

- All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga -

A DAY AT HĀPĀNIYĀ

A lecture delivered by Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

On October, 1989 Advent Festival of Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śridhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

(As published in Śrī Chaitanya Sarasvatī Vol. I, edited by Śripād Swarupānanda Prabhu)

I offer my obeisances to my respected Godbrothers, Godsisters, and the villagers of Śrī Hāpāniyā. Today we have very happily come to Śrī-Pāṭ Hāpāniyā Dhām. Our destination is Goloka, even if we may not know where Goloka is. However, we must know that the Abode of Goloka has personally become manifest in this world as the Abode of the Divine Master, the residence of the devotees and the Temple where the Deities are worshipped. Today, whether we can perceive it or not, we have arrived in this Holy Place which is non-different from Goloka-Dhām.

Many years ago we brought our Divine Master back here to Hāpāniyā, the place of his Advent. We had a purpose, as also did the residents of this Village; and all wanted to have Guru Mahārāj's company once again, since so many long years had passed since Guru Mahārāj left his family to accept the renounced order of life, *sannyāsa*, and went out to preach throughout the whole of India, after which Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur departed from this mortal world, and Guru Mahārāj remained in Vṛndāvana, Gokula, and Śrī Nabadwip Dhām. His family members, especially his brothers Śriyukta Maṇi Bābu and Śriyukta Amar Bābu, tried their level best to bring Guru Mahārāj back to his 'home town' Hāpāniyā, but he had no desire to come here and never agreed to their proposal.

Afterwards, on the request of Guru Mahārāj's Godbrothers, Param-pūjyadpāda Śrīla Yāyāvar Mahārāj, Paramahāṁsa Mahārāj, Madhusūdan Mahārāj, etc. – all the Vaiṣṇavas who had much regard and affection for him – Guru Mahārāj finally agreed to come here for a day or two.

My underlying intention through all this was to locate the exact spot where Guru Mahārāj took his birth. I thought that could be indicated only by him personally. No one else could do that because all were

younger than him. He was the eldest remaining of all his family members of the village, and furthermore, his memory was the sharpest of all. Therefore I considered that only he could accurately point out the place of his birth.

When Yāyāvar Mahārāj and other Godbrothers of Guru Mahārāj, and myself, petitioned Guru Mahārāj to come back here once, Kṛṣṇadās Bābājī Mahārāj also supported our proposal with great enthusiasm. He personally became most eager that Guru Mahārāj should come. Our most revered Śriyukta Maṇi Bābu and Śriyukta Amar Bābu were most enthusiastic. Also Śriyukta Satyen Bābu, Śriyukta Bon Bābu, and many other distinguished Brāhmaṇas and pious souls of the village and their families – all showed great eagerness. Young and old – everyone, even one elderly Muslim gentleman who lived nearby also expressed his heartfelt wish that Guru Mahārāj might be brought back here once again. In this way, everyone propitiated Guru Mahārāj, and at last he agreed.

A memorable day

When Guru Mahārāj reached here, I requested him to indicate the place of his birth. Guru Mahārāj happily agreed to do so, and the very spot directly before us where Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Gopināthjī now graciously preside, was indicated by him to be the exact place of his birth.

On that day we collected 6000 rupees for making a small place of worship here, to mark the spot. All the venerable Godbrothers of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj who were present also graciously gave me contributions. Then at the request of Kṛṣṇadās Bābājī Mahārāj, Yāyāvar Mahārāj and others, Maṇi Bābu registered a deed and gave it to me for this place. Although it was a very small beginning, I was encouraged very much by the blessings and association of Guru Mahārāj's

brothers and my Godbrothers. Śrīyukta Amar Bābu took full charge of the project, and in a very humble way we tried to make a small temple only for the worship of Guru Mahārāj's photograph. Originally there was no temple for the Deity, or any *Nāt-Mandir*. Gradually, the devotees became more and more enthused to give contributions, and so after about eight years I thought that with our Guru Mahārāj's permission it would now be possible to build a temple here and install Deities.

