



Holy Engagement



*His Divine Grace
Swamí B.R. Sridhar*

*Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
Nabadwip Dham*



All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

Holy Engagement

Compiled from informal discourses given by
The Founder-Ācāryya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
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Under the direction of the Present Ācāryya
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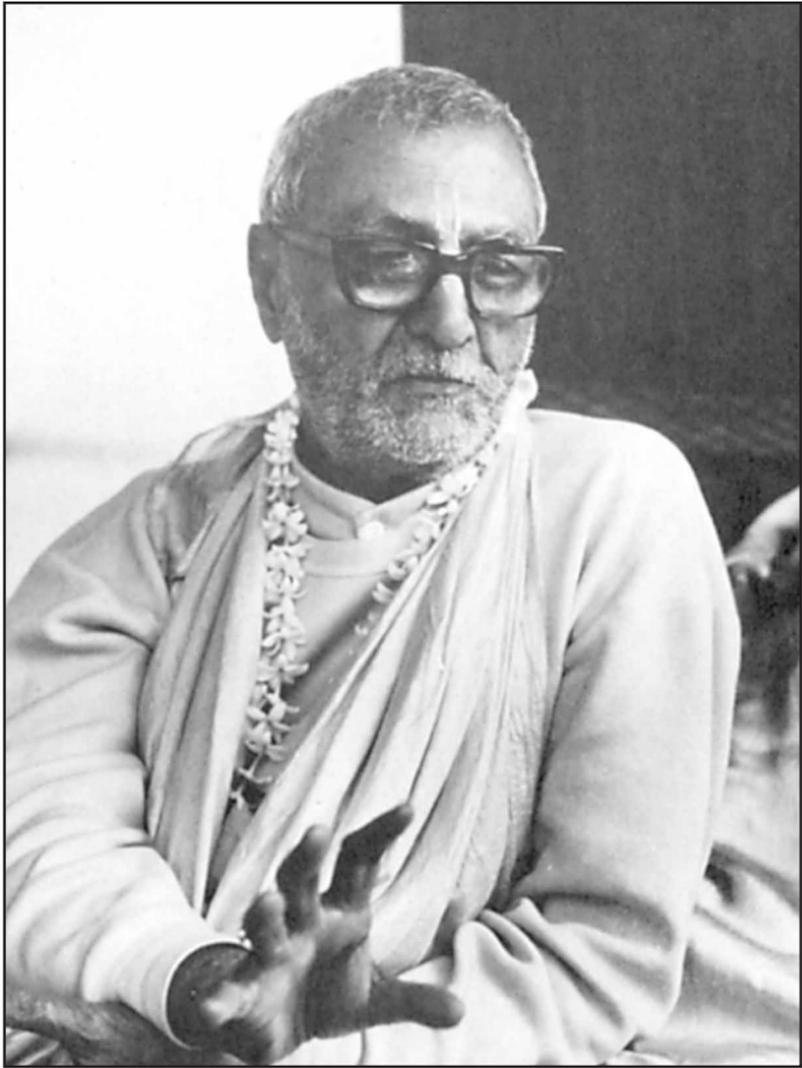
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Divine Transformation

An excerpt from Chapter 3 of *Jaiva Dharmma* written by
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
[Translated by Śrīpād B.A. Sāgar Mahārāj]

One evening, three hours after nightfall, Sannyāsī Ṭhākura sat alone, singing the Holy Name. He was seated on a small mound in a lonely arbour of Śrī Godruma forest. As he cast his glance northward, the full moon rose, revealing an unprecedented beauty throughout the Holy Abode of Śrī Nabadwīp. A short distance away, Śrī Māyāpur became visible. Sannyāsī Ṭhākura exclaimed, “O! What is this wonder? I see an ecstatic holy place. There, constructed of precious jewels, are an effulgent palace, a temple, and gateways. The entire bank of the Jāhnavī River is illuminated by their brilliance. In many places at once, a tumultuous roar of *Harī-nāma Saṅkīrtana* is arising, vibrating through the skies. And now hundreds of devotees resembling the celestial sage Nārada are vibrating *vīṇās*, chanting the Holy Name and dancing. Somewhere, the white-complexioned god of gods, Mahādeva, is clutching his Ḍambaru drum, crying, ‘O Viśvambhara, please give me Your mercy!’ Dancing in a mad frenzy, he now falls to the ground. Somewhere else, four-headed Lord Brahmā, seated in the assembly of Veda-reciting Rṣis, is singing the Vedic *mantra*,
**mahān prabhur vai puruṣaḥ sattvasyaīṣaḥ pravarttakaḥ,
sunirmmalām imām prāptim iśāno jyotir avyayaḥ.**

"The Supreme Person is Mahāprabhu; He alone is the Source of our enlightenment. Only by His grace can one attain immaculate peace. He is the Supreme Being, the Invincible."

"Now Lord Brahmā is giving the transcendental commentary on that *mantra*. And somewhere else, all the demigods headed by Lord Indra are leaping and bounding, singing, 'Jaya Prabhu Gaurachandra, jaya Nityānanda—glory be to the Lord Gaurachandra, glory to Śrī Nityānanda!' All the birds, perched on the branches of the trees, break out in song, 'Gaura-Nitāi, Gaura-Nitāi!' The bees have become intoxicated drinking the nectar of the Name of Gaura, and they are busily humming through the length and breadth of the flower gardens. Intoxicated by the Ecstasy of Śrī Gaurachandra, Mother Nature extends her beauty all around. Lo! I never saw all these things in Śrī Māyāpur by day! What is this?"

Then, remembering his Divine Master, he said, "My lord, I know well that you have given me your grace by extending unto me a divine vision of Holy Māyāpur. From now on, I shall adopt a method to come out into the world as a member of the party of Śrī Gaurachandra. In this Holy Abode of Śrī Nabadwīp I see that everyone wears Tulasī beads around their necks, and they decorate their bodies with the signs of *tilaka* and the Holy Names. I also shall do this."

Speaking in this way, Sannyāsī Ṭhākura fell into semi-consciousness.

Shortly after, he awoke. Certainly he was awake, but the beautiful divine vision was no longer visible. Falling to

weeping, Sannyāsi Ṭhākura said, “I am greatly fortunate. I received the grace of Śrī Guru, and just for a moment I had a divine vision of Śrī Māyāpur Dhām.”

The next day, Sannyāsi Ṭhākura threw his *māyāvādi san-nyāsa-daṇḍa* into the river. He tied three strands of Tulasi beads around his neck and decorated his forehead with the Vaiṣṇava insignia of *tilaka*. He danced, chanting, “Hari! Hari!”

