

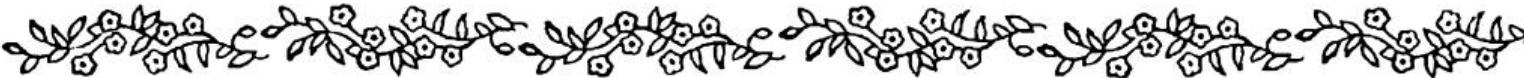
“In the Association of Pure Devotees”

*satāṁ prasāṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-josanād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*
—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25



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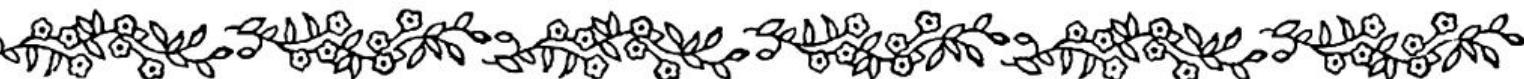
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—Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.25



IN THE ASSOCIATION OF PURE DEVOTEES

This book has been compiled from lectures and informal talks delivered by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, interviews with friends, family, godbrothers, disciples and followers of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

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All interviews with Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuj Jeeyer - Śrīla Ācāryadeva translated into English by Śrī Badrinārāyaṇa Rāmānuja dāsa.

Chapter 16 of this book is compiled by Mañjumēdhā devī dāsī Dip. Vastu, B. Vastu. www.vastu-vidya-australia.com

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First Edition 1000 copies - 2016

ISBN: 978-0-9875988-6-8

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“In the Association of Pure Devotees”

Nimāi Pañdita dāsa



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सतां प्रस्रान्मम वीर्यसंविदो
 भवन्ति हृत्कर्णरसायना” कथा” ।
 तज्जोषणादाश्वपवर्गवर्त्मनि
 श्रद्धा रतिर्भक्तिरनुक्रमिष्यति ॥ २५ ॥

*satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
 bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
 taj-joṣanād āśv apavarga-vartmani
 śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25*



Dedicated to my
divine spiritual master



Śrī Śrīmad
Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja



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Introduction

The lives of *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-mahājanas*, great personalities, are not just ordinary memoirs. Their lives are supra-mundane as they are not from this material world, and therefore their activities are also not material. They come with an eternal message for the *māyā-baddha jīvas* – the eternally conditioned lost souls of this mortal world.

As described in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*na karma-bandhanam janma
vaiṣṇavānāṁ ca vidyate
viṣṇur anucaratvam hi
mokṣam āhur maniṣināḥ*

“A Vaiṣṇava does not take birth under the jurisdiction of karmic law. His birth and disappearance are transcendental. The wise have declared that the servants of Viṣṇu are eternally engaged in the liberated service of the Lord and hence are free from the laws of material nature.”¹

Upon seeing the suffering conditioned souls, the heart of a pure devotee bleeds, and thus they descend to the material world bringing with them the great message of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They impart *tattva-jñāna*, knowledge about love of Godhead, to the *jīvas*. The conditioned souls can only speculate on the nature of the eternal soul. They have no knowledge regarding the goal of life nor of how to capture the Supreme Lord within the core of their materialistic hearts.

The *sad-gurus* descend with *prema bhakti-sūtra*, the rope of *prema*. Kṛṣṇa becomes bound up with that rope of love the *bhakti-sūtra*. One

end of that rope is firmly attached to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and those who are Kṛṣṇa's very dear, intimate devotees, the *premī-bhaktas*, descend here with the other end of that rope, and if they cast their merciful glance on some conditioned soul, then the end of that rope will go to that fortunate soul.

Thus these true Vaiṣṇavas freely give the message of love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to one and all. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami mentioned that, "...it is a thankless task..."

The personal association of pure Vaiṣṇavas, who are *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī-mūrti* - the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's mercy is of utmost importance. They are *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra* - eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa who are eternally nourished by the *svarūpa śakti* (the internal energy of the Lord). They are the magnanimous gift of the Supreme Lord upon the conditioned souls. Therefore, all opportunity should be taken to develop greed for *sādhu-saṅga*. The personal association of such a rare personality should be treasured and greatly revered.

As conditioned souls, we have imperfect senses. Therefore, we often cannot recognise the Lord's dear devotees. Thus we should be very cautious not to hinder, vilify, denigrate, or offend a *sādhu* in any way. To hinder the preaching of a exalted and rare soul is to commit a grievous offence, and if one does so he should immediately repent from the core of one's heart.

In the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* it is written:

"The pious credits earned in a hundred births are at once destroyed for they who blaspheme Lord Kṛṣṇa or His saintly devotee."²

The *Skanda Purāṇa* states:

*nindāṁ kurvanti ye mūḍhā
vaiṣṇavānāṁ mahātmanām
patanti pitṛbhiḥ sārdham
mahā-raurava-samjñite*

*hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi
vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣam
darśane patanāni ṣat*

“That foolish person who criticises an exalted Vaiṣṇava falls down to the hell known as Mahāaurava, along with his forefathers. Whoever kills a Vaiṣṇava, blasphemes him, feels malice toward him, does not properly greet him upon seeing him, becomes angry with him or does not feel joy upon seeing him, certainly becomes degraded as a result of these six types of misconduct.”³

Also in the *Nectar of Devotion*, Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“...As attachment can be invoked by the association of pure devotees, so attachment can also be extinguished by committing offences at the lotus feet of pure devotees... This extinguishing is like the waning moon, which gradually decreases and at last becomes darkness...”⁴

These great souls are not forced to take birth in the material world as ordinary conditioned souls are. They see Kṛṣṇa; they know Kṛṣṇa and have bound up Kṛṣṇa in their heart with the rope of love. They descend to this plane of existence for two reasons: from the eternal abode or spiritual world – *nitya-dhāma*, they see that the *māyā-baddha-jīvas*, the conditioned souls, are suffering so much, and this is such a great cause of distress for them, and out of their causeless mercy they voluntarily descend to reclaim them, knowing them to be the parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa.

The second reason for the earthly incarnation of the eternally perfected souls is that they are sent directly by Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Lord to deliver the *patita-adhamas* (fallen miscreants), and when they come here their only business is to speak *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, wherein *śabda-brahma*, the transcendental sound vibration descends. In this way, they awaken the conditioned souls' potential for love of Godhead.

Thus they perform the highest welfare work, *para-upakāra** in this world of suffering and madness, wherein the *jīva* falsely thinks himself to be the doer and the enjoyer of all things.

In the words of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Goswāmī Prabhupāda:

“Kṛṣṇa’s *darśana* can only be attained through the medium of the ear as one hears *hari-kathā* from the pure Vaiṣṇavas. There is no other way.”⁵

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is written:

*satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“In the association of pure devotees [śuddha-bhaktas], discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed [from illusion], and his attraction becomes fixed [to the Supreme Lord]. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”⁶

In a lecture on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda states:

“...You have to hear from the superior person, one who is self-realised. Hearing. *Satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido bhavanti hṛt-*

* *bhārata-bhūmite haila manusya janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari’ kara para-upakāra*

“One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India [Bhārata-varṣa] should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 9.41)

karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ [SB 3.25.25]. *Satāṁ prasaṅgāt*. By association with superior devotees...”⁷

In the purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.31.2), Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda writes:

“...One desiring perfection or liberation should associate with a person who is already liberated. This is called *sādhu-saṅga*, associating with a perfect devotee...”⁸

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja has also stated,

“Placing full faith in the *sādhu*, one needs only to hear submissively, *śravaṇam*. In this way, you will be able to obtain the mercy of that *sādhu*. It will help you. There is only one requirement, *śravaṇam*, nothing else. Just hear. Serve that *sādhu*, please him, hear submissively, surrender yourself at his lotus feet and humbly ask questions. Out of mercy, the *sādhu* will impart *tattva-jñāna* to you. This is the only process. Unless you obtain the association of a living *sādhu*, what can you do? Will you put some question to a book and the book will answer you? This process is a living process. It is always there, and it is always current. It is not that inquiry was done a certain way in the past and now it is done differently. No! It is an eternal process, *pranipātena, paripraśnena, sevayā*.”^{**9}

Thus it is the responsibility of anyone who wants to escape the frenzied madness of this material world - to seek out and find the association of superior devotees – *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-mahājana saṅga*.

** *tad viddhi pranipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśināḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realised soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34)

*ato gurum praṇamyaivam
sarva-svām vinivedya ca
grhṇīyād vaiṣṇavam mantram
dīkṣā-pūrvam vidhānataḥ*

“It is the duty of every human being to surrender to a bona fide spiritual master, giving him everything - body, mind and intelligence, and one must take Vaiṣṇava initiation from him.”¹⁰

*sarva-deśa-kāla-daśāya janera kartavya
guru-pāṣe sei bhakti praṣṭavya, śrotavya*

“It is therefore the duty of every man - in every country, in every circumstance and at all times - to approach a bona fide spiritual master, question him about devotional service and listen to him explain the process.”¹¹

Your lowly servant,
Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa

Chapter One



The Journey Continues

As Aspiring Devotees ...

As is described in *Tad Viddhi Praṇipātena* - Just Try to Learn the Truth we (Dīna Bandhu dāsa, Jagatpatī dāsa and Nimāi Pandita dāsa) were in India with Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. We stayed in India for approximately six weeks, three in Bhubaneswar. Having arrived at the Bhubaneswar Temple, we were handed a bucket full of holes to take bath. But by now, we had upgraded to buckets without holes, (affording us the luxury of a full bucket bath). However there were still holes in our hearts. Thereby I mean to say that our hearts were full of *anathas*, as we were, and still are very conditioned souls but Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami's *hari-kathā*, *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, *bhāgavata-kathā* was the soothing balm for our materialistic ailments.* It truly was a remarkable time, and we were in a state of limbo, so-to-speak. As aspiring devotees, we had spent our first years in ISKCON attempting to understand and perform devotional service in the temples in the West and had not really come across anything like this. We had not encountered anyone like Śrī Śrīmad Gour Gour Mahārāja.

*Please see *Just Try to Learn the Truth* pages 58 - 60 for this information.

Cooroy

Prior to going to India, the three of us (Dīna Bandhu dāsa, Jagatpatī dāsa and myself) had been living on Jayadharma Prabhu's farm in Cooroy, on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland, Australia. As part of the morning program, we would listen to two or three lectures by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and then one of us would give a class after that.

Jayadharma prabhu had over 600 recorded cassettes [in those days it was cassettes not CDs or MP3s] of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures, *darśanas* etc. In Śrīla Prabhupāda's classes we heard so many very interesting points. There were two quotes in particular that stood out.

Kṛṣṇa's Colour Is the Sky

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Kṛṣṇa is bluish. Kṛṣṇa's colour is the sky. When you see the clear sky, bluish sky, are you not very happy? "Oh, today is very nice day, blue sky." Especially in this country, when the sky is always overcast with cloud. So why you appreciate the colour of the sky so much? That is Kṛṣṇa's colour. Kṛṣṇa's body, there is a ray, *brahmajyoti*. That *brahmajyoti* is reflected in the sky. That *brahmajyoti* is outside this material sky, but that is being reflected. Therefore the sky's colour, it appears bluish.¹

So Many Important Books

"...If you want to preach the gospel of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, then the personalities who established, by writing these books, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*,

Vidagdha-mādhava, so many books they have written. So we must go through them, must try to understand. Then we can understand what is the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Caitanya-māngala*, there are so many. *Caitanya-candradoya* by Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī. So many devotees, they have given us so many high literatures, we should consult..."²

These are only two points from all the information in Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures and books! But I was wondering how to reconcile all this information?

The Picture Begins to Take Shape

The three of us had been reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books for many years and attending the full morning program. But it was not until we met Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami that the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle began to come together. By the personal association of this genuine *sādhu-guru-vaiṣṇava* and by his astounding instructions, the picture began to take shape. Our hearts were like barren land and by the association of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, that barren land which needed cultivation, was turning into fertile land. With his cutting, though very affectionate *kathā*, he was ploughing our hearts and made the soil fertile to sow the seed of the *bhakti-latā*, creeper of devotion.

In point of actual fact, then and there, we were beginning the process of devotional service, as we had never before had true *sādhu-saṅga*.

"...There are so many people, but how many are coming for *sādhu-saṅga*? It is a question of *bhakti-sukṛti*. When someone

has acquired *bhakti-sukṛti* he comes for *sādhu-saṅga* and develops *bhakti*. The first thing is *śraddhā*; *ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo’tha bhajana-kriyā** – he develops strong faith in *sādhu-śāstra-guru*, then *guru-pādāśraya*, he takes shelter of the lotus feet of *guru* and engages in *guru-bhajana*. One must take shelter of a *sādhu-guru*. He will teach you how to do *bhajana*. You do not know how to do *bhajana*. Prior to taking shelter at the lotus feet of *sādhu*, before engaging in *bhajana* – *gireche nānā anarthare bhai*** - you are surrounded by many *anarthas*, opposing the good qualities, *asat-guṇa*, *sat-guṇa-virodhī*. Then when someone takes shelter at the lotus feet of *sādhu-guru* and engages in *bhajana*, *bhajana-kriyā*, acceptance of the regulative principles, then *anartha-nivṛtti*, all your *anarthas* are destroyed. That is the result of *bhakti* developed by the merciful association of *sādhu*. This is the result of *sādhu-saṅga*...”³

Gone Mad!

After we left Bhubaneswar and arrived back in Australia, the local devotees thought that we had gone mad, because all we could talk about was Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami and the need for *sādhu-saṅga*. I mean no offence, but Australia was drying up spiritually then. Australia was a sunburnt country, and after the mishaps in the temples (euphemistically speaking) no-one knew where to turn or whom to turn to, as the *zonal-guru* had fallen from grace. This madness may have been a fact, but if we were mad, it was because we had met a real *sādhu*. Maybe we were mad by material standards, but the association of a bona fide *sādhu-guru* has its effect. I witnessed later with other devotees, who previously thought that we were mad, that

*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.4.15

**Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura says, “O brother, you are surrounded by so many *anarthas*.”

when they took shelter of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, they also became mad, mad for *sādhu-saṅga*!

The Exalted Bhakta-Bhagavata

The reality was that the constant presence of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami kept everyone in the Bhubaneswar temple spiritually alive and ‘flying high’ - thriving. Now we were also ‘flying high’ by the potency of his purity, and from hearing him speaking *hari-kathā*. The temple seemed to be lifted off the ground. When Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami left Bhubaneswar to preach in another part of India or to preach in another country, after a week of separation the temple atmosphere was really not the same.

The Tattvas of Our Gaudiya Siddhanta

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami introduced us to the importance of correctly understanding the *tattvas* of our Gauḍīya *siddhānta*. He carefully explained the deep understandings, revealing the difference between *tattva-vicāra* and *apāra-vicāra*, the absolute consideration and the apparent consideration; what are the two kinds of *bhāgavata* - *bhakta-bhāgavata* and *grantha-bhāgavata*; who is *āśraya-vigraha* and *viṣaya-vigraha*, the enjoyer and the enjoyed. *Prīti-viṣaya* and *prīti-āśraya*, the abode of love and the object of love. One recurrent theme in his lectures was *guru-tattva*; the two kinds of *guru*; *samaṣṭi-guru* and *vyaṣṭi-guru*; the position of *guru*; who is *sad-guru* - a real *guru*; and the importance of hearing from a *tattva-ācārya*, an *ācārya* of the absolute truth. This was for us, at that time, a massive amount of information to digest. We had never heard

these topics explained in such depth before. In fact, we had not heard about most of these topics at all.

He gave a lecture one day about ‘Has Kṛṣṇa Gone Mad?’* He spoke about why ordinary persons become mad and the reasons why they become mad. He listed three reasons, and then he analysed them one by one in respect to Kṛṣṇa, according to Śrīla Rūpa Goswami. It was absolute brilliance!

The Only Protection Against Maya

He would say repeatedly that the only protection against *māyā* was ‘taking the most powerful medicine of *hari-kathā* coming from the right source.’ He would humbly say that he was only a pipe through which the *kathā* was flowing from the source, and that he was not the source. He would insist that he was only a pipe, but to us, he was that ‘right source’ delivering a constant flow of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, *hari-kathā*, *bhāgavata-kathā*, because we cannot personally associate with the Supreme Lord, however we can associate with His representative.

I am Just a Pipe

“Water comes from the reservoir. You are a mere pipe. If you are connected with the reservoir then the supply comes. But if the pipe says, “I am giving the water,” then it will be an offence. ‘I am just a pipe and the water comes from the reservoir through me. It is not mine. It is all His.’ This should be the mentality. If I think I am speaking or if I think I am a great speaker then *dambha*, pride comes. Then everything is finished, crushed. The mercy you were given will be withdrawn.”⁴

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.229, spoken in Bhubaneswar on 06-04-1989.

Indeed, the original source is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the *guru* is receiving everything from Him. The spiritual master is glorified in the first verse of *Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam* for showering mercy on the disciple, as a cloud is taking water from the ocean and then showers rain on a forest fire. But we all felt that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a distant reality and that we were receiving everything from His merciful manifestation appearing to us in the form of our spiritual master Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

The Oasis in the Desert

Up until then, we had virtually been in a spiritual desert, as we had never had such personal *sādhu-saṅga* before. He was the oasis in that desert. Slowly he began to administer nectar to our dehydrated souls, speaking nectarean sweet *hari-kathā* into our depleted consciousness, just enough day after day, and we drank as much as we could digest. Sometimes he would look at us during class and say, "...what are you doing here? This is not for you..." Then he would smile and continue speaking.

The Saving Grace

We did not have much of an idea at all about spiritual life. I felt that I had much less of an idea than Jagatpatī Prabhu and Dīnabandhu Prabhu. Nonetheless, there we were, and we were hearing this wonderful *kṛṣṇa-kathā* which could not be replaced with anything else.

Prior to meeting him, we had only theoretical understanding of what a *guru* was, but after we met him, we were actually practically experiencing what a *sad-guru* is, being in his personal association and hearing his *hari-kathā*.

He gave us a much deeper understanding of who the *guru* is, by speaking on two topics that were totally foreign to us. We had not the remotest idea of what they were, but we were there to learn - right? With so much love and affection he carefully and clearly explained to us, whilst always quoting from *śāstra*, that the *guru* is *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā śrī-mūrti*, and *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra*. This information will be elaborated upon in Chapter Two and Chapter Three of this book.

He Knew Us Better than We Knew Ourselves

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami did not need to resort to magic tricks, wizardry or mystical jugglery to win followers. People were spontaneously attracted by his realised understanding of the *śāstra*, his devoted love and dedication to his spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, his effulgent appearance, and his remarkably humble personality. He was a real *sādhu*, a great sage. He could see right through us, it was as if he was looking right into our hearts. He knew us better than we knew ourselves, and he had only just met us! That is 'food for thought'.

Chapter Two



Krsna Krpa Sri Murti

The Embodiment of Krsna's Mercy

Pray Constantly and Sincerely

One may ask: what type of *guru* should I accept? In this chapter, and also in Chapter Three, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami answers this question, explaining that the ideal *guru* should be *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī-mūrti* and a *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra*.

One may also enquire: how can I find a *guru*? He explains that the *sad-guru* and the *sad-śiṣya* will find each other through the transcendental arrangement of the Lord, and that actually a conditioned soul under the influence of his imperfect senses, imperfect mind and imperfect intelligence cannot hope to possibly see who is a bona fide *guru*.

So how does it work? Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the indwelling monitor, Paramātmā, sees the heart of the prospective disciple, and according to the sincerity of his desire and his *sukṛti*, or spiritual merit, he arranges for the meeting of a particular disciple with a particular *guru*. Therefore one is advised not to rely on his own faculties of vision and judgment but to depend on the arrangement of the Lord, which is always the best.

As we cannot see Śrī Guru with our imperfect senses, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami repeatedly taught that we should pray constantly and sincerely from the core of our heart and that Kṛṣṇa will make all suitable arrangements for our acceptance of Śrī Guru. That Śrī Guru, the bona fide *guru*, is *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī mūrti* - the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. The *sad-guru* is the mercy of Kṛṣṇa having assumed a body.

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

“The Supreme Lord is not obtained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, or even by repeated hearing. He is obtained only by one whom He Himself chooses, and He manifests His own form.”¹

How does He manifest?

*jīve sākṣat nāhi tāte guru caitya-rūpe
śikṣā-guru haya kṛṣṇa-mahānta-svarūpe*

“Since one cannot visually experience the presence of the Supersoul, He appears before us as a liberated devotee. Such a spiritual master is none other than Kṛṣṇa Himself.”²

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

“Kṛṣṇa is situated in everyone's heart as the *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within. When He is kind to some fortu-

nate conditioned soul, He personally gives him lessons so he can progress in devotional service, instructing the person as the Supersoul within and the spiritual master without.”³

*yadyapi āmāra guru—caitanyera dāsa
tathāpi jāniye āmi tāñhāra prakāśa*

“Although I know that my spiritual master is a servitor of Śrī Caitanya, I know him also as a plenary manifestation of the Lord.”⁴

Paramatma Krśna Tattva

“When the *caitya-guru*, Paramātmā in the heart assumes a body, appears before us and speaks, then we will be able to understand *paramātmā-kṛṣṇa-tattva*. Therefore one should approach that *guru* who is the embodiment of Krṣṇa’s mercy [*kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī mūrti*], and take shelter at his lotus feet. By gaining his divine association, by surrendering, pleasing him and obtaining his mercy, he lights the lamp of knowledge and dispels the darkness of ignorance in the heart of his true disciple, *jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*.*”⁵

Sad-Guru

“...As far as the time of *dīkṣā* (initiation) is concerned, everything depends on the position of the *guru*. As soon as a bona fide *guru* is received by chance or by a program, one should immediately take the opportunity to receive initiation. In the book called *Tattva-sāgara*, it is stated:

* *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 10.11

*durlabhe sad-gurūṇāṁ ca sakṛt-saṅga upasthite
tad-anujñā yadā labdhā sa dīksāvasaro mahān*

*grāme vā yadi vāraṇye kṣetre vā divase niśi
āgacchati gurur daivād yathā dīksā tad-ājñayā*

*yadaivecchā tadā dīksā guror ājñānurūpataḥ
na tīrtham na vratam hemo na snānam na japa-kriyā
dīksāyāḥ karaṇam kintu svecchā-prāpte tu sad-gurau*

“If by chance one gets a *sad-guru**, it doesn’t matter whether one is in the temple or the forest. If the *sad-guru*, the bona fide spiritual master, agrees, one can be initiated immediately, without waiting for a suitable time or place.”⁶

“To have the *darśana* of *guru* means that one’s life is completely transformed. New enlightenment comes. *Guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja* - by the mercy of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, the seed of the *bhakti* creeper is sown in the heart of a fortunate *jīva*. ”⁷

**Sad-guru*:

*guravo bahavah santi śiṣya-vittāpahārakāḥ
durlabhaḥ sad-gurur devi śiṣya-santāpahārakah*

“One can find many *gurus* who can take away the wealth of their disciples, but there are few who can remove the miseries of their disciples.” (*Padma Purāṇa*. Lord Śiva speaks to Pārvatī-devī)

Hence, *durlabhaḥ sad-gurur devi* – *sad-guru*, bona fide *guru* is very rare.

Sad-guru – a perfected spiritual master. A pure *guru*; a spiritual preceptor who follows *sat* (the pure path of the *sādhus* as described within *śāstra* and as delivered through *paramparā*).

Divine Precepts

“...To have met Śrī Guru means that you have received the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. We should understand that Gurudeva is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. To a conditioned soul, it is good fortune to have material wealth, money, name, fame, and prestige; however, these things are not really good fortune. If one gets Śrī Guru, he is the most fortunate because he receives the *bija*, the seed of the *bhakti* creeper...”⁸

“...The life in which the *darśana* of Śrī Guru takes place is a very, very successful life. That is good fortune. Having the *darśana* of Gurudeva means to receive the mercy of Gurudeva. We may see Gurudeva with our material vision, but if Gurudeva casts his merciful glance on us, then it should be understood that we are very fortunate. Otherwise, we should not think ourselves to be very fortunate. By his mercy we can realise what his real *svarūpa* is and how he is a *mahā-bhāgavata*...”⁹

“Transcendental knowledge, *śruti*, means the Veda. Kṛṣṇa has said, ‘*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.15) ‘By all the Vedas, I am to be known.’ This *veda-jñāna* has come to the material world with Śrī Guru. The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa keeps His own transcendental knowledge with His dear devotees. That Gurudeva is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī-mūrti*.¹⁰

“The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is *rasa-maya*, full of transcendental bliss and all-loving mellows. One who is constantly attached to that *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* Kṛṣṇa, is a *premī-bhakta*, *premīka-guru*. By the mercy and association of such a

bhakta, you can develop *prema*; he can give you *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Otherwise, how will you have Kṛṣṇa? You can feel and realise what *prema* is in his presence. That *premī-bhakta-guru* is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's mercy, *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī-mūrti*. Without the mercy of that *guru* no one can have entrance into the loving kingdom of the Lord.”¹¹

“...What is Bhagavān? How is He *prema-maya* and *ra-sa-maya*, full of *prema* and mellow? How does He keep His dear devotees always drowning in this ocean of mellow? Who can understand this? It is only in the association of such a *premī-bhakta-guru* that one fortunate *jīva* may understand it, otherwise no one can. Unless one gets the mercy of such *gurus* and *sādhus* who are the embodiment of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa – *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī-mūrti* – one cannot understand the message of the kingdom of love. So, *bhagavat-svarūpa-jñāna* comes through such dear devotees of Bhagavān, not through *jñānīs*, *yogis*, or *karmis*.

I do not know what I am saying, I do not know. What my Guru says, I say. But what he says through me, I do not know...”¹²

“...Although my *guru* is the *dāsa*, the servitor of Caitanya, still I know he is His direct manifestation, *tāñhāra prakāśa*. This is *tattva*. Therefore we say, when *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā* assumes a body, he appears before a fortunate soul as Śrī Guru. That Śrī Guru is known as *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī-mūrti*, the embodiment of *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*...”¹³

“...If Kṛṣṇa showers His mercy onto some fortunate person, He Himself appears as *guru* and teaches *bhakti*. This is *bhāgyavān*. Therefore *guru* is known as *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī mūrti*: the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*, has assumed a body. That is *guru*. *Guru* is *mūrtimān-kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, *guru* is an embod-

iment of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. If someone gets such a *guru* he is considered most fortunate, *bhāgyavān...*"¹⁴

Who is Guru?

"...Who is *guru*? *Guru* is *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī-mūrti*, the embodiment of *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*. *Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā* has assumed a body: that is *guru*. He has been sent by Kṛṣṇa and he has come down from that abode of Kṛṣṇa to distribute mercy to the conditioned souls.

*samsāra-dāvānala-līdha-loka-
trāṇāya kāruṇya-ghanāghanatvam
prāptasya kalyāṇa-guṇārṇavasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

Arṇava means 'ocean'. *Kārunya* means *kāruna*, mercy. Kṛṣṇa is *kāruna-sindhu*, an ocean of mercy. So *guru* has come down here with that ocean of mercy, to distribute it. Therefore *guru* is known as *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā śrī-mūrti*. He is the embodiment of *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*. *Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā* has assumed a body, *guru*, who has come down here to distribute that ocean of mercy. That is *kṛpā*. He teaches us how to serve Kṛṣṇa and he imparts *tattva-jñāna*. That is *guru-kṛpā*. In other words he sows the seed of the *bhakti-latā* creeper in the properly cultivated land. That land is our heart. That is his *kṛpā*. That is *guru-kṛpā*, the mercy of *guru*..."¹⁵

What Is Krsna-Krpa?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Then what is *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*?
Devotee: Giving us *sad-guru*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Yes, making the arrangement that such an aspirant, a *bhakta* or soul will meet His true representative, or sending such a soul to His real representative, His own man. That is *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*. Therefore we say *kṛṣṇa kṛpāte guru mile, guru kṛpāte kṛṣṇa mile* – by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa you will get *guru* and by the mercy of *guru* you will get Kṛṣṇa. Thus, *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā* and *guru-kṛpā* are inter-dependent, related.¹⁶

Chapter Three



Svarupa Sakti Pusta Parikara

The Guru is Empowered by
the Internal Energy of Sri Krsna

An Eternal Associate of Krsna

Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, speaking on the vast subject matter of *guru-tattva*, explained that Śrī Guru, a bona fide *guru* (*sad-guru*) is *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra*, an associate of the Lord empowered by *svarūpa-śakti*, Kṛṣṇa's internal potency.

Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“...In the absolute world, there is no distinction as me, or he, and I. Kṛṣṇa and His representative is the same. Just like Kṛṣṇa can be present simultaneously in millions of places. Similarly, the spiritual master also can be present wherever the disciple wants. A **spiritual master is the principle, not the body**. Just like a television can be seen in thousands of places by the principle of relay monitoring...”¹

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states the same point:

“...The Lord gives His pure devotee the power to distribute His own mercy (*sva-kṛpā-śakti*) as he likes...”²

An Acarya Is Svarupa Sakti Pusta Parikara

Excerpt from questions and answers with Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami
on 10th April 1994 in Bhubaneswar.

Question: Guru Mahārāja, you spoke about *śakti puṣṭa parikāra*. There are many associates of the Lord that are in this material world, but it seems that this person who gets that *svarūpa-śakti*, he becomes the *ācārya*? Is that correct? He becomes the *ācārya*? **Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja:** He becomes *ācārya*. That is *guru-tattva*, *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra*. *Kintu prabhor yah priya eva tasya... Nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai*, it all speaks of *guru-tattva*. One who has access into the *kuñja* is *rādhā-priya-sakhī*. Only the dear girl companions of Rādhā have access into the *kuñja*. No one has access into the *kuñja*, *bābā*. No. Maybe access to Vṛndāvana but not to the *kuñja* where there is union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Only very dear *sakhīs* have access. And *nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai*, that is *guru-tattva*. What is that, *bābā*? What does it say?

Question: They say that it means that the Six Goswamis are *mañjarīs* or *gopīs*; so, they wrote books, and we are helping to distribute those books, so we are assisting the *gopīs*. That's *nikuñja-yūno*, that is what they say.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, assisting by their mercy. One day I will be like that. Just hoping for it.

Question: Guru Mahārāja, he is using this term 'jagat-guru'. Sometimes I have heard that this term 'jagat-guru' is not a Vaiṣṇava term or Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava term, but that it is used by the Māyāvādis. Is it proper to use that for Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Many say 'Jagat-guru [Śrīla] Prabhupāda'. So?

Question: Sometimes there is a controversy. Some people are saying very strongly that you should not...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Many say, ‘*Jagat-guru* [Śrīla] Prabhupāda’. He travelled throughout the whole world and imparted *tattva-jñāna*, and he delivered so many *mlecchas*, *yavanas* and inculcated Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so his whole activity was of *jagat-guru*. One who does so, is *jagat-guru*.

Question: So, Guru Mahārāja, those other intimate associates of the Lord who are on the planet, they do not receive that specific *svarūpa-śakti*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Intimate associate receive. When you say ‘intimate associate’, how is it that he cannot receive?

Question: How is it that an associate of the Lord is chosen to become the *ācārya*? There may be many there, but one becomes prominent?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: It is not so easy. It’s very rare, *durlabham*. Are there many? How can you say many? *Durlabha*, it’s a very rare personality. Is it not?

Question: If there is four or five on the planet, say?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: There are many in that kingdom, not in the material world. In the material world there are not many, it is rare personality – *durlabha vyakti*...

See the Internal Features

The mercy of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes through a fit person, the bona fide *sad-guru*. In the *Nectar of Instruction* His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“...One should therefore avoid observing a pure devotee externally, but should try to see the **internal features** and understand how he is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. In this way, one can avoid seeing the pure devotee from a material point of view, and thus one can gradually become a purified devotee himself...”³

The Four Defects

The *guru* is empowered by the internal energy of Kṛṣṇa, therefore he is *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa*. The spiritual master is not an ordinary being, he is not conditioned. He is not fraught with the four defects that bewilder the *baddha-jīva*, the conditioned soul, namely:

1. *bhraṇa*: the tendency to commit mistakes.
2. *pramāda*: the tendency to come under illusion.
3. *vipralipsā*: the tendency to cheat.
4. *karaṇapāṭava*: he has imperfect senses.

These defects are not found in liberated souls. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja has said on this topic, “...Kṛṣṇa spoke this to Uddhava: ‘That ācārya is My manifestation, *mat svarūpa*. He is as good as Me. Do not think that he is an ordinary human being.’ One who thinks this commits *guru avajñā aparādha....*”

In a class on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja said:

“...Therefore *guru* is *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra*, an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa who is eternally nourished by the *svarūpa-śakti*. Furthermore, he speaks on *guru-tattva*. *Guru*

means *guru* in the true sense, not *goru*^{*}. This is *guru-tattva*. One should think of *guru* like that then you will develop *guru-bhakti*. If you think that *guru* is an ordinary human being, you will commit *aparādha*; definitely you will commit *aparādha*, definitely...”⁴

“...Kṛṣṇa in Vrajabhūmi is *kiśora-kṛṣṇa*. Whatever *līlā* He does, is *prema-līlā*, which is enacted by His *svarūpa-śakti*. The very dear devotees, *premī-bhaktas* know this *līlā-rahasya-tattva*. One who is very fortunate can have a *guru* who knows that *prema-līlā-tattva*, who is *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikara*.^{**} It is sometimes said that *guru* is *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikara*. Only he can impart such *tattva-jñāna*, no one else. One who is running after his own happiness cannot understand, or cannot be interested in this *vraja-līlā kahani*. He cannot get *prema-dhana* at all. He will be cheated. Whereas, one in the association of such *premī-bhaktas* can receive this knowledge by their mercy...”⁵

Therefore, he would instruct that *guru* is the principle not the body. A real *guru*, a *sad-guru*, is *svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra*, empowered by the internal energy of the Lord. Otherwise, he is not really a *guru* in the full sense of the term.

The Need for a Living Guru

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja shone like a great beacon of light and was a towering figure of spiritual strength on the path of *bhakti*. When he spoke, it was from a far, far away place, not of this world, and his presentation of the *siddhānta*

**Goru* means cow.

**Author's note: An associate of the Supreme Lord nourished by Kṛṣṇa's *śakti*.

rattled the very fibre of one's existence, which was more-or-less complacent and mundane. All our material and mental ideas were disintegrated and replaced with real, tangible alternatives to our so-called immature attempts at spiritual life. He gave a pragmatic, lucid encounter with the highest reality. He emphasised the necessity of surrendering to a personal, living *guru*, to whom the searching inquisitive soul can ask questions, and from whom he can receive answers about the nature of the soul. Such a *guru* is able to clarify all doubts with explanations based on Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*. As explained in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,

*sarva-desa-kāla-daśāya janera kartavya
guru-pāše sei bhakti praṣṭavya, śrotavya*

“It is therefore the duty of every man - in every country, in every circumstance and at all times - to approach the bona fide spiritual master, question him about devotional service and listen to him explain the process.”⁶

From this verse we learn:

1. *guru-pāše* - to approach the bona fide spiritual master.
2. *bhakti praṣṭavya* - question him about devotional service.*
3. *śrotavya* - listen to him explain the process.**

It has been asserted that it does not matter how long one waits for the answer to one's enquiries about spiritual life, that one should just patiently continue studying the *śāstra* and

*Author's note: To ask someone questions means (and this is very simple) there is one person asking questions [the disciple] and one person ** replying [the spiritual master]. Thus the doubts of the living entity are gradually dispelled by constant hearing and having their doubts dispelled from self realised souls, that are approachable.

eventually, even if it takes five or six years, the answers will come. While there may be some merit to such an exercise, as *śāstra* has its own mercy, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa has stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*: *tad viddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā*.⁷ Our philosophy is to approach a self-realised soul and enquire from him.

Three of the important points from this verse are:

1. *pranipātena* - by approaching a spiritual master.
2. *paripraśnena* - by submissive enquiring from the spiritual master.
3. *sevayā* - by the rendering of service to the spiritual master.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit had only seven days to live and therefore he heard the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* continuously, from the great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī. He did not just close himself up in a secluded place with a pile of *śāstra*, trying to figure out on his own what was best for him to do.

The process of associating with a *sādhu* is that the *sādhu* speaks and the disciple hears. When the disciple humbly inquires, the *sādhu-guru* answers the disciple's questions out of mercy and clears all his doubts immediately. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī did not tell Mahārāja Parīkṣit, "Please wait and continue to study the *śāstra*. I am sure that all your questions will be answered during this week." He dispelled Parīkṣit Mahārāja's doubts immediately. This is the importance of *sādhu-saṅga*, association with a *sādhu*, because, *jñāninas tattva-darśinah* - The self-realised soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth. Also in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated: *rṣibhis tattva-darsibhiḥ*.⁸ One should hear from great sages or saintly persons who know the Absolute Truth. Then the suffering conditioned soul is able to enquire and receive answers immediately.

Also, in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* it is stated:

*naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā
proktānyenaiva su-jñānāya preṣṭha*

“This realisation, my dear boy, cannot be acquired by deductive reasoning. It can be properly understood only when an especially qualified person speaks it.”⁹

Thus Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja could not stress enough the need for *sādhu-saṅga*, the need for one who is baffled in his or her attempts in this material world - which means practically everyone - to meet and associate and serve, and inquire personally from a living *sādhu*, a *sādhu-vaidya*, or “doctor of the soul”, as he would say. This theme, of course, is the pivotal point of Vedic culture: the association of *sādhu-guru-vaiṣṇava*, the bona fide *sad-guru* and hearing and enquiring from him.

To practice *bhakti-yoga*, one must first accept a bona fide spiritual master. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* advises:

*guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt
kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣanam
viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā
sādhu-vartmānuvartanam*

“The first four limbs of *sādhana-bhakti* are: to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*, to take *dīkṣā* and receive instructions on service to Kṛṣṇa from him, to serve him with intimacy and affection, and to follow the path of the *sādhus* under his guidance.”¹⁰

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has said:

“We have to hear about the Supreme Lord from His own agent. When we hear those things, then all material experience and the inclination to make false arguments have to be locked up. When we hear about the Supreme Lord from a living *sādhu*, who can deliver these talks **in a bold, lively, inspiring way**, then all weakness will disappear from our hearts. We will feel a kind of courage, which was never there before, and the soul’s natural tendency to surrender to the Lord will fully manifest itself. In that surrendered heart, the eternally manifested truth of the transcendental world will spontaneously reveal itself.”¹¹

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has stated:

“...This is the secret. Unless one is *svānubhāvam*, self-re-alised, life is *bhāgavata*, he cannot preach *Bhāgavata*. That is not... That will not be effective. **A gramophone will not help.** Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara, recommended, *bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*, ‘If you want to read Śrimad-Bhāgavatam, you must approach a person who is life living *Bhāgavata*.’ *Bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*. Otherwise, there is no question of *Bhāgavata* realisation...”¹²

“...Then what is required? *Namanta eva*. Just become sub-missive. Don’t think yourself as very great philosopher, the-o-logist, scientist. Just be humble. ‘My dear sir, just be hum-ble.’ *Namanta eva*. ‘Then what will be my business? All right, I shall become humble. Then how I shall make progress?’ Now, *namanta eva san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām*. ‘Just hear the message of God.’ ‘From whom?’ *San-mukharitām*: ‘through the mouth of the devotees.’ Not professional, not

gramophone – through the mouth of, through the lips of real devotee..."¹³

"...If you simply becomes a gramophone speaker, then it will not be effective. **Gramophone or tape record speaker, that will not be. You must be live speaker.** Your living condition should be spiritually, what is called, surcharged..."¹⁴

"...Simply if you hear about Him, then you will understand. Then you will understand. So hearing is not very difficult job. But you must hear from the realised soul. That is... *satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvidah*. If you hear from a professional man, that will not be effective. Hearing must be from *sādhu*, from devotee, **from the lips of the devotee.** Just like Śukadeva Gosvāmī was speaking to Mahārāja Parīkṣit..."¹⁵

Roaring Like a Lion

Anyone who visited the Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple in Bhubaneswar and heard Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja delivering *hari-kathā* in his characteristically bold, lively and inspiring manner, roaring like a lion, will understand this point. Any weakness of heart in the devotees who came to receive treatment and medicine for curing their heart disease rapidly vanished. They quickly began to feel their misgivings disappear, as he diligently drove *māyā* out of the heart. He would speak three-four hours at a time, in two languages (English and Oriya), expanding upon and elucidating the *tattvas*, the sacred truths revealed in Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports. Whenever he spoke, he would always support every point he made by quoting countless verses from the *śāstra* and from the teachings of our previous *ācāryas*.

Maharaja Parīksit Heard From Śukadeva Gosvāmī

When you listen submissively, with concentrated attention to a *sādhu-guru* speak on topics about Kṛṣṇa and then humbly ask questions, he will impart *tattva-jñāna* to you. Anyone who has met a true *sādhu* knows that this is one of the ABCs of spiritual life.

The first lesson given to us in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is that Mahārāja Parīksit heard from Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore one must accept a bona fide *guru*, receive *mantra* from him, hear from him, and then, in a humble frame of mind, ask questions; then one should submissively listen to him explain the answers. Otherwise, this *tattva-jñāna* cannot be received.

Of course, receiving knowledge is not everything; in addition to acquiring *tattva-jñāna* from a *sādhu*, one must please that *sādhu* by sincere service (*sevayā*).

To Sever One's Bondage to This World

There is an important point here to understand. The Vedas do not simply impart data, they have a transformational purpose. They are made to make us turn back towards Him, whom we have forgotten, and develop pure love for Him. Bhaktivinoda Thākura says that the Vedas only teach pure *bhakti* however, due to misinterpretations, other opinions have been presented.¹⁶ They are the way through which the Supreme Lord chooses to make Himself known. But to whom does the Supreme Lord reveal Himself? To one who is devotedly engaged in his *guru*'s service.

It is also said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that one should cut the knot of material attachment with the sword of knowledge.

However, a blunt blade, simple *jñāna*, will not do. The secret is that the blade of knowledge should be sharpened by *guru-seva*. Otherwise, one will not be able to sever one's bondage to this world.

