
Twenty-four hours a day service to the Lord is necessary, but the nearest Lord is Guru, *Vaiṣṇava*, and Mahāprabhu. We are to fully surrender there, not only surrender and lie down, but surrender and serve. We are to surrender and serve with our full energy twenty-four hours a day, and then we must reach our transcendental destination very easily and without caring about anything.

* THE DIVINE SERVITOR *

Sri Chaitanya Saraswati Math, Nalae, J-p

The Divine Servitor



SRILA BHAKTI SUNDAR GOVINDA
DEV-GOSWAMI MAHARAJ

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

THE DIVINE SERVITOR

Compiled from Lectures and Letters by

His Divine Grace

ŚRĪLA BHAKTI SUNDAR GOVINDA MAHĀRĀJ

and from articles by
the venerable devotees
in glorification of His Divine Grace.

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Tel: Nabadwip 85

Collected from their own transcendental reservoir and
offered for the glorification and satisfaction of

Śrī Āchāryyadeva
His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

and our
Beloved Spiritual Master
who withdrew his manifest pastimes
on 12th August 1988

His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bowing my head and laying down my full body in the desire to surrender to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga I wish to express my sincere and happy acknowledgements to all those who helped in the preparation of this book which has been compiled as an offering unto His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupād Paramahansa Parivrājakāchāryya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj on the occasion of his 62nd Śrī Āvirbhāv Mahotsav. I pray that he and our beloved Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupād Paramahansa Parivrājakāchāryya-varyya Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, may be satisfied by this humble offering and attempt to chant their glories. I am feeling great happiness receiving the authoritative articles of glorification of Their Divine Graces from Śrīpad Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj who is heading the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh's main overseas branch in London; Dr. Dolgobinda Shastri, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's former Sanskrit teacher and present Director of the Jagannāth Research Institute, Puri, and from Śrīpad Dayadhāra Gaurāṅga Prabhu Bhakti Prabhākara who was formerly a professor of neurobiology and whose service activities now include leading this Maṭh's branch in Malaysia. Their articles make up Part One of this book. I am sure the reader will share my joy in reading these.

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj's glories are chanted by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and by all the devotees of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. In the second and third parts of this book we have the fortune to receive Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's association in the form of instructions and guidance compiled from his informal

Acknowledgements

talks and his letters respectively. We can never fully repay the spiritual master for even one word of instruction and so I am confident the devotees will appreciate the greatest value of these, despite the inevitable imperfections in my humble attempt to put them into print.

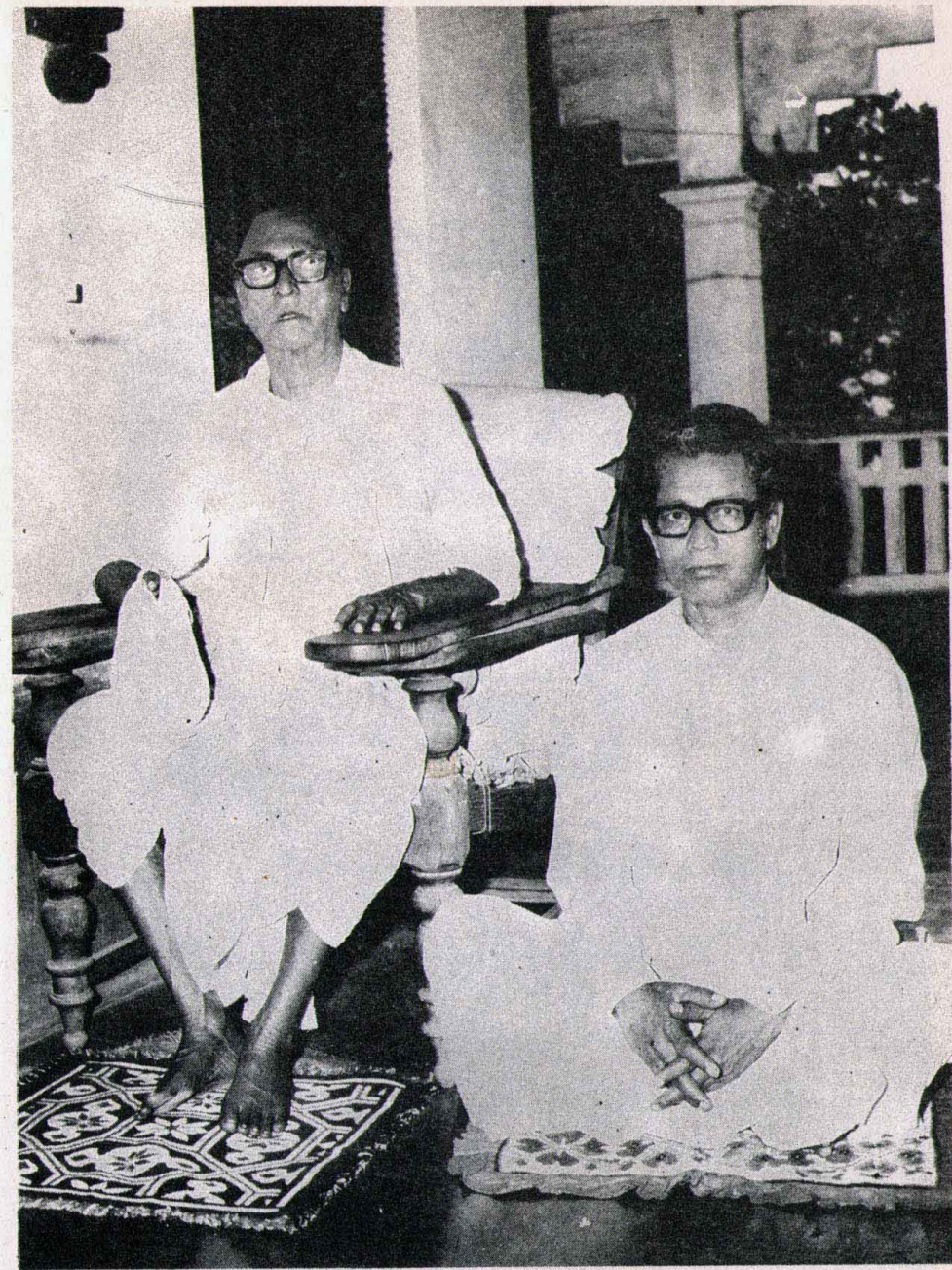
Many members of our Maṭh have given their energy to help with the preparation of this book. I give special mention to Śrīpad B.A. Paramādwaiti Mahārāj and Śrī Mohanānanda Prabhu whose services to the Maṭh have, amongst many other things, enabled this publication to come out in its present form, and to Śrīpad Nimāi Sundar Prabhu Vidyā-Vinoda who has given invaluable assistance in identifying and transliterating many of the Sanskrit and Bengali quotations contained herein.

Above all I am most indebted to my *harinām* and *dikṣa* Gurudeva His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupād Paramahansa Parivrājakāchāryya Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and to my full *sikṣa* Gurudeva Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj for their grace upon myself and upon everyone everywhere by giving the opportunity to connect with the highest prospect of life by means of engaging in their service. I pray to them and to all the readers that you may enable me to properly utilise this chance.

Humbly aspiring to serve the *Vaiṣṇavas*,
—Mahānanda Dāsa Brahmachārī Bhakti Rañjan
4th December 1990. The Holy Appearance Day of
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj.



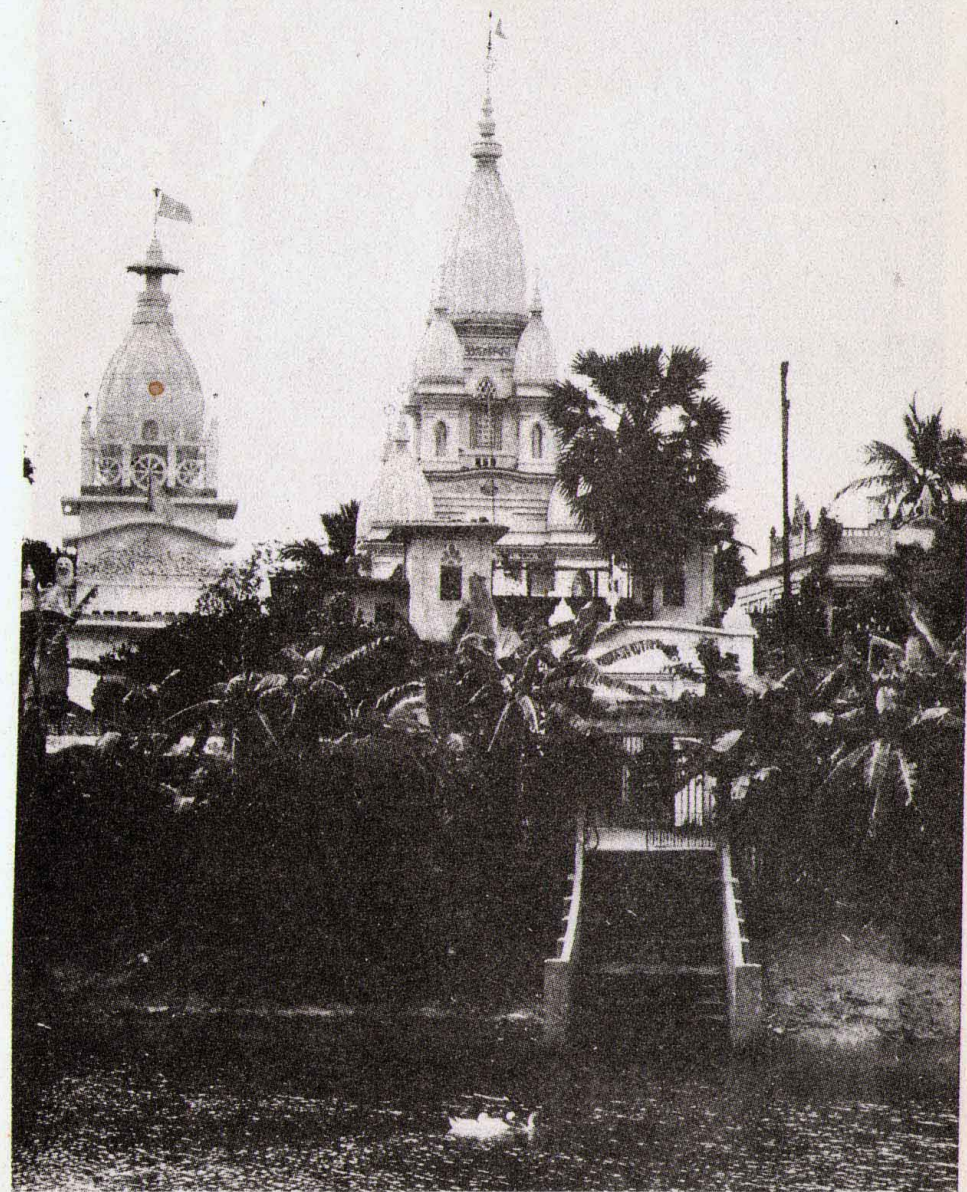
*Om Viṣṇupād Śrī Śrīla
Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj*



*Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj
seated at the holy feet of his Divine Preceptor,
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*



*Om Viṣṇupād Śrī Śrīla
Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*



*Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Math,
Koladwīp, Nabadwīp*



*Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj
conversing with devotees in Nabadwip*

Śrī-Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅgau Jayataḥ

Part One
**GLORIFICATION BY THE
DEVOTEES**

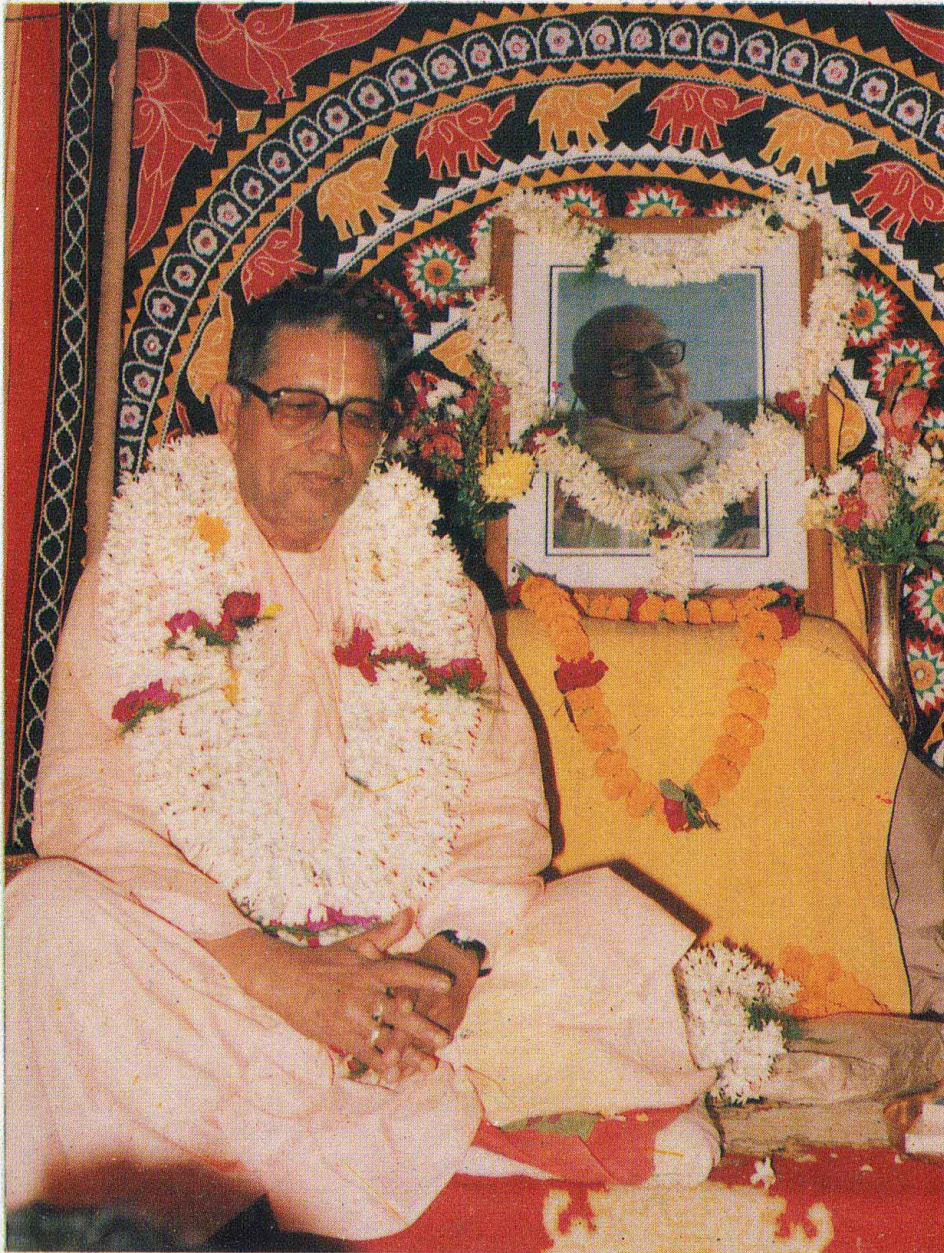
Chapter One
**THE GLORIOUS ADVENT
OF THE
PURE DEVOTEE**

By His Holiness Tridaṇḍi Swāmī
Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvarttate*
(Bhagavad-gītā. 3.21)

“The general mass follow the practices of the superior man; they follow whatever he accepts as the standard.”

This well-known verse sung by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Śrī Gītā* was sung by Prabhupāda Om Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī



*Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj:
always glorifying Śrīla Guru Mahārāj*

Mahārāj when his beloved disciple and intimate attendant, Om Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj approached Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet to take transcendental initiation from him and join him in his holy mission of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh. Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed his divine joy and confidence that the appearance in his Mission of such a person as Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj—our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj who descended in high brahminical lineage and was already replete with profuse scriptural knowledge and saintly qualities—heralded the welcome of many superior personages within the fold of Śrī Gaurāṅgadev.

As a unique *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsi* of the Śrī Gauḍīya *Sampradāya*, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's radiant example continued throughout his entire sojourn in this world and beyond. He preached with formidable command all over India, taking a prominent part in the founding and organising of many of the Gauḍīya Maṭhs of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī. Because of his high scriptural command and pure representation, Śrīla Prabhupāda one day addressed him as “*Śāstra-nipuṇa Śrīdhara Mahārāj*” (genius in scriptural representation), and finally, he was chosen by Śrīla Prabhupāda to sing *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pāda* for him during his (Śrīla Prabhupāda's) last days of manifest pastimes in this world.