When the Vaiṣṇavas of Godruma saw his new-born countenance and charming new attire, they all offered him their obeisances, considering him to be most blessed. Sannyāsi Ṭhākura felt somewhat bashful, and said, “No doubt I accepted the dress of a Vaiṣṇava to become a fit recipient of their mercy, but now I’m falling into another predicament. Over and over I have heard this verse from the lotus mouth of Śrī Gurudeva:

**ṭṛṇād api sunīcena, taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena, kīrtaniyaḥ sada hariḥ**

(Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 20.21)

“Knowing oneself to be lower than a blade of grass, being more tolerant than a tree, divesting oneself of all pride, and offering due respect to others—one should chant the Holy Name constantly.”

“Now, what will be my fate if those very Vaiṣṇavas that I have accepted as my Gurus offer me their obeisances?”

Thinking in this way, he approached Paramahansa Bābāji and offered him his prostrate obeisances.

Seated beneath the roof of Mādhavī vines, Bābāji Mahāśaya was taking the Holy Name. Seeing the completely transformed appearance of Sannyāsi Ṭhākura, and seeing that his heart had bloomed in love for the Name, Bābāji Mahāśaya embraced his disciple, bathing him with his tears. He said, “O Vaiṣṇava Dāsa, today my ambitions are fulfilled by touching your auspicious form.”

By these words alone, Sannyāsi Ṭhākura’s previous name vanished. He now became known as ‘Vaiṣṇava Dāsa.’ He had now attained something very special, a new lease of life. His dress of a *māyāvādī* ascetic, his haughty name and titles of that *sannyāsa* order, and his condescending egotism—all these things had vanished.

In the afternoon many Vaiṣṇavas of Śrī Godruma and Śrī Madhyadwīp visited Śrī Pradyumna Kuñja to offer their respects and meet with Paramahaṁsa Bābāji Mahāśaya. All were seated around him, chanting the Holy Name on their Tulasī beads. Some shed tears, crying, “Hā Gaurāṅga, Nityānanda,” or, “Hā Sītānātha,” or, “He jaya Sacinandana.” The Vaiṣṇavas discussed spiritual matters amongst one another. The visiting Vaiṣṇavas circumambulated the Holy Tulasī tree, and began to offer their prostrate obeisances to the resident Vaiṣṇavas. Just then Vaiṣṇava Dāsa also circumambulated Śrī Vṛndādevī, and threw himself into the dust before the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas. Hearing the devotees’ remarks, some of the highly respected, elevated Vaiṣṇavas exclaimed, “He can’t be the same Sannyāsi Ṭhākura—what an amazing transformation!”

Vaiṣṇava Dāsa rolled on the ground before them. Imploringly, he began to speak, “Today, my life’s mission is

fulfilled. I have attained the dust of the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas. By the mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, I have learned well that there is no refuge for the soul other than the dust of the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas. The foot-dust of the Vaiṣṇava, the nectarean water that washed the feet of the Vaiṣṇava, and the remnants of food left by the Vaiṣṇava—these three are the medicine for the disease of mundanity, and they are the healthy diet for those afflicted with this disease. Not only do they cure the disease, but they bestow the highest ecstasy upon the healthy souls.

“O Vaiṣṇavas, please don’t think I am flaunting my scholarship. These days, my heart has become purged of egotism. I was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, I studied all the Scriptures, and I entered into the fourth order, the life of asceticism. Thus, the inflation of my ego has known no bounds. But since the day I became attracted to the principles of the Vaiṣṇavas, a seed of humility was planted within my heart. By the mercy of you all, I have gradually cast off the pride of my birth, the megalomania of my scholarship, and the grandeur of my ascetic status. Now, I find that I am a helpless, wretched soul. Other than the shelter of the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas, I have no refuge whatsoever. Brahmanism, scholarship, and *sannyāsa*—these things were the cause of my downfall. Now I have openly confessed everything at your lotus feet; please utilise your servitor as you deem proper.”

An excerpt from *Śrī Daśa-mūla*
composed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
[Translated by Śrīpād B.A. Sāgar Mahārāj]

**yadā bhrāmaṁ bhrāmaṁ hari-rasa-galad-vaiṣṇavajanaṁ
kadācit saṁpaśyaṁs tad-anugamane syād ruci-yutaḥ
tadā kṛṣṇāvṛtṭyā tyajati śanakair māyika-daśāṁ
svarūpaṁ vibhrāṇo vimala-rasa-bhogaṁ sa kurate [8]**

After wandering throughout the higher and lower species of life, when he is blessed with a holy glimpse of a Vaiṣṇava whose heart is melted in the joy of love for the Supreme Lord Hari, the attraction to live the life of following in the wake of the Vaiṣṇava is born for the conditioned soul. Continuously chanting the Holy Name and Glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, his life of illusory existence is gradually dispelled. He soon attains to his own intrinsic form and becomes eligible to revel in the joy of the unadulterated Service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.



Chapter One

Devotees' Pilgrimage

Devotee: Please tell us something about Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām Parikramā (circumambulation).

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj (Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj): We should try to become more acquainted with the realistic view of Nabadwīp. There are so many divisions in this Nabadwīp Dhām: mainly nine. It is mentioned that they represent the nine sections of devotion:

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

Śimantadwīp represents *śravaṇa-bhakti*, hearing about Kṛṣṇa. Chanting about Kṛṣṇa, *kīrttan*, is in Godrumadwīp; remembering the Lord, *smaraṇam*, is in Madhyadwīp; serving the Lord's feet, *pāda-sevanam*, is here in Koladwīp; worshipping with ghee lamp, etc., *arccanam*, is in Ṛtudwīp; offering prayers, *vandanam*, is in Jahnūdwīp; rendering service as a servant, *dāsyam*, is in Modadrumadwīp; rendering service to the Lord in the relationship of a best friend, *sakhyam*, is in Rudradwīp; and full self-surrender, *ātma-nivedanam*, is represented in Śrī Antardwīp, Māyāpur. They have connection with these nine main types of devotional conceptions respectively. When travelling to these places we are reminded by the incidents connected with them how such representation comes from each place. All of them taken together promote our understanding as to what is devotion proper.

Ātma-nivedanam, full self-surrender, is the basis of all. After *ātma-nivedanam* the plane of life will be categorically changed. After surrendering to the central direction, whatever will be done by us will come to have recognition as devotion. That is devotion. *Ātma-nivedanam* is selflessness plus self-surrendering. Self-surrendering presupposes selflessness. Selfish actions come to an end and selflessness is also crossed, and then self-surrendered life begins—and that is devotion proper.