The Saviour of the Fallen

I personally witnessed Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja transform the lives of many devotees who obtained his personal association. I remember one devotee in particular who came to Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja for shelter. He had been addicted to all manners of sinful activities in the past and he was haunted by ghosts. This was the second time that I had seen a ghost inside someone's body: two persons were looking at me; one was smiling [the ghost] at me but not the grossly embodied person. Although he was chanting the *Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, and attending the morning program, which had helped him to a certain degree, he was still totally lost in his mind, until he met Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja, the living *guru*, who literally hammered *māyā* out of his heart! By the mercy of his personal instruction, he transformed his delinquent and reprobate mentality. I felt fortunate to be able to witness how Śrī Guru is *patīta-pāvana*, the saviour of the fallen.

I remember asking Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja on the subject of being instructed by the *guru*. His answer was that there are general instructions and personal instructions given by the bona fide *guru*, and that the personal instructions to the individual disciple are most important. The instructions given during class are general; they are for one and all.

Chapter Four



Follow the Mahajana

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Excerpt from The Six Qualities that Enhance Bhakti from Śrī Bhaktyāloka.

The Lotus Feet of a Bona Fide Guru

A spiring devotees should first take shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*. Without taking shelter of a [bona fide] *guru*, one cannot achieve anything auspicious. There are two types of people: one has developed intelligence and one has undeveloped intelligence. Those whose intelligence is undeveloped are absorbed in the so-called happiness of this world. If by chance they get the association of a *mahajana*, then they also become intelligent. Then they consider, "How unfortunate I am! I'm always engaged in sense gratification. I'm passing my days hankering for material enjoyment." This initial association with a great soul is also called association with the *guru* by hearing. By good fortune, at this time faith is awakened. When faith is awakened, one endeavours for devotional service. Then it is essential for one to take shelter of the lotus feet of a *guru*. In this way by good fortune, persons with undeveloped intelligence become intelligent and take shelter of the lotus feet of a *guru*.

Attachment to Krsna

What type of *guru* one should take shelter of is explained in the *śāstras*. One who has conquered the six enemies beginning with lust*, one who is pure, one who performs devotional service on the path of *rāga*, one who is brahminical, one who knows the clear path of the Vedas, one who *sādhus* can respect as *guru*, one who is able to control the senses, one who is merciful to all living entities, one who is cultured, one who is without duplicity, and one who is truthful - this type of householder is fit to be a *guru*. All these qualities are considered in two ways. The principle quality of a *guru* is attachment to Kṛṣṇa and detachment for what is not related with Kṛṣṇa. All other qualities are secondary. That is why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 8.128):

*kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei ‘guru’ haya*

“Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī* or a *śūdra* – regardless of what he is – he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa.”**

If one possesses this principal symptom of a *guru*, then he is eligible to be *guru* even though he lacks one or two secondary symptoms. Being a *brāhmaṇa* and being a householder are

*Author's comment: The six enemies - *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *mātsarya* - lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy.

**Author's comment: The science of Kṛṣṇa:

1. *sambandha-tattva* – knowledge of our relationship with the Supreme Lord.
2. *abhideya-tattva* – the process for realising that knowledge.
3. *prayojana-tattva* – the ultimate goal of life, *prema-bhakti* (un-adulterated love of God).

counted as secondary symptoms. It is good if a person possesses these two secondary symptoms along with the principal qualification. But those who are defective in the principal symptom are unqualified to be *guru* even though they possess the other two. As stated in *Śrī Padma Purāṇa*:

*mahā-bhāgavata-śreṣṭho
brāhmaṇo vai gurur nṛnām
sarveśām eva lokānām
asau pūjyo yathā hariḥ*

*mahā-kula-prasūto ‘pi
sarva-yajñeṣu dīkṣitāḥ
sahasra-śākhādhyāyī ca
na guruḥ syād avaiṣṇavah*

“Among all human beings the *brāhmaṇa* who is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, or great devotee, is topmost and qualified as *guru*. He is as worshippable as Lord Hari. A non-Vaiṣṇava is never fit to be *guru* even if he has taken birth in a great family, performed all sacrifices, and studied many branches of the Vedas.”

A Drama of Pseudo Kirtana

After finding a qualified *guru*, a faithful disciple should serve him with firm conviction and without duplicity. One should accept initiation and *kṛṣṇa-mantra* after pleasing the *guru*. Those who are averse to taking initiation and only make a drama of pseudo-*kīrtana* while advertising themselves as Vaiṣṇavas certainly cheat themselves. It is not the duty of materialistic

persons to renounce the process of initiation because a few great souls like Jāda Bharata did not take initiation. Initiation is a constitutional injunction for every birth of the living entity. If initiation is not seen in the life of a perfected soul, it should not be taken as an example. General rules are not changed because something happens to a particular person in a special situation. Śrī Dhruva Mahārāja went to Dhruvaloka in his material body; seeing that, should one waste time hoping for the same? The general rule is a living entity gives up his material body and goes to Vaikunṭha in his spiritual body. General rules should be accepted by people in general. Whenever and whatever is desired by the Lord, who is full of inconceivable potencies - that only happens. Therefore we should never transgress the general rules. After pleasing the *guru* by serving him without duplicity, one should receive from him instructions on the Absolute Truth and initiation into chanting the holy name of the Lord.

Follow the Path of the Previous Mahajanas

After receiving initiation and instructions from a bona fide *guru*, a fortunate disciple should follow the path of the previous *sādhus*. Those who are proud neglect the previous *mahajanas* and create new paths. As a result, they soon proceed on their inauspicious path and ruin themselves. It is said in the *Skanda Purāṇa*:

sa mrgyah śreyasāṁ hetuh
 panthāḥ santāpa-varjitaḥ
 anavāpta-śramāṁ pūrve
 yena santah pratashire

“One should strictly follow the easy path which the previous *mahājanas* have accepted. That path bestows great auspiciousness and is devoid of all misery.”

Discuss the Path of Devotional Service

By discussing the path of the previous *sādhus*, one gets determination, courage, and satisfaction. When we discuss the path of devotional service exhibited by Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Raghunātha, and Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, we feel such happiness that cannot be described. When the miscreant Mohammedans tortured Haridāsa Ṭhākura, he said:

*khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai’ deha yāya yadi prāṇa
tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi hari-nāma
e saba jīvere kṛṣṇa! karaha prasāda
mora drohe nahu e sabāra aparādha*

“Even if my body is cut into pieces and I lose my life, I will never give up chanting the Lord’s holy name. O Kṛṣṇa, please be merciful upon these poor souls, kindly excuse them for their offence of torturing me.”

A Path Cannot be Manufactured

Maintaining this type of determination and being compassionate to all living entities while always chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the path of devotional service exhibited by the previous *mahājanas*. A path cannot be manufactured. Whatever path is there should be accepted by *sādhus*. Those who are proud and want fame try vigorously to discover new paths. Those who have good fortune from past lives give up pride

and respect the established path. Those who are unfortunate promenade on a new path and thus cheat the world.



Chapter Five



Simply by Reading Books

Approach the bona fide spiritual master and question him about devotional service

Selected quotes from
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda
Founder Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

He Must Go to Guru

Dr. Patel: *Sat-saṅga* is continuously coming in contact with such gurus like you, or, I mean, reading śāstras also is *sat-saṅga*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But reading... By reading, you cannot understand. *Tad-vijñānārthatam sa gurum evābhigacchet* [MU 1.2.12]. That is also *vidhilinī**: "In order to understand that science, he must go to guru."¹

The Bona Fide Spiritual Master

"...Harassed life after life by the laws of nature, the living entity wanders throughout the entire universe in different

* Author's note: *Vidhilinī*. This form of verb is used in Sanskrit grammar, and the meaning [quite emphatic] is: 'You must'.

planets and different species of life. Somehow or other, if he is fortunate enough, he comes in touch with a devotee who reforms his entire life. Then the living entity goes back home, back to Godhead. Therefore it is said:

*janame janame sabe pitā-mātā pāya
kṛṣṇa guru nāhi mile bhaja hari ei*

In the transmigration of the soul through different bodies, everyone, in every form of life – be it human, animal, tree or demigod – obtains a father and mother. This is not very difficult. The difficulty is to obtain a bona fide spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the duty of a human being is to capture the opportunity to come in touch with Kṛṣṇa's representative, the bona fide spiritual master. Under the guidance of the spiritual master, the spiritual father, one can return home, back to Godhead...”²

Accept a Bona Fide Spiritual Master

“...In *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.1) the Lord recommends, *mayy āsakta-manāḥ pārtha yogam yuñjan mad-āśrayah*. This indicates that one must execute devotional service under the guidance of a devotee or directly under the guidance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is not possible, however, to train oneself without guidance from the spiritual master. Therefore, according to the instructions of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the first business of a devotee is to accept a bona fide spiritual master who can train him to engage his various senses in rendering transcendental service to the Lord...”³

Take Instructions at His Lotus Feet

“...In this material world, the conditioned souls are baffled by their activities, and sometimes they are relieved after great difficulty. On the whole, the conditioned soul is never happy. He simply struggles for existence. Actually, his only business is to accept the spiritual master, the *guru*, and through him he must accept the lotus feet of the Lord. This is explained by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *guru-kṛṣṇa prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*[Cc, Madhya 19.151]. People struggling for existence in the forests or cities of the material world are not actually enjoying life. They are simply suffering different pains and pleasures, generally pains that are always inauspicious. They try to gain release from these pains, but they cannot, due to ignorance. For them it is stated in the Vedas: *tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet.** When the living entity is lost in the forest of the material world, in the struggle for existence, his first business is to **find a bona fide guru** who is always engaged at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu. After all, if he is at all eager to be relieved of the struggle for existence, **he must find a bona fide guru and take instructions at his lotus feet**. In this way he can get out of the struggle.... No one can get out of this struggle for existence, which is full of miseries, without accepting a pure devotee of the Lord.

The material attempt changes from one position to another, and no one actually gains relief from the struggle for existence. The only resort is the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master, and, through him, the lotus feet of the Lord...”⁴

*Mundaka Upaniṣad 1.2.12

Associate With a Bona-fide Spiritual Master

“...When the living entity is engaged in the material body, he is called *jīva-bhūta*, and when he is free from the material body he is called *brahma-bhūta*. By changing his material body birth after birth, he travels not only in the different species of life, but also from one planet to another. Lord Caitanya has said that the living entities, bound up by fruitive activities, are wandering in this way throughout the whole universe, and if by some chance or by pious activities they get in touch with a bona-fide spiritual master, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, then they get the seed of devotional service. After getting this seed, if one sows it within his heart and pours water on it by hearing and chanting, the seed grows into a big plant, and there are fruits and flowers which the living entity can enjoy, even in this material world. That is called the *brahma-bhūta* stage.... Unless one gets the opportunity to associate with a bona-fide spiritual master by the grace of the Lord, there is no possibility of one’s liberation from the cycle of birth and death in the different species of life and through the different grades of planets...”⁵

The Personality of Devotee

“...A third-class devotee has to receive the instructions of devotional service from the authoritative sources of Bhāgavata. The number one Bhāgavata is the established personality of devotee, and the other *Bhāgavatam* is the message of Godhead. The third-class devotee therefore has to go to the personality of devotee in order to learn the instructions of devotional service. Such a personality of devotee is not a professional man who earns his livelihood by the business of *Bhāgavatam*. Such a devotee must be a representative of

Śukadeva Gosvāmī, like Sūta Gosvāmī, and must preach the cult of devotional service for the all-around benefit of all people..."⁶

One Must Take Lessons from a Realised Soul

"...If one wants to learn the meaning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, one must take lessons from a realised soul. One should not proudly think that one can understand the transcendental loving service of the Lord **simply by reading books**. One must become a servant of a Vaiṣṇava. As Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has confirmed, *chādiyā vaisṇava-sevā nistāra pāyechē kebā*: one cannot be in a transcendental position unless one very faithfully serves a pure Vaiṣṇava. One must accept a Vaiṣṇava *guru* (*ādau gurv-āśrayam*), and then by **questions and answers** one should gradually learn what pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is. That is called the *paramparā* system..."⁷

A Ship Without a Rudder

"...One should always remember that a person who is reluctant to accept a spiritual master and be initiated is sure to be baffled in his endeavour to go back to Godhead. One who is not properly initiated may present himself as a great devotee, but in fact he is sure to encounter many stumbling blocks on his path of progress toward spiritual realisation, with the result that he must continue his term of material existence without relief. Such a helpless person is compared to a ship without a rudder, for such a ship can never reach its destination. It is imperative, therefore, that one accept a spiritual master if he at all desires to gain the favour of the Lord.

The service of the spiritual master is essential... If one thinks that he is above consulting anyone else, including a

spiritual master, he is at once an offender at the lotus feet of the Lord. Such an offender can never go back to Godhead..."⁸

Touch His Lotus Feet

"...One should, by deliberate consideration, raise himself to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To attain such an end, one must touch the lotus feet of the spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be achieved by self-endeavour. One must therefore approach a self-realised Kṛṣṇa conscious person and touch his lotus feet... One cannot come to the precincts of Kṛṣṇa consciousness unless he touches the dust of the lotus feet of a person who has become a *mahātmā*, a great devotee. This is the beginning of the surrendering process. Lord Kṛṣṇa wants everyone to surrender unto Him, and this surrendering process begins when one touches the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master. By sincerely rendering service to a bona fide spiritual master, one begins his spiritual life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Touching the lotus feet of a spiritual master means giving up one's false prestige and unnecessarily puffed-up position in the material world. Those who remain in the darkness of material existence due to their falsely prestigious positions - so-called scientists and philosophers - are actually atheists. They do not know the ultimate cause of everything. Although bewildered, they are not ready to surrender themselves to the lotus feet of a person who knows things in their proper perspective. In other words, one cannot arouse Kṛṣṇa consciousness simply by his own mental speculation. One must surrender to a bona fide spiritual master. Only this process will help him..."⁹

Hearing Is the Main Point

From a letter to Punjabi Premanand

Bombay 16 April, 1976

Concerning your questions: Yes, it will help to read Bhagavad-gita but you have to hear from the realised person. Without the help of guru, if you read independently, you may be misguided. ... Our system, the Vedic system, is to approach the right person and hear from him exactly as Arjuna listened from Krishna. Mental speculation will not help. Hearing is the main point. ... That is the difference, hearing from devotees, the sound vibration coming from the realised person. Tattva-darsinah - hearing from one who has seen the truth. Reading or hearing from the realised person there is no difference, but hearing the sound vibration from the realised soul is still more effective, better.¹⁰

Become Perfect Simply by Hearing

“...You hear from the realised soul. God has given you ear you can hear. It doesn't require education. Formerly everyone was taking education simply by hearing. There was no book. Therefore all the Vedic knowledge is called *śruti*... So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is opening centers just to give you chance to hear about Kṛṣṇa, only hearing. *Sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatāṁ tanu-vāñ-manobhiḥ.** Simply by hearing, you become perfect. Just like Parīkṣit Mahārāja. At the time of point of his death, he had no time to perform any *yajña* or any big, big thing. He simply heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* care-

*Translation: Regardless of one's condition of life, if he practices *bhakti-yoga*, which begins with hearing (*śruti-gatām*) the transcendental messages of the Lord through the mouths of devotees, he gradually conquers the unconquerable God.

fully. *Śrī-viṣṇoh śravaṇe parīksid abhavad vaiyāsakih kīrtane.**
And he became perfect simply by hearing...”¹¹

Try to Find a Genuinely Qualified Spiritual Master

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, Chapter One, Text 35, in his purport, after having explained that *śikṣā-guru* and *dīkṣā-guru* are equally worshipful manifestations of the Lord, Śrīla Prabhupada states:

“...If one thinks he is above consulting anyone else, including a spiritual master, he is at once an offender at the lotus feet of the Lord... Śrī Jīva Goswami advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for real advancement in spiritual understanding...”¹²

You Must Approach a Guru

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Therefore there is a Vedic injunction, *tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet*: [MU 1.2.12] “Because you are fool, rascal, you must approach a *guru*.” That is the way. *Sa gurum eva; eva* – certainly, *abhicacchet* – must go. Otherwise there is no possibility. You remain as foolish forever and suffer.¹³

*Translation: “Parīksit Mahārāja attained salvation simply by hearing, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī attained salvation simply by chanting...”

The Duty of Every Man ...

*sarva-desa-kāla-daśāya janera kartavya
guru-pāśe sei bhakti praṣṭavya, śrotavya*

“It is therefore the duty of every man - in every country, in every circumstance and at all times - to approach the bona fide spiritual master, question him about devotional service and listen to him explain the process*.”¹⁴

*Author’s note: “...question him...” means he/she needs to inquire from the spiritual master. “... and listen to him explain the process...” These two statements denote very personal contact with the spiritual master and not from a distance. As stated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda:

“...We should certainly communicate directly with the spiritual master. Those who do not wish to serve and associate with their spiritual master personally are bound to be cheated. Direct communication with *guru* is the first step on the path of divine service.”

“It is not enough to serve the spiritual master with awe and reverence only from a distance...” (*Amṛta-vāṇī*, Nectar of Instructions for Immortality, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda)

Chapter Six



The Guru & the Disciple

The True Spiritual Master

*tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇih śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*

“It is said in the Vedic scriptures that to understand the Supreme Lord and transcendental science, a dedicated soul, with folded hands, should approach a spiritual master, *ācārya*, who is expert in Vedic literatures, is coming in disciplic succession, and completely fixed in transcendental realisation.”¹

*naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā
proktānyenaiva su-jñānāya preṣṭha*

“This realisation, my dear boy, cannot be acquired by logic. It must be spoken by an exceptionally qualified spiritual master to a knowledgeable disciple.”²

*Author’s note: Please bear in mind that this verse has been quoted by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the folio 317 times. In addition to being quoted by many of our predecessor *ācāryas*. And as quoted in the previous chapter, this means “...one must go to *guru...*” Going to *guru* is very personal, as quoted in the previous chapter by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, “...Direct communication with *guru* is the first step on the path of divine service...”

*paricaryā-yaśo-lābha-lipsuhśisyādgururnahi
kṛpā-sindhuḥ susampūrṇaḥ sarva-sattvopakārakah*

“One who desires to obtain wealth, fame or service from others is not fit to become a *guru*. A true *guru* is an ocean of mercy, who feels pain by seeing others in distress. Such a person works tirelessly for the benefit of others.”³

*niḥsprahāḥ sarvataḥ siddhaḥ sarva-vidyā-viśāradāḥ
sarva-saṁśaya-saṁchettā nālaṣogurur āhṛtaḥ*

“The real *guru* is free from all desire for sense enjoyment [free from lust], is perfect in all ways, is experienced in all types of knowledge, removes all the doubts of his followers, and is not lazy.”⁴

*mahā-bhāgavata-śreṣṭho brāhmaṇo vai gurur nrñām
sarvesām eva lokānām asau pūjyo yathā hariḥ*

“A *brāhmaṇa* who is an exalted devotee of the Supreme Lord and who knows the glories of Vaiṣṇava-dharma is the spiritual master of the members of all *varnas*. He should be worshipped by everyone, just as Lord Hari is worshipped by all.”⁵

The Symptoms of a Pseudo Guru

*bahv-āśī dīrgha-sūtrī ca
viśayādiṣu lolupah
hetu-vāda-rato duṣṭo
'vāg-vādī guṇa-nindakah*

*aromā bahu-romā ca
ninditāśrama-sevakah
kāla-danto 'sitauṣṭhaś ca
durgandhi- śvasa-vāhakah*

*duṣṭa-lakṣana-sampanno
yadyapi svayam iśvarah
bahu-pratigrahāsakta
ācāryah śrī-kṣayāvahaḥ*

“If a person accepts a spiritual master who eats voraciously, who is lazy, who is greedy for acquiring material objects, who is fond of arguing against the *śāstra*, who is mischievous, who is happy to expose others’ sinful activities, who is a blasphemer, who has no hair or much hair on his body, who is engaged in the service of a condemned *āśrama*, who has black teeth, whose complexion is black, whose lips are black, who has bad breath, or who is very cunning and thus accepts a great deal of charity even though he does not require it – all of his good fortune and opulence will become exhausted.”⁶

The Symptoms of a Disciple

*śiṣyahśuddhānvayaḥśrīmān
vinītahpriya-darśanah
satya-vākpunya-carito
'dabhra-dhīrdambha-varjitaḥ*

“A genuine disciple is faithful, glorious, humble, pleasing to the eye, truthful, pious, intelligent, honest, free from hypocrisy and free from pride.”⁷

*kāma-krodha-parityāgī⁷
 bhaktaś ca guru-pādayoh
 devatā-pravaṇahkāya-
 mano-vāgbhirdivā-niśam*

“He is free from lust and anger, and is completely devoted to the lotus feet of his spiritual master. He is dedicated to the Supreme Lord, and is engaged in service day and night, with his body, mind and words.”⁸

*amāny amatsaro dakṣo
 nirmamo dṛḍha-sauhṛdaḥ
 asatvaro ‘rtha-jijñāsur
 anasūyur amogha-vāk*

“The servant or disciple of the spiritual master should be free from false prestige, never considering himself to be the doer. He should be active and never lazy and should give up all sense of proprietorship over the objects of the senses, including his wife, children, home and society. He should be endowed with feelings of loving friendship toward the spiritual master and should never become deviated or bewildered. The servant or disciple should always desire advancement in spiritual understanding, should not envy anyone and should always avoid useless conversation.”⁹

The Unqualified Disciple

*sad-guruḥsvāśritamśisyam
 varṣmekamparīkṣayet*

“A true spiritual master should examine a candidate who is staying under his shelter for at least one year.”¹⁰

*rājñicāmātyajādoṣāḥ
patnī-pāpaṁsva-bhartari
tathā śiṣyārjitampāpam
guru prāpnotiniścitam*

“It is his duty because, as the sins acquired by the queen go to the king and the wife’s sins are transferred to the husband, in that same way the sins acquired by the disciples are surely achieved by the genuine spiritual master. That is certain.”¹¹

*guror agre pṛathak-pūjāṁ
advaitāṁ ca parityajet
dīkṣāṁ vyākhyāṁ prabhutvāṁ ca
guror agre vivarjayet*

“The disciple should not worship or glorify someone else in front of his spiritual master. He should not think himself to be as good as his spiritual master, give initiation, explain literatures, or pose himself as master in front of his spiritual master.”¹²

The Behaviour of a Disciple

*yatra yatra gurum paśyet
tatra tatra kṛtāñjaliḥ
pranamed dandavad bhūmau
chinna-mūla iva drumah*

“Anywhere that one sees his spiritual master, he should, with folded hands and in a humble mood, pay his obeisances to him just as an uprooted tree falls on the ground.”¹³

*nodāhared guror nāma
parokṣam api kevalam
na caivāsyānukurvīta
gati-bhāṣāṇa-ceṣṭitam*

“Without offering words of glorification, the disciple should never utter the name of his spiritual master, even in his absence. He should not imitate his spiritual master’s style of walking, speaking or performing other activities.”¹⁴

*guror gurau sannihite
guruval vṛttim ācaret
na cāvisṛṣṭo guruṇā
svān gurūn abhivādayet*

“If a disciple sees the spiritual master of his spiritual master, he should respect him just like his spiritual master. A disciple should not offer respect or obeisances to his father and other elderly people without the approval of his spiritual master.”¹⁵

The Pleasure of the Guru

*ācāryasya priyam kuryāt
prāṇair api dhanairapi
karmaṇā manasāvācā
sayāti paramam gatim*

“A disciple should please his *guru* with his life, wealth, actions, mind and words. By doing so, the disciple attains the supreme destination.”¹⁶

Unless One Is Initiated

*dīkṣā vidhir likhyate atra
 anu sṛtya kramadīpikām
 binā dīkṣām hy pujāyām
 nadhikārasti kasyacit*

“Now, I shall describe the process of initiation as it is mentioned in the book *Krama-dīpikā*, which was composed by Śrī Kesavācārya. Without first being initiated, no one is qualified to worship his beloved Lord.”¹⁷

*dvijānām anupetānām
 svakarma adhyanādiṣu
 yathā dhikāro nāstīha
 syāt ca upanayanādanu*

*tatha atra dīkṣitanāmtu
 mantra devārcanādiṣu
 nadhikāra astitah kuryāt
 ātmanam śiva samstutam*

“Just as a *brāhmaṇa* boy is not qualified to perform his occupational duties and study the Vedas if he is not initiated – one who has not taken initiation is not eligible to chant transcendental *mantras* and worship the Supreme Lord. By accepting initiation into the chanting of the Viṣṇu *mantras*, one makes himself worthy of being praised even by Lord Śiva. As one cannot separate himself from his worship of the Supreme Lord, so he cannot separate himself from accepting initiation.”¹⁸

*te narāḥ paśabo loke
kim̄ tesāṁ jīvane phalam
yenair labdhā harer dīkṣā
nārcito vā janārdanaḥ*

“Those who have not taken initiation from a spiritual master, according to the prescribed rules and regulations, and who have not worshipped the Supreme Lord Janārdana, are as good as animals because their lives are spent uselessly. This statement confirms that initiation is an eternal function.”¹⁹

*adīkṣitasya vāmoru
kṛtam̄ sarvam̄ nirarthakam
paśu-yonim̄ avāpnoti
dīkṣā-virahito janāḥ*

“Unless one is initiated by a bona fide spiritual master, all his devotional activities are useless. A person who is not properly initiated can descend again into the animal species.”²⁰

*ato gurum̄ praṇamyai�am
sarva-svam̄ vinivedya ca
grhṇīyād vaiṣṇavam̄ mantram̄
dīkṣā-pūrvam̄ vidhānataḥ*

“It is the duty of every human being to surrender to a bona fide spiritual master, giving him everything - body, mind and intelligence, and one must take Vaiṣṇava initiation from him.”²¹

*yathā kāñcanatāṁ yāti
kāṁsyam rasa-vidhānataḥ
tathā dīkṣā-vidhānena
dvijatvam jāyate nṛṇām*

“As bell metal mixed with mercury is transformed to gold, a person, even though not golden pure, can be transformed into a *brāhmaṇa*, or *dvija* simply by the initiation process.”²²

Chapter Seven



Guru-Samsare – Krsna-Samsara

Why Has He Come?

“**G**urudeva could just sit in any secluded place and do his *bhajan*. He could build a cottage and sit by the side of Rādhā-kunḍa and Śyāma-kunḍa and do his *bhajan*. He could do so.

Why has he come here to this world - especially the Western world, filled with gross materialists, where *māyā* is very strong? Because his heart bleeds upon seeing the suffering of the *jīvas*. Having given up all personal desires, he has come to this world to teach you how to do *kṛṣṇa-bhajan*, to give you the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa.

You have forgotten Kṛṣṇa, so he has come here just to revive your remembrance, *smarana*, and to give you the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa.”¹

The Guru Opens a Factory

“...The guru has opened a factory, called *guru-saṁsāre*^{*}, and you can become an employee in that factory and thereby enter into *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra*.

**Saṁsāre*: *guru-saṁsāre* – guru’s world, guru’s family. *Saṁsāra* – means in that world; *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra* – Kṛṣṇa’s world, Kṛṣṇa’s family. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would also say that there is also: *māyā-saṁsāre* – *māyā*’s world, engaged in *māyā-saṁsāra* or *māyā-bhajan*. Engaged in the world of *māyā* (illusion).

Now, some may say, ‘I am chanting *hari-nāma*: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*. What more do I need?’ You may be chanting, but unless you enter into *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra*, what will be the value of your chanting?...”²

Chanting the Holy Name With Offenses

“...In order to enter into *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra*, you have to approach a bona fide *guru*, Srī Guru. That Gurudeva is calling you, ‘Come, come! I have opened *guru-saṁsāre* here.’ Unless you enter *guru-saṁsāre*, you cannot enter *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra* and chant without offence. You may chant *lakhs* and *lakhs* [hundreds of thousands] of names of Kṛṣṇa, but if it is all offensive chanting, your *anarthas** can never be destroyed, you cannot make any advancement at all. Many are chanting, but what is the result? Can you go to Vaikunṭha by chanting the holy name with offences? No! No! No! Gurudeva has come here to teach you that you should enter into the *guru-saṁsāre*, which is *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra*.

You are a servant of Guru and Kṛṣṇa, therefore you have to render service to them. How? You render service by entering into the *guru-grha*, the house of the *guru*; then you will obtain perfection.

When you enter into *guru-saṁsāre*, will you just take everything and not give anything in return? No. You have received so much from *guru*, have you not? So, unless you become a servant and serve in the house of the *guru*, what benefit will there be? No benefit....”³

**Anarthas*: unwanted desires in the heart. Desires unfavourable for advancing in spiritual life.

Engage in Seva-Yajna

“...Gurudeva will say, ‘Come and join, enter into my *samsāra*! Because *guru-samsāre* is *kṛṣṇa-samsāra*. ‘Come, join here, then all your *anarthas* will be destroyed.’ So dedicate your body, mind, speech and soul, everything, for the service of *guru*. He has opened a factory and he will employ you in that factory. That means the *guru* will engage you in the service of Kṛṣṇa, *kṛṣṇa-sevā-yajña*. This *yajña*, sacrifice is the offering of service to Kṛṣṇa, *sevā-yajña*. Unless you engage in *sevā-yajña*, unless you render service in the *guru*’s *grha*, under the guidance of *guru*, you cannot obtain any lasting benefit at all...”⁴

In his book *Bhajana-rahasya* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes the four types of *anarthas*, and the four categories within each type of *anartha*.

The Four Types of Anarthas

1. *tattva-bhrama* – illusion about spiritual knowledge.
2. *hṛdaya-daurbalya* – weakness of heart.
3. *aparādha* – offences.
4. *asat-trṣṇā* – material desires.⁵

The Four Categories within each Type

- The four types of *tattva-bhrama* – illusion about spiritual knowledge, are:
 1. *sva-tattve-bhrama* – illusion about one’s original position as a *tatasthā-jīva*.

2. *para-tattva-bhrama* – illusion about the nature of the Supreme Lord.
 3. *sādhya-sādhana-bhrama* – illusion about the processes of *sādhana* and *prema-bhakti*.
 4. *virodhī-viṣaya-bhrama* – illusion regarding subjects unfavourable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- The four types of *hṛdaya-daurbalya* – weakness of heart, are:
 1. *tucchāsakti* – attachment to subjects not related to Kṛṣṇa.
 2. *kuṭinātī* – deceitfulness and faultfinding.
 3. *mātsarya* – envy.
 4. *pratiṣṭhāṣā* – desire for fame.
 - The four types of *aparādha* – offences, are:
 1. *kṛṣṇa-svarūpa-aparādha* – offences towards the form of the Lord.
 2. *nāma-aparādha* – offences to the Holy Name of the Lord.
 3. *kṛṣṇa-tadiya-aparādha* – offences to the devotees.
 4. *jīva-aparādha* – offences to other living entities.
 - The four types of *asat-trṣṇā* – material desires, are:
 1. *aihikēśvaiṣanāñā* – desire for material objects.
 2. *pāra-trikeṣu* – desire for heavenly comforts.
 3. *bhūti-vañcha* – desire for mystic powers.
 4. *mumukṣa* – desire for liberation.⁶

The Four Anarthas

Lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami

21-08-1994 Barcelona Spain

“...According to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, there are four types of *anarthas*.

1. *asat-tṛṣṇā*
2. *hṛdaya-daurbalya*
3. *viṣamayā-aparādha*
4. *svarūpa-bhrama*, or *tattva-bhrama*.

The *anartha asat-tṛṣṇā* means cherishing desires separate from Kṛṣṇa. Asat-tṛṣṇā has four types: *pāra-trikeṣu caiṣaṇā*, desiring material enjoyment in this life; *aihikeṣvaiṣaṇā*, desiring enjoyment in the next life; *bhukti-kāma*, desiring mystic powers; *mukti-kāma*, desiring liberation.

The second *anartha* is *hṛdaya-daurbalya* – weakness of heart. I speak about *hṛdaya-daurbalya* in particular because Balarāma Prabhu especially destroys this *anartha*. It has four types: *kṛṣṇe tara-viṣaya aśakti*, attachments separate from Kṛṣṇa; *kuṭināṭī*, that means *kāpatya*, duplicity, crookedness, faultfinding nature; *parasṛkātra* or *mātsarya*, envy; and *pratiṣṭhāśā*, desiring name, fame and adoration. Balarāma Prabhu especially destroys this *hṛdaya-daurbalya anartha*.

The third *anartha* is *viṣamayā-aparādha*, offences. This *anartha* also has four types: *nāma-aparādha*, *svarūpa-aparādha*, *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, and *aparādha* committed to other persons.

The fourth *anartha* is *svarūpa-bhrama* or *tattva-bhrama*, the misconception about *tattva*. It has also four types:

1. *sva-tattve-bhrama*: the misconception of one's own identity, *jīva-tattva*.
2. *kṛṣṇa-tattve-bhrama*: the misconception of *kṛṣṇa-tattva*.
3. *sādhya-sādhana-tattve-bhrama*: the misconception about the processes of *sādhana* and *prema-bhakti*.
4. *virodhī-viṣaya-bhrama*: the misconception of opposing *tattva*.⁷

“...This fourth *anartha*, *tattva-bhrama*, means that one is not conversant with *tattva* - *īśa-tattva* - *śakti-tattva*, *māyā-tattva*. He does not know them. He has no clear-cut knowledge of these three *tattvas* - who he is, what is his own *tattva*, what is *īśa-tattva*, what is *śakti-tattva*, *māyā-tattva*. This *bhrama* is there...”⁸

Chapter Eight



The Descent of Sabda-Brahma

The Pure Devotee Carries Kṛṣṇa within His Heart

*ei-bāro karuṇā koro vaisnava gosāi
patita-pāvana tomā bine keho nāi*

“O Vaiṣṇava Gosvāmī, please be merciful to me now. There is no one except you who can purify the fallen souls.”^{1*}

*jāhāra nikāte gele pāpa dūre jāy
emona doyāla prabhu kebā kothā pāy*

“Where can anyone find such a merciful personality, whose mere audience sends all sins far away?”^{2 **}

*gaṅgāra paraśa hoile paścate pāvan
darśane pavitra koro-ei tomāra gun*

“One becomes purified after bathing in the waters of the sacred Ganges many times, but just the sight of you purifies the fallen souls. This is your great power.”^{3 ***}

*Author's comment: The Vaiṣṇava (no one else) purifies the fallen souls.

**Author's comment: Just by seeing such a Vaiṣṇava one's sins disappear. So one would need to see that Vaiṣṇava, which denotes personal contact.

***Author's comment: Just by the sight of such a personality, one is purified. Again personal contact is very important with the sādhu.

*hari-sthāne aparādhe tāre hari-nām
tomā sthāne aparādhe nāhi paritrāṇ*

“The holy name delivers one who has offended Lord Hari, but deliverance is impossible if one offends you.”⁴

*tomāra hṛdaye sadā govinda-viśrām
govinda kohena-mora vaisnava parāṇ*

“Your heart is always the resting place of Lord Govinda, and Lord Govinda says, ‘The Vaiṣṇavas are in My heart’.”⁵

*prati-janme kori āśā caranera dhūli
narottame koro doyā āpanāra boli’*

“I desire to have the dust of your holy feet in every birth I may take. Please consider Narottama yours, and be kind upon him.”⁶

The Prompting of Kṛṣṇa

His heart is also Vṛndāvana, as where Kṛṣṇa is, that is Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa never takes one step out of Vṛndāvana - *vṛndāvanam parityajya padam ekam na gacchati*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*kṛṣṇo ‘nyo yadu-sambhūto
yah pūrṇah so ‘sty atah paraḥ
vṛndāvanam parityajya
sa kvacin naiva gacchati*

“The Kṛṣṇa known as Yadu-kumāra is Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. He is different from the Kṛṣṇa who is the son of Nanda Mahārāja. Yadu-kumāra Kṛṣṇa manifests His pastimes in the cities of Mathurā and Dvārakā, but Kṛṣṇa the son of Nanda Mahārāja never at any time leaves Vṛndāvana.”⁷

When the *sad-guru* descends to this material sphere, Kṛṣṇa comes with him. Even though Kṛṣṇa never leaves Vṛndāvana, He comes with that *sādhu*, because He also resides in that Vṛndāvana in his heart.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written:

*kṛṣṇa se tomāra, kṛṣṇa dite pāro,
tomāra śakati āche
āmi to' kāṅgala, 'kṛṣṇa' 'kṛṣṇa' boli',
dhāi tava pāche pāche*

“Kṛṣṇa is yours; you have the power to give Him to me. I am simply running behind you shouting, ‘Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!’”⁸

The words of the *sādhu*, *hari-kathā*, are the prompting of Kṛṣṇa, who inspires him to speak from within, thus the *sādhu*'s speaking is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa in sound form, *śabda-brahma*. This *śabda-brahma* then descends, coming from Kṛṣṇa through the *sādhu*'s mouth, and this flow of nectar is disseminated by the *sādhu* to the conditioned souls, calling them back home to Him. Just as water flows through a pipe from a vast reservoir, the *sādhu-guru* is the pipe allowing the flow of *śabda-brahma* to move through him to purify the world. This *śabda-tattva-jñāna* flows freely from Kṛṣṇa through His most intimate dear devotee (the *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-mahājana*), and he transmits *tattva-jñāna* to

the humble disciple. Hence it is very important to hear directly from the lips of Śrī-guru who is physically present and who distributes *śabda-brahma* purely.

Just a Pipe

Thus, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would always say that he was, “...just a pipe...” The flow was coming from Guru and Kṛṣṇa.

Question: It just seems that the spiritual master must have unlimited knowledge.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Yes. Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, the source of unlimited knowledge. One who has obtained Kṛṣṇa has everything.

Question: How is that unlimited knowledge coming to that personality of the spiritual master?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: From that proper source. He is just a pipe. A pipe supplies water from a reservoir that has unlimited water. The pipe only supplies.

Question: But again, we are only repeating what we've heard from our authority.

We have heard a percentage. I have heard 5 percent, 10 percent, so I am repeating that portion.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Only a drop. You can receive only as much as the size of your container, your receptacle.

Question: So there is some spiritual capacity also?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Yes, spiritual capacity...⁹

I am Simply an Instrument

Śrīla Prabhupāda also commented:

“...So here it is said, *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is speaking. He’s speaking means He’s speaking with all knowledge. His knowledge has no flaw. Our knowledge has many, so many flaws. We commit mistake, we are illusioned. Sometimes we speak something and in our heart there is something else. That means we cheat. And our experience [is] all imperfect because our senses are imperfect. Therefore I cannot speak anything to you. If you ask me, ‘Swamiji, then what you are speaking?’ I am speaking simply what the Supreme Personality of Godhead has said. I’m just repeating the same words. That’s all. Don’t think that I am speaking. I am simply [the] instrument. [The] real speaker is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is without and within...”¹⁰

As it is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*śabda-brahma param-brahma
mamobhe śāśvatī tanū*

“...The Supreme sound vibration and the Supreme Being are one and the same...”¹¹

Thus Kṛṣṇa prompts the pure devotee (*sādhu-guru*) from within to speak *śabda-brahma* to the conditioned souls; then they can question him about devotional service and listen to him explain the process. This process is very elementary.

He Has Acquired Perfect Vedic Knowledge

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja comments on this process:

“...That is *brahma-vādinaḥ*, he has acquired perfect Vedic knowledge - *brahmajānātīti brāhmaṇa*. Veda is *śāstra*, which speaks about the *nitya dharma* and *param brahma tattva*.

Anādi-siddha sarva-puruṣa-paramparāsu, sarva-lauki-kālaukika jñāna-nidānatvād aprākṛta-vacana-lakṣaṇo vedah. This is the definition that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has given in his *Tattva-sandarbha*. It means Veda comes from the cause of all causes - *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam, sarvesvareśvara, sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahah Bhagavān*.

*īśvarah paramah kṛṣṇah
 sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahah
 anādir ādir govindah
 sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*
(Brahma-Saṁhitā 5.1)

Who is the cause of all causes? That is Kṛṣṇa, *param brahma*, the Supreme *īśvara*. That Veda has come down since time immemorial through *paramparā* - bona fide disciplic succession. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, a bona fide *ācārya*, has given this definition.

In other words, we may say that Veda comes from the breathing of Bhagavān, and it comes down through disciplic succession. That means through those who are very dear to Bhagavān. Kṛṣṇa gives this knowledge to His dear devotees - *Vaiṣṇavas, mahāpuruṣas, mahājanas* and through them it descends here. It is *aprākṛta śabda* - transcendental sound vibration; not material. Veda means *śabda-brahma* and it comes through *guru paramparā* - the succession of bona fide *gurus, ācāryas*.

The student hears from *guru*, that is why another name for Veda is *śruti*^{*}, because it is received through hearing. This *śabda-brahma* descends when such a bona fide *ācārya* speaks. The Supreme Lord in the form of *śabda* - sound - descends and enters the heart through the ears. In this way Vedic knowledge is received. This is Veda and the meaning of *brahma-vādināḥ* - one who knows Veda..."¹²

The process is one of hearing from and questioning *sādhu-guru*, then listening to him explain the answers. It is very personal and the *sādhu-guru-vaiṣṇava* simultaneously disciplines the disciple:

"...and therefore the *guru* is there to take control of the situation. *Guru* inflicts discipline and *śāstra* inflicts discipline. The word 'śāstra' is formed from the verbal root 'śas'. 'Śas' means 'śāsana', discipline. *Sāstra* and *guru* inflict discipline and discipline is meant for human beings. Therefore disciple means that one is under discipline; otherwise, you are not a disciple. What kind of society is it if there is no discipline? It is not a human society but a society of dogs and hogs. This Western society means a society of dogs and hogs..."¹³

"...Therefore *śāstra* is like a disciplining stick. You may read the *śāstra* all you want, but once the *sādhu* speaks from *śāstra*, then the meaning of *śāstra* takes effect. My grand-gu-

*Footnote: In Vedic literature there are some difficult passages, but the meaning or the purpose should be learned from a bona fide spiritual master. That is the process for understanding the Vedas. *Śruti* means that one should hear from the authority. One should not construe some interpretation for his personal interest. There are so many commentaries on *Bhagavad-gītā* that misinterpret the original text. The real import of the word should be presented, and that should be learned from a bona fide spiritual master. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 16.1-3, purport by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.)

ru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvāti Goswāmī Mahārāja has said, “Get up early in the morning and beat your wicked mind with a broom one hundred times, and before retiring at night beat that wicked mind with your shoes one hundred times....”¹⁴

One Must Hear From a Physically Present Sri Guru

Question: *Śabda-brahma* is Kṛṣṇa in sound vibration?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes! One has to hear. It is not that tapes are there, ‘all right, I will hear the recorded tapes and be benefitted.’ *Śabda-brahma* will never descend.

