but *we* will see it as only his expression of clarification for his disciples in order to make his mission perfect.

I have no doubt that Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj wanted to give the position of Āchāryyaship to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. And when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj came out from that Gauḍīya Mission he received his first preaching invitation from Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj in Calcutta as a measure of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj’s respect and friendship.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj wanted to start another mission headed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—many times we have seen it. We can mention that his last proposal was that he wanted to take Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj as the President of the “League of Devotees” in Jhansi.

Actually neither of them were very much eager to take missionary Āchāryyaship, but it later automatically came to them and they served that chair whole-heartedly, and they endeavoured to give full protection to that chair for the future preceptorial line.

I know that his letter was not criticism of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj expressed in that letter in the name of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for only cautioning the devotees. We can consider this as a past picture of the Gauḍīya Mission, and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj did not want a repetition of that picture.

My commentary is not as a disciple of them, it is simply impartial history. Actually we have no right to involve in that historical matter. What you say in your letter is one hundred percent true: “We cannot fully know the arrangement of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but we do see practically that insincerity will be rewarded with fall-down. But, it is not the fault of the Gurudeva, but rather the insincerity of the disciples that may lead to such discrepancies and problems.”

In the time of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu it was His desire that everyone will chant a minimum of one lakh (one hundred thousand) *Harināma*. Some devotees chanted in that way, but mostly they could not do so. Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura also instructed that to chant one lakh *Harināma* every day is very good, but that a minimum of sixteen rounds must be chanted. But when the Gauḍīya Mission expanded all over India and disciples also came from all parts of the country, it was his consideration that an absolute minimum of four rounds must be daily chanted by everybody.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj realised everything about the Western World and scrutinisingly seeing their nature of devotion he gave the direction, “Everybody must chant sixteen

rounds every day.” However, everybody cannot follow that, therefore they are breaking their promise to Gurudeva.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj duly considered, and he expressed, “We must chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* with full concentration for a minimum of four rounds if it is not possible to chant sixteen rounds or more,” following his Gurudeva’s minimum guide-line, and he gave much more importance to *sevā*—that means serving the Lord through the satisfaction of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas.

Nāma-saṅkīrtan is direct service to *Harināma* if it is perfectly done without offence. You know the *śloka*:

**ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau, svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ**

Śrī *Harināma* will reveal Himself through service to the Vaiṣṇavas, and Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākur gave more importance to such service to Guru-Vaiṣṇava. By his instruction to chant a minimum of four rounds it is indicated that as much as possible by the servitors they are to chant unlimitedly. And everywhere Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “We need quality, not quantity.” Also in Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur’s *Patrāvalī* (Letters of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur) we can see in his letter to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that he gave more importance to the service of Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava, and that through such service they achieve the qualification of quality in their chanting. But if anyone can increase the quantity while keeping the quality, that is very, very good.

We can also see from another angle. When Gurudeva gives *Harināma* initiation, at that time the disciple promises, “Yes I shall chant such a specified number of rounds (whether four, sixteen, sixty-four, etc.),” but to fail to keep their vow will

go in the category of offence against Guru. In that way it is some relief to the devotees to have a minimum of just four rounds daily. On the whole all Their Divine Graces have the right to adjust their instruction according to the environment, the situation and the capacity of the devotees. Anyhow, the vital point is that we are to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa as much as possible—without offence, with sincerity and with love, and to serve Guru-Vaiṣṇava and their *Mahāprasādam* whole-heartedly.

About the four directives, we are always mentioning them here in India, but on my recent world tour I sometimes did not mention them—I am thinking that everyone in the West is conscious about the four directives. Also, those who are coming to me, they are not coming to me directly, but they are coming through some Vaiṣṇavas. Those Vaiṣṇavas are recommending them, that is I do not know anything about them but I am giving my service initiation to the recommended sincere seekers. (Actually the directives are not four, but five, and those four directives are living automatically within the fifth. However for the innocent newcomers we must advise that they follow the four directives no doubt.)

But here is also some vital point that we must not forget (even though it may not be for public mass-distribution) that is that the position of the real and exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa is above the rules, and such devotees can come from anywhere and everywhere. And from another angle, we can say that the mercy of the great Vaiṣṇavas can make anyone immediately into a good devotee. In this connection we can discuss the *ślokas* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, *jāta-śrad-dho mat-kathāsu...* and: *api cet sudurācāro....* Therefore we must try to consider everything in a harmonising way otherwise we may be offenders.