The life of a devotee has no individual or provincial interest. He works only for the universal interest of the Whole Absolute. Devotees are soldiers of that plane. Whatever they may do, the suggestion and inspiration comes from the centre, the Absolute Good. Though apparently they seem to be members of this plane of quarrel, in their heart their connection is with the Absolute Good; therefore their colour has completely changed. The valuation of the devotees' movements has completely changed although apparently they seem to be doing everything almost in a similar way to the mundane persons. Mundane persons eat, and the devotees also appear to eat, but actually they are not eating: they are rendering service to the remnants sent by the Lord. In this way they are going on.

**tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha-, vāso 'lañkāra-carccitāḥ
uccīṣṭa-bhojino dāsās, tava māyāṁ jayema hi**

Uddhava says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, “We shall conquer the whole of the deluding energy (Māyā) by only one thing. And what is that? We shall accept everything with the spirit of service. Whatever You, O Lord, send to us, You

have already taken and enjoyed, and we shall serve those remnants and thereby the whole of the deluding energy will be devastated."

One of my learned professor Godbrothers was challenged by his younger brother who was perhaps a graduate, "What do you do there in the *Maṭh*? What we do, you also do there."

The professor replied, "No, no, you do not do what we do in the *Maṭh*."

"You do not eat?"

"No, we do not eat."

"Then what do you do? With my own eyes I have seen you eating."

"No, we don't eat. We don't eat like you: we don't put solid things into our stomachs like you. We render service to *Mahāprasādam*. What we do is beyond your understanding. We don't eat like you. We have no spirit of consumption. We don't consume anything, but we honour the remnants of the Lord."

Such will be the difference between all the activities of the true Vaiṣṇavas and the worldly men. Apparently the Vaiṣṇavas seem to do the same things as others are doing: walking, sleeping, eating, engaging others in activities, earning money, spending, and so many apparently similar things; but the standpoint is totally different. It is connected with the centre. They abide by the direction of the central movement whereas the worldly men are guided by their provincial, local interest. The difference is that one is guided by the local, and the other by the Absolute, and that difference is very, very great. The Vaiṣṇavas are on the other side of selflessness, the

other side of renounced life. Between the worldly men and the Vaiṣṇavas is the realm of complete renunciation. One is on one side, the other is on the other side.

What proper devotion is, must be realised. Generally, it may not be understood by the apparent movement of the devotees, but it is to be realised by the question of adjusting the angle of vision. The angle of vision is to be changed.

There are so many incidents, stories, and sceneries connected with Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām Parikramā, but all are meaning to help us in our life of absolute adjustment. If one can catch that, then by his *parikramā* through different holy places and his hearing about local 'historical' incidents he will receive eternal instructions in various conceptions of devotion. He will receive encouragement in this way.

It is not like the *parikramā* of the ordinary people in the general Hindu section of society who also go out on pilgrimage. The general people come in contact with the holy places and they have some holy association, but their main object is to gain some unseen help in their present life. They want their desires of this present life to be satisfied by some invisible help from the demigods. It is *puṇya-karma*—to acquire good merit to help success in their present life according to their conception. It is not *Śuddha-bhakti*.

The objective of the Gauḍīya Maṭh people is quite different and it cannot be reckoned in any of the different planes the present educational section are hunting for. The present-day scholars cannot even think that purely spiritual life is possible at all. They consider that spiritual life may be only a concoction that others are suffering from. According to the so-called scientific scholars, the spiritual searchers are

fighting with their shadow, hunting after impossibility and imaginary things. They consider the devotees to be running after phantasmagoria and superstition.

**yā niśā sarvva-bhūtānām, tasyām jāgartti saṁyami
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni, sā niśā paśyato muneh**

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* 2.69)

But on the other side, we think that in the name of concrete reality *they* are running after phantasmagoria—just the opposite. They are running after the mortal achievements. They think immortality is not possible, and Socrates had to pay a heavy price for expressing that the soul is immortal. At the cost of his life he announced that the soul is immortal. They objected, “No, nothing is immortal, therefore it is foolish to neglect the mortal pleasures, so let us enjoy whatever there may be.” That was their viewpoint.

The normal viewpoint is that we want to be wakeful in that plane of life which is darkness to them. The basis is that the soul is immortal and there is an immortal world—it is not only immortal but it is nectarean reality. *Śrīnvanu viśve amṛtasya puttrāḥ*: “O you sons of nectar, be mindful. You are eternal and you are children of that soil. Why do you suffer so much. You have become victims of mortality but really you are not so. You have an inconceivably higher prospect of life. Come back. Come back to your own plane. Come back home.” That is the general call of the *Upaniṣads*, the most ancient revealed Scripture.

The attempt of the followers of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu does not only call for theistic life, but it calls for theism in its full-fledged condition: that is a family life

with God—family life with the Absolute Beauty and Charm. “Your place is just on the lap of the affectionate father, or, just on the lap of the beloved consort.”

“Do or die” is the slogan of Mahāprabhu’s followers. Let us try. Let us strive our utmost to achieve what is our own real prospect. No compromise. There must be no compromise along the way, but we must fight to the finish and we must be prepared for that. Our Guru Mahārāj, Prabhupād Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, was the *Ācāryya* of the whole Gauḍīya Maṭh and he was of such nature. He was not haphazard or prepared to make any compromise—nothing of the kind.

Prabhupād Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura had to begin his fight almost single-handedly against the whole of the world—against all the different stages of culture ever known to the world. His only support was *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Śrīman Mahāprabhu. He proceeded with ‘heart within and God overhead.’ On his head was Mahāprabhu and *Bhāgavatam*. He stood alone to fight out Their cause. Not only did he want to fight in Bengal, the province of Mahāprabhu, and not only in India, but he wanted to fight outside as well.