Question: It does not descend through transmission of tape?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: No, no.

Question: Only when you are physically in the presence of a pure Vaiṣṇava?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes. Now, in this present scientific age there are so many advanced techniques. People [technological experts are claiming some kind of advancement] they say that teachers are no longer required, that they can teach [adequately] through television. This is nonsense. *Śabda-brahma* will never descend [through any type of machine].*

*Author's note (1): In a room conversation Śrīla Prabhupāda had this to say about tape recorders. (August 9th 1971 London – 710809, rc.lon)

Guest: If you could just explain to me the difference between the... I mean, how this fits in, the monistic or the idea of the unitary view that Kṛṣṇa is everything, all and in all. And then at the same time that the world, there is this world of illusion which is somehow distinct from Kṛṣṇa. Could you just explain this point to me?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is very easy to understand. Just like you are recording my speeches in the tape recorder. When you play back it will speak just like I am speaking, but I am not there. Is it not fact?

Guest: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It will appear now I am speaking from beyond this world.”

Cont. on next page.

Question: What if one is a disciple of a bona fide *guru*, then later on that *guru* stops his *līlā*. What should one do?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: *Līlā* is always there:

*yadyāpiha sei līlā kare gorā rāya
kono kono bhāgyavāne dekhibāre pāya*

Gaurāṅga's pastimes are still going on. People say, "O Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu has disappeared." One who is very fortunate and has vision can see how *gaura-līlā* is going on.*

Question: Does that mean that *guru* is always there?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes! He is always there. His *līlā* is going on.

Question: I may think that since I have already taken the dust of the lotus feet of my *guru*, now he is no longer here, I don't need to take that dust anymore.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: *Darśana* is there. The *guru* is always there if you have the eye to see. If you are a *sat-śiṣya* you can always see how the *guru* is present.

Question: How can we see *guru*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Blind man! If you are endowed with that vision you can see. I have never lost sight of my *guru*. I see

Author's note (2): Also Śrīla Prabhupāda had this to say about recording his speaking.

"...But Kṛṣṇa says that *itīyam me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*, 'These eight kinds of material elements, they are separated energy from Me.' Separated energy, you can understand very easily. Just like I am speaking and it is being recorded in the tape recorder. When the tape recorder is replayed again, you'll find that I am speaking again. But that speaking and my present speaking is different. Therefore that speaking is separated energy. Now I am speaking directly. That is not separated, but when it is transferred to another matter that is separated energy...." (from a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda in Bombay on March 30 1971.)

*Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmyam, *Pramāṇa-khaṇḍa*.

my *guru* is always there. Therefore I cannot say, ‘*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa*’. It is so painful to me. No. He is here.

Question: Do you have to be a pure devotee to see a pure devotee?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, that vision is required. If you have no vision, then you are a blind man. How can a blind man see? The object is there. What is required to see the object? The first thing required is the eye, and the other requirement is light. You may be endowed with vision, but if there is no light how can you see? Can you see in the dark? Therefore two things are required, vision and light. Even if you have eyes, if there is no light you cannot see. What is that light? That light is the enlightenment of the mercy potency, without that merciful potency, how can you see?

Question: *Anarthas* seem to be like clouds in front of the eyes.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, *anarthas* are like clouds covering the sun. The eyes are covered.

Question: Does the *guru* appear before the disciple in different forms? Does he come in dreams?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: He may come in a dream. He also has different forms just as Kṛṣṇa has different forms. Kṛṣṇa has so many manifestations. Therefore we have discussed *samaṣṭi-guru* and *vyaṣṭi-guru* in our book *Śrī-guru-vandanā*.

Question: What are those *gurus*, *samaṣṭi-guru* and *vyaṣṭi-guru*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: *Guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe*-scripture describes that it is Kṛṣṇa who appears as *guru*.* Kṛṣṇa is one, *guru-tattva* is also one. *Guru* is one, but he appears in many different forms, that is *samaṣṭi-guru* [sum total *guru*]. The particular forms, such as Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swami, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, this particular *guru*, that particular *guru*, they are called *vyaṣṭi-guru* [individual *gurus*].

*Footnote: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 1.45.

Question: When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī left the world was *guru* still here?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes.

Question: Is *guru* always present?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, *guru* is always present.

Question: Because *guru* is non-different from Kṛṣṇa, we understand that to be a *guru* is not an easy thing. So why is it said that someone who may be on the level of *kaniṣṭha* or *madhyama*, can still be *guru*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: They are all *gurus*. There are divisions: *kaniṣṭha-guru*, *madhyama-guru* and *uttama-guru*. What you deserve, you receive. Kṛṣṇa knows what you deserve, so He makes an appropriate arrangement for you.

Question: Some devotees are not accepting *guru* now. They are saying, “I will just accept *śāstra*.”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: How can you understand *śāstra*?

Question: But we have seen, for example in Russia, some devotees have only received the books, and now they are chanting, worshipping the deity, and preaching.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: You cannot understand. In *śāstra*, *mantra* is there, *nāma* is there, but unless it comes out from the lips of *sad-guru*, Śrī Guru, your chanting will never be effective. The potency will never be there.

Question: They say that *smṛti-śāstra* is coming from the lips of the Vaiṣṇavas, so we are hearing *smṛti*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes. This is how *śāstra* manifests. When it comes out from the lips of *sad-guru*, Śrī Guru, then it manifests. Though *śāstra* is there, by itself it will never manifest to you. It is a question of manifestation.

Question: Other persons say that we can hear from the commentaries of the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: For that reason it is said, *bhaktyā bhāgavatam grāhyam, na buddhyā na ca tīkayā** - *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can only be understood by *bhakti*, not by dint of one's intelligence or by reading commentaries.**

You cannot understand *Bhāgavatam* by taking help of the *tīkās*, the commentaries. There are so many commentaries. One may think, "I am a scholar. It is all written in Sanskrit. I know the language so I can read the commentaries and understand them." No! You can only understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by *bhakti*. You cannot understand *Bhāgavatam* by dint of your material scholarship, learning, intelligence, or by taking help of the commentaries. No. Hear from the *ācārya* and then you can develop *bhakti*. Unless you hear, how can you understand just by reading? You cannot understand. *Granthāvatāra* will never manifest to you. You will only see black and white paper, nothing else.

Question: Then what is the meaning of the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga-saṅkīrtana*? Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said that our *kīrtana* is *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga-saṅkīrtana*, the printing press.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, that will inspire you. Just one book can spread so far. First, you read the book and then one friend says, "Oh, let me read that book." Then he gives it to someone else to read. In this way it spreads far. The sound of the *mṛdaṅga* only goes from this room here to that room there. But the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga* spreads far and wide. So that will inspire you. You will want to find out the source: "let me go and see and hear from him."

*“According to the śāstras: *bhaktyā bhāgavatam grāhyam, na buddhyā na ca tīkayā* - One should understand the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by hearing from a real devotee. One cannot understand them simply by erudite scholarship or sharp intelligence...” (Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 9.102 purport)

***Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 24.313

Question: First you hear, then if you read the same thing in the *śāstra*...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes. It is only in Kali-yuga that books are required. In other *yugas* there were no books. Just by hearing once, they remembered. But in this *yuga*, if I ask you after the class to repeat what you heard, how much will you be able to repeat? You will have forgotten ninety to ninety-five percent. You may be able to repeat five percent at best. So books are required in Kali-yuga. Therefore Śrīla Vyāsadeva came and he wrote books. They will help you remember, “Oh yes. I have heard this, now it is here.”

Question: In your book, *Śrī-guru-vandanā*, you described this flow of nectar as *padma-madhu*. You said that it comes to a devotee who is a sincere hearer. So, someone who is very sincere to hear from *guru*, who serves *guru*, can he receive that nectar, even though he may not have physical contact with *guru*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: You should be greedy. Physical contact is required. You must hear directly from the lips, not just by listening to tapes. *Sabda-brahma* will never descend through a tape recording. One must hear from Śrī Guru, who is physically present.¹⁵

Hear from Śrī Guru

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has said the same thing and as quoted in Chapter Three of this book:

“...When we hear about the Supreme Lord from a living *sādhu*, who can deliver...”

Also in his *Upadeśāvalī*,

“Kṛṣṇa’s *darśana* can only be attained through the medium of the ear as one hears *hari-kathā* from the pure Vaiṣṇavas, there is no other way.”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Maharaja has said,

“...One must hear from Śrī Guru, who is physically present.” “They speak the same language; one needs to meet a living physically present *guru*.”

A Person Who Is Life Living Bhagavata

“...This is the secret. Unless one is *svānubhāvam*, self-realised, life is *bhāgavata*, he cannot preach Bhāgavata. That is not... That will not be effective. A **gramophone will not help**. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara, recommended, *bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*, that ‘If you want to read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, you must approach a person who is life living Bhāgavata.’ *Bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*. Otherwise, there is no question of *Bhāgavata* realisation...”¹⁶

Through the Lips of Real Devotee

“...Then what is required? *Namanta eva*. Just become submissive. Don’t think yourself as very great philosopher, theologian, scientist. Just be humble. ‘My dear sir, just be humble.’ *Namanta eva*. ‘Then what will be my business? All right, I shall become humble. Then how I shall make progress?’ Now, *namanta eva san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām*. ‘Just hear the message of God.’ ‘From whom?’ *San-mukharitām*: ‘through the mouth of the devotees.’ Not professional, not gramophone — through the mouth of, through the lips of real devotee...”¹⁷

“...Simply if you hear about Him, then you will understand. Then you will understand. So hearing is not very dif-

ficult job. But you must hear from the realised soul. That is... *Satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvidah*. If you hear from a professional man, that will not be effective. Hearing must be from *sādhu*, from devotee, from the lips of the devotee. Just like Śukadeva Gosvāmī was speaking to Mahārāja Parīkṣit..."¹⁸

You Must Be Live Speaker

"...As they have been trained up to rise early in the morning, this will give you spiritual strength. If you simply become a gramophone speaker, then it will not be effective. **Gramophone or tape record speaker, that will not be. You must be live speaker.** Your living condition should be spiritually, what is called, surcharged..."¹⁹

"...It is never explained in the Vedic literature that the science of God can be understood by the eyes. No..."²⁰

"...One has to hear the message of Godhead from the lips of the pure devotee of the Lord or *ācārya*..."²¹

"...One should not be simply intent on consulting books..."²²

"...You have to hear from the superior person, one who is self-realised. Hearing. *Satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvi-do bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ* [SB 3.25.25]. *Satāṁ prasaṅgāt*. By association with superior devotees..."²³

This list of quotes could go on and on and on, I have only listed a few here. In summation I will conclude with a statement from Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja:

“...Execute the order of *guru* as it is. Do not add any of your deliberation. That is what you should understand. Then you will get the mercy of Guru and Gaurāṅga. This is the consideration. Give up your independence. Completely surrender unto the *tattva-darśī-guru*, who has seen the Absolute Truth, and render service to him without duplicity, *niṣkapata-sevā*. I say that if you do so, in one life it is guaranteed that you will go back home, back to Godhead, and get Kṛṣṇa. It is guaranteed. If you can engage yourself in the service of such a personality day and night, twenty-four-hours, without duplicity, and hear *bhagavān-kathā* from him, then you will definitely get Kṛṣṇa. This is the only consideration. There is no other consideration, *vicāra*....”²⁴

Chapter Nine



Bhagavat-Sangi-Sangasya

Questions & Answers from a lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 16 April 1994, New Talavan USA. 'Humility is Needed'

Approach Bhagavata by Bhakti

Devotee 1: One cannot get *kṛṣṇa-prema* through austerities, renunciation, by studying commentaries.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Cannot understand *Bhāgavatam*.

Devotee 1: I have this doubt: now it seems to me that one can derive some *bhakti* by studying the commentaries.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Śivajī said:

*bhaktyā bhāgavatam grāhyam
na buddhyā na ca tīkayā¹*

This is not my version, it is Śivajī's version. Śivajī is one of the *mahājanas*.* *Bhaktyā bhāgavatam grāhyam na buddhyā na*

* svayambhūr nāradah śambhuḥ
kumārah kapilo manuḥ
prahlādo janako bhīṣmo
balir vaiyāsakir vayam

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ca tīkayā, only by *bhakti* can one understand *Bhāgavatam*. One cannot understand *Bhāgavatam* by dint of his scholarship, merit, and intelligence or by taking help of the commentaries - *na buddhyā na ca tīkayā*^{*}, because *Bhāgavatam* is Kṛṣṇa, *vibhu*,^{**} and Kṛṣṇa is only understood through *bhakti*. Because *Bhāgavatam* is Kṛṣṇa, *vibhu*. Kṛṣṇa is only understood through *bhakti*. There is no other means.

*na sādhayati mām yogaḥ
na sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgaḥ
yathā bhaktir mamorjita*

“My dear Uddhava, the unalloyed devotional service rendered to Me by My devotees brings Me under their control. I cannot be thus controlled by those engaged in mystic *yoga*, Sāṅkhya philosophy, pious work, Vedic study, austerity or renunciation.”²

*dvādaśaite vijānīmo
dharmam bhāgavatam bhaṭāḥ
guhyam viśuddham durbodham
yam jñātvāmṛtam aśnute*

“Lord Brahmā, Bhagavān Nārada, Lord Śiva, the four Kumāras, Lord Kapila [the son of Devahūti], Svāyambhuva Manu, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Janaka Mahārāja, Grandfather Bhiṣma, Bali Mahārāja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and I myself know the real religious principle. My dear servants, this transcendental religious principle, which is known as *bhāgavata-dharma*, or surrender unto the Supreme Lord and love for Him, is uncontaminated by the material modes of nature. It is very confidential and difficult for ordinary human beings to understand, but if by chance one fortunately understands it, he is immediately liberated, and thus he returns home, back to Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.20-21)

*Author's note: *Tīka* means commentary.

**The Sanskrit word *vibhu* means the Supreme Lord who is full of unlimited knowledge, riches, strength, fame, beauty and renunciation.

One may acquire Vedic knowledge but still cannot understand Him. Kṛṣṇa says, “*yathā bhaktir mamorjitā* - one understands and approaches Me through *bhakti* only.” Only by *bhakti* one can approach Kṛṣṇa and understand Kṛṣṇa, not by other means: not by *yoga-sādhana*, Vedic study, *sāṅkhyā-locanā*, *tapasya*, or *tyāga* - renunciation.

Devotee 2: I have some confusion because there is some benefit studying the commentaries.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: You may acquire knowledge. By getting knowledge you become puffed up, proud.

Only Sadhu-Sanga

Devotee 1: As in the case with Jaḍa Bharata, when he informed King Rahūgaṇa that only by taking the dust of the lotus feet of the pure devotees one can obtain *bhakti*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, yes. Take the dust from the lotus feet, then you will get *sādhu-guru-kṛpā*, then you will get *bhakti*.

Devotee 1: Isn't it Śrīla Prabhupāda's benediction upon the world that by reading *Bhāgavatam* the people can be delivered? I don't mean to say that any rascal who just reads one or two *ślokas*...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: One who only reads but doesn't associate with *sādhu* Vaiṣṇavas, only reads, but disregards *sādhu* Vaiṣṇavas. It is said for them. But so much has been said in *Bhāgavatam* about *sādhu-saṅga*. What did the Pracetās ask for when Lord Viṣṇu said, “Ask for a boon. What do you want?” Bhagavān Viṣṇu became pleased because they

underwent severe austerities standing in water for thousands of years. He appeared before them and told them to ask for a boon. What boon did they ask for? Only for *sādhu-saṅga*:

*tulayāma lavenāpi
na svargam nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya
martyānām kim utāśisah*

“The value of a moment’s association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those who are meant for death?”³

We are residents of this mortal world of birth and death, *martya-pura*. For us, there is only one boon, *bhāgavata-bhakta*, *bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya*, only the *saṅga* of *bhāgavata-bhakta*, *sādhu Vaiṣṇavas*. *Saṅga*, association is the only boon for us. No other boon is there. *Tulayāma lavenāpi na svargam nāpunar-bhavam* - if one who is fortunate gets the *saṅga*, the association of a *sādhu* who is a completely surrendered soul, a *premī-bhakta*, even only for a moment, what he gets cannot be compared to the attainment of elevation to the heavenly planets and getting vast material enjoyment, or merging into Brahman. It cannot be compared to the association of such a *sādhu*. So what boon did they ask for? They only asked for *sādhu-saṅga*.

Rahūgaṇa-rāja said the same thing. It is King Rahūgaṇa’s version: *vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-’bhiṣekam** - Unless one takes the

**rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yati
na cejayā nirvapanād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-’bhiṣekam*

Cont. on next page.

dust from the lotus feet of a *paramahaṁsa*, *mahātmā*, *premī-bhakta*, *mahā-bhāgavata* and smears that dust on his head or body, he cannot understand this thing. That is only by *sādhu-kṛpā*, *guru-kṛpā* can one understand. By reading Bhāgavata or reading *śāstra* one can get *kṛpā*. *Śāstra* has *kṛpā*!

By the Mercy of Sadhu and Sastra

*sādhu-śāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha haya
sei jīva nistare, māyā tāhāre chādaya*

“If the conditioned soul becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, by the mercy of saintly persons who voluntarily preach scriptural injunctions and help him to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, the conditioned soul is liberated from the clutches of *māyā*, who gives him up.”⁴

By the mercy of *sādhu* and *śāstra*, if you develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then you will be free from the clutches of *māyā*. You will be delivered. *Śāstra* has *kṛpā*, *śāstra* speaks about *sādhu-saṅga*, but if you only read *śāstra* and do not have any *sādhu-saṅga*, disregarding *sādhus*, then you cannot get *kṛpā*. You become an offender. Do you understand the point I am making? In that respect Śivajī spoke those words.

“My dear King Rahūgaṇa, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realise the Absolute Truth. One cannot realise the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy [*brahmacarya*], strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a *vānaprastha*, accepting *sannyāsa*, or undergoing severe penances in winter by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.12.12)

A puffed up fellow says, “Only by reading and taking help of the commentaries, I can understand. They are written in Sanskrit language. I am a Sanskrit scholar. I can read Sanskrit and the commentaries are there also. I can read and understand. What is the need of developing devotion, *bhakti*? ”

Devotee 3: He hasn’t understood. If he is just reading the Vaiṣṇava’s commentary, then he really hasn’t understood.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: He cannot understand because he is a puffed up proud fellow. He does not care for the association of *sādhus*, Vaiṣṇavas. He never seeks or begs for the mercy of the *sādhus*. He disregards *sādhu-saṅga*. He is puffed up.

Devānanda Paṇḍita* is mentioned in *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. He

**bhāgavatī devānanda vakreśvara-kṛpāte
bhāgavatera bhakti-artha pāila prabhu haite*

“Devānanda Paṇḍita was a professional reciter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but by the mercy of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita and the grace of the Lord he understood the devotional interpretation of the *Bhāgavatam*.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā verse 10.77)

“In the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Madhya-khaṇḍa*, Chapter Twenty-one, it is stated that Devānanda Paṇḍita and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya’s father, Viśārada, lived in the same village. Devānanda Paṇḍita was a professional reciter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not like his interpretation of it. In the present town of Navadvīpa, which was formerly known as Kuliyā, Lord Caitanya showed such mercy to him that he gave up the Māyāvādī interpretation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and learned how to explain *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in terms of *bhakti*. Formerly, when Devānanda was expounding the Māyāvādī interpretation, Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura was once present in his meeting, and when he began to cry, Devānanda’s students drove him away. Some days later, Caitanya Mahāprabhu passed that way, and when He met Devānanda He chastised him severely because of his Māyāvāda interpretation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. At that time Devānanda had little faith in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but one night some time later Vakreśvara Paṇḍita was a guest in his house, and when he explained the science of Kṛṣṇa, Devānanda was convinced about the identity of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Thus he was induced to explain *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* according to the Vaiṣṇava understanding...” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, verse 10.77, purport.)

was a great scholar and he gave very nice, eloquent *Bhāgavata pravacana*. He led a strict ascetic life, like a *sannyāsī* or *brahmacārī*, a very pure life; he never engaged in sinful activity. But he was very puffed up; he had no humility; he never came for the association of Vaiṣṇava *sādhus*. He had *pāṇḍitya*, he was an erudite scholar. However, Mahāprabhu became very angry with him, “I will tear up your *Bhāgavata pāṭhitā* and throw it away.” Why did He say that? Because he was a very puffed up fellow! He never came for *sādhu-saṅga*. He disregarded *sādhus*. He was so proud because of *jñāna*.

One Who Disregards Sadhus

Devotee 1: Is he the same devotee who ignored Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentaries?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: No, that was Vallabhācārya, Vallabha Bhaṭṭa. He was such a proud, puffed up fellow that once he said to Mahāprabhu, “I have written a commentary on *Bhāgavatam*, but I have not touched Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentaries.” This is a question of pride only. Then Mahāprabhu became angry and said: *jagad-guru śrīdhara-svāmī ‘guru’ kari’ māni** and *śrīdharānugata kara bhāgavata-vyākhyāna*** – “If you want to speak or write on *Bhāgavatam*, you accept Śrīdhara Svāmī as *guru* and under his guidance you study *Bhāgavata*, speak *Bhāgavata* or write something.” *Svāmī ye nāmāni tākā veṣyā kāri māni* – one who does not accept Śrīdhara Svāmī is a prostitute, *veṣyā*.” *Svāmī* literally means ‘husband’. Mahāprabhu said, “one who doesn’t accept *svāmī* is a prostitute.” Mahāprabhu said this to ... Vallabha Bhaṭṭa because he was such a puffed up fellow. One who has a humble frame of mind does

**Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 7.133*

***Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 7.136*

sādhu-saṅga and develops *bhakti*, and with that devotional frame of mind, he takes the help of the commentaries. They are the addition, but most important is *sādhu-saṅga*, and *bhakti*. There is so much said about *sādhu-saṅga* in the *Bhāgavatam*, much more than in any other *śāstras*. One who disregards *sādhус* and thinks that he, by only reading the commentaries and taking knowledge from them can understand them, is proud. This has been said in that respect and therefore it is denied. Whereas, for one with a humble frame of mind, *śāstra* has *kṛpā*, mercy. You get mercy from both *sādhu* and *śāstra*. That is the meaning. But disregarding *sādhu*, “only by *śāstra* I will see”, that is denied.

The Book Bhagavata & the Person Bhagavata

Devotee 1: So you mean [you need] not only the book *Bhāgavata* but also you need the person *bhāgavata*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: *Bhakta-bhāgavata*, yes.

*dui bhāgavata dvārā diyā bhakti-rasa
tāñhāra hṛdaye tāñra preme haya vaśa*

“Through the actions of these two *bhāgavatas* the Lord instills the mellows of transcendental loving service into the heart of a living being, and thus the Lord, in the heart of His devotee, comes under the control of the devotee’s love.”⁵

Kṛṣṇa gives *prema-bhakti-rasa* through two *bhāgavatas*: *bhakta-bhāgavata* and *grantha-bhāgavata*, and He Himself becomes bound up by this *prema-bhakti*.*

*“...One *bhāgavata* is this book *Bhāgavata*, another *bhāgavata*, the person *bhāgavata*. Who lives on the book *Bhāgavata*, he is person *bhāgavata*. (Cont. on next page.)

Devotee 2: I read a conversation between some devotees and Śrīla Prabhupāda in Melbourne, Australia. They asked Prabhupāda, “can one develop some relationship with the *gurus* through the books?” Prabhupāda said, “No, you have to approach someone who understands the books.” They said, “But Prabhupāda, what about your books?” Prabhupāda said, “No, you still have to approach someone who knows.” They said, “Well, what about your commentaries?” Prabhupāda said, “No, no. You have to approach someone who has understood and realised the books.”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: By his mercy you can understand. That is the important thing. But disregarding *sādhus*, if someone only reads the books, that is denied. Then you will become puffed up, develop pride.

Devotee 1: Nowadays you find many people who think that they can approach Śrīla Prabhupāda directly. Maybe they will derive some benefit, then eventually...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Prabhupāda has said you should approach such a person who understands.

Devotee 2: Just like some people say, “I don’t have to approach *guru*. If I like I can read the books at home.” But Prabhupāda said, “No, that is not possible.”

Devotee 1: Some people ignore Prabhupāda’s disciples and say Prabhupāda’s disciples are not qualified.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: They are puffed up. Therefore they are not qualified, [they say,] “only I am qualified”. It is pride.

Two kinds of *bhāgavata*. So we have to learn *Bhāgavatam* from the living *bhāgavata*... The two *bhāgavatas*. You study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from living *bhāgavata*. So if one does not take or does not surrender unto the living *bhāgavata*, he cannot understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda Lecture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.23 in L.A. June 20th 1972)

Devotee 3: *Śāstra* gives the symptoms of someone who is a *sādhu*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, in *Bhāgavatam* it is mentioned in Kapiladeva-Devahūti *samvāda*. Kapiladeva speaks about *sādhu lakṣaṇa**. Kṛṣṇa also speaks about it to Uddhava. It is all mentioned there.

Devotee 3: If someone has not found *sādhu-saṅga* but still understands what the symptoms of a *sādhu* are and by Kṛṣṇa's mercy gets a *guru*... Kṛṣṇa's mercy is in the form of *Bhāgavatam*

**Sādhu lakṣaṇa*:

titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ
suhṛdah sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravah śāntāḥ
sādhavah sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ

“The symptoms of a *sādhu* are that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.21)

*kṛpālu, akṛta-droha, satya-sāra sama
nidoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu, śuci, akiñcana*

*sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
akāma, anīha, sthira, vijita-ṣad-guṇa*

*mita-bhuk, apramatta, mānada, amānī
gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi, dakṣa, maunī*

“Devotees are always merciful, humble, truthful, equal to all, faultless, magnanimous, mild and clean. They are without material possessions, and they perform welfare work for everyone. They are peaceful, surrendered to Kṛṣṇa and desireless. They are indifferent to material acquisitions and are fixed in devotional service. They completely control the six bad qualities-lust, anger, greed and so forth. They eat only as much as required, and they are not inebriated. They are respectful, grave, compassionate and without false prestige. They are friendly, poetic, expert and silent.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 22.78-80)

also... So in that way you can learn to recognise who is *sādhu* by reading *Bhāgavatam*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes, *sādhu-lakṣaṇa* is mentioned in *Bhāgavata*. If you know the symptoms, then you can find who is a *sādhu*. That will help you because symptoms are mentioned there. “I don’t know who is a *sādhu*, but the symptoms are mentioned here.” It is a question of understanding. Then when you find those symptoms in a Vaiṣṇava, then you can understand, “yes, he is a *sādhu*. The symptoms are there.” That will help you. Yes.

Devotee 4: In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.5) Kṛṣṇa is telling Arjuna, “Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you have changed bodies many times.” Then in *Mahābhārata* it is said that the Pāṇḍavas, went back in their selfsame bodies. On the one hand He is telling Arjuna he has changed bodies. On the other hand . . .

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Why does he say like that? The teaching is for us, for all mankind, therefore, pointing out Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa says this thing. Arjuna is not a conditioned soul but he is acting as a conditioned soul. That is his mercy, because he asked the questions that we have to ask, and he received answers directly from the lips of Kṛṣṇa.

Sakha-Candra-Nyaya The Logic of the Moon on the Branch

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: There is a logic, *śākhā-candra-nyāya*. *Nyāya* means ‘logic’, *śākhā* means ‘branch of a tree’, and *candra* means ‘moon’. The branch and the moon logic. The child cries, so what does the mother do? The mother says,

“Do you see the moon there, the very effulgent silver plate? Do you want to have it?” Then the child says, “Yes, mother, where is it? Where is it?” “Don’t you see it? It is in the sky.” The full moon is very beautiful, but it cannot be seen because the branches of a tree are obstructing the vision. It is just at the opening of a few branches, but the child cannot see it. “Where is it, where is it, where is it, mother?” “Look at this tree. Do you see the big branch there?” She points out the tree’s branch and thus shows the moon. This is the logic *śākhā-candra-nyāya*. By pointing to the tree’s branch, the mother shows the moon to the child. Similarly, by speaking to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa speaks to us and by pointing it out to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa shows everything to mankind.

Chapter Ten



Prema-Ruruksu

When your heart bleeds, when your heart cries for Kṛṣṇa.

An evening *darśana* with Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 22 March 1994.

Kṛṣṇa Attracts in Two Forms

Material contaminations, filth accumulated in the heart will be cleansed if you hear pure *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from a *sādhu*.

śṛṇvatāṁ sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇah
 puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanah
 hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadraṇi
 vidhunoti suhṛt satām

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.”¹

That is stated in this *Bhāgavatam* verse. What did Prabhupāda do? He chanted the pure name, spoke pure *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in the Western world and attracted all. In two forms Kṛṣṇa attracts the

conditioned souls here, in this material word: in the form of His holy name, and the form of *ācārya*.

*ācāryam mām vijānīyān
nāvanmanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guru*

“One should know the *ācārya* as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods.”²

Kṛṣṇa has said: That *ācārya* is as good as Myself. Do not think him to be an ordinary human being, *na martya-buddhyāsūyeta*: He is as good as Myself. He is My manifestation. All demigods manifest in his person, *sarva-deva-mayo guru*. So in two forms - in the form of the holy name, and the form of *ācārya* - Kṛṣṇa attracts the conditioned souls here in this material world.

Priyasya Sakhyuh
Your Very Dear Friend

Devotee 1:

*jīve sākṣat nāhi, tāte guru caittya-rūpe
śikṣā-guru haya kṛṣṇa mahānta-svārūpe*

“Since one cannot visually experience the presence of the Supersoul, He appears before us as a liberated devotee. Such a spiritual master is none other than Kṛṣṇa Himself.”³

So even if the *guru* doesn't speak, if he is pleased with the disciple, because there is a relationship between the *guru* and Paramātmā, if the *guru* desires the well-being of the disciple. **Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja:** *priyasya sakhyuh.*

Devotee 1: So purification can go like that also?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: the Supreme Lord, *priyasya sakhyuh, kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam.* He is very dear to the Lord. By his good will Kṛṣṇa appears. Who can make Kṛṣṇa appear?

He Can Make Kṛṣṇa Appear

Devotee 1: A *premi bhakta*, a pure devotee.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: His dear devotee, a *premi bhakta*, do you understand? *Bhaktecchopātta-rūpāya:** by the will of such a *bhakta*, such a dear devotee, Kṛṣṇa appears. A dear devotee can make Kṛṣṇa appear. Although there is a specific time for His *avatāra* - at that time He descends although it is not the time - if such a dear devotee wants, he can make Kṛṣṇa appear. Because Kṛṣṇa is bound by love, the rope of love. What His pure devotee wants Kṛṣṇa does. So how does he make Kṛṣṇa appear? By his will, he can make Kṛṣṇa appear in the heart of his dear disciple. By his mere good will that is the *guru's* activity.

**bhūmir uvāca
namas te deva-deveśa
saṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhara
bhaktecchopātta-rūpāya
paramātman namo 'stu te*

"Goddess Bhūmi said: 'Obeisances unto You, O Lord of the chief demigods, O holder of the conchshell, disc and club. O Supreme Soul within the heart, You assume Your various forms to fulfill Your devotees' desires. Obeisances unto You.'" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.59.25)

Therefore Narottama Dās Ṭhākura sings,

*kṛṣṇa se tomāra, kṛṣṇa dite pāro,
tomāra śakati āche
āmi to' kāṅgala, 'kṛṣṇa' 'kṛṣṇa' boli',
dhāi tava pāche pāche⁴*

“O Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, Kṛṣṇa completely belongs to you because you have bound up Kṛṣṇa with the rope of love in your heart. Kṛṣṇa is there in your heart; you can give me Kṛṣṇa.” So, such is Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura: if he is pleased, by his good will he can make Kṛṣṇa appear from his heart into the heart of his disciple. That *guru* does so. *Bhaktecchopātta-rūpāya paramātmānamo* ‘stu te, by the will of such a devotee, Kṛṣṇa appears. Otherwise, how can one give Kṛṣṇa? How can one who does not have Kṛṣṇa give Kṛṣṇa? He cannot give. He cannot give.

Devotee 1: Post-dated check only.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Post-dated check, that's the language of my Guru Mahārāja, post-dated check. Yes!

That Is Called Svarupa-Siddhi

Devotee 1: But Viṣṇu, Paramātmā is already in the heart of every living entity...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes.

Devotee 2: So when we say that the pure devotee makes Kṛṣṇa appear in the heart, it means Paramātmā manifests as Śyāmasundara in the heart of the devotee?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: No, the form that the

devotee wants to see, Kṛṣṇa will manifest in that form. That is called *svarūpa-siddhi*. He wants to see that form. Paramātmā is in the heart of every living entity, but in whose heart is He peaceful and blissful? In the heart of a dear devotee! He is manifested there and He rests there peacefully and blissfully. In the heart of other living entities that are not Kṛṣṇa conscious, He is not finding pleasure there, although He is residing there. That is the difference. Yes! There is a difference.

You Are a Crow - Become Garuda!

Devotee 2: To make Kṛṣṇa appear means also to make the disciple become aware of Kṛṣṇa in his heart and develop this full loving relationship?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes. That's *guru-kṛpā*; by the mercy of *guru*. Otherwise, how can the disciple realise that? That is the *guru*'s mercy. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo* - by the mercy of *guru*, he gets the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. *Guru-kṛpā hy kevalam, guru-kṛpā*, the mercy of *guru* is very powerful. *Kākere garuda kare*, he has such powerful mercy that it can turn a crow into Garuda. You are a crow! You are a crow and when you get *guru-kṛpā* you become Garuda; it is that powerful!

Kṛṣṇa Knows the Heart

Devotee 1: *Kabe ha'be bolo se-dina āmār...**

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: *Kabe ha'be bolo se-dina*

* *kabe ha'be bolo se-dina āmār*
(āmār) aparādha ghuci', śuddha nāme ruci,
kṛpā-bale ha'be hṛdoye sañcār

"When, oh when will that day be mine? When my offences ceasing, taste for the name increasing, when in my heart will your mercy shine, when, oh when will that day be mine?" ("Kabe Ha'be Bolo," by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

āmār, when will that auspicious day of good fortune come to me? Yes. Just cry for it, weeping, crying, *kabe ha'be bolo se-dina āmār*. Yes. That's a fact. One should hanker after that and develop such yearning, such crying in the heart. And Kṛṣṇa knows the heart; yes he is crying for Me now. Unless you cry, how can you get? No. You have to cry!

Aspire for it and Cry

Devotee 3: When, at which stage do we become *prema-ruruksu*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: *Prema-ruruksu*? When your heart bleeds, when your heart cries for Kṛṣṇa, at that moment, when you develop love for Kṛṣṇa then you place Kṛṣṇa on the platform of love. Kṛṣṇa becomes the only object of love. So at that moment, then *prema-ruruksu*. Aspire for it and cry. *Kabe ha'be bolo se-dina āmār*, when will that auspicious day come to me? When will I cry for Kṛṣṇa? I'll roll down in that land, dance and chant. Desiring that, crying for it, crying... It's an internal business; it's not external. Always crying in the heart. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is the crying of the soul, *ātmāra krandana*, the soul is crying, "Oh Hare! Oh Kṛṣṇa! Oh Rāma! I am Your servant, please think of me as a speck of dust and engage me in Your service." That's crying. Are you chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in this mood? When you chant in this mood then you will achieve. Understand?

Devotee 3: The soul has to be awake, fully awake.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja: Yes!

Chapter Eleven



Bhubaneswar

The Gateway to the Puri-Dhama

In *Vaiṣṇava Tantra* it is mentioned:

*mathurā dvārakā-līlā
yāḥ karoti ca gokule
nīlācala sthitāḥ kṛṣṇa
stā eva racati prabhuḥ*

“Whatever *līlās* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are manifest in Gokula, Mathurā and Dvārakā are all found in Nīlācala, Śrī Kṣetra.”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami has commented on Śrī Kṣetra, Jagannātha Purī-dhāma:

“If you have the vision, you can see that all the Lord’s *līlās* are present in Jagannātha Purī-dhāma. When Mahāprabhu stayed there, He saw Vṛndāvana. When He saw Caṭaka-parvata, He said, ‘Oh! Govardhana!’ When He saw the sea, He thought, ‘Oh! It is the Yamunā.’ When He saw the garden called Jagannātha-vallabha, He exclaimed, ‘Oh! It is Vṛndāvana.’ In this way, Mahāprabhu saw all of Kṛṣṇa’s *līlās* in Śrī Kṣetra.

“In the *Utkala Khanḍa* section of the *Skanda-Purāṇa*, which is the largest *Purāṇa* [81,100 verses], Śrīla Vyāsadeva has described the special characteristics of Śrī Kṣetra, Jagannātha Purī-dhāma. This *kṣetra* is very beautiful and wonderful. It is *daśa-yojana-vistṛta*, ten *yojanas* in diameter, which is eighty miles. It is situated on the shore of the ocean and is known as Tīrtha-rāja, the king of all places of pilgrimage. At the middle portion, there is a blue mountain, which is called Nīlācala. ‘*Acala*’ means ‘mountain’. Śrī Bhagavān has said that the *kṣetra* which is situated on the northern side of the ocean and the southern side of the river Mahānādī, in Orissa, is very famous throughout the world.” Śrīla Vyāsadeva has mentioned that if one visits Jagannātha Purī-dhāma he will have the result of visiting all *tīrthas*. For one who has been to Jagannātha Purī-dhāma there is no need to go to any other places of pilgrimage.

“Purī-dhāma begins from Bhubaneswar, also known as Ekāmra-kānana. Bhubaneswar is the gateway through which one can enter into this *kṣetra*. From Bhubaneswar, it goes up to Candrabhāgā (Koṇārka), where the Sun-god is worshipped in the Sūrya Mandira.

“This *dhāma* is very confidential. It is *durlabha-kṣetra*, difficult even on the part of Lord Brahma to attain. Because the form of this *kṣetra* is like a conch-shell, with the stomach portion sunk into the sea, it is also known as Śaṅkha-kṣetra. The head portion is towards the western side, where the gate is guarded by Nīlakanṭha Śiva. There, Lord Śiva is known as Bhuvaneśvara, Liṅgarāja, and Kṣetrapāla, the protector of the *dhāma*.

“This *kṣetra* is *parama-pāvana*, supremely purifying and is also called Daśāvatāra-kṣetra, the *kṣetra* of the ten incarnations: Mīna [Matsya], Kūrma, Nṛsiṁha, Vāmana daśāvatāra, etc.

“Kṛṣṇa, who is *līlā-puruṣottama* - the enjoyer of innumerable pastimes - eternally resides there as *arcā-avatāra*, the deity form. Therefore it is also known as Puruṣottama-dhāma, and because He is Jagannātha, the master of the three worlds, His *dhāma* is known as Jagannātha Purī-dhāma.”¹

Bhubaneswar An Out-of-the-Way Place

Now, we could see that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was not of this material world, and we were not the only ones, but he was hidden from the ISKCON mainstream so-to-speak, in an out-of-the-way place, in the little-known city of Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India. Of course, Śrīla Prabhupāda was himself distanced from the mainstream of the Gauḍīya Maṭha preaching, prior to beginning his worldwide preaching mission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had sent Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami there, to Bhubaneswar. Why? When Śrīla Prabhupāda went to Bhubaneswar, he stayed there for 17 days, which is quite a length of time, for no apparent or obvious reason. The reason usually given for his staying in Bhubaneswar was that he went there to lay the corner stone for the new temple; yet to do that would have taken only a short period of time. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami had organised a room in a very nice guest house for Śrīla Prabhupāda to stay and also a life member of ISKCON had offered that he should stay at his house, and yet Śrīla Prabhupāda chose to stay on the donated temple land with his dear disciple Gour Govinda Swami for 17 days. He chose to stay in a tiny, one-room, thatched-roofed, rough, brick cottage that Gour Govind* had himself built instead of comfortable accommodation elsewhere. As described in the *Līlāmrta* of Śrīla

*Gour Govind the name Śrīla Prabhupāda affectionately called his dear disciple.

Prabhupāda; "...he [Śrīla Prabhupāda] felt perfectly at home and happy living in a primitive, mud and thatched roof hut on a secluded patch of land in the dust of Orissa..." Although some members of the GBC considered that the land was an out-of-the-way place and was virtually useless for building a temple, Śrīla Prabhupada decided to build a big temple there. Bhubaneswar is a very special place...

The Brahmana from Sri Rangam

On one fine day in 1980, after Śrīla Prabhupāda had left this world, a *brāhmaṇa* walks through the gate onto the property of the yet-to-be-finished Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple near the village of Nayapalli, in that same Bhubaneswar. He sees a *sādhu*, because he has been trained in the ancient science of the ‘Geometry of the Body’, *sāmudrika-śāstra* (or full body analysis), he is able to observe that this *sādhu* has the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata*; the *sādhu* is of course Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. The *brāhmaṇa* is Śrī Badrinārāyaṇa Rāmānuja dāsa, born in Orissa, India, 25.10.1959, of *brāhmaṇa* parents.

Śrī Badrinārāyaṇa Rāmānuja dāsa was trained in the four Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, palmistry, astrology and the sanskrit language. He was also trained to recognise the bodily symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata*, all of which he instantly observed on the body of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

Many years later, his uncle, Tīrthānanda Dash, who is one of the prominent astrologers in Orissa, could understand the greatness of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami when he did his astrological chart. He could see that he was not a conditioned soul. He could ascertain that he had not taken his birth on this planet due to *karma* as conditioned souls do.