**yasmin śāstre-purāṇe va haribhaktirna dṛśyate
śrotabyam naivatat śāstram yadi brahmā svayaṁ vadet**

“Do not hear any scripture which does not glorify *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and *Kṛṣṇa’s Bhaktas*. Even if Lord Brahmā will sit in front of you and recite any other type of scripture, don’t listen!” It was for this purpose that Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj formed ISKCON. He wanted ISKCON to be a pure place of devotional association. Especially we are to avoid *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

Always there must be some imperfection in this world but if ISKCON remains at least 60% pure, then carefully the devotees can serve there. ‘Carefully’ means that devotees will be careful to keep good association and to avoid those who have any tendency to be offensive or disrespectful to the *Vaiṣṇavas* and *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

About myself, I can say clearly that I have made a promise to my Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and at least I can say I am trying one hundred percent to practise and preach according to his wish.

When travelling to our destination if we come across someone who is sick or injured and they beg assistance, naturally we will also try to give some assistance by way of relief-work.

When an ISKCON *Āchāryya* does some activities that even the material people will not do, then how can we agree? And in which way can the sincere seeker be faithful to that *Āchāryya*? Such seekers want no mundane things from ISKCON. They need the seeds of *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness and the association of good *Vaiṣṇavas*.

They need to have the seeds planted happily in the heart, and to get more and more inspiration to practise *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness, and they can inspire others also by their example as good ISKCON devotees. But we cannot ignore the fact that inside

ISKCON many of the leaders have proceeded in a very mechanical and mundane way.

You are putting a very hard question for me to answer about the ISKCON Mission. In those earlier days when Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj established the now exalted 'International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness' his Mission was always receiving proper nourishment through his divine association. Perhaps everything was not going fully perfectly, but on the whole we can say that his Mission was the only hope for the Western world to happily practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is true that after his disappearance some disturbance came in his beloved ISKCON Mission, and it is a very usual thing. In every mission everywhere it must be expected that when the exalted sun is going to set, some illusory environment will try to influence over all that mission. I cannot say that in Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's time there was no influence of illusion, but by his divine power everything was immediately harmonised.

Everybody will try to make his Mission perfect, and I think all the auspicious and great *Āchāryyas* in this world tried to make their Missions perfect and spent their whole energy for that. And I have no doubt they were all the well-wishers of all *jīva*-souls.

I think the ISKCON Mission is completely different from other missions: we can consider it as a God-gifted organisation for the super-benefit of the conditioned souls through His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, "Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj is a *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, otherwise no man can make such a mission all over the world within five years." In a very short time he widely gave the chance to receive the supreme goal of life: unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa in the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

In the time of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj whenever news

would come from any corner of the world of the many persons chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* and practising pure devotional life, at that time I saw the face of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to be greatly exalted and he openly praised Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's divine activities and glories in front of everybody. I also saw his similar divine expression whenever Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj would come and report his missionary news to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. They were both very great, and their basic discussion was very high and harmonious about spreading real Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj himself selected a few leaders for maintaining and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world for his Mission—that was called the “G.B.C.”—and he was proud of them. At that time my own feelings were non-different from ISKCON and I was very happy to see the mood of the devotees. I did not get the chance to mix with everybody—it was also not possible—but I was surprised to see the depth of knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in those I saw. Actually, I received much nice impression and enthusiasm from them including Śrīpād Bhāvānanda Mahārāj, Śrīpād Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāj, Śrīpād Achyutānanda Prabhu, etc. I still have many friends in the ISKCON society and they have a very good mood. They are living within the preaching and practising life and I highly respect them.

But you know that after the disappearance of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj many things have happened in that society. Not only that, but many of the great, great devotee personalities showed their very unfortunate form and that was painful for their followers and many of the followers of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, and it was very painful for myself also. Those confused persons eagerly sought secure shelter for their spiritual life, but they could no longer fully trust others in that society.

At the same time they did not want to leave Kṛṣṇa consciousness because living in their hearts was the seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness planted by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj often said, “I am ISKCON.” That means that all the property of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—the Society he formed—was living with him, and he could not tolerate that any disturbance will come to his preaching life, and he would try to remove such disturbances by any means. But after His Divine Grace’s disappearance, some wave of illusion in the form of ego immediately tried to spread bad influence. You know that many have been affected by that influence. By those infected persons’ power many good souls were ousted, and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj tried to give them some hope and shelter in the form of relief work. At present I am trying to serve his divine chair to the best of my limited capacity.