He wanted to attack the highest position of the present civilisation—the Western world, the scientific civilisation. They are so proud with their present achievements, but Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupād wanted to break down the whole structure of the present false civilisation. He wanted to demolish it and construct a divine temple over the ruins. He wanted to construct a temple of God over the mundane world. He wanted to present not any

half-truth, but the fullest: in his words, “full-fledged theism” in accordance with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We are not to stop halfway or be satisfied with partial progress, but we are to only engage in wholesale dealings, and that is given by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

avismṛtiḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayoḥ

The conception of theism follows these lines. It is continual existence under the holy protection of the Divine Feet of Kṛṣṇa: to maintain one’s life of continuous engagement with all sorts of activities, while thinking, “The guide is upon my head. The Divine Feet of Kṛṣṇa are upon my head.” With this attitude we can easily remove what is foreign within us in no time at all. The continual remembrance of Kṛṣṇa’s Lotus Feet, of Kṛṣṇa’s connection, will in no time disperse all the difficulties along the way, as well as all meanness and all that is not dignified. Our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “The Gauḍīya Maṭh stands for the dignity of the human race.” We are to understand that slavery to Kṛṣṇa is a most dignified position. And everything against that ideal is meanness. The only standard of life for a gentleman is to understand and accept the position of subordination to the Absolute Truth. To admit what is proper and real, and on that basis make one’s life advanced, is not meanness. To understand one’s proper position and to understand one’s proper duty and discharge it—that is a gentleman’s life; to accept what is truth. What is considered to be meanness will be removed very soon. And what is really for our welfare and beneficial to us, that will increase.

You are at present in an adulterated conception of your own life. The mind, intelligence and exploiting energies of different kinds are all adulteration. So from your existence will be eliminated all kinds of adulteration. It will be purified and your real self within will come out in its pristine glory, and you will find you have a happy devotional connection with the Supersoul, the Super-knowledge. You will come across knowledge proper—a clear, personal type of knowledge—with its paraphernalia and systematic existence.

Whatever you are attracted to at present in this mundane plane will be transferred. Affection proper will be discovered. At present your affection, attraction, and love are misdirected, but they will find their proper place and position. The special characteristic is that you will have a real place and position where these faculties of affection and attraction will find a special support, a proper place to which they will be directed. This is devotion.



Searching Life's Secret

We must have eagerness to mix with *sādhus* of the higher type and avoid liking the company of the ordinary public. If we allow ourselves to mix with the ordinary public in the name of preaching or collection or any other thing, that will be detrimental to our cause.

**vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhiraḥ
sarvvām apimām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt**
(*Upadeśāmṛtam* 1)

Inspired by the advice of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī put His advice into this poetic language.

Vāco vegam—one should not be habituated to speak much; to speak always, whether good or bad, without discrimination. Also, *manasaḥ*, the raw mental flow is to be controlled. The mind generally thinks about war, about astonishing scientific research, about making money feverishly, and so on. People who are greedy always try to keep company with millionaires, but the mind must not be allowed to run after such things. Those who are full of lust are always searching for beautiful women. Such is their campaign. And those that have controlled their senses are always searching for different conceptions of Nārāyaṇa. So the ordinary flow of the mind towards exploitation, towards tempting things, must be checked. We are not to

allow the flow of our mind to go this side, that side and every side.

Krodha-vegam. Sometimes anger may come, but it creates disaster. It is inevitable that there will be a reaction to anger, therefore we shall try to check that type of flow of the mind towards anger. But still, we must try to utilise for the Service of Kṛṣṇa all of whatever we still have left of these things.

Kāma kṛṣṇa-kārmṇāpaṇe krodha bhakta-dveṣi-jane. Speculation, planning, etc. may be utilised in the service of Kṛṣṇa. We shall try to utilise any anger within us by defending the devotees, and in this way in no time we shall get relief from anger. The free-flow of the mind may be directed and utilised in *sādhu-saṅge harikathā*. *Prajalpa* is unnecessary discussion about mundane affairs. Also we should not be eager to have the company of any person without first considering whether his association will be good.

Jihvā-vega means our attraction to a particular taste. Some may have a particular attraction to the pungent, some to the bitter, some to the sweet, some to the acidic, etc. We should try to avoid the hankering of the tongue to taste particular things. How? The process is that while taking anything I am to consider how nicely the *sādhu*, the Guru, or the Lord has first tasted it. The material things should be subservient and our attention should be directed towards the subjective feeling of how the higher have tasted it. This is the clue to how to get free from the material taste.

Mahāprabhu tried to avoid sweet things; “I am a *sannyāsī*, so I must keep the ideal. If I take the good things then all will follow that example and it will be detrimental to them.”

Then Swarūpa Dāmodara said, “That is the negative

side, but the positive side is that one should take *Prasādam*. A person must have the experience of how Jagannāth has tasted the preparations." From the objective world we are to go to the subjective. All feelings should be collected and applied towards the higher plane, and they must be withdrawn from the lower plane.

Udara-vega. "I have not taken much food. My belly seems to be vacant, I shall take more." Such tendency to take more and more is called *udara-vega*.

Jihvā-vega is for the taste, the quality, and *udara-vega* is for the quantity. And *upastha-vega* is the tendency or urge to gain pleasure from the company of women. We are instructed that these three are in one line and they help each other: *jihvā-vega*, *udara-vega* and *upastha-vega*. We must be very careful to get rid of them. They cause so much disaster in one's life. They spoil so many lives. We must be careful in our dealings with them.

"*Etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ, sarvām apīmān pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*. One who can control all of these difficulties is a real Goswāmī, and he can control the whole of the world. He is eligible to make the population of the whole world into his disciples. Any number of disciples cannot make him deviate from his standpoint." These have been given as the cautionary points for the *sādhus* who come under the flag of Śrī Chaitanyadeva.

But how can we become intimate with a *sādhu*?

**dadāti pratigrhṇāti, guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caiva, ṣaḍ-vidhaṁ pṛīti-lakṣaṇam**

(*Śrī Upadeśāmṛtam*, 4)

We can increase our attraction and love for a *sādhu* by giving him raw items and by accepting his *Prasādam*—to give and to take. To give items to be utilised by him, and to accept whatever is necessary for ourselves, but nothing new.

We won't try to take anything new, but we will wish only for something which has been used by the Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, whether it be a garland, clothes, decorations, or whatever. We shall try to live by the remnants of the Vaiṣṇavas. We shall present new things to the *sādhus*, and we shall try to live by their remnants.

Guhyam ākhyāti—I should reveal my innermost feelings to the *sādhu*: “From my innermost heart I feel these many particular things within me. Are these feelings good or bad? And if bad, what is the remedy?” We shall place our inner heart before him so he may examine and proceed accordingly.

Ṗṛcchati—we shall enquire from the *sādhu*, “What is the secret of your holy life? Please tell me and I shall try to follow that example in order to get out of my present circumstances. In your case how did you gain relief?” We shall try to collect the secrets of success of life from a *sādhu*. *Bhūṅkte bhojayate caiva*—we shall feed him, and accept his *Prasādam*.