He said that Gour Govinda Swami was one of the Supreme Lord's personal associates. He was from that *nitya-dharma*, *vaikuṇṭha-loka* and *guru-loka** the eternal abode of the Lord.

Śrī Badrinārāyaṇa Rāmānuja dāsa: Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, sitting in a temple that he was working to complete at the gateway to the Puri-dhāma, was emitting a bodily effulgence. On my first visit to this temple I could understand: "He is a *mahā-bhāgavata*". The *Sāmudrika-śāstra* states,

*pañca-dīrghah pañca-sūkṣmāḥ
sapta-raktah ṣad-unnataḥ
tri-hrasva-pṛthu-gambhīro
dvātrimśal-lakṣaṇo mahān*

"There are thirty-two bodily symptoms of a great personality: five of his bodily parts are large, five fine, seven reddish, six raised, three small, three broad and three grave."²

I have seen these symptoms on his body. Therefore I would take his association as much as possible, because it is to everyone's eternal benefit to associate with such a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

When I arrived in Śrī Raṅgam, I explained to my *guru* Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuj Jeeyer, Śrīla Ācāryadeva, that there was a *mahā-bhāgavata* residing in Bhubaneswar and that we should go to see him to verify it. I asked my *guru*, "please, Śrīla Ācāryadeva, come with me." I knew that if he came, he would be able to confirm that I had seen this correctly. We went, and he indeed verified what I had seen. Śrīla Ācāry-

*Author's comment: In the Śrī-sampradāya they use the term *guru-loka*, meaning that the Supreme Lord is from the eternal realm and the *guru*, *sad-guru*, bona fide *guru* is also from that same abode.

adeva is my *dīkṣā-guru* and Śrīla Gour Govinda Swami is my *śikṣā-guru*.*

***Author's note:** This is interesting, as Badrinārāyaṇa prabhu is initiated in the Śrī-sampradāya, but he has a *śikṣā-guru* in the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya! Also Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami wanted to go to Śrī Raṅgam and he said to Śrī Badrinārāyaṇa Rāmānuja dāsa, "...Badri you will take me to Śrī Raṅgam..." However Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami left this world prematurely, of his own volition, before being able to visit that very holy place of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas and before many, many of his projects were finished.

***Author's note 1:** The five large parts are the nose, arms, chin, eyes and knees. The five fine parts are the skin, fingertips, teeth, hair on the body and hair on the head. The seven reddish parts are the eyes, soles, palms, palate, nails and upper and lower lips. The six raised parts are the chest, shoulders, nails, nose, waist and mouth. The three small parts are the neck, thighs and male organ. The three broad parts are the waist, forehead and chest. The three grave parts are the navel, voice and existence. Altogether these are the thirty-two symptoms of a great personality. This is a quotation from the *Sāmudrika*. (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 14.15 purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda)

Author's note 2: In Śrīla Rūpa Goswami's book *Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, chapter titled *A Description of the Eight Principle Sakhīs*; it is described that the *sakhī* Indulekhā is especially conversant with *sāmudrika-śāstra* [the science of reading the auspicious and inauspicious features on a person's body]:

*indulekhā bhaven mallā nāga-tantratka-mantrake
vijñānasya ca mantre 'pi sāmudraka-višeśavit*

"Indulekhā knows well all of the incantations for controlling snakes mentioned in the *nāga-tantra*. Moreover, she is also most skilled in using those incantations. She is especially conversant with *sāmudrika-śāstra*."

Chapter Twelve



The Acarya from Srí Rangam Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuja Jeeyar - Śrīla Ācāryadeva

Srī Rangam

The beautiful and majestic temple of Srī Raṅgam is situated in South India in the state of Tamil Nadu. This is where the Deity of Srī Raṅganātha, the Lord of Lakṣmīdevī, resides. The temple of Srī Raṅgam is extremely large, the crest of the temple tower pierces the sky. Throughout the day and night hundreds and thousands of pilgrims are coming to take *darśana* of Lord Raṅganātha. The temple hall resounds with the sound of many *brāhmaṇas* chanting Vedic hymns.

“...Srī Raṅga-kṣetra [Srī Raṅgam] is a very famous place. It lies in the district of Tiruchirāpalli, about ten miles [16 kilometres] west of Kumbhakonam and near the city of Tiruchirāpalli, on an island in the Kāverī River. The Srī Raṅgam temple is the largest in India, and there are seven walls and seven roads surrounding it. There are also seven roads leading to Srī Raṅgam. The ancient names of these roads are the road of Dharma, the road of Rājamahendra, the road of Kulaśekhara, the road of Ālināḍana, the road of Tiruvikrama, the Tirubiḍi road of Māḍamāḍi-gāisa, and the road

of Ada-iyāvala-indāna. The temple was founded before the reign of Dharmavarma, who reigned before Rājamahendra. Many celebrated kings like Kulaśekhara and Yāmunācārya (Ālabandāru) resided in the temple of Śrī Raṅgam. Yāmunācārya, Śrī Rāmānuja, Sudarśanācārya and others also supervised this temple...”¹

Srī Laksman Rāmānuja Jeeyar

The famous *ācāryas*, Śrīla Yāmunācārya (918-1038) and Śrīla Rāmānujācārya (1017-1137), resided in this temple and led the Śrī Sampradāya in their preaching mission. Many years later Lakṣman Rāmānuja Jeeyar, who is also known as Śrīla Ācāryadeva, became the *ācārya* of Śrī Raṅgam. He was born on the 3rd March, 1930 in a *brāhmaṇa* family. He was given *upanayana* - the sacred thread given at *brāhmaṇa* initiation, at the young age of nine. He was then known as Tanalal Joshi. After his *upanayana* ceremony, he went to study Sanskrit and philosophy at the Sanskrit *tol* (or school) of the Śrī Sampradāya Giri Swami Maṭha, one of the many Śrī Sampradāya *āśramas* in Puri, in the Balisahi district. He excelled in Sanskrit and was given the name Padmanābha Ācārya. From the age of 18, he was teaching the younger students Sanskrit. He would return at regular intervals to Śrī Raṅgam to see his *guru*, Śrīnivāsa Rāmānuja Jeeyar*. He graduated from that school at the age of 21. In 1965, he went to reside permanently in Śrī Raṅgam with his Gurudeva and was given *sannyāsa* in 1970.

In 1971, he became the *ācārya* of the Śrī Sampradāya, a responsibility he fulfilled until he left this world in 2012. He was a *naiṣṭika-brahmacārī* (one who remains celibate throughout his

*Author’s note: Jeeyar means *guru* in the Śrī Sampradāya, whether one is a *sannyāsī* or a *grhastha*.

whole life). Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuja Jeeyar had tens of thousands of disciples and he gave *sannyāsa* to twenty-two of them. These *sannyāsīs* also initiate, and thus he has tens of thousands of grand disciples who call him their “Great Grand Gurudeva”.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva visited Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami on five separate occasions. The first of which was in 1991, when he stayed in Bhubaneswar at the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple for a period of three weeks in the temple guesthouse.

As the bedding he was given was white, (they did not have any saffron bed-sheets), he said, “There are 3 things a *sannyāsī* should have white: his teeth, his *brāhmaṇa* thread and his heart [meaning the heart is pure].”

As Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuja Jeeyar Ācāryadeva was educated in the four Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, the sanskrit language, the ancient vedic arts of astrology, palmistry, and the ‘geometry of the body’, *sāmudrika-śāstra* – the ancient Vedic art that sets out in detail the measurements of all particular bodily constructions and asserts that the conditioned souls are categorised under a different *tala* (scale) than the liberated souls – he declared that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami did not conform to any known category of conditioned souls, and that he did not have the normal bodily construction of such souls. He then stated that he was in the category of *mahā-bhāgavata*. He concluded that it was a rare occurrence in this world to come face to face with a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

Now when Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī arrived to see Mahārāja Parīkṣit, there were sages who were expert in physiognomy. They could see that he was a great devotee of the Lord by the symptoms on his body:

*śyāmam sadāpīya-vayo-'ṅga-lakṣmyā
strīṇāṁ mano-jñām rucira-smitena*

*pratyutthitās te munayah svāsanebhyaḥ
tal-lakṣaṇa-jñā api gūḍha-varcasam*

“He was blackish and very beautiful due to his youth. Because of the glamour of his body and his attractive smiles, he was pleasing to women. Though he tried to cover his natural glories, the great sages present there were all expert in the art of physiognomy, and so they honoured him by rising from their seats.”²

In his purport to verse 1.19.30 of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrīla Prabhupāda states; “...One should therefore never minimise the importance of a devotee like Śukadeva Gosvāmī...”*

Śrīla Prabhupada writes:

“...When one has attained the topmost position of *mahā-bhāgavata*, he is to be accepted as a *guru* and worshipped exactly like Hari, the Personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of a *guru*...”³

On his first glimpse of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, Śrīla Ācāryadeva paid full *dandavats* on the concrete verandah outside his hut. He confided that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was a very powerful personality, a spiritually effulgent personality. Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuja Jeeyar Ācāryadeva also said

*“In the great assembly of saintly personalities, there was Vyāsadeva the *brahmarṣi*, Nārada the *devarṣi*, Paraśurāma the great ruler of the *kṣatriya* kings, etc. Some of them were powerful incarnations of the Lord. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was not known as *brahmarṣi*, *rājarṣi* or *devarṣi*, nor was he an incarnation like Nārada, Vyāsa or Paraśurāma. And yet he excelled them in respects paid. This means that the devotee of the Lord is more honored in the world than the Lord Himself. One should therefore never minimise the importance of a devotee like Śukadeva Gosvāmī” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.19.30 purport)

that the birthmarks on the body of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami represented the different *avatāras* of the Lord, Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha.

Jagadisha Paṇḍita dāsa: During his 1991 visit to ISKCON's Śrī Śrī Krṣṇa Balarāma Temple at Bhubaneswar, the Ācārya paid full *dandavats* to Gurudeva on the ground outside the hut. He was the head of the Rāmānuja *sampradāya*, who had something like 20,000 disciples. This *ācārya* was also a great astrologer and he could read the signs and auspicious markings on the body - the body has geography about it - he had the gift that he could read the geography of people's bodies. He spent some time with Gurudeva on that first meeting. After, maybe fifteen minutes, he came out and he told the devotees who were present that Gurudeva had all the signs of a *siddha-puruṣa* visible on his body.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: When we went to Śrī Raṅgam in 1993, December 26th, the *ācārya*'s daily routine was to worship three sets of his own Deities, and he would cook and offer the *bhoga* to Them. Then he would serve the *prasādam* with his own hands to whoever was there and if you did not want to eat he would become concerned. There was only one requirement; you could not take *prasāda* unless you were wearing Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*. Then, after three to four days in Śrī Raṅgam, we left to catch our flight to Bhubaneswar to be in the association of our Gurudeva, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. Just prior to leaving, Śrīla Ācāryadeva had cooked a meal for us with his own hands so that we would not be hungry on the eight-hour bus ride to Madras, and the flight from Madras (now Chennai) to Bhubaneswar. Śrī Laksman Rāmānuja Jeeyar - Śrīla Ācāryadeva always practiced the principles of *trnād api sunīcena, taror iva sahiṣṇunā, amāninā māna-dena*. He is definitely a great saintly Vaiṣṇava personality and mystic.

Rādhārāṇī devī dāsī: I went to Śrī Raṅgam [December 1993] with my parents and we stayed in the āśrama of the ācārya, which was in the same street as the main Raṅganātha Temple. I clearly remember Ācāryadeva cooking and serving us *prasāda*. He was like a friend*, there was no high and mighty, or superior attitude. There was no, ‘Hey I am the ācārya all bow to me’. There was none of that.

One morning I went to the bathroom and on the way back I noticed something poke its head out from a gap between the concrete slabs. Thinking it was a snake, I screamed and then called out to my mum. He heard us and came to see what the problem was. He laughed and shook his head and said that it was not a snake, and then he proceeded to cover the hole with cow dung. He was an extremely low-key person with no profile, and the way he looked after us was amazing, especially for someone in that high position. He was truly a great personality. We can all learn from his actions and humility. It does not matter what position you have you can still be a friend to one and all. You rarely meet someone like that. It is a great shame that he has left this world and we will not see him again! All glories to Śrīla Ācāryadeva.

*Author's note: "...A devotee is the friend not only of human society but of all living entities, for he sees all living entities as sons of the Supreme Personality of Godhead..." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.24, purport.)

"...A saintly devotee is certainly very tolerant. He is the friend of all living entities..." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.13.24, purport.)

"...The symptoms of a sādhu are: that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities..." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.10.18, purport.)

Author's comment (1): Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuja Jeeyar - Śrīla Ācāryadeva is truly a mystic as when the author and family went to visit Śrī Raṅgam in the latter part of the year 1993, and stayed with the him, he related events to us that only we had privy to; he could not have known, but he understood many matters relating to us that only we knew.

Author's comment (2): At the time of writing this section Chapter Twelve, Śrī Laksman Ramanuj Jeeyer - Śrīla Ācāryadeva was 82 years of age. He left this world on 18 May 2012.

It is quite unusual for the *ācārya* of one *sampradāya* to go to a different *sampradāya* and to verify the spiritual calibre of a *sannyāsī* from that other *sampradāya* and glorify him to the extent that Śrīla Ācāryadeva did. But please, consider that the combination of the philosophies of the four *sampradāyas* took place in Puri. The unique mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu took a strong hold at the time when Mahāprabhu defeated Sārvabhauma Bhāṭṭācārya*, who converted to Vaiṣṇavism. The *ācārya* from Śrī Raṅgam came to see Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami who was residing in Bhubaneswar, which is the gateway to Jagannātha Puri-dhāma. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami explained to him that in this age the four *sampradāyas* would join together. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami explained the significance of the appearance of Lord Caitanya. He mentioned the Golden Age of Mahāprabhu, the ‘Prema-yuga’, the age of divine love, which would last for 10,000 years in this Kali-yuga** and which began at the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

“...When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared, He ushered in the era for the *saṅkīrtana* movement. It is also said that for ten thousand years this era will continue...”⁴

*Author’s note: Sārvabhauma Bhāṭṭācārya, was the leader of the Māyāvādīs and taught the *sannyāsīs* Vedānta. Which in itself was quite an accomplishment considering he was a *grhasta*.

**Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda also made these points about the Golden Age, which is also called the Gaura-yuga or the Prema-yuga, inside this Kali-yuga, with Allen Ginsberg:

Allen: Will people still be chanting Hare Krishna in 400,000 years?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Hare Krishna will be finished within 10,000 years. There will be no more Hare Krishna...

Śrīla Prabhupāda: People will take advantage of this, up to 10,000 years...

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The duration of Kali-Yuga is 432,000 years. Out of that we have passed 5,000 years. There is balance of 427,000 years. Out of that, 10,000 years is nothing...⁶

“...Of these 427,000 years, the 10,000 years of the *sankīrtana* movement inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu 500 years ago provide the opportunity for the fallen souls of Kali-yuga to take to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and thus be delivered from the clutches of material existence and return home, back to Godhead...”⁵

During their meeting Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami requested the ācārya from Śrī Rāngam if he could send him all the information that Rāmānujācārya had written on the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. He said he was planning to compile a book with all this information for his *sannyāsī* godbrothers and future *sannyāsīs*, so that they would have a much broader understanding of their *āśrama*.

Let us Join Together

In a lecture given in 1976 in South India, Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

“...So my request is that India, especially South India... South India is the place for all the ācāryas. South India is the place of Rāmānujācārya, Śaṅkarācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇu Svāmī. And we're Gaudīya, Mādhva-Gaudīya *sampradāya*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu belongs to the Mādhavendra Purī *sampradāya*. Mādhavendra Purī belonged to the Madhva *sampradāya*, therefore our *sampradāya* is known as Brahmā Madhva-Gaudīya *sampradāya*. So, the purpose of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to establish this brahminical culture. *Namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca.* It is lost, but we are trying to revive it. There is good sign. Not only good sign, there is prediction by the authorities,

by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He has predicted that all over the world, *prthivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma*: As many villages and towns are there on the surface of the globe, this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement would be spread. So my request is that, “let us join together”, not only in India but all over the world. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s order is, *kṛṣṇa bhajanati nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra*. In the matter of executing devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, there is no such distinction wherefrom this man is coming. *Māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye ‘pi syuh pāpa-yonayah* [Bg. 9.32]. Even if they are coming from the *pāpa-yoni*, it doesn’t matter if one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness *te ‘pi yānti parām gatim*. This philosophy should be followed. I especially request the *ācāryas*, the *brāhmaṇas* of South India, to take up this cause very seriously...”⁷

It is very interesting that Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking like this in 1976 and that fifteen years later, in 1991, the *ācārya* of the Śrī Sampradāya visits Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami in Bhubaneswar who then relates to him that in Kali-yuga the four *saṁpradāyas* will flow into one *saṁpradāya*; the Brahmā Madhva-Gaudīya *saṁpradāya*...!

As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta has written in *Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava*, Chapter Six, Part Six,

“...In a short time, there will be only one *saṁpradāya*, or devotional line. That will be the Brahma-sampradāya. All the other *saṁpradāyas* will find their conclusions in the Brahma-sampradāya...”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda wrote an article called ‘Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda’, which was about a prediction from his very great father. This article was published in the Harmonist Magazine.

“...Thākura Bhaktivinoda has predicted the consummation of religious unity of the world by the appearance of the only universal church which bears the eternal designation of the Brahma-sampradāya. He has given mankind the blessed assurance that all Theistic churches will shortly merge in the one eternal spiritual community by the grace of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The spiritual community is not circumscribed by the conditions of time and space, race and nationality. Mankind had been looking forward to this far-off Divine Event through the Long Ages. Thākura Bhaktivinoda has made the conception available in its practicable spiritual form to the open-minded empiricist who is prepared to undergo the process of enlightenment. The keystone of the Arch has been laid, which will afford the needed shelter to all awakened animation under its ample encircling arms. Those who would thoughtlessly allow their hollow pride of race, pseudo-knowledge or pseudo-virtue to stand in the way of this long hoped for consummation, would have to thank only themselves for not being incorporated in the spiritual society of all pure souls...”

Srauta-Parampara

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in *Prameya-ratnāvalī*, quoting the *Padma Purāṇa* has said,

sampradāya vihīnā ye
 mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ
 ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti
 catvāraḥ sampradāyināḥ

śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakā
 vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ

*catvāras te kalau bhāvyā
hy utkale puruṣottamāt*

“Unless one is initiated by a bona fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, the *mantra* he might have received is without any effect. For this reason four Vaiṣṇava disciplic successions, inaugurated by Lakṣmī-devī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Sanat-kumāra, will appear in the holy place of Jagannātha Puri in Orissa and purify the entire earth during the age of Kali.”⁸

*rāmānujam śrīḥ svī-cakre
madhvācāryam caturmukhaḥ
śrī-viṣṇu-svāminam rudro
nimbadityam catuhṣanah*

“Lakṣmī-devī chose Rāmānujācārya to represent her disciplic succession. In the same way Lord Brahmā chose Madhvācārya, Lord Śiva chose Viṣṇu Svāmī, and the four Kumāras chose Nimbārka.”⁹

The word ‘*sampradāya*’ is generated from the Sanskrit verb root ‘*saṃ-pra-da*’ which literally means ‘to hand down’. The understanding is that spiritual instruction is handed down personally from master to disciple in a chain. As the knowledge is directly heard by the disciple from his spiritual master, it is called *śrauta-paramparā*. It is also called *guru paramparā*, disciplic succession. The *sampradāya* institution has existed since time immemorial.

“...The principles of the *paramparā* system were strictly honoured in previous ages, Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga and Dvāpara-yuga - but in the present age, Kali-yuga, people neglect the importance of this system of *śrauta-paramparā*, or receiving knowledge by disciplic succession....”¹⁰

In fact Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has commented, "...As soon as the disciplic succession is missing, then everything is lost..."*

Acintya-Bhedabhed-Tattva

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu took two essential teachings from each of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*:

*madhva haite sāra-dvaya kariba grahana
 eka haya kevala-advaita nirasana¹¹
 kṛṣṇa-mūrti nitya jāni' tāñhāra sevana
 sei ta' dvitīya sāra jāna mahājana¹²*

From Śrīla Madhvācārya of the Brahmā-Mādhva-sampradāya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu took the tenets of complete rejection and refutation of the Māyāvāda philosophy (*kevalādvaita* - exclusive monism), and of the acceptance of the reality of the deity and dedication to His service.

*“Prabhupāda:...The word is called disciple. Disciple means who accept discipline. If there is no discipline, where is disciple? And ‘disciplic succession.’ We have used this word. Not that discipline is finished by one man, no. It will continue to go by succession. That is perfect.

*evam paramparā-prāptam
 imam rājarsayo viduh
 sa käleneha (mahatā)
 yoga naṣṭah parantapa [Bg. 4.2]*

Find out this verse. As soon as the disciplic succession is missing, then everything is lost...

Prabhupāda: *Naṣṭa*, this word is used.

Satsvarūpa: ‘This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost.’

Prabhupāda: That’s it. As soon as the discipline broken, then everything is lost...”
 (Śrīla Prabhupāda Room Conversation with disciples-July 1, 1974, Melbourne)

*rāmānuja haite āmi lai dui sāra
ananya-bhakati, bhakta-jana-sevā āra¹³*

From Śrīla Rāmānujācārya of the Śrī-sampradāya, He took the principles of pure devotional service (unpolluted by *karma* and *jñāna* - *ananya-bhakti*) and service to the Vaiṣṇavas.

*viṣṇu haite dui sāra kariba svīkāra
tvadīya-sarvasva-bhāva, rāga-mārga āra¹⁴*

From Viṣṇu Svāmī of the Rudra-sampradāya, He took the conceptions of the sentiment of exclusive dependence on Kṛṣṇa (*tvadīya-sarvasva-bhāva*), and the path of spontaneous devotion (*rāga-mārga*).

*tomā haite laba āmi dui mahā-sāra
ekānta-rādhikāśraya, gopī-bhāva āra¹⁵*

And from Nimbārka Ācārya from the Kumāra-sampradāya, He took the two supremely essential principles: the utter necessity of taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā (*ekānta-rādhikāśraya*) and the high esteem of the *gopīs'* worship of Kṛṣṇa.

Thus, with the basic tenets of *siddhānta* taken from the four bona fide Sampradāya Ācāryas, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu combined the spiritual essence of their four philosophies and established His sublime doctrine of *acintya bheda-abheda-tattva* - inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference.

There are two kinds of philosophical understandings: *bheda* and *abheda*, difference and oneness. The *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* conception is the perfect explanation, proof and teaching by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. One of its applications is that even though in fact there is no duality between the various features

of the Supreme: Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, still, there is a difference between them.

This conception also reconciles the quarrels concerning if the *jīva* and Brahman (Param-Brahman) are one or different. By stating that they are actually one and different: the soul and God have the same nature, are one in quality, but there is a difference in quantity - or whether the cosmic manifestation and Bhagavān are one or different - by explaining that the energy and the energetic are non-different, *ṣakti-ṣaktimatayor abheda*, but at the same time they are distinct. So, in Mahāprabhu's philosophy, these two, *bheda* and *abheda*, come together and are harmonised. This is the truly complete philosophy. That is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy, *acintya-bheda-abheda-tattva*, the teaching of inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference.

The Flow of Nectar

Thus the four philosophies of the four *saṃpradāya ācāryas* flowed into one philosophy. As predicted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and stated by his divine son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, the four *saṃpradāyas* would all find their shelter in the one *saṃpradāya*, the Brahmā-Mādhva-Gaudīya-saṃpradāya, under the tutelage of the most magnanimous and most munificent incarnation of Godhead, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura in his *Mahāprabhura Śikṣā* writes:

“...In a very short time, there will exist only one school of Vaiṣṇava teaching, which will be named the Brahma sa-

pradāya. All other Vaiṣṇava schools will come into the fold of that one disciplic succession..."

Thus the flow of nectar will rise up and inundate the land of India and the whole planet under the banner of the Brahmā-Mādhva-Gaudīya-sampradāya. This is what Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was explaining to the *ācārya* of the Śrī-sampradāya on his first visit to the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple in Bhubaneswar Orissa, India in 1991; this took place during their first meeting in that very hut that he had built for Śrīla Prabhupāda fourteen years earlier.

On his first visit to Bhubaneswar the *ācārya* from Śrī Raṅgam made three points regarding Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: he was self effulgent, a powerful personality and he was a *mahā-bhāgavata*. Just prior to leaving this world he said, "...he [Gour Govinda Swami] was *śaktyāveśa* *avatāra**..."

*Author's note: *Śaktyāveśa*-*avatāra* or *śaktyāveśa*-*jīvas*: an empowered living entity who serves as an incarnation of the Lord; empowered by the Supreme Lord with one or more of the Lord's opulences.

In the *Śrī Br̥hat-Bhāgavatāmṛta* it is stated:

*kvacit keṣv api jīveṣu tat-tac-chakti-praveśataḥ
tasyāveśāvatārā ye te 'pi tadvan matā budhaiḥ*

kvacit – sometimes; *keṣu api* – within certain; *jīveṣu* – souls; *tat-tac-śakti* – of His respective potencies; *praveśataḥ* – because of the entrance; *tasya* – His; *āveśa* *avatārāḥ* – empowered incarnations; *ye* – who; *te* – they; *api* – also; *tadvat* – like Him; *matāḥ* – considered; *budhaiḥ* – by the wise.

"Sometimes, the Lord's special potency enters into a qualified living being, who is then known as an empowered incarnation (*āveśa*-*avatāra*). The wise accept these empowered incarnations (*āveśa*-*avatāras*) to be as good as and as real as the Lord Himself." (*Śrī Br̥hat-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, Part Two, section Vaikuṇṭha, verse 167)

Approach to Hear - Not to See

Some may say that the *sādhu* is self effulgent and that, as we were able to see Śrīla Prabhupāda, so we are able to see who his successors are or are not, and we can see any other pure devotee. However, if you are not trained in these ancient Vedic arts, or are not a *mahā-bhāgavata* yourself, you will simply not be able to see the *sādhu*, as Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami said on numerous occasions: "...You cannot see a *sādhu*; ...first hear and then see..." Also, in the First Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupada states with regards to Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

"...A sage is not, therefore, recognised by sight, but by hearing. One should approach a *sādhu* or **great sage not to see but to hear him**. If one is not prepared to hear the words of a *sādhu*, there is no profit. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a *sādhu* who could speak on the transcendental activities of the Lord. He did not satisfy the whims of ordinary citizens. He was recognised when he spoke on the subject of *Bhāgavatam*, and he never attempted jugglery like a magician. Outwardly, he appeared to be a retarded, dumb madman, but in fact he was the most elevated transcendental personality."¹⁶

How many times have we heard aspiring devotees (which most of us are), due to an unfortunate misunderstanding of the nature of *sādhu-guru*, say, "Oh, I have not seen a *sādhu*..." or, "...he looks like a *sādhu*..." Some may also say, "...I have travelled all over India (highly unlikely as there is so much to see in India materially and spiritually*) and I can truthfully say

* "...In the land of Bhāratavarṣa there are many hundreds and thousands of places of pilgrimage distributed all over the country, and by traditional practice the common man visits such holy places during all seasons of the year..." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.1.17 purport)

that there are no pure devotees, no *sādhus*..." This is a fallacious point of view, but we think that with our defective senses we can see the *sādhu*. This is simply not a fact; it is not possible, as Śrīla Prabhupada states:

"...A sage is not, therefore, recognised by sight, but by hearing. One should approach a *sādhu* or great sage not to see but to hear him..."¹⁷

Therefore what can we really see and what do we really comprehend with these defective senses? Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would always say:

"...you cannot see a *sādhu*...first hear the *sādhu* and then see..."

Also Śrīla Prabhupada has stated at different times:

"...And by hearing you will see...."¹⁸

"...One cannot see properly unless one has heard from a superior source..."¹⁹

"...Don't try to see a *sādhu* by your eyes. You try to see a *sādhu* by ears..."²⁰

Therefore we are not qualified; we have no eyes to see a *sādhu*. Those who are trained in these ancient Vedic sciences, and/or who are *sādhus* themselves, they can see. The *sādhakas* who are gradually becoming devotees, or who are attempting to become free from fruitive reactions, and the conditioned souls cannot see, therefore they need to submissively hear and only then will they be able to truly see that *sādhu*.

Another most important point is that they have to hear from the lips of a personally present living Śrī Guru. When the *śāstra* and the *ācāryas* speak of hearing, this means hearing from a *sādhu* who is personally and physically present. Mahārāja Parīkṣit heard from Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī; the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya heard from Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī. Even in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa takes the position as *guru* and Arjuna as the disciple. Arjuna hears the *siddhānta* from the lips of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is an example for all mankind and through Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa speaks to the whole world. In fact Sūta Gosvāmī was selected to speak to the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya because:

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ
tvayā khalu purāṇāni
setihāsāni cānagha
ākhyātāny apy adhītāni
dharmā-śāstrāṇi yāny uta

“The sages said: Respected Sūta Gosvāmī, you are completely free from all vice. You are well versed in all the scriptures, famous for religious life, and in the Purāṇas and the histories as well, for you have gone through them under proper guidance and have also explained them.”²¹

yāni veda-vidāṁ śreṣṭho
bhagavān bādarāyaṇah
anye ca munayah sūta
parāvara-vido viduh

“Being the eldest learned Vedāntist, O Sūta Gosvāmī, you are acquainted with the knowledge of Vyāsadeva, who is the

incarnation of Godhead, and you also know other sages who are fully versed in all kinds of physical and metaphysical knowledge.”²²

*vettha tvam̄ saumya tat sarvam̄
tattvatas tad-anugrahāt
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta*

“And because you are submissive, your spiritual masters have endowed you with all the favours bestowed upon a gentle disciple. Therefore you can tell us all that you have scientifically learned from them.”²³

Then at the very end of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* recitation, he has said:

*yogīndrāya namaś tasmai
śukāya brahma-rūpiṇe
saṁsāra-sarpa-daṣṭam̄ yo
viṣṇu-rātam̄ amūmucat*

“I offer my humble obeisances to Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī*, the best of mystic sages and a personal manifestation of the Absolute Truth. He saved Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who was bitten by the snake of material existence.”**²⁴

*Sūta Gosvāmī now offers obeisances to his own spiritual master Śukadeva Gosvāmī. (quoted BBTI *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Twelve)

**Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura clarifies that just as Arjuna was placed into material confusion so that *Bhagavad-gītā* might be spoken, so King Parīkṣit, a pure, liberated devotee of the Lord, was cursed to die so that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* might be spoken. (quoted BBTI *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Twelve)

Hence I quote this verse again:

*satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“In the association of pure devotees [śuddha-bhaktas], discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”²⁵

*prasaṅgam ajaram pāśam
ātmanāḥ kavayo viduh
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto
mokṣa-dvāram apāvṛtam*

“Every learned man knows very well that attachment for the material is the greatest entanglement of the spirit soul. But that same attachment, when applied to the self-realised devotees, opens the door of liberation.”²⁶

*śuśrūṣoh śraddadhānasya
vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ
syān mahat-sevayā viprāḥ
puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanaṭ*

“O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva.”²⁷

“...In the association of pure devotees [śuddha-bhaktas]...”, “...attachment, ... to the self-realised devotees...”, and “...serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice...” one makes advancement on the spiritual path.

Only then will *śabda-brahma* descend and enter the heart of the *sādhaka*. By constant submissive hearing of this transcendental sound, the *sādhaka*'s consciousness and vision become fully purified. Thus, unless the truth has manifested in the heart of the *sādhu* how is it possible for him to manifest it in your heart?

“...The real fact is that a bona fide spiritual master knows the nature of a particular man and what sort of duties he can perform in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he instructs him in that way. He instructs him through the ear...”²⁸

Not Gramophone or Tape Recorder

Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“This is the secret. Unless one is *svānubhāvam*, self-realised, life is *bhāgavata*, he cannot preach *Bhāgavata*. That is not... That will not be effective. A **gramophone will not help**. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu's secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara, recommended, *bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*, that 'If you want to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you must approach a person who is life living *Bhāgavata*'. *Bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*. Otherwise, there is no question of *Bhāgavata* realisation.”²⁹

“Then what is required? *Namanta eva*. Just become submissive. Don't think yourself as very great philosopher, the-

ologist, scientist. Just be humble. ‘My dear sir, just be humble.’ *Namanta eva*. ‘Then what will be my business? All right, I shall become humble. Then how I shall make progress?’ Now, *namanta eva san-mukharitāṁ bhavadīya-vārtām*. ‘Just hear the message of God.’ ‘From whom?’ *San-mukharitām*: ‘**through the mouth of the devotees.**’ Not professional, **not gramophone — through the mouth of, through the lips of real devotee.”**³⁰

“...As they have been trained up to rise early in the morning, this will give you spiritual strength. If you simply become a gramophone speaker, then it will not be effective. **Gramophone or tape record speaker, that will not be. You must be live speaker.** Your living condition should be spiritually, what is called, surcharged...”³¹

Chapter Thirteen



The Symptoms of a Maha-Bhagavata

The symptoms recognised on the body of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami by Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuj Jeeyer which we discussed in the previous chapter, are described in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.

Thirty-Two Bodily Symptoms of a Great Personality

*pañca-dīrghah pañca-sūkṣmaḥ
sapta-raktah ṣaḍ-unnataḥ
tri-hrasva-pṛthu-gambhīro
dvātrimśal-lakṣaṇo mahān*

pañca-dīrghah—large; *pañca-sūkṣmaḥ*—fine; *sapta-raktah*—reddish; *ṣaṭ-unnataḥ*—raised; *tri-hrasva*—small; *pṛthu*—broad; *gambhīraḥ*—grave; *dvā-trimśat*—this way thirty-two; *lakṣaṇaḥ*—symptoms; *mahān*— a great personality.

“There are thirty-two bodily symptoms of a great personality: five of his bodily parts are large, five fine, seven reddish, six raised, three small, three broad and three grave.”¹

The five large parts are the nose, arms, chin, eyes and knees. The five fine parts are the skin, fingertips, teeth, hair on the body and hair on the head. The seven reddish parts are the eyes, soles, palms, palate, nails and upper and lower lips. The six raised parts are the chest, shoulders, nails, nose, waist and mouth. The three small parts are the neck, thighs and male organ. The three broad parts are the waist, forehead and chest. The three grave parts are the navel, voice and existence. Altogether these are the thirty-two symptoms of a great personality. This is a quotation from the *Sāmudrika*.²

The Position of the Maha-Bhagavatas

In addition, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has quoted the following eight verses, in his writings, from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses 11.2.48-55, to explain the position of the *mahā-bhāgavatas*:

*gr̥hitvāpīndriyair arthān
 yo na dveṣṭi na hr̥syati
 viṣṇor māyām idam paśyan
 sa vai bhāgavatottamah*

“Unlike the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* with a materialistic mentality, who engages his senses in enjoying their objects, the person who sees this variegated world as a creation of the illusory energy of Lord Viṣṇu is neither attracted nor repulsed while engaging his senses with their objects. He is indeed the greatest among devotees.”³

*dehendriya-prāṇa-mano-dhiyām yo
 janmāpyaya-kṣud-bhaya-tarṣa-kṛcchraih
 saṁsāra-dharmair avimuhyamānah
 smṛtyā harer bhāgavata-pradhānah*

“One who, simply by remembering the lotus feet of Lord Hari, is no longer attached to the five objects of body, senses, life air, mind, and intelligence, and who is thus no longer entangled in the miseries of birth, death, hunger, fear, and thirst, is to be considered a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a foremost devotee of the Lord.”⁴

*na kāma-karma-bījānām
yasya cetasi sambhavaḥ
vāsudevaika-nilayaḥ
sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“The seed of lusty desires cannot fructify in the heart of one who is fixed in the service of the Supreme Lord and completely peaceful, because he has taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord. Such a person is considered a *pradhāna* Vaiṣṇava, or topmost devotee of the Lord.”⁵

*na yasya janma-karmabhyām
na varṇāśrama-jātibhiḥ
sajjate ‘smiññ aham-bhāvo
dehe vai sa hareḥ priyah*

“If one does not become proud of one’s material body made of skin and flesh in spite of taking an aristocratic birth such as that of a *brāhmaṇa*, executing pious activities like giving and accepting charity, and having a prestigious position within the *varṇāśrama* society, then one is to be considered the dearmost servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”⁶

*na yasya svāḥ para iti
vitteṣv ātmani vā bhidā*

*sarva-bhūta-samah śāntah
sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“One who sees no distinction of ‘one’s own’ and ‘others’ in terms of his body and wealth, who treats all living beings equally, and who is always peaceful is considered to be a *mahā-bhāgavata*.⁷

*tri-bhuvana-vibhava-hetave ‘py akuṇṭha-
smṛtir ajitātma-surādibhir vimṛgyāt
na calati bhagavat-padāravindāl
lava-nimiśārdham api yaḥ sa vaisnava-gryah*

“One whose mind cannot be distracted from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa for even a single moment even if he achieves the benediction of ruling and enjoying the opulence of the entire universe – which the demigods whose hearts are dedicated to Lord Ajita aspire for – is to be considered *vaiṣṇava-pradhāna*, the best of the Vaiṣṇavas.⁸

*bhagavata uru-vikramāṅghri-śākhā-
nakha-maṇi-candrikayā nirasta-tāpe
hṛdi katham upasīdatāṁ punah sa
prabhavati candra ivodite ‘rka-tāpah*

“A person who is afflicted by the burning heat of the sun experiences no pain from the cooling moonshine. So how can the fire of material suffering again burn one’s heart when it has been cooled by the rays emanating from the jewel-like nails of the most powerful lotus feet of the Supreme Lord? Such a person is a *mahā-bhāgavata*.⁹

*visṛjati hṛdayam na yasya sākṣād
 dharir avaśābhīhitō ‘py aghaughā-nāśah
 praṇaya-rasanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ
 sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktah*

“If one even unintentionally utters the names of Lord Hari, all his sinful reactions are destroyed. That Supreme Lord Hari never leaves the heart of one who has captured His lotus feet with love. Such a person is to be known as *mahā-bhāgavata*, the most exalted devotee of the Lord.”¹⁰

Chapter Fourteen



The Pure Devotee

The Desire Tree of Auspiciousness

Song 12 from *Kalyāna-kalpataru* - By Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

*kabe mui vaiṣṇava cinibo hari hari
vaiṣṇava caraṇa kalyānera khani
mātibo hṛdaye dhari*

“Oh my Lord Hari, when will I ever be able to realise who is actually a real Vaiṣṇava, the lotus feet of whom are like a mine of all-auspiciousness? When will I become madly overwhelmed by holding these lotus feet within the core of my heart?” (Verse One)

*vaiṣṇava thākura aprākṛta sadā
nirdoṣa ānandamaya
kr̥ṣṇa nāme prīti jaḍe udāsīna
jīvete dayādra haya*

“Such a revered devotee is always transcendental, free from all faults, and fully joyful in spiritual bliss. Being lovingly attached to the holy name of the Lord, and always disinterested and callous towards worldly interests, he is always melted with compassion for all souls.” (Verse Two)

*abhimāna hīna bhajane pravīṇa
viṣayete anāsakta
antara bāhire niskapata sadā
nitya līlā anurakta*

“Devoid of any trace of false ego, fully experienced and expert in *bhajana*, the pure devotee is completely detached from all types of sense objects. He is always straightforward both internally and externally, and he is completely attracted to relishing the eternal pastimes of the Lord.” (Verse Three)

*kaniṣṭha, madhyama, uttama prabhede
vaiṣṇava tri-vidha gani
kaniṣthe ādara, madhyame praṇati
uttame śuśruṣā śuni*

“I discriminate between the three types of Vaiṣṇavas, namely the *kaniṣṭha* (beginning neophyte), the *madhyama* (middle class), and the *uttama* (highest pure devotee). I respect the *kaniṣṭha*, I offer my respectful obeisances unto the *madhyama*, and I fully submit myself to hearing from the *uttama*.” (Verse Four)

*je jena vaiṣṇava, ciniya loiya
adara koribo jabe
vaiṣṇavera kṛpā, jāhe sarva-siddhi
avaśya pāiba tabe*

“At that time when I learn to properly honour such a pure devotee, recognising his real quality, then I will certainly achieve all spiritual perfection by his mercy.” (Verse Five)

*vaiṣṇava caritra, sarvadā pavitra
jei ninde himsā kori
bhaktivinoda, nā sambhāse tāre
thāke sadā mauna dhori*

“Bhaktivinoda always keeps a vow to abstain from speaking any type of envious blasphemy unto such a spotless devotee, whose life and characteristics are in all ways pure.” (Verse Six)

Chapter Fifteen



The Deity Maker

“...Gour Govinda Swami does not fit into the category of a conditioned soul...”

Professor B.C. Mohanty

Professor Bipra Charan Mohanty

After Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami left this planet in 1996, his dedicated disciples felt strongly that there was a need to install a life-size deity of him, along with a smaller functional *vigraha* at the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Mandira in Bhubaneswar.

The late Professor Bipra Charan Mohanty, a retired principal of the government-run Khalikot Art College, was commissioned by the disciples of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, to sculpt the two *vigrahas*. Bipra Charan Mohanty was a traditional *śilpa*, or sculptor, who was trained to understand the specific measurements of *vigrahas* and images, based on the ancient Sanskrit *śilpa* texts. In fact he was the winner of national and international awards for his artistry, so naturally he had the necessary expertise to make the deities of Śrī Śrīmad Gour

Govinda Swami. He had previously been commissioned by the Government of India to produce models of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru which are exhibited in Delhi.

However, after repeated attempts and having consulted with other well known *śilpa* artisans, he was unable to complete the *vigrahas*. Months passed without substantial progress, causing concern for the disciples of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, who were relying upon Bipra Charan Mohanty's earlier assurance of having the *vigrahas* ready in good time. Invitation letters had been posted, inviting dignitaries, *sādhus*, devotees, and the general public to attend the installation of the deities of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja.