Actually Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj organised the ISKCON society so there can be practising of Kṛṣṇa consciousness under proper guardianship, and that is the only goal of life for all conditioned souls. This is not only the preaching of His Divine Grace, but it is also the preaching of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, His associates and the preceptorial line after Him. No doubt it has manifest in the world at large, especially in the West, through Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, but the many disciples of Śrīla Saraswati Ṭhākur and our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj continued according to their own capacity to preach and practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We see everywhere that each do not have the identical preaching method and mood of Śrīman Mahāprabhu: *tṛnād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā, amāninā mānadena...* and they were not all free from *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Therefore many difficulties arise in every society, and even our society is not fully free from that.

We need to do good for ourselves and for others. We want to leave the ideal of mundanity and we must try to achieve the

super-beneficial transcendental service-plane—which is really our life’s goal—through chanting the *Mahāmantra* without offence in the association of devotees, and preaching. The chanting without offence is so very essential, and if that feeling does not come to us we will not get the proper beneficial results. I feel that this is very important for us now.

I heard a phrase in English from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “The rank is but the guinea-stamp, man is the gold for that.” Actually an institution or *sampradāya* is like the guinea-stamp but the real value is to be found in the quality of the gold—wherever it is to be found—otherwise only in its own particular country will the value certified by the guinea-stamp be given.

In another way we can say, “*svadeśe pūjyate rājā bidvān sarvoatra pūjyate.*” Qualified persons have value everywhere, but if a King is not qualified, he will only receive honour in his own kingdom. We can also see many nicely designed uniforms displayed in shop-windows. But we need to proceed to our destination and if we can understand whole-heartedly this importance we cannot sit back and wait for that. If we can have both the man and the designed uniform, that will be very good for us.

I am always trying to harmonise with all environments and I never advise anyone to make any disturbance or offence to others. I want to try to make everyone my friend, and I want blessings from all our sister-concerns. And if unknowingly I may make any offence to them, I am always praying for their forgiveness. If I can proceed with this mood I must remain free from *Vaiṣṇava-āparādha*.

Already everything has been given in the writings of the Goswāmīs, but the successive *Āchāryyas* distributed that same treasure but according to the receiving capacity of the aspi-

rants. This process is always going on, whether in the West or the East, and in this way lakhs of people have come. Even Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur did not give many things to us—because we are not qualified. Not only that, but Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself did not give such things, because they are not for mass-distribution. Therefore the conclusion is that they gave everything about Kṛṣṇa consciousness no doubt, but not for everybody. Also all are not qualified to receive that. Therefore it is said,

antaraṅga laiṅkā kare rasa-āsvādan
bahiraṅga laiṅkā kare nāma-saṅkīrtana

I sometimes hear that disciples of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and myself, they are heavily preaching their conception akin to “throwing out the baby with the bath-water,” but that is not *my* preaching. My preaching is to be humble, tolerant and to give honour to others, and that is the way of Mahāprabhu’s teachings also. It is my prayer to everyone to try to take to heart the teachings of all our predecessor *Āchāryyas* for the real benefit and progress of everyone in a harmonious way. All have come for Kṛṣṇa consciousness and they have faith in that conception. To see them going away is very painful. I want to help them, and if anyone approaches me for help, it is my duty to try to help them according to my capacity.

In summary of the answers to your questions:

1) Concerning the standard that Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj established in the Western World for the behaviour of the devotees and the chanting of the *Mahāmantra*, that standard must be beneficial for all. But the special consideration about chanting a minimum of four rounds is also agreeable to remind us of the mercy of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur as well as Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

2) Śrīla Gurudeva's orders are the super-directives for the disciple, and without hesitation the disciple must follow that. ISKCON is a society for practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it was unquestionable in the time of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, that is he said "I am ISKCON." If after the disappearance of His Divine Grace that society can exist within that same conception of quality then the devotees will unhesitatingly try to serve there if they will get the chance.

3) Maturity and progress in spiritual life have no limit, but in the starting stages there are certain directives.

4) Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī said,

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ, kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ, janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

If anyone sincerely seeks with a full mood of hankering to search *Rāgāṅgā* loving *bhakti*, we must encourage them, but we are not to disturb in any way the mission of others or the natural devotional environment.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said that we are to have sympathetic dealings with nature and not to cause any disturbance. But along the way of spiritual advancement if we will see that anyone is in trouble and they need help, or that their vehicle needs repair or they want a lift to their destination, or in any way they are in a difficult position and need help for their relief, we will try to help them as affectionate friends. Actually we all need spiritual progress within the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as well as the *Rūpāṅgā Sampradāya*, therefore we shall try to help each other in that line through our mood of service-energy, but we will never try to disturb others' service activities or missions.

5) And in answer to your last question: When I claim that I was perhaps the first mass-distributor of *Back to Godhead* door

to door from 7 Sitakanta Banerjee Lane, Calcutta, then where is any difficulty for us to distribute the books of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj if the B.B.T. will give chance to do that service? I can say that I think everyone headed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj would be very happy to see their books distributed side by side.

I may mention Your Grace as an example. You have approached me with thoughtful, sincere enquiry, and naturally I am trying to give proper reply and guide-lines according to my capacity, but my English is very insufficient. I cannot express fully my thought through the English language, and I think my answer will invite more questions. That is, everything is not sufficiently expressed, but only briefly I have expressed my heart.

In this way I cannot ignore all the sincere seekers and enquirers. But personally I consider Your Grace to be a qualified Vaiṣṇava and merciful to the fallen souls such as myself.

I hope this letter meets you in steady practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Again with my humble *daṇḍavat praṇāms*,

Yours Affectionately,
Swāmī B.S.Govinda

P.S. My time is very short. If you want to ask any more questions, please try to see me. At that time we can sit together and discuss.

Question: Recently I came across the books of Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāj and I find them to be a great source of inspiration in my devotional life. However, some of my friends who are disciples of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī

Prabhupāda are discouraging me from reading these books and associating with your disciples. I am in a dilemma and asking your help.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: You have been a devotee for several years but I do not know if you are aware of the intimate relation between Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda and our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. I was with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj personally for maybe 42 years and saw his relationship with all the different devotees. For about ten years of that time the Calcutta branch of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh was in Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's own premises next to his house. He would regularly come for many hours of discussions with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Also at that time, by the instruction of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, I learned *Bhagavad-gītā* from Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. Also up until Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's last days in this world he wanted Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to be the head of his ISKCON Mission. Actually there are many things that the devotees do not know, therefore some misunderstanding has sometimes come.

Anyhow, by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, the position of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is clear. It was always the wish of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj not to disturb others' missions, but our mission is one of 'relief work' for the spiritual seekers. You are reading his books and associating with his devotees, that is, you can understand something of his exalted mood.

Question: You have much faith in my ability to manage, but I cannot see how it is possible to carry out your order, and I fear that if I continue, then the situation will get much worse. Please, Mahārāj, remove me from this position and appoint someone else and I will try to serve that devotee. If it is your desire that I continue, then I shall have to try again but I am deeply frustrated and feel hopeless.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: In our practitioner’s life, for the time being many disturbing things and also frustration, must come, but with our deep service intention and faith, by the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj everything will be vanquished. Every morning in winter we shall not see the clear sun, as some days must be foggy, but we do not stop our duty because of that. Śrī Kṛṣṇa said in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*:

**mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya, śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino ’nityās, tāms titikṣasva bhārata**

What is necessary is only our capacity to tolerate. And this is also one kind of test. If I think of my own life’s history, almost every day I have spent with anxiety in my service-life. But I am happy with that, that is, I am thinking that Kṛṣṇa is taking something from my energy for His divine service by making me worried. When a good boy after trying hard, fails his class exam, what does his father do? Does he oust him from the house, or give him nourishment to give him more enthusiasm? We must remember this.

**alabdhe vā vinaṣṭe vā, bhakṣyācchādana-sādhane
aviklava-matir bhūtvā, harim eva dhiyā smaret**

Therefore we must try with our double energy to fulfil the desire of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for the super-benefit of our spiritual lives.

Whatever is my duty is exclusively mine—I cannot give any share to anyone to make a massacre. If I know that only I can do the duty that has come to me, then I must do that. Those who can accept the challenge of service to Guru-Gaurāṅga, they can do many things even beyond their capacity, by the grace of Their Lordships. Therefore don’t you worry.

