

**THEIR
LASTING
RELATION**

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

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From Lectures and Letters by
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī
Prabhupāda
and
His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta
Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

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A BRIEF HISTORY

In June 1996 at the Rādhā-Ramaṇa temple in Orange County, California, Siddhānta prabhu of Illuminations Television (ITV) interviewed Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja regarding his relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Interviewer: Please tell us how you first met Śrīla Prabhupāda, and any circumstance you may have had with him when any characteristics of the pure devotee may have been exhibited.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja: I was the personal servant of my *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and I always traveled with him. We had a Maṭha (preaching center and *āśrama*) in Calcutta, called Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. It was there that I met Swāmījī¹ in 1946 or 1947. Whenever Gurujī used to come to Calcutta, Swāmījī would come to see him. Both were disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura and they were also bosom friends. Swāmījī met Śrīla Prabhupāda in about 1922, and about four years before that, in 1918 my *guru-mahārāja* took initiation from him. So my *guru-mahārāja* was the elder Godbrother of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī. From the beginning they were intimate friends.

When there were some problems in the Gauḍīya mission in 1939-40, my *guru-mahārāja* went to Prayāga, Allahabad, to the

¹ It is tradition in the Gauḍīya Maṭha that all *ācāryas* and *sannyāsīs* refer to one another by their given *sannyāsa* names. Because Śrīla Prabhupāda's *sannyāsa* name is 'Swāmī,' Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja refers to him as such, adding the suffix 'jī.' 'Jī' denotes great regard, as well as intimacy and affection. Prior to Śrīla Prabhupāda's coming to the West, they related with one another in Vṛndāvana as intimate friends. Also, as they have both taken *sannyāsa* from the same *guru*, they have a Godbrother relationship as well. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja sometimes refers to Śrīla Prabhupāda as Swāmījī, sometimes as Swāmī Mahārāja, sometimes as Prabhupāda, and sometimes as Śrīla Prabhupāda.

house of Swāmījī. At that time Swāmījī had a very good medical shop there, and he was very renounced. My *guru-mahārāja* spent about five to six months with him, and they had many discussions.

In 1941 our *gurudeva*, along with Bhaktivedānta Swāmījī established the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Calcutta. At that time Swāmījī was Abhay Babu. I went to the Maṭha in 1946, and perhaps at the same time, or maybe one month after I arrived in Calcutta, Swāmījī again came there. I was the personal servant of my *gurudeva* and I also served Swāmījī. Swāmījī was so happy to see my service to *gurudeva*. He asked some questions and become very pleased with my replies. He asked me, "What is your name? From where you have joined here?" And thus I used to serve him.

In 1953, our *Guru Mahārāja* started two papers, *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrika* and *Gauḍīya-patrika*. *Gauḍīya-patrika* was in Bengali and *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrika* was in Hindi. *Guru Mahārāja* requested Swāmījī to be the editor general of both *patrikas* (journals). Swāmījī accepted and began to give articles, so many good articles, especially regarding *Gītā*—from beginning to end. He wrote one particular article about the *murgi* mission. *Murgi* means hen. Hen mission. They call themselves religious persons but they take the flesh of *murgis*, hens—and even cows. They have no mercy at all, yet they think that they are religious persons and know Vedānta. This is *murgi* mission. Swāmī Mahārāja wrote so marvelously that everyone was praising him, and our *guru-mahārāja* requested him to write more articles like this—to reform religious *saṁskāras*, and institutions."

Those who are not actually following Kṛṣṇa and Vedānta are not really religious persons. This is especially how Swāmījī wrote about *māyāvādīs* in *Gītā*. Those who think that the Possessive and the Possessor are the same as Kṛṣṇa, they are Vaiṣṇavas. But those who think that the body of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇi (the soul of Kṛṣṇa) are different, are *māyāvādīs*, and they don't know anything about the meaning of *Gītā*. One learned doctor, the president of India, Dr. Sarvapalli Rādhākṛṣṇan, was very famous in Western countries for philosophy, but he wrote that Kṛṣṇa's body was one thing, and the spirit soul of Kṛṣṇa was another. So Swāmījī wrote against Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan. He wrote very strongly in regard to *Vedānta* and especially about the *Gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—that Kṛṣṇa,

Kṛṣṇa's body, possessions, and everything in relation to Him is the same thing. He is *sat-cit-ānanda*.

One copy was sent from Mathurā to Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan, and to all the learned persons of the *samsad* (parliament). Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan did not reply. They cannot reply, because *māyāvāda* is against *bhakti* path. There are so many arguments, but it would take time to explain. Swāmījī gave me his articles in Baṅgala (Bengali) and I used to translate them in Hindi. I had a very close relationship with him.

I knew him as a very good and staunch philosopher. He had not gone to any colleges for learning Sanskrit, or *Gītā*, or *Vedānta*. He was a born philosopher, and a pure devotee. He was a *mahā-bhāgavatā*, but he played the role of *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava to give help and initiation to others. An *uttama-adhikārī* does not give initiation to anyone. He thinks that everyone is *mahā-bhāgavata*, always serving Kṛṣṇa. So he was in this position—playing the role of a *madhyama-adhikārī*. But I realized who he was by his words and by his association.

In 1955 Swāmījī lived in Mathurā for more than five months, and he gave daily classes there. He would read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and speak on pastimes of Prahlāda, Citraketu, Kapila and Devahūti, and Dāmodara-līlā. He translated the verses word-by-word and explained the meanings. Very learned persons were attracted by this. At that time, when he lectured, he told me that I should perform *kīrtana*. In those days my voice was very good and I used to sing beautiful *kīrtanas*. I was famous in the whole Gauḍīya mission for *kīrtana* and dancing. So he used to tell me to sing, and he played *mṛdaṅga*.

I used to cook for him, and help him in many other ways. I used to give him many books from my library room, to assist him in his translating of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and after some time he went to Delhi and published three volumes of First Canto.

Swāmījī was very much fond of a good sweet from Mathurā called *perā*, and he used to tell me, "O, bring *perā*." So I brought that, and we used to discuss many things. I think that what we discussed is what he later established in ISKCON. I was with him for so many years in Mathurā, and then after that in Vṛndāvana. I was with him everyday.

Then, with no *paisā* (money), not a farthing, he came to the

Western countries. When he was in New York, in 1965, he requested me that, “You should come with me. I am alone and I will have to do something there; so you should come.” I told him that, “My *guru* is here and I am serving him. When he will return to Bengal I may come.” Swāmījī said, “Very good, you should serve your *gurudeva*, but when you have the chance then you should certainly come and join me.” I said, “Yes, I will come.” After that I sent all his books—*Gītā*, Rāmānujā’s *bhāṣya* (*Śrī bhāṣya*), Śaṅkara’s *bhāṣya* (*Śārīraka bhāṣya*), all commentaries (*bhāṣyas*) to New York. A few days ago I saw those books in Los Angeles. Not all, but some of them are there. I sent him *mṛdaṅgas*, *karatālas*, and *vigrahas* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and also ten kilos of sweet *perā* every month. I brought some here, but it’s all gone.

Navīna Kṛṣṇa prabhu (Śrīla Mahārāja’s servant): It was all left in Houston.

Śrīla Naryana Mahārāja: We had five or six kilos that I wanted to give everyone wherever I would go, in memory of Swāmījī, but I could not.

In 1967 Swāmījī returned to India with Kīrtanānanda. I was the only person to meet him at the airport in Delhi. We went to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in Delhi, and I used to live there at Swāmījī’s request, so that I could render various services to him. Then Acyutānanda came. Swāmījī would say, “I am not feeling well, I’m tired, so you go with Kīrtanānanda and Acyutānanda to some persons’ home, and you will have to give the lectures there.” I did so.

After Swāmījī came to Vṛndāvana, to the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple, I often came to visit him from Mathurā. He discussed so many things about Vedānta, and especially about *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He discussed many principles, and explained why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to this world—to preach *nāma* and *dharma*. And He explained how Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to taste Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s mood. *Anarpita carīm cirāt karuṇayāvotīrṇaḥ kalau samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam*. He gave such high class, deep association there. He loved me so much.

Later, in 1968, our *gurudeva* disappeared from this world. I sent a message to Swāmījī who was at that time in Seattle. When

he received this he at once replied me as if he was writing and weeping. He wrote me that, "I am so much aggrieved for this." He wrote a *śloka* and explained that "as Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī was weeping for his *gurudeva*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, I am feeling like this." He wrote this: *vairāgya-vidyā nija-bhakti-yogam*, then *apāyayan mām anabhīpsu andham śrī-keśava-bhakti-prajñāna-nāma*. "I was not in a mood to take the renounced order. I was fearing so much. My family rejected me, and I was penniless, but still I was not ready to take *sannyāsa* and fulfill my *gurudeva*'s order to go to Western countries to preach his mission. But *pujapada* Keśava Mahārāja gave me *sannyāsa*, the renounced order. 'You have to take.'" Swāmījī wrote me that this was his *śraddhāñjali* for *gurudeva*'s feet.

The renounced order is not a play. It changes one's whole life. It means one is aspiring for *gopī-bhāva*. Some say that Swāmījī was only a friend to Kṛṣṇa. But I strongly oppose this. His (*sannyāsa*) *mantra* was a *gopī-mantra*. And he has taken *gopāl-mantra*. Those who are second initiated know what is the *gopāl-mantra*. Without the *gopāl-mantra* no-one can have the mood which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to give. So I have heard from him directly. And also by hearing his lectures I know that he has come in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—to give the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This was also the mission of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhu-pāda. They are both associates of Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu. They are not of this world. So Swāmījī has not come only to give *dharma*. He has not come only to give the *yuga-dharma* of *harināma*. This was not the mission of Mahāprabhu; it was the mission of Mahāviṣṇu or Advaita Ācārya.