Sacīnandana dāsa, who had commissioned Bipra Mohanty, was at times anxious about the lack of progress. One day Bipra Mohanty was overheard speaking to himself in frustration, saying, "How can Sacīnandana dāsa expect me to make the deity of Gour Govinda Swami while the weather is so unfavourable for this process? If the Swami [Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja] is so great, why doesn't *he* make the weather more favourable?" Thinking in this way, working late into the night, Bipra Charan Mohanty went to bed.

The Dream

That night, he dreamt of a *sannyāsī* calling to him in a friendly manner, saying, "Oh, Bipra Charan Mohanty! Have you forgotten me?" Still in his dream Bipra Charan Mohanty replied, "Mahārāja, I have never met your Holiness before in this life." Then the *sannyāsī* asked, "Do you remember, in 1974, when, on the eve of my acceptance of the renounced order of life, I came to the Tapobana *āśrama*, the *āśrama* of Baba Ānanda

Svarūpa at Khandagiri near Bhubaneswar? At that time you too were present to obtain the blessings of that saint, and therefore you were favoured to be chosen as principal of the then famous Khalikot Art College, subsequently renamed as Bibhuti Bhusan Kanungo Art College. Saint Ānanda Svarūpa directed you to take blessings from me, saying, ‘Though he appears as an ordinary person, a school teacher, he is actually a *sādhu* and you should take advantage of his rare presence, accept his blessings, and the purpose for which you are now here will be fulfilled.’” In this way, through the medium of a dream, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami caused Bipra Charan Mohanty to recall their meeting in 1974. Upon hearing Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami’s words in the dream, Bipra Charan Mohanty recalled with clarity the incident. Thereupon, emotionally overwhelmed, he said, “Oh Mahārāja, now I can remember. I did not recognise you. Previously you were looking like a common man, but now you are dressed as a *sannyāsī*.”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami continued, “Oh Bipra Charan Mohanty, now please do your best and finish this work without delay. My disciples, my children are waiting for me, and they are in anxiety due to the delay of my appearance in deity form.” Charan Mohanty then revealed another cause of his delay in finishing the *vigrahas*. “Oh revered Mahārāja-jī, my grandson to whom I am greatly attached, fell from the roof of our building and has sustained severe head injuries. He has been flown to the hospital in Bangalore and is in a critical condition.” Upon hearing this from Charan Mohanty, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami said, “Bipra Charan Mohanty, there is no reason to worry. Very soon you will receive a phone call that your grandson has recovered.”

Jubilant, Charan Mohanty asked, “Oh, revered Mahārāja-jī, when can I expect to hear this good news?” Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami said, “In one hour from now.” After having spoken in this way the *sannyāsī* disappeared from his dream.

At approximately 5:30 a.m. that morning, Charan Mohanty was roused from his sleep by a phone call from his own son with news that his grandson had completely recovered, and that he should distribute sweets to everyone.*

Professor Bipra Charan Mohanty was beyond amazement. Clearly understanding that what he had experienced was not an ordinary dream, he immediately, with renewed enthusiasm, began, once again, to work on the *vigraha*. All this time he had been trying to fashion the deities of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami according to the rules governing that of a conditioned soul, hence he had not been able to create the *vigrahas*. However, after realising that Gour Govinda Swami was not an ordinary person of this material world, he was able to complete the large size deity without further delay.

Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapati (quoting the *śilpa-śāstra*) has written:

“...The *śilpa-śāstra* states that it is not appropriate to worship images fashioned in the proportions of a human body, though they may be in accordance with the natural order. This is because the human body is subject to change and decay in time. But, the image produced by the application of the grammar set out in the *Māna Laksanam* (Iconometry)

*Author’s note: In India sweets are distributed to commemorate a festival or good news.

is eternal, and, hence untouched by time. In the sculptural tradition, the grammar is very important ... It is thus of vital importance that the sculptors in the traditional mode should fully comprehend the grammar and order of this system. Only then, will they be able to design with clarity..."¹

Some time later he started working on the small deity of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja. The first mould is made of clay to then caste the deity out of pure bronze metal. During one hot summer night while working late the professor had to have the doors and windows closed so that the clay would not be affected by any breeze, as it is very delicate work. The professor, who was eighty-six at that time, was feeling tired and hot, becoming frustrated because he was again struggling to get the proportions correct. Then late that same night the whole room became cool and pleasant and all of a sudden Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja appeared to the professor in person and blessed him. When the professor went to offer *pranāms* and touch the feet of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja, he suddenly disappeared. The professor, totally astounded by the event, continued to work on the small deity of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja as, he related, it seemed as if someone was guiding his hand. Consequently, the small deity of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja manifested.

Your Guru Is Not Manifesting

Jagadiśa Pañdita dāsa: After Śrīla Gurudeva [Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami] left his body in 1996, the deity maker [Bipra Charan Mohanty] corroborated what Śrī Laksman Ramanuj Jeeyer, Śrīla Ācāryadeva, had said. Bipra Charan Mohanty had received several awards for making deities,

statues, and many forms of *gurus* from other temples, *mathas* and *āśramas*. He had also been commissioned by the Government of India to make statues of Mahatma Ghandi. This Bipra Charan Mohanty, who had been making deities all his working life, explained to us, “Your *guru* does not fit into the category of a human being. All human beings fit into a category, a mathematical equation of ratio, like it is a fact that the length of the face is equal to the length of the hand and an average man is usually seven and a half heads tall. The nose is a certain size, the head is a certain size, the feet are a certain size.” He had studied this ancient Vedic art for 6 years at university. Then, at the age of 86, we, the disciples of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami requested him to carve *vigrahas* of Śrīla Gurudeva; a small *vigraha* for the temple altar, and a life size *vigraha* for the *samādhi-kuṭīr*. For seven months Mr. Mohanty studied photographs of Śrīla Gurudeva and worked on the deity form. Then he informed us, “Your *guru* is not manifesting. Only once before has this happened to me [in 1966]. There was one *sādhu* who did not fit the mold of a normal human being. I tried to make a deity of him but I could not. His disciples came to my home to do *kīrtana*, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa for two weeks. Only then, could I complete their Gurudeva. On both occasions the personality’s bodily geography, bodily ratio, did not fit into the category of a normal conditioned person. I consider that neither of them were of this mortal world. They are both *mahā-bhāgavatas*.”

I Have Now Realised His Greatness

Professor Bipra Charan Mohanty thus confirmed the divinity of Śrī Srimad Gour Govinda Swami, as did many other mystics, psychics and astrologers in India. Bipra Charan Mohanty also said, “I will make my own deity to worship him [Śrī Śrīmad

Gour Govinda Swami] and I want to change my ways and follow him. I have first hand experience and have now realised his greatness."

GBC Resolution:

2005 GBC Resolution

413. Murtis of Gurus Inside the Temple Room (voted by correspondence).
[Statement]

Whereas ISKCON Law 6.4.8.6. Murtis of Gurus Inside the Temple Room states, There shall be no establishment of *murtis* in any ISKCON temple room of ISKCON gurus subsequent to Srila Prabhupada in succession. (97-617)

And whereas, devotees in Orissa have, some time ago, established *murtis* of HH Gour Govinda Swami in the temple rooms in Bhubaneswar and Gadei Giri. And whereas, although circumstances in Bhubaneswar and Gadei Giri are sufficient to warrant an exception being granted, the GBC wants to reaffirm its existing law and emphasise that it has no intention of granting further exceptions.

It is resolved that:

1. The GBC Body reaffirms its Law 6.4.8.6. Murtis of Gurus Inside the Temple.
2. The GBC Body hereby grants an exception to this law for the ISKCON temples in Bhubaneswar and Gadei Giri, Orissa, to the extent of *murtis* already installed in the temple rooms there. It does not intend to issue any further exceptions.

Author's note: Many Gaudiya Matha Temples and centres around the world celebrate the appearance and disappearance day of Śrī Srimad Gour Govinda Swami, and have his picture on their altars, realising his greatness.

Chapter Sixteen



The Importance of the Correct Vibration

A Brief Technical Approach

Sāmudrika-śāstra is a Sanskrit term that translates roughly as ‘knowledge of bodily features’. The ancient Vedic texts of the *Sāmudrika-śāstra* describe the science of face reading, aura reading, and whole body analysis to depict how every natural or acquired bodily mark encodes its owner’s psychology and destiny, and where each elevation, depression, elongation, diminution, and other marks become relevant. *Silpa-śāstra* and *Vastu-śāstra* are traditional ancient Vedic texts that present the exact measurements for constructing religious and divine forms, such as temples and deities. Modern scientific analysis establishes that temple space is surcharged with enormous positive energy, and visitors experience a sense of physical and mental well-being. The question may arise: How does a mere structure built of stone, or of brick and mortar contain this kind of energy?¹

A Building Is Frozen Music

The basic metaphysical understanding of the art of *vastu* is expressed in the Sanskrit phrase ‘*vasturevā vāstu*’. This means that it is the space itself (*vastu*), which transforms into form (*vāstu*).²

Time transforms the energy of space into reality. These manifested energies often illustrate the influence of time in the form of rhythm (*tāla*). Music is the best example for this. A song, a dance or orchestral music is expressed with the passing of time, which is structured by the rhythm.

In architecture and sculpture, the rhythm of the underlying oscillation is expressed in the rhythmic design of space. A building is, so to speak, ‘frozen music’. It has as much rhythm as a symphony. In its visible forms, time appears to be standing still, and yet it generates an impression of a musical, rhythmic process in consciousness. In this way, the observer is able to experience the subtle presence of dynamic time and vibrating space in the works of architecture. The purpose of the science of *vastu* is to manifest a harmonious and uplifting sound and rhythm inside a building, so that the consciousness of the inhabitants residing in this space will be influenced correspondingly.

In the art of *vastu*, rhythm, measures, forms and proportions are derived from the dance of Lord Śiva. Similarly, the assignment of elements and spatial functions to the directions are derived from the anatomy of the *Vastu-puruṣa*^{*}. Lord Śiva embodies the perfect harmonious organisation of space and time. Its manifestation as a building is the goal of the *vastu* science. Rhythm-bound musical forms and rhythm-bound architectural forms are inviting, alluring and spiritually elevating.³

The grammar of these rhythmic, spatial forms is described in the ancient Vedic scriptures on architecture. The patterns of how time and its rhythm become manifested in space can be presented as mathematical and numerical formulas.⁴

**Vastu-puruṣa* embodies the living consciousness of space. He is the Vedic demigod and chosen ruler over all the architectonic objects.

Tala-Manam – Time Measure

The extraordinary aesthetic beauty and the deep spiritual value of architectural edifices and sculptural forms, and also of every other artifact, are attributable to the unique system of linear or spatial measures adopted in the *vāstu* system. The unit of measure that India was using before the advent of the British system implied a unique concept of ‘time and space’, the like of which would be rare to meet within other traditions of art and architecture. Fortunately, the traditional practitioners in the field of architecture and sculpture are still cherishing them. This time measure has come to be designated in the Vedic scientific and technological fields as ‘*tā-la-mānam*’ or ‘*kāla-mātra*’, meaning ‘time-measure’. This is of very deep significance. Have you ever heard of time-measure being applied to the creation of buildings anywhere in the world, while ‘time’ itself is yet to be understood or defined convincingly and scientifically?⁵

The adoption of the *tāla-mānam* not only ensures the symmetrical beauty and artistic grace of architecture and sculptural forms, but also imparts unique spiritual meaning and symbolism to them.⁶

Arca-Murti – The Form of the Lord

The sculptural tradition in India is closely linked to the architectural field, and when the measurements of the *tā-la-mānam* system are correctly applied in the creation of a sculptural form of the Lord, and after the Lord has been invoked by a qualified *brāhmaṇa*, a pure devotee, then the form or deity is a direct manifestation of the Lord.

“These forms are called *arcā-mūrtis*, or forms of the Lord which can be easily appreciated by the common man. The Lord is transcendental, beyond our mundane senses. He cannot be seen with our material vision, nor can He be heard with material ears. To the degree that we have entered into the service of the Lord or to the proportion to which our lives are freed from sins, we can perceive the Lord. Even though we are not free from sin, the Lord is kind enough to allow us the facility of seeing Him in His *arcā-mūrti* in the temple. The Lord is all-powerful, and therefore He is able to accept our service by presentation to His *arcā*, form. No one, therefore, should foolishly think the *arcā* in the temple to be an idol. Such an *arcā-mūrti* is not an idol but the Lord Himself, and to the degree to which one is free from sin, he is able to know the significance of the *arcā-mūrti*.⁷

The Difference Between the Idol and the Deity

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda clearly described the difference between the idol and the deity. The idol is manufactured by the material mundane mind and the deity of the Lord is the authorised form of the Lord worshipped in the temples according to religious scripture.

As the Lord appears in sound form, in His holy name, He also appears within the *arcā-avatāra*, His incarnation as the Deity, worshipped in the temple. This *pūjā* purifies the minds and senses of the devotees and connects them to the Lord in an attitude of love. Māyāvādīs decry service to the Deity form as idol worship. They argue that God is not present within the Deity, because He is everywhere; but if He is everywhere, then why is He not within the Deity as well? Moisture is also everywhere, even within the air, but when one needs a drink of water, he cannot obtain it from the air.

Viśvakarma
The Architect of the Demigods

Designers and artists belonging to the Vedic classical traditions of sculpture and architecture were known as *viśvakarmās* – creative persons, named after Viśvakarmā, the architect of the demigods. The Vedas and Purāṇas describe the glories of Viśvakarmā, the engineer and constructor of entire cities and wonderful buildings in the upper heavenly planets. Lord Kṛṣṇa had Viśvakarmā build the amazing city of Dvārakā, which was especially beautified by the palaces of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadus. In the construction of that city, the full scientific knowledge and architectural skill of Viśvakarmā could be seen.

Even today, the *śilpis* and *sthāpatis* are known by this name, although there are regional variations. *Viśvakarmas*, (craftsmen and artists) have been the designers of towns, temples, residences, villages, and palaces. They are makers of sculptural works in metal, wood, earth, mortar and stone. They are jewellers, vessel makers, blacksmiths and makers of implements of war. To this day, communities of such artists and craftsmen live in various pockets throughout India, though sadly depleted in number and marginalised in their contribution to society.⁸

Sculpture is a very important part of the Indian heritage, as amply evidenced by the temples and their incomparable artwork where worship of *mūrtis* has been performed from time immemorial.

The artistic basis for the creation of the divine form is a unique heritage of this subcontinent. To house such lyrical forms, countless temples have been raised, and on their

walls, ceilings, and floors the great works of art of the *śilpis* (sculptors) have been created.⁹

Individual Talam & Universal Talam

The basic formula of rhythms is derived from the universal space, known as '*prapañca-tālam*' – universal rhythm. It influences the growth of all animate forms in a mathematical order and this is the fundamental measure adopted by the dancers, musicians, poets, sculptors and architects in India for all the development of artistic forms that they experience and generate from within.¹⁰

Individual Talam in Tune with Universal Talam

South Indian Vastu expert Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapathi, summarises the understanding of space and time as presented so far, in this way: If a part of the all-pervading space becomes isolated and is restricted by four walls (a building), it transforms into a living organism and pulsates in a specific pattern.¹¹

This vibration of relative time, which is especially expressed in the orbital cycles of the planets, stars, sun and moon, also determines the quality or the vibration of the inner space of a living being at the time of birth. Although the inner space is part of the outer space, the living beings maintain the vibration appointed at the time of their birth for their whole life, while the vibrations of outer space change continually. Because of this change, the inner space of living beings and their outer space are generally not in a harmonious relation to each other.¹²

Since the subtle space enclosed in our body is part of the universal space, it is mere logic to say that the *tālam* or *layam* of our inner space should be the same as that of the universe, but in reality, it is very rare to find an individual with inner *tālam* equal to that of the universe. If the individual *tālam* is in tune with the universal *tālam*, the individual concerned is said to be in commune with or in harmony with the universal being or Supreme Personality of Godhead. In that case the individual is said to enjoy spiritual strength, growth, peace, bliss and perfect knowledge.¹³

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has explained in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that:

“...Without perfect knowledge one cannot act perfectly. The real source of knowledge is the *vācaḥ*, or sound vibration given by Vedic instructions. Here the word *vācaḥ*, or vibration, means the Vedic vibration. The origin of creation is sound vibration, and if the sound vibration is clear and purified, perfect knowledge and perfect activities actually become manifest...”¹⁴

Chapter Seventeen



The Wedding Party

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda Mahārāja gives the example of the wedding party story, to teach us.

One big *zamindar*, a landlord, and materially a very opulent person resided in Calcutta city. He had arranged the marriage of his son with a girl in Śāntipura. The bridegroom's party was going to the bride's house. This system is not observed in the West, but this is the Vedic system.

The bridegroom's party, with the very nicely dressed bridegroom, the bridegroom's father, uncle, aunt, grandfather, and other relatives and friends, was on its way in a big procession. Having arrived at the bank of the Ganges, they had to cross the river. The father called the boatman: "Boatman, bring your boat! We have to go to Śāntipura because our son is going to be married. The whole wedding party has to go. We need a nice big boat that can accommodate about fifty people to take us to Śāntipura. The auspicious time, for tying the hands together of the bride and the bridegroom during the wedding, is 4:00 a.m. We have to reach Śāntipura prior to that time."

Tying the hands together of the bride and the bridegroom is part of the marriage ceremony, as at that time, the connection is made and the relationship will be established.

"We have to be there before 4:00 a.m. Can you do it?"

"O yes, I can do it."

"You have to row the boat very quickly so that we will reach our

destination, Śāntipura, in sufficient time.”

That boatman said, “Yes, I can do it, but I have to enlist the services of more men, then we can do it.”

“Alright and I will give you more money. I will give you a reward of some extra hundred rupees.”

The boatman happily agreed.

The bridegroom’s party went into the boat. It was evening, and they were all tired. The boatman said, “You all go and sleep! Don’t worry. We’ll take you there and make sure that you reach Śāntipura in time.”

They all lie down and went to sleep inside the boat. The boatman and his crew were rowing, and rowing the whole night, but when the day dawned and the sun was about to rise, they realised that the boat had not moved an inch! They were struck with wonder and quarrelling among themselves.

Hearing that quarrelling, the members of the bridegroom’s party woke up, “O, What happened? O, the boat is still here! It has not moved one inch! What happened? O, boatman! You told us to sleep, so we all slept. You said that we would reach Śāntipura in sufficient time, what happened? The boat has not moved at all, you have cheated us.”

The boatman said, “We have not cheated you. We have been rowing all night. Look, we are all perspiring, and our muscles in our arms are aching. We are not lazy fellows.”

“You may not be lazy fellows, and you may not have been sleeping, but what happened? The boat has not moved one inch!”

One old man in the party said: “Hey *maji!* O, boatman, did you lift the anchor? Look! Look!”

“O, the anchor has not been lifted!”

Then they all saw that the anchor had not been lifted, but was still stuck in the mud. It was a very heavy anchor and they had been rowing all night. “How can the boat move like that? You are a foolish boatman, you don’t even know how to row a boat, and how to take it to its destination!” They chastised him.

He admitted that it was his fault. Then they became very angry, because everything was spoiled, and *lakhs* of rupees were wasted. The marriage could not take place because the auspicious moment was gone. What would the bride's parents, friends, and relatives be thinking?

This is an allegorical story. The first lesson to be learned here is that if you have developed a very strong attachment towards this material world, with all these material objects of enjoyment, although you are performing *sādhana* and *bhajan*, your eternally perfect loving relationship with the Lord cannot be established. The endeavours of rowing the boat and pulling the ropes are compared with *sādhana* and *bhajan*.

Material Attachments Are the Anchor

The anchor resembles your material attachments. You have not lifted the anchor as yet, but you are rowing the boat! Therefore, how can the boat move? How can your boat ferry you across this dreadful ocean of materialistic existence, and go to the other shore, the spiritual world? It is impossible! Material attachments are the anchor and as yet, you have not lifted it. That is the second teaching.

How Can a Conditioned Soul Ferry You Across this Dreadful Ocean?

The third teaching is that the foolish boatman – *bokā maji*, (the navigator on the boat) has not lifted the anchor, but he is rowing the boat. This foolish boatman, the foolish navigator resembles the 'so-called' *guru*, who is not a real *guru*. He is a *guru* in name only, and surrounded by so many *anarthas*, a conditioned soul. How can he ferry you across this dreadful ocean of materialistic existence if he has not lifted the anchor himself?

The Auspicious Moment Is this Rarely Achieved Human Birth

The father of the bridegroom and the members of the bridegroom's party are the 'so-called' students or disciples of that foolish boatman, who is a 'so-called' *guru*, a *guru* by name only. They believe in a conditioned soul who poses as a *guru* and is surrounded by so many *anarthas*.

The allegory behind the marriage – *vivāha* resembles the perfect eternal relationship with the Lord, which has to be established. The auspicious moment – *śubha-lagna* is attained by an astrological calculation, which ascertains that a particular moment is very favourable. The hands of the bridegroom and the bride should be tied at this auspicious moment.

What is the allegory behind that auspicious moment? That is this rarely achieved human birth – *sudurlabha mānava janma*. Although it is temporary, it is a rarely achieved human birth, because in this birth you can develop complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness – *paramārthika labha*.

The 'so-called' *guru* is greatly attached to this material world and has so many *anarthas*. Somehow or other he has become *guru* and he has a number of *śiṣyas* – disciples, who are also like their *guru*. 'Like-*guru*, like-*śiṣya*'. His *śiṣyas* have strong attachments to their home and hearth, and to this material world. They have not given up their strong attachment and they have so many material desires, and some of them even have the desire for liberation. Therefore, although they are performing *sādhana* and *bhajan*, they are just posing, for them it is just like a theatrical performance, they are hypocrites.

What is the consequence of this? Will they be able to reach the destination, Śāntipura? The destination is the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, which in this case cannot be reached. They will never be able to reach it. In other words, they will not develop *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and therefore cannot render loving service unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. This is only a waste of their rarely achieved human birth, because the goal of human life is not achieved.

Each and every one of these strong material attachments to this body, home and hearth, and hankerings after your own bodily comfort, your own sensual material enjoyments, are anchors. They are anchors that are deeply stuck in the mud, thus how can the boat move if these anchors are not lifted? Therefore, you must lift the anchors of this boat, the human body.

How Can You Lift this Anchor?

*nṛ-deham ādyam sulabham sudurlabham
plavam sukulpam guru-karṇadhāram*
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.17)

In the eleventh canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is written that this rarely achieved human body – *nṛ-deham*, is a most suitable boat to ferry one across this dreadful ocean of materialistic existence. This suitable boat (the human body) is a gift, therefore you should be intelligent enough to obtain an expert navigator, instead of a foolish boatman who is not able to lift the anchor and therefore is incapable to row the boat.

You have to lift that anchor, but how can you lift an anchor that is very deeply stuck in thick mud? It will be lifted by the mercy of *sādhu-guru-vaiṣṇava!* Unless you receive the mercy of *sādhu-guru-vaiṣṇava* this anchor cannot be lifted. Therefore you should approach a *sādhu-guru* and you must surrender at his lotus feet; you must listen to him speak *bhāgavata-kathā*, *kṛṣṇa-kathā* daily. It is essential that you perform *sādhana* and *bhajan* under his expert guidance and render service to him. Pleasing a *sādhu-guru-vaiṣṇava* and obtaining his mercy is very powerful.

In this way the anchor will be lifted, whereby this boat can very easily ferry you across the dreadful ocean of materialistic existence, and enable you to reach your destination, Śāntipura. The allegory of Śāntipura is: Śāntipura is a *pura* where only Kṛṣṇa's loving service –

kṛṣṇa-sevā rajya is. The kingdom of Kṛṣṇa's loving service is Śāntipura, the destination.

Therefore if the anchor is not lifted, (but instead you are only hankering after, and desiring the comforts and pleasure of your body and senses), the boat will never reach its destination. The understanding of the *vivāha* – marriage, is to establish the loving relationship with the Lord. This is the story Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda Mahārāja gave to us.¹

To Accept Guru Means Unconditional Surrender

“...There should be complete surrender. Not conditional, not artificial, not partial. That is *guru-pādāśraya*. To accept *guru* means unconditional surrender. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.7), Arjuna has said, “I become Your śisya, disciple – śisyas te ‘ham śādhī mām tvām prapannam.” One who is under strict discipline, he is a disciple. And *karma-dhāra*, *guru* is the expert navigator.* You cannot go hither and thither. *Karma* also

*

*tvam nah sandarśito dhātrā
dustaram nistitīrśatām
kalim sattva-haram pumśām
karṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam*

“We think that we have met Your Goodness by the will of providence, just so that we may accept you as captain of the ship for those who desire to cross the difficult ocean of Kali, which deteriorates all the good qualities of a human being.” (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.22)

*karnadhāra ivāpāre
bhagavān pāra-darśakah
athābabhāṣe bhagavān
nārādo muni-sattamah*

“You are like a captain of a ship in a great ocean and you can direct us to our destination. Thus addressed, the godly personality, Devarṣi Nārada, greatest of the philosopher devotees, began to speak.” (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 1.13.40) Cont. on next page.

means ear. *Guru* can catch hold of your ear and slap you. You rascal! What are you doing? The *guru* has that right, and you have to accept it, because he is *guru*. You cannot sue him in the court. If someone catches hold of your ear and slaps you, you can sue him in court. But you cannot sue *guru* because you have voluntarily accepted him. *Śisyas te 'ham śādhi mām tvām prapannam* - “I become your *śisya*, I accept you as my *guru*. Please inflict very severe discipline on me.” *Śādhi mām* means ‘inflict very severe discipline on me’. Thereby your strong attachment will be cut off. Whatever severe discipline *guru* inflicts upon you, accept it gladly, without grumbling. Then this strong attachment will disappear. Thereby he is lifting your anchor which is now stuck very deeply in the mud. Then he will row the boat. He is very expert and he knows how to ferry this boat amidst all sorts of obstacles and dangers. But you have to accept his discipline...”²

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami made the point above, “... But you have to accept his discipline...”

On the next page are two examples where Śrīla Prabhupāda explains *śās*, *śiṣ* and *śisya* - disciple.

*nṛ-deham ādyam sulabham sudurlabham
plavam su-kalpam guru-karnadhāram
mayānukūlena nabhasvateritam
pumān bhavābdhim na taret sa ātma-hā*

“The human body, which can award all benefit in life, is automatically obtained by the laws of nature, although it is a very rare achievement. This human body can be compared to a perfectly constructed boat having the spiritual master as the captain and the instructions of the Personality of Godhead as favourable winds impelling it on its course. Considering all these advantages, a human being who does not utilise his human life to cross the ocean of material existence must be considered the killer of his own soul.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.17)

Sisya Means Voluntarily Accepting Ruling

“...And *śāstra* and *śāstra*... These people were driven away by *śāstra*, by weapon, knife. That is *śāstra*. And *śāstra* is the same thing, but it is books. Therefore it is called *śāstra*. The original word is coming from *śās*. *Śās* means ruling, *śās-dhātu*. *Śāstra*, *śāstra*, *śāsana*, *śisya*. *Śisya*. *Śisya* means voluntarily accepting ruling.* That is called *śisya*. The word is the same, *śās*. From *śās*, *śisya*. From *śās*, *śāstra*. From *śās*, *śāstra*. From *śās*, *śāsana*. These are. So sometimes by force, sometimes by voluntarily... So just like *guru-śisya*. The *guru*, he gives enlightenment, and *śisya* voluntarily accepts. That is *guru-śisya*. Similarly *śāstra* means weapon...”³

Sisya Means to Obey - Discipline

Prabhupāda: *Śisya*, this word, very word, means voluntarily accepting the chastisement. This word, *śis*, *śās*, *śās-dhātu*... From *śās-dhātu* comes *śāstra*. *Śastra* means weapon. So weapon is meant for maintaining peace and order. And *śāstra*. *Śāsana*. These are the derivation from original root... *Śisya*. *Śisya* means who has voluntarily accepted to be chastised and ruled by the spiritual master.

Dr. Patel: *Śikṣā* means instruction. So the one who takes the instruction in *śisya*. *Śikṣā*.

Prabhupāda: To obey. *Śisya* means to obey, discipline.

Dr. Patel: Live under the paternity of *guru* to learn.

Prabhupāda: Yes, voluntarily giving him [the spiritual master] the right to rule over.⁴

*Author's note: Or as Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would say numerous times, disciple means one who is under discipline.

Chapter Eighteen



The Missing Link

Most of today's scientists accept without question or rationality the theory originally presented in 1859 by Charles Darwin in his book *The Origin of Species* to be absolute fact, with perhaps a few minor alterations. They admit that there is a missing link in our evolution, half-way between us and the monkeys, our supposed ancestor, but that they will surely discover it sooner or later. Although 157 years have past after the publishing of Darwin's book they have not discovered it as yet. Hence, the conception of evolution is, no matter what way you view it, only a theory.

Spiritual scientists, how-ever, from the Bhaktivedanta Institute* are refuting their illogical arguments by clearly

*The Bhaktivedanta Institute was formed by His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in 1974 to promote the theistic understanding that life comes from life and not from matter. Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was presenting a scientific understanding of religion/philosophy/culture and an auspicious way of life for all human beings. Therefore he formed the Bhaktivedanta Institute with scientists and Phd's to confront the current quagmire that 'life comes from matter'! The Bhaktivedanta Institute was co-ordinated by Śrīpād Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Mahārāja (Dr. T.D. Singh), 1937 - 2006. Their motto: '*Promoting the Synthesis of Science and Spirituality since 1974.*'

In 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda began to converse on scientific topics with Thoudam Dāmodar Singh, a graduate student in biochemistry who had become attracted to Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. The young scientist later became a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and received the name Svarūpa Dāmodara Dāsa. In conversations with Svarūpa

Cont. on next page.

explaining that, yes, there is a missing link, but it is in their incomplete understanding. They promote the understanding, which has been promulgated in the Vedas for millenia, that it is the consciousness of the indestructible soul that inhabits and animates the physical body which evolves, and not the body which mutates into another form of life. Consciousness does not come from matter. Matter is inert, and the body is composed of inert materials; it cannot function without the presence of the soul. Thus there is an evolution of the soul, or an evolution of consciousness, not of gross material matter that makes up this inert material object we call ‘a body’.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami explained that there are five levels of consciousness.

“...This has been revealed by the great *ācāryas* [spiritual masters] in our line, especially by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who has explained the five levels of consciousness: *āvṛta-cetanā*, *sankucita-cetanā*, *mukulita-cetanā*, *vikaśita-cetanā* and *pūrṇa-vikaśita-cetanā*. In English we may refer to these different levels of consciousness as: covered consciousness, a little superior to that is shrunken consciousness, then comes budding consciousness, after which comes blossoming consciousness and then completely blossoming consciousness, which is complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All 8,400,000 species of life come under these five levels of consciousness. The 8 million species other than the humans, live only within

Dāmodara and others, Śrīla Prabhupāda outlined his critique of modern science and asked his scientifically trained followers to develop it in detail. Svarūpa Dāmodara (now Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami) responded positively, and in 1974 he and other disciples founded the Bhaktivedanta Institute. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted the Institute members to challenge erroneous scientific teachings and intelligently present the correct Vedic ones.

two levels of consciousness, which are covered consciousness [*āvṛta-cetanā*] and shrunken consciousness [*saṅkuci-ta-cetanā*]. Only human beings are able to develop the other three levels of consciousness...”¹

The Deer in the Desert

There is the example of the deer foolishly leaving the oasis, where greenery indicates the presence of water, and instead going into the desert in search for water. Being deluded by the vision of water in mirages, it goes further and further into the desert until it grows very weak and ends up dying from heat and thirst. Similarly, the conditioned soul is wandering throughout the material universe, looking for happiness, and does not understand that real happiness is within. Being covered by material consciousness, he is in total ignorance as to what is real happiness and auspiciousness.

As there is no need for the deer to run outside the oasis in the desert in search of water, there is also no need for the human beings to keep looking for happiness in the external realms of this material existence. Happiness is within, in our eternal relationship as loving servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa.* To do this we need the personal association of Śrī Guru.

*Author’s note: This is confirmed in the *Vedānta-sūtra* (1.1.12) as *ānanda-mayo-bhyāsāt* – we are eternally pleasure seeking; however this pleasure cannot be found in matter but in spirit, or the soul and the Supreme soul. Everyone is trying to find happiness in the body; however the body has a beginning, middle and end. Hence our pleasure, or our so called pleasure has a beginning, middle and end.

Contact the Supreme Soul
by Way of
His Divine Representative

Therefore, since we do not understand the soul, and we think that we are the body, and act accordingly, even as aspiring spiritualists, we suffer due to committing numerous blunders and mistakes. We believe mistakenly that we are composed of matter, and are thus forgetful of our true eternal existence as spiritual souls, inseparable parts and parcels of God, servants of God. Hence, whilst we search endlessly for happiness in the material sphere, by trying to enjoy the mod-cons of life, such as; fancy cars, mobile phones, laptop computers, and the rest. Plus engaging in casual sex life, intoxications and the like, we lose sight of reality, or we never even become an apprentice in the attempt to try to understand reality. Everyone wants to be the master, no-one wants to become the apprentice, a common dilemma amongst conditioned souls. All these external trappings of our so-called civilised, industrialised, technologicalised, computerised, nuclear, space, stealth existence that we call ‘modern material life’ actually increase suffering because we over-identify with the body and the virtual reality. Consequently we are looking only outward towards material acquisition for satisfaction and happiness, while losing sight of our eternal spiritual position. Thus, to re-establish ourselves on the platform of the soul, it is necessary to come in contact with those who are well established on that platform. Our eternal spiritual position can only be understood through the association of someone who has fully realised this subject matter like a *sad-guru*, a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

The soul is the indestructible and eternal self, therefore we can say that knowledge of consciousness is the ‘missing link’. Knowledge of how to understand the soul, true knowledge, is obtained by contacting and hearing submissively from one who is the representative of that Supreme Soul, a fully self-realised *sādhu*, a *sad-guru*, a *suddha-vaiṣṇava*, a very intimate servitor of that Supreme Soul. Therefore, to understand consciousness, we must associate with someone who is fully conscious, not only conscious of their bodily behaviour but also fully conscious of the soul and the Supreme Soul. This is self-realisation.

Therefore, in this book, we take the ‘missing link’ one step further, by suggesting that not only do we need to understand that in our original position, *svarūpa*,* we are not matter, but spirit soul, but also that the ‘missing link’ can be revealed to us only by such a great personality, a *sad-guru*.

*bāhya-sparśeṣv asaktātmā
vindaty ātmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā
sukham akṣayam aśnute*

“Such a liberated person is not attracted to material sense pleasure but is always in trance, enjoying the pleasure within. In this way the self-realised person enjoys unlimited happiness, for he concentrates on the Supreme.”²

*ye hi saṁsparśa-jā bhogā
duḥkha-yonaya eva te
ādy-antavantaḥ kaunteya
na teṣu ramate budhaḥ*

*Author’s note: one’s constitutional position or one’s own form.

“An intelligent person does not take part in the sources of misery, which are due to contact with the material senses. O son of Kuntī, such pleasures have a beginning and an end, and so the wise man does not delight in them.”³

*śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhum
prāk śarīra-vimokṣaṇāt
kāma-kroḍhodbhavam vegam
sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī narah*

“Before giving up this present body, if one is able to tolerate the urges of the material senses and check the force of desire and anger, he is well situated and is happy in this world.”⁴

*nāyam deho deha-bhājām nr-loke
kaṣṭān kāmān arhate viḍ-bhujām ye
tapo divyam putrakā yena sattvam
śuddhyed yasmād brahma-saukhyam tv anantam*

“My dear sons, there is no reason to labour very hard for sense pleasure while in this human form of life; such pleasures are available to the stool-eaters [hogs]. Rather, you should undergo penances in this life by which your existence will be purified, and as a result you will be able to enjoy unlimited transcendental bliss.”⁵

A Personality Who Knows Us Better Than We Know Ourselves

We can stop wandering in this material world looking for external happiness only when we are engaged in hearing the

flow of nectar coming from bona-fide Vaiṣṇava sādhus. Divine reality is conveyed through the śuddha-bhaktas, as pipes channel pure water from a spotless spring. To understand our real eternal identity we need to meet, face to face, a personality who knows us better than we know ourselves, who can see into our hearts despite all the material desires covering our real *svarūpa*. Then that personality, a self-realised soul, will give us instruction on what to do and what not to do, according to our individual needs.

This instruction and guidance can only be done when one is personally in front of a self-realised soul, hearing him attentively, then enquiring from him and listening to his answers. We do not adhere to the foolhardy and nonsensical '*broken lips theory*'*, which is a philosophy propounded by those

*This is a theory, [just as the Big Bang and Darwin's theory of Evolution, are theories], propounded by a certain branch of followers of Vedic culture. They present that one does not need to hear from a physically present *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-guru*, one does not need personal instruction, but, all one needs is the book. They make the statement, foolishly, that what if the *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-guru* breaks his lips how do we hear from him then, if he cannot speak...! [?] I have never heard of anyone breaking their lips, have you? However, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has commented in his *Upadeśāvalī*: "Kṛṣṇa's *darśana* can only be attained through the medium of the ear as one hears *hari-kathā* from the pure Vaiṣṇavas. There is no other way."

I list here just a few quotes from Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda:

1. 'It is not possible, however, to train oneself without guidance from the spiritual master.' Please see page 36 of this book.
2. '...the first business of a devotee is to accept a bona fide spiritual master who can train him to engage his various senses in rendering transcendental service to the Lord.' Please see page 36 of this book.
3. '...his first business is to find a bona fide *guru*.' Please see page 37 of this book.
4. '...he must find a bona fide *guru* and take instructions at his lotus feet.' Please see page 37 of this book.
5. '...Unless one gets the opportunity to associate with a bona-fide spiritual master...' Please see page 38 of this book.
6. '...The third-class devotee therefore has to go to the personality of devotee in order to learn the instructions of devotional service...' Please see page 38 of this book.

[Cont. on next page]

who do not understand the verses in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34 and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 25.122, and a plethora of other information cited by all our predecessor ācāryas.

From the Lotus Lips of a Great Personality

As has duly noted by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda,

7. ‘...One should not proudly think that one can understand the transcendental loving service of the Lord simply by reading books...’ Please see page 39 of this book.
8. ‘...One must accept a Vaiṣṇava guru (*ādau gurv-āśrayam*), and then by questions and answers one should gradually learn what pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is...’ Please see page 39 of this book.
9. ‘...One should always remember that a person who is reluctant to accept a spiritual master and be initiated is sure to be baffled in his endeavour to go back to Godhead...’ Please see page 39 of this book.
10. ‘...To attain such an end, one must touch the lotus feet of the spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be achieved by self-endeavour. One must therefore approach a self-realised Kṛṣṇa conscious person and touch his lotus feet...’ Please see page 40 of this book.
11. ‘...One cannot come to the precincts of Kṛṣṇa consciousness unless he touches the dust of the lotus feet of a person who has become a *mahātmā*, a great devotee...’ Please see page 40 of this book.
12. ‘...One must surrender to a bona fide spiritual master. Only this process will help him...’ Please see page 40 of this book.
13. ‘...A gramophone will not help...’ Please see page 74 of this book.
14. ‘...You must approach a person who is life living Bhāgavata...’ Please see page 74 of this book.
15. ‘...through the mouth of the devotees...’ Please see page 74 of this book.
16. ‘...not gramophone - through the mouth of, through the lips...’ Please see page 74 of this book.
17. ‘...Gramophone or tape record speaker, that will not be. You must be live speaker...’ Please see page 75 of this book.
18. ‘...from devotee, from the lips of the devotee...’ Please see page 75 of this book. The next two quotes are from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda.
19. ‘...from the lotus lips of a great personality...’ Please see page 163 of this book.
20. ‘...from the lotus lips of Śrī Gurudeva...’ Please see page 165 of this book.

Question: Is it possible for a human being to describe the affairs of the transcendental plane?

Answer by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabh-upāda:

Only a person who has descended from the spiritual world can speak about that place. One who belongs to the phenomenal world cannot actually report on matters of the transcendental plane. However, upon receiving the fortune of hearing *hari-kathā* from the lotus lips of a great personality who has descended from the spiritual world, one can obtain information about Vaikunṭha – the infinite Kingdom of God.

No transcendental entity can be comprehended through a worldly line of thought. It is not appropriate to consider the transcendent and the phenomenal to be one and the same. With good fortune, one may find a great person who has come from the other world. Śrī Caitanyadeva has therefore said:

*kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane*
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.47)

“When a soul becomes extremely fortunate, Śrī Kṛṣṇa showers mercy upon him by coming personally to teach him. He appears externally in the form of śrī guru, and internally in the form of the Supersoul.”⁶

We are adherents of *sadhu-saṅga*, of meeting a *sādhu*, of listening to him explain the answers to our questions [see verse Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 25.122], of enquiring from him and of him clearing all our doubts. That can only be done in a reciprocal relationship, between a physically present self-

realised *guru* who can see into the heart of a present disciple. If one is not a self-realised soul, he will teach general knowledge, and say ‘I have heard this’, or ‘I have read that’. It is of course valid but it is not as spiritually potent. Since they cannot see into someone’s heart, they do not know his or her real condition and cannot really prescribe the correct remedy for each individual’s condition.