I can remember one phrase in Bengali poetry that says that even if the whole world will leave their service with a crying mood, I will not run, but I will try. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj many times recited this story of Ravindranath Tagore:

yadi tora dāka śune keu nā āse tabe esalā calore

If nobody will come with you, you must proceed alone, without even a stick. It is necessary to be steady in your point of position of service. It is a very high thing, but for your attention I can say humbly, but beyond my jurisdiction, in remembrance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: “Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī cannot tolerate to give any other party Her divine, exclusive service share for Kṛṣṇa.” I think it is enough for your remembrance....

...We have got this very rare human body, intelligence, energy, and many qualifications for the service to Kṛṣṇa, therefore we cannot allow ourselves to make a massacre of our service-mind in exchange for some part of the mundane.

Dear Prabhu, don't you be worried for any illusory environment. You must think that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is always with us, watching us, and taking care of us. It must be we will finally get a victorious service position by His divine mercy.

We are very fortunate, that is we are enlightened by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj's divine service life. After Śrīman Mahāprabhu, this kind of wave of devotion has not come out until the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda. That wave has been blown all over the world by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in order to successfully smash the illusory environment; and now the whole world is chanting “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” By hook or by crook they established Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but if we think how much obstruction came in their lifetime, we must forget our own sorrow and difficulties. Śrīla Dāsa Goswāmī said that when you

will be in a very much troubled position from your inner enemies—*kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *mātsarya*—you chant loudly the name of your protector: the Vaiṣṇavas. Pray to them for the protection of your spiritual divine life, and, if you are sincere, you must get help from them. Then I can only say, “Proceed, proceed, and proceed, and the foggy sky must timely leave your vision.”

Question: We have read in a book from another temple that union is higher than separation and we are having some problems understanding the explanations given there. In the past we have always read in books by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that *vipralambha*, separation, is the highest mood in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How are these statements compatible?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: My feeling is that even after one thousand births more, such persons as wrote that statement will never be able to understand what is *vipralambha* and what is contained there. Mahāprabhu stayed twelve years in Gambhīrā tasting the separation mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to Kṛṣṇa extremely, and that is the super-expression of *Kṛṣṇa-prema*. Such super-expression came out through *vipralambha*, otherwise it is not possible to taste *Kṛṣṇa-prema*. We can get some idea of how deep it is, that Mahāprabhu took the Form of Rādhārāṇī’s *bhāva* and *kanti*, and that is not the mood of union, but of separation.

Everyone, including even a child goat, in this mundane world knows what union is, therefore it is not necessary to teach anyone to enjoy: they already know, so it is not necessary to clarify that for anyone. But all the attentive energy is to be used for what? What is not known is the transcendental mood of separation. Why was such mood tasted by

Mahāprabhu again and again? Mahāprabhu's feeling always returned to the tasting of that *vipralambha*—the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The subject matter of Mahāprabhu was to taste what deepest degree of feelings were felt by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

It is not possible to express by language the mood of separation that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu tasted in Gambhīrā, but Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja tried to show something in *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, second chapter. Throughout the whole of *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* the mood of separation is present. And why do we say that this is the supreme mood of the play of the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Just what degree of *bhāva* is in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that Kṛṣṇa appeared as Mahāprabhu in order to take Her mood and taste that? Who is the enjoyer? What is enjoyment? And, who is being enjoyed through the mood of suffering?

Everyone knows enjoyment, especially conditioned souls involved with sexual enjoyment, and thinking it gives the highest happiness within this mundane world, but he who can say that the highest super-painful mood of separation can give the supreme feelings—the only one who can say that is Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

One *śloka* expressed by Kavirāja Goswāmī about Mādhavendra Purī's feeling of the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa is:

**ayi dina-dayārdra-nātha he mathurānātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvadaloka-kātaram dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham
ei śloka kahiyāchen rādhāra ṭhākuraṇī...**

This *śloka* was extremely expressed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and through Her super-mercy Śrīpād Mādhavendra Purī also tasted it at the last moment of his life. After that, only Śrīman

Mahāprabhu, and no one else, is qualified to taste it fully—this is the opinion of Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī.