*yuga-dharma-pra vartana haya aṁśa haite
āmā vinā anye nāre vraja-prema dite*

My plenary portions can establish the principles of religion for each age. No one but Me, however, can bestow the kind of loving service performed by the residents of Vraja. [Cc. Ādi 3.26]

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu comes, taking the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, he teaches *prema*. It is that *prema* which he wanted to give to the *jīvas*.

*prema-rasa-niryāsa karite āsvādana
rāga-mārga bhakti loke karite pracāraṇa
rasika-śekhara kṛṣṇa parama-karuṇa
ei dui hetu haite icchāra udgama*

The Lord's desire to appear was born from two reasons: He wanted to taste the sweet essence of the mellows of love of God, and He wanted to propagate devotional service in the world on the platform of spontaneous attraction. Thus He is known as supremely jubilant and as the most merciful of all. [Cc. Ādi 4.15-16]

This is the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the mission of Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha Gosvāmī, and the mission of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, and later on Śrīla Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ṭhākura, then Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, then Śrīla Gaura-kīśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. So Swāmījī has come to the Western countries only to give their mission. Nothing new; only their mission. He has not written any new books. He has translated *Gītā*, and he has given purports. He has also given purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Īsopaniṣad*, and other books. He has given the names of the *paramparā*, from Nārada to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and up to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. So he was not out of our line, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line. He was a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. The first Gauḍīya mission was Gauḍīya Maṭha in the line of our disciplic order. We should not try to cut that link. If anyone is doing this, it is due to ignorance. No one should try to cut Swāmījī from our line, and thus make himself fall down from the *sampradāya*. Swāmījī has not created anything new.

I can tell something about his mission in the Western countries. He always was connected with the *sampradāya*. At first he has plowed and made barren land into cultivated land—thus fertilizing it. He planted seeds, and these seeds should never stay the same. They should sprout, they should grow, and they should come up and give sweet fruits. We should increase our devotional activities, our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We should not remain third class Vaiṣṇavas. Kṛṣṇa consciousness was established by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. It is not that for one hundred years we should remain as the same seed. We have to become qualified, otherwise we are in ignorance. We have to go

deep into the philosophy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, otherwise we will not see Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja.

Swāmījī has written everything in his books, including that which he could not speak much about at that time. Those who think that Swāmījī is dead are themselves dead. He is always giving inspiration to the whole world. We should know that he is still alive and giving inspiration. If we serve him we will see his books with quite new meaning—quite new meaning. Then we can properly read these books, and become more qualified. I learned from him that we should associate with more bona fide and advanced devotees than ourselves. We should honor them. We should see that all devotees are in one family, Lord Caitanya's family. If we are not thinking in this way, then we cannot be *bhaktas* (devotees). We should think that we are in one family, and there are so many hands. Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, or Swāmījī have thousands and thousands of hands, and so we should honor all hands; we should honor all those who are chanting the holy name of the Lord. I heard him say that those who are chanting the name, even if they have not taken initiation, should also be honored. Those who have taken initiation and are chanting should be more honored. And those who are *mahā-bhāgavata* should be served by all means. Swāmījī has written all this in his translations.²

We should know what is *rasa-siddhānta*, what is *bhakti* and what is *bhakti-rasa*. First we should read *Bhagavad-gītā*, wherein Swāmījī's purports clearly state that we are not this body. In this body there is ego. "Oh I am so lovely. I am a bona fide Vaiṣṇava." In this body we have anger and envy, we insult others, we do not behave well and we do not honor our elder brothers. We forget them. Without ego, lust, *anarthas* and offenses, we should forget the bodily concept of life. Then we will become advanced devotees.

If we are attached to worldly things like apartments, wealth,

² One should mentally honor the devotee who chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation [*dīkṣā*] and is engaged in worshipping the Deity, and one should associate with and faithfully serve that pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others. [N.O.I. text 5]

women, *pratiṣṭhā* and fame, then we should think there is no hope—we are not Vaiṣṇava. So we should become Vaiṣṇava.

So I pray that those who were initiated by Swāmījī should be very broad minded and know that I am actually the first disciple of Swāmījī, from before ISKCON was founded.

There are two kinds of disciples—*śikṣā* and *dīksā*, and both are the same. Sometime the *śikṣā-guru* is superior, and sometimes the *dīksā-guru* may be. The relationship with the *śikṣā-guru* is very friendly—like bosom friends. The *dīksā-guru* should be very much respected, and so we may somewhat fear him. But the *śikṣā-guru* is like a friend, sometimes sitting on the same seat as us. I used to sit with Swāmījī on the same bed, or *āsana*. Then, during his last days, I went to Vṛndāvana to see him. Taking my hands and putting them in his hands, he told me that I should sit on his bed. But I offered *praṇāma* and sat on another chair. He told me that, “I have got so many disciples, but they don’t know very much. You should try to help them. Especially, my *samādhi* should be given by your hands. I want this.” Tears came to his eyes when he was ordering all this. I told him, “You are my *śikṣā-guru*. Though you and I are friends, I always consider you my *śikṣā-guru*. I will always follow your instructions, word for word, letter for letter.” And I have followed. Then I told all the disciples present, especially the leading disciples, “You should not think that Swāmījī is going to die. You should think that he has a mission to help the Western countries. So after his going you should be united and try to honor each other. Give his mission to the countries where he could not go. Don’t cheat his mission. It is most high level to follow his orders. You should all try to be broad-minded and don’t try to control anyone. You can’t get *sneha*, *prema*, love and affection by controlling others and by accumulating money. You can’t control by giving orders. Don’t try to control anyone.”

Swāmī Mahārāja told them, “Come on, come on, listen to Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. Hear what he has to say.”

After Swāmījī’s departure many devotees came from Mathurā to Vṛndāvana and we performed *nagara saṅkīrtana*. I led the *kīrtana*, and then I put Swāmījī in *samādhi*—with Vedic *mantras* and all Vedic arrangements. Most of the renounced people of Vṛndāvana, including *bābājīs* from all four *sampradāyas*, came

there, and I organized everything, including who should do the public speaking and in what order people should speak. I honored all, just as Swāmījī asked me to in his final words. He had told me, “Give as you like. You should give to Rādhā-Dāmodara temple, to all other temples, and to all Godbrothers.”

We took his transcendental body around Vṛndāvana—to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda, and other temples, and at last we came to his abode. His main office was in Bombay, his *sādhana-bhūmi*, place of practice, was in Navadvīpa, Māyāpura, and his eternal abode was in Vṛndāvana. So we gave him *samādhi* there.

I humbly request the devotees to try to have love and affection for each other. As Swāmījī brought all persons to his *sevā*, we should also try to love all, and spread the mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and Swāmījī.

Interviewer: Of all the qualities Śrīla Prabhupāda exhibited, does one stand out in your mind? Does any one stand out?

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja: The symptoms of *guru* have been written in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Gītā*, and I saw these symptoms in Swāmījī:

*tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotṛiyam brahma-niṣṭhām
[Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad: 1.2.12]*

He was *brahma-niṣṭhā* (one who has given up all other activities and has dedicated his life to working only for Kṛṣṇa).

In this *śloka*: *tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam sabda para*. We see that one symptom of *guru* is that he knows Vedānta, *Upadeśāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhāgavad-gītā*, etc. He should be *siddhānta-vit* (knower of all philosophical conclusions) so that he can clear all the doubts of his disciples. I know that Swāmījī was very much qualified in this. He knows everything. He was perfect in this.

Second, *guru* should be detached from worldly things, and I

know that Swāmījī had no such attachment. He had attachment to those who are thoroughly attached to Kṛṣṇa. The *guru* should have realization of his *iṣṭādeva*, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. One cannot preach without realization. If he is not factually practicing *bhakti*, and he has no realization, then his words will vanish like air. No one will be able to truly follow him.

So I have realized this: that any disciple, or anyone who came to Swāmījī, they were overpowered by him. He conquered their hearts with love and affection. Without realization of Kṛṣṇa no one can do this.

In *Gītā* it has been said:

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

Who is *tattva-darśī*? One who knows all the *siddhāntas* of all the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, and other *śāstras*. *Praṇipātena paripraśnena*. You should go to such a *guru*, again and again very honorably questioning and serving him. I see how Swāmījī went to Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, how he accepted him as his *gurudeva*, and especially how, in a very short time he spread His *prema*, His mission, Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission, to the whole world, established about one hundred and fifty temples around the world. Even more importantly his *Gītā* is translated in fifty languages. In very little time he spread his mission. A common person cannot do this. It was the *śakti*, the energy and the potency of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his *gurudeva* that he could do all this.

I remember one other instance. The last time I saw Swāmījī (the evening before he departed from this world), he was so friendly to me. He told me, "I have done something wrong in my life, so I want to be forgiven. You should especially forgive me because you have served me and you are so dear to me." I said, "No, don't say this. Anyone who comes in a special situation, at a special time, can say anything to encourage new devotees. We also say things like this. So I don't think you have done anything wrong." He then told me, "You should forgive me and you should tell all my Godbrothers to forgive me. When I told some disciples 'don't mix with anyone. Don't mix with my Godbrothers,' it was

in a letter, not in my books, and I told this only for a special time.” Swāmījī was a first class Vaiṣṇava, a *mahā-bhāgavata*. He wrote like this only for third class, *kaniṣṭha* devotees—to increase their service.

I asked him, “Mahārāja we are friends. I want to know why do your Deities have names which are not applicable, not *siddhānta*—like Rādhā Pārtha-sārathi and Rukmiṇī Dvārakādhiśa. Regarding Rukmiṇī Dvārakādhiśa, I know that in 1969 you have established and did *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā* (installation ceremony) of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with peacock feather and flute, and with Rādhā there on His left side.”

He replied, “When I established Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Los Angeles, I gave Them the name Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and then I left Los Angeles (for India). When I returned someone had changed the name to Rukmiṇī Dvārakādhiśa. I become very angry with this person. I was against this name, but now this name has come about.”

Regarding Rādhā Pārtha-sārathi, he told me he was very ill at the time, and that his disciples gave this name without his actual approval.