A great nectarine current of Sanskrit and Bengali devotional compositions and commentaries flowed from the pen of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, including his *Śrī Gītā Catuḥ-śloki* and *Brahma-Gāyatrī* commentaries, unique to the entire *sampradāya* in full-fledged theistic representation. A handsome collection of monumental works in English were brought to scholars and seekers world-wide, and an endless stream of new publications from his taped conversations continue to be brought out, by the grace of that Guardian of Devotion Om Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Today is the 62nd Anniversary of the Holy Appearance Day of Om Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sundara Govinda Mahārāj. On this most holy of holy days I beg to offer my prostrate obeisances unto his lotus feet, unto the lotus feet of his illustrious Śrī Gurudev, and all their associates. As is well known, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj was chosen by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj long before his disappearance as his Successor-Āchāryya-President for his Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh of Nabadwip, Nadia, West Bengal, with its branches all over the world. At that time he happily retired and gave all duties and his exalted divine chair to Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. After that, by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's instructions, the following *śloka* in glorification of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj became manifest by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's wish and composition, for our supreme benefit. Now I am giving some explanation of this *śloka*

with my full respect, in the hope of attracting his causeless mercy.

*gurvabhīṣṭa-supūrakam guru-gaṇair
āśīṣa-sambhūṣitam
cintyācintya-samasta-veda-nipuṇam
śrī-rūpa-panthānugam
govindābhidham ujvalam vara-tanum
bhakty anvitam sundaram
vande viśva-guruṁ ca divya-bhagavat-
premṇo hi bīja-pradam*

Gurvabhīṣṭa-supūrakam—he fulfils the cherished desires of his Gurudev. At Brahmanapara, District Burdwan, only about six miles from Śrīpat Hāpāniyā, on 17th December 1929 Āchāryyadev Śrīla Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj made his gracious Advent in the world just to fulfil the innermost heart's desire of his Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: without, to distribute the unalloyed grace of Śrī Chaitanyadev to every nook and cranny of the universe, and within, to maintain the indomitable standard of exclusive devotion for Śrī Gurudev. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj taught us that one with a high vision will see his Śrī Gurudev as the manifestation of the Lord's most dear servant, who in the supreme position is seen to be Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Constitutionally, a disciple sings the glories, that is, performs the *kīrttana* of his Gurudev. But in particular and special cases we hear Gurudev performing the

kīrttana of his disciple. In 1985, Śrīla Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj conferred the *sannyāsa* order upon Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. The next day, which was his own Day of Advent, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj began the day by joyfully enumerating the unending glories of his beloved disciple, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, before the assembled fortunate devotees. The talk was no less than three hours long. Among the multitude of points he mentioned, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj referred to Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's learned scriptural representation, his knack of being on hand at the time of need, his mystical devotional nature, and his abundance of strong common sense in all dealings. It is for the fortunate and faithful soul to see how the pure devotee servitor ever fulfils the cherished wishes of his Gurudev in a multitude of ways.

Guru-gaṇair āśīṣa-sambhūṣitam—he is fully adorned with the blessings of all his Gurus, his Guru-varga. World preacher and ambassador of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Om Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-sata-śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Prabhupāda proclaimed at his public address at the opening of his Śrī Māyāpur Chandrodoya Mandir, "I consider Śrī Govinda Mahārāj to be my dearest son, and his Gurudev, Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj, to be my *Sikṣa-guru*."

In his "Declaration of Spiritual Succession" of 1986 Śrīla Guru Mahārāj stated to all the devotees present, when naming Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj as his successor,

“All my Godbrothers are very affectionate towards him, and they are happy that he will have this position.”

When in 1947 Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj approached the lotus feet of his Gurudev Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was surrounded by fourteen or more *brahmachārīs* including his own Godbrothers. Thus, from that early age of only seventeen, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj had their association and enjoyed their whole-hearted blessings and affection.

In 1989, during his address to the devotees assembled at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh on the Advent Day of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, observed in his separation, Śrīla Bhakti Kaṅkaṇa Tapasvī Mahārāj declared, “Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj was the foremost of the followers of our Gurudev Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Mahārāj, and he has clearly declared that he has selected Śrīpād Govinda Mahārāj as his successor. So my dear devotees, you please all accept him as the successor of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, otherwise you will have to fall down from your spiritual life.”

It was none other than Śrīla Tapasvī Mahārāj who was the intermediary in recommending Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj to Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Mahārāj for both initiations in one day (*Harīṇām* and *Gayātrī*), to which Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed. Also both during the time of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj as well as after his disappearance, many of his Godbrothers such as Their Divine Graces Śrīpād B.V. Jājāvar Mahārāj, Śrīpād B.D. Mādhav

Mahārāj, Śrīpād Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāj, Śrīpād B.P. Puri Mahārāj, Śrīpād B.K. Śānta Mahārāj, Śrīpād Satprasaṅgānanda Prabhu, etc. gave their happy blessings to Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj in many ways and expressed their joy.

Cintyācintya samasta veda nipuṇaṁ—well-versed in both the conceivable and inconceivable conclusions of all the religious scriptures. Once, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had promised to attend a meeting for delivering a *Bhāgavata* lecture at the house of Śrī Satkari Banerjee in Calcutta, a prominent and respected industrialist of the time. The occasion was in observance of the disappearance of his father Śrī Hari Prasād Banerjee. Suddenly, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj suffered a migraine headache attack, so he sent Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj to the meeting in his place. Many distinguished and learned guests attended that meeting. At that time, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj was only a youth of twenty-one years, a young boy in appearance. At first, Śrī Satkari Banerjee thought, “I have invited so many qualified persons—how will this young boy speak before them about *Bhāgavata*?” But after Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj had spoken, all were highly satisfied with his delivery. In that meeting many questions were posed and everyone was very satisfied and surprised to hear the answers given by Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. The next day, Mr. Banerjee remarked to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “I could not imagine that a young boy would be capable of delivering such high thoughts in a *Bhāgavata* speech.”

It was that Mr. Banerjee who bore the cost of the Deities of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh of Nabadwip.

Highly realised and possessing natural talent in Sanskrit and Bengali, the mother tongues of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava thought, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj has given us many valuable divine prayers and songs filled with the conceivable and inconceivable thought of the *Vedas*.

Śrī-Rūpa-panthānugam—he is the faithful follower on the path of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, the one who was chosen by Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Mahārāj to sing the holy prayer of the Divine Succession of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, chose as his successor Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. As Śrīla Prabhupāda's choice naturally drew the Vaiṣṇavas' highest regard for Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, similarly Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's choice clearly reveals his indomitable hope for the bright future of the Divine Succession of Śrī Rūpa, having reposed all his divine qualities in the personage of Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj. The faithful followers of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj cannot but feel genuine safety under the shelter of the future guardian he chose for them, and offer Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj the same respect and service that is offered to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself.

Govindābhīdham ujvalam vara-tanum bhakty anvitam sundaram—he is known as Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, and he possesses a splendid and radiant divine form that revels in the ecstasy of pure devotion for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Although we may have thought that the

Gauḍīya skies were about to be plunged into darkness when the full moon of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj disappeared from our view, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself had no intention of allowing any darkness to enter his *sampradāya*. He selected the brilliant, beautiful and devotional personality of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, who can satisfy all our divine aspirations. Seeing him in his effulgent form, delivering a wealth of *Hari-kathā* (narrations of the Supreme Lord) to the pilgrims hailing from the world over, we find that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj never left us. He is residing resplendently in all his divine glory in the personality of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj.

Viśva-guruṇ ca divya-bhagavat-premṇo hi bīja-pradam—by the blessings of his Guru Mahārāj and his own exalted capacity now we are seeing that he has manifest his Holy Self as 'viśva-guruṇ,' the Guru of the Universe, and he is the bestower of the seed of love divine for the Supreme Lord Hari. The flag of the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh flies high, singing its glories to the world. The fortunate souls from all over the world, far and wide, are coming to hear the nectarine delivery of *Hari-kathā* from Śrī Gaurāṅgadev's pure devotee, Oṁ Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-sata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj. His immaculate delivery infuses divine faith into the hearts of all, planting the seed of transcendental love divine.

Vande ('ham)—I offer my humble obeisances unto his holy lotus feet.

Chapter Two

A BORN PRECEPTOR

PUṢPĀÑJALI—

AN OFFERING OF FLOWERS IN A FEW WORDS

By

Dr. Dolgobinda Shastri,

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Kavya-Vyakaran-Puraṇ Tirtha(Cal),

Sankhya-Vedanta-Sahityashastri (Dacca),

Bhaktishastri (Nabadwip).

Retd. O.E.S. Principal.

4th December 1990

On the Advent Ceremony, Vyāsapūja, of

His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupād

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Towards the last quarter of 1947, I was directed by His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj to start a Sanskrit school at 7 Sitakanta Banerjee Lane, Calcutta, the old ancestral house of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj, the founder of the world-wide organisation 'ISKCON.' By then, that house was rented as the second branch of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Math, Kolerganj, Nabadwip.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, my *Sikṣa-guru*, asked me to

teach *Harināmāmṛta vyākaran*, *kāvya*, *alankār* and *chanda* to his *brahmachārīs*, amongst whom were Śrī Gaurendu and Śrī Hari Charan.

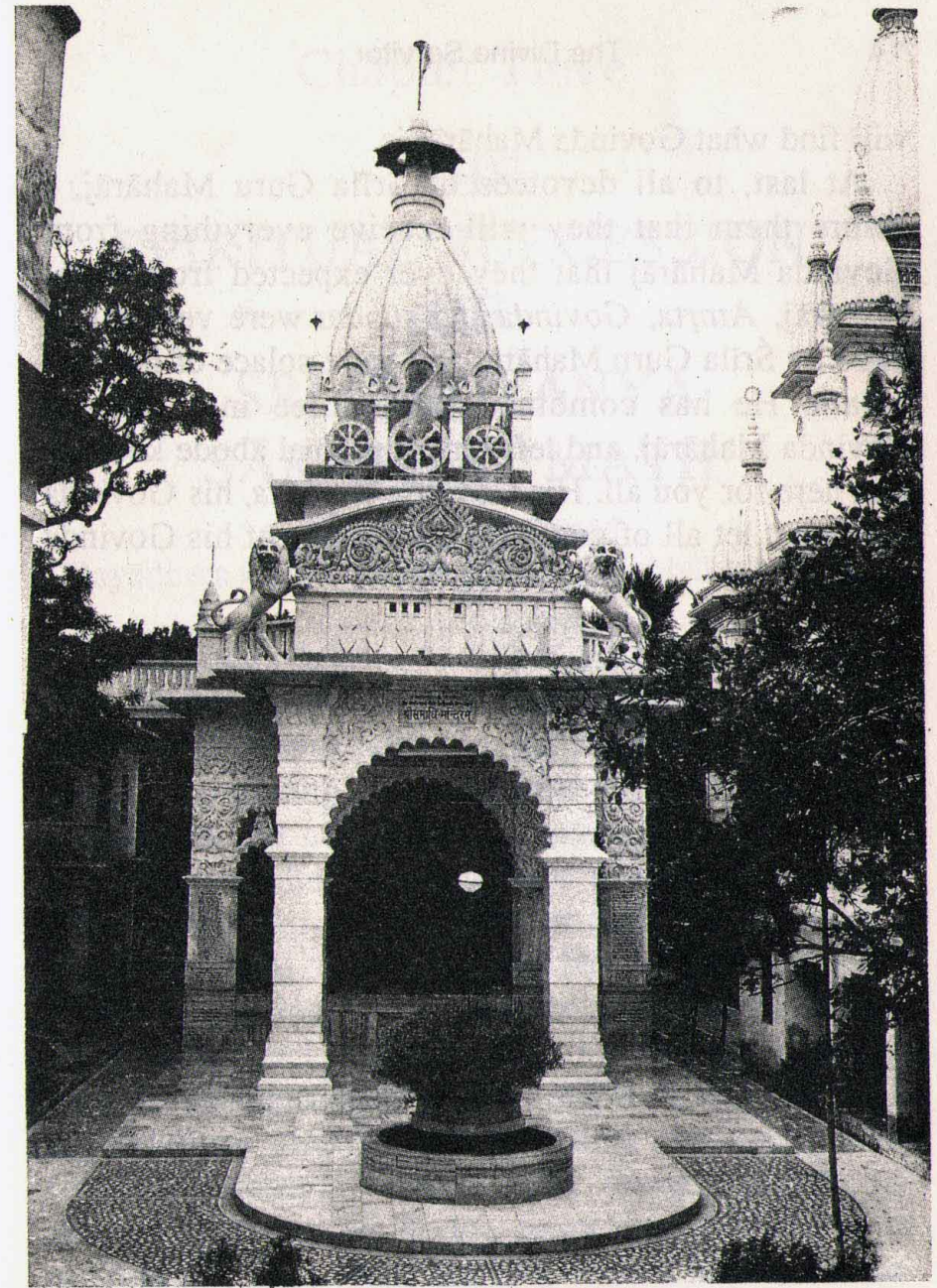
I found Śrī Gaurendu, now our Śrī Govinda Mahārāj, to be extraordinary, most intelligent and endowed with exceptional memory power. He could reproduce every lesson the next day without mistake. I taught him some metres of *Chanda Mañjarī* like *tūṇak*, *toṭak*, *mandakranta* etc., but to my utter astonishment, he composed Sanskrit verses in those metres within a few days. One day he narrated before me that he had addressed a gathering of more than two thousand people to whom he explained the feeling, thinking and willing faculties relating to devotional practice. I asked him to explain it elaborately and he did so, nicely. Generally this is a topic to be taught to graduate students of philosophy. This was my second astonishment; that a boy of eighteen, without a general school education, could grasp and explain intricate psychological terms so correctly, so nicely!

I had to change my attitude and approach towards him. Such qualities as he displayed cannot be manifest in anyone without *sādhana* of a previous life or the special *kṛpā* of a *siddha guru*. At that time my vision changed and from then onwards I saw him as the embodiment of service to his beloved Guru Mahārāj.

Gradually our intimacy was transformed to a level of friendship, and when we both were alone we would chant *bhajans*. Mostly there were three songs—*badasi*

yadi kiñcidapi; mādharma! bahuta minati kari toya and tātala saikate—that, from his sweet tone, would drench us both with tears. The element of the divine love of the highest stage was his natural instinct.

From the very beginning I understood that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was trying to shape Gaurendu according to his own image and he wished to make him his successor. I could also understand that as Śrīla Guru Mahārāj liked me much, it was my divine obligation to contribute the best I could towards the fulfilment of his cherished desire. From 1947 until the last day of my stay in Calcutta in 1961, I was in closest touch with both of them. Then, after nearly thirty years, by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's divine will I was compelled to return to Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh; and found to my utmost satisfaction that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had fulfilled his wish to his heart's content and then departed to his eternal abode. He transmitted whatever treasure he had—mental, intellectual and spiritual—to his most beloved disciple, Govinda Mahārāj, and merged in him. This is "Union in Separation." His *Samādhi Mandir* now stands there at the Maṭh as the embodiment of "Union in Separation." Anyone who wants to see Govinda Mahārāj and Guru Mahārāj united in one whole can stand before the *Samādhi Mandir*, observe it from top to plinth floor, once read the verses inscribed on the marble plaques, stand again in front of the Deity of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and read the Sanskrit verses composed and inscribed below the Deity—and he



Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Samādhi Mandir*:
The Temple of Union in Separation

will find what Govinda Mahārāj is.

At last, to all devotees of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, I assure them that they will receive everything from Govinda Mahārāj that they ever expected from Guru Mahārāj. *Amṛta*, *Govinda* and *sundar* were very much liked by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and were solace of his life-breath. He has combined these three into one, in Govinda Mahārāj, and left for his eternal abode keeping him here for you all. His Govinda is *amṛta*, his Govinda is *sundar*: let all of you taste the ecstasy of his Govinda Sundar.

Chapter Three

THE SPIRITUAL SUCCESSION OF ŚRĪ CHAITANYA SĀRASWAT MATH

by His Grace Śrīpad

Dayādhara Gaurāṅga Dāsa Bhakti Prabhākara Ph.D.

It is a well known fact that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī, at the age of 86 in 1979 was not prepared to begin a new campaign of initiating disciples from all over the world because he did not expect to survive long enough to give them shelter through their introduction to the *bhakti* path. Several disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj had approached him in 1979 and 1980 for his connection, but for that reason he did not accept them as initiated disciples. Still, he became saddened with the circumstances of their plight. It was then that his dearmost disciple and long-time confidant, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, urged Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to reconsider giving his divine connection to those who approached. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj desired to help but he feared he would not be staying much longer in this

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world to give them the necessary direct guidance. This seemingly impossible dilemma set the stage for the most wondrous and fortunate sacrifice to have ever been witnessed in our lifetimes. Feeling Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's pain and understanding the dire need of the devotees approaching Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for his connection, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj made a proposal to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. The substance of that proposal was staggering to the most imaginative minds: if Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would give his connection to those devotees, then Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj would accept the responsibility for their spiritual lives after Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's departure from this worldly plane. It was then that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj reversed his policy and began giving initiations to the Western devotees. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's promise warmed the heart of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and his acceptance of disciples from the West was similar to, and indeed reminded us, of the great campaign of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu some 500 years ago. There it was first demonstrated how the saintly stalwarts canvas to recruit and accept anyone with interest in Mahāprabhu's mission, regardless of qualification.