Guru Mahārāj was also very happy to hear that I wanted to install Deities here. He said, "I am sure you will have no problem to engage a good priest, invite the Vaiṣṇavas and hold a grand festival for the installation of the Deities. But after that, how will you feed your Deities? It is not a matter of one or two years – it is an Eternal Service. So first you will have to try to manage for a permanent arrangement for the worship of the Deities."

Birth of an Āshram

By the blessings of Guru Mahārāj and through the affection of my Godbrothers sufficient facility came to enable me to arrange regular offerings and worship for the Deities. So, taking Guru Mahārāj's instruction, with the guidance of his honourable Godbrothers we installed the Deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Gopināthjiu. Since then we have held four grand festivals every year, and we continue the daily worship of the Deities according to the Scriptural regulations.

Guru Mahārāj named the Deities Rādhā-Gopināthjiu. This name causes us to always remember Mādhavendra Purīpāda. Mādhavendra Purī received the profuse blessings, and sweet rice *Prasādam*, from Gopināthjiu of Remuṇā. So Guru Mahārāj said that since the Deity had manifest Himself here as Gopināthjiu, we must arrange very nice *Paramānna* or sweet rice to offer to Him every day.

Gradually, the Temple and *Nāt-Mandir* has manifested by the blessings of Guru Mahārāj and the affection of the devotees. Along with his family, Guru Mahārāj's brother, Śrīpād Amar Bābu, constantly serves this Maṭh. Guru Mahārāj named this Maṭh 'Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Āshram,' and up to the present it is running very happily and perfectly under the guidance of Amar Bābu. As at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, all the spiritual functions are carried out every day, and devotees and villagers from far and wide come to see Gopināthjiu. Hundreds of villagers come for the festivals like *Rādhāśtami* and *Kṛṣṇa-*

Janmāśtami. On *Janmāśtami* they come for worship of Gopināthjiu, and they observe fasting the whole day. The next day, for the great festival known as *Nandotsava*, five to six thousand people attend this Maṭh and happily take *Prasādam*. They all cooperate with us very nicely. In this way, the Service of Gopināthjiu has become very glorious. We are also very happy because Guru Mahārāj's orders to make these Service programmes have become fulfilled. Today, you have also seen the new land we have acquired, and the pond which we have named 'Śāntisarovara.' There, we are now cultivating our own crops. Devotees of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh now visit here regularly, especially for the Festivals of *Gaura-Pūrṇimā*, *Guru-Pūjā*, and *Janmāśtami*, and they are very happy to see the Service of Gopināthjiu and take His *Prasādam*, and they feel transcendental ecstasy. Thus our Service is always progressing with the kind assistance of the devotees.

Today so many of you have again attended, and this year my programme is a little different. Guru Mahārāj's form is transcendental, never mundane, and on the Holy Day of his Advent we worship him in the same way as Lord Kṛṣṇa or Mahāprabhu. Therefore, I thought that after his Appearance Day Festival, which we observed yesterday in Nabadwip, we should hold a Festival here today for Guru Mahārāj in the same way as *Nandotsava*, the Festival held by Nanda Mahārāj the day after Kṛṣṇa's Birth. Everything here is transcendental, and if we can have the vision to see this we must be spiritually benefitted. In this way we are trying to fulfill the desire of the exalted Vaiṣṇavas.

The name of this Village is 'Hāpāniyā,' which means 'sweet water'. A place that produces sweet water is called 'Hāpāniyā'. *Pāniya* means 'that which is drinkable.' Today we have drunk the water from the green coconuts here and experienced their sweetness. Because of these coconuts full of sweet water, this place has been called 'Hāpāniyā.'

A child of that soil

Another feeling also comes to me when I am in Hāpāniyā, as a child of this village. Perhaps in the past I was a resident of this village. I do not know why, but whenever I come here I feel myself to be a part of this village. Perhaps it is because of the affection of Guru Mahārāj's family members. I first came here when I was 17 years old. At that time, Mani Bābu, Amar Bābu and their families were very affectionate to me and bestowed their blessings upon me; and Guru Mahārāj's sister, who now lives at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

in Nabadwip – she accepted me as her son. With so many such things combined, I feel myself to be a boy of this village. Now I have been coming and going to and from this village for about 42 years.