I read in his *Kṛṣṇa* book that this is *rasābhāsa*. Swāmījī has written like this, not only in one place, but in so many places.³ He told me not to think that this was his idea. I told him that my doubt was gone, and I pray that you bless me so that I may be like

³ It is stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* [8.90 pp]: “Although according to the material conception, Nārāyaṇa, Rukmiṇī-ramaṇa and Kṛṣṇa are one and the same, in the spiritual world one cannot use the name of Kṛṣṇa in the place of Rukmiṇī-ramaṇa or Nārāyaṇa. If one does so out of a poor fund of knowledge, his mellow with the Lord becomes spiritually faulty and is called *rasābhāsa*, an overlapping of transcendental mellows. The advanced devotee who has actually realized the transcendental features of the Lord will not commit the mistake of creating a *rasābhāsa* situation by using one name for another. Because of the influence of Kali-yuga, there is much *rasābhāsa* in the name of extravagance and liberal-mindedness. Such fanaticism is not very much appreciated by pure devotees.”

It is stated in *Teaching of Lord Caitanya* [ch. 30]: “Thus the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana do not like to see Kṛṣṇa as the husband of Rukmiṇī, nor do they address Him as Rukmiṇī-ramaṇa. In Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa is addressed as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa, the property of Rādhārāṇī. Although the husband of Rukmiṇī and Rādhā’s Kṛṣṇa are on the same level in the ordinary sense, still in the spiritual world, the names indicate different understandings of various aspects of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental personality. If one equalizes Rukmiṇī-ramaṇa, Nārāyaṇa, or any other name of the Supreme Lord, he commits the fault of overlapping tastes, which is technically called *rasābhāsa*.”

you in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” He benedicted me, and I felt so glad, so fortunate to think that he ordered me to always serve him.

Interviewer: I understand Śrīla Prabhupāda was having so many difficulties and harassments in Bombay to keep his centers, and you took some role to keep ISKCON’s property?

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja: Five years ago Swāmījī’s son told the Bombay court that Swāmījī was a *vaiśya*, a businessman, that he was not a *sannyāsī*, and he did not go to the Western countries for preaching. His son said that only a *brāhmaṇa* can take *sannyāsa*. Because Swāmījī was a businessman, he went to the West for business, and ISKCON is a family business. The son’s conclusion was that he is the master of all of ISKCON’s property. One ISKCON leader came and told me, “If you don’t give evidence this son will take all of ISKCON, all over the world.” He told me that I should go immediately. I told him that I only want to serve Swāmījī, so without any payment or any gain I will go. After that I went to Bombay several times and sat in court the entire day. Everyday I would take *prasādam* early in the morning, about 7 A.M. and then immediately go to the court. I want to always serve the mission of Swāmījī.

MY MISSION IN THE WEST

This is an excerpt from a lecture given on Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's first Western preaching tour. The lecture took place in San Francisco on June 30, 1996.

I have come from Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, but I do not feel I have left there. Everywhere I see very bona fide devotees, just as in Vṛndāvana. Swāmījī was a penniless person, knowing no one in any country, but he has performed a miracle. In a very short time he preached the glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadra, and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa all over the world. When he was first planning to come to the Western countries he told me, "Oh, you should come with me." At that time I was engaged in the service of my holy master, Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja. So I humbly requested him, "Please excuse me; after some time I will come and join you."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ordered Swāmījī to go to the West to spread the holy name of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and he came about forty years later. Swāmījī similarly ordered me, and so I have also come about twenty years later. He has ordered me and I have come.

My mission in the Western countries has three purposes. First, I want to take the dust from Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja's lotus feet by going to the places he preached in England and here in America. He first came to New York so I also wanted to come here. When he came he was penniless, singing Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya and Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma on the streets. He wrote me from there, and I sent him the books he wanted, many pairs of deities—Gaura-Nityānanda Prabhu and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. I also sent him *karatālas*, *mṛdaṅgas*, and many other paraphernalia.

Second, I have come here to give his message to the entire world. He has planted the seeds, and they have somewhat grown, but they are lacking water. Swāmījī has given me that water which is his *hari-kathā*, and according to my ability I am carrying this water everywhere. I am so happy to carry out his instructions, and to take his footdust from places he has sanctified.

The third purpose of my traveling is to help the sincere devotees who are unhappy due to long term lack of good association. I have come to tell them, "You should see that Swāmījī is here, among you. You must again become powerful and energetic, just as you were at the time of his manifested appearance. Think neither that he is dead, nor that he is not here." I did not know any of you before, but Swāmījī has done such marvelous things that on this Pacific sea-coast, from Los Angeles to San Francisco to Vancouver, and wherever I go, many devotees are coming to see me.

I am grateful to Swāmījī, and I am offering lotus flowers of my devotion to his feet. He has performed a miracle, and if he were here today, he would preach more and more. He has written and translated so many books, which have been translated into over forty languages. But at the same time eighty or ninety percent of the devotees have left ISKCON. I want that ISKCON becomes more and more powerful. Everyone should be

strengthened, and everyone should preach all over the world, just as Swāmījī has preached.

I will speak some *hari-kathā* from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and I will try to quench your thirst so that the bona fide honor and appreciation you have for your Prabhupāda will increase. He will bless us all, and he will be so happy that you have come.

REMEMBRANCES AT 26 SECOND AVENUE

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja speaks at the 26 Second Avenue temple in New York City. Established in 1966 it was Śrīla Prabhupada's first temple in the West.

I remember when I first met Swāmī Mahārāja, how I heard from him, how I performed his *sannyāsa* ceremony and how I served him; and I remember our final meeting in 1977 when I served him in Vṛndāvana.

Swāmījī Mahārāja was a bosom friend of my *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktiprañāna Keśava Mahārāja. He was a bona fide, *guru-niṣṭhā* devotee, always internally and externally serving his holy master, and never doing anything for himself. He simply carried out the order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When I compare him with my *gurudeva*, I realize that they were both on the same platform of *tanū*, *mana*, and *vacana*. This means they have offered their body, mind, words, and soul at the lotus feet of their Holy Master. We also say we offer ourselves at the lotus feet of our holy master, but it is only words. We cannot offer ourselves fully by *ātmā* or mind.

Swāmījī did not come to the West for making money, to attain reputation, or for any worldly purpose, like so many others from India. He came only on the order of his *gurudeva*, and to fulfill the orders of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

conjugal (the Divine Couple). His *gurudeva* is the most dearly beloved of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. His *praṇāma-mantra* does not state that he is the servant of Kṛṣṇa:

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrī śrīmad bhaktisiddhānta-sarasvatīti nāmine
śrī-vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayitāya kṛpābdhaye*

I think therefore that Śrīmatī Rādhikā told Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, “Order your maid-servant to go to the material world and inspire not only human beings, but all living entities to come to Me. There is no *bhakti* in the western countries. No *bhakti*. People don’t know anything. They don’t chant Kṛṣṇa’s name or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s name, and they are always immersed in worldly sense gratification. So you should send him.” Because of this, Swāmījī came.

Many devotees do not know that Swāmījī’s mission was the same as that of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. These *ācāryas* were all very near and dear to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and they are all from Vraja. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is Kamalamāñjarī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda is Nayana-māñjarī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is Rūpa-māñjarī, Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara is Lalitā, and Śrīla Rāya Rāmānanda is Viśākhā. Their mission was to make personalities all over the world pure devotees.

In order to be pure devotees we will have to drink from the bottle which contains the formula:

*tṛṇād api sunīcena, taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena, kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

Thinking oneself to be even lower and more worthless than insignificant grass which has been trampled beneath everyone’s feet, being more tolerant than a tree, being prideless, and offering respect to all others according to their

respective positions, one should continuously chant the holy name of Śrī Hari.

If we do not follow this *śloka*, we can not be pure devotees. Sometimes we overlook it, and Swāmījī sees this. There is no need to go to colleges and other places to acquire worldly knowledge. What knowledge will we get from there? We should only want knowledge of the holy name:

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāstyeva nāstyeva nāstyeva gatiṁ anyathā*

In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.

Swāmījī has come to preach this, and there is no need to learn anything more. *Kṛṣṇa-tattva*, *māyā-tattva*, and every other *tattva* will come automatically by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's name is more powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself.

I have known Swāmījī since the end of 1946 or the beginning of 1947, and from that time I have been serving him. I think that most of you were not born at that time. I treated him like a *śikṣā-guru*, but he saw me as a friend, not as a disciple. When he was penniless, when his sons and wife rejected him from the house, he came to me in Mathurā, and told me his story. As our conversations were usually in Bengali, he spoke to me in that language about when he joined Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura. He said, "When I was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda, I read a *śloka*: *yasyāham anugrṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ* [Bhāg. 10.88.8]. 'When one takes shelter of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa makes him a street beggar.' Now He has made me one. I was fearing that if I chant more and do devotional services, I may become just like a street beggar. And now I see that this has come to pass."

I told him, “Kṛṣṇa does not want you to be successful in worldly affairs, nor does Prabhupāda (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura), and so He has done this for you. You are so powerful and learned. Your Holy Master has told you to preach in the Western countries in the English language. Your English is so rich, you can do it.”

He said, “I don’t know what my future will be, but I know that Kṛṣṇa’s mercy has come, and that is why I have become poor.”

In the meantime, our *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, came to Mathurā from Navadvīpa-dhāma, and I asked him to request Swāmī Mahārāja to accept the renounced order. My *gurudeva* then requested him, and he agreed. The next day he took *sannyāsa*. That day was *viśvarūpa kol*, the Disappearance Day of Śrīla Viśvarūpa, the elder brother of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. At Swāmījī’s *sannyāsa* ceremony I arranged for his *daṇḍa* and *dor-kaupina* cloth, I also organized the *yajña* and performed the fire sacrifice. Then Guru Mahārāja came and gave him *dor-kaupina*, *sannyāsa-mantra* and everything else. Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja performed the *kīrtana*.