Certainly our qualifications in coming to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj were questionable. We had been summarily rejected by our former associates and we hadn't a clue really what we were coming for except to continue what Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj had given to us. Yet somehow, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj accepted us—such was

his magnanimity. And, moreover, this was only due to the great mercy of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. So, in what category can we posit his mercy?

From 1982 to 1986, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj preached to the entire world, without, to use Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's words, "world itineracy"; and, according to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's own divine plan, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj took *sannyāsa* in November of 1985. So it was that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, at *Gaura-pūrṇimā* in 1986, told the world of his decision to depart this worldly plane and reiterated his wish of the last forty years to leave everything in the hands of his dearmost disciple, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. No doubt we were saddened to hear the news of his impending departure. But the inevitability of it had been before us for several years as Śrīla Guru Mahārāj increasingly revealed the symptoms of failing health. Yet, we had the hope of a small child thinking that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would remain in this earthly plane throughout our lives. Such was the love he cultivated in us and such was our unfathomable attachment to His Divine Grace. All the more remarkable was this feat when we consider that he only performed this service by, and for, the mercy of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj.

When Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj came to the West and created such a great following, it occurred to us (after his departure) that he came only to take us to the lotus feet of *Sad-guru*, his *Sikṣa-guru*, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Now, shortly after the departure of

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, it is becoming increasingly apparent that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's great preaching and canvassing campaign to create a 'relief agency' for the fallen souls of the Western world, was to recruit us solely for the service of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj who would carry out the wishes of the *paramparā* perfectly. Such is the way of the very high *Vaiṣṇavas*, and we have been ever so fortunate to witness that. This was Śrī Guru and His Divine Grace—and it was our great fortune to be recruited to fulfil that. A few days before the *Gaura-pūrṇimā* celebration of 1986, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj delivered the following ordinance to all the devotional community present and, indeed, for his disciples near and far throughout the whole world:

“According to the desire of my Divine Master, I have been maintaining this disciplic succession but it is no longer possible for me, as I am now too old and invalid. You all know that from long ago I have chosen Śrīman Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj and I have given him *sannyāsa*. All my *Vaiṣṇava* Godbrothers are very affectionate towards him and it is also their desire to give him this position. I have previously given to him the charge of the Maṭh and now I am giving him the full responsibility of giving *Harināma*, *dikṣa*, *sannyāsa*, etc, as an *Āchāryya* of this Maṭh on behalf of myself.

“Those who have any regard for me should give this respect and position to Govinda

Mahārāj as my successor. As much as you have faith in my sincerity, then with all sincerity I believe that he has got the capacity of rendering service in this way. With this, I transfer these beads and from now, he will initiate on my behalf as *Ṛtvik*. The *Ṛtvik* system is already involved both here and also in the foreign land. The *Ṛtvik* is the representative. So, if you want to take from me, and you take by his hands, then it will be as well and as good as taking from me.

“In the *Mahāmandala*, Sāgara Mahārāj and many others are also *Ṛtvik* of Swāmī Mahārāj and also myself. They may do so, but in this Maṭh and in any Maṭh under this Maṭh, he will be the representative. If anyone cannot accept this, he may leave the Maṭh rather than stay here and disturb the peace of the Maṭh. With all my sincerity and good feelings to Guru-Gaurāṅga, to the *Vaiṣṇavas* and the *Āchāryyas*, Mahāprabhu, Pañca-Tattva, Rādhā-Govinda and Their *Parṣadas*, with all my sincere prayers to Them, henceforth he will represent me in this affair beginning from today's function.

“Now I shall go from here and he will do the necessary. On my behalf, he will give *Harināma*, *dikṣa*, *sannyāsa*, and everything.”

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj agreed to accept the responsibility of the Western disciples of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in 1981, out of his intense desire to serve Śrīla Guru

Mahārāj. As Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's disciple, he could empathise with the yearning of the Western devotees for Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's connection. In this way, both Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj were helping each other to serve the divine mission of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj further explained at informal gatherings during Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Vyāsa-pūja* celebration in 1988 in Nabadwip-Dhām:

“Śrīla Guru Mahārāj called Puri Mahārāj and requested him, ‘You arrange everything for Govinda Mahārāj's *sannyāsa*.’ And after that function was performed, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was somewhat satisfied. Then on the 2nd of December 1985, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj registered his last will. He became very satisfied after that with this work—his transcendental work. Of course, we were praying, very selfishly perhaps, that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj must stay with us, but I came to understand that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has his own desire and his own life also, and we cannot disturb that. One time when I voiced the sentiment that he stay with us, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj very quickly turned away his head from me. That time, it came very heavily to my heart that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj wants his own association, the pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. He is that Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī coming in the form of Guru Mahārāj in this world, and he now

wants to go there, but we are disturbing him. Then I thought either today or tomorrow or someday—any day we must face the inevitable separation. This situation of separation will come and then, what to do? If Śrīla Guru Mahārāj wants, immediately he can leave. And he did that.

“But afterwards when we took Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Divine Form downstairs, I could see that so bright was his body, and no disturbance was in his body. So from upstairs to downstairs, I was steady. And since that time, I have not come back up here until today (to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's room). This is the first time since Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's departure (on August 12th, 1988) and it is for duty to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Only I am coming now to give the initiation for the devotees. Now we are bound to do our duty. Sometimes Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would say, ‘The transcendental duty is our life—there is no other life.’

“So, duty we must do, but there are two kinds of duty: mundane duty and transcendental duty. Sometimes mundane duty is attracting us, but we can transform that duty also in a transcendental way. Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura also said in one song, *gr̥he vā vanete thāke*, that we can stay in *gr̥hastha* life, or *sannyāsa* life, or *brahmachārī* life—any life, if we can chant the

Mahāmantra and worship Mahāprabhu. Then, everything is going in that direction. No problem. At the time of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, most of his devotees were also *gṛhasthas*—Śrīvasa Paṇḍita was a *gṛhastha* of the Pañcattattva; and Adwaita Prabhu showed *gṛhastha* life. Nityānanda Prabhu lastly also showed *gṛhastha* life. In *Kali-yuga*, *sannyāsa* life is not recommended, not favoured for the devotional attitude. But *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* is accepted in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—not *karma-sannyāsa*, but *bhakta-sannyāsa*, that is another type of *sannyāsa*. It has its root exclusively in *Guru-sevā*—nothing else. No other thing. This way, there is some promise in *Vaiṣṇava-sannyāsa*: by *kāya*—body, *mana*—mind, *vākya*—speech, everything I shall engage in the service of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*. That is the *sannyāsa* for this age. That *sannyāsa* is possible everywhere, and everyone can take it.

“Formally, in our Vedic *śāstra*, there is *brahmachārī*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*; that *sannyāsa* is *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharmma*. There are two kinds of *varṇāśrama*; *daiva-varṇāśrama* and *asura-varṇāśrama*. That *śāstric sannyāsa* is *daiva-varṇāśrama*, and that is also accepted by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and certainly other *śāstras*. But commenting on the

paricaya—identity or acquaintance—of the *Vaiṣṇava*, Mahāprabhu says in one *śloka*:

nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir
nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāhaṁ varṇi na ca gṛha-patir
no vana-stho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-
paramānanda-pūrṇāmṛtābdher
gopi-barttuḥ pada-kamalayor
dāsa-dāsānudāsah

“This is our *paricaya*. We are not *brahmaṇas*, we are not kings, *vaiśyas*, or *śūdras*; we are not *brahmachārīs*, *sannyāsis*, or *vānaprasthas*, but our *paricaya* is that we are the servitors of the servitors of the servitors of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*.

gopi-barttuḥ pada-kamalayor
dāsa-dāsānudāsah

“This is Mahāprabhu’s desire and we are following that. But for the general people, they want to see the red cloth and they are thinking, ‘It is a *sādhu*’: in this way, for the benefit of the people—the general mass—we are trying to maintain the *sannyāsa* life, trying to maintain the *gṛhastha* life, every life. But *bhakta* life is the only life. Where there is *bhakti*, there—that is life. Where there is no *bhakti*, there is no life. This is Mahāprabhu’s teaching.”

We had the rare pleasure and opportunity to come to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, no doubt. But what we have yet to learn is that we entered onto a stage where a transcendental symphony was playing (*līlā*)—where Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj were playing and we were also a witness to that. Those who came but could not, cannot, or will not, see this divine relationship playing before our eyes have missed the most valuable treasure shown: *sādhū-saṅga*.

Our greatest fortune is in being placed in the divine hands of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj after Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's unexpected (by us) departure. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's arrival, his pastimes and his departure were all miraculous and transcendental. Those who wish to fault any part of his pastimes as mundane, incoherent or foolhardy, do themselves the greatest harm. But they are certainly not the first to underestimate the divine instructions of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

In 1981 when I visited a number of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Godbrothers on his order (to undertake a comparative study), I was often told by those well-meaning Godbrothers, "Yes, but Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj is now too old and invalid," as if to say "Your Guru Mahārāj is no longer preaching in this world at large." But we can see that after 1981, from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's informal talks alone have already come several books lauded the world over. In addition, he closely supervised our printing and translation of his most revered writings, "The Hidden Treasure of the

Sweet Absolute" and "Positive and Progressive Immortality." Certainly now, no one thinks we were following an 'invalid.' So also, the entire life span of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was filled with integrity and intent of purpose. He did not decide on his successor at the time of his departure: forty years earlier he had decided that Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj would succeed him, and at the end of his life, as we have quoted herein, he has firmly and resolutely reasserted his wish for our benefit. The Elixir of Nectar which has been carried to us from Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh for the last fifty years is still flowing by the mercy of Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu represented in the person of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. I take the feet dust of that Elixir on my head and pray that the good sense to continue to do so never leaves me. The nectar has now become doubly sweet with the advent of Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—acclaimed by one and all as the "Maker of Gurus"—has presented us with his most precious gem in the personage of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj. In Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's own words, we say, "May we thank our lucky stars!"

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

Part Two:

DIVINE DISCOURSES

By His Divine Grace

ŚRILA BHAKTI SUNDAR GOVINDA MAHĀRĀJ

First Discourse:

THE DIVINE ACCOUNT

I am feeling very fortunate and thankful to you all because you have engaged me in the service of my Divine Master, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. I am always busy with other services of this Maṭh and therefore I cannot properly serve you all. Also I have a little deficiency in English, and therefore am a little cautious to speak in English; but it is my duty to serve the Western devotees, and I cannot forget that. Just now I was doing other duties but when you engaged me in this service of speaking to you I thought, "Oh, this is also my service but I have not carried it out." In this way I am very

thankful to you all because you want to engage me in my Divine Master's service.

In earlier days my Divine Master was sitting in this chair and distributing His mercy to devotees all over the world. Devotees were coming from so far. Some came 10,000 miles, some 6,000 miles and some 3,000 miles. Sometimes when Guru Mahārāj was feeling sick he would say, "I am not feeling well, I cannot speak now." At that time my tendency was to be very affectionate to my Godbrothers and I would request him, "Mahārāj, please speak a little, at least for only five or ten minutes. They have come from so far away. Please speak for five minutes, or even without speaking anything, just be seated there for five minutes." In this way I requested him for my Godbrothers. And Guru Mahārāj always agreed to my request. Even if he was not feeling well, he still would come to speak something for the devotees' benefit. But when he was sitting in this chair he was like another man—not a sick man. He would speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness with full energy and full enthusiasm. I know, and Guru Mahārāj knew, that sometimes he wanted to avoid the meeting, but that was not sufficient for me. Once seated in his chair he was the world-wide Mission's *Āchāryya* speaking, and I would be surprised that often he would speak for two hours. In this way, with much difficulty Guru Mahārāj tried to distribute the Kṛṣṇa conception, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to the devotees.

There are two kinds of devotees we can see in the world: those with a preaching tendency and those with *bhajan* tendency. One is called *goṣṭhyānandī* and the other *bhajanānandī*. He who wants to conceal himself and chant for his own benefit, who is doing *bhajan*, is called *bhajanānandī*. In the time of Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī there were two or three devotees who were like that. One you know very well; his name is Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāj. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāj was a very close friend of Guru Mahārāj. He was a graduate, and learned, but he did not want to preach; he always wanted to do some *bhajan* for himself. He was in the mood of one who is self-satisfied—*ātmārāma*—one who tastes ecstasy himself, but does not distribute it to others. But Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī was not happy with his mood.

At that time Guru Mahārāj was preaching in Northern India; Delhi, Kurukshetra, Ambala, etc. In the winter season it is very hard to preach there with snow falling and the well-water freezing. Once I heard from Guru Mahārāj that one night he was in Ambala railway station with Bon Mahārāj. They had no place to sleep so they tried to sleep under the footbridge, but ice was falling down and it was not possible to sleep. Guru Mahārāj had only one blanket and was thinking he may die because it was so cold, but he thought, "If I die it will be for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for my Guru Mahārāj, then I have no problem." That night two men died. They also had no shelter but they could not tolerate the

cold. In this way Guru Mahārāj was preaching in Northern India. When he came near Benares, he wrote a letter to Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda telling of Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāj's affection for him. At that time Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāj's name was Svadikānanda Brahmachārī.

He wrote, "Svadikānanda Brahmachārī is staying in Balihati. If you order me I shall try to bring him for preaching." Prabhupāda Saraswatī Thākura was very happy with that letter and immediately replied saying, "If you can bring him with you and engage him in preaching then I must say that you are his real friend." And there he mentioned: "Seated in the jungle of Balihati chanting on beads is not *Kṛṣṇānuśīlana*, the real cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

The real practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to preach to others and to practise oneself by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and doing *Guru-Vaiṣṇava sevā*. It was the mood of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Thākura that if Śrīla Guru Mahārāj could bring that devotee for preaching then he would be the best friend of that *brahmachārī*, and so asked him to try.

When we are meditating we may think, "What are we feeling?" Many thinking matters will come in our mind to disturb us and proper meditation is not possible. But yogis are meditating with much endeavour with their full energy. When there are the activities of *prāṇāyāma*, *āsana*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, etc., this yoga is called *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, but those who practise this

properly are achieving in their *samādhi* only a little feeling of Paramātmā. One who is very expert may see Paramātmā at a particular moment, but still, after that he must come back to his previous consciousness. But Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī practised and preached the best method, and that is called *bhakti-yoga*; and not ordinary *bhakti-yoga*, but *ananya-bhakti-yoga*. *Ananya-bhakti-yoga*, or exclusive devotion, means:

sarvopādhi vinirmuktaṁ, tat-paratvena nirmalam
hrṣikeṇa hrṣikeśa sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate
 (Nārada Pañcarātra)

Another similar *śloka* is:

anyābhilāṣitā śūnyam, jñāna-karmmadya anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanaṁ bhaktir uttamā
 (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu)

This is very wholesome advice and Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda gave a translation in Bengali poetry form: "With all your energy, all your senses, and all your activities, engage yourself twenty-four hours a day for the service of the Lord. That is real *bhakti*, and there is no fault that will come to attack you." The conditioned soul has faults, no doubt, but Kṛṣṇa takes everything in His own account, so the conditioned soul's account is empty. There is no fault-counting, therefore no problem comes to the real devotee. He is not doing anything for himself. He is not eating for himself, he is not sleeping for himself—he is

not doing anything for himself. He does everything for his Divine Master, for his Divine Lord, so what fault can he have? Maybe a very qualified person can do many things but they are always plus-minus accountable. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says:

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

All kinds of qualifications grace a devotee, and the *sāstra* sees no defect in him. If devotion is quite exclusive there can be no fault there. In this way Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda tried to preach Mahāprabhu's conception all over the world. Another name of that preaching conception is *paramahansa dharma*.