You try to consider the following: What is it that Kṛṣṇa cannot taste Himself? What was it that Kṛṣṇa wanted to taste, that He appeared in the Form of Mahāprabhu? Why did Kṛṣṇa take the mood and colour of Rādhārāṇī and what was His tasting matter? What did Kṛṣṇa taste in the Form of Mahāprabhu during His Pastimes here? What mood did Mahāprabhu show in Purī-Dhām, especially in His Gambhīrā-līlā, and why did He faint to see Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra in the Form of Jagannātha? Why did Chaṇḍidās write in one poem:

**lakha lakha yuga hiye hiye rākhanu
tabu hiyā juḍana nā gela**

(Meaning: Why did Rādhārāṇī say She couldn't be satisfied by embracing Kṛṣṇa for millions of millions of years?)
What mood is expressed here?

What mood of tasting is given by Śrī Kavirāja Goswāmī in expressing Mahāprabhu's *Antya-līlā* in *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* second part, second chapter?

That which Rādhārāṇī tasted in separation of Kṛṣṇa when He did not return but sent Uddhava to see Vṛndāvan, Mahāprabhu tasted that *Vramara-gītā* in an intoxicated way continuously for twelve years like an extremely mad man. If such souls are foolish then all the residents of Vṛndāvan, including the *Gopīs*, are foolish. Why didn't they get straight into a chariot, like a taxi, and go just half an hour to Maṭhurā instead of foolishly living in Vṛndāvan?

But if that author (of the book you mention) with his conception wants to taste the mood of union he will immediately become pregnant, then what will be for him?

What was it that Rūpa Goswāmī expressed in a praising

way about the mood of *Kṛṣṇa-prema* in separation when he said—*pīḍābhir nava-kāla-kūṭa*, etc. (*C.c. Madhya 2.52*)—the power of even a young cobra’s poison is defeated by the *Kṛṣṇa-prema* of separation?

Actually I am not eager to give answer to this, but I am only remembering the mood of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. I am extremely hating to give any answer to this question of childish mood of praising union. That is, everybody knows the position of union.

I know what is hell, and I have some experience about heaven, but I do not know what is the destination of one who wants to criticise the dearest associates of Rādhārāṇī as well as Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadeva. He has not even the smallest idea about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially about the twelve years of Mahāprabhu’s living in Gambhīrā, and the mood of Rādhārāṇī tasted by Mahāprabhu, the non-different Form of Kṛṣṇa. Can you say what kind of destination awaits such a person? If the residents of hell see such a person they must be fearful of him and need to make a new hell for him.

We have taken refuge at the lotus feet of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and therefore Kṛṣṇa has been gracious to give us all protection from the concocted ideas of the foolish. If you read only Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s books and try to serve only in his line, you will be joyful and worry-free, and very quickly you will make progress on your transcendental homeward journey.

Question: I am running a purely vegetarian restaurant, but a devotee quoted you as saying that devotional service and business should not be mixed. He also implied that it isn’t proper to offer foodstuffs to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga before

serving it out. I have a little trouble to understand this. Please say something on this matter for us.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Regarding your question I can say that everything depends on the mood of the devotee. The *Mahābhāgavata* can see everything to be *Prasādam*. But the Scripture also says that to give *Mahāprasādam* to those who have no faith is an *aparādha*. By way of example, *Harināma* can rescue everyone, but if you give it to someone who has no faith then it is an offence; in a similar way we can make *aparādha* to *Mahāprasādam*. But it all depends on the mood of those involved: if in a fully conscious way it is made and offered, then distributed to those with faith—that is very good.

Mahāprasādam means mercy, and we are not to give that in exchange for money, but we can give it in exchange for faith. However, I am not criticising Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, that is I can harmonise it in another way: he wants to engage the whole world in the service of Kṛṣṇa, and he has the right to break and make the injunctions, that is, he is a *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. We can adjust the mood of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and the traditional rules in this way: where there is no other way to do service to Guru-Gaurāṅga, the devotees are doing business, being employed, distributing books, selling cookies, etc. Also running restaurants is one kind of business. So I can harmonise in this way, that after cooking you first offer a little of each preparation to Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga, but not mix it back in with the remainder. Also, after taking for the maintenance of your family, you offer the profit money for the service of Śrī Guru Vaiṣṇava, and in this way no reaction will come to you. That is, I say it all depends on the mood in which it is done. The main thing is that your existence must stand in the plane of service. If anyone with *śrad-*

dhā wants that *Prasāda*, you can happily give it to him.