Someone once told me that taking *sannyāsa* is only a secondary thing. I replied to him that he had no knowledge. *Sannyāsa* and the *sannyāsa-mantra* is given only to attain *gopī-bhāva*. *Sannyāsa* is not an ordinary thing. If *gurudeva* sees that someone is qualified, he gives this *mantra* and *sannyāsa*. At the time of taking *sannyāsa* one vows, “Now I have nothing to do with worldly things, I only want *gopī-bhāva*.”

So this is not a secondary thing, and in fact it opens the door to Vraja, to enter the mood of the *gopīs*. Sometimes it may be that the *dīkṣā-guru* can not give *sannyāsa* to a disciple because he is not qualified while the *guru* is physically present. Later therefore, when the disciple is ready, the *śikṣā-guru* can give it.

After Swāmījī took *sannyāsa*, our relationship became more and more thick, like friends. I went with him to Jhansī and other places he went to preach. He always wanted me to be with him. I helped him to cook, and in other ways also. He spent much of his time translating *Bhagavad-gītā* in Keśavaji Gauḍīya Maṭha⁴ in Mathurā, where I again served him. After that we both went to Vṛndāvana, to Rūpa Gosvāmī's *samādhi* and *bhajana-sthalī*, and Swāmījī then planned to come to the Western countries.

At that time he told me, "I want to open some rooms for student's boarding and lodging, and I will help them. If it will be necessary, then I will also supply eggs, meat—anything they want. But there will be one condition; they will have to chant: *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*—at least one round. I know that they will give up all these bad habits in a very short time, and they will become bona fide Vaiṣṇavas." He was so compassionate.

When Swāmījī came to New York in 1966, he only took with him one *Gītā*, a trunk full of his three volume set of First Canto *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and one pair of *karatālas*. He wrote me to send him whatever items he needed for establishing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I sent him his reference books for translation work. I remember now that the address to which I used to send these items was this 26 Second Avenue.

Whenever Swāmījī did anything new for his preaching, he used to write me. When this ISKCON institution was established, he at once wrote me that so many hippies were coming to him and becoming 'happies'. He wrote that he was regularly going to the parks to sing '*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-*

⁴ This is the temple where Śrīla Prabhupāda took *sannyāsa*, and where Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja resides and preaches.

advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda.' Then, when he went to San Francisco, he again wrote. I received over three hundred letters from him, mostly in Bengali and Hindi, and our friendship went on in this way.

When Swāmījī returned for the first time to India with Kīrtanānanda in 1967, I was the only one to receive him at the Delhi airport. No one else was there. I was with him for about seven days in Delhi, and then he went to the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana, and I went to see my *gurudeva*. From time to time I went to visit him.

After a few weeks, another of Swāmījī's disciples, Acyutānanda, came to India. Because they were Swāmījī's disciples I used to sit with them and honor *mahāprasāda*. I remember that all the caste Gosvāmīs, and at that time almost all of Swāmījī's Godbrothers, would never even take the water Kīrtanānanda and Acyutānanda offered them, because they were Western, and had previously eaten flesh.

When Swāmījī left this world, his disciples were still very young. On the evening before he left, Swāmījī called several of them to him and said, "Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has come. I am so glad. Now everything will be done." Then he said to me, "Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, you please put me in *samādhi* with your own hands. I know that you have had so much good training and experience in this. And also try to help my disciples, because they don't know very much. You should help them."

I replied, "I will carry your order to my best ability."

He then told his senior disciples to hear from me, and I addressed them, "You should not think that he is going to die. This is a play, a role. In one form he is going to eternally serve his masters, the Divine Couple and Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu, and in another form he will be here forever to nourish you. Just as Nārada, Yaśodāmayī, Nanda Bābā and all of

Kṛṣṇa's associates have *lākhas* and *lākhas* of manifestations, so Swāmījī also has. In this way he will be here, always among you, giving inspiration and making arrangements. If you think that he is a mortal man, then everything will be spoiled. You should never think like this.

“Don't quarrel among yourselves for money, wealth, reputation, etc. You should try to fulfill Swāmījī's mission, and honor all devotees, whether they are *kaniṣṭha*, *madhyama* or *uttama-adhikārī*. Even if someone has not yet received initiation, as long as he is chanting *Hare Kṛṣṇa*, you should honor him as part of the family. We are all part of the family of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

I think that he has now dropped me here in the West. Right now he is seeing that “Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is here in my 26 Second Avenue temple, he has been in California, he has been to the Manor in England, and he was in Los Angeles and other places.” Swāmījī is now showing me all these places, “Here I have done this, and here I have done that.”

I am so fortunate to come to this place and take his foot dust. This place is a *mahā-mahā-tīrtha*. When Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura left his body, Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself carried him in His arms and put him in *samādhi* with His own hands. He told everyone present that this place is a *mahā-mahā-mahā-tīrtha*. At first it was a *tīrtha*, but by touching the feet of Haridāsa Ṭhākura it became such a powerful *mahā-tīrtha*. Similarly, these cities on the Eastern sea coast, the West coast, in Los Angeles, California and other places, have also become *mahā-mahā-tīrthas*. One purpose of my mission is now fulfilled, and I want his mercy to become qualified to go where he is, in the spiritual world, to meet my *gurudeva* and him, and serve the conjugal Divine Couple. I am waiting, and when they call I will go. Until that time I will be in Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and other places, chanting *trṇād api*

*sunīcena/ tarora api sahiṣṇunā/ amāninā mānadena. Gaurāṅga bolite habe pulaka-śarīra*⁵. *Rūpa-raghunātha-pade hoibe ākuti/ kabe hāma bujhabo se jugala-pīriti*⁶.

Our ultimate goal is to serve Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This was Swāmījī's main objective in coming to this world—to give us the service of Śrīmatī Rādhikā—not Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is crooked, and sometimes so hard; but Śrīmatī Rādhikā is so simple, soft, sweet and fragrant. Kṛṣṇa has Himself admitted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, “My guru is Śrīmatī Rādhikā,⁷” and we should also serve Her. For this Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to this world,⁸ and this is the primary mission of Swāmījī. He spent so much time in cutting the jungles of the philosophies of *māyāvāda*, *jñānāvāda*, *karmāvāda*, and *yogāvāda*, to make a very clear path. He then gave the seed of *bhakti*, service to Kṛṣṇa. That seed fructifies and externally takes the shape of *śraddhā*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti*, and *bhāva*, in which the devotee has nothing to do with this world. In the next birth *prema* comes,⁹ and then the devotee enters Goloka Vṛndāvana.

⁵ When will that opportune moment come to us, when there will be shivering of the body as soon as we chant Lord Gaurāṅga's name?

⁶ When shall I be very eager to study the books left by the Six Gosvāmīs? We should try to understand this *yugala-pīriti*, conjugal love, under the direction of the Six Gosvāmīs.

⁷ The love of Rādhikā is My teacher, and I am Her dancing pupil. Her *prema* makes Me dance various novel dances. [Cc. *Ādi* 4.124]

⁸ But these three desires (to understand Rādhā's love) have not been satisfied, for one cannot enjoy them in a contrary position. Unless I accept the luster of the ecstatic love of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, these three desires cannot be fulfilled. Therefore, assuming Rādhārāṇī's sentiments and bodily complexion, I shall descend to fulfill these three desires. [Cc. *Ādi* 4.265-268]

⁹ The fact is that those who are always engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and mature in pure devotional service, are given the chance, after death, to gain Kṛṣṇa's association in the universes within the material world where Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are continually going on, either in this universe or in another universe. . . . In that universe the devotees get their first opportunity to

So Swāmījī has come to give this *prema*. He did not want his followers to always be in an elementary class, always doing the service that he initially gave. We also have to advance further. On one hand we should continue doing these services, such as distributing books, writing articles, performing *kīrtana* etc., but we will also have to develop from *śraddhā* to *niṣṭhā*, to *ruci*, and to *āsakti*. We will have to know what is *āsakti*, what is *ruci*, what is the goal and what is *viśuddha-sattva*. It is not that we do *kīrtana*, thinking it is the goal. Such *kīrtana* is of a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*.

When a person who is involved in worldly consciousness, thinking “I am this body,” performs *kīrtana*, then his *nāma* (*nāmāparādha*) is third class; it is not pure. As much as one develops his Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his *nāma* chanting becomes more and more pure. When we chant with offenses and worldly intoxications, this *nāma* (*nāmāparādha*) may give us some wealth and reputation, and by *nāmābhāsa* we can have liberation; but we cannot have *bhakti* at all. By the grace of *gurudeva* we can develop our heart to the stage of *ruci*, and then we will see ourselves actually linked with the predecessor *ācāryas*. At that time our chanting of the holy name will be somewhat perfect, and *śuddha-nāma*, the pure name will come. At that time we will only desire *vraja-bhakti*.

We should not think that Swāmījī was only like us, that he has only preached some *nāma* chanting. This is not the only glory of our *gurudeva*, our Swāmījī. His glory was that he was always engaged in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. He mercifully came to this world and he wants to give us the *prema* of Goloka Vṛndāvana. We should try to know him, glorify him, and preach his mission in this world. I pray at his lotus feet that he

should be pleased to give more mercy, so that we will be able to understand him in truth.

Guru prachodayāt. You know this *mantra*? It is part of the *guru-gāyatrī mantra*. What is the meaning? In this *mantra* we are praying to *gurudeva*, “Who are you? What are you like? What is your form? What are your duties and services to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇā in the spiritual world?” *Kṛṣṇānandaya dīmahī.* Who is Kṛṣṇā? [note the long ‘ā’] Śrīmatī Rādhikā is. “O Gurudeva, kindly manifest in my heart.”

If you recite this *mantra* very carefully, with concentration, *guru* will reveal everything about himself to you, and then you will see him. At present we do not see him in the real sense, just like we don’t see Kṛṣṇa in the real sense. We think, “Oh, He is like a man.” Duryodhana used to see Kṛṣṇa, but he never understood that He was the Supreme Lord.