I heard this following history from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. You have seen recently on Vyāsa Pūjā day a disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda give a lecture in Bengali very enthusiastically. When he was a child, a young *brahmachārī*, he went by horse and cart to preach with some *sannyāsis*. At that time Prabhupāda had two horse-drawn carts and one motor car. Big *sannyāsis* and expert devotees were going by car for preaching. The middle class devotees were going for preaching by horse and cart, and others were going by tram, bus, etc. That *brahmachārī* was going by horse and cart with some *sannyāsis*. Another *sannyāsi* was watching. Although a prominent disciple

and qualified man, that *sannyāsi* did not have so much exclusive devotion to Śrīla Prabhupāda. He said, "I am very unfortunate, I cannot understand my Divine Master properly. My Divine Master is preaching and demonstrating practical *paramahansa-dharma*, but I cannot understand this." *Paramahansa-dharma* is the way of practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness with all one's energy, activity—everything.

A *hansa* takes milk from water. *Hansa* means swan. If you give milk mixed with water to a swan, he will extract the milk and leave the water. This is the nature of a *hansa*. A *paramahansa* is also doing likewise: from every matter, from everything, he takes the service of the Lord. He does everything and uses everything for the service of the Lord, and the unwanted parts he leaves aside, just as the swan leaves aside the water. This is the nature of a *paramahansa*.

Why must I live? Because I must do my master's *sevā*, his service, otherwise I do not want to live. What is *Vaiṣṇavism*? A *Vaiṣṇava* is always worshipping his Lord twenty-four hours a day. Worshipping means serving the Lord. That is *Vaiṣṇavism*. In some ways it is a very easy thing.

We are coming from Viṣṇu. Our origin is coming from *Viṣṇu-tattva*. Every *jīva* soul has fifty kinds of qualities. According to the scriptures the Supreme Lord possesses sixty-four types of qualities, but each *jīva* has only fifty. The *jīva* soul has so many qualities in common because he originates from *Viṣṇu-tattva*.

Viṣṇu-br̥hatvat br̥mhanatvat. He is very great; the greatest. *Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante. Yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayanty abhisamviśanti, tad vijñāsyasya tad eva brahma.* From where are all the material worlds and the spiritual worlds coming? And who is giving light, and where will everything go? That is the *Brahma-tattva*. From where everything is coming and to where everything is going is the *Brahma-tattva*, whereas we are *anucitkan*, atoms of particles of consciousness. We have much qualification because our origin is Viṣṇu. So if we cannot engage those qualifications for the service of the Lord, we cannot get any transcendental benefit. Our fault is in avoiding engaging our capacity in His service. Our soul must be attracted by Param-brahma, Kṛṣṇa, but Māyā is living in the middle portion. We are attached to Māyā now. And because of our activity, Māyā covers us like a cloud, or like rust. This rust is called *ahaṅkar*. In the scriptures it is said:

*ahaṅkāranivṛttanām, keśavo nahī dūragah
ahaṅkāra-yutānām hi, madhye parvvata-rāśayah
(Brahma-vaivartta Purāṇa)*

Bhagavan, the Lord, is near to us, but we cannot see Him. Why? Because inside is rust, therefore Kṛṣṇa cannot attract us. But if there is no rust we must immediately become attached to our Lord's service, as iron is attracted to a magnet. One who is practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness twenty-four hours a day, is a pure devotee. And Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta

Saraswatī was preaching that conception with all his associates. But that *sannyāsi* said, "I cannot properly understand my Divine Master. This fourteen-year old boy is going for the service of the Lord and he is going by horse-cart. But our ideal is given by Rūpa, Sanātana, Jīva Goswāmī, etc. and they would live underneath a tree, taking only a little buttermilk. But Prabhupāda is giving all facilities for practising and preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that boy is using those facilities. This I can easily understand but why can I not understand Śrīla Prabhupāda?" In this way he showed himself to be perplexed. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was there and heard this, and I heard it from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

It is very easy to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness if we can engage ourselves always in the service of Kṛṣṇa. Many duties will come to us and all the fruit of all duties must go to Kṛṣṇa. In this way we will have no liability; all liability will go to Kṛṣṇa.

After Śrīla Guru Mahārāj made the memorandum of rules and regulations of his Mission, the government had some difficulty in accepting its contents. So I had to give an explanation of the rules and regulations of this memorandum to them. One point that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave there is that the *Āchāryya* is not liable for the accounts of his society, although he is vested with all powers. The *Āchāryya* has veto power. If a resolution is passed by other members in a meeting but the *Āchāryya* does not consider it proper, he can cancel it with his veto power. But the government could not

understand this. They said, "What is this? If one man can manage everything, then he is liable for everything, but here the *Āchāryya* has no liability and yet he can do everything. It is not possible!"

Why did Guru Mahārāj form the constitution in this way? The *Āchāryya* is the representative of the Lord in this mundane plane. If a devotee will think the *Āchāryya* to be like ourselves, a mundane man, it will not be possible for that devotee to get the full benefit of devotion. In the *sāstra* it says;

*ācāryyam mām vijānīyān, nāvamanyeta karhicit
na marttya buddhyāśūyeta, sarvva deva-mayo guruḥ
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.17.27)*

Who is Guru? He is Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing in the form of Guru, for our benefit. Therefore we are not to differentiate between the Lord and the Guru. If we do differentiate, we will be offenders. We are not to make such differentiation.

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

If the Guru is merciful, Kṛṣṇa must be merciful, and we can consider that we have passed our examination. But if we fail to satisfy our Guru, then we have failed our examination and Kṛṣṇa cannot help us.

There is also another very nice example which I have mentioned before, using the analogy of the relationship of the water, the lotus and the sun. If the lotus is in the water the sun nourishes it making it glorious, but if we pull the lotus out of the water then the sun will burn it. In this way Guru is like the water, he is our life. We are like the lotus, and the Lord is like the sun. The mercy of Śrī Gurudev can give us everything: unlimited things, things we cannot imagine. But if the Guru is dissatisfied, Kṛṣṇa does not care for those who displease him.

So in our governing body, all the men and women are disciples, and Guru is *Āchāryya*. Then how will they judge the Guru? They cannot judge the Guru, and this is the purport of what Śrīla Guru Mahārāj wrote in his society memorandum. The *Āchāryya* is not liable for any account, but he has great power. He is like an autocrat. Kṛṣṇa is an autocrat and His position is autocratic. Similarly the *Āchāryya*'s position is like that of an autocrat. The government wanted to modify the wording a little, but when I told them that I did not make the constitution but it was written by a big lawyer, they gave due consideration and recognition.

The only thing necessary for the disciple is to give full obeisances to his Guru, then he will have no problem in his spiritual life. But it is very difficult for the conditioned souls. The illusory environment is always bolstering our ego. That ego is barring our entrance into the transcendental world. If we remove

that ego from our heart we must then become able to live in the transcendental world.

The scientists and the scriptures also differentiate between *cetan* (consciousness) and *jaḍa* (matter). But matter is coming from where? Matter is also coming from consciousness. This is tangible truth, and this is where the Darwin theory fails. If there is no consciousness, there can be no matter. Then if consciousness is the mother of matter, matter may be fully conscious. I cannot see this pillar moving, but it is moving now. The scientists say there is some internal motion going on all the time. It will be seen that in fifty or a hundred years time this pillar will fall down. It is going, day by day. Imperceptibly, a child is also changing daily, and we can see this if we compare the one-year-old and the six-year-old. In this way everything is moving. So we should try to see everything transcendently.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said that we see Nabadwip Dhām as though it is the mundane world. Many thorn trees used to be at Ishodyan and also on the land in Māyāpur where the Māyāpur Chandradoya Mandir is now. But Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said, "You are only seeing many thorn trees. When you see Māyāpur proper, you will see here many transcendental things; I am seeing those." Here there are many flower gardens and many nice transcendental buildings. Everything is transcendental here. The dust of Māyāpur is transcendental, the grass also. Everything here is eager to serve

Mahāprabhu. It is all very nice and continually serving Him. Mahāprabhu is coming here and performing His *līlā*, chanting with His associates and devotees, and every bathing ghat on the Ganges here is built out of *mani*, *manikya*, *ratna*, etc. (invaluable spiritual gems, jewels, etc.). Everything is transcendental. But we are living in *Māyā* so we cannot see in that way at present. Therefore it is necessary for us to open the door to the world of consciousness.

Bhagavan Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* :

*daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī, mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante, māyām etāṁ taranti te*
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.14)

Everything here is happening with the combination of *Māyā* and the *jīva* soul. The soul is getting happiness, sadness, and many things, but with the connection of *Māyā*. When *Māyā* leaves us, then our material ego will also leave and then we shall be able to see the transcendental world; and we will get our position in the service of our Supreme Lord, our Supreme Godhead. We are waiting for that day. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written many things in his songs in this regard, including the following:

*kabe gaura-vane suradhunī-taṭe
'hā rādhe hā kṛṣṇa' bā'le
kādiyā beḍāba deha-sukha chhāḍi'
nānā-latātarutale*

śvapaca-grhete māgiyā khāiba
piba saraswatī jala
puline puline gaḍāgaḍi diba
kari' kṛṣṇa-kolāhala

dhāmavāsī jane, praṇati kariyā
māgiba kṛpāra leśa
vaiṣṇava-caraṇa-reṇu gāya mākhi
dhari' avadhūta-veśa

gauṛa-vraja-vane bheda nā heriba
haiba varajavāsī
dhāmera svarūpa sphuribe nayane
haiba rādhāra dāsī.

He says that, when we can see that transcendental form of Nabadwip, we will understand where we are. Then we can say confidently, "We are living on Gupta Govarddhan now!" Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said that this place Koladwīp—where this Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is situated—is Gupta Govarddhan, and that it is *aparādha bhañjan pāṭ* in Mahāprabhu's *līlā*. That means that if we live here with full faith for one night all our sins and all our offences will go. Also in the holy book *Bhakti Ratnākara* it is given that this place, Koladwīp, where we are living, is *aparādha bhañjan pāṭ*. When that day will come to us—when Māyā and our ego leave us—then we will be able to see everything including our Lord's manifestation in the form of the *Dhām*. With our transcendental body we

will be able to serve our Lord in many ways: *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and up to the highest, *madhura*.

Madhura-rasa is very gloriously manifested only in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, and hankering for that *rasa* is manifested fully in *Gaura-līlā*. Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that Kṛṣṇa Himself cannot imagine how beautiful He is. And when Kṛṣṇa sees His face in the mirror He wants to embrace and kiss Himself, and He is very disturbed: He cannot tolerate. He needs Himself. But can He succeed? The *madhura-rasa* is inside Him, and He is as though mad, thinking, "What shall I do?" And Kṛṣṇa is seeing that Rādhārāṇī is getting all the ecstasy from His transcendental form and by His service. What Kṛṣṇa wants, She immediately presents Him with that. She knows what Kṛṣṇa wants, and She is always preparing for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has no chance to serve that *mahāśakti*, Rādhārāṇī. By the service of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī gets everything, but Kṛṣṇa does not get that even though He enthusiastically wants it most. So He thinks, "It is only possible if I Myself assume the position of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, then I shall be able to taste that ecstasy She is feeling." In this way Kṛṣṇa took the *bhāva* and *kanti*—the mood and colour—from Rādhārāṇī and He became Gaura-Mahāprabhu; and that is the very highest entity that we worship with utmost reverence. But now our position is very low, but from below, downstairs, we are expecting that by the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu we must get a lift, an elevator to go there. And by coming in touch with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj already we have a connection

to go there. It is only necessary for us to have a little strength to tolerate the speed. Kṛṣṇa is very merciful to the souls of *Kali-yuga* because He gives them the opportunity to connect with Himself. "Himself" means *nāma*, *Harināma*. Kṛṣṇa and *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* are non-different. He, in the form of *nāma*, always wants to distribute His mercy to the fallen souls. That connection we have already; now it is only necessary to tolerate the speed of our journey. That is our only duty, and who cannot so tolerate will fall down. Every *jīva*-soul has freedom, that is he is free not to take hold of a pillar, stick or other handhold and so he falls down by the wind.

We are so fortunate to have taken birth in this age of *Kali-yuga*, and especially so, having attained this human body. Not only that, but we have connected with this Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the merciful devotees of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj; then what fear need we have? We have received everything, but now it is necessary to digest it properly. We have received much instruction and many books from both Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and we have heard many valuable teachings from them. We are observing their associates now living in this world: they are present in this world and we are hearing from them and are trying to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness as much as possible. We are trying to a lesser or greater degree; still, no doubt, our attempt is lacking. It is always necessary to have more and more attachment with

consciousness—full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Everything is consciousness, but it is necessary to engage ourselves fully with that Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Many, many births have gone before and maybe many are waiting in the future. But at this moment we have this human body. We do not know how much time we have in this world, but one second is sufficient for us to surrender with that full consciousness. So we must try; we have no other place or direction to go. Only these directives we can follow: what is shown by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj and Mahāprabhu in the scriptures. There is only this one directive. It is not much for us. We have spent before many lives with our own happiness; but if we can spend this life for Kṛṣṇa, that cannot be negligible. Many thousands and thousands, and crores and crores of lives have passed. Eighty-four lakhs species of bodies are covering the *jīva* souls in this world, but only four lakhs of those are human. We now have this human body, this body with developed consciousness, so we must use it properly. Therefore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has said: "He who is a suicidal man is he who is looking at everything but not taking anything."

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

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: 11.20.17)

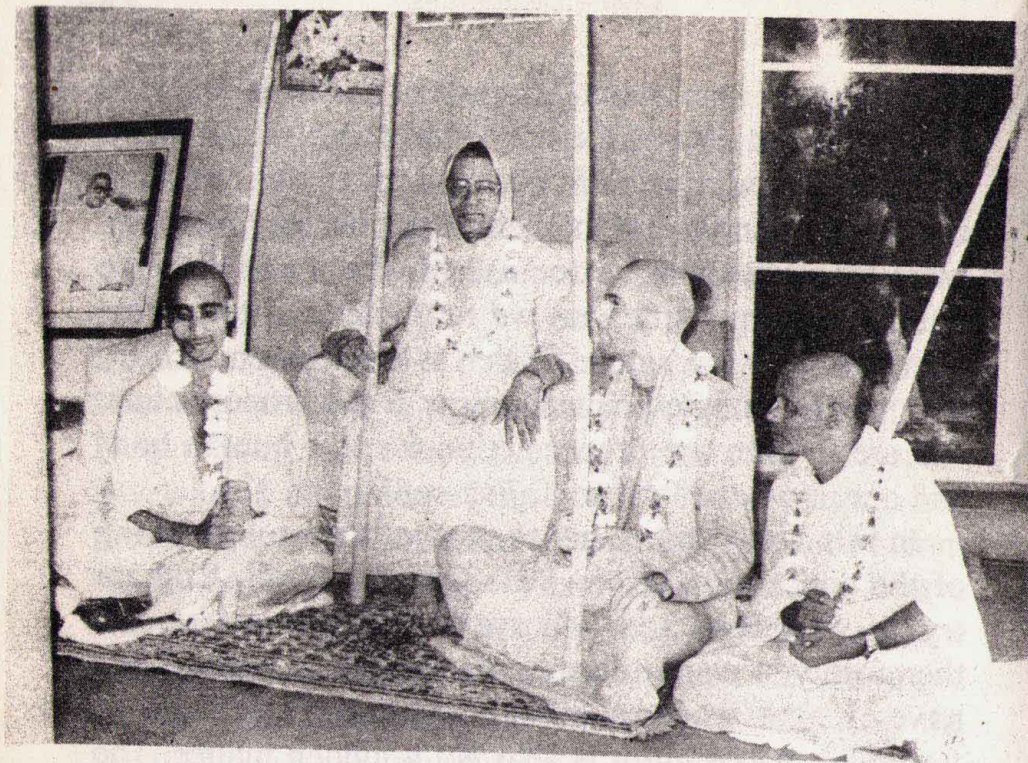
We have this human body in our hand, and it is very rarely achieved. Many, many births have passed, but suddenly we have attained this human body by our *karmma*, good *karmma* no doubt. It is *sulabham sudurllabham*, which means it is not easily attainable, but we have attained it. If you want to cross a river or an ocean, you need a boat. This human body is like a boat and we have now attained it. With the help of this human body, our soul can easily cross over the ocean. But who is the guide of the boat? My Gurudeva is he; the navigator. All my good fortune has descended from *Kṛṣṇa-loka* in the form of my Gurudeva, and I have connection with him. Kṛṣṇa is very merciful to show our destination through the Guru, through the *sādhū* and through the scriptures. In this way he is giving the favourable wind for this boat of ours to go to our destination. So, one who will not take this chance is a suicidal man. We have a very good chance and we must take this chance. We can go this side, that side or in so many ways: we have the right, but it is not good for us. We must go straight and that one-way direction is to the spiritual world. That is our destination. We need to go there. We do not want to look at anything except that single goal, just as Arjuna with single-pointed attention shot the eye of a model bird without seeing anything but that single point of the target. That is, our attempt must also be in this way. Many things have happened in our lives but we do not want to discuss that. Many things may come in our lives in the future but we do not

want that. Now we have connection with Kṛṣṇa, His entourage and also His service, and this is our destiny. We must try with our full energy to reach our destination, and when we get the help of all our environment, what fear can there be for us? Maybe sometimes we will fall down a little, but we must immediately arise, continue, and run again: so that is no problem. To try with our full single-pointed energy is the proper action. We are to take the proper action for this human body and our transcendental soul, *jīva*-soul.