The Hearing Process *Srauta-Parampara*

*tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet**
samit-pāṇih śrotriyam brahma-niṣṭham

“To learn transcendental subject matter, one must approach a spiritual master. In doing so, he should carry fuel to burn in sacrifice. The symptom of such a spiritual master is that he is expert in understanding the Vedic conclusion, and therefore he constantly engages in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”⁷

In the *Upaniṣads* it is written: *ācāryavān puruṣa veda*. What does this mean? *Tattva-jñāna* descends to one who has heard from a bona fide *ācārya*, by *śrauta-paramparā*. One cannot understand it by a speculative process: it is only obtained by the descending process [*avaroha-panthā*], by hearing from a bonafide *ācārya*, who is *tattva-jñātā*, who knows *tattva*, and who is *tattva-draṣṭā*, who sees *tattva*. By ‘*tattva*’ we mean *advaya-jñāna-tattva*, the Absolute Truth Kṛṣṇa, Vrajen-dra-kumāra, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. One who sees *tat-tva*, he is *tattva-draṣṭā*... Such a bona fide person can impart *tattva-jñāna* unto you. If you can take shelter of that *ācārya*

*Author’s note: *eva* – certainly; *abhibacchet* – must go.

and serve him, please him and humbly enquire about *tattva*, then he will be pleased to impart this knowledge to you...⁸

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has also commented on the fact that:

Question: By what means can one know Śrī Bhagavān?
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda: One will have to hear with faith the *kathā* of Bhagavān coming from the lotus lips of Śrī Gurudeva. There is no way to know Śrī Bhagavān other than by whole-heartedly surrendering unto the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. Only a person who does so can know Śrī Bhagavān.⁹

You Must Surrender to a Sad-Guru

“...So, to understand this knowledge, one has to approach an *ācārya*. *Ācārya* means one who knows the purpose of the Vedic literature, *sāstra* - *āśṛnoti yah sāstram* - and practices, and teaches his disciple

And, *ācārya upāsanam*: Before worshipping the Lord, you must first of all worship the *ācārya*. Just like here, Kṛṣṇa said in the beginning, *ācāryopāsanam*, and in the middle, He says, *mayi cānanya-yogena bhakti-avyabhicāriṇī*. So, before engaging yourself in devotional service to the Lord, *ācāryopāsanam*, you must first of all worship the *ācārya*. One cannot become a devotee personally without *ācārya*. Just like some rascals say, ‘What is the use of accepting *guru*?’ Of course, persons they may have got very bad experience...

But who is *ācārya*? *Ācārya* means one who has received the Vedic knowledge through the *paramparā* system. *Evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduh* [Bg. 4.2]. *Ācārya* cannot be manufactured, self-made. No. He must come down from the disciplic succession. He is *ācārya*. You have

to approach such *ācārya* who is coming in disciplic succession. *Ācāryavan puruṣo veda*. One who is under the shelter of *ācārya*, he knows things. So Kṛṣṇa recommends also here that if you actually want to become in knowledge, if you want to have real knowledge, then you must worship *ācārya*. *Ācāryopāsanam*. This is Vedic system. *Tad vijñānārthatam sa gurum evābhigacchet* [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12].

It is not that ‘If I like, I can go to a *guru*; if I don’t like I can learn the books at home and learn everything.’ No, that is not possible. Practically... Just like if you purchase some medical book and study at home and if you begin to practice, you will be called a quack. You will not be recognised by the government. You will not get the practitioner’s registration. You will not. Unless you have passed through the medical college your medical examination, you will not be accepted, even if you say that ‘I have read all the books.’ Similarly, if you simply think that ‘I have read...’ As we see generally, ‘Oh, I have read *Bhagavad-gītā* hundred times.’ But you ask him what is Kṛṣṇa, he cannot say. Because he has not approached the *ācārya*. This is the difficulty. He might have read *Bhagavad-gītā* a thousand times, but he will not understand a single word because he has not approached an *ācārya*.

Therefore Vedic literature says *tad vijñānārthatam sa gurum evābhigacchet* [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12]. *Abhigacchet*. This word is used when the sense is ‘You must.’ This is the *vidhilin* form of the verb *gacchet*, *abhigacchet*. ‘You must’. There is no excuse. You cannot learn. *Tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam* [SB 11.3.21]. If you want to know *uttamam* subject matter - *ut* means *udgatam*, transcending. *Tamaḥ* means this material world. This material world is *tama*, darkness. If you are interested in the matter which is transcendental to this material world, that means the spiritual world, then *tasmād gurum prapadyeta*, you must surrender to a *guru*...”¹⁰

Just by Reading Your Books? No...

One may think that if he is reading books, then he does not need to approach a living *sādhu* personally, however Śrīla Prabhupāda has said that just reading books is not enough. One does not necessarily need to meet the author of the book but he must meet one who has understood the subject matter.

Madhudviṣa: One cannot become a medical practitioner by simply reading the books. He must study under a medical practitioner. So, in the case of your books, is it possible to become a devotee without actually having personal association with you? **Just by reading your books?**

Prabhupāda: No, it is not that you have to associate with the author. But one who knows, if you cannot understand you have to take lesson from him. Not necessarily that you have to contact the author always.

Devotee: Just like the textbooks are not written by the teachers; they are written by other professors.

Devotee: Usually you don't even meet the author.

Prabhupāda: Simply, one who knows the subject matter, he can explain.

Madhudviṣa: But can your, would your purports, would that serve as explanation besides...

Prabhupāda: No, no, anyone who knows the subject matter, he will be able to explain. Not necessarily the author is required to be present there. [break] ...to study from a medical man, I never said you have to study from the author. Or one who understood the author's purpose. Just like we are explaining *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. Not that one has to learn directly from Kṛṣṇa. One who has understood Kṛṣṇa, from him. That is *paramparā* system.¹¹

Nandarāṇī: But their faith is there.

Prabhupāda: That is good, but that is called *bhakta prakṛta smṛtaḥ*. That is not exactly on the transcendental platform. It's on the material platform, just appreciating some great power beyond our reach, that's all. They don't have a clear idea. Therefore they are disturbed when they think of form. They think form means limitation. At least, they think like that. They do not know. Nobody knows, except in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Why we have described about God in so many books? But they have this idea. Very poor idea... But they are accepting that God is great, that will help them in the future.

Nandarāṇī: That's elevating them. That faith is elevating them?

Prabhupāda: Someday, if they come in contact with a real devotee, they'll appreciate. Just like you are coming... So they have to meet some devotee, then they'll be benefited. With their present idea, there will be very slow progress. Practically no progress, there is little progress, very slow. So, unless they come in contact with a pure devotee, then...

Hari-śauri: Your books.

Nandarāṇī: If we distribute your books and *prasāda*, then that is as good as them coming to meet you personally.

Prabhupāda: No, personally also, you can do.¹²

The Book Bhagavata & the Person Bhagavata

“...One *Bhāgavata* is this book *Bhāgavata*, another *bhāgavata* is the person *bhāgavata*. One who lives on the book *Bhāgavata*, he is a person *bhāgavata*. There are two kinds of *bhāgavata*. So we have to learn *Bhāgavatam* from the living *bhāgavata*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara, advised one *brāhmaṇa* who wrote something about Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There were many poets and

writers who used to come and visit Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He was at Jagannātha Puri, and they would present some writings, but these writings would not be presented before Caitanya Mahāprabhu unless it was sanctioned by His secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara. That was the system. So one *brāhmaṇa* wrote one poetry. The purport of that poetry was that “Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa. But He cannot move. He’s wooden Kṛṣṇa. And Caitanya Mahāprabhu is also Kṛṣṇa, but He is moving Kṛṣṇa.” That means that he distinguished between Jagannātha and Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So this is not *siddhānta*.

This is not the conclusion of the *śāstra*. The *Śāstra*’s conclusion is: the Deity and Kṛṣṇa are the same. There is no difference. We have many times explained this. The worshipful deity in the temple, is not different from Kṛṣṇa. So Svarūpa Dāmodara did not approve of the poetry to be presented to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. At that time, he chastised him that “You do not know the conclusion, and you dare to write some poetry. Don’t do this.” And he said, *bhāgavata para giya bhāgavata-sthāne:(?)* “If you want to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, then you go and study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from the pure devotee. Then you’ll understand. Otherwise, you’ll write all these nonsense.” *Yāha bhāgavata pada vaiṣṇavera sthāne.*

So there are two *bhāgavatas*. You study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from a living *bhāgavata*. So, if one does not surrender unto the living *bhāgavata*, he cannot understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I have seen many learned scholars, they cannot understand *Bhāgavatam*. Sanskrit scholars, they will read, but they will not be able to understand. Similarly, if anyone studies *Bhagavad-gītā* from the scholarly point of view, a-b-c-d, he’ll not understand. Kṛṣṇa therefore says, “Arjuna, I shall speak the lessons of *Bhāgavata* unto you because you are My very dear friend and you are My devotee.” Kṛṣṇa did not want to speak *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* to a scholarly stu-

dent. No. These books are not to be understood by mundane scholarship. That is not possible..."¹³

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is stated

*eka bhāgavata bara bhāgavata śāstra
āra bhāgavata bhakta bhakti-rasa pātra*

"One of the *Bhāgavatas* is the great scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the other is the pure devotee who is absorbed in the mellow of loving devotion, *rasa*."¹⁴

*dui bhāgavata dvārā diyā bhakti-rasa
tāñhāra hṛdaye tāñra preme haya vaśa*

"Through the actions of these two *bhāgavatas* the Lord instills the mellow of transcendental loving service into the heart of a living being, and thus the Lord, in the heart of His devotee, comes under the control of the devotee's love."¹⁵

*yāha, bhāgavata pada vaiṣṇavera sthāne
ekānta āśraya kara caitanya-caraṇe*

"If you want to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you must approach a self-realised Vaiṣṇava and study it under his guidance while at the same time taking exclusive shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya."¹⁶

From a Living Bhagavata

We should try to understand the statement by Śrīla Prabhupāda,

“...You study Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from a living *bhāgavata*. If one does not take or does not surrender unto the living *bhāgavata*, he cannot understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam...”^{*17}

It is a fact that, “...The guidance of a pure devotee is therefore always required...”¹⁸

Cry for the Sun

*uddhava uvāca
kṛṣṇa-dyumaṇi nimloce
gīrṇeṣv ajagareṇa ha
kim nu naḥ kuśalam brūyām
gata-śrīsu grheṣv aham*

“Śrī Uddhava said: My dear Vidura, the sun of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has set, and our house has now been swallowed by the great snake of time. What can I say to you about our welfare?”

A dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa, an *ācārya*, comes here to give us Kṛṣṇa - *kṛṣṇa se tomāra, kṛṣṇa dite pāra* “O Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, Kṛṣṇa belongs to you because you have bound up Kṛṣṇa in your heart with the rope of love. Only you can give me Kṛṣṇa.” *Ācāryas* like my revered spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, come here to give us Kṛṣṇa, to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. He was so good for us. When an *ācārya* disappears, a dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa, we should cry because this is the most acute pain for us. When the *ācārya* leaves, a dark period comes, the sun sets and darkness comes. Here Uddhava has said, “The Kṛṣṇa sun has set, so darkness is

*“...So, if one does not surrender unto the living *bhāgavata*, he cannot understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam...” (Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.23 in L.A. June 20, 1972)

prevailing. We are in darkness. What auspiciousness is there for us?" Similarly, when such a dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa disappears, there is a dark period, a most inauspicious period. We are in that most inauspicious, most dark period, just groping in the darkness. As the effulgent sun may be covered over by a patch of dark clouds, similarly a dark period has come. Definitely we are in a dark period. What auspiciousness is there? So we must cry for the effulgent sun to rise again. Let that patch of dark clouds disappear! We must cry for it. We are just spending the dark night in a motel, but we should not sleep and snore. We should just cry and cry, anxiously waiting for the rising of the effulgent sun. "Let the darkness disappear and the effulgent sun rise so that I can catch up my path to Puruṣottama-dhāma! I am just a traveller spending the dark night in this motel." This illusory material world is compared to a motel. The illusory energy of the Lord is the darkness, whereas Kṛṣṇa is like the sun - *kṛṣṇa-surya sama, māyā haya andhakāra*. Those who are covered by this illusory energy are in darkness. So we must pray for that effulgent sun to rise. Do not forget this. This is severe grief for us. We have to cry and then pray for the effulgent sun to rise, then all happiness, all auspiciousness and enlightenment will come and then we will catch up the road to Puruṣottama-dhāma, the abode of Lord Jagannātha. Otherwise where is there any auspiciousness for us if we are bereft of devotion, Kṛṣṇa and His very dear devotee?¹⁹

ISKCON Is One of the Branches Of the Caitanya Tree

If one is very sincere and is crying out for *sādhu-saṅga* within the core of one's heart, then Kṛṣṇa will send a *sādhu* to

help. ISKCON is a branch of the Caitanya tree and part of the Brahmā-Mādhva-Gaudīya-sampradāya.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Goswami describes the Caitanya tree as follows,

*madhya-mūla paramānanda purī mahā-dhīra
aṣṭa dike aṣṭa mūla vṛkṣa kaila sthira*

“With the sober and grave Paramānanda Purī as the central root and the other eight roots in the eight directions, the tree of Caitanya Mahāprabhu stood firmly.”²⁰

*skandhera upare bahu śākhā upajila
upari upari śākhā asaṅkhyā ha-ila*

“From the trunk grew many branches, and above them innumerable others.”²¹

*viśa viśa śākhā kari’ eka eka maṇḍala
mahā-mahā-śākhā chāila brahmāṇḍa sakala*

“Thus the branches of the Caitanya tree formed a cluster or society, with great branches covering all the universe.”²²

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has written in his purport to this verse:

“Our International Society for Krishna Consciousness is one of the branches of the Caitanya tree.”²³

I Offer My Respects
To All the Branches of the Tree

Therefore Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Goswami, has written:

*vande śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-
premāmara-taroh priyān
śākhā-rūpān bhakta-gaṇān
kṛṣṇa-prema-phala-pradān*

“I offer my obeisances to all the dear devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the eternal tree of love of Godhead. I offer my respects to all the branches of the tree, the devotees of the Lord who distribute the fruit of love of Kṛṣṇa.”²⁴

In his purport to this verse Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda writes:

“...Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī therefore offers equal respect to all the preachers of the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who are compared to the branches of the tree. ISKCON is one of these branches, and it should therefore be respected by all sincere devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu...”²⁵

Chapter Nineteen



The Power of Sadhu-Guru's Mercy

Darśana with Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami on 11 September 1993,
at the Bhaktivedanta Manor, UK.

Invaluable Gems

Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: If you float on the surface you will collect fish. If you go deep, deeper to the deepest region, then you will collect the invaluable gems. Unless you go deep, deeper and deepest, how can you get the invaluable gem that is *kṛṣṇa-prema*? That is the invaluable gem.

Clarify All Your Doubts

Devotee: We can go deeper and deeper by associating with *sādhu*, by asking questions...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Clarifying all your doubts, *āśaṁśacet* no tinge of doubt should be there. *Samśayātmā vinaśyati*, if a tinge of doubt is there you'll perish. Clarify all your doubts. That is achieved by the mercy of *sādhu*. Without his mercy, nothing can be achieved.

Sadhu's Mercy Dispels the Darkness

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Their [the *sādhus*] mercy *doyā, kṛpā*, is very, very powerful. It is like enlightenment, *kṛpā-āloka*, and then your eye will be opened. Such *āloka*, light will come. Your eye will be opened then you can see correctly. The sun rises and gives light. It dispels the darkness prevailing outside. How will the darkness prevailing in your heart be dispelled? The sun cannot do it. It is only by the *sādhu's* mercy. The *sādhu's* mercy dispels the darkness prevailing in your heart. They open the inner eye. With that eye you can see the Supreme Lord. That is *kṛpā-āloka*, the enlightenment of mercy. Then you can see the Supreme Lord, understand Him and see Him. Without that you cannot. That mercy is so powerful. *Vaiṣṇavera kṛpā, jāhe sarva-siddhi*,* all perfection is achieved by the mercy of a Vaiṣṇava. But, two sides are there. Get the mercy of such a Vaiṣṇava, please him and get the mercy.

If You Commit Offence

If you commit offence, speaking ill of a Vaiṣṇava, blaspheming a Vaiṣṇava, everything is lost. If you have achieved anything it is all destroyed, it is all lost now. You are bereft of everything now. You will lose everything; any education, any *tapasya*, anything you have, if you commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādhā* you will lose everything, it is completely lost. Therefore we say: Do not commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādhā*. Become as humble as a blade of grass, lowest of the low. All are Vaiṣṇavas but me. I am not a Vaiṣṇava. All are superior to me; lowest of the low.

*Author's note: Quoted on page 130 of this book, The Pure Devotee. Song 12 from *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* - The desire tree of Auspiciousness, By Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Verse five.

If a list will be made, number 1-2-3 like that, my name will come last, no one is below me; every one is above me. This is the attitude, *tṛṇād api sunīcena*. This is the attitude, *bhāva*. Unless you develop this attitude you cannot do *hari-bhajana*, you cannot get the mercy of a Vaiṣṇava, you cannot achieve the supreme perfection.

They Are Not Vaṁśava Sampada

Devotee: As told, one can become humble by the causeless mercy of a Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Yes, by the causeless mercy of a Vaiṣṇava you will get all perfection, why not this? You hear, you understand this and become humble. Why such pride and arrogance? Why such demoniac characteristic?

*dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca
krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca
ajñānam cābhijātasya
pārtha sampadam āsurīm*

“Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance, these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature, O son of Prīthā.”¹

Āsurīm, demons, they have demoniac characteristics. They have no *vaiṣṇava sampada*, divine characteristics. It [pride] is a demoniac characteristic. Those who are real *sādhus*, they are humble.

Devotee: When you go to India and take bath in the Ganges or the Yamunā, and there are *bābājīs* there, they tell you they

will do the *pūja* and you give this much money, and then everything will be all right.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: They demand money? Then they are not *sādhus*.

Sadhu Is Greater than the Ganga

*gaṅgāra paraśa hoile paścāte pāvan
darśane pavitra koro ei tomāra guṇa*

“One becomes purified after bathing in the waters of the sacred Ganges many times, but just the sight of you purifies the fallen souls. This is your great power.”²

If you go to the Ganges and touch the water, or if you take bath there, then you may be purified, but *darśane pavitra koro-ei tomāra guṇa*, “O Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, merely by your *darśana* one becomes purified.” So *sādhu* is greater than the Gaṅgā.

A Vaṁśava Never Demands Money

Devotee: Yes. But you know, like the *vrajavāsīs*, all *vrajavāsīs* are Vaiṣṇavas so why not respect... I suppose in one-way we are not respecting when they say do this *pūjā*, because that's their living, isn't it?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Let them be Vaiṣṇavas. We pay our respect to them, that's all right. But why are they demanding money? A Vaiṣṇava never demands money. A Vaiṣṇava is so merciful. He offers mercy only, and in return he never demands anything. But one who demands money is not a Vaiṣṇava. Thereby they are exhibiting a profession.

They do not know *brahma-tattva*: *brahma-tattvam na jānāti brahma-sūtrenā garvitah*.^{*} They are very proud, *garvitah*, and with the *brahma-sūtra* they say, “Don’t you know, I am Brahmin? You see, this is my brahminical thread. I’ll curse you! All your forefathers will be destroyed. Give me money, give me money. Give me *dakṣiṇa*, give me *bhojana*, give me food. Satisfy me.” It goes on like that.

Kṛṣṇa Will Manifest Before You

Devotee: Mahārāja, why is it in India, more and more temples are becoming like that? You know, the priests down there, say, if you put some money then I will open the curtains and you can see Rādhā Gokulānanda, or whoever it is.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: That is a very good source of income. We cannot earn money, all right; this is a source of income. Give money then I can show you the Lord. *Calo, calo*. If you can develop *bhakti* then you can show. Kṛṣṇa will manifest before you, the very beautiful form of Śyāmasundara. It is not that by giving some money to a *pāṇḍā*, he will open the curtain and you can see. What is that?

*Author’s note:

“...The Dharma-śāstra writer Atri has stated:

*brahma-tattvam na jānāti
brahma-sūtrenā garvitah
tenaiva sa ca pāpena
viprah paśur udāhṛtaḥ*

‘One who proudly advertises himself as a sanctified *brāhmaṇa* but is ignorant of the Absolute Truth is because of this sin called a *pasu-vipra*.’ Therefore by drinking the water that has washed the feet of such a *pasu-vipra*, ordinary, foolish, bewildered living entities will immediately become *pasus*, or animals...” (From the *Gaudīya-bhāṣya* commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Ādi-khaṇḍa, verse 17.20: The Lord’s Travel to Gayā, by Śrila Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda)

Sadhu-Vaisnava Is More Than a Tirtha.

Devotee: The people, they go for *yātrā*, or tourist *yātrā*, they say...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: *Tīrtha-yātrā?*

Devotee: Yes, *tīrtha-yātrā*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: We were discussing that.

Devotee: It is very purifying. Is it all right to go on that, Mahārāja?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: You were in the class?

Devotee: Yes, yes, I was in the class. It is purifying, yes, I know. But...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: We were discussing that, what is a *tīrtha*. *Yahañ sādhu, tahañ tīrtha tahañ vṛndāvana*, where there is a *sādhu*, that place is a *tīrtha*; it is Vṛndāvana. But Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has said, what benefit is there if you travel thousands and thousands of miles, spending thousands and thousands of pounds or dollars to visit some *tīrtha* and bathe there in the holy water of the *tīrtha*, just to wash off your sins, and you don't go to meet a *sādhu* and have association of a *sādhu* who stays there, who is engaged in *bhajana*? By his presence there, by his *bhajana* the place has become a *tīrtha*. If you do not do that then your *tīrtha-yātrā* is useless. *Yahañ sādhu, tahañ tīrtha* - where there is such a *sādhu* that is a *tīrtha*. A *sādhu* Vaiṣṇava is more than a *tīrtha* – *tīrthera parama tumi*. When Mahāprabhu saw Īśvara Purī He said, “*gayā-yātrā saphala āmāra*”, I came to Gayā to offer oblations to My deceased father but I achieved success because I have seen you, O Vaiṣṇava Thākura. You are the supreme *tīrtha*. Your lotus feet are the supreme *tīrtha*. One

**Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa* verse 17.50.

who goes to a *tīrtha* and offers *pīṭḍa* to his father, then his father may be delivered, or his grandfather or great grandfather may be delivered, but how can those, whose names he does not know and does not utter, be delivered? But one who can see you, such a Vaiṣṇava who is the *parama-tīrtha*, supreme *tīrtha*, *crores* of his forefathers are delivered, *koti-pitṛ-puruṣa*. So, the sādhu Vaiṣṇava is such a *tīrtha*. He is *parama-tīrtha*, the supreme *tīrtha*. Then why would you go to a *tīrtha* and give money to the *pāṇḍās*?

Chapter Twenty



What Kind of Spiritual Master Can Remove Confusion?

Srīla Prabhupāda: ...Everyone in the material world is confused about spiritual identity. It is therefore our duty to approach a bona fide spiritual master who can give us real knowledge.

Mr. O'Grady: I am very confused.

Srīla Prabhupāda: So you must approach a spiritual master.

Mr. O'Grady: And he makes a decision on how to help me stop this confusion?

Srīla Prabhupāda: Yes, the spiritual master is one who solves all confusion. If the spiritual master cannot save his disciple from confusion, he is not a spiritual master. That is the test...

... The spiritual master is one who has received the mercy of God, and he can deliver the solution to the confused man. One who has received the mercy of God can become a spiritual master and deliver that mercy to others.¹

Confusion

Confusion reigns. Why? Because of no personal instruction. There is no clear path or avenue to follow. The direction is not clear.

In our daily life we need to understand the path (especially in spiritual life) as everyone is floating on the chariot of the mind and acting on it [*manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*]. The religion or *dharma* of the mind (*manodharma* – one who is lost in the world of mental concoctions) is *sāṅkalpa* and *vikalpa*, acceptance and rejection.

In our own personal lives as *sādhakas*, as conditioned souls, if we are in confusion, how can we help others?

Therefore, if we are not this example as explained below:

*kṛpā-sindhuḥ su-sampūrnah
 sarva-sattvopakārakah
 nisprhah sarvataḥ siddhah
 sarva-vidyā-viśāradah
 sarva-saṁśaya-saṁchettā
 'nalaso gurur āhṛtah*

“One who is an ocean of mercy, who is fulfilled in all respects, who has all good qualities, who works for the benefit of all souls, who is free from lust, who is perfect in all respects, who is well-versed in the scriptures, who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa, ‘who can remove all the doubts of his disciples’, and who is always alert in the service of Kṛṣṇa is known as a genuine spiritual master.”²

If we cannot remove the doubts of ourselves and others then we are neophytes. Hence confusion still remains.

A Self-Realised Sadhu Is the Crying Need of the Day

Then who will be able to clear our doubts? Who will clear the confusion? We need to find someone who knows us better than we know ourselves. That person is the *sādhu*, a pure devotee of the Lord. He is the one whom we can approach and present our questions to for clarification and deeper understanding. Only such a pure Vaiṣṇava can truly clear any doubt or misunderstanding from our heart.

“...One should take shelter of a pure devotee, who has nothing to do with this material world but is simply engaged in devotional service. By serving him only, one can transcend the qualitative material condition. In this verse it is recommended (*yogeśvara-upāsanayā*) that one serve the lotus feet of the topmost *yogī*, or the devotee. To serve the topmost devotee means to hear from him about the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To hear the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead from the mouth of a pure devotee is to acquire a pious life...”³

Some may raise the objection, “Oh, but I cannot see a *sādhu*.” This is a mistaken view. The fact is that simply by using our faulty senses and mind, *sādhu* cannot be seen. First hear and then see. [As has been explained on pages 116 and 117 of this book]. That is the process; by hearing submissively. We think that we can see the *sādhu* but it is the *sādhu* who is seeing us. *Guru* is the seer, we are the seen, we are to be observed in our very conditioned, confused state.

If one does not need assistance, if he is not confused in any way and can remove all the doubts and confusion of others,

then he is a pure devotee. If one is a pure devotee he sees Kṛṣṇa, he can see into the hearts of one and all. Can we do it? I doubt it. If we are confused, then how can we be of much genuine assistance to others who are similarly confused? Why try to help others with their confusion when we cannot help ourselves? We need assistance and that assistance comes from one who knows Kṛṣṇa, who sees Kṛṣṇa, who is with Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise our attempts at relieving the confusion of others can only be partial, conditional and artificial.

Unfortunately, nowadays the advice is often given simply to read books, to listen to MP3 lectures or watch videos, but we seldom hear the advice to search for a *mahā-bhāgavata* spiritual master.

It is a fact that we do need to hear answers to our questions, and who better to ask to than a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a pure devotee of the Lord.

However here Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“...Such a Vaiṣṇava should be accepted as an *uttama-adhikārī*, a highly advanced devotee, and his association should always be sought...”⁴

Due to continued misunderstanding of the need for a relationship with a top quality *guru* (*sad-guru*), confusion still reigns. The personal association of a top level *sadhu* is needed to ‘clear all our doubts’. The self-realised *sādhu* is the positive alternative to listening to our minds.

In a lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami said:

“...Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted; *niśreyasaya*: which I have not yet completely explained. It will take me a week to explain it completely. It is now 11:30 a.m., I began class at 8:00 a.m., that is three and a half hours. It will take daily three and a half hours, for one week then the whole, complete explanation, will be given. How can you understand Prabhupāda’s purport? Can you understand it?...”⁵

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda’s books are the conclusive outcome of the understanding of the *siddhānta*, but how will the conditioned soul understand these conclusive outcomes without approaching a self-realised *guru*?

The Books of the Previous Acaryas

And what about the books and purports of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, are they not also the conclusive outcome of the understanding of the *siddhānta*? How will we understand these books? Do we read the books of the previous *ācāryas*? How will we understand their purports without the help of a self-realised *guru*? How many times have we heard “...We do not need to read the books of the previous *ācāryas*...”*

However Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has said:

“...false devotees think that studying books of the previous *ācāryas* is unadvisable, like studying dry empiric philosophies. But Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, following the previous *ācāryas*, has inculcated the conclusions of the scriptures in the six theses called the *Sat-sandarbhas*. False devotees who

*Please see author’s footnote at the end of this chapter.

have very little knowledge of such conclusions fail to achieve pure devotion for want of zeal in accepting the favourable directions for devotional service given by self-realised devotees...”⁶

The operative word here being ‘self-realised’. Because the self-realised *sādhu* knows the imports of the Vedas.

An example of such a *sādhu* is Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. When he first met Śrīla Prabhupāda, he was instructed by His Divine Grace to translate his books into Hindi, this task he commenced immediately. However, wherever Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted one of the previous *ācāryas* in his purports, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would obtain the relevant book and read ten pages before that quote and ten pages after that quote and thus he made notes on the writings of the previous *ācāryas*. Having collected all the books of the previous *ācāryas* for further study, he was in a position to explain the *siddhānta* in an amazing way.

In their book *The Hare Krishna Movement*, Dr Edwin F Bryant and Dr Maria L. Ekstrand describe the following:

“...Gaura [Gour] Govinda Maharaja was an elderly Indian disciple of Bhaktivedanta Swami and Vaishnava by birth, thus more senior, learned, exemplary, and inspirational than the younger Westerners...”⁷

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was trained to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa from the early age of two years by his exalted Vaiṣṇava grandfather. He began the study of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with his Vaiṣṇava father at the age of six to the age of eleven. He began the study of the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* from the age

of twelve to sixteen years with his uncles, the great *kīrtanīyas* from the village of Gadāi-Giri*. From seventeen years of age to forty four years of age he studied the four *Vedas*, the 18 *Purāṇas* and 108 *Upaniṣads*. Then he left home in search of a bona fide spiritual master from whom he could take *sannyāsa*.

The Protector of the *Siddhānta*

The *sādhu* holds the key to the *siddhānta*, and he unlocks unlimited information. Thus what has been said and written by the great *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-mahājanas* can only be upheld in reality by another great *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-mahājana*. Hence the *sādhu* is the protector of the *siddhānta*; *siddhānta-rakṣaṇa*.

Compensated by Seva

Also Śrīla Prabhupāda has stated:

“*Tad viddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā* [Bg. 4.34]... First of all, you must find out a person where you can fully surrender, *pranipātena*. And then you can enquire [*paripraśnena*], and the enquiry should be compensated by *sevā* [*sevayā*]...”⁸

God Is Not Far Away

Mr. O’Grady: The problem is to find this spiritual master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is not a problem. The problem is

*Author’s note: Please see chapters one and two of the life of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, *Kṛṣṇālīṅgita-vigraha* volume one for more information on the famous village of Gadāi-Giri and the illustrious Vaiṣṇava family he was born into. Also please see the booklet ‘Gour Govinda Swami – Who Was He’ pages iv and v for extra information on this subject matter.

whether you are sincere. You have problems, but God is within your heart. *Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām*. God is not far away. If you are sincere, God sends you a spiritual master.⁹

Therefore the problem is not to find a spiritual master, but to be sincere enough to want to find a bona fide spiritual master, otherwise cheating will go on.

Author's note: The quotes below by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda recommend the reading of the literatures written by the previous ācāryas:

“...Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu, the teacher of the science of devotional service, wrote several books, of which the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmrta* is very famous; anyone who wants to know about the subject matter of devotees, devotional service and Kṛṣṇa must read this book...” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 56.203, purport)

“...Sanātana Gosvāmī also wrote a special commentary on the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* known as the *Daśama-ṭippanī*, which is so excellent that by reading it one can understand very deeply the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in His exchanges of loving activities...” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 56.203, purport)

“...Another famous book by Sanātana Gosvāmī is the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, which states the rules and regulations for all divisions of Vaiṣṇavas, namely, Vaiṣṇava householders, Vaiṣṇava *brahmacārīs*, Vaiṣṇava *vānaprasthas* and Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs*. This book was especially written, however, for Vaiṣṇava householders...” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 56.203, purport)

“...Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is described as the *bhakti-rasācārya*, or one who knows the essence of devotional service. His famous book *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the science of devotional service, and by reading this book one can understand the meaning of devotional service...” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 56.203, purport)

“...Another of his famous books is the *Ujjvala-nīlamani*. In this book he elaborately explains the loving affairs and transcendental activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī...” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 56.203, purport)

Chapter Twenty-One



Sincerity Is a Key Factor

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami has said that if you are sincere Kṛṣṇa will send a bona fide *guru* to you. The following quotes are from the teachings of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda on being sincere.

Kṛṣṇa Helps a Sincere Person

“...One has to be freed from all contamination, and at the same time he has to find a person who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa helps a sincere person; as stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde*, by the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, one attains the path of salvation, devotional service. If one sincerely searches for spiritual salvation, then Kṛṣṇa, being situated in everyone’s heart, gives him the intelligence to find a suitable spiritual master. By the grace of a spiritual master like Maitreya, one gets the proper instruction and advances in his spiritual life...”¹

Serious and Sincere as Dhruva Maharaja

“...My Guru Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, used to say that every one of his disciples could attain Vaikuṇṭhaloka in this life, with-

out waiting for another life to execute devotional service. One simply has to become as serious and sincere as Dhruva Mahārāja; then it is quite possible to attain Vaikuṇṭhaloka and go back home, back to Godhead, in one life...”²

When a Devotee is Serious and Sincere

“...The Lord is the Supersoul seated in everyone’s heart, and He acts as the *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within. However, He gives direct instructions only to the advanced, pure devotees. In the beginning, when a devotee is serious and sincere, the Lord gives him directions from within to approach a bona fide spiritual master. When one is trained by the spiritual master according to the regulative principles of devotional service and is situated on the platform of spontaneous attachment for the Lord (*rāga-bhakti*), the Lord also gives instructions from within...”³

One Who is Sincere

“...One who is sincere and pure gets an opportunity to consult with the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Paramātmā feature sitting within everyone’s heart. The Paramātmā is always the *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within, and He comes before one externally as the instructor and initiator spiritual master...”⁴

The Devotee Serves His Spiritual Master Sincerely

“...A sincere devotee who follows the instructions of the spiritual master certainly gets direct instructions from his heart from the Supersoul. Thus a sincere devotee is always helped directly or indirectly by the spiritual master and the

Supersoul. This is confirmed in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja* [Cc. Madhya 19.151]. If the devotee serves his spiritual master sincerely, Kṛṣṇa automatically becomes pleased...”⁵

If One Is Sincere He Can Find the Guru and Learn Everything

“...If one is sincere he can find the *guru* and learn everything. One should take lessons from the *guru* and find out the goal of life. Mahārāja Satyavrata, therefore, shows us the way of the *mahājana*. *Mahājano yena gatah sa panthāḥ* [Cc. Madhya 17.186]. One should surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*daśāvatāra*) and learn from Him about the spiritual world and the goal of life...”⁶

If One Becomes a Sincere Devotee

“It is not possible for a conditioned soul to directly meet Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but if one becomes a sincere devotee and seriously engages in devotional service, Lord Kṛṣṇa sends an instructing spiritual master to show him favour and invoke his dormant propensity for serving the Supreme. The preceptor appears before the external senses of the fortunate conditioned soul, and at the same time the devotee is guided from within by the *caitya-guru*, Kṛṣṇa, who is seated as the spiritual master within the heart of the living entity.”⁷

The Sincere Living Being

“...This is called *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. Kṛṣṇa is prepared to bestow His mercy upon all living entities, and as soon as a

living entity desires the Lord's mercy, the Lord immediately gives him an opportunity to meet a bona fide spiritual master. Such a fortunate person is fortified by both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master. He is helped from within by Kṛṣṇa and from without by the spiritual master. Both are prepared to help the sincere living being become free from material bondage..."⁸

To a Person Who Is Sincere

"...When by good fortune one comes in contact with a pure devotee and hears from him patiently, one begins to follow the path of devotional service. Such an opportunity is offered to a person who is sincere..."⁹

Kṛṣṇa Helps a Sincere Devotee

"...Kṛṣṇa helps a sincere devotee internally and externally. Internally He helps as Paramātmā by giving intelligence from within. *Dadāmi buddhi-yogam tam.* Externally He helps as His representative, the spiritual master. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu says: *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja.* "By the grace of Kṛṣṇa, one gets a bona fide *guru*, and by the grace of the *guru*, one gets Kṛṣṇa." (*Cc. Madhya 19.151*) Thus the śāstras have given us a very easy way to appreciate our transcendental life. That is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement..."¹⁰

The Guru Can Enlighten the Sincere Disciple

"...First we must find a bona fide *guru*, establish our relationship with him, and act accordingly. Then our life will be successful, for the *guru* can enlighten the sincere disciple who is in darkness..."¹¹

But if You Are Sincere...

“...Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Of course, to search out a *guru* is very nice, but if you want a cheap *guru*, or if you want to be cheated, then you will find many cheating *gurus*. But if you are sincere, you will find a sincere *guru*. Because people want everything very cheaply, they are cheated...”¹²

A Sincere Student

“...A sincere student aurally receives the holy name from the spiritual master, and after being initiated he follows the regulative principles given by the spiritual master. When the holy name is properly served in this way, automatically the spiritual nature of the holy name spreads; in other words, the devotee becomes qualified in offencelessly chanting the holy name. When one is completely fit to chant the holy name in this way, he is eligible to make disciples all over the world, and he actually becomes *jagad-guru*...”¹³

In this regard we may add this quote written by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda:

“...We hope, therefore, that people will derive the greatest benefit by studying *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* as we have presented it here, and if even one man becomes a pure devotee of the Lord, we shall consider our attempt a success...”

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

12 May, 1971

Sydney, Australia.¹⁴

Thus we can see from the above quotes the key factor to progress on the path of spiritual life is sincerity.

He Is So Sincere

In an interview, with Devadharma dāsa at New Govardhana Farm conducted by the author of this book in 1990 this comment was made about Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami:

Devadharma dāsa: I was in Bhubaneswar when Śrīla Prabhupāda visited. One evening as *Gaura-ārati* was going on, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked who was singing. When someone replied, “Gour Govinda Swami” Śrīla Prabhupāda made the comment, “...Oh Gour Govinda Swami, he is so sincere!” I was right there with Śrīla Prabhupāda when he made this comment.

Chapter Twenty-Two



Associate with Pure Devotees Uttama-Adhikarīs

Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“...The more you are engaged in devotional service, the more your senses become pure or uncovered. And when they are completely uncovered, without any designations, then you are capable of serving Kṛṣṇa. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is apprenticeship. Real bhakti, *parā-bhakti*, is *rāgānuga-bhakti*. After surpassing *vaidhī-bhakti*, we have to come to *rāgānuga-bhakti*. In the material world, if we do not try to make further progress in devotional service, if we are simply sticking to the śāstric regulation process and do not try to go beyond that, we remain *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*. The śāstric process of regulation is required. Without the śāstric process you cannot go to that platform. But if we only stick to the śāstric process and do not try to improve ourselves, we remain *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*. The śāstric process is *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, the lowest stage of devotional service...¹

“...Generally, when people come to the temple they are very devoted to the Deity. They offer their respects, offer flowers and other things, follow the regulated process, and circumambulate. This is a nice beginning. But one has to go

above this. One has to know who is actually a devotee. One has to do good for others. That is a *madhyama-adhikārī*.

If I am satisfied with only worshipping the Deity in the temple and following regulative principles, and I have no other idea, then I am a *prākṛta-bhakta*.

*Prākṛta** means on the material platform. Such a devotee can fall down at any moment because he is on the *prākṛta* stage. And *prākṛta* means this *guṇamayī*, *prakṛti*, the three modes of material nature. It is very strong. Any devotee can fall down if he remains a *prākṛta-bhakta*.

He has to raise himself above this to the level of *madhyama-adhikāra*. We are enjoying the interactions of the three modes of material nature and we are thinking it to be spiritual. My Guru Mahārāja used to say that it is like licking a bottle of honey. That is not real honey. You have to open the bottle and experience the real honey, then you get a taste. That is advancement of spiritual knowledge. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes *satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido, bhavanti hṛt karna rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ* - **the association of pure devotees**, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. [SB. 3.25.25]

Therefore, if we do not associate with advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikārīs*, if we simply want to remain in the lowest stage of devotional service, then we are not making progress. Then we shall simply enjoy the material field without entering into the spiritual platform...”²

*Author's note: "A *prākṛta-bhakta*, or materialistic devotee, does not purposefully study the *śāstra* and try to understand the actual standard of pure devotional service. Consequently he does not show proper respect to advanced devotees. He may, however, follow the regulative principles learned from his spiritual master or from his family who worships the Deity. He is to be considered on the material platform, although he is trying to advance in devotional service. Such a person is a *bhakta-prāya* [neophyte devotee], or *bhaktābhāsa*, for he is a little enlightened by Vaiṣṇava philosophy." (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.74 purport)

We May Create a Blunder

The association of advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikārīs*, is very important and personal. In the following dialogue, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda debunks the theory that we can take a spiritual master from many years back who is no longer on the planet:

Question: If Jesus Christ was a *jagad-guru* and his instructions capable of bringing us deliverance, why do we need a spiritual master?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda: We accept both the universal spiritual master and the initiating spiritual master. By accepting only the *jagad-guru*, we may face many *anarthas*. If at present we want to follow Christ's orders by accepting him as *jagad-guru* and we think we do not require an initiating spiritual master, we will certainly face doubt about how well we can follow Christ's orders.

The Supreme Lord or universal *jagad-guru* delivers his instructions about the absolute truth only through the disciplic succession. As I sit on the bank of the Gaṅgā in Navadvīpa, far from the Himalayas where the Gaṅgā originates, and am able to touch her water here, the initiating spiritual master similarly brings the Gaṅgā of pure devotional service, which emanates from the Lord's lotus feet, and places it in my hand and on my head. Because I am an ordinary, powerless, poor person, I am not able to climb the Himalayas to touch her water there.

Similarly, if the flow of the Gaṅgā from the Himalayas is interrupted on the way, I would have to face the danger of accepting a polluted flow instead of the pure Gaṅgā. If the instructions Jesus Christ gave two thousand years ago do not

come to us through disciplic succession, or if we have to sort them out from books, then perhaps we may create a blunder and accept a perversion of the truth taught in the name of Christianity. We may even come to accept something opposite from what he taught, thinking it his actual philosophy.

The initiating spiritual master is also *jagad-guru* because he is a manifestation of the original *jagad-guru*. Out of his causeless mercy he delivers the message of the original *jagad-guru* through the disciplic succession. He does not cheat or flatter the disciple, nor does he yearn for any material gain. He is simply a messenger of the Absolute Truth.³

The Only Desirable Goal

In his book *Prema-Vivarta*, Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has written:

*sādhu-sāṅge kṛṣṇa-nāma’ – ei-mātra cāi
saṁsāra jinite āra kona vastu nāi*

“The only desirable goal is to chant *hari-nāma* in the association of pure and saintly devotees. This is the best and only way to conquer nescience.”⁴

Throughout *śāstra*, time and again, we are told that the association of *uttama-adhikārīs* is of utmost importance. We should avail ourselves of their personal association, their personal instructions, and serve them in person. The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is personal and alive.