If we chant that *mantra* with great interest and great honor, *guru* may manifest himself. If one has actually seen him, that person will never fall down from a position of renunciation. If one has seen him and has actually served him, even for a moment, he will never fall. But if one has served only externally, thinking he is the monarch of all, he may fall, he will not develop in *bhakti*. To actually serve *gurudeva* is very rare—very rare. Any real devotee will have no ego, and he will not try to control anyone. We have to become unalloyed servants of *gurudeva*. Only a very rare person can really serve.

I have seen Swāmījī from all sides. We should try to see him internally and follow him. If one even follows very little, he will surely one day have *kṛṣṇa-prema*. So we beg at his lotus feet that he bestows his mercy more and more, that those who have come in his contact for even a moment, and those who have helped him, should return to him. If they have fallen but have not committed offenses, I think that they will have some chance, but if

they have knowingly committed offenses, they will go far away and may never return to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We honor and serve all *gurus* from Kṛṣṇa to current *gurus*. I pray to Swāmījī that he gives his mercy to me. I have not come to make disciples, to make money, or for material gain. I have only come to serve his mission and to carry out his orders.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja ki jaya!

A LOCKED TREASURE CHEST

This is an excerpt from Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's lecture at the Ātmānanda Yoga center in New York City on July 12, 1996

No one called Swāmījī to the West. His *gurudeva* sent him and he mercifully came to this land where only wine, wealth, and women are prominent, where no one knows what is *ātmā*, who he is, why he has come to this world, what is his duty, and where he is supposed to go? Everyone here was sinking in darkness. Mercifully he came to this land, and in a very short time, hundreds and thousands of people became devotees. Those who were hippies became happies. All who were touched by his words became happy.

Swāmījī has given everything in his books. He knew that a child of one year, or two years, or even five years could not retain all this information. A father or mother save money for their child, keeping it in a locked box. When the child is mature, he will be qualified to take the treasures inside. Before maturity, however, the child would waste that treasure. Similarly, Swāmījī kept all his treasures, his inlaid treasures, in his books. If you want to open them, you should know that the key is in the hands of *bhāgavata*.

There are two *bhāgavatas*—*grantha-bhāgavata* and *bhakta-bhāgavata*. *Bhakta-bhāgavata* is superior. The key is with bona fide *bhaktas* who have *prema*. They can open

the lock. Swāmījī has kept the treasure which Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī left in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and his other books. Swāmījī's books are full of treasures. In his purports we see all the teachings which are in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's books. *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* (*Nectar of Instruction*) for example, gives the process by which we can go to Vṛndāvana and follow Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Some persons say, "We are not qualified and we will never be qualified to hear about Goloka," but I think that is quite wrong, because Swāmījī has written it all in his books. When we are matured and qualified, then we can actually taste that nectar, and go to that place Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Vyāsadeva, and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja have written about.

THE DIVINE DISAPPEARANCE OF ŚRĪLA BHAKTIPRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA MĀHĀRĀJA

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was at the Seattle, Washington ISKCON temple on October 21, 1968, he received messages from Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and the Godbrothers of Śrīla Mahārāja, informing him of the disappearance of his own Godbrother and *sannyāsa-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. After receiving this news he gave the following lecture (taken from Bhaktivedānta Book Trust [BBT folio]):

One has to accept the renounced order (*sannyāsa*) from another person who is in the renounced order. I never thought that I shall accept this renounced order of life. In my family life, when I was in the midst of my wife and children, sometimes I dreamt that my spiritual master was calling me and I was following him. When my dream was over, I was a little horrified¹⁰ and

¹⁰ Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *nitya-siddha* devotee, an always renounced and eternally liberated associate of Kṛṣṇa. In order to show conditioned souls how one can advance from conditioned material life to a life of pure devotion,

thought, "Oh, Guru Mahārāja wants me to become *sannyāsī*. How can I accept *sannyāsa*?" At that time, I was not feeling very satisfied that I would have to give up my family and become a mendicant; it was a horrible feeling. Sometimes I was thinking, "No, I cannot take *sannyāsa*." But again I saw the same dream. So in this way I was fortunate. My *guru-mahārāja* (Prabhupāda begins to cry with a choked voice) pulled me out from this material life. I have not lost anything. He was so kind upon me. I have gained. I left three children, and I have got now three hundred children.

So I am not the loser. It is only our material conception if we think that we shall be the loser by accepting Kṛṣṇa. I can say from my practical experience that nobody is the loser. I was thinking, "How can I accept this renounced order of life? I cannot accept so much trouble." But I retired from my family life, and I was sitting alone in Vṛndāvana writing books. My Godbrother (Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja) insisted, "Bhaktivedānta prabhu. . ." This title was given in my family life. It was offered to me by the Vaiṣṇava society. It is not that he insisted. Practically speaking my spiritual master insisted through him: "You accept."

Without accepting the renounced order of life, no one can become a preacher. My *gurudeva* wanted me to become a preacher. He therefore forced me through this Godbrother who said, "You accept," and unwillingly I accepted.

Then I remembered that Guru Mahārāja wanted me to go to the Western countries. So I am feeling now very much obliged to my Godbrother, because he carried out the wish of my spiritual master and forced me to accept this *sannyāsa* order.

Prabhupāda manifested what is called '*nāra-līlā*' or human-like pastimes. In *nāra-līlā* he pretends to be a conditioned soul advancing.

This Godbrother, His Holiness Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, is no more. He has entered Kṛṣṇa's abode. So I wish to pass a resolution of bereavement and send it. So all of you present, you sign this and I shall send it tomorrow. I have composed one verse, also in this connection, in Sanskrit. *Vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yogam*. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness is *vairāgya-vidyā*. *Vairāgya-vidyā* means to become detestful to this material world. That is called *vairāgya-vidyā*, and that is possible simply by this *bhakti-yoga*. *Vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yogam apāyayan mām*. It is just like medicine. The child is afraid of taking medicine, and that also I have experienced. In my childhood, when I became ill, I was very stubborn. I would not accept any medicine and therefore my mother used to force it in my mouth with a spoon. I was so obstinate. So anyway, I similarly did not want to accept this *sannyāsa* order, but this Godbrother forced me.

"You must." *Apāyayan mām*. He forcefully made me drink this medicine. *Anabhīpsum andham*. Why was I unwilling? *Anabhīpsu* means 'unwilling' and *andham* means 'one who is blind, who cannot see his future.' Spiritual life is the brightest future, but the materialists cannot see it. The Vaiṣṇavas and the spiritual master however, forcefully give the medicine. They say, "You drink this medicine." *Apāyayan mām anabhīpsum andham*¹¹ *śrī-keśava-bhakti-prajñāna-nāma*.

So my Godbrother, Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja is *kṛpāmbudhi*. He did this favor upon me because he was

¹¹ Śrīla Prabhupāda was inspired by Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's prayer to Sanātana Gosvāmī in *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* (quoted in *Ādi-līlā* 5.203 purport): "*apāyayan mām anabhīpsum andham/ kṛpāmbudhir yaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhi/ sanātanas taṁ parbhūm āśrayāmi*. I was unwilling to drink the nectar of devotional service possessed of renunciation, but Sanātana Gosvāmī, out of his causeless mercy, made me drink it, even though I was otherwise unable to do so. Therefore he is an ocean of mercy. He is very much compassionate to fallen souls like me, and thus it is my duty to offer my respectful obeisances unto his lotus feet."

an ocean of mercy. So we offer our obeisances to the Vaiṣṇava as *kṛpāmbudhi*. *Vaiñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca*. The Vaiṣṇavas, the representatives of the Lord, are so kind. They bring the ocean of mercy to distribute to the suffering humanity. *Kṛpāmbudhir yas tani aham prapadye*. So I am offering my respectful obeisances unto His Holiness, because he forcefully made me adopt this *sannyāsa* order. He is no more in this world. He has entered Kṛṣṇa's abode. I am therefore offering my respectful obeisances along with my disciples.

On the first day of my *sannyāsa*, I remembered that I'd have to speak in English. So on that *sannyāsa* day, when there was a reception, I first of all spoke in English. It was all the arrangement of the higher authority of Kṛṣṇa.

We are writing like this, "Resolved that we the undersigned members and devotees of International Society for Krishna Consciousness Incorporated, in a condolence meeting under the presidency of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swāmī, today the 21st of October, 1968, at our Seattle branch, express our profound bereavement on hearing the passing of His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupada Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktiprañāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the *sannyāsa-guru*, preceptor of our spiritual master, on October 6th, 1968, at his headquarters and residence in Navadvīpa, West Bengal. We offer our respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja with the following verse composed on this occasion by our spiritual master."

*vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yogam
apāyayan mām anabhīpsum andham
śrī-keśava-bhakti-prajñāna-nāma*

This verse I have already explained to you. So I wish that you all sign this and I'll send it tomorrow by airmail.

The following is from the original *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrika* magazine printed in 1968, of one of the letters of condolence sent by Śrīla Prabhupāda's temples.

LETTER OF CONDOLENCE

This letter was originally written in Bengali by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda on the occasion of the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. It was addressed to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, one of the prominent disciples of Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. It was then translated into Hindi by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and printed in *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrika* magazine in December 1968. The following is the English translation of that letter.



All Glories to Śrī Guru & Gaurāṅga

Seattle, Washington
October 22, 1968

I offer my humble prostrated obeisances at the lotus feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrīpada Trivikrama Mahārāja,¹²

¹² Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja is one of the three prominent disciples of Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja. He took *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja at the same time as Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja, and to date they preach together and enthuse tens of thousands of devotees.