In this way I am trying to present to you something of the conception of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. You are trying very hard and you are so affectionate to me, therefore you want to hear something from me. What I have, I also want to give to others. This is not a 'testable' matter but it is also not a hidden matter. The property I have is also yours.

It is necessary to have proper adjustment with all, and that is congregational chanting. If I can play *mṛdaṅga*, I must play *mṛdaṅga*. If you can play *karatāls*, you must play *karatāls*. If someone can dance he must dance. If someone can chant, he must chant. Everybody can do one thing or another, so by congregational chanting we will go with a big ship to our destiny. This is our goal, and the method is called *goṣṭhyānandī bhajan*.

Jai Om Viṣṇupad Paramahansa-parivrājakāchāryya-varyya Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj; kī jaya!



Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj
with sannyāsa disciples

Second Discourse

SURRENDER AND SERVE

by

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

We are not renounced *sannyāsis*; we are more than *gṛhasthas*, but this 'gṛha' is the house of Śrī-Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundar. In this way we are actually members of Their house, not *sannyāsis*. We are members of Śrī-Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundar's servitors' group and therefore we have much responsibility. The highest responsibility is to serve the *sādhū*, the Guru and the *Vaiṣṇavas*. In the scriptures it is said that every *gṛhastha* must do some *Vaiṣṇava-sevā*, some *Guru-sevā*, and in this way they can increase their devotional life. Our service to Śrī-Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundar is also like the service of a householder. Many devotees are coming and going, and for the purpose of preaching we are making many programmes, so this is also one kind of *gṛhastha* life. In the book *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, in which Rūpa Goswāmī gives the science of devotion, he has written one *śloka*:

*anāsaktasya viṣayān
yathārham upayujataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe
yuktaṁ vairāgyaṁ ucyate*

We are followers of Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī and Śrīman Mahāprabhu, as well as our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. We are trying to maintain our devotional life with this conception of *yukta-vairāgya*. We must invite into our lives that which is necessary for devotion, and leave aside whatever may be harmful. Mahāprabhu said that we are not *brāhmaṇas*, we are not *kṣatriyas*, we are not *vaiśyas* and we are not *sūdras*. Also we are not *vānaprasthas*, we are not *gṛhasthas* and we are not *sannyāsīs*, but our only identification is that we are the servitors of the servitors of the servitors of the servitor's servitors of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And what kind of Kṛṣṇa? *Gopī-bharttuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsanudāsaḥ*. Not Kurukṣetra Kṛṣṇa and not Dwārakā Kṛṣṇa, but He who is protecting the cows, He who is Lord of the Gopīs, and He who is playing in Vṛndāvan and on Govardhan Hill; that type of Kṛṣṇa, cowherd boy Kṛṣṇa: we are to be the servant of the servant of Him. To be such a servant is our main line and goal of life.

*nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na sūdro
nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gṛha-patir no vana-stho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrnāmṛtābdher
gopī-bharttuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsanudāsaḥ*

Spontaneously we must try with our full devotion to establish and maintain this conception in our life. Twenty-four hours a day service to the Lord is necessary, but the nearest Lord is Guru, *Vaiṣṇava*, and Mahāprabhu. We are to fully surrender there, not only surrender and lie down, but surrender and serve. We are to surrender and serve with our full energy twenty-four hours a day, and then we must reach our transcendental destination very easily and without caring about anything. That is the devotional mood.

One day during the translation from Sanskrit to Bengali of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, many *paṇḍits* came to the Maṭh here in Nabadwip. There was one very difficult *śloka*, the meaning of which the *paṇḍits* could not fully understand. This *śloka* said, "I don't care for Baladev, and I don't care for Rukmiṇī or Satyabhāmā, but I must do my service: that type of ego I have." But that is very difficult to understand. Baladev is Guru and Satyabhāmā is a super-servitor of Kṛṣṇa, therefore how can anyone say that he does not care for them? So why has Rūpa Goswāmī composed this verse?

The *paṇḍits* were all puzzled and came to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. They were very satisfied to hear his reply. He told them, "Rūpa Goswāmī composed this *śloka* with some purpose: to show what is the target of the devotee. 'O, Baladev, O, Satyabhāmā, You are both most worshipable to me, but please do not interfere with me now. I am busy with my service and have no time to spare. I know that you are both super-servitors of Lord

Kṛṣṇa, but I am your servitor's servitor; I have some duty." If their master's table is dirty, will the master clean that? No! If the master will want to clean it, the devotee must give objection, "Please give me that opportunity, it is my duty not yours." In this way the devotees have some ego: they must serve their master. "Please do not interfere here, but go and be seated over there and I shall worship your lotus feet." This is the meaning that is coming through this *śloka*.

In that assembly there were great, great *paṇḍits* including Śrī Rām Gopal Vidyābhūṣaṇa who was a very great devotee of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and a great Sanskrit scholar. Previously those *paṇḍits* could not understand the gist of that *śloka*, but when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained it they were all very happy. This interpretation can now be found in Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* commentary.

The servitor's nature is that he does not wish to give any trouble to his Lord. Even when the Lord is lying down and sleeping, the servitor will not stop: he must engage in his Lord's service. Nothing can separate him from his Lord's service, just as the soldier-ant cannot give up his grip even if his head becomes torn from his body in the attempt.

But it is true that one servitor cannot do everything. Therefore in Vṛndāvan, and everywhere, there are many groups. In each group there is a main leader as well as other leading devotees. They instruct others while they

themselves engage in service. In this way the transcendental service world is running very happily, and that is called Goloka Vṛndāvan.

*śrīyaḥ kāntāḥ kāntaḥ parama-puruṣaḥ kalpa-taravo
drumā bhūmiṣ cintāmaṇi-gaṇa-mayī toyam amṛtam
kathā gānaṁ nāṭyaṁ gamanam api vaṁśī priya-sakhī
cid ānandaṁ jyotiḥ param api tad āsvādyam api ca
(Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā 5.56)*

This is a very nice *śloka* from *Brahma-saṁhitā*. One who once reads *Brahma-saṁhitā* can never forget it. Mahāprabhu brought from South India two books. When He came across the *Brahma-saṁhitā* He was surprised and thought, "This is My conception!" and took with Him a copy of that book. The other book he brought from South India was *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛtam*. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* all the *siddhānta* is given in gist form, and in *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛtam* all the *rāsas* are similarly given. Mahāprabhu took in His left hand *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛtam* and in his right hand, *Brahma-saṁhitā*. But for us to understand *Brahma-saṁhitā* is a little difficult, therefore Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātan Goswāmī, Jīva Goswāmī and other *Āchāryyas* composed many *Vaiṣṇava* scriptures for our *saṁpradāya*; many books for our help. One such book is called *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, another which is by Rūpa Goswāmī and gives the science of devotion is called *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī composed *Bṛhat Bhāgavatāmṛtam*. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī composed

Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛtam and many *nāṭakas* (plays) such as *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, etc.

Many compositions have come for the development of our transcendental knowledge, but we are not qualified to read every book. In order to read the books it is necessary to have some previous qualification, some primary qualification. Otherwise if we go to read those books we will go down with our mundane mind, and *sahajiyāism*, imitationism, will immediately catch us. Therefore Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda instructed us to avoid reading any explanations about *madhura-rasa*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj also instructed us not to try to read these books, but first we may read the primary books under the guidance of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, and that will be very helpful for our devotional lives.

There are many books, but particularly Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* will be very helpful for us, although the interpretations of *Śrī Gītā* from other *sampradāyas* may not be helpful.

It is necessary to see what should be the one target in our lives, and that is service to Guru and *Vaiṣṇava*. This is the main thing of value in our lives. To get a position or to get a chair is very easy. Anyone, anywhere, can make a chair for himself. But to receive mercy from Guru and *Vaiṣṇava* is very difficult, although that is the wealth of our lives, and that is what we need for our practising life. Our only hope is that our Gurudev, his Godbrothers, and other *Vaiṣṇavas* will not leave us.

They are always giving us causeless mercy and we are able to maintain our spiritual lives with that.

*dūrdaive sevaka yadi yāya anya sthāṇe
sei prabhu dhanya tāre cule dhari āne*

No doubt we are conditioned souls and sometimes must do some wrong. It is a real possibility in our life. But our Guru is conscious, so he will not leave us: he must take us and forcibly rescue us bringing us to his lotus feet. That is also a qualification of Guru. Our Gurudev is very great, and therefore from every direction our minds may be rescued and brought to his lotus feet and engaged in his service. Also it is my own experience that sometimes I may try to do something about which I do not know much; but there is no fault in trying. Rather, I must try, but the result is in the hands of Kṛṣṇa, Guru and *Vaiṣṇava*. My attention is not to be attached to the result; They will see to that.

I must only serve. I must try to serve, and I must not forget my duty. This is the main theme of our lives. We have had many births, lakhs and lakhs of births, but somehow we now have this human birth, so we must use this body in the proper way. We have a very high chance, a super-chance with this mundane human body.

By our good fortune we have received the seeds of *Kṛṣṇa prema*, from which grow the *bhakti-latā*, or creeper of devotion, and if we can cultivate that properly we can cross over the illusory environment. Not only can we leave the illusory environment and go

to *Virajā* and *Brahmaloka* but we can cross even those planes very easily by our devotion. And with the help of that *bhakti-latā* we can go to our main destination, Goloka Vṛndāvan. When we get shelter in that *kalpa-vṛkṣa*, that wish-fulfilling tree, the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, everything will be fulfilled automatically; and we need this. We now have the human body but we do not know what may come in the future, and we do not know where our *karma* will take us when we die.

*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ
tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya
sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.6)

If at the time of dying I remember a dog then I shall go to the womb of a dog. Such danger is there.

So we must do everything for the service of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, then nothing can disturb us. It is necessary that the mind be captured by the transcendental environment. If we can do that then we can use everything for the Lord's service. That is *paramahansa-dharma*.

Third Discourse

THE LIVING LIFE

by

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

Without servitors, associates and paraphernalia, the Lord's position is *Brahma* where there is no action. There is no feeling, willing, action or thinking. That is the plane of *nirākār nirvviśeṣa*, non-differentiation. The activity of the transcendental world is positive, whereas the activity of this mundane world where we are living is negative. We need to leave this mundane world with the help of the positive current, and that help comes to us in the form of our *Guru-paramparā*. A light bulb requires both negative and positive electricity for it to light up. When there is darkness, we can think what light is, and in this way our programme for being rescued from the mundane world is going on.

Nārada Goswāmī gave a conception to Vyāsadev, who then engaged in proper contemplation and attained realisation.

*bhakti-yogena manasi, samyak praṇihite 'male
apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇaṁ māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.4.)*

There are two kinds of Māyā: Yogamāyā and Mahāmāyā. In Yogamāyā, Kṛṣṇa is playing in His transcendental pastimes, but Mahāmāyā is the illusion where we are at present. Here is only the activity of Mahāmāyā, illusion, but sometimes it may also be possible to receive some help from that.

There are many things to be known in transcendental knowledge, but Mahāprabhu simply instructed, "Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra, and then you will realise everything." Only by properly chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra we will see everything. Similarly, Nārada Goswāmī spoke only four ślokaś to Vyāsadev, called *Bhāgavata catur-ślokī*, and through meditation upon those ślokaś evolved the whole *Bhāgavata* of eighty thousand ślokaś. For our benefit it has appeared in this mundane plane by the grace of Śrīla Vyāsadev. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The whole body of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Kṛṣṇa's body. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and also in other scriptures, we find that the main instruction is to chant the holy names of the Lord. This is a very nice thing, and the chanting of this Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra is our only hope. In this way we can go to our transcendental destination, and we can attain everything. Also, if we preach about that Mahāmantra to others, we shall be benefitted. When

someone will practise, others will see that practitioner's life and must be inspired. In this way Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu wants to take all the *jīva*-souls from all over the world to the transcendental world. There are countless numbers of *jīva*-souls, and if the world were to be emptied, more would immediately come to refill it, just as wind rushes into a depression. This is one kind of pastime, *līlā*, of Kṛṣṇa. By His will everything is moving. The transcendental world is always very happily moving whereas the mundane world is moving unhappily. Everything is *gacchatīti jagat*, which means that it is always moving. There is *jaḍa jagat* and *cetana jagat*: the material world and the transcendental world. Everything, everywhere, is moving. This wall is moving, this light bulb also is moving and within a hundred years we will be able to see how they have changed their form. *Jagat* means 'world.' There are the transcendental worlds and the material worlds—everywhere, and inside everything, always some activity is going on.

The proper work is service to Kṛṣṇa, and the whole transcendental world is fully engaged in His service in many ways. There are many *avatāras* such as *śaktyāveśa avatāras* and Matsya, Kurma, Varāha, Vāmana, etc., also *Catur-vyuha* and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kāraṇadakaśāyī Viṣṇu. There are so many manifestations of the Lord. There are many things in the transcendental world and it is called *pūrṇa*—full.

We have this birth in our hand and we shall try to utilise it properly to go to the transcendental service world. To properly use it means to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra, to do *Vaiṣṇava-sevā*, and to try to improve our devotional practising life.

Everybody is trying to make his heart clean, no doubt, but we must get problems with our human body; however these we shall try to ignore. We may have many diseases but we are not to run behind the diseases, rather we shall try to run with our conception of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. In this way we must all try to proceed. First there is the practising life, and only later will the higher knowledge come to capture us. When the higher knowledge conquers us, He will play in His own way. But we are practitioners, therefore it is most important that we try very hard to practise, otherwise we will not get that fortune. It is necessary to practise without offence and in that way we will quickly be successful. It is a very easy thing and also a very hard thing! No doubt it is a very hard thing but if we can follow under the guidance of an expert, it is also an easy thing.

I have mentioned that when I joined Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's mission he gave me only one advice, and I think that this is the first and last advice of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. He told me, "You must follow my directives, not your mind." When we are unqualified, we have no knowledge as to what is Kṛṣṇa consciousness: we have no knowledge about the transcendental world. Therefore we are to expertly try to follow our Guru; and Guru

must be perfect. Before accepting Guru I may examine him in many ways and pray to Nityānanda Prabhu to show His real form as my Guru. But once I have accepted someone as my spiritual instructor, Guru, then I must follow him properly.

Nityānanda Prabhu is the treasurer of Vṛndāvan and so we may pray to Him, that means to our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj who is non-different from Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu, and He must be merciful to us and give the opportunity to stay in Vṛndāvan Dhām. Vṛndāvan Dhām is here in a hidden way in Nabadwip, and here at Koladwip is Gupta Govarddhan, Hidden Govarddhan Hill. He who wants to see, can actually see this.

By following a pure devotee, *sādhū*, we can achieve everything. Sometimes living with a *sādhū* may not be good for us due to the chance of our making offences, but if we are far from *sādhū* but thinking about him and serving him, then that is sometimes better for the conditioned souls.

The name I have given for Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's *Samādhi Mandir* is "The Temple of Union in Separation." Union in separation is the highest life in the spiritual world. When Kṛṣṇa is with Rādhārāṇī and the Vraja Gopīs, He is eating, playing, etc. When He is before Rādhārāṇī, She sees only one Kṛṣṇa, but when He is out of Her vision, She sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere: many Kṛṣṇas. That is the idea of union in separation.

*yadi nayana mude thāki antare govinda dekhi
nayana khulile dekhi śyāme*

“If I close my eyes I see Govinda within my heart. When I open my eyes I also see the same Śyāma before me.” That is also the position of the *mahābhāgavata*.

*sarvvabhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah
bhūtāni bhagavatya ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamah*

One who sees the presence of Kṛṣṇa everywhere is a *mahābhāgavata*. Everywhere, in every matter and in every service, he feels Kṛṣṇa's presence. In good matters, in bad matters, in everything and everywhere the *mahābhāgavata* sees Kṛṣṇa. He is a *paramahansa*. He feels the presence of Kṛṣṇa and sees the play of Kṛṣṇa. All this is mainly coming via the channel of union in separation. That is the highest goal of our spiritual life. Mahāprabhu said,

*nayanam galad asru-dhārayā
vadanam gad-gada-ruddhayā girā
pulkair nicitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-graṇe bhaviṣyati*

“O Lord, when will my eyes be adorned with tears of love, flowing like waves? When will my voice tremble with love, and when will my body thrill to the chanting of Your holy name?”