Chapter Twenty-Three



Association with Great Personalities

The association of the pure devotees of the Lord, the Vaisnavas, who are dignified and truly saintly personalities, cannot be under-estimated. To obtain their association is of paramount importance for the conditioned souls.

In the Fourth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrīla Prabhupāda has written:

“...It is said, ‘Birds of a feather flock together.’ In this world, everyone is attracted by a person of the same category. A drunkard is attracted to persons who are also drunkards. Similarly, a saintly person is attracted by other saintly persons. Mahārāja Pṛthu was in the topmost position of spiritual advancement, and as such, he was attracted by the Kumāras, who were of the same category. It is said, therefore, that a man is known by his company...”¹

“...So by **association with pure devotees** the inquisitive, the distressed, the seeker after material amelioration and the man in knowledge all become themselves pure...”²

“...Although there is a process of gradual elevation, if one, by the **association of pure devotees**, takes directly to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is the best way...”³

“...This is possible only by the **association of a pure devotee**, who can give a finishing touch to the transcendental activities of all...”⁴

“...So the science of *bhakti-yoga*, of worshipping the Lord, glorifying the Lord, hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from the right sources [not from the professional man but from a person who is *Bhāgavatam* in life] and being always in the **association of pure devotees**, should be adopted in earnestness...”⁵

“...The best association is the service of the devotees of the Lord, and by that association one can become the highest qualified man by the grace of the Lord’s pure devotees. As we have already seen in the life of Śrīla Nārada Muni, he became the topmost devotee of the Lord simply by the **association of pure devotees** of the Lord...”⁶

“...Therefore the *Bhāgavatam* always recommends the association of the *mahat*, or the great soul, for opening the gate of salvation. To associate with persons engaged in lording it over the material world means to enter into the darkest region of hell. One should try to raise himself by the **association of the great soul**. That is the way of the perfection of life...”⁷

“...Association with a **great personality** is most important. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Lord Caitanya says that *sādhu-saṅga* [Cc. Madhya 22.83], the association of a great saintly person, is very important, because even if one is not

advanced in knowledge, simply by **association with a great saintly person** one can immediately make considerable advancement in spiritual life...”⁸

“...The greatest opportunity is to have the **association of a saintly person**...”⁹

“...However, **association with great personalities**, devotees who are great souls, will elevate one to the spiritual platform...”¹⁰

There are innumerable similar quotes in Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda’s purports and in the writings of all our predecessor ācāryas.

Also in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is written:

śuśrūṣoh śraddadhānasya
vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ
syānmahat-sevayā viprāḥ
puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt

“O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva.”¹¹

naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu
nityam bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavaty uttama-śloke
bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī

“By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”¹²

A Sadhu Is Always Very Humble

Only a fool promotes himself to be a pure devotee. A great devotee does not think himself great, he thinks himself very low and he will say, as in the case of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, “I am nothing; I am lowly; I am an unfit person.”

Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami

In fact in one question and answer period Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami said:

Devotee 2: Just see, some more cheating is going on! (laughter) I was told that *sādhus* were very *mahātmā*, broadminded, not ...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: *Āre bābā*, I am not *sādhu*! This person, he is cheating me. I am not *sādhu* at all, *bābā*. I am not *Vaiṣṇava* at all, *bābā*.

*puriṣera kīṭa haite muñi se laghiṣṭha
jagāi mādhāi haite muñi se pāpiṣṭha*

“I am worse than a worm in stool. I am more sinful than Jagāi and Mādhāi.” So why are you saying I am *sādhu*? He is cheating me, you see?

Devotee 2: I had come with so much hope. I did not expect such miserliness.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Now you have become hopeless? Why do you carry such hope, coming to such a sinful person seeing him as *sādhu*? Why are you so hopeful? You should first understand and be able to recognise, “Yes well, who is a real *sādhu* and where is he? And I’ll go there.” So you have come to the wrong place. Isn’t it?

Devotee 2: I have been everywhere, and everywhere there was one sign pointing to here. (laughter) I couldn’t find anywhere, and everywhere there was some sign. I have been all around the world searching.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Then, do you have vision to see? You are going searching only. Isn’t it? “Let me search here, search there, and search there.” You see there is a story about those who depend on their material senses, especially this eye. The eye is a powerful sense. If I can see it with the eye then I will believe it. Seeing is believing. So I am going out, wandering the world, and I am searching, searching, searching for a *sādhu*. In spite of this, how can you find him? Do you have the vision? Can you see him? Those who depend on their material-vision-eye are cheated. I told that story about one *Siva bhakta*, a devotee of *Siva* who took a vow on *Sivarātri* and fasted. So at the dead of the night he went to the *Siva Mandir* to offer worship to Lord *Siva*. When he saw that some rats were walking on the *śiva-liṅga* and that they were eating the *bhoga* offered to Lord *Siva*, he thought, “what is this? I have heard *Siva* is a very powerful personality, but after seeing this I do not think *Siva* is powerful at all.” So similarly, the person who is searching and searching does not have the vision.¹³

Srīla Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavīraja Gosvamī

A bona fide *sādhu* never thinks that he is a great saintly person. As in the case of Srīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavīraja Gosvāmī the author of the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*puriṣera kīṭa haite muñi se laghiṣṭha
jagāi mādhāi haite muñi se pāpiṣṭha*

“I am more sinful than Jagāi and Mādhāi and even lower than the worms in the stool.”¹⁴

*mora nāma śune yei tāra puṇya kṣaya
mora nāma laya yei tāra pāpa haya*

“Anyone who hears my name loses the results of his pious activities. Anyone who utters my name becomes sinful.”¹⁵

*emana nirghṛṇa more kebā kṛpā kare
eka nityānanda vinu jagat bhitare*

“Who in this world but Nityānanda could show His mercy to such an abominable person as me?”¹⁶

Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, has said with regard to personal humility:

*prabhu kahe—śuna, śrīpāda, ihārakāraṇa
guru more mūrkhadekhi’ karilaśāsana*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied to Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, ‘My dear sir, kindly hear the reason: My spiritual master considered Me a fool, and therefore he chastised Me.’”¹⁷

*mūrkha tumi, tomāra nāhika vedāntādhikāra
‘krṣṇa-mantra’ japa sadā,—ei mantra-sāra*

“‘You are a fool,’ he said. ‘You are not qualified to study Vedānta philosophy, and therefore You must always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. This is the essence of all *mantras*, or Vedic hymns.’”¹⁸

Sir Isaac Newton

Even the great scientist Sir Isaac Newton (granted not a great Vaiṣṇava devotee, but nonetheless) would say, “I have simply collected a few grains of sand in the ocean of knowledge.”

Srīla Rupa and Srīla Sanatana Goswamīs

Also Rūpa and Sanātana Goswamis thought that they were lower than Jagāi and Mādhāi, because they had taken service in the Mohammedan court, and they had even changed their names to Dabira Khāsa and Sākara Mallika respectively. Thus they had supposedly been expelled from *brāhmaṇa* society.

*jagāi-mādhāi haite koṭī koṭī guṇa
adhamā patita pāpī āmi dui jana*

“We two are millions and millions of times inferior to Jagāi and Mādhāi. We are more degraded, fallen and sinful than they.”¹⁹

*mleccha-jāti, mleccha-sevī, kari mleccha-karma
go-brāhmaṇa-drohi-saṅge āmāra saṅgama*

“Actually we belong to the caste of meat-eaters because we are servants of meat-eaters. Indeed, our activities are exactly like those of the meat-eaters. Because we always associate with such people, we are inimical toward the cows and brāhmaṇas.”²⁰

*mora karma, mora hāte-galāya bāndhiyā
ku-viṣaya-viṣṭhā-garte diyāche phelāiyā*

“The two brothers, [Sākara Mallika and Dabira Khāsa], very humbly submitted that due to their abominable activities they were now bound by the neck and hands and had been thrown into a ditch filled with abominable, stool-like objects of material sense enjoyment.”²¹

The symptoms of a devotee are meekness and humility. Therefore, a devotee should not be proud of his acquisitions. Although spiritually very advanced, he will always remain meek and humble. The principle of true humility is naturally felt by all advanced Vaiṣṇavas, as Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī and all the other ācāryas have taught us by personal example. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in the preface of the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

“...If I have any credit in this connection, it does not belong to me personally, but it is due to my eternal spiritual master, His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahāṁsa Parivrājakācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda...”

In 1936 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

“...Personally, I have no hope for any direct service for the coming crores of births of the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realised through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command...”²²

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami quoted the following verse incessantly:

*tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyah sadā hariḥ*

“One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than the tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.”²³

The question may be asked, “Where can I meet such a true and humble Vaiṣṇava *sādhu*?” Suffice it to say that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is an affair of the heart. If you are sincere, the

Supreme Lord who resides within the heart of every living entity as the Supersoul (Paramātmā) will direct you to a pure Vaiṣṇava who is the external manifestation of the Supersoul and the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's mercy - *kṛṣṇa-kīrpā-śrī-mūrti*.

Thus, if we are praying in the heart with great sincerity, the Supreme Lord will definitely reciprocate. Then, and only then, will the question of how to find such a *sādhu* be answered.

The Prayer of Their Hearts

In the words of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami:

“...The disciples of such *gurus* [*guru* that has fallen from grace] should know for certain that if they pray very sincerely with devotion to the Supreme Lord, who is in their heart, He will certainly respond to the prayer of their hearts by helping them to take shelter of a genuine, bona fide and pure spiritual master [*sad-guru*], who can successfully lead them unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa...”²⁴

Better a Simple Street Sweeper

It seems that the ‘I am a pretty advanced devotee’ mentality has spread far and wide now-a-days. One may ask himself or herself introspectively what kind of pure devotee does he or she think they are. For instance, “Well, am I a pure devotee on the platform of *prema*, who sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere? Or on the platform of *bhāva*, manifesting all transcendental, ecstatic bodily symptoms? Mmmh... Well, am I a pure devotee on the platform of *āsakti*, the highest stage of *madhyama-adhikārī*, fully absorbed in the Lord, ‘having fallen into the current of the great celestial river of attachment to the Lord’, as mentioned in the

Mādhurya Kādambinī of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura? Or am I even entering the platform of pure devotion, the *ruci* stage? What category do I actually fit into?”

Some may mistakenly believe themselves to be great exalted Vaiṣṇavas, *madhyama* or even *uttama bhaktas*, and yet, if we scrutinise the scriptures and the words of our previous ācāryas, who can say he or she has really come out of the *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra* stage and has a real footing in *nīṣṭha*, the beginning of the *madhyama* stage? The beginning stage of *nīṣṭha* means that one has surpassed the *anarthas*. No more *anarthas*! Upon careful analysis, it seems that, due to lack of understanding the need for association with living pure devotees, practically every one of us is simply still in the beginning stages. Therefore it is very important for everyone individually to understand what level of devotion he or she has attained. It is better to remain a simple street sweeper than to be a charlatan, because the charlatan can cause great havoc in the spiritual lives of others. Unfortunately there have been far too many examples of this. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written:

‘āmi ta’ vaisṇava, ei buddhi haile,
amānī nā ha ‘ba āmi
pratiṣṭhāśā āsi’, hr̥daya duṣibe,
haibo niraya-gāmī

“If I think ‘I am a Vaiṣṇava,’ then I will never become humble. My heart will become contaminated with hope of receiving honour from others, and I will surely go to hell.”²⁵

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, when quoting this verse would always say, “...If I think that I am a Vaiṣṇava, then a demon has entered into me...” A real Vaiṣṇava feels himself

lower than the lowest. They are always meek and mild. They are the personification of *trṇād api sunīcena, taror api sahiṣṇunā, amāninā mānadena, kīrtanīyah sadā hariḥ*.²⁶

Chapter Twenty-Four



The Association of Maha-Bhagavatas Is Essential

The Dust of the Lotus Feet of Great Devotees

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejayā nirvapanād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-bhiṣekam*

“**M**y dear King Rahūgaṇa, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realise the Absolute Truth. One cannot realise the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy [*brahmacarya*], strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a *vānaprastha*, accepting *sannyāsa*, or undergoing severe penances in winter, by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee.”¹

As previously mentioned, it is imperative that one enters into *guru-samsāre*, in order to enter *kṛṣṇa-samsāra*, otherwise, without *seva-yajña*, rendering (loving) service under a bona fide *sad-guru*'s guidance, you cannot obtain lasting benefit. Without the association of advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikārīs*, we will not make much advancement; we will remain apprentices. Therefore, the association of *mahā-bhāgavatas* is most essential. To meet a real *sādhu* and to have pure *sādhu-sanga* is most rare.

Universal Vibration – Resonance

Everything comprised of matter, whether it be the material body of an insect, animal, aquatic, bird or human, has a vibration or resonance that is negative or positive. It can be a house of stone, brick or wood, a place of business, or a religious building, or it can be a larger material body, a planet or an entire universe. Each and every part of the universe, every atom vibrates and resonates and it is understood that like attracts like. We attract or repel objects and people, we are attracted by places, people and objects that vibrate at the same or similar frequency as ourselves. To discover at which frequency we are vibrating may be discerned by the conscious beings and objects that surround us. For instance, if we are attracted to intoxication, liquor, drugs, etc, we will attract objects or people of a similar vibrational frequency; in most cases a lower negative experience. If we are attracted to money, then we attract people of a similar vibration. If we are attracted to godly life, spiritual life and the association of those who operate on a higher spiritual level, the bona fide *sādhu-guru-vaiṣṇavas*, then we will attract people of a similar vibration; thus experiencing an inspirational and uplifting influence. It is a matter of higher or lower frequency

of vibration, that can either elevate us or degrade us, depending upon the vibrational frequency of the objects and people we surround ourselves with.

The highest positive vibration in all of the creation is the transcendental vibration of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, if we want to become Godly, then we must resonate with a similar transcendental vibration. In the Vedic literature, the oldest revealed scriptures, it is stated that the most beneficial transcendental vibration for a conditioned soul is to vibrate the holy names of the Lord.* So, by resonating the holy names of God, we attract the association of God and His representatives, the bona-fide *sādhus-guru-vaiṣṇavas* (*dīkṣā* and *śikṣā*).

What we are attempting to convey to the readers of this book is that the higher frequency of vibration emanating from the *mahā-bhāgavatas* is similar to that of the Supreme Lord. This is because the *uttama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇavas are totally and utterly surrendered to Him in thoughts, words and deeds, and the purpose of their very existence is simply to please Him. In that absolute surrender, they have sacrificed their own existence for the greater whole, for pleasing the senses of the Supreme Lord. According to the degree of one's surrender, one's own existence will resonate as either godly or demonic, god-centred or atheistic. According to the degree of one's God conscious development, one will either progress towards the Supreme or deteriorate, as the case may be, as explained in the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* entitled, *The Divine and the Demoniac*. Therefore, according to one's conscious level of intent, one will advance or regress. And what affects your consciousness is our association.

*For detailed information on the Holy Name, please see the book by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, "Suddha-Nama Bhajan".

It is all a question of association. The association of *mahā-bhāgavatas* is essential for students who are serious in treading upon the spiritual path.

The Three Levels of Devotees

The *Bhāgavata* philosophy illustrates that devotion is manifest in the hearts of the Lord's adherents in varying degrees of intensity; the scriptures prescribe for us what the symptoms and qualification of the topmost transcendentalists are and thereby inform us as to which level of devotee should become our ideal type of association.

*śrī-rājovāca
atha bhāgavatam brūta
yad-dharma yādṛśo nṛṇām
yathācarati yad brūte
yair liṅgair bhagavat-priyah*

“Mahārāja Nimi said: Now please tell me in greater detail about the devotees of the Supreme Lord. What are the natural symptoms by which I can distinguish between the most advanced devotees, those on the middle level and those who are neophytes? What are the typical religious activities of a Vaiṣṇava, and how does he speak? Specifically, please describe those symptoms and characteristics by which Vaiṣṇavas become dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”²

*śrī-havir uvāca
sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah*

*bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmān
eṣa bhāgavatottamah*

“Śrī Hāvīr said: The most advanced devotee sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he sees systematically everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.”³

Also when teaching Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya further stated:

*śāstra-yuktye sunipuṇa, dṛḍha-śraddhā yāñra
‘uttama-adhikārī’ se tāraye samsāra*

“One who is expert in the Vedic literature and has full faith in the Supreme Lord is an *uttama-adhikārī*, a first-class Vaiṣṇava, a topmost Vaiṣṇava who can deliver the whole world and turn everyone to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”⁴

“...With great love and affection*, the *mahā-bhāgavata* observes the Supreme Personality of Godhead, devotional service and the devotee. He observes nothing beyond Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness and Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. The *mahā-bhāga-*

*Love and affection for one and all. The *sādhu* sees with equal vision:

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca
pañcitaḥ sama-darśinah*

“The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste].” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 5.18)

vata knows that everyone is engaged in the Lord's service in different ways. He therefore descends to the middle platform to elevate everyone to the Kṛṣṇa conscious position..."⁵

*īsvare tad-adhīneṣu
bālišeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā
yah karoti sa madhyamah*

"An intermediate or second-class devotee, called *madhya-ma-adhikārī*, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent and disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."⁶

*arcāyām eva haraye
pūjām yah śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktah prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

"A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position."⁷

The Swanlike and Asslike Mentalities

"...Sectarianism is a natural by-product of the Absolute Truth. When *ācāryas* first ascertain and instruct the truth, it is not polluted with sectarianism. But the rules and regulations received through disciplic succession regarding

the goal and the method of achieving it are changed in due course of time according to the mentality and locale of the people.

A rule that is followed by one society is not necessarily accepted in another society. That is why one community is different from another.

As a community gradually develops more respect for its own standards, it develops hatred towards other communities and considers their standards inferior. These sectarian symptoms are seen in all countries since time immemorial. This is prominent amongst neophytes and found to some extent amongst *madhyama-adhikārīs*. Amongst *uttama-adhikārīs*, however, there is no trace of sectarianism...”⁸

“...Differences that arise from places, times, languages, behaviours, foods, dresses, and natures of various communities are incorporated within people’s spiritual practices and gradually make one community so completely different from another community that even the consideration that everyone is a human being may cease to exist. Due to these differences, there is disagreement, cessation of social intercourse, and fighting, even up to the point of killing one another. When an asslike mentality becomes prominent within the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*, they certainly indulge in these things. But if they develop a swanlike mentality, then they do not take part in quarrels; rather, they endeavour to attain a higher level...”⁹

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, the *madhyama-adhikārī* and the *uttama-adhikārī*, are not of the same spiritual stature. As such, their faith, devotion and understanding of the *siddhānta* are not on the same level. Therefore, one needs to seek-out and approach a first-class *sādhu* to further his or her progress on the path of self-realisation. The *Bhagavad-gītā* clearly states this injunction:

*tad viddhi pranipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinah*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realised soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”¹⁰

*yaj jñātvā na punar moham
evam yāsyasi pāṇḍava
yena bhūtāny aśeṣāṇi
drakṣyasya ātmānī atho mayi*

“Having obtained real knowledge from a self-realised soul, you will never fall again into such illusion, for by this knowledge you will see that all living beings are but part of the Supreme, or, in other words, that they are Mine.”¹¹

*api ced asi pāpebhyah
sarvebhyah pāpa-kṛt-tamah
sarvam jñāna-plavenaiva
vr̥jinam santariṣyasi*

“Even if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners, when you are situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge you will be able to cross over the ocean of miseries.”¹²

The fact that the spiritual master has seen the truth (*tattva-darśinah*), means seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa (God) face to face and therefore he can give you the full gamut of understanding to an eternal, peaceful, spiritual understanding and life.

The Maha-Bhagavatas

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

“...Such *mahā-bhāgavatas*, or first-grade devotees, although moving amongst men, are not contaminated by honour or insult, hunger or satisfaction, sleep or wakefulness, which are all resultant actions of the three modes of material nature...”¹³

“...Such devotees with perfect knowledge are called *mahā-bhāgavatas*, or first-class devotees. There are three classes of devotees, namely the *prākṛta*, *madhyama*, and *mahā-bhāgavata*. The *prākṛta*, or third-class devotees, are temple worshippers without specific knowledge of the Lord and the Lord’s devotees. The *madhyama*, or the second-class devotee, knows well the Lord, the Lord’s devotees, the neophytes, and the non-devotees also. But the *mahā-bhāgavata*, or the first-class devotee, sees everything in relation with the Lord and the Lord present in everyone’s relation. The *mahā-bhāgavata*, therefore, does not make any distinction, particularly between a devotee and non-devotee...”¹⁴

“...Such *mahā-bhāgavatas* are called *nitya-siddhas*, or souls liberated from birth...”¹⁵

“...There are three different kinds of devotees, namely *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, *madhyama-adhikārī* and *uttama-adhikārī*: the neophyte, the preacher and the *mahā-bhāgavata*, or the highly advanced devotee. The highly advanced devotee is one who knows the conclusion of the Vedas in full knowledge...”¹⁶

“...The *mahā-bhāgavatas*, they are first-class devotees. They themselves are the holy place. Not only they are themselves a holy place, but wherever they go, they make that place a holy place of pilgrimage. This is the idea...”¹⁷

“...This book *Bhāgavatam* is the sound incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And there is another *bhāgavata*, who is the spiritual master, or the Vaiṣṇava, a devotee of the Lord. He is also called *bhāgavata*. A great devotee is called *mahā-bhāgavata*. So there are two kinds of *bhāgavatas*. The sound vibration, sound representation of God is the book *bhāgavatam*. And the mercy representation of God is called the devotee *bhāgavata*...”¹⁸

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami has given two very practical points in his book *Śuddha-nāma Bhajana* as to whether you have achieved the level of a *mahā-bhāgavata*,

1. “...One utterance of *śuddha-nāma*, the pure name, will make you a *mahā-bhāgavata*. If you are chanting the pure name, then immediately the all-beautiful form of Śyāmasundara will appear before you. Not only His beautiful form but all His *līlās* will manifest before you...”

2. “...When you are remembering the holy name, then you will see the all-beautiful form of Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa, immediately...”*

Also further to the point, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami quoted this verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in a lecture,

**Śuddha-nāma Bhajana* – Chanting the Pure Name by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

*kalpayitvātmanā yāvad
 ābhāsam idam īśvarah
 dvaitam tāvan na viramet
 tato hy asya viparyayah*

“As long as a living entity is not completely self-realised - as long as he is not independent of the misconception of identifying with his body, which is nothing but a reflection of the original body and senses - he cannot be relieved of the conception of duality, which is epitomised by the duality between man and woman. Thus, there is every chance that he will fall down because his intelligence is bewildered.”¹⁹

Then he commented accordingly:

“...One who is completely self-realised does not see the body, but sees the soul and the Super-soul. His consciousness is not on the bodily platform but on the spiritual platform. Only he can deal with the conception of duality, otherwise no one can deal with those matters.

As long as you have the misconception of identifying yourself with your body, you see the body, and the senses are so strong that you become attracted. On the other hand, a self-realised soul sees the soul, not the outward form. He sees that soul as belonging to Kṛṣṇa as a servant or maid-servant, not as an object of enjoyment. That means, only those who are beyond the bodily conception can deal with this matter, otherwise no one can, as there is every chance that they will fall down because their intelligence is bewildered. . .”²⁰

The Transcendental Body

The body of a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee is not like that of conditioned souls. Traditionally, in Vedic culture, when a *sannyāsī* leaves his body, he is not cremated, but especially when he is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, his transcendental body is not cremated. It is placed in *samādhi*. *Samā* means equal, same, and *dhi* means intelligence, or consciousness. It is said that a self-realised soul remains in the same transcendental consciousness after leaving this world: *samādhi*. And a shrine also called a *samādhi* is erected above his buried spiritual body, which has been placed in a sitting position [lotus position] after having been worshipped, decorated with sandalwood pulp and *tulasi* leaves and adorned with special *mantras* which are written on his transcendental body. A particular characteristic of the body of a *mahā-bhāgavata* after he has left this world is that it is warm, not cold; there is no rigor mortis in his body as it is in the case of conditioned souls.

It is interesting to note that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami's body manifested this particular symptom. He left while speaking *hari-kathā* on the highest level. From the moment of his divine disappearance, to the time he was placed into the car was approximately five hours. Then he was taken from Śrīdhāma Māyāpura in West Bengal back to Bhubaneswar in Orissa. This journey took between twelve to fourteen hours. Add to that the time of the procession around the temple and the last *darśana* with numerous *bhajans*, and the time it took to prepare his transcendental body for the *samādhi* ceremony at the Bhubaneswar temple. During all that time, his divine body remained warm. There were no signs of rigor mortis at all. His skin was still just like a baby's skin; very soft and supple.

His body glowed. This is one more proof of his transcendental position and identity. The pure Vaiṣṇavas do not take birth in this material world nor do they disappear from this mortal realm like conditioned souls.

The Glories of the Pure Vaiṣṇavas

*na karma-bandhanāṁ janma
vaiṣṇavānāṁ ca vidyate
viṣṇur anucaratvām hi
mokṣam āhur manīṣināḥ*

“A Vaiṣṇava does not take birth under the jurisdiction of karmic law. His birth and disappearance are transcendental. The wise have declared that the servants of Viṣṇu are eternally engaged in the liberated service of the Lord and hence are free from the laws of material nature.”²¹

*vahni-sūrya-brāhmaṇebhyas
tejīyān vaiṣṇava sadā
na vicāro na bhogaś ca
vaiṣṇavānāṁ sva-karmanām*

*likhitām sāmni kauthumyām
kuru praśnām bṛhaspatim*

“The Vaiṣṇavas are always more powerful than Agni, Sūrya, and the brāhmaṇas. Vaiṣṇavas do not have to suffer the reactions of fruitive activities or concern themselves with analysing these activities. This is stated in the *Kauthumī* branch of the *Sāma Veda*. You may ask Bṛhaspati for confirmation of this.”²²

*jagatāṁ guravo bhaktā
bhaktānāṁ guravo vayam
sarvatra guravo bhaktā
vayam ca guravo yathā*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna: The Vaiṣṇavas are the spiritual masters of the entire world, and I am the spiritual master of the Vaiṣṇavas. As I am the spiritual master of everyone, the Vaiṣṇavas are also the spiritual masters of everyone.”²³

*mahā-prasāde govinde
nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatāṁ rājan
viśvāso naiva jāyate*

“Persons who are not very highly elevated in pious activities cannot believe in the remnants of food (*prasāda*) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nor in Govinda, the holy name of the Lord, nor in the Vaiṣṇavas.”²⁴

*tulayāma lavenāpi
na svargam nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya
martyānāṁ kim utāśiṣah*

“The value of a moment’s association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those meant for death.”²⁵

*naisāṁ matis tāvad urukramāñghrim
sprśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ*

*mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam
niṣkiñcanānāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvat*

“Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed from material contamination, persons very much inclined toward materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord.”²⁶

One must contact such a great devotee so that the materialistic influence in one’s life disappears by constantly associating with such a *mahātmā*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written:

“...the *bhāgavatottama* exudes only *kṛṣṇa-prema*. He does not discriminate among a neophyte, an intermediate, or an advanced Vaiṣṇava, or even between a Vaiṣṇava and a non-Vaiṣṇava. This elevated position is very rarely attained...”²⁷

Also the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* explains that the conditioned soul should search out a *jīvan-mukta* a liberated soul:

*ya ātmāpahata-pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko ‘vijighatso
‘pipāsaḥ satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ so ‘nvestavyah*

“A person should search out a *jīvan-mukta*, who is seen to possess these eight symptoms: *apahata-pāpa*, free from all sinful activity and the nescience of *māyā*; *vijara*, free from the miseries of old age and decay; *vimṛtyu*, has conquered death and rebirth; *viśoka*, is beyond material happiness and distress; *vijighatsa*, no longer desires material enjoyment; *api-pātā*, has no desire other than the service of the Lord; *satya-kāma*, whose desires are always faultless and directed to the Supreme Truth, Kṛṣṇa; and *satya-saṅkalpa*, whose wishes are always fulfilled by the grace of Kṛṣṇa.”²⁸

Atmavan Manyate Jagat

One sees the world according to the way he sees himself or according to his or her own viewpoint: *ātmavan manyate jagat*. According to that logic, everyone thinks of others according to their own position. If we are aspiring Vaiṣṇavas and commit an offence to pure Vaiṣṇavas, then it seems that it is an indication that our level of consciousness is not very high, neither is our level of faith. It is likely to be weak, *komala śraddhā*. If this is the situation, then it seems that our belief system stems from a still uncontrolled mind and senses, and an intelligence that has not yet been fully transformed by the transcendental sound vibration emanating from the mouth [lotus lips] of a *sad-guru*, even if we have associated with one and have served him in person. We can only become as our association is, therefore it is of paramount importance that the neophyte associates with highly elevated Vaiṣṇavas: the *bhāgavatottama* Vaiṣṇava, the *uttama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava who exudes only *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Chapter Twenty-Five



Taking Shelter of a Gaura-Priya-Jana A Very Dear Devotee of Mahāprabhu

Nityananda Prabhu Is More Merciful

Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: They are all most merciful Vaiṣṇavas, more merciful. As I said, Mahāprabhu is *mahāvādānya*, a greatly munificent personality, *adbhuta-kāruṇya*, *adbhuta-vadānya*, *adbhuta-audarya*, wonderfully merciful, wonderfully munificent and wonderfully magnanimous. However, Nityānanda Prabhu is even more merciful than Mahāprabhu.

*heno nitāi bine bhāi, rādhā-kṛṣṇa pāite nāi
dharo nitāi-caraṇa du'khāni**

Unless one takes shelter under the shade of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda, it will be very difficult for him to approach Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Narottama dāsa advises that one firmly catch hold of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda.

**Nitāi-Pada-Kamala*, verse 1, by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Gaura-Priya-Jana

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Nityānanda is Lord Balarāma, *balarāma haila nitāi*. *Baladeva-tattva* and *nityānanda-tattva* are the same *tattva*, there is no difference. Nityānanda Prabhu is more merciful than Mahāprabhu. Unless you can receive the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu, you cannot get the mercy of Mahāprabhu, and, unless you get the mercy of Mahāprabhu, you cannot approach Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. This is our process.

The manifestation of both Nityānanda, of Balarāma is *guru*. Nityānanda-Rāma is *guru*, *guru-tattva*. Nityānanda-tattva, *baladeva-tattva*, and *guru-tattva* are the same *tattva*. So *guru* is more merciful. He is the devotee of Gaura. He is known as *gaura-priya-jana*, very dear to Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. One who is *gaura-priya-jana* is more merciful than Gaura. Prabhodānanda Sarasvatīpāda states the following in his *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*:

*ācārya dharmam paricarya viṣṇum
 vicarya tīrthāni vicārya vedān
 vinā na gaura-priya-pāda sevām
 vedāti-dusprāpya padam vidanti*

“Those who perform the duties of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, worship Lord Viṣṇu, and visit many holy places, yet neglect the service of the lotus feet of the great devotees who are dear to Lord Caitanya, are never able to understand the pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda in Their confidential abode of Vṛndāvana.”*

**Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, verse 22, by Śrīla Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī.

You may do *ācārya dharmam*, strictly follow the principles of religiosity; *paricarya viṣṇum*, you may offer *śodaśa-upacāra-pūjā*, very opulent *pūjā* to Viṣṇu *vigraha*; and *vicarya tīrthāni*, you may visit all the *tīrtha-sthāna*, holy places of pilgrimage, *vicārya vedān*, you may become proficient in Vedic knowledge, but *vinā na gaura-priya-pāda sevām vedāti-dus-prāpya padam vidanti*, without doing *pāda-seva*, serving the lotus feet of a *gaura-priya-jana*, a dear devotee of Gaurāṅga, you cannot attain that *prema*, *prīti* which is very difficult to get by merely reading or acquiring the knowledge from the Vedas, *vedāti-dusprāpya*. Only by the mercy of a *gaura-priya-jana* will all Vedic knowledge manifest in you. When you will approach Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, when you will get Kṛṣṇa you will get everything. Kṛṣṇa means everything. Kṛṣṇa is bound up only with love, *prīti*, *prema*. And Mahāprabhu gives that *prema* freely, *āpāmaram yo vitatāra*.

This Is Our Process

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami:

*brahmāra durlabha prema sabākāre yāche
dīna hīna patita pāmara nāhi bāche**

Indiscriminately, freely He gives *prema-bhakti*, which is very difficult to attain, even on the part of Lord Brahmā.

This is our process: by serving the lotus feet of a dear devotee of Gaura, and by obtaining his mercy, you can achieve everything. That which is not available to others by *vedāti-dusprāpya*, Vedic study, that which is the highest love, *prema*, you can obtain by taking shelter of a *gaura-priya-jana*. Nityānanda-Rāma, Balarāma-Nityānanda, which means *guru*,

**Śrī Caitanya-māngala*, by Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura.

is so merciful. He is more merciful than Gaurāṅga. That is our Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

Ignorance Will Be Completely Destroyed

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: There is a nice song written by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura,

*vaiṣṇava-caraṇa-reṇu bhūṣaṇa kariyā tanu
 jāha haite anubhāba haya
 marjana haya bhajana sādhu-saṅge anukṣaṇa
 ajñāna-abidyā-parajaya*

If you do *nāma-bhajan* in the association of a *sādhu*, chant *hare kṛṣṇa*, then your *bhajan* will be pure; free from *aparādha*, and free from *anarthas*, contaminations. Your *ajñāna* *vidyā*, ignorance will be completely destroyed. The dust of the feet of such *vaiṣṇava-sādhu* is very powerful. If you smear this dust on your body, your consciousness becomes purified and all Vedic truths, *bhagavata-tattva*, *bhakti-tattva* become revealed to you. This is the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas. *Vaiṣṇava-caraṇa-reṇu*, the *reṇu*, the dust received from the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava is that powerful. If you are fortunate enough to obtain that dust from the lotus feet of a *gaura-priya-jana* and if you can smear it on your body, you can get everything. Nothing is as powerful as that. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has said that.

A Speck of Dust at Your Lotus Feet

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Therefore the following verse should be our prayer, which is described by Mahāprabhu in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*.

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
 patitam mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
 kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
 sthita-dhūlī-sadṛśam vicintaya*

“I am Your *kiṅkara*, Your servant, but somehow I’ve fallen in the depths of this ocean of nescience. Please shower Your mercy on me, take me as a particle of dust at Your lotus feet.”¹

The Topmost Position of Maha-Bhagavata

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has stated in his transcendental purports:

“...When a person is firmly fixed in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is described as *vīra-vrata*, fully determined. Such a devotee increases his ecstasy in devotional service more and more. Thus as soon as he remembers Lord Viṣṇu, his eyes fill with tears. This is a symptom of a *mahā-bhāgavata*...”²

“...When one has attained the topmost position of *mahā-bhāgavata*, he is to be accepted as a *guru* and worshipped exactly like Hari, the Personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of a *guru*...”³

“...He is the *guru*, or spiritual master, for the entire world, a devotee on the topmost platform, the *mahā-bhāgavata* stage, and a *paramahāṁsa-ṭhākura*, a spiritual form only fit to be addressed as *paramahāṁsa* or *ṭhākura*...”⁴

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 20.32, Śikṣāṣṭaka verse 5.

*koti-jñāni-madhye haya eka-jana ‘mukta’
koti-mukta-madhye ‘durlabha’ eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta*

“Out of many millions of such wise men, one may actually become liberated [mukta], and out of many millions of such liberated persons, a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to find.”⁵

His Association Is Most Desirable

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has written:

“...A *madhyama-adhikārī* should mentally show respect to the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* who is properly initiated and engaged in chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. One who has surpassed the stage of *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra* through the process of chanting the holy names and who engages in worshipping the Supreme Lord with transcendental realisation, such a *madhyama-adhikārī* should be offered respectful obeisances and his guidance should be followed. And one who is constantly engaged in worshipping Kṛṣṇa with transcendental realisation, who has completely given up aversion to Hari, and who does not condemn even those who are envious of Hari - such a *mahā-bhāgavata* should be respectfully served with the conviction that his association is most desirable...”⁶

Hearing from the Uttama

*kaniṣṭha, madhyama, uttama prabhede
vaiṣṇava tri-vidha gani
kaniṣthe ādara, madhyame pranati
uttame śuśruṣā śuni*

“I discriminate between the three types of Vaiṣṇavas, namely the *kaniṣṭha* (beginning neophyte), the *madhyama* (middle class), and the *uttama* (highest pure devotee). I respect the *kaniṣṭha*, I offer my respectful obeisances unto the *madhyama*, and I fully submit myself to hearing from the *uttama*.”⁷

Srīla Haridasa Ṭhākura

*uhāna se yogya pada ‘haridāsa’-nāma
niravadhi kṛṣṇa-candra hṛdaye uhāna*

“His name, ‘Haridāsa,’ is appropriate, for Lord Kṛṣṇa constantly dwells in his heart.”⁸

For an explanation of the second line of this verse, one should see *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.4.63-68.⁹

*sarva-bhūta-vatsala, sabāra upakārī
īśvarera saṅge prati-janme avatārī*

“He is affectionate to all living entities, and he is always engaged in their welfare. He accompanies the Lord whenever He incarnates.”¹⁰

Haridāsa Ṭhākura is affectionate to all living entities and the benefactor for both animate and inanimate beings. He incarnates whenever the Supreme Lord incarnates. In other words, he is a constant associate in the Lord’s pastimes.¹¹

*uñhi se niraparādha viṣṇu-vaiṣṇavete
svapne o uñhāna dṛṣṭi nā yāya vipathe*

“He is never offensive to Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas, and even in a dream he does not deviate from the proper path.”¹²

Since Haridāsa Ṭhākura is a direct associate of the Lord, he cannot commit any offenses against Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas. He can never deviate from his endeavor to serve Kṛṣṇa like an ordinary human being, even in a dream.¹³

*tilārddha uñhāna saṅga ye-jīvera haya
se avaśya pāya kṛṣṇa-pāda-padmāśraya*

“One who associates with Haridāsa for even a fraction of a moment will certainly attain shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.”¹⁴

If by the good fortune resulting from accumulated pious activities over many lifetimes, a living entity associates with Haridāsa Ṭhākura for even a short time, he will certainly achieve the lotus feet of the Lord.¹⁵

*brahmā-śivo haridāsa-hena bhakta-saṅga
niravadhi karite cittera bāda raṅga*

“Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva always desire to associate with a devotee like Haridāsa.”¹⁶

The demigods headed by Brahmā always hanker to become glorious by obtaining the association of a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee like Haridāsa.¹⁷

Constantly Serve a Maha-Bhagavata

“...If a so-called *guru* is envious of the Vaiṣṇavas, then one should reject him, remembering the *guror apy avalipta-*

sya verse*. This so-called *guru* does not have the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava, therefore such a non-devotee should not be accepted as a *guru*. Those devotees who desire eternal welfare should say farewell to such so-called *gurus*, knowing them to be the subjects of the *avaiṣṇavopadīṣṭena* verse**. In the ab-

**guror apy avaliptasya
kāryākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya
parityāgo vidhiyate*
(*Udyoga-parva* of *Mahābhārata* verse 179.25)

“A person who is wallowing in carnal pleasures and material comforts, who is confused about the human goal of life and is devoid of *bhakti*, and who poses as a *guru*, such a depraved charlatan must be rejected.”

***avaiṣṇavopadīṣṭena
mantreṇa nirayam vrajet
punaś ca vidhinā samyag
grāhayed vaiṣṇavād guroḥ*
(*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* verse 4.144)

“If anyone receives *mantra* initiation from a non – Vaiṣṇava who is a womaniser and is bereft of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, is certainly doomed to hell. Therefore he must immediately act according to scriptural injunction and take re-initiation from a real Vaiṣṇava *guru*.”

Author’s note: In the second verse it is recommended to be careful to take your *mantra* from a bona fide Vaiṣṇava *guru*. Hence in the *Padma Purāṇa* the great sage Śrīla Vyāsadeva has stated:

*samprādyā-vihinā ye
mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ
ataḥ kalau bhavisyanti
catvāraḥ sampradāyināḥ*

*śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakā
vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ
catvāras te kalau bhāvyā
hy utkale puruṣottamāt*

(Cont. on next page)

sence of a genuine Vaiṣṇava *guru* who fits the description given above, one should constantly serve a *mahā-bhāgavata* for one's ultimate welfare..."¹⁸

Approach a Bhagavata

In the words of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda:

"...Śāstra says that you should approach a *bhāgavata*, a devotee who is living in Vṛndāvana, pure devotee, and surrender unto him..."¹⁹

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has written:

sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ

"Following after the inhabitants of Vraja, one should perform service in one's physical body and in one's *siddha* body, for a particular *bhāva*."²⁰

Communicate Directly with the Spiritual Master

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has said:

"Unless one is initiated by a bona-fide spiritual master in a bona-fide disciplic succession, the *mantra* he might have received is without any effect. For this reason four Vaiṣṇava disciplic successions, inaugurated by Lakṣmī-devī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and the four Kumāras, will appear in the holy place of Jagannātha Puri, and purify the entire earth during the age of Kali." (Quoted from Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's *Prameya-ratnāvalī*)

“...We should certainly communicate directly with the spiritual master. Those who do not wish to serve and associate with their spiritual master personally are bound to be cheated. Direct communication with *guru* is the first step on the path of divine service.”

“...It is not enough to serve the spiritual master with awe and reverence only from a distance...”²¹

So, no one wants to be cheated. Thus the formula is: “...communicate directly with the spiritual master...” “...associate with the spiritual master personally...” Otherwise we are, “...bound to be cheated...”

To Properly Honour Such a Pure Devotee

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written:

*je jena vaisnava, ciniya loiya
adara koribo jabe
vaisnavera kṛpā, jāhe sarva-siddhi
avaśya pāiba tabe*

“At that time when I learn to properly honour such a pure devotee, recognising his real quality, then I will certainly achieve all spiritual perfection by his mercy.”²²

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said we need the association of advanced devotees:

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya ‘sādhu-saṅga’
kṛṣṇa-prema janme, teñho punah mukhya aṅga*

“The root cause of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is association with advanced devotees. Even when one’s dormant love for Kṛṣṇa awakens, association with devotees is still most essential.”²³

Therefore it is essential to hear the pastimes of the Lord in association of pure devotees:

*satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”²⁴

In the words of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, “...*sādhu-saṅga* is the only *dharma*...” And who is a *sādhu* he who is 101% surrendered to Kṛṣṇa.