Question: In the purport of verses 5.24 and 25 of *Śrī Brahma saṁhitā* it is stated that the *Gopāl Mantram* has two aspects: 1) To fulfil the pure spiritual desires of pure devotees, culminating in *Kṛṣṇa-prema*, and 2) To also fulfil the mundane desires of the mixed devotees.

Considering myself a mixed devotee I am asking you if I may chant this *Gopāl Mantra*. I am already initiated into the *Gāyatrī Mantra* which contains the *Gopāl Mantra*. May I chant this *Gopāl Mantram* like *japa-mala*, or in my mind incessantly?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Regarding the *Gopāl Mantram*, you can refer to this verse:

**bhoga-mokṣa vāñchā chāḍī' harināma gāi re
nā ceyeo nāmera guṇe osaba phala pāi re**

When we will chant the Hare *Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra* or meditate upon the *Kṛṣṇa* or *Gopāl Mantram* without asking for anything except the transcendental service to *Kṛṣṇa* under guidance of *Śrī Gurudeva*, that will be of real benefit for everybody, and what good things are needed for us will come automatically. But if any mundane desire will come and mix with that devotional mood, that must hamper the pure devotion.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī said:

**anyābhilāṣitā śūnyam, jñāna-karmmādy anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā**

You can consult with that *śloka* and can understand what is what. It is in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Also *Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur* said,

**bhoga-mokṣa vāñchā chāḍi' harināma gāi re
nā ceyeo nāmera guṇe osaba phala pāi re**

You can chant the Gopāl *Mantram* constantly—that is no problem, but in this age of Kali-*yuga*, *Harināma* is the *Mahāmantra* and of all *mantras* is the best. *Harināma* is for everything, but the Gopāl *Mantram* is for meditation.

Question: I have been told that *jīva*-souls who take birth in the mortal world but who later go back to Kṛṣṇa's abode can also fall down again into the material world. Is this true? Also I hear from some that the *jīva* originally came from the spiritual world, but others say our origin is the marginal position. Dear Gurudeva, please help me understand this.

Also, please clarify as to whether I may visit other missions if I find their members to be respectful to my Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: If anyone from Vaikuṅṭha comes to the material worlds it is generally only by the will of the Lord. It is, however, given in the Scriptures that even a resident of Vaikuṅṭha can fall down if he commits *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, but that also can be seen to be by the will of the Lord as in the case of the gatekeepers, Jaya and Vijaya.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was many times approached with this question and he illustrated clearly that our origin is the marginal potency of the Lord, the *taṭastha-śakti*. If we become liberated from worldly bondage, as a matter of right we can enter the marginal plane, but only by grace can we enter the higher planes of Vaikuṅṭha, Vṛndāvan, etc.

In other societies there are no doubt many good and respectful souls whose association is good, but it is also true that some have the tendency to criticise our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—and

that is very harmful. To hear criticism of Śrī Gurudeva is very bad and must be avoided because it strikes at the foundation of spiritual wealth: faith in Śrī Guru. From another angle, anyone running a mission certainly faces many problems to keep the unity, so we must always be careful to respect that. And if others may not want us to visit their Temple we will humbly agree to their wish and still keep our respect for those devotees.

Ideally we shall try to keep the association of those who are following our own track of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In this way various devotees are trying hard to make successful *āśramas* as places for our *Maṭh's* devotees to associate happily.

Question: As you know, one devotee who was considered to be more senior has fallen away from your Mission here. Our question is how we can avoid similar misfortune befalling ourselves also?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: I am surprised to see the mood of that devotee: he has completely fallen down in the ocean of illusion, but you are all saved by the grace of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. We can understand that the cause for such fall-down is ego and offence to the Vaiṣṇavas. You all please try to avoid *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, and be careful from mundane ego.

I have seen in my short life many things: many up and down situations of the practitioner's life. Big, big personalities up to *Brahmaloka* have received difficulty in their practising life due only to the cause of *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* and egoism. Anyhow, our protector and saviour, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, is always bestowing his mercy to us and we must cross over that dangerous situation.