If we follow the above guidelines we shall come closer to a person. If we deal in these ways with a bad man we shall become bad, and with a good man we shall become good. There are two types of water: filtered and filthy. Filthy water can be purified. The higher *sādhus* can take evil thoughts from others without becoming contaminated. In their hearts resides Govinda. Govinda is infinite and He can consume any quantity of filthy things, therefore their hearts cannot be contaminated.

yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa

(*Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 7.128*)

“Whoever you find, talk with him about Kṛṣṇa only.” This should be our motto. One who follows this is a real follower of Mahāprabhu—not of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is almost confined within His own circle but when He comes as Mahāprabhu His main interest is to open the way to His domain. “Go on distributing. At first distribute My sound aspect. It is the most spacious, subtle and effective. Gradually you will find everything there. The first connection is with My sound aspect.”

His sound aspect is all-embracing. From far away it can connect, and then the Figure, then Colour, then Quality, then His Associates, and then His Pastimes. At that time the devotee becomes attached with some particular duty by which he joins the *Līlā* of the Lord.



Recognising Divinity

Devotee: When my *Dikṣā-gurudeva* was present he gave me spiritual instructions, therefore he was also my *Śikṣā-guru*. After his departure I receive guidance from his books and tapes as well as his general instructions. Is he still considered to be my *Śikṣā-guru*? Are his books and recordings now my *Śikṣā-guru*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Of course, but in a passive way. Generally the *Caitya-guru's* function is better there. If you fail to understand a particular passage, then you cannot have progress. Passively it is represented to you, but you have to extract the real purpose; and another Vaiṣṇava may see something more there. Therefore it has been said, '*Jāho bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne.*' If you want to read the *Bhāgavatam* you must go to a Vaiṣṇava *Ācāryya*, a Vaiṣṇava teacher, and read it under his guidance, otherwise you may fail to understand the real standpoint. You must read Vaiṣṇava scripture with the help of the Vaiṣṇava *Ācāryya*. The passive *Śikṣā-guru* may help to remind you, but if you fail to understand, the book will not come to remove your misconception. But the living *Śikṣā-guru*, the *sādhu*, will point out and explain the misunderstandings. *Sādhu* and *śāstra* are both necessary, but the *sādhu* is principal. In the absence of the living Scripture—the *sādhu*—the passive scripture—the *śāstra*—is there to give us help.

Devotee: Is the *Caitya-guru* passive?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: It is not passive but it is somewhat

vague within us and we may not always be able to detect its advices. It is difficult to understand its advice.

Devotee: Can the *Caitya-guru* be a manifestation of our Gurudeva and of Kṛṣṇa also?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes. When we internally ask something while standing before our Gurudeva, “Please advise me in this particular position. What am I to do?” Then we may feel something: “My Gurudeva is giving *this* suggestion.” If we are pure then we shall be able to catch the real solution from him.

While reading *Bhagavad-gītā* we may also ask Kṛṣṇa, “What is the real meaning of Your speech? Please allow me to understand.” According to our position we will be able to understand if Kṛṣṇa suggests, “This is the purpose of My speech:...” But it is vague and depends upon one’s capacity of realisation.

Devotee: Many of us did not get to see or speak with our Gurudeva much, so how is the Spiritual Master aware of the activities of his disciples? Also the Spiritual Master is sometimes far away from the disciples, so how does he keep connection with them?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: He can gain a general conception from the letters of the disciple, by his words and also from others. From one, two, or more sources he may conjecture as to the way the disciple is engaging as well as his current stage of progress. By the activities, expression, and aspiration of a disciple it is not too difficult to understand his general situation and plane. So many tests exist.

Generally it is said that a man cannot be judged by his

dress, but he can be judged by his words. But in devotional life a person may even be judged by the nature of his dress as well as of course by his words, practices, attachment, etc.

If some dirt will accumulate and cause an interruption in the running of a fine machine such as a computer, the expert will be able to understand the nature of the defect. Similarly, the plane of a person can be known from the words he speaks and the actions he performs. His earnestness and attraction for various particular stages of duty are among the many symptoms by which a person's position can be understood.

In general, some may tend towards renunciation, others towards exploitation, and some towards devotion. Amongst the devotional section some may tend towards devotion to the Deity, some to devotion to the Vaiṣṇavas, some to devotion to the Guru. A devotee's situation may be assessed according to where his intensity and eagerness lies. There are many signs to indicate the different stages of devotees.

The position of a devotee can also be assessed according to the nature of his enquiry. What does he want to know? In the *śāstra* are listed different stages of enquiry and instruction.

Devotee: After the disappearance of the Spiritual Master, is the connection still maintained? Is the Spiritual Master still aware of the disciple's activities?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Our attitude should be to consider that he is seeing everything from above.

We cannot have full knowledge of our Gurudeva. A devotee after fifteen years of continuous service as a *san-*

nyāsi was told by our Guru Mahārāj, Prabhupād Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, “You have not seen me. You could not see or meet me.” By this example we can understand that it is very difficult for the disciples to know in what plane the Gurudeva is staying.

He was one of the most popular *sannyāsīs* amongst Śrīla Prabhupād’s disciples, but during Śrīla Prabhupād’s last days that *sannyāsi* took some independent action which caused this remark to come from our Guru Mahārāj, “You could not meet me; you could not see who I am.”

In other words we understood that Guru Mahārāj indicated, “You are trying to be a canvasser of the *gr̥hasthas*—not my servant. Some men and money are at your disposal and you think I want men and money and so you are supplying me with such things. You think that your property is your men and money, and sometimes you give something to me by way of a bribe, and then you return to keeping your estate. But I require that you be *my* man and that you will always work cent-percent on my behalf, and never be influenced by the popular opinion of any charm of the material world. You are to be cent-percent my servant. Whatever you do must be independent of any connection with the outside world. No outside connection is to influence you in any way. You are to be always clear. You are to handle the world, but not establish any connection or affection in the world. Cent-percent, you are to be mine. That should be the attitude. You are to be my man and you are not to incur any obligation to the external world. It is not that in the name of devotion you will come and plead on their behalf to me. You are to be always cent-percent mine, and in this way

engage yourself with the outside world—whether with men, money, fame, or anything else. This connection must not be slack.”

On the other hand Vāsudeva Datta said to Mahāprabhu on behalf of the people at large, “Please accept them. I stand as their guarantor. If you wish, you may send me to eternal hell, but please accept them.” But that mood is of another type. There is no lacking of faith in the centre; rather the most intense degree of faith in the centre is displayed by his words, although apparently he pleaded for the public at his own risk.