Yesterday I received your letter dated October 12, and its contents were heart-breaking. Kindly inform me of the details of the sudden disappearance of Pujiyapada Mahārāja (Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja). I had a very long-standing intimate relationship with Śrīla Mahārāja. When I used to visit Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, I was taken care of by Śrīpada Narahari Dada¹³ and Śrīpada Vinoda Dada¹⁴ with great affection. They were my extremely loving friends. Also in Calcutta, the senior Tīrtha Mahārāja, Professor Nishikanta Sanyala and Vasudeva Prabhu, were very dear to me. Afterwards I used to visit and associate freely with Śrīpada Śrīdhara Mahārāja as if we were the closest of family members. Except for Śrīpada Śrīdhara Mahārāja, all of the above-mentioned Vaiṣṇavas have gradually disappeared. Our time is also approaching, so it will be best to have the opportunity to serve Śrīla Prabhupada as long as possible.

I have a very close connection with Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.¹⁵ Yourself, and particularly Śrīpada Vāmana Mahārāja¹⁶, are well aware of the fact that I am

¹³ Śrīla Narahari Dada was a senior and intimate disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He was considered the 'mother' of Gauḍīya Maṭh. He always made arrangements for the care and nourishment of all devotees. 'Dada' means elder Godbrother.

¹⁴ Vinoda Dada is the *brahmacārī* name of Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. His full name was Vinoda Bihāri Brahmacārī. He was manager of Gauḍīya Maṭh under Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

¹⁵ After the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja wanted to preach vigorously on his behalf. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had previously been so pleased by Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja's preaching and scholarship in scriptures, that he gave him all his scriptures, and Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja understood the meaning—that his *gurudeva* wanted him to preach the real meaning of *vedānta*—as *bhakti*. He therefore desired to establish a center or society for preaching from *vedānta*, what Śrī Gaurasundara wanted to give the world—*rūpānuṅgā-bhakti*. Therefore he started Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

one of the three persons who founded Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. We had conceived the idea of the formation of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti at Bosapada Lane, Calcutta, even before Śrīla (Keśava) Mahārāja accepted *sannyāsa*. Within a few days of the formation of the Samiti, Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmācārī (presently Tridaṇḍi Swāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja) separated himself from the Samiti. At that time Śrīpada Vāmana Mahārāja, who was then a *brahmācārī*, visited our home at Sītākānta Banarjī Lane. He made me the president of the Bengali magazine, *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrika*.¹⁷

Respecting the order of Śrīla (Keśava) Mahārāja, I started writing articles for the *Gauḍīya-patrika* regularly. Śrīla Mahārāja greatly appreciated whatever I wrote. Thereafter, I was also appointed as the president of the Hindi magazine, *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrika*, and many of my articles were published in that. Afterwards I could not submit articles due to lack of time. Now I have become a resident of foreign lands and I have to travel twenty thousand miles every year.

The greatest compassion of Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja was to make me a *sannyāsī*. I had taken a vow that I would never accept *sannyāsa*, but Śrīla Mahārāja forcibly gave it to me. He would certainly have been most pleased today to see the success of my preaching. Last year I visited him in Calcutta along with my disciples, and despite being bed-ridden, he was very pleased to receive us. I have complete confidence that both in his manifest presence and after his disappearance, he must

¹⁶ Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja was the right-hand man of Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja and he is now the *ācārya* of Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, as per the will of Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He is also the society's president.

¹⁷ *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrika* is continued to the present day in Navadvīpa by disciples of Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. The publication of *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrika* is also continued to date by the devotees at Keśavjī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā.

be very pleased to see my widespread preaching of the message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in western countries like America, Canada, England, Germany and Hawaii (Honolulu), situated in the Pacific Ocean, as well as eastern countries like Japan (Tokyo) and so on.

I was a staunch *grhamedī* (one whose intelligence is absorbed in household affairs). Śrīla Prabhupāda used to come to me in dreams from time to time and call me to renounce family life and come along with him. The dreams would frighten me and make me think that I would have to accept *sannyāsa*. I didn't have any desire to take *sannyāsa*. But upon the repeated insistence of Śrīpada Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja bestowed boundless mercy upon this unwilling and blind person, by forcibly giving me *sannyāsa*. It seems that this desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda's was transmitted into his heart, and it was thus that my *sannyāsa* was accomplished.

So I am eternally indebted to Śrīla (Keśava) Mahārāja. Therefore, immediately after receiving your letter, I organized a *viraha-sabha*, a meeting at the Seattle temple to honor his disappearance. I am sending the condolence resolution of the meeting along with this letter. Kindly accept it as our *śraddhāñjali*, humble homage. In my other centers (the list is enclosed), particularly London, Hamburg and Honolulu I have given instruction to arrange a *viraha-sabha* and offer *śraddhāñjali* homage likewise.

You will be glad to know that under my guidance I have formed three *saṅkīrtana* parties comprising American youths and couples. One such party is currently traveling to all cities in America and I am also with this party. The second party of six devotees is performing *kīrtana* at different places in London. The Indians living there are amazed to see them. They have given up their homeland and come all the way to the Western world to attain wealth and reputation, but the Americans are performing *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. Some-

how the preaching activities are going on very nicely. I am interested to know what kind of constitution you are forming. In this matter you will receive my complete cooperation, because I am a man of constructive ideas. I do not like destructive policies.

It was the desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that Americans perform *kīrtana* in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, and that opportunity has now come. Unfortunately, those who have intruded into Māyāpūra consider it to be their personal property. These days others are restricted from visiting that place. Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja used to deal with these *guru-tyāgīs* (those who renounce their *guru*) and *guru-bhogīs* (those who enjoy the property of their *guru*) with sword in hand. Anyway, last year he mentioned that he would arrange five acres of land for me in Śrīdhāma Māyāpūra. You were present at that time. If you help me in this matter, I intend to make an *āśrama* in Māyāpūra. American boys and girls can visit and stay there and receive proper training. By our co-operation, preaching activities can be done very nicely. Therefore, I am eager to know the details of your constitution.

I am going to Montreal tomorrow. From there I will go to Santa Fe (New Mexico) and then to Los Angeles. I am sending the addresses of our various centers along with this letter. We are executing a plan to build New Vṛndāvana on three hundred acres of land. Kindly reply to the Los Angeles-Hollywood address as I will be staying three days in Montreal, seven days in Santa Fe and almost one month in Los Angeles.

*pr̥thivīte āche yata naḡarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

Preaching can be spread extensively throughout the world on the basis of this system. I think that you will make your constitution directly in accordance with the above prediction. I hope your *bhajana* is going on nicely.

Your obedient servant
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Swāmī

PS If you have any nice photograph of Śrīla Mahārāja, then kindly send it to me. I will get a life size oil painting made of it and along with a picture of Śrīla Prabhupada, I will place it in my prominent centers, particularly New York, Hollywood, London and so forth.

SAME SIDDHANTA, SAME LINE

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja establishes that Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda's message and mission is the same as that of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers, like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Śrīla Prabhupāda was very fond of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentaries, and he quoted them profusely in his own books, particularly in his *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya caritāmṛta*.

The following is a reprint of Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's introduction to his English *Veṅu-gīta*. There he illuminates the Gauḍīya *siddhānta*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda came to this world to give.

INTRODUCTION

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a direct manifestation of the Supreme Lord. It is an ambrosial, overflowing ocean of nectarean love (*prema-rasa*) for *svayam-bhagavān* Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personification of divine *rasa*. *Rasika* and *bhāvuka-bhaktas* always drown in this ocean. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the fully ripened, nectarean fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literature which comprises the entirety of Indian thought. Within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *gopī-prema* has been ascertained to be the ultimate objective.

A few towering waves of *gopī-prema* can be seen from the *Veṅu-gīta* portion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Rasika-bhaktas* drown themselves in these waves and even lose all consciousness of their own bodies. Greed to be immersed in this nectarean ocean sprouts even in the hearts of the faithful devotees who are situated on the shore of this ocean.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined form of *rasarāja* and *mahābhāva*, resplendent with the sentiment and bodily complexion of Śrī Rādhā, relished the nectar of *Veṅu-gīta* with Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda in Śrī Gambhīra. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī collected a few drops of this nectar in their commentaries on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* entitled *Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* and *Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* respectively. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, through his commentary named *Sārārtha-darśinī*, has distributed to the whole world the same nectar in the form of the remnants of their *mahāprasāda*.

Some persons believe that unqualified *sādhakas* are ineligible to hear, chant or remember the topics of *Śrī Veṅu-gīta*, *Śrī Rāsa-pañcādhyāya*, *Yugala-gīta*, *Brahmarāg-gīta* and so on, as described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This consideration is fully legitimate. But according to their conception, only a *sādhaka* who has conquered the six urges (*kāma*, *krodha*, etc.), who is free from all *anarthas* and fully purified from the heart disease of lust, is eligible to hear such topics, while all others have no right. We will now examine this topic in greater detail.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who established and fulfilled the inner heart's desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, composed *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Śrī Uj्ज्वाला-nīlamanī* and other sacred texts. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī composed *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. While writing, they were deeply concerned that these confidential texts on *rasa* should not fall into the hands

of unqualified persons. If this should occur, it may present a great disturbance to the world. A glimpse of this topic is found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* [Cc. Ādi 4.231], as stated by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī:

*e saba siddhānta gūḍha,—kahite nā yuyāya
nā kahile, keha ihāra anta nāhi pāya*

*ataeva kahi kichu kariṇā nigūḍha
bujhibe rasika bhakta, nā bujhibe mūḍha*

*hṛdaye dharaye ye caitanya-nityānanda
e-saba siddhānte sei pāibe ānanda*

*e saba siddhānta haya āmrera pallava
bhakta-gaṇa-kokilera sarvadā vallabha*

*abhakta-uṣṭrera ithe nā haya praveśa
tabe citte haya mora ānanda-viśeṣa*

*ye lāgi kahite bhaya, se yadi nā jāne
ihā vai kibā sukha āche tribhuvane*

*ataeva bhakta-gaṇe kari nāmaskāra
niḥśaṅke kahiye, tāra hauk camatkāra*

“The esoteric and confidential conclusions regarding the amorous pastimes of *rasarāja* Śrī Kṛṣṇa together with the *gopīs*, who are the embodiments of *mahābhāva*, are not fit to be disclosed to the common ordinary man. But without revealing them, no one can enter into this topic. I shall, therefore, describe these topics in a concealed manner so that only *rasika-bhaktas* will be able to understand, whereas ineligible fools will not.