Question: As per your wish we plan to translate and publish books of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. We need funds for this, therefore

we first wish to translate and publish a popular book introducing Indian philosophy. We are asking your permission for this.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: For your own continuing practising life and proper, happy, safe progress you must try to be devoted exclusively to your Guru for the satisfaction of the beloved Lord. In order to do that you need some certain line and track to happily proceed. Many things are good in this world, no doubt, but one with exclusive mood will always focus on his own track—that means the books of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, his instructions, practising method, etc.—and we will follow that. But as a business for the purpose of maintenance we can consider presenting the books of others, as long as it is not harmful and that it does not differ from the conception of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but we cannot sell ourselves in exchange for anything in the mundane world. In this regard we can remember Śrīla Prabhupāda Saraswatī Ṭhākur’s advice that we must tolerantly try to serve Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga despite whatever may come. Love or rupture or anything may come, but we are to proceed in our track—that is very important.

Question: I have an enquiry about the worship of the Devas. Also, Gurujī, is it wise for us to conduct *śrāddha* ceremonies for the non-devotees who have passed away?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: One who is a follower of the exclusive devotional line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as given by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj as followers of the *Rūpānuga Sampradāya*, he will not feel any necessity to engage himself for the purpose of any other god or demigod. This is our clear line. As primary support for this *Kṛṣṇa-sevā* conception *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, *devarṣi-bhutāpta-nṛṇām pitrṇām*. This *śloka* supports that one has no other necessity than to engage in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

For one who is living as a *gr̥hastha*, if he will feel some obligation about Vedic society rules for his departed ancestors, he has some allowance in this way: he can offer *Mahāprasādādam*, read from four or five holy Scriptures in front of Vaiṣṇavas, offer sixteen kinds of gifts to the Vaiṣṇava Gurus, hold a fire sacrifice as *Vaiṣṇava-homa*, congregationally chant the *Mahāmantra*, and make special offerings to the Deities then offer that *Mahāprasādādam* for the satisfaction of the Vaiṣṇavas and afterwards offer that *Mahāprasādādam* to the departed soul for the spiritual benefit of that soul.

For the general people if they faithfully follow the Vedic culture they may be encouraged to become Vaiṣṇavas.

Question: Should the *Gāyatrī Mantra* be received by hearing through the right or left ear? I understand there is evidence in the Scripture that says spiritual topics should be received through the left ear, but recently I heard you mention that the *Mantram* should be received through the right ear.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Regarding your question, I can say that generally the right ear is stronger than the left ear. It is true that King Purañjana heard through the right ear, the south *pañcāla*, that means the *karmma-kāṇḍa* fruitive activities under guidance of the *Vedas*, and it is that plane that Purañjana entered. This is given in the *śloka* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.25.50), but in that *śloka* another qualification is also given: that one can memorise very quickly, *yāti śrutadharānviṭah*, just by once hearing, one can immediately memorise. In addition, Mādhavāchāryya, our *Sampradāya* Guru, said that through *karmma-kāṇḍa* the *jīva*-soul may get a super chance by the *karmma* if by good fortune he gets the opportunity of the super-servitor's as devotees' service. The left ear is a little weaker and it is mentioned to be a symbol of *jñāna-kāṇḍa*. In *jñāna-kāṇḍa* there

is virtually no chance to get any service to the Vaiṣṇava devotees due to base ego. The final result they receive is *nirvviśeṣa-loka*, but this position must be avoided. In *jñāna-kāṇḍa* the main base is ego.

Also in some places we find the left ear is mentioned, but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj instructed us to hear through the right ear, therefore we are following that process.

Question: I am living so far away from the central *Maṭh*. How can I understand there is any value in whatever little service I can do from here?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied: Here in Nabadwip so many activities are going on, but all is for the satisfaction of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Also you can think it, that in the capital city of a country there are many duties that cannot be done there in the capital. The provinces, the smaller towns, and the villages all have their part to play in serving the centre. They grow paddy, vegetables, etc., spin cotton, make fabrics and clothing, keep cows and produce milk, butter, yoghurt, etc, as well as many other duties. In this way all over the world's fortunate souls can engage in service to the central Mission of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in unlimited ways. This varied service-life to the Centre is the basis of the whole spiritual world of joyful activity.



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EVERYONE EVERYWHERE spends their life eating, sleeping, enjoying, fearing and protecting themselves, and then dying—taking birth and dying. But that is not real life.

Real life is doing something of eternal value. If someone can do something in connection with the eternal world, they will receive an eternal result. That connection comes through transcendental knowledge, consciousness and activity; therefore we have no other course but to follow the divine guidance of Sri Guru.

Swami B.S. Govinda