Devotee: It is also said, *caḡṣu-dāna dila yei, janme janme prabhu sei*—that he who gives me transcendental vision is my lord, birth after birth. So, is the connection with the Spiritual Master actually eternal, birth after birth?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Of course. But we must not identify him with the appearance we experience by our physical senses. The inner identification is necessary, and that vision will increase according to our inner growth. Our vision will increase and transform from *prākṛta* to *aprākṛta*, from material to transcendental. As our vision changes, the way we see Gurudeva will change accordingly. A man is generally known first by his external uniform, then by his body, then by his mind, then by his intelligence. As much as our eye will develop to see things rightly, what we see will change its appearance.

Ācāryyam mām vijānīyāt—the Lord says, “It is ultimately I who am the *Ācāryya*. It is My function in different stages and forms.” At the same time different *Ācāryyas* may simul-

taneously work together. They have their common ground in their Śrī Gurudeva, but, like so many branches of a tree, they differ in many ways. Still, the ideal is *ācāryyaṁ māṁ vijānīyāt*. The ideal is going from gross to subtle. According to the depth of vision of the eye of the viewer some factors are in common, some different.

Different depths of vision will disclose different realities of the *Ācāryya*, and it will go in different *Rasas* [Divine Relationships] to the highest position by a gradual process of realisation. Otherwise it will be *marttya-buddhi*, a material conception of the Divinity, and that is a crime; that is ignorance. It is erroneous.

We are to withdraw ourselves from the snare of identifying reality with the physical form presented to our senses. The eye is a deceiver; it cannot see the proper form. The ear also deceives. The form of the *Ācāryya* is not *indriya-grāhya*, perceivable by the senses; it is *indriyātīta*, beyond the experience of the senses. Because we are in such a low position we must gradually proceed to the inner world with the help of the figure we see before us. But so much importance is given to seeing deeper. The *Ācāryya* sometimes wears winter clothing and sometimes he wears summer clothing, but we are not to identify him with the dress even though it is also indispensibly connected with his body. Similarly the *Ācāryya* may show himself to have a young body but later in life he shows an old body. Similarly in one birth he may come in a particular body and another time he may come in another body. The same *Ācāryya* may come differently at different times. From the external we shall have to go to the internal. This applies to ourselves also. If I lose this body of

flesh and blood and have instead only a subtle body, then I shall see the Guru in the form of his subtle body, not in the form of this physical type of body. The *Devatās*, *Gandharvas*, and *Siddhas* also have their Gurus, but neither they nor their *Ācāryyas* have a material body. So we are to eliminate the external conception and enter within the internal conception, and that will be all-important to a progressive disciple. It does not mean that he will disregard the physical form of Gurudeva, but he will look to the real importance and real presence within.

We should worship the remnants of the *Ācāryya*—his coat, his shoes, his sandals, etc.—but that does not mean that such things will be superior to his own body. Similarly, if we are eager to do some physical service to him but he does not want that, then we should not do it. If I go to massage his feet but he says, “No, no. I do not want that,” then we should refrain. His internal wish will be higher. In this way we are to make progress from the gross to the subtle, but that does not mean we should abhor all external things. We should respect them, but more importance should be given towards the internal as the higher, deeper representation. *Eho bāhya, āge kaha āra.* “This is superficial, go deeper.” As much as we have deeper vision we shall go forward.

Devotee: In the case of Bilvamaṅgal Ṭhākura, his Gurudeva spoke to him through the prostitute Cintāmaṇi, and Bilvamaṅgal recognised his Guru there.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: But that does not mean he went back to Cintāmaṇi. He accepted Cintāmaṇi as his first Guru. Through her advice he went to Somagiri and from there he

went to Vṛndāvana, eliminating his earlier guide. He recognised that Cintāmaṇi was his starting point but he did not give so much respect that he stayed there and served her. *Eho bāhya, āge kaha āra*. Progress means elimination. Progress presupposes some sort of elimination, some change in conception, otherwise it is stagnant and static.

Devotee: Does that mean that in a devotee's progress he discards lower *Rasas* as he progresses from *śānta* to *dāsyā* to *sakhya* and so on?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: When his internal representation finds its full nature it will stay there. He will not make further progress to a higher *Rasa* because his final goal has been reached.

Gradation is everywhere. Similarly, there is classification in the energies: *Goloka-śakti*, *Vaikuṅṭha-śakti*, then *Śivaloka*, *Brahmaloka*, *Virajā*; and then, here in the material world, there is classification—but according to grossness. In the mundane plane the classification is from gross to subtle. There is also classification and gradation within the nature of the *jīvas*. Some finish their progress in the *dāsyā* relationship in *Vaikuṅṭha*. Some cross *Vaikuṅṭha-dāsyā* and enter within the *Dāsyā* of *Kṛṣṇaloka* where there is *Madhura-rasa-dāsyā*, *Vātsalya-rasa-dāsyā*, general *Dāsyā*, etc. There are infinite classifications. The soul is infinite and everything is infinite. We are indicating such things from afar (*digdarśana*) but everything is analysed in the infinite. Every part of infinity is infinite, therefore we are repeatedly told, “Begin work. Begin service. There is no end of knowledge, and there is no end of enquiry, so begin service—Devotion.” *Jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā*—enquiry is never to be finished. It

is never satisfied. *Praṇipāta*, *paripraśna*, *sevayā*. *Praṇipāta* is full confidence; *paripraśna* is honest enquiry; and *sevā*, service, is all-in-all. Without *sevā* you cannot claim to come in touch with the Infinite. You are to submit and serve, then the necessary direction will be revealed within you. Begin your service. Wherever you are, it is a great blessing if you get the chance to begin your service. Through some agents that chance may come even in the tree and beast species.

Service is all-in-all. It is the concrete whole; anything else is just a partial representation. Without submission, no enquiry is possible. But enquiry is not the fulfilment. Fulfilment is to serve. That is the reality and that will fetch something in return for you.

Bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā. *Bhakti*, not *jñāna* or other things, will promote *Bhakti*. *Jñāna* cannot produce *Bhakti*, but *Bhakti* is independent in herself. Only *Bhakti* can produce *Bhakti*, so *jñāna* is in the negative side. *Bhakti* is independent. *Bhakti* is absolute. It does not depend in any way upon *jñāna* or *karma*. *Bhakti* is born of *Bhakti* alone. *Bhakti* can produce *Bhakti*. Nothing else. *Ahaituky apratihātā*. It is causeless. It cannot be produced by any other thing. *Bhakti* can extend herself. And *apratihatā*—no other wave can oppose the growth of *Bhakti* except for *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, offence to the devotees of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is the misconception of *Bhakti*, the misapplication of *Bhakti*. *Jñāna* and *karma* cannot produce any effect on *Bhakti* because *Bhakti* is *apratihatā*, but anti-*Bhakti* is *aparādha* and we must be careful there. *Yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hāti-mātā*. In particular we shall be careful to try to save ourselves from *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

There is also gradation in *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. If a Vaiṣṇava of a lower type is dissatisfied it will not have much effect, but when there are differences between Vaiṣṇavas it is necessary to see who will have the backing from the higher quarter. The central thought is to be considered. With that consideration we are to approach. Ambariṣa Mahārāj was a devotee, also Durvāsā Muni had some devotion, but we are to compare and see who will receive the higher backing. Duryodhana was a devotee and Arjuna was also a devotee, but there was a clash between them. Sometimes we see such things.

Bhīṣma is a devotee—he is one of the twelve devotion-*al mahājans*—Arjuna is also a devotee, but we are informed that there was a clash between them. Sometimes the clash is ostentatious and sometimes according to their circumstances. But who shall we side with? When such a case is there and cannot be avoided along the way, who we side with should be calculated in consultation with higher opinion. We must look for support from the higher office. It is living, not a dead jumble of law.

It is not such an easy thing to commit *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. It is *aparādha* if some offence is made to a Vaiṣṇava, but if a clash comes with an *anartha* in a middle-class Vaiṣṇava causing him to become angry, that will not produce any offence. A cent-percent Vaiṣṇava may have some *anartha*, and if some opposition comes to the *anartha*, he may be enraged. In such a case it is not strictly the Vaiṣṇava but his mind—the mental system of the Vaiṣṇava and not his spiritual element. It will not be so much of an *aparādha* if the cause of his anger was only that his material interest was disturbed.

We can make so many calculations and assessments, but we also see in the Scripture: “*Na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd, durgatīm tāta gacchati*—any person engaged in virtuous actions does not go down to hell or become ill-fated.” If one is sincere and does not want to deceive himself, none can deceive him. We must be true to our clear spiritual conscience. We must be truthful to that in our quest, then the Lord within will come to help us. He will always help the sincere souls. He is everywhere and He is the helper.

na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd, durgatīm tāta gacchati

I want the highest good, and the Highest Good will also correspondingly come to my relief.



The Inner Domain

Conceptually Sanātan Goswāmī took Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā, and from there he took Him again back to Vṛndāvana. He did not allow Kṛṣṇa to go out of Mathurā. We see this in his writings. But we see that Rūpa Goswāmī connected *Vṛndāvana-līlā* with *Dvārakā-līlā*. He showed that everything of *Vṛndāvana-līlā* was transferred to *Dvārakā-līlā* including even the Queens. When asked what the adjustment is, our Śrīla Prabhupād replied, “Why has this subject matter been termed as *adhokṣaja*—beyond our understanding? If it is possible to understand everything and keep it within our fist, then it cannot be *adhokṣaja*—*acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā, na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet.*”

It is His sweet will. We must leave everything up to His sweet will. If it is possible to capture all knowledge within me, then His existence does not transcend mine. Therefore, *jñāne prayāsam*: don't bother yourself uselessly to try to know anything and everything about Him, but submit. By submission you will come to understand by partial instalments according to your feeling of service necessity. You are finite, so do not try to 'devour' the Infinite—that attempt is not desirable. To want to devour the whole thing and put it in your belly is not only a waste of energy but it is detrimental to your cause. By trying to do so means that even unconsciously you consider it to be limited, otherwise how can you be bold enough to try to know everything about Him—to want to know more and more, more and more?

This tendency proves that you want to finish all understanding about Him. It may be possible to have some sort of ‘complete’ knowledge of Māyā to a certain extent, but not Adhokṣaja, Kṛṣṇa, in any way. Such hankering for knowledge is a disqualification within you. By that path you cannot make any real progress. *Yam evaiṣa vṛnute tena labhyaḥ*—it must come from the higher side. You can only try to encourage your negative side: “I am so low, I am so mean. I am the most needy.” And that must be sincere—not a show.

Sincere progress rests on our realising that, “I am the most needy, the most wretched, the most mean.” This is the way we should try to cultivate. So *jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā*. We are to hatefully banish such a tendency to ‘know’ Him. *Namanta eva, jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām*—instead, I must try to catch whatever comes through the mouth of the devotees, because by that way knowledge from the positive direction comes to me out of its own accord. I shall welcome and invite that. It is automatically coming. It is freely coming to me, and not that by labouring I shall try to know everything about Him. I will accept such revelation in whatever form it may come, and not that I shall disturb Him with the demand, “You make it known to me what You are.”

Sthāne sthitāḥ—and it does not matter wherever one is placed. One may even be a bird or beast, but that does not matter. Hanumān is not in a human form, Garuḍa also, but they have much. Kṛṣṇa indicates, “Really they have access to enter into My Domain and within My heart. The real path to Me is through Devotion, through service. Leaving the path of service, those who are very eager to ‘know’ every-

thing about Me, they labour with much pain to try to have some conception and estimation about Me. But their pain is their only reward. Pain is the only reward if one leaves the path of service and wants to know Me. You have curiosity, but why? You are My servant, so don't try to go to any other side. Don't be eager to know Me, to know who I am. Instead, try to fulfil Me. Really, you are to satisfy Me. I am *Ānandam*, ecstasy. That is My highest part, and you are to come and add to that."

You are to search for *Kṛṣṇa-santoṣa*, a way to satisfy Him, but without caring for that, you are using so much energy to try to satisfy your abstract knowledge, your curiosity. Therefore you are a self-deceiver.

**śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.4.16)

How? The example is given that if paddy is threshed there will be rice, but if only the husk is threshed it is likened to the attempt for knowledge of *Kṛṣṇa*. We want rice, not the husk. To thresh the husk is mere fruitless labour. The pain of the endeavour is its only reward. Similarly, when the finite wants to know the Infinite, his labour is wasted there. *Kṛṣṇa* says, "Whatever you get, try to use that in your duty to satisfy Me, *Ānandam*." That is the real thing, the real taste.