When we shall take *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* properly then these feelings must come to us and we shall be able to see the play of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will dance on our tongues. We cannot chant properly now, but when *śuddha-nāma*, the

pure name, will appear on our tongues, He will dance and then we shall be able to feel everything:

*hṛdaya haite bale jihvā agrete cale
śabda rūpe nāce anukṣaṇa*

I must make myself as a platform for the dancing of *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*. We must try in that way, and we shall be able to see that all the trees and all the paraphernalia of this Nabadwip Dhām and of this Maṭh of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj are transcendental: we shall be able to feel that. These transcendental feelings are necessary, and when they appear they will not leave our heart. We may be trying mundanely now, but we must try with whatever we have. If we are able to run, we may try to win a 100 metre race. But now our legs are very weak. We cannot even walk properly, and are therefore taking the help of this mundane earth. We are taking that help like a baby who is trying to move by first taking the help of the earth. But when we gain strength in our legs we shall be able to run, and after practising at 100 metres we can very easily try for 400 metres or 1500 metres or even the marathon.

With the association of the devotees we can progress in our spiritual lives very quickly. A real devotee can give us everything. With his association we shall get many things and a ‘living life.’ Life is not dead matter, but living life is necessary.

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur, indriyebhyaḥ param manah
manasas tu parā buddhiḥ, buddheh yaḥ paratas tu saḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 3.42)*

If we can engage proper intelligence for the service of the Lord then we must certainly be the gainer. Proper intelligence is necessary, and that comes with the association of the devotees. Our mind is always going this way, that way and every way, but when we get the association of the devotees we shall automatically and always talk about Kṛṣṇa consciousness; of that there is no doubt. Just now I was doing some other service, but when you all came here to me, automatically I immediately engaged myself in speaking about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore we can see practically the benefit of associating with devotees. You also try wherever you are living to make an association of devotees, and you will also be happy.

Fourth Discourse

SWEET SUCCESS ASSURED

by

His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

By the will of the Lord, *trikāla darśī ṛṣis* have made the laws, and those are recorded in the scriptures. They make the laws, but the laws are for whom? It is necessary to know. The law is not for those who are perfect persons, but the law is for the sinners and offensive persons. The *paramahamṣas* always see everything as property for the service of Kṛṣṇa. The *paramahamṣas* use everything in that way and therefore no fault touches them. But everybody must follow the rules and regulations so as not to disturb the environment here in this mundane plane. But where everybody is perfect there is no necessity for making laws. If nobody sins then there is no necessity for having prison-houses. In every country there are many prison-houses but there would be no necessity for these if everybody was perfect. The pure devotees are always perfect and so it is not necessary to make any restrictions or rules for them. They are doing what is good for the service of Kṛṣṇa, and that is the rule they are following. They are not disturbing others, therefore there is no necessity for

law and restriction. In such a plane everyone's mood is to serve others and not to take for themselves. That is the service world and in that world there are no problems. What disturbances may be seen there, are for the nourishment of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. There may even be jealousy in that plane, but that jealousy is also very nourishing for His pastimes, though that is a very high thing. That world is the transcendental world where there is no fault and no wrong. Whatever appears to be wrong is really glorifying Kṛṣṇa and giving Him satisfaction.

During the *rāsa-līlā*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was watching Kṛṣṇa dance with the other Gopīs. She thought, "I know that He is not fully satisfied, but why is He doing this for so long? And what is My position there? I am His super-servitor and so I do not like it when Kṛṣṇa deals with Me in the same way that He deals with others!" Thinking this, She left. As soon as Kṛṣṇa noticed that Rādhārāṇī was no longer there He became beside Himself and started searching for Her. He left everything and everyone and went searching for Her.

Such things cannot be explained fully, but when they come down and manifest in the heart, you will be able to understand them. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī explained in his book *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

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

This is a very nice *śloka* and it gives us much hope. Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's fame, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Kṛṣṇa's form; everything about Him is transcendental and therefore we cannot conquer Him with this mundane human body and mundane self. But we can conquer Him fully with our transcendental mood of service. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau, svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*—when He is satisfied with our mood of service, He Himself will come down into our hearts and will dance on our tongues. It is not by the power of our exertion, but Kṛṣṇa Himself will come on our tongues and He will dance showing His form and pastimes.

Nityānanda Prabhu is very merciful, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is very merciful, and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj is very merciful, therefore there is no doubt that we must get everything necessary to connect with the high transcendental matters. Then why should we have any fear about mundane activities? Only we must not make any offence to the *Vaiṣṇavas*; that is our cautionary rule. We must follow that path of avoiding offence to *Vaiṣṇavas*. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja heavily expressed in *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*:

*yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hātī-mātā
upāde vā chiṇḍe, tāra śukhi yāya pātā
(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta Madhya 19.56)*

With his head the elephant rips up trees and throws them out; similarly *Vaiṣṇava aparādha* is like that elephant's head: it rips up the creeper of devotion, the

bhakti-latā, and throws it away. At that time the heart becomes empty of devotion and full again with illusion. No other disturbance can come in the way of *bhakti* except *Vaiṣṇava aparādhā*, and it is my earnest prayer that you all give me blessings so that I may be safe from the danger of ever committing *Vaiṣṇava aparādhā* in my life.

Question: You said that we are to be the servants of the *Vaiṣṇavas*; but we also hear that the *Vaiṣṇava* is a servant of all *jīvas* and of the whole world. So how are we to adjust?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Anything other than service to the *Vaiṣṇavas* is not service to Kṛṣṇa, but that is *karma*. Only service to the *Vaiṣṇava* is real service to Kṛṣṇa, and only that can take us out from the illusory environment to the transcendental service world. The only service to the *jīvas* which is actually good is if we can engage them in the service of Guru-*Vaiṣṇava* otherwise serving them will be the cause of not only their bondage but also my own bondage—*loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanāḥ*.

The meaning of the word '*mahotsav*' has been explained by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in one article that he wrote. In the *Vaiṣṇava* community many *mahotsavs* are being held in every temple but generally the meaning of *mahotsav* is not known. *Mahotsav* means '*mahā utsav*,' that means that it is a 'super-festival.' Everywhere they are telling, "We are celebrating a

super-festival." Here 'super' means that there is transcendental blessing, mercy, everything—*prasādam*. In which way is Kṛṣṇa taking our humble offerings?—Through Guru-*Vaiṣṇava*. To satisfy the *Vaiṣṇavas* is really to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says:

*aham bhakta-parādhīno
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.63)*

But if there is no *Vaiṣṇava* present, where will we see the transcendence? But if a *Vaiṣṇava* takes *prasādam* that will then be transformed into a *mahā utsav*—*mahotsav*. There may be only five, or even just one or two, *Vaiṣṇavas* present, but that is then a *mahotsav*, whereas if there are thousands of people present to take food but no *Vaiṣṇava* then that is not actually a *mahotsav*. First the *Vaiṣṇavas* will take *prasādam* and then those who are fully body-conscious will take after them.

Therefore everything is not service to Kṛṣṇa and the *Vaiṣṇavas*. There are very few *Vaiṣṇavas*, but first we shall try to serve the *Vaiṣṇavas* and in that way we can distribute *prasādam* to the masses. Amongst thousands gathered at a festival there may be only one or two *Vaiṣṇavas* present, but if they first will take that *prasādam* and the remainder is distributed to the masses, the *mahotsav* is successful. In that way the masses will

get *nitya sukṛti*, or eternal merit, through that *mahā-mahā-prasādam*.

We want to serve the masses, but in which way? By giving them *mahā-prasādam*. When Kṛṣṇa takes food, that is called *mahā-prasādam*, but when that *mahā-prasādam* is taken by a *Vaiṣṇava* it becomes *mahā-mahā-prasādam*, and it is that which we want to distribute to everyone. Amongst those who are gathered at a festival some of those who are body-conscious may be destined to become ghosts, but they will be benefited by taking *prasādam*, and if they will take *mahā-mahā-prasādam* after the *Vaiṣṇava-sevā* then they will get more benefit.

At present they will not listen to the advice of the scriptures. They are attached to the mundane world. Also *Māyā* always keeps some cover over this transcendental Nabadwip Dhām. There are many here who are playing upon that cover like insects on a bottle of honey which has the top firmly closed; they try to take that honey but cannot. If we do not follow the directives, our position is also like that. First it is necessary to open the bottle, then the honey can be distributed everywhere. The devotees will take that honey and glorify it with an intoxicated mood. While they relish the taste and enthusiastically give glorification, some honey may spill here and there, and we can take that. This is very nice for us and we can easily get that ecstasy.

*hari-rasa-madira-madāti-mattā
bhuvi viluṭhāma naṭāma nirvviśāma*

Without caring, they are relishing that honey, dancing and crying, and in this way they are taking that intoxication. That is called *alaṅkāra*. Here intoxication does not mean the intoxication of alcohol and drugs but the intoxication of *Hari-kathā*. That type of ecstasy comes down from the transcendental world through the servitors of Kṛṣṇa. Those servitors dance and chant ecstatically, and while doing so, some of that ecstasy is spilt here and there and we can easily take that. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj wrote, "I have collected those drops of ecstasy in my *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam*. You take it and taste for yourself just what this is."

*śrī-śrīmad-bhagavat-padāmbuja-madhu-svādotsavaiḥ ṣaṭ-padair
nikṣiptā madhu-bindavaś ca parito bhraṣṭā mukhāt guṇjitaḥ
yatnaiḥ kiñcid ihāhṛtaṁ nija-para-śreyo 'rthinā tan mayā
bhūyo-bhūya ito rajāṁsi pada-samlagnāni teṣāṁ bhaje
(Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam 10.14)*

I think that this is the highest *śloka* I have received in my life, and I shall try to explain the meaning.

"In the lotus feet of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is honey. The devotees in a very glorifying way are tasting that; and it is not a mere drop of honey, rather it is an ocean. They take that and become very intoxicated. They chant and glorify their Lord, and that honey overflows.

A few drops of that come down into this world and I am quickly collecting those drops of honey and keeping them in a pot: that is *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam*. For my benefit and the benefit of the searchers, I am presenting this in book form. You take this and bless me.” This, in a simple way, is the meaning of that *śloka*, and I think that this is the highest *śloka* I have heard in my life. I am always quoting this, and whenever I have a chance I include it in a book.

This is one of two *ślokas* that I always want to publish and distribute. The second *śloka* is from *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*:

*kṛṣṇa-līlāmṛta-sara, tāra śata śata dhāra,
daśa-dike vahe yāhā haite
se caitanya-līlā haya, sarovara akṣaya,
mano-harṣa carāha' tāhāte*

“What is *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*? It is the real essence of nectar. It is the gist of sweetness, happiness and ecstasy. The sweetness of the sweetest thing that can ever be conceived of is represented in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Then what is *Chaitanya-līlā*? In *Chaitanya-līlā*, that sweet nectar of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is flowing in all ten directions in hundreds of streams as if from a fountain. That fountain is *Chaitanya-līlā*.”

All devotees like to read *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* and I have also read it many times, but the meaning is not always apparent to us. The real meaning comes through our service, so we must try whole-heartedly and

happily to serve, even though sometimes service may not come so happily to us. Sometimes it may give us pain or difficulty.

On the occasion of moving the No.1 Ultadingi Road branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭh to the Bag Bazaar Maṭh in Calcutta, all the devotees were chanting and dancing, and so became very tired. Because they were so exhausted, everybody took rest and tried to sleep even without eating. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was also very exhausted. His name then was Rāmendra Sundar Babu. One devotee approached him saying, “Oh Rāmendra Babu, please come with me in order to bring here a pot of sweet *prasādam* from a devotee’s house.”

Although Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was also very exhausted he said, “Yes, I shall go.” On arriving at the devotee’s house Śrīla Guru Mahārāj saw there a large pot weighing perhaps sixty kilograms. His body was very strong and, carrying that pot on his head, he went to the Bag Bazaar Maṭh. However, he was not in the habit of carrying things on his head and later said, “At that time I thought my head was going to be crushed!”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj took that heavy pot thinking, “It is an austerity for me no doubt, but I must take it because this *prasādam* will be taken by the *Vaiṣṇavas* and everyone gathered there, and they will be happy. Nobody else can bring this pot at this time, so I must do it.” He later explained that when he was feeling so much pain in his head he was thinking, “Kṛṣṇa wants this service from me, therefore I am happy to do this.”

That *brahmachārī* who asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to carry the pot later said, “Mahārāj, I have done much offence unto your lotus feet.”

But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj replied, “What offence?”

“Oh, on that day I was unable to get anyone to bring the heavy pot of *prasādam* to the Bag Bazaar Maṭh, therefore I asked you to do so. But you are a very high class *brāhmaṇa*, not only that, your position was very exalted, but I could not understand or recognise this on that day. I therefore treated you like a servant by asking you, ‘Rāmendra Babu, come with me.’” Lastly he asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for permission to stay in this Maṭh, and he did stay for perhaps three or four months.

Service to the Guru and *Vaiṣṇava* is our life, and we must try to perform that service. No doubt we cannot always satisfy Guru and *Vaiṣṇava*, but the main thing is to have the tendency and inner desire to satisfy them. Transcendental power comes down through that channel, and if we want it, we must try in this way. Through the Guru and the *Vaiṣṇavas*, transcendental power comes to us and gives us devotional strength. That strength is the service to Guru and *Vaiṣṇava*. Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura wrote: *nitāiyer karuṇā habe, vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pābe*. When we can please Guru and *Vaiṣṇava*, they will give their mercy and then we must surely get service to Rādhā-Govinda and Mahāprabhu. This is very clear. In this way Nityānanda Prabhu is very merciful and He takes the conditioned souls from the very low level up to the high level: that is the power

of Nityānanda Prabhu. The incarnation of Nityānanda Prabhu is Gurudev. Always He distributes the mercy of Mahāprabhu and He gives entrance to the *līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. He is actually the first treasurer of the whole of the transcendental world. He is the master of the whole of that realm, and when we may get entrance to Goloka, Vraja-dhām, we shall receive the mercy of Rādhārāṇī's servitors. But first, to serve Nityānanda Prabhu is most necessary; we must satisfy Nityānanda Prabhu.

In *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* it is related that Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī many times tried to go to join with Mahāprabhu's mission in Jagannāth Puri, but he was always unsuccessful and could not meet with Him. Many times he tried to go to the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu but his father tried to keep him in household life and therefore Raghunāth was very sad.

One day he heard that Nityānanda Prabhu had come to Panihati near Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī's father's house. Immediately he went to see Nityānanda Prabhu thinking, “Without the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu I will not get Mahāprabhu's mercy.”

So he went to Nityānanda Prabhu. Seeing him Nityānanda Prabhu was happy and said, “You are a thief. Always you are trying to go to Mahāprabhu in the manner of a thief, but first you arrange a festival to feed all the devotees gathered here for My satisfaction. If you can satisfy Me in this way, I shall give you direct entrance to Mahāprabhu's lotus feet.”

At that time wherever Nityānanda Prabhu went he was accompanied by many devotees; also on that occasion in Panihatigram many were present.

Raghunāth Dāsa was very happy to hear Nityānanda Prabhu's order and said, "Yes, Prabhu, I shall try." So from many villages he collected large quantities of yoghurt, milk, flat rice, bananas, sandesh and many other eatables in order to feed the devotees. He made all arrangements. Nityānanda Prabhu with His associates, servitors and devotees all very happily took that *mahā-prasādam*. Nityānanda Prabhu said, "Yes, now you have finished your *grhastha* life. Your household life is now finished, and you will attain to Mahāprabhu's lotus feet."

Then he went back to his father's house but he did not enter the inner quarters. Instead, he lived on the outside in the reception room. Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī's mother said to her husband, "Many times your son has stealthily tried to run away to go to the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, therefore bind his hands and keep him in a room so he cannot leave."

Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī's father was not a pure *Vaiṣṇava* but he had regard for the *Vaiṣṇavas*. He replied, "How will binding your son keep him here? There are three things that are sufficient to bind one in this mundane world: one is money, another is a wife, and the third is fame. But I gave all of my money to him, I gave him a good and very beautiful wife, and I gave all my fame to him, but still I cannot bind him. If I

cannot bind him by this method then how will you keep him here merely by binding his hands? It is impossible to bind him, to keep him in a house. Now I see that also I cannot bind him and that today or tomorrow he must join with the mission of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

caitanya-candrera kṛpā hañāche inhāre
caitanya-candrera 'bātula' ke rākhite pāre
 (Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta Antya 6.41)

"Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy has come down into his heart—so who can bind a 'madman' of Chaitanya-chandra. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is now very merciful to him and therefore nobody, including myself, can check him."