Some of the symptoms of a *sādhu* are:

1. *Anya-nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam* - free from the propensity to criticise others.²⁵
2. Free from envy - *dhīrādhīra-jana-priyau priya-karau nirmatsarau pūjitaū*²⁶, and *nirmatsarāṇāṁ satāṁ*²⁷ - of the one-hundred-percent pure in heart (hence no envy).

3. *Saralata hi vaisnavata* – simplicity is Vaiṣṇavism. They have childlike simplicity.²⁸

4. Tolerant & humble –

*trñād api sunīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyah sadā hariḥ*

“One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than the tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.”²⁹

5. Always chanting the Holy Name:

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

Thus the search – for the self-realised soul who knows us better than we know ourselves, who can see into our hearts, who is the missing link in our lives, and who can take us to the highest reality – ends when you meet someone who has the above mentioned qualities. He does not criticise others, is non-envious, has childlike simplicity, is tolerant and humble, and is always chanting the holy name. Then you have come across a self realised soul. According to the *Tattva-sāgara*:

*durlabhe sad-gurūṇām ca sakṛt-saṅga upasthite
tad-anujñā yadā labdhā sa dīkṣāvasaro mahān*

*grāme vā yadi vāraṇye kṣetre vā divase niśi
āgacchati gurur daivād yathā dīkṣā tad-ājñayā*

*yadaivecchā tada dīkṣā guror ājñānurūpataḥ
na tīrtham na vratam hemo na snānam na japa-kriyā
dīkṣāyāḥ karaṇam kintu svecchā-prāpte tu sad-gurau*

“If by chance one gets a *sad-guru*, it doesn’t matter whether one is in the temple or the forest. If the *sad-guru*, the bona fide spiritual master, agrees, one can be initiated immediately, without waiting for a suitable time or place.”³⁰

At that moment all good fortune arises for the spiritual practitioner who is now at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, the living Bhāgavata. After having done this, your spiritual journey, under the guidance of a self-realised soul*, a *tattva-darśī guru***, a *sad-guru****, begins.

***A self-realised soul:** one who has realised who he is and has realised the Supreme Soul, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

** **Tattva-darśī guru:** refers to one who has perfectly realised the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Also he is, according to the Vedic scriptures, very pure and uncontaminated.

*****Sad-guru:** a genuine preceptor whose divine loving relationship is established with the Lord.

Chapter Twenty-Six



The Distribution of Prema-Tattva

Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami preached *prema-tattva* throughout the world. The basis of all his presentations were the purports of his divine spiritual master Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, and in between them he wove the commentaries and words of the previous ācāryas. I list here a sample of the topics that he illuminated:

1. That the *guru* is *rādhā-priyā dāsī* or *rādhā-priya-sakhī*, an intimate maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.
2. The identity of the spiritual master as *sevaka-bhagavān*, the servitor Personality of Godhead.
3. Kṛṣṇa is called *sevya-bhagavān*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is to be served and worshipped.
4. The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *pṛīti-viṣaya* – the object of love.
5. All the *gopīs* headed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are *pṛīti-āśraya* – the abode of love.

6. The mood of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu is *prīti-dharma* – love and affection for one and all.
7. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is *āśrayā-tattva*.
8. Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mahārāja Nanda, is *vिषया-तत्त्वा*.
9. He explained that Śrīmān Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu is Prema Puruṣottama, the father of *prema*.
10. He also explained that Lord Rāmacandra is *maryādā-puruṣottama*, a strict follower of Vedic culture; He accepts only one wife.
11. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is known as *līlā-puruṣottama*; He enjoys wonderful pastimes with His dear devotees.
12. That the highest goal is *prema* – love of God, which can be obtained only by the personal association of a *premī-bhakta*, *premīka-bhakta*; one who has love of God.
13. Rādhārāṇī is *mahābhāva-mayī*, *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva-mayī*; the personification of *mahābhāva*.
14. Kṛṣṇa is *rasa-rāja*, *śṛṅgāra-rasa-rāja*; the king of conjugal mellites.
15. He also explained that Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu made a garland of *prema*, *nāma-prema-mālā* and garlanded the entire material world with this garland.*

*Author's note: This list is abbreviated, it is a very long list of topics illuminated on by Śrī Śrīmad Gourī Govinda Swami.

Whilst travelling the world and preaching, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami's main focus was to enhance, grace and compliment the mission of his own Guru Mahārāja, ISKCON's Founder Ācārya His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, on three platforms:

1. Preach to the preachers.

It gave him so much pain to see devotees falling down and going away. For instance, many lost faith in the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda and left after they realised that their so-called *gurus* were fallen.

2. He wanted to show how everything is in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

There were persons saying that Śrīla Prabhupāda only gave the A-B-C of spiritual teachings. It caused Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja so much pain in his heart to hear this. He wanted to reveal how this was not correct.*

3. Through his articulated presentation of the *siddhānta* he showed how all the *tattvas* were available in ISKCON.**

Thus, within ISKCON he was increasing the understanding of all *tattvas*, embellishing upon the purports of his spiritual master and expanding the limit of the *siddhānta* including all

*Author's note: Therefore he spoke extensively and so deeply on the purports of his spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Those who actually took the time to listen were amazed, and also those who are reading his books, listening to his lectures on mp3 and viewing his DVDs with English subtitles at this present point in time, are also amazed that such a person existed in ISKCON.

** Author's note: Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, mentioned these points a number of times, however in Germany in 1993 he was asked by one *sannyāsī* godbrother, "...why have you come?..." The answer of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami's to this question was the above mentioned three points.

works of our previous *ācāryas*, to encompass all the *tattvas*, finally leading up to the point of *prema*. As described by Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda and Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda:

*chala-dharma chādi' kara satya dharme mati
catur-varga tyagi' dhara nitya-prema-gati*

“Reject all false religion and cultivate the path of true eternal religion. Ignore even the four Vedic goals of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa* and strive only towards developing *prema*, eternal love of Kṛṣṇa.”¹

“...This *prema* is the supreme destination, the final fruit of all activity of the soul. The fourfold objects of human endeavour, namely, *dharma* (virtue), *artha* (worldly possession), *kāma* (objects of worldly desire), and *mokṣa* (liberation) are as insignificant as a straw lying by the wayside, in comparison with *kṛṣṇa-prema*...”²

“...Love of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema*) is that pure love. The quality of love is that it takes shelter of one entity and takes another as its object. *Prema* cannot exist without *asraya* (shelter, or subject) and *visaya* (object).

The shelter of *prema* is the heart of the soul. The object of *prema* is Kṛṣṇa alone. When perfect, pure *prema* arises, the aspects of the Lord as Brahman, the controller and Nārāyaṇa ripen into the form of Kṛṣṇa...”³

“...Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, *premā pum-artha mahān*: Love of Godhead is the ultimate benediction for all human beings...”⁴

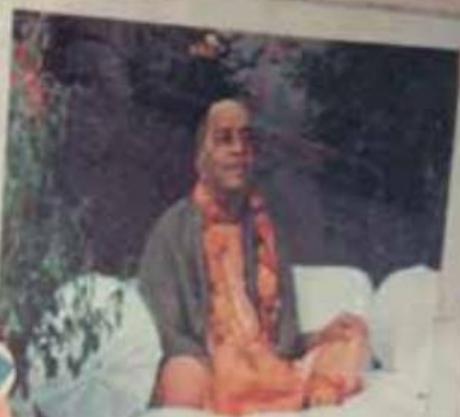
“...And what is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? *Prema-bhak-*

ti-vadānyatā. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is preaching *prema*, means love of Godhead. That is the only necessity to understand in human form of life. *Premā pumartho mahān...*"⁵

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami explained at length that we need to have a clear and concise understanding of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is *prīti-viṣaya* – the object of love; *prīti-āśraya* – the abode of love which is all the *gopīs* headed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the mood of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu, which is *prīti-dharma* – love and affection for one and all. This can only be developed when one has love and affection for Kṛṣṇa - then we will have love and affection for one and all. Therefore the association, personal association, of a *premī-bhakta* is of paramount importance for the conditioned souls, as has been explained throughout this book. This was the ultimate teaching of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

The highest goal in this human form of life is to achieve *prema* and Mahāprabhu is the epitome of that *prema*. Thus by associating with *mahā-bhāgavatas*, one begins to traverse the path beyond apprenticeship and can make tangible headway towards the platform of *prema* – love of God, *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was distributing this *prema-tattva* to one and all.

Therefore the goal for the conditioned soul is to search for the self-realised soul (*tattva-darśī-guru*), and sit at his feet. Then the self-realised soul will show and teach by his own practical example and will personally explain to him or her these intricate transcendental *tattvas* (truths).



About



Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swamī

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami appeared in this world on 2nd September 1929 in the village of Jagannāthapurā in the Indian state of Orissa (Odisha). Both the paternal and maternal sides of his family have been Vaiṣṇavas for many, many centuries. His divine appearance was not like the birth of an ordinary being, he came to this world solely to fulfill the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Tattva-Vicāra

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami dedicated his whole life to preaching the absolute consideration of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, *tattva-vicāra*, and spoke uncompromisingly against accepting *apāra-vicāra*, the apparent consideration. Speaking in his own words, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami said, “... I am stressing only *tattva*. In all my lectures I stress this, *tattva-vicāra*. Do you know the real *tattva* (truth)? You are all following this apparent consideration (*apāra-vicāra*), not *tattva-vicāra*. That mistake is there. You do not know who you are, who Kṛṣṇa is, who is a *guru*, who is a *sādhu*, and what the relationship is between them, you do not know these *tattvas...*”

By Kṛṣṇa's Arrangement

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami is a disciple of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977), the Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness. By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement they met in the sacred land of Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma in 1974.

This transcendental meeting has been nicely described by Gunanarva Dāsa, in Chapter Three of the book *Just Try to Learn the Truth*. Though they had not met previously, there was immediate recognition between the two great souls; *sad-guru* and *sad-sisya*. Śrīla Prabhupāda commented on his disciple Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami saying (at different times), "... Kṛṣṇa has sent him..." and "... Gour Govinda Swami is a devotee from birth..."

The Three Sevas

Śrīla Prabhupāda entrusted Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami with three important *sevās* (services):

1. To stay in Orissa and build a temple like the famous Temple of Jagannātha in Purī, as Orissa is a very important place in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *līlā*.
2. To translate Śrīla Prabhupāda's books from English into Oriya.
3. To accept disciples and train them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Upon receiving these instructions from his spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja immediately returned to Orissa and started working earnestly on plans for what would become the famous Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple in

Bhubaneswar, which Śrīla Prabhupāda famously predicted, “This temple will be one of the best ISKCON temples in the world. This place will be the heart of the city.” Gour Govinda Swami also embraced the *sevā* of translating Śrīla Prabhupada’s books into Oriya as a sacred duty which he continued every day without fail for the rest of his life.

While Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja immediately began to execute the first two instructions given by his spiritual master, the third and final instruction he received from Śrīla Prabhupāda was to prove more difficult to carry out. After many years, he very hesitantly took on the role of being a spiritual master himself, as he understood the position of *guru* was a very heavy responsibility.

Lord Jagannatha Is in Bhubaneswar

Śrīla Prabhupāda had accepted many Western disciples and taught them the glories of Puruṣottama-kṣetra, Jagannātha Purī Dhāma, where Mahāprabhu performed many pastimes in the eighteen years He resided there. However, when Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples went to visit Jagannātha Purī they were refused entrance to the famous Temple of Lord Jagannātha because they were considered foreigners and not Hindus. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “I will build a temple in Bhubaneswar like the Temple of Jagannātha in Purī, because my western disciples are not allowed there. Lord Jagannātha will come and stay in Bhubaneswar, so all my disciples can go there and have His *darśana*.” Śrīla Prabhupāda, who had been donated land in Bhubaneswar, instructed Gour Govinda Swami to stay on the land and build a temple. He entrusted Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami with the mission of establishing ISKCON in Orissa, the

most important place of Mahāprabhu's pastimes, and told him, "Gour Govind, you will take me to Orissa."

Under Extreme Conditions

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami returned to Orissa and stayed on the ISKCON land (near the Nayapalli village) in Bhubaneswar under the most extreme and austere circumstances. There were no facilities at all on the land, no shelter, no building, no running water, no toilet, no electricity, no telephone, no nothing! To take bath one would have to go to a far off paddock where there was a pump and take bath from that pump. The only light available for reading and writing in the early hours of the morning and late in the evening came from a castor oil lamp. Wild bears, tigers and elephants would wander the area, which was also frequented by dacoits (thieves).

On Ekādaśī Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja would fast and chant the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* and on other days he would recite one chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. He would often walk up to twenty kilometres a day to collect donations to build the temple, print literature and to buy foodstuffs to prepare and offer to the Lord.

Seventeen Days

Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Bhubaneswar in 1977 and stayed for seventeen days on the ISKCON property in the mud hut, which had been constructed for him by Gour Govinda Swami. On 2nd February 1977, the auspicious appearance day of Lord Nityānanda, Śrīla Prabhupāda laid the foundation stone of the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir. This Temple in Bhubaneswar was to be Śrīla Prabhupāda's last founded project.

Instruction Fulfilled

After sixteen years of determined endeavour, and with practically no outside help, (in one of the poorest regions of India) Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami fulfilled the instruction of his most beloved spiritual master when the magnificent Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir was inaugurated in Bhubaneswar in 1991. Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadra-devī came of Their own accord, as Śrīla Prabhupāda prophesied, and this Temple now attracts thousands of people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Travelling the World

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami spent many years travelling the world preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. His travels took him to Europe, North America, South America, Canada, Africa, Mauritius, Australia, Asia [Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Bali], the Caribbean — Guyana, Surinama, Trinidad and he preached vigorously throughout the Indian subcontinent, especially in the state of Orissa, where he most notably constructed the glorious Temples of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāl Jīu.

Spellbound

Wherever he went Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would leave his audience spellbound by his dynamic presentation of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He would often speak for up to four hours at a time on topics about Kṛṣṇa, leaving his audience enchanted and always eager to hear more. On occasions he would speak on a single verse of the Śrīmad-

Bhāgavatam, both morning and evening for seven days. There was no question put to him that he could not answer, and hearing from Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami on a regular basis would melt even the hardest heart, convincing one to seriously take to the path of *bhakti-yoga*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was an expert in his understanding of the *sāstras* and from the depth of his conviction was able to dispel the doubts [*sarva-saṁśaya-saṁchettā*] of those who came to him for spiritual guidance by the depth of his spiritual conviction. He would place great importance on chanting, encouraging and inspiring everyone to chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa without offence, to chant the pure name and thereby achieve the goal of life; to get Kṛṣṇa and develop *kṛṣṇa-prema* in this very life.

Sri Ksetra
Jagannatha Puri - Bhubaneswar Dhama

One of the most important aspects of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja's preaching was to reveal the innermost secrets of Puri-Bhubaneswar Dhāma, of Lord Jagannātha, and the reason why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stayed in Jagannātha Purī. He gave the most subtle and clear understanding of the Lord's pastimes in Jagannātha Purī and why Bhubaneswar is so important for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community.

Storehouse of Knowledge

While astrologers predicted that he would live up to the age of ninety and deliver many conditioned souls, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami left this world by his own volition while speaking *kṛṣṇa-kathā* on February 9th 1996, in Śrī Māyāpura Dhāma on the holy appearance day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

He left behind a veritable storehouse of knowledge concerning the truth about the *jīva*, *māyā*, and the Absolute Truth Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Many of his lectures and talks were recorded at the time, on audio and video, and many of these are now available on the internet, on CD, DVD and MP3 formats, as well as in numerous books published by his disciples and followers.

To gain a greater understanding of the life of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, we suggest reading the authorised biography *Kṛṣṇa-lingita Vigraha: One Who is Always Embraced by Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. For a brief but in-depth look at the life of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami we recommend the booklet *Gour Govinda Swami – Who Was He?* Both of these titles have been published by Tattva-vicāra Publications and are available from www.tvpbooks.com. Readers interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with the publisher: info @ tvpbooks.com.

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Other Titles

by and for

Srī Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Amṛtera-Taraṅgiṇī — “The Flow of Nectar”

Bhakti-Naipunya — “The Last Limit of Bhakti”

Encountering the Kṛṣṇālingita-Vigraha

Gopāl-Jiu — “The Beloved Deity of Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja”

Srī Guru Makes Kṛṣṇa Appear in your Heart

Kṛṣṇālingita-Vigraha Vol. 1 — “The Life of Srī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami”

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Mathurā meets Vṛndāvana

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Śuddha-nāma Bhajana — “Chanting the Pure Name”

The Embankment of Separation

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The History of Lord Jagannātha’s Snāna-Yātrā

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The Nature of a Mahatma

Rādhā-Prema Makes Kṛṣṇa Mad

Śrī Guru Caraṇa Padma — “*The Lotus Feet of Śrī Guru*”

The Greed of the Lord

The Meaning of Vyāsa-Pujā

The Nature of a Mahatma

Rādhā-Prema Makes Kṛṣṇa Mad

Śrī Guru Caraṇa Padma — “*The Lotus Feet of Śrī Guru*”

Taking Care of Bhakti-Latā

Bound by Love

The Beauty of a Premī-Bhakta

Rādhārāṇī’s Beauty

Icchā-Mṛtyu — “*Simply by His Will a Pure Devotee Leaves*”

The Asset of the Gaudīya-Guru-Varga

The Heart of a Vaiṣṇava

The Garland of Prema-Nāma

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15. *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*, *The Greatness of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma*, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Chapter Sixteen, verse 56.
16. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.4.6 purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
17. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.4.6 purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
18. *Bhagavad-gītā* lecture 13.24, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda Bombay, October 23, 1973.
19. *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* Mantra Six purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
20. Excerpt from conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda, Hrishikesh, May 13, 1977.

21. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.1.6
22. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.1.7
23. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.1.8
24. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 12.13.21
25. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.25.25
26. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.25.20
27. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.2.16
28. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.22.7 purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
29. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture 1.2.3 by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Rome, May 27, 1974.
30. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture 6.1.24 by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Chicago, July 8, 1975.
31. Room conversation Mauritius, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda October 5, 1975.

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1. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* verse 14.15
2. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 14.15, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
3. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.48
4. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.49
5. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.50
6. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.51
7. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.52
8. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.53
9. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.54
10. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.55

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Chapter Fifteen

1. *Indian Sculpture and Iconography* – Forms and Measurements – by Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapati.

Chapter Sixteen

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1. *Sthāpatya Veda*, by Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati.
2. *The Power of Living Space*, by Professor Marcus Schmieke.
3. *Sthāpatya Veda*, by Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati.
4. *The Power of Living Space*, by Professor Marcus Schmieke.
5. *Sthāpatya Veda*, by Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapati.
6. *Indian Sculpture and Iconography*, by Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati.
7. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.1.17, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
8. *Indian Sculpture and Iconography*, by Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati.
9. *Indian Sculpture and Iconography*, by Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati.
10. *Sthāpatya Veda*, by Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati.
11. *The Power of Living Space*, by Professor Marcus Schmieke.
12. *The Power of Living Space*, by Professor Marcus Schmieke.
13. *Sthāpatya Veda*, by Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati.
14. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.24.44, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Chapter Seventeen

1. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.18.23 by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 28 March, 1995, Bhubaneswar, India.
2. Lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 2 June 1995, Amherst, USA, .
3. Morning Walk, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 2 November, 1975, Nairobi.
4. Roof Conversation, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 5 January 1977, Bombay.

Chapter Eighteen

1. Lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 1 October 1993, Cairns, Australia.
2. *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 5.21
3. *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 5.22
4. *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 5.23
5. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 5.5.1

6. *Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta* is a compilation of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's instructions in question-and-answer form.
7. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* verse 1.2.12
8. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.16-17 by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami on 4 November 1990, New Govardhan, Australia.
9. *Amṛta Vāṇī*, by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
10. *Bhagavad-gītā* class by Śrīla Prabhupāda 5 October 1973, Bombay.
11. Morning Walk with Śrīla Prabhupāda May 21 1975, Melbourne Australia.
12. Śrīla Prabhupāda evening darshan Tehran Iran August 6, 1976.
13. Śrīla Prabhupāda Lecture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.23 in L.A. June 20th 1972.
14. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* verse 1.99
15. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* verse 1.100
16. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* verse 5.131
17. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.23 by Śrīla Prabhupāda, 20 June 1972, L.A.
18. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.1.17, purport Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
19. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.7, by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami May 1993, in New York, USA.
20. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* verse 9.16
21. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* verse 9.17
22. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* verse 9.18
23. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 9.18 purport Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
24. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* verse 10.7
25. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 10.7 purport Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Chapter Nineteen

The Power of Sādhu-Guru's Mercy

Darśana with Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 11 September 1993, Bhaktivedanta Manor, UK.

1. *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 16.4
2. *Prārthanā* by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, *Vaiṣṇave Vijñapti* - Prayer to the Vaiṣṇava.

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1. Excerpts from an interview with Śrīla Prabhupāda and Mr. O'Grady May 1974, Rome. (Published **Back to Godhead Magazine # 67**)
2. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* verses 1.45-46 quoted from *Viṣṇu-śmṛti Vacana*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī.
3. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.22 purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
4. *Nectar of Instruction*, Text Five, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
5. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.18.40 by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 12 April 1995.
6. Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 2.117, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
7. *The Hare Krishna Movement, The Post Charismatic Fate of a Religious Transplant*, by Edwin F Bryant Ph.D. and Maria L. Ekstrand Ph.D.
8. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.5 by Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 27 October 1976, Vṛndāvana, India.
9. Excerpts from an interview with Śrīla Prabhupāda and Mr. O'Grady May 1974, Rome. (Published **Back to Godhead Magazine # 67**)

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1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.20.4, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
2. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.43, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
3. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.41 purport, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
4. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.52, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
5. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.52, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
6. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.24.53, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
7. Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 1.58, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
8. Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya-līlā 19.151, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

9. *Nectar of Instruction* verse 3 purport, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
10. *Teachings of Lord Kapiladeva* verse 30 purport, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
11. *Science of Self Realisation*, Choosing a Guru, section What is a Guru, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
12. *Science of Self Realisation*, Choosing a Guru, section What is a Guru, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
13. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 7.83, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
14. *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Preface by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Chapter Twenty-Two

1. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.33 by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 12 November 1972, Vṛndāvana.
2. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.33 by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 12 November 1972, Vṛndāvana.
3. *Amṛta Vāṇī*, page 44 by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda., Touchstone Media.
4. *Śrī Prema-Vivarta* verse 6.13

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1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.3, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
2. *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.17, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
3. *Bhagavad-gītā* 17.28, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
4. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.6, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
5. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.3, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
6. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.10.41, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
7. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.10.41, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

8. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.23.54, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
9. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.23.57, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
10. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.4.26, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
11. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.2.16
12. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.2.18
13. From a lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.24.47, 12 April 1993.
14. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā verse 5.205
15. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā verse 5.206
16. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā verse 5.207
17. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā verse 7.71
18. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā verse 7.72
19. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā verse 1.196
20. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā verse 1.197
21. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā verse 1.198
22. Offering to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, 13 February, 1936, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
23. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā verse 17.31 (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse 3).
24. *Guru Tattva* by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami – Concluding Words.
25. *Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru - Kṛpā Kara Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura* - verse 2 by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.
26. *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse 3.

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1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 5.12.12
2. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.44
3. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.45
4. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā verse 22.65
5. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 16.74 purport, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
6. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.46
7. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.47
8. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Samhitā by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, from the introduction.
9. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Samhitā by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, from the introduction.

10. *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 4.34
11. *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 4.35
12. *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 4.36
13. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.11.38, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
14. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.18.16, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
15. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.15, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
16. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.16, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
17. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture, 1.13.10, by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Geneva, June 1 1974.
18. Lecture by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Jakarta, February 27, 1973.
19. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 7.12.10
20. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.18.23 by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami 28 March, 1995, Bhubaneswar, India.
21. *Śrī Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa* 10.113, quoted from *Padma Purāṇa*.
22. *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa, Chapter 59.
23. *Ādi Purāṇa*.
24. *Skanda Purāṇa*, Utkala-khaṇḍa.
25. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.18.13
26. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 7.5.32
27. *Jaiva Dharma*, Chapter 8, Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.
28. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.7.1

Chapter Twenty-Five

1. From a question and answer period after *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class 1.1.7, UK 27 August 1991, by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.
2. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.17.2, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
3. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 24.330, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
4. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 25.9, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

5. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* verse 19.148
6. *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava, Hari-jana-khaṇḍa* – Section concerning the devotees of Hari, by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
7. Song 12, Verse Four from *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* - The desire tree of Auspiciousness By Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.
8. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, verse 16.232
9. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, 16.232, commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
10. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, verse 16.233
11. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, 16.233, commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
12. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, verse 16.234
13. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, 16.234, commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
14. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, verse 16.235
15. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, 16.235, commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
16. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, verse 16.236
17. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Ādi-khaṇḍa*, 16.236, commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
18. *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava, Hari-jana-khaṇḍa* – Section concerning the devotees of Hari, by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
19. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.1 by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda on 16 March 1974, in Vṛndāvana, India.
20. *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verse 1.2.295
21. *Amṛta Vāṇī*, Nectar of Instructions for Immortality by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
22. *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, The Pure Devotee, verse 5.
23. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* verse 22.83
24. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.25.25
25. Nectar of Instruction, *Upadeśāmṛta*, verse five.
26. *Ṣad-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka* of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, verse one.
27. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.1.2
28. From the lotus mouth/lips of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.
29. *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse 3 from the mouth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

30. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, 24. 331, purport by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Chapter Twenty-Six

1. *Jaiva-dharma* of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura. Appendix, *The Phala Śruti: The Auspicious Fruit of Hearing this Book*.
2. *Śrī Hari Bhakti Kalpa Latikā*, *The Desire-Creeper of Devotion to Lord Hari*, by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Foreword By His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, *The Treasure of Bhakti*.
3. *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta - The Nectarean Instructions Of Lord Caitanya*, Chapter One, Part One, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.
4. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 7.1 purport.
5. Lecture on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.1 by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, March 1 1975, Atlanta, USA.

Glossary

A

Ācārya: spiritual preceptor who teaches by example. One who has personally assimilated the confidential meanings of the scriptures (*śāstra*) and engages others accordingly in *sad-ācāra*, or proper behaviour, and who personally follows that *ācāra* or behaviour himself.

Adbhuta-audārya: wonderfully magnanimous.

Adbhuta-kārunya: wonderfully merciful.

Adbhuta-vadānyā: wonderfully munificent.

Anartha: unwanted desires that populate the area of the heart.

Āsakti: attachment - the advanced stage of spiritual progress wherein the practitioner has deep and intense attachment for the object of his or her devotional service.

Āśraya-vigraha: The *āśraya-vigraha* refers to the Lord's eternal associates who are naturally the receptacle of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and under whose guidance the aspiring devotees place themselves in order to awaken their spontaneous attraction toward the Lord.

Āvṛta-cetanā: one of the five levels of consciousness known as covered consciousness.

B

Bābājī: a person who dwells alone in one place and leads a life of meditation, penance and austerity; renounced order, in which one chants and reads.

Back to Godhead Magazine: The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement Founder His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda (1896-1977).

Bhakta-bhāgavata: the living, walking, talking – *bhāgavata*; pure representative of the Lord.

Bhakti-sukṛti: Spiritual merit leading to *bhakti* which will in one birth lead one to the association of great devotees of the Lord.

*bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgena parijayate
sat-saṅgah prāpyate pumbhiḥ sukṛtaiḥ pūrva-sañcitaiḥ*

“Devotional sentiments are evoked by the purifying association of advanced devotees. The *jīva* is able to come into close contact with a pure devotee only by accruing sufficient pious results from many previous births.” (*Bṛhad-nāradīya Purāṇa*)

Bhakti-sūtra or prema-bhakti-sūtra: the rope of divine love.

Bhakty-unmukhī sukṛti: same as *bhakti-sukṛti*.

Bhaktivedanta Institute: started in 1974 by Śrīpāda Bhakti Svarūpa Dāmodara Mahārāja (TD Singh Phd BioCh) by the order of his *guru* Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda with the aim to establish a synthesis in science and religion.

Bona fide spiritual master: *sad-guru*; *guru* of the highest order; a pure and authentic representative of the Absolute Truth.

Brahma-bhūta: one who is free from the material body.

Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa: one of the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

Bṛhad-mṛdaṅga or Bṛhad-mṛdaṅga-saṅkīrtana: the glorification of the Lord through the medium of the written word. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda would say it is like a great drum (*bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*) that could be heard throughout the world.

C

Cooroy: a town in Queensland, Australia, located on the northern Sunshine Coast. When Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja first visited Jayadharma’s farm in this area, in October 1990, he said, “...a very nice place for *bhajan*...”

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata: An original exposition of the teachings and activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu which gives emphasis on the Lord’s pastimes of childhood and youth. Written by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, the last disciple of Śrī Nityānanda prabhu. Originally named *Śrī Caitanya Maṅgala*, the name was changed when it was discovered that Śrī Locana dāsa Ṭhākura had already composed a literature of the same name.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta: The last prominent account of the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, written by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Goswami by the mercy of Śrī Nityānanda prabhu.

Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala: The first written account of the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by Śrī Locana dāsa Ṭhākura.

Cetanā: consciousness.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad: one of the 108 *Upaniṣads*.

D

Dambha: pride.

Dañḍavats: Prostrated obeisances. Flat like a rod.

Darśana: The act of seeing, meeting and beholding the deity in the temple and/or a spiritually advanced personality.

Dīkṣā: spiritual initiation by the bona fide spiritual master (*guru*).

Durlabha: very rare.

G

Gopīs: according to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the *gopīs* are the cowherd damsels of Vraja, who manifest the highest degree of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.

Gramophone: the first device for recording and replaying sound.

Grantha-bhāgavata: the book *bhāgavata*, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Guru-samsāre: the world or the family of the spiritual master.

H

Hari-bhajana: the process of devotional service to Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa.

Hari-kathā: topics of Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa.

Narrations of the holy name, form, qualities and pastimes of Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa.

Harmonist Magazine: published by Sree Gauḍīya Math, P.O. Baghbazaar, Calcutta India. Editor and Chief: Paramahamsa Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Goswami (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda Mahārāja). Also please see: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda Mahārāja page 281 of this book.

I

International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON), founder His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977).

ISKCON: International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. The preaching mission of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founded in 1966.

J

Jāda Bharata: Bharata Mahārāja in his final birth as a renounced *brāhmaṇa*. He gave wonderful spiritual instruction to Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa.

Jagāi and Mādhāi: Two very sinful persons who received the mercy of Lord Nityānanda and then gave up their sinful ways and became great devotees. They became the 89th and 90th branches of the Caitanya tree.

Jagat-guru: the spiritual master of the whole universe.

Jīva-bhūta: a living entity who is encaged by the material body.

K

Kaniṣṭha-adhikārī: A third class devotee (lowest) or *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee.

*arcāyām eva haraye
pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktah prākṛtah smṛtah*

“A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the Deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.” (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.47)

Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā śrī-mūrti: the *guru* who is the embodiment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

Kṛṣṇa-prema: Topmost pure love for Kṛṣṇa (God).

Kṛṣṇa-samsāra: The world or the family Śrī Kṛṣṇa. However before entering *kṛṣṇa-samsāra*, we need to enter *guru-samsāre*, the world or the family of Śrī Guru.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad: one of the 108 *Upaniṣads*.

Komala śraddhā: very soft, weak faith.

M

Madhyama-adhikārī: The intermediate devotee.

*īsvare tad-adhīneṣu
baliṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā
yaḥ karoti sa madhyamah*

“An intermediate or second-class devotee, called *madhyama-adhikārī*, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent and disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.46)

Mahājana: A great personality.

Twelve such *mahājanas* are described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.3.20*.

*svayambhūr nāradah śambhuḥ
 kumārah kapilo manuḥ
 prahlādo janako bhīṣmo
 balir vaiyāsakir vayam*

“Lord Brahmā, Bhagavān Nārada, Lord Śiva, the four Kumāras, Lord Kapila [the son of Devahūti], Svāyambhuva Manu, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Janaka Mahārāja, Grandfather Bhīṣma, Bali Mahārāja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and I [Yamarāja] myself know the real religious principle.”

Mahātmā: A great soul. A title of respect offered to those elevated in spiritual consciousness.

Mahā-bhāgavata: A topmost devotee of the Supreme Lord.

Mañjarīs: residents of the topmost portion of the spiritual sky who have the most intimate access to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

A young maid-servant expert in assisting in the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Māyā-baddha-jīvas: lost souls, caught in the labyrinth of this material world.

Mleccha: A meat eater.

Mukulita-cetanā: one of the five levels of consciousness known as budding consciousness.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad: one of the 108 *Upaniṣads*.

N

Nitya-dhāma: the eternal realm, the spiritual world, the *paravyoma*.

Nitya-siddha: an eternally liberated soul, not touched by the allurements of this material, ephemeral world.

P

Padma Purāṇa: one of the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

Pāṇḍā: a *brahmāṇa*, who also acts as a guide at temples and holy places.

Parā-bhakti: real *bhakti*, *rāgānuga-bhakti* – transcendental pure devotional service.

Paramparā [or sampradāya]: This is also called disciplic succession or *guru parampara*, and implies that such instruction in spiritual truth is passed down personally from teacher to disciple in a direct unbroken chain (*śrauta-paramparā*).

Prema bhakti-sūtra: the rope of divine love offered to the conditioned souls by the bona fide spiritual master.

Premī-bhaktas: one who has *prema*, pure love of Godhead and can give this *prema* to others.

Para-upakāra: the greatest welfare work, giving the path of *bhakti*.

Patita-adhamas: the most fallen human beings.

Prīti-āśraya: abode of love.

Prīti-viṣaya: object of love.

Pure Devotee: a *suddha-bhakta*. One who performs pure devotional service. One who is free from any desire other than the desire to give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa.

Pūrṇa-vikaśita-cetanā: one of the five levels of consciousness known as fully blossoming consciousness.

R

Rūpa Gosvāmī: see Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

S

Śabda-brahma: the spiritual sound vibration emanating from the heart of a God realised soul which manifests the direct presence of the Lord.

Sādhu: a saintly personality.

Sad-guru: a genuine *guru* who is eternally situated in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Sat-siṣya: a genuine disciple, a first class disciple.

Sādhu-vaidya: The devotee physician who knows how to treat the spiritual diseases of the *baddha-jīva* or conditioned soul by imparting transcendental moods of service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śaktyāveśa-avatāra: an empowered living entity who serves as an incarnation of the Lord; empowered by the Supreme Lord to act powerfully on His behalf.

Samaṣṭi-guru: the sum total of *guru-tattva*, usually referred to as Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

Sampradāya [or *paramparā*]: The *sampradāya* institution has existed in this holy land of Bharata (India) since time immemorial.

The word *sampradāya* is a passive nominal formation from the Sanskrit verb root, *sam-pra-da* ('to hand down'). Lexicographers define it as 'the instruction that is passed down in a line of spiritual masters.' This is also called disciplic succession or *guru paramparā*, and implies that such instruction in spiritual truth is passed down personally from teacher to disciple in a direct chain (*śrauta-paramparā*).

Sāmudrika-śāstra: the total analysis of the body. The *Sāmudrika-śāstra* explains the thirty-two bodily symptoms of a great personality.

Saṅkucita-cetanā: one of the five levels of consciousness known as shrunken consciousness.

Śāstra: the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His associates. These are not ordinary books but manifestations of transcendence.

Ṣaṭ-sandarbhas: six philosophical treatises written by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, they are; *Bhagavat-sandarbha*, *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha*, *Tattva-sandarbha*, *Prīti-sandarbha*, *Krama-sandarbha*, *Bhakti-sandarbha*.

Seva-yajña: the sacrifice of rendering service to Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

Siddhānta: A harmonious whole with a harmonious conclusion.

Śikṣā-guru: instructing spiritual master.

Skanda Purāṇa: one of the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa: written by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī.

Śrī Guru-vandanā: a song from the *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda Mahārāja: (1874-1937): The founder of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. An extra-ordinary, powerful preacher who founded sixty-four missions in India. The transcendently empowered son of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda appeared in this world on February 6, 1874. He is the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. He initiated 60,000 disciples, established 4 printing presses and produced a daily newspaper, filled with topics of the spiritual world. He also wrote and published over 100 books on transcendental topics.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838-1915): A great *ācārya* in the Brahmā-Mādhyava-Gauḍīya-sampradāya, the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, who, together, pioneered the propagation of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in the west.

He single handedly resurrected the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community. He wrote

over 100 books and was called the Seventh Goswami, because, like the Six Goswamis of Vṛndāvana, he uncovered lost holy places, established deities, preached the cult of pure bhakti and wrote books delineating the science of devotion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda (1896-1977): His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977), founder of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON). The personality who spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the Western world. He travelled the world fourteen times in twelve years, wrote more than 80 books and opened 108 temples. His last founded project was the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India. The spiritual master of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja, who was born in a Vaiṣṇava family from Orissa, which is the land of Lord Jagannātha.

Śrīla Jagadānanda Pañdita: an eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, an intimate and prominent associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrī Lakṣman Rāmānuj Jeeyer - Śrīla Ācāryadeva (1930 – 2012): Ācārya for the Śrī Sampradāya from 1971 - 2012.

Śrī Manu-smṛti: ancient texts authored by Manu, the father of mankind, for the welfare of human beings.

Śrī Raṅgam: Śrī Raṅga-kṣetra (Śrī Raṅgam) is a very famous place. It lies in the district of Tiruchirāpalli, about ten miles west of Kumbhakonam, near the city of Tiruchirāpalli, on an island in the Kāverī River. The Śrī Raṅgam Temple is the largest in India, and there are seven walls surrounding it. There are also seven roads leading to Śrī Raṅgam.

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī: The son of Śrī Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva. He was a *rasika-bhakta* who knew the innermost secrets of devotion to the Lord. He spoke the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the king of the earth, Parīkṣit Mahārāja. Parīkṣit Mahārāja had seven days to live and was inquiring about the goal of life and the process to attain it.

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī: a disciple of Śrī Śukadeva Goswami.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī: The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is conducted under the supervision of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. He was the leader of all the Gosvāmīs in Vṛndāvana.

Śrī Uddhava: the greatly intelligent and closest associate of Kṛṣṇa in the Dwārakā pastimes.

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura: a great devotee of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who was always feeling separation from the Lord. His *kīrtana* was so spiritually powerful that all who heard it were transformed by spiritual sentiments.

Śuddha-bhaktas [pure devotee]: devotees in whom the transcendental power of devotion to the Lord has manifested.

Śuddha-nāma: the pure holy name of the Lord.

Sukṛti: merit which when accrued leads one to higher levels of consciousness.

Sva-kṛpā-śakti: the Lord's own power of compassion and mercy. It follows the desires of the śuddha-bhaktas [pure devotees] and thus śuddha-bhaktas [pure devotees] are able to distribute the Lord's mercy in this world.

Svarūpa-śakti: The Lord's own internal energy. It is a completely spiritual and transcendental energy which is completely distinct from matter.

Svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra: one who is empowered by the Lord's internal energy.

T

Tattva-darśinah: one who sees the truth and can see the Lord face to face.

Tattva-jñāna: spiritual knowledge, which is distributed by the Lord's dear most servants to the suffering conditioned souls of this material world.

Tīrtha-yātrā: travelling to many different holy places (*tīrthas*).

U

Utkala Khaṇḍa: one chapter of the *Skanda-Purāṇa*. The *Skanda-Purāṇa* consists of 81,100 verses.

Uttama-adhikārīs: The topmost devotee or Vaiṣṇava.

śrī-havir uvāca

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed

bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah

bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmāny

eṣa bhāgavatottamah

“Śrī Haver said: The most advanced devotee sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently, he sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.45)

V

Vaidhī-bhakti: devotional service under scheduled regulations; the beginning stage.

Vaiṣṇava: One who has the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu in his heart and mind always.

Vaiṣṇava-aparādha: offences unto the lotus feet of exalted Vaiṣṇavas.

When the body, mind or words are filled with hatred and envy (and thus devoid of love and affection) and are used against an exalted Vaiṣṇava. It is likened to a mad elephant because it uproots the creeper of one's devotional life, just as a mad elephant in a well-kept garden may uproot the valuable trees being cultivated there.

*nindām kurvanti ye mūḍhā
vaiṣṇavānām mahātmanām
patanti pitṛbhiḥ sārdham
mahā-raurava-samjñite*

*hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi
vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣam
darśane patanāni ṣat*

“That foolish person who criticises an exalted Vaiṣṇava falls down to the hell known as Mahaurava, along with his forefathers. Whoever kills a Vaiṣṇava, blasphemes him, feels malice toward him, does not properly greet him upon seeing him, becomes angry with him or does not feel joy upon seeing him, certainly becomes degraded as a result of these six types of misconduct.”

(*Skanda Purāṇa*)

Vikaśita-cetanā: one of the five levels of consciousness known as blossoming consciousness.

Viṣaya-vigraha: The Supreme Lord who is the object and enjoyer of the devotee's love.

Vyaṣṭi-guru: the individual spiritual master. All our different ācāryas who appear here and teach by their example.

Y

Yavanas: a class of humans fallen from the Vedic culture; a low-class person, generally a meat-eater; a barbarian.

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सतां प्रसरान्मम वीर्यसंविदो
भवन्ति हृत्कर्णरसायना” कथा” ।
तज्जोषणादाश्वपवर्गवर्त्मनि
श्रद्धा रतिर्भक्तिरनुक्रमिष्यति ॥ २५ ॥

*satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25



ISBN 978-0-9875988-6-8

9 780987 598868

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