“Anyone who has established Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu in their hearts will attain transcendental bliss by hearing all these conclusions. This entire doctrine is as sweet as newly grown mango sprouts, which can be relished only by the devotees who are likened to cuckoo birds. For the camel-like non devotees, there is no possibility of admittance

into these topics. Therefore, there is special jubilation in my heart.

“If those whom I fear are themselves unable to comprehend these topics, then what could be a greater source of happiness in all the three worlds? Therefore, after offering obeisances to the devotees, I am revealing this subject without any hesitation.”

By reading and hearing these topics, everyone can attain the highest benefit. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has clarified this topic by quoting the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.33.36]:

*anugrahāya bhaktānām mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ
bhajate tādṛśiḥ kṛdā yāḥ śrutvā tatparo bhavet*

“In order to bestow mercy upon the devotees as well as the conditioned souls, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests His human-like form and performs such extraordinary pastimes (*rāsa-līlā*) that anyone who hears them becomes exclusively devoted unto Him.” [quoted in *Cc. Ādi 4.34*]

Here Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja points out that the verb *bhavet* in the above verse is in the imperative mood. This means it is compulsory for the *jīvas* to hear such pastimes, as explained in the following *śloka* from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* [Ādi 4.35]:

*‘bhavet’ kriyā vidhiliṅ, sei ihā kaya
kartavya avaśya ei, anyathā pratyavāya*

“In the above verse *bhavet* is in the imperative mood. Therefore, this certainly must be done. To not do so would be a discrepancy.”

For the information of the reader, I am referring here to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī* commentary on the above quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.33.36].

The words *anugrahāya bhaktānām mānuṣaṁ deham āśritaḥ* indicate that the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in His original human-like form and performs various pastimes in order to bestow favor upon His devotees.

Therefore, although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is satisfied in Himself (*āptakāma*), His display of kindness toward the devotees is quite appropriate. This is the distinctive characteristic of *viśuddha-sattva* (pure goodness). The Lord is always prepared to reward the devotees with a result consistent with their performance of *bhajana*. The favor shown toward King Rahugaṇa by Śrī Jaḍa Bharata and the Lord's favor toward Śukadeva Gosvāmī illustrates this.

In the verse under discussion, it is said that the Lord manifests His form and pastimes in order to bestow favor upon His devotees. The word *bhakta* used here refers to the Vraja-devīs (the *gopīs*), the Vraja-vāsīs (residents of Vraja) and all other Vaiṣṇavas—past, present and future. In order to bestow favor upon the Vraja-devīs, *svayam-bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa lovingly executes such pastimes as *pūrva-rāga* (the attachment in anticipation of meeting Kṛṣṇa prior to their union). To bestow mercy upon all the residents of Vraja, He enacts His birth and other pastimes, and by all His activities, He bestows favor upon past, present and future devotees through the medium of hearing *līlā-kathā*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests all these pastimes to benefit the devotees. By so doing, even ordinary persons (other than the devotees) who hear even the more common of the Lord's pastimes become fully intent upon the Lord. Therefore, by hearing the supremely ambrosial *rāsa-līlā*, ordinary persons will certainly become exclusively devoted to the Lord—of this there can be no doubt. This fact will be elaborately discussed in subsequent verses such as *vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ* [*Bhāg.* 10.33.39]

The words *mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ* may also indicate that those *jīvas* who have attained the human form of life are able to hear all these pastimes and thus they become exclusively devoted to the Supreme Lord. This is so because the Lord incarnates exclusively on the earthly planets (*martya-loka*), and it is here only that worship of

the Lord takes on its predominant form. Consequently, the human beings residing on the earthly planets may easily hear these narrations of the Lord's pastimes.

The word *bhaktānām* appears in this verse. But in some other editions, the word *bhūtānām* is found in its place. In that case, the purport would be as follows: the Lord incarnates only for the sake of the devotees. As a result, the devotees are the root cause of the Lord's appearance. The Lord also appears in His original human-like form in order to bestow His favor upon the liberated souls (*muktas*), the aspirants for liberation (*mumukṣus*), sense enjoyers (*viṣayīs*), and all living entities in accordance with their relationship with the devotees. The Lord's compassion is therefore said to be the cause of His appearance. Nevertheless, it must be understood that the Lord's favor toward other living entities is due only to their relationship with His devotees. In other words, the Lord bestows favor upon *jīvas* only because of their connection with devotees.

In his *Bhāgavatam* commentary known as *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has written that what to speak of the devotees, even materialistic persons are freed from their material absorption by hearing the Lord's pastimes, and thus they become exclusively fixed upon Him.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains this verse in his commentary known as *Sārārtha-darśinī*:

*bhaktānām anugrahāya tādṛśiḥ krīdāḥ bhajate yāḥ śrutvā
mānuṣaṁ deham āśritāḥ jīvaḥ tatparas tad viṣayakāḥ
śraddhāvān bhaved iti krīdāntar ato vailakṣaṇyena madhura
rasamayāḥ asyāḥ krīdāyās tādṛśī maṇi-mantra-mahaṣadhānām iva
kācid atārkya śaktir astity avagamyate*

"The Lord performs varieties of pastimes to show favor to His devotees. Having adopted the human form of life, living entities who hear these pastimes become exclusively devoted unto the Lord. In other words, they develop firm faith in hearing the narrations of the Lord's

activities. What more shall I say about the importance of hearing *līlā-kathā*? And this *rāsa-līlā*, being fully imbued with *mādhurya-rasa*, is eminently distinguished even from the Lord's other pastimes. Like a jewel, a *mantra* or a powerful medicine, this *rāsa-līlā* is endowed with such indisputable, astonishing potency that by hearing it, all persons in the human form become devoted to the Supreme Lord. Therefore, all varieties of devotees who hear the descriptions of these pastimes will become successful and obtain supreme pleasure. Can there be any question of doubt in this regard?"

In this context, we may cite the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.33.30]:

*naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty ācaran maudhyād yathārudro 'bdhijam viṣam*

"In other words, those who are not *īśvara*, the Supreme Lord, who are powerless and subjected to *karma*, should never imitate the Lord's pastimes even within their minds. If anyone foolishly imitates Lord Śiva by drinking the poison generated from the ocean, he will certainly be destroyed."

The gist of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentaries on this verse is that living entities who are subservient to the material body and who are *anīśvara*—bereft of the controlling potency of the Supreme Lord—should never behave in such a way even within their minds. What to speak of actually performing such activities, one should not even desire to do so. In other words, such acts performed by God in transgression of religious codes should not be contemplated even within the mind.

The word *samācaraṇa* (behavior), when divided into its constituent parts (*samyak* and *ācaraṇa*), indicates complete behavior. Here it has been used to indicate total prohibition of such activity. Therefore, the purport is that such behavior should not be adopted even to the

slightest extent. What to speak of performing such activities through speech or the senses, one should not even mentally conceive of such activities.

The word *hi* indicates that this certainly must *not* be done. If one were to behave in that way, he would be completely destroyed. The significance of the word *maudhyād* (stupidity) is that if anyone, being ignorant of the Lord's omnipotence and his own incompetence, foolishly adopts such behavior, he will be utterly ruined. Just as if anyone other than Lord Śiva were to foolishly consume deadly poison, instantaneously he would be destroyed. But Lord Śiva, in spite of drinking poison, is not destroyed; to the contrary, he attains even greater fame and splendor as Nīla-kaṅṭha, he whose throat turned blue from drinking poison.

Here in this verse, imitation of such behavior has been prohibited, yet in the verse to come [*Bhāg.* 10.33.36]—*yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet*—it is evident that not only devotees, but even others who faithfully hear these pastimes will become fully devoted to the Supreme Lord. This has been further explained in the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.33.39]:

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmāṁ
hrd-rogam āśo apahinoty acireṇā dhīraḥ*

“A sober person who in the beginning faithfully and continuously hears from his *guru* the narrations of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unprecedented *rāsa* dance with the young wives (*gopīs*) of Vraja, and later describes those pastimes, very soon attains *parā-bhakti* or *prema-bhakti* towards the Supreme Lord, and thus becomes competent to quickly dispel the heart disease of lust.”

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments in *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇi*: Having concluded the narration of the *rāsa-līlā*, Śukadeva Gosvāmī became deeply immersed in spiritual ecstasy. In this verse, he describes the fruits of hearing

and chanting the *rāsa-līlā* and thus benedicts all future listeners and reciters. Those who incessantly and faithfully hear Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā* with the young wives of Vraja, and later recite those pastimes, quickly attain *parā-bhakti* toward Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus relinquish the heart disease of lust.

Śraddhānvita means to hear with firm faith. This word has been used to prevent the offense which results from mistrust (*aviśvasa*) or disregard (*avaññā*) of the statements of *śāstra*—in complete opposition to the principle of hearing with faith. It has also been used to promote constant hearing. By this word, the importance of hearing has been pointed out. The words *atha varṇayed* indicate that after continuously hearing the *rāsa-līlā* along with other special pastimes, one will personally describe those pastimes. By *Upalakṣaṇa*, that is indirect implication, it is further indicated that after hearing and reciting, one will also remember those pastimes and take great delight in them. In other words, hearing, chanting, remembering, experiencing delight, and so on are all implied by the words *śraddhānvitaḥ anuśṛṇuyāt atha varṇayed* (to hear repeatedly with faith and then describe).

Parā-bhakti means *bhakti* which follows in the wake of the *gopīs* of Vraja. Therefore, the *bhakti* referred to here is *prema-bhakti* of the highest category. The word *pratilabhya* (repeatedly obtained), together with the word *parā-bhakti*, indicates that first *parā-bhakti* (possessing the distinctive characteristics of *prema*) is obtained within the heart at every moment in every new variety. Thereafter one quickly gives up the heart disease of lust.