After only twelve days he met with Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. When Mahāprabhu saw him He said, "My Raghunāth has come back now, but he is very thin. He has not taken any food during his journey except for only a little milk that he begged from the *brāhmaṇas'* houses." Then He gave Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī into the care of His personal secretary and friend, Svarūpa Damodar, saying, "You please take care of this boy." In this way Mahāprabhu distributed His full mercy to Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī. This is the history of Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī's life.

Without service to Nityānanda Prabhu we will not achieve anything. Nityānanda Prabhu means Gurudev. The incarnation of Nityānanda Prabhu is Śrī Gurudev. His position is just like Kṛṣṇa's, rather it is even more

than Kṛṣṇa's. What Kṛṣṇa cannot do, Nityānanda Prabhu can do. That is His very heavy and powerful position. And by the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu we must get entrance into the *līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. What Mahāprabhu wants to distribute in this mundane plane is *Kṛṣṇa-sevā* under guidance of Rādhārāṇī. That is the highest goal of our life. By the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu we must receive that opportunity. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's line is very clear. Through service we can reach the goal, otherwise there is no possibility. Always the mood of service will give us enthusiasm to engage with even more of a serving attitude. By that mood of service we can achieve everything.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gives the example of a boy playing football. The football always comes to the feet of a good football player. For one who can play nicely, the football always comes to him. The centre-forward is very clever and swift, but one who cannot play properly is always running around the whole ground but the ball is always far from his feet. Similarly, for one who can do *sevā*, *sevā* will come to him more and more. This is a very nice example for us. It is necessary to sincerely try to serve and in this way we will find that we are always engaged; and by the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj we must fulfil his desire. We are only to sincerely try to serve and it is good if we do not involve ourselves with any result that may come. Sometimes the result may come very nicely and sometimes no result may come but we are not to involve ourselves with that. In *Śrīmad*

Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa says in regard to the mundane world's affairs:

*mātrā-sparsās tu kaunteya
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpayino 'nityās
tāms titikṣasva bhārata*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.14)

Everything in this mundane plane is sometimes coming and sometimes going. Sometimes there is happiness and sometimes sadness. Sometimes we have good food, sometimes bad food. Sometimes we achieve what we want and sometimes we do not. But service life is not like that. We must not involve ourselves with any mundane matter. We must involve ourselves with service and we must try to fulfil our service, but the result is in the hand of Kṛṣṇa. Whatever comes may be good or may be bad but as much as possible I must always try to be successful. This is our life, and joyfulness and success must finally come to us. Since so long ago, in my life also I have seen many things happen but ultimately I have been successful. During the time of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj many times many things happened in this Maṭh, but he told me, "Don't be upset, this is your duty and any result will come through Kṛṣṇa, so that result must be good for you." This is the way we must try to serve. We shall try to engage in the particular service in which we have capacity and with which we are familiar. But first importance will be given to

following instructions. If instruction will come for us to do service for which we are not accustomed, or which is against our nature, then we are to prepare ourselves for that.

When I joined Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's preaching mission I was very young, perhaps seventeen years old. After seeing me Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked, "Can you stay here?" I was surprised. I thought, "Why is he asking me this? I came to stay. I did not come with any thought of leaving, so why is Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asking me this?" I was a little upset wondering why Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was asking me this. Then the *brahmachārī* who first brought me to the Maṭh said, "Yes, Mahārāj, this boy can stay."

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj then said, "Yes this is very good. His intention that he must stay is very good." He further said to me, "Can you follow me?" At that time it was not within my nature to give a negative answer. If I was ordered to do anything I would immediately say "Yes." Even without fully hearing the order I would immediately agree to it; that was my nature. If the question would come, "Can you do it?" I would always immediately tell "Yes." I did not like the word "No." So when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked, "Can you follow me?" I said, "Yes, I shall do anything you instruct."

Then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, "First you try to follow this one instruction of mine." I replied, "Please, Mahārāj, say what that instruction is."

He replied, "Do not listen to your mind, but hear from me. What I shall order, you are to follow that. Can you do that?"

"Yes!"

Then one day I was taking *prasādam* but that *prasādam* didn't appear to be very nice, especially the dahl which contained so many insects. The dahl tasted very nice but there were many white insects floating on the surface. When the cook came to serve that dahl I noticed the insects. Nearby, standing on the verandah was Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. He was watching, so what should I do? At first I thought, "Oh, it is very bad," and my mind told me, "Don't take it!" Then suddenly and immediately I took the decision, "Oh. No, no, I must take it. It has come as the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, therefore I must take it." At that time I immediately gave out some sound, "Oh. No, no, I must take."

It was the order of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: "What I shall tell, you must do. What I shall give you, you must take." So I must take that *prasādam*, and happily.

After taking *prasādam* I went to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in order to give some massage and to have some discussion. He was joking with me and said, "Why did you say, 'Oh. No, no, I shall take'?"

Then I explained, "Mahārāj, it was full of insects. It was not pure dahl but on the top many insects were floating; perhaps thirty or forty! So I was thinking it was not good. But suddenly and immediately I remembered your order, 'What I shall give you, you

must take; and what your mind will say, you don't follow that.' Remembering that, I happily took." Then Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, "Very good. You can follow me." In this way I had my first examination—and passed.

Sometimes many things may come to confront us in order to examine us, but we must sincerely try to pass those tests. No doubt we may sometimes fail, but we have heard that "failure is the pillar of success." Therefore there is no problem, and again we must try.

bhūmau skhalita-pādānām, bhūmir evāvalambanam

tvayi jātāparādhānām, tvam eva śaraṇam prabho

(*Skanda Purāṇa*)

When a young child is at first trying to walk by himself, he will not successfully be able to do that. Sometimes he will fall down but he will get up and try again until finally he is successful. At first he will try one step, then two steps, then three steps, then four steps. In this way he will go forwards and fall down, but then he will try again to walk. Our attempt is also like that: sometimes we must fall down but there should be no fear of that because we must have the strength of mind to know that we have the backing from our Guru and the *Vaiṣṇavas*. Seeing their merciful world we must take the chance again and again; that is the main thing and there is no other way.

Here where we are living is the mundane plane where in a cyclic way we are receiving birth after birth

throughout the fourteen worlds. But our goal is to cross over this environment to Paravyoma Dhām and to Goloka Dhām: that is our destination. By repeatedly trying, one day we must be successful in reaching that goal. Another way for us to go is by the merciful blessings of Guru and the *Vaiṣṇavas*. They are not blind, but seeing our intention they must surely help us by giving guidance as to which way we can go and what will be beneficial for us. What we may get by way of inspiration is received from the *caitya-guru*, the internal Guru. Other directives we receive from the *mahānta-guru*, the external manifestation of Śrī Guru.

Therefore our future is very bright no doubt, but we must follow the directives of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and try to go to our transcendental destination. This is our only duty; there is no other duty.

It is very fortunate when the opportunity to engage in direct service to Kṛṣṇa comes to the *jīva* souls, and Kṛṣṇa gives that through Guru. Therefore Nityānanda Prabhu, that is Śrī Guru, is the only hope in our lives. Lastly we have seen how Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was always chanting, "Dayāl Nitāi, Dayāl Nitāi, Dayāl Nitāi." He said, "My only hope is 'Dayāl Nitāi, Dayāl Nitāi.'"

Nobody could understand the meaning within that, but by the mercy of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj I immediately guessed it. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is showing us the proper line. He has crossed over all stages of the practising life; that is called *paramahansa*, and now he is showing

us our fortune, that is Dayāl Nitāi. By the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu we must be successful, therefore our practising life must go in that direction. This is my advice to you all and also I am trying, and praying to Śrī Guru and the *Vaiṣṇavas*, "Please give me that type of increasing inspiration and power to preach to others and be successful as a servitor myself."

Part Three

Answers Through Letters

given by

HIS DIVINE GRACE
ŚRĪLA BHAKTI SUNDAR GOVINDA
MAHĀRĀJ

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj is known the world over by the affectionate but reverential name, 'Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.' He disappeared from his manifest pastimes in this world on 12th August 1988. Since that time his dearmost and topmost Divine Servitor and Successor Āchāryya Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj has been increasingly involved with the direct guidance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Mission and devotees world-wide. Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj himself is our shining example of exclusive devotion to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and his radiance is felt by countless fortunate souls around the world through his replies to their letters.

Question: I used to help in the local preaching centre but that has closed down, therefore my service has stopped and I have gradually become isolated from my Godbrothers. What am I to do? At present myself and family are worshipping the pictures of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Would it be alright to have a *Śrī-Murti* of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj made for our altar? I would also greatly appreciate some personal information about Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, such as his favourite *prasādam*, *bhajans*, *ślokas*, etc.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

In general we shall try always to associate with the devotees who are in the same line as ourselves, who are further ahead, and who are favourable in their mood of assistance to us. Therefore if we can associate with those who are going in the line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, that will be good, otherwise not. If you have no association of good *Vaiṣṇavas* then you can take association from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's books and instructions, with serious endeavour to put into practice the advice found there. When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was directly present he constantly gave his association in order to guide souls as fallen as ourselves on the path of the ultimate good. Now, in his absence, he remains present as our guardian in the form of his direct representative, dear associates and *caittya-guru* who reveals that path of the highest good. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's presence is found in his message, in his instructions, in his guidance, and in

each particle of every single atom of his established place of *bhajan*, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. With the vision of service to the holy abode, we can directly witness and realise this extension of his divine service: this wealth of his divine service. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself many times said that in pursuit of the highest ideal it may sometimes be necessary to march on alone when favourable association is not immediately available by the side of a devotee.

Before installing any *Śrī-Murti* it is absolutely necessary to see that *Śrī-Murti* is not a doll. It is necessary that not only the present *sevā* can be done nicely but also that in the future, for our lifetime and also after that, the service can be properly continued. Please carefully consider and with honest heart you decide.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's favourite preparations included natural orange juice (with just a little sugar), *cholā dahl*, *ālu-bhājā* (fried potatoes), and every day he would take *muḍi* (puffed rice). He would very much like to take *puris* with the *ālu-bhājā*, also he liked *ālu-dam* (potato curry) and *samosa*.

There are many *ślokas* and *bhajans* that he much appreciated and liked, especially Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's songs from *Śaraṇāgati*: *kabe habe bolo...*, *tuñhu doyā sāgara...*, *ki jāni ki bole...*, *emona durmmati...*, *rādhā-kuṇḍa taṭa...* Also Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's *bhajans*: *hari hari baṛa sela...*, *śrī rūpa mañjarī pada...*, and also his own composition,

sujanārbbuda rādhita... He would always be reciting many different *śloka*s and, included amongst them, he particularly liked many of the *śloka*s in chapter two of the *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*.

Question: I have heard it said by the devotees that there is no such thing as love in this mundane world. Please can you explain this statement?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

It is true that there is no word in English to correspond with the divine love mentioned in the scriptures. Love and *prema* are not the same. Each *jīva*-soul has three kinds of qualities: willing, feeling and thinking, but in this mundane world the *jīva*-soul is covered by illusion; that is called “*Māyā*.” The *jīva*-soul in his clean position always worships his beloved lover, that is Kṛṣṇa, and that is the only duty he thinks of. The natural duty in the transcendental service world is love. The transcendental world is full of love. Kṛṣṇa is infinitely loving. He gives love infinitely, but by giving His love to one, He is not reduced thereby so that He would not then be able to give His love to others. Mostly all the *jīvas* are going there to that plane of the transcendental life of love, but unfortunately a few souls come here to this world. In this mundane plane they are always searching for love but here pure love is not to be found. There is the plane of renunciation, the plane of dedication and the plane of exploitation. Real

love is seen in the plane of dedication and that is the transcendental world.

By nature the *jīva*-soul is living. He must do something, and he is doing, but in this mundane plane his activity is always with the illusory plane of exploitation. Here everything is exploiting everything else but in the plane of dedication there is no possibility for exploiting, only for serving Kṛṣṇa and His associates. There, whoever is taking and whoever is giving—everybody is extremely happy. Someone is eating an apple: the devotee is happy, the apple is happy, everyone is happy. That is Kṛṣṇa-loka, Vraja-dhām.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī gave a description of what love is:

*vyatītya bhāvanā-varttma
yaś camatkāra bhārabhūḥ
hṛdi sattojjvale bādham
svadate sa raso mataḥ*

Whatever is the extreme point of what we can guess here to be love, real love is far beyond that. What kind of happiness, joyfulness and fulfilment of life is there, we cannot guess from this mundane position. But in *śuddha-sattva*, in the heart free from the covering of illusion, then that ecstatic ocean, can be felt. In the mundane plane, what we see to be love is just a tiny shadow of those feelings. Therefore it is not possible to experience such things in this mundane plane without connection with the transcendental world. In this world

we are living with only the shadow of that loving sense and with the identification of male and female. Sometimes we are trying our best together, and with each other, to get that essence. And sometimes for the non-disturbance of this mundane we are living together with some systematic system for sympathetically dealing with nature with our hankering for real love. But by our activity here we are going in a circular way, again and again dying and taking birth. We are taking so many different types of birth in different forms of life and we are searching, "Where is love? Where is love?" like a blind fellow searching for the light of the world of dedication. We cannot see where is that world of dedication but our Supreme Lover, Kṛṣṇa, can see everything. Seeing our hankering tendency He may sometimes distribute His merciful loving light through Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava in order to prepare us to receive a drop of the ecstatic ocean of love.

Your letter is very hard as it is attached with the confidential pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Anyhow I hope that you can understand the meaning nicely. You are fortunate to have the association of a devotional family. It is by service to the devotees headed by our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that the real meaning of the transcendental world can be nicely understood. You can see so much guidance in Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's books and can try to follow that. Everyone, in honesty, wants real love, and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is preparing us for that by his instructions and advice.

Question: What should our mood be for making real progress in spiritual life?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said that always we must be humble and we should try to help our own spiritual lives as well as the devotional faith of the other devotees. That is only possible by the way of *ṭṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā, amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*. That is, the *jīva*-soul is independent but when he is bound by illusion everybody must think, "I have something." But when he can understand himself properly, then he will think, "I am very, very, insignificant and my only hope is the mercy of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, and my only shelter is my Divine Master." If he thinks in this way then he will be free from *Māyā* by the blessings of Kṛṣṇa.

We are practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or we came to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness, not for any mundane benefit. Where we shall see the real light of Kṛṣṇa consciousness we must really pay obeisances there. If we can preach in this humble way then no problem will come and illusion cannot attack us. In this way all the devotees can cooperate together just like a noble family. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said himself that we are all students; maybe there is some classification but we always must learn from our Divine Master, from the glorified *Vaiṣṇavas* and from the scriptures. After the

disappearance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj many things have happened in the Western world that are no doubt mostly inauspicious, but if we can see by means of the conception of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj then we can collect from there also our super benefit.

Question: Now that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has disappeared from this world I am feeling very empty. Therefore I am praying to you for guidance.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

After the disappearance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, in his separation so many inauspicious things have happened, and due to that I am really too much shocked both mentally and bodily, but by the will of Kṛṣṇa, there is no other way to spend a single moment without His *sevā* programme. *Nirjjan-bhajan* may be possible singlely but *saṁkīrtan* is not possible without *Vaiṣṇava* association; in that way we are in the proper line of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Until death we must try to maintain our joyful *saṁkīrtan* life. We have no other ambition except to be the servants of the servants of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, but when we see our friends madly jumping into the ocean of illusion and becoming puzzled, then we must be afraid of Māyā and more tightly embrace the shelter of our protector.

Question: How can I best serve Śrīla Guru Mahārāj?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has already instructed you on the

highest direction of your service. There is no service anywhere that is comparable to service rendered to Koladwīp. And in Koladwīp there is no service that is comparable to the service of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and to his Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. You have the great fortune to have the opportunity to render such direct service. Only very few have such opportunity and this is not comparable to service rendered in any other quarter.

The wealth of the devotee is exclusive devotion to Śrī Guru. We all have so many seniors; and Vṛndāvan is the "Land of Gurus," but *ananya-bhakti* is the exclusive absorption in devotion to my own Śrī Gurudev. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj taught this and practised this, and we are to try to follow in that line.