Guru Mahārāj himself was so very affectionate to me, he did not like me to be away from him for even a few hours. Sometimes when I would go to Calcutta, Guru Mahārāj would send a Godbrother by a shortcut on the cycle to the bridge to intercept me and call me back. "Call Govinda Mahārāj back, I am not feeling well." This happened many times. Sometimes, even if there was very important work in Calcutta, he would send someone to cycle with the order, "Bring him back immediately." But whenever I had to come here to Hāpāniyā, Guru Mahārāj would always very happily grant me permission. Even if he was not in very good health, his mood would change and he would become very pleased. He always encouraged me to come to Hāpāniyā. but so many times when I had to go to Calcutta, he would call me back. Therefore, I am very attached to Hāpāniyā Dhām.

After the Manifestation of the Deity, when I was about to go to Hāpāniyā, sometimes Guru Mahārāj would ask, "Where are you going?" And I would reply, "I am going to my Maṭh." Guru Mahārāj would enjoy, and laughing he would say, "Oh, Hāpāniyā is your Maṭh? Alright. You may go." Guru Mahārāj's mood was very happy if I served the Deity of Rādhā-Gopīnāthjiu. This is why I have become more and more enthusiastic to serve the Deity. Also, many of my Godbrothers. Especially I can mention that Śripād Yudhāmanyu Sevā Vikram Prabhu and Śripād Aravinda Lochan Sevā Sundar Prabhu are assisting me very much for the Hāpāniyā Sevā. Many other Godbrothers are also helping. Whenever the devotees hear that their contribution is utilized for Hāpāniyā, their hearts feel peaceful and happy.

We enjoy here very feely. When I am in Calcutta I have heavy responsibilities, and in Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh also I am not worry-free. But in Hāpāniyā, I feel much peace at heart. I come here weekly or fortnightly. Although I don't stay very long, I appreciate being here.

So now you have come to this very place, Hāpāniyā, where Guru Mahārāj manifested himself to the world, where all the trees, all the animals, all the

men, women – everything is transcendental. Even all the vegetables are transcendental. But it is necessary to eat with a transcendental body. Otherwise, how can we digest?

That day we came here with Guru Mahārāj, a humble meeting was held here in this very place. As shelter, only a tarpaulin was erected above our heads. We sat on the ground, and Guru Mahārāj sat on a chair. He discussed various *slokas*. At that time it was my greatest fortune to hear a special *sloka* from my Guru Mahārāj for the first time. Guru Mahārāj wanted to inject our hearts with the feeling that we had come to the Holy Abode.

yat kiñca ṭṛṇagulma-kikaṭamukham gaśthe samastam hi tat
sarvvāndamaye mukundadayitam lilānukūlam param

He told us, "Everything here is transcendental and very auspicious. If you can see in this way, you will be benefitted. You will retrieve your transcendental life, and also, you will attain the Service of Śrimati Rādhārāṇī." In this way, Guru Mahārāj gave his blessings to us here on that day, and we always remember that. I have tried to speak a little of the Glories of Guru Mahārāj, for his satisfaction, and I know that if I can see the meaning of his *sloka*, my prayer must reach its destination very easily.

Now the offering is being made to the Deities. After the Bhogāratī we shall happily take the *Prasādam* of Rādhā-Gopīnāthjiu, Giridhārījiu and our Guru Mahārāj. This is my desire and prayer. My obesiances to you all – the villagers, the *Sannyāsins*, *Brahmacārins*, etc.

Jaya Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa-parivrācāryya-varyya Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrimad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhār Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj kī jaya! Tadiya Āvirbhāva-bhūmi Śripāt Hāpāniyā kī jaya! Jaya Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Gopīnāthjiu kī jaya! Tadiya Bhogāratī kī jaya! Jaya Śripād Anaiiga Mohan Prabhu kī jaya! Jaya Gaurī Mātādevī kī jaya! Jaya Śrī Upendrachandra Vidyāratna kī jaya! Jaya samaveta Vaiṣṇava-maṇḍala kī jaya! Samaveta Bhaktavṛnda kī jaya! Harināma-saṅkīrtana kī jaya! Gaura-premānande Hari bol!