Here the difference between *kāma* (material lust) as a disease of the heart and *kāma* (spiritual love) in relationship to the Supreme Lord is pointed out. These two are distinct from each other. The word *kāma* here indirectly implies that all diseases of the heart will quickly be dispelled.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.54] it is said: “One who is situated in the transcendental position beyond the contamination of the three modes of nature (*brahma-bhūta*), who is fully satisfied in the self, who neither laments nor hankers for anything, and who looks impartially upon all living beings, attains *parā-bhakti* unto Me.”

In this *Gītā* verse it is said that one attains *parā-bhakti* only after the disappearance of the diseases of the heart, but in the above verse it is said that one attains *parā-bhakti* even before their departure. Consequently, it is understood that hearing and chanting of *rāsa-līlā* is one of the most powerful forms of *sādhana*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states as follows in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on the same verse [10.33.39]

The prefix *anu* (repeatedly or methodically) when applied to *śṛṇuyāt* (to hear) indicates constant hearing. By continuously hearing from the lips of the *śravaṇa-guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, and thereafter reciting, narrating, or describing (those pastimes) in poetry of one’s own composition, one attains *parā-bhakti*—or in other words *bhakti* which is of the nature of *prema* (*prema-lakṣaṇa-bhakti*).

The suffix *ktvā* has been used in the formation of the verb *pratilabhya* (obtained) as follows: *prati + labh + ktvā*. According to the rules of Sanskrit grammar, when the suffix *ktvā* is applied to a verbal root with a prefix, it is replaced by *yap*. Then the letter ‘p’ is dropped and thus the final form of the word ‘*pratilabhya*’ is obtained. The suffix *ktvā* is applied to the first of two verbs performed by the same agent to show successive action (i.e., having attained *prema*, he relinquishes all lusty desires of the heart). In this case, the first action is *pratilabhya* (the attainment of *prema*) and the second action is *apahinoti* (renunciation of the lusty desires of the heart).

Therefore, the suffix *ktoā* in the verb *pratīlabhya* indicates that although lust and other evils still remain within the heart, *prema-bhakti* first enters the heart and by its extraordinary influence destroys all vices to the root. In other words, hearing and reciting *rāsa-līlā* possesses such astonishing power that the lust in the heart of the faithful *sādhaka* is destroyed and he attains *prema*. Though these two take place simultaneously, the influence of *prema* manifests first, and through its effect, all lusty desires of the heart are dissipated.

Thus, as a result of hearing and chanting the narrations of the Lord's pastimes, one first attains *prema* for the Lord's lotus feet and thereafter one's heart is liberated from lusty desires and all other contamination. In other words he becomes perfectly pure because *prema* is not feeble like the processes of *jñāna* and *yoga*. *Bhakti* is omnipotent and supremely independent.

The words *hṛd-roga-kāma* indicate the difference between lusty desires of the heart and the *kāma* in relationship to the Supreme Lord. *Kāma* which is in relationship to the Supreme Lord is of the very nature of the nectar of *prema* (*premamṛta svarūpa*), whereas the lusty desires of the heart are exactly the opposite. Therefore, these two items are distinct from each other. This is substantiated by use of the words *hṛd-roga kāma*.

The word *dhīra* means a *pañḍita*, or one who is learned in the *śāstra*. One who disbelieves the statement of this verse and thinks, "As long as the disease of lust remains in the heart, *prema* cannot be obtained," is said to possess an atheistic temperament. One who is free from such a foolish, atheistic demeanor is known as a *pañḍita* or sober person (*dhīra*). Consequently, only those who have firm faith in the *śāstra* are known as *dhīra*. Those who have no faith in the statements of the *śāstras* are atheistic and offenders to the holy name. Such persons can never attain *prema*.

Consequently, in the heart of the *sādhakas* who firmly believe in the statements of the *śāstra*, faith arises by hearing *rāsa-līlā* and other narrations. Only in the hearts of such faithful devotees does *prema* manifest its influence as a result of hearing *līlā-kathā*. Thereafter, lust and all evils present within the heart of the devotees are destroyed to the root.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.47.59] is also relevant to this discussion. There it is stated that *bhakti* is the only cause of superior qualities being found in any individual. Austerities, learning, knowledge, and so on, are not the cause of superior qualities. Although *bhakti* is itself of the highest excellence, it does not appear only in the most exceptional individuals endowed with all good qualities. On the contrary, it may manifest or remain even in the most condemned and vile persons. Furthermore, it causes thoroughly wretched and fallen persons to attain all good qualities, to become worthy of the respect of all, and to attain the highest and most rare association.

For this reason, the opinion that Bhaktidevi enters the heart only after all *anarthas*, *aparādhas*, lust and other diseases of the heart have been eradicated, is not appropriate. On the contrary, by the mercy of the Supreme Lord or the devotees, or by faithfully executing *sādhana* and *bhajana*, this rare *bhakti* enters the heart first, and then all *anarthas* are automatically dissipated—this condition is thoroughly agreeable.

Therefore, only faithful *sādhakas* with firm belief in the statements of *śāstra*, *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas are eligible to hear the *līlā-kathā* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which are saturated with *rasa*. And conversely, those who believe that only *sādhakas* who are completely free from all *anarthas* are eligible to hear the above-mentioned pastimes, will neither become free from *anarthas* nor obtain eligibility to hear—even after millions of births.

Another point to consider is that if this argument is accepted, then we *sādhakas* who are still affected by *anarthas*, although possessing faith, could never read nor hear the sacred books of *rasika* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* like Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Under such a circumstance, we would be forever deprived of the extremely confidential and elevated truths of *bhakti* expressed by these *ācāryas*. There would be no possibility that the sprout of greed for *rāgānugā-bhakti* would ever be awakened in our hearts. Thus we would be forever cheated from that which was not previously given, the *prema-rasa* of the most munificent Śrī Śacīnandana, the bestower of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. What then would distinguish the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu from Vaiṣṇavas of other *sampradāyas*?

A third point to consider is this. In Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* [*Madhya* 8.70] the following verse is quoted from *Padyāvalī*:

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

Here, the words *laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ* (indeed the only price is greed) indicate that this supremely rare greed cannot be aroused even by pious activities accumulated over millions and millions of births. Then how can this greed be obtained? The words *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ* indicate one whose intelligence or perception has been awakened toward *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*. Here, the implication is that by faithfully hearing the narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes saturated with *rasa* from the lips of *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas in whom *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa* has arisen, or by faithfully and attentively studying the literatures related to the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

composed by them, this greed may be obtained. Besides this, there is no other means.

Another argument, that at present there is no *sādhaka* who is completely free from *anarthas* and, therefore, no one is eligible, nor in the future will anyone be eligible, is completely illogical. Freedom from lust and all other *anarthas* in and of itself is not the qualification for entrance into *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti*. On the contrary, greed awakened towards the Lord's *mādhurya* (sweetness) is the sole qualification for entrance into *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti*. Nor is there any certainty that by routine observance of the limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti* alone, greed toward *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti* will automatically awaken. There is no evidence of this anywhere. Therefore, our highest obligation is to follow the purport of the commentaries of the previous *ācāryas* to the above-mentioned verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

It is by the inspiration of His Divine Grace Śrīla Guru-pāda-padma Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and the repeated solicitation of many bumblebee-like devotees, that I am presenting *Śrī Venugīta* to the readers along with a purport to the commentaries of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī named *Sārārtha-darśinī* and *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇi* respectively. By reading this subject with full faith, the greed to enter into *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti* will certainly sprout in the hearts of the faithful devotees. This itself is the very purpose of human life.



The following is an excerpt from *Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead* [ch. 32], by Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja, on the same subject:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī concludes this episode of *rāsa-līlā* by pointing out that if a person hears from the right source about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, who is Viṣṇu Himself, and the *gopīs*, who are expansions of His energy, then he will be relieved of the most dangerous type of disease, namely lust. If one actually hears *rāsa-līlā*, he will become completely freed from the lusty desire of sex life, and elevated to the highest level of spiritual understanding. Generally, because they hear from *māyāvādīs* and they themselves are *māyāvādīs*, people become more and more implicated in sex life. The conditioned soul should hear about the *rāsa-līlā* dance from an authorized spiritual master and be trained by him so that he can understand the whole situation. Thus one can be elevated to the highest standard of spiritual life; otherwise one will be implicated. Material lust is a kind of heart disease, and to cure the material heart disease of the conditioned soul, it is recommended that one should hear, but not from the impersonalist rascals. If one hears from the right sources with right understanding, then his situation will be different.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī has used the word *śraddhānvita* for one who is trained in the spiritual life. *Śraddhā*, or faith, is the beginning. One who has developed his faith in Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Spirit Soul, can both describe and hear. Śukadeva also uses the word *anuśṛṇuyāt*. One must hear from disciplic succession. *Anu* means 'following,' and *anu* means 'always.' So it is important that one must always follow the disciplic succession and not hear from any stray professional reciter, *māyāvādī* or ordinary man. *Anuśṛṇuyāt* means that one must hear from an authorized person who is in the disciplic succession and

is always engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When a person wants to hear in this way, then the effect will be sure. By hearing *rāsa-līlā*, one will be elevated to the highest position of spiritual life.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī uses two specific words, *bhaktim* and *parām*. *Bhaktim-parām* means execution of devotional service above the neophyte stage. Those who are simply attracted to temple worship but do not know the philosophy of *bhakti* are in the neophyte stage. That sort of *bhakti* is not the perfectional stage. The perfectional stage of *bhakti*, or devotional service, is completely free from material contamination. The most dangerous aspect of contamination is lust or sex life. *Bhaktim-parām* devotional service is so potent that the more one advances in this line, the more he loses his attraction for material life. One who is actually deriving benefit from hearing about the *rāsa-līlā* dance surely achieves the transcendental position. He surely loses all traces of lust in his heart.