Question: I am purchasing a building to be used as an *āśram* here in the West to represent your Maṭh in Nabadwīp. I am asking your instructions as to how I shall proceed with full earnestness.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

When we will go to start a new preaching centre and want to install the Deities for our *sevā* programme, first it is necessary to see that the Deity is not a doll and also that the *āśram* is a conscious part of the Kṛṣṇa conception. If we can maintain properly both the Deities and the *āśram* for as long as we live, and longer, then we can start a preaching centre.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj disappeared and we all fell down into the ocean of his separation but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave us full direction in the *Kṛṣṇa-sevā* conception. His Divine Grace is now living with us in the form of his *divya-vānī*, in his divine instructions and his associates. Now our only hopeful shelter is the lotus feet of his divine associates, servitors and followers.

Question: I am planning to purchase a small facility for an *āśram* here in our country and am asking for your blessings and advice.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

Try to preach from your *āśram* the specific conception of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Also Śrīla Guru Mahārāj always asked all the devotees to try to serve his Deities here at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh in the regular way. Preaching is life. Without preaching, Mahāprabhu may not be satisfied, but with preaching then your enthusiastic programme of service must surely become fulfilled, glorified and joyful. This is my prayer unto the lotus feet of our Divine Master.

Question: My wife is not attracted to chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra but she is presently associating with members of the Rāmānuja *sampradāya*. They chant other names of the Lord. Please can you give some instruction on the difference between chanting Hare

Kṛṣṇa and chanting other names of the Lord? Please explain to her what is the topmost *sampradāya*.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

I am happy to hear that you are sincerely trying to guide your good-wife towards the all-fulfilling line of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Chapter Ten of "The Search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa" nicely presents the glories of the Mahāmantra. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu came to give this Mahāmantra as the *yuga-dharmma* for this age, and all of our predecessor *Āchāryyas* are chanting its greatness. In *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* there are clear scientific explanations of the supremacy of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvan, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu established this conception over all others.

The Rāmānuja *sampradāya* is glorious and is presenting pure devotion but of a lower order than the devotion presented by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's gift of service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The highest goal of *sevā* of the Rāmānuja *sampradāya* is service of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa which is in *viddhi-mārga* and therefore virtually unattainable for the fallen souls of *Kali-yuga*. However in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *sevā* of Vṛndāvan the worship is in *rāga-mārga*, and by the grace of Śrī Nitāi-Gaura everyone has some hope to enter there. The service of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa can give up to two and half *rāsas* whereas the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* can give us the full *sevā* of five *rāsas*; especially *mādhura* is found there. It is only possible to get such service from one who is established there in *rāga-mārga*.

In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* is the following quotation:

*sahasra nāmnām punyānām
trir āvṛtṭyā tu yat phalaṁ
ekāvṛtṭya tu kṛṣṇasyā
nāmaikam tat prayacchati*

“Three times chanting the one thousand names of Viṣṇu may give the result which can be achieved by once chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name.”

In *Jaiva Dharma*, in *Śrī Nāma*, *Nāmābhāsa o Nāmāparādha Vichār*, and in *Śrī Harinām Cintāmaṇi* the glories of the Mahāmantra have been chanted. However it is necessary to maintain our spiritual lives under the guidance of Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava otherwise we cannot progress properly. So many things may come in front of us to cause disturbance. Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurāṅga are exclusively distributing this highest gift and we are to find guidance from Their bona fide representative. By sincerely wanting Their gift, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will lead us to such a bona fide guide.

Other *sampradāyas* may also be chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa but they are doing so under quite a different conception. Some consider that *Nārāyaṇa-loka* is the highest and *Kṛṣṇa-loka* is lower than that. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Thākura was once by Rādhā-kuṇḍa and an important person, a king perhaps, was doing *daṇḍavat prañāms* circumambulating this sacred *kuṇḍa*. At that time Paramānanda Prabhu told Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda that they are also worshipping Rādhārāṇī. He replied that they are worshipping Her

but under the impression that Rādhārāṇī is under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa, whereas we have the clear conception from Śrī Nitāi-Gaurāṅga which is quite the opposite.

You should both regularly read Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s books and sincerely follow his guidance and advice. Everything is nicely presented by him in a short, conclusive and sweet way. By focusing our energy only there, it will bring the highest transcendental fruit.

Question: There seems to be a very fine line between reality and illusion. Everywhere I look I see a forest fire of self-interest. I feel we need some solid, tangible guide-lines and encouragement to align us with the current of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

What Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has given to the world is living and is with the highest prospect of fulfilment. He has glorified and distributed pure *Vaikuṇṭha-nāma*. By following the path of pure chanting with service-mood, gradually we can connect with the Lord’s figure and colour, His qualities, then His associates and paraphernalia, and then His pastimes. We can be given the chance to enter there and be given some duty if we may be blessed by Him with some engagement. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is in front of us and is guiding us in this line. With firm faith, simply we are to follow the process that he is continually describing to us. With this real

spiritual connection the path must take us to where we are welcome as a willing servitor. In the highest position all labour is a labour of love and there is no weariness, indifference or hate there. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has given such bright promise of that land, and that has drawn the fortunate souls throughout the whole world to his lotus feet.

The prospect is great, but no doubt these are difficult times for all the devotees now that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has disappeared from our immediate vision. It is a time of test, but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself gave assurance that those who are victorious in standing by the ideal even after the disappearance of their guru, will be glorified and successful in spiritual life.

Question: I received connection with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj by *ṛtvik* initiation but my *ṛtvik* guru has now fallen down. Like others I feel badly deceived. I am writing to you directly seeking your advice and shelter. Can you please tell me whether my existing *dikṣa* initiation by that *ṛtvik* guru is still valid under these circumstances? What should I do?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

I am not aware of the exact circumstances of your own initiation but I can clarify what is the situation for devotees who may have received connection to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj through the *ṛtvik* process. That is, when a person holds a post as an officer in the government, he

may himself be given the duties to appoint others in certain ways and to make all types of arrangements. If he should leave or be ousted from that officer's post then naturally his authority as a government representative is also finished. However, whatever arrangements he had made and whoever he had appointed during the time of his holding office; all this will still stand and will be recognised by the government as before. But when that officer goes, then those that were being engaged by him may ask, "Now what is my duty?" For Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's devotees that duty is to serve his central Maṭh and Deities, and this is what Śrīla Guru Mahārāj advised to everyone after their taking initiation. Engage in this central service, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and preach Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's conception, and if anyone will find any difficulty then he will ask the Chief-Secretary.

Question: What should we think when chanting japa?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

I asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj what we should focus our attention on while chanting *japa*, whether on the Deity form of Kṛṣṇa etc. His reply was that we are only to concentrate on avoiding the ten offences and four *nāmābhāsa*. Everything is in the pure name chanted under the guidance of Gurudev, so if we can chant purely, without offence, then everything will be revealed. We are not *yogis*, *jñānīs*, *tapasvīs* etc. but we

are active devotees aspiring after the pure ideal of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Question: For two years now I have been intrigued by astrology. I am enclosing my birth-chart and asking if you can give some advice?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī were both great *jyotishis*, knowers of astrology, but few people know that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was a great *jyotishi*. By the order of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj I also studied astrology in order to get some understanding, but I am not practising that. I looked a little at your chart but I do not know the Western type of astrology, only something of the Eastern system.

Although Śrīla Guru Mahārāj knew astrology well, he did not practise it. Rather he gave enthusiasm for chanting, reading devotional books, service etc. and if we can unquestionably follow that line it will be best for our future.

Question: My wife is not a devotee and sometimes she gives opposition to my own practising life. How can I overcome this problem? Also Śrīla Gurudeva, I wish to ask some further questions: i) Can you tell me about my past lives as I have been asked this by colleagues at work? ii) Is "Prabhu" used only to address initiated disciples? And, iii) May we read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

When Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj first started his Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the West, in America, at that time he tolerated many things for the sake of the fallen souls. Even he could not take the food to which he was accustomed, but gradually everything came under his control nicely. In this way we must tolerate everything and know that if it is Kṛṣṇa's will, it will therefore come gradually to the set-right position. With the proper transcendental vision we can always and everywhere receive enthusiasm to do the *sevā* of our Divine Master.

Regarding your first question, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his *Śaraṇāgati* sang:

*pūrvva itihās bhūlinu sakal
sevā sukha peye mane
āmi to tomāra tumi to āmāra
ki kāj apara dhane*

The meaning is that the *Vaiṣṇava* does not care to remember or think about his past lives. He is fully engaged with joyful *Kṛṣṇa-sevā* through his Gurudeva, and he is satisfied.

Secondly: "Prabhu" is customarily only used as a title for initiated devotees.

Thirdly: we can read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* but cautiously and with the association of a qualified *Vaiṣṇava*, otherwise we may go in the line of *sahajiyā* (imitation). Some of the sections of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are very

helpful for the devotees, but that also must be read within the association of the *Vaiṣṇavas*. In *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* it is given:

jāho bhāgavat pada vaiṣṇaver sthāne

For the fallen souls of this age it is better to read the many scriptures of our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and to hear the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from a qualified *Vaiṣṇava*. In our fallen position *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is always as worshipable as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We are to pray to it in our heart as His manifestation.

Question: I have been involved with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for several years and have recently had the association of some disciples of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj. They have described his teachings and mood, and their association has inspired me, again giving me hope in spiritual life. They have also chanted your glories and I am writing to you for your mercy.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

It is true that we are most fortunate to have come across the shelter of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, and the association of their devotees. *Vaiṣṇava-saṅga* is giving us the highest opportunity to serve Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndhārvvā-Govinda-sundar as we can directly connect with them (the *Vaiṣṇavas*). Like the telescopic system we must send our service through Guru-*Vaiṣṇava*. Service is our life

and in the association of the *Vaiṣṇavas* we must get everything. You please try to read the books of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, especially "The Loving Search for the Lost Servant," "Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion," "*Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam*," etc. It is not only that we are to get inspiration but we need to do something, and that is *sevā* of Śrī Guru-*Vaiṣṇava*. From that door our super-fortune will come to take us into the ecstatic ocean of *Nāma-saṅkīrtan*.

Question: Here in the cultural environment of the West it seems necessary to make adjustments for time and place. Must we wear the dress of the traditional cloth of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*, *tilak*, etc. to present the teachings of Mahāprabhu? Please offer me some advice on this matter.

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

Regarding your questions: for householders, what is suitable dress for their duties they may accept that. For their preaching, what is most suitable may be worn; but at least for *arati*, for the worshipping of the Deities, the *dhoti* etc. should be worn. The *brahmachārīs* will more actively maintain the external garments. They are full-time representing the Mission and should be recognised as such, as far as possible. But for *sannyāsīs* they are to always wear the dress of *sannyāsa*. If it is absolutely necessary for them to wear at any time the shirt, pants, etc. then under those garments their *sannyāsa* cloth will

be worn. The only time for them not to wear their *sannyāsa* garments is in a grave life-or-death situation.

The thread must always be worn. The *kunti-mālā* (neck beads) must also be worn but, if necessary, a single thread may be worn at the least. These general guide-lines you can follow. We want to favourably present Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and what is suitable for that we will accept according to the circumstances.

In every *sampradāya* and every religion there must be some who will misrepresent the teachings or give a bad impression to the public, but that should not hamper our own mission. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda would always establish the super-excellence of the pure *Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava* conception and he would march onwards strongly despite so much heavy opposition. In this way he established the dignity of this Mission.

Question: I am a householder and I have one room which is reserved solely for worshipping the Lord and *bhajan*. My request is: what form should that worship take, and in what way can I improve my *sādhana*?

Sometimes I hear devotees criticising other devotees and I feel I must run away and hide so as not to lose respect for them. But Śrīla Guru Mahārāj mentions that our environment is always favourable. I see that the devotees are a part of that environment and should not be criticised. Is this correct?

Śrīla Mahārāj replied:

There are nine kinds of *sādhana-bhakti*:

*śravaṇam kīrttanam viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arccanam vandanam dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

*iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau
bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addha
tan manye 'dhītam uttamam*

Arccanā is one branch of *sādhana-bhakti* but Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu described that really the path for the fallen souls of *Kali-yuga* is the congregational chanting of *Harināma* and also the independent chanting of the Mahāmantra. If the fully surrendered soul will try to maintain this practice then that is enough for that *jīva*-soul especially in this age.

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā*

And also in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann,
asti hy eko mahañ guṇaḥ
kīrttanād eva kṛṣṇasya
mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*

In order to have more engagement the *gṛhastha bhakta* can practise other branches of *bhakti*, but

chanting the Name without *aparādha*, called *śuddha-nāma*, can give everything to us.

Practically a real devotee does not criticise anyone. Sometimes they may analyse others and learn from them, but not in the mood of criticism. Also it is practically to be noted that *sat-saṅga*, real *sādhū-saṅga*, is very rare in this world. When great personalities like Śrīpad Swāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj will point out others' practice of religion, then that is not criticism but it is only for the benefit of their associates and followers that they are to beware of such things.

I am trying to answer your questions but no doubt it may not be possible to cover everything in a letter. Anyhow, with the guidance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj given in his books, lectures, etc. and with sincerity of purpose in following them, the proper adjustment to each circumstance will come. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj himself always stressed that we are all students, not masters; so always we are learning how to serve and what is service. Our real wealth and fortune is that we have come across a true guide for our divine prospect.

TREASURES

SHORT EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

By His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

Always we must carefully guard our faith. Faith is the foundation of our devotional life and if it becomes injured or shaky then the whole of our devotion is in a shaky position. Village talks can damage our faith and Mahāprabhu instructed this to such an exalted person as Śrīla Raghunāth Dāsa Goswāmī. So we can understand the importance of this message for such as ourselves.

Not only our body, but our faith and devotional creeper must also be looked after. If our faith is once broken it may not be possible to again fully repair it. Therefore if any black spot can be seen in another that may injure our own faith then we must be careful to avoid that from afar. With great humility and respect for everyone we must try to always engage in topics and service connected with Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Guru.

The *jñānīs* and yogis are going to much trouble, and with great austerities they are constantly rounding the

universe searching for a hole in the cover in order to go out. But the devotees simply surrender to the Lord and His devotees and in that way accept His divine will and protection. They qualify to enter far beyond the plane of the material universes.

This mundane world is the very distrustful area of *Māyā*. The demoniac *asura* mentality has always given trouble to the devotees ever since the beginning of the conscious world, but the devotees are taking everything in the light of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They see that all is coming by the will of Kṛṣṇa, and so behind everything is their spiritual benefit.

Bilvamaṅgal was blind, but Kṛṣṇa was playing with him by slapping his hand. Whenever Bilvamaṅgal tried to catch Him, Kṛṣṇa hid Himself. Bilvamaṅgal then told Kṛṣṇa, "You can hide from me in this way but You will have to be very powerful if You can leave from my heart." So when we can know that everything is within Kṛṣṇa consciousness then we have no problem.

Problems will always come, but the solving of those problems is activity for us. If there were no victory or defeat then nobody would work and everyone would stay like stone. We are always very enthusiastic to get victory for our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's satisfaction.

If we can understand what was so dear to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, especially his Deities, Maṭh, devotees and paraphernalia, then it is not possible to think that suddenly these things are no longer dear to him and so give them all up so easily. In this way we are all trying to serve Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's desires here for his mission.

What Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave, everybody cannot understand, but still it is to be expressed. For example, many explanations have been given of the *Gāyatrī Mantram* by the *Āchāryyas* but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj broke the hard fort around that *mantram* and revealed the internal meaning. Already *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has given the meaning of the *Gāyatrī* but that is in 18,000 *ślokas*. I asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, "The *Gāyatrī* is a hidden treasure but you are distributing that by including it in the English commentary of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. Even the big *ṛṣis* did not do this." However Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, "But somebody must give this meaning to the world, so who will give that if I do not? No one will believe them."

In *Kali-yuga* sin committed in the mind is not counted, but *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is different from sin. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* penetrates to the *ātmā* and causes destruction of the devotional creeper. The essential point is that we will try to keep within the favourable

association of the *bhakta sādhu* and stay far away from the dangers of *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

We are not to be indifferent but we are to be kind. Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī asked Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī what, in a short way, is the essence of the instructions of Mahāprabhu. He replied, “*jīve doyā, nāme ruci, Vaiṣṇava sevā*.” This is *Vaiṣṇava dharmma*: kindness to every *jīva*-soul, chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names without offence and service to the *Vaiṣṇavas*.

Outer space is a foreign place to us and it is only possible to survive there in a carefully protected space-capsule. Similarly we are to lead spiritual life in this world in an environment carefully protected by devotion.

Yes, there is freedom with the *jīva* soul. There is the freedom to spoil everything but also with that freedom there is the opportunity to build your spiritual fortune.

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