There are four *ślokas* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* condemning *jñāna*. Another is:

**naiṣkarmmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjjitaṃ
na śobhate jñānam alaṃ nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram iśvare
na cārpitaṃ karma yad apy akāraṇam**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.12)

Naiṣkarmmaṃ paramaṃ siddhim. The idea that I shall have to labour to live is very dishonourable. If I have to live, I must labour; that is very dishonourable. So the ancient scholars searched for a position where we can live without labour, where without pain we can live easily. They started a campaign to discover or invent such a position. Sometimes *naiṣkarmma* received much appreciation within the society. They want to be without labour troubles, and in this way the capitalists use computers and so many machines in place of so much man-labour. The man-labour has been so impertinent that the capitalists want to eliminate it.

The ancient scholars were sometimes very busy to discover a social position for all the souls whereby they can live without labour, without *karma*: *naiṣkarmma*. They came to consider that self-satisfaction, *ātmārāmatā*, could be achieved by complete withdrawal. To back up this conception they considered that Buddha and Śaṅkara came to give relief by pointing out that there is a stage of *samādhi* such as we feel in a sound sleep. They described that if we can reach that plane of no labour we will still be able to live happily and we will find no trouble there.

Śukadeva Goswāmī agreed, “Yes, *naiṣkarmma* is also found here.” But in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* he gave a new form of *naiṣkarmma*: “You say that work is painful, work is dissi-

pating. You say that labour is wasting energy. But now I am going to give you an ideal of life where there is no dissipation. You will labour, but without dissipation of energy."

How?

"*Yatra jñāna-virāga-bhakti-sahitam naiṣkarmmyam āviṣkṛtam*—we have discovered, or invented, a new type of *naiṣkarmma*: *jñāna-virāga-bhakti*."

Jñāna and *virāga* took Buddha and Śaṅkara to *samādhi*, but the *Bhāgavata* school says, "No, no. You must not be captivated by that. It is not that at the cost of your own individual prospect you are to purchase *naiṣkarmma*, the labourless life. In *samādhi* you will be nowhere, so it is suicide for whoever will purchase that kind of *naiṣkarmma* in *samādhi*. But we are giving you *painless* labour, and that is the labour of love in *Rāga-mārga*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the *ātmā* (soul) is ascertained as eternal, and in the eternal plane you can keep your own individuality, and you will labour. But the *ātmā* is above mortality, so there is no pain in such labour. At the same time you can retain your own identity and position, and have a better form of life."

Our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used to give an example. If a cowshed catches on fire, the cows naturally become fearful and run out, and, because of that experience, those cows may sometimes become afraid to see red clouds in the sky at dawn or dusk. Our Guru Mahārāj said that the Buddhist and Śaṅkarite schools have the type of fear which the cows have upon seeing the red clouds. They think that after emancipation any energising in spiritual life also produces the pain of labour. But it is a labour of love, and that will give nourishing ecstasy, *ānandam*. As much as you energise,

that degree of *ānandam* will come to you, and there is no dissipation of energy because it is the eternal plane; and you are also eternal. Everything being in the eternal plane, there is no dissipation of energy and you can retain your individual, pleasant, fruitful life. It is a life of fulfilment. It is a life of progress. You can have everything, but without the dissipation of energy which you are so afraid of in this mortal world. You can playfully live without any reaction which leads towards death.

jñāna-virāga-bhakti-sahitaṁ naiṣkarmmyam āviṣkṛtaṁ

Service to the Lord is not labour. It is a giver, a sustainer. It does not deplete vitality, but it sustains more and more. It is life-giving. Pure service is life-giving, not life-taking; not vitality-killing, but vitality-supplying. It is opposite in the eternal plane, especially in the Goloka area where everything is a labour of love.

Without labour the residents of Goloka will think themselves to be fasting, and when engaged in labour they will think themselves to be well fed. Service is nourishing. Service is not depleting; it is not killing. Therefore our attempt should not be so much for knowledge, for trying to know everything, but it should be directed towards how we can utilise ourselves in the highest function—service.

**naiṣkarmmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjjitaṁ
na śobhate jñānam alaṁ nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īsvare
na cārpitaṁ karmma yad apy akāraṇam**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.12)

Naiṣkarma is much renowned and appreciated by many scholars, but that *naiṣkarma*, to say nothing of the proposal of the elevationists in the mundane world, has no place at all in the *Bhāgavata* school. Even *naiṣkarma*, which has so much respect from the higher leaders such as Buddha and Śaṅkara is discarded—scornfully thrown out.

Service, service, service. Don't be afraid that service is depleting energy. Service is life-giving. It is feeding you properly. Service!

Die to live. You must have such courage to die for Kṛṣṇa and you will see everything come in glorious colour. So, engage in service; that is the main thing. To try to know Him is futile. You cannot make Him an object of your knowledge. He is Adhokṣaja.

Why is there a difference between what Sanātan Goswāmī and Rūpa Goswāmī gave? They are one and the same, so why is there a difference in what they presented? Our Guru Mahārāj said, "It is *adhokṣaja*. Do not try to bring everything within your understanding, for that will be Māyā." It is to be revered by us. It is unknown and unknowable. And faith will help you to 'die' for living.



The Greatest Benediction

Satyam priya-hitam ca yat. Speak the truth. Tell the truth, not lies, while at the same time be mindful not to be eager to give delivery to unpleasant truth. That does not mean you will speak lies because it is pleasing. We are to speak the truth but with the condition that it must be pleasing, otherwise we should not say anything unnecessarily. *Priya* means tasteful, pleasing. Truth may not necessarily be pleasing, so where does the element 'pleasing' have its standing? It is above truth. It is of the mercy character. Truth is something like justice, but 'pleasingness' is in the category of mercy—above justice. It is possible that there is something more than truth. Sympathy, mercy, grace, love, charm, and beauty are above naked truth. Without these qualities truth will be just law, untasteful, and ultimately that will come to the nondifferentiated Brahma conception.

Lilā means beautiful, life-giving, loving Pastimes. Without love, *Lilā* is useless, and that is *Māyā*. If we can have the conception of mercy above justice, we can have some positive conception of the ultimate reality. We will understand just how great a well-wisher He is. We are sinners, for whom Nityānanda Prabhu approaches from door to door and appeals to His utmost, "Please accept the Truth. Truth is beautiful because of mercy."

We may not deserve, but there is hope because there is a land of mercy. Crossing what we deserve, such things may come to us. This is so greatly hopeful to the needy. This is

Prema. Although Nityānanda Prabhu was opposed and maltreated by Jagāi and Mādhāi, He nonetheless distributed mercy to them. So of what magnitude is mercy! Nityānanda Prabhu approached them for their own welfare but they opposed and injured Him. Still He persisted. So how hopeful is the existence of mercy! It is above truth. This is what is Love Divine. This is what is *sundaram*. This is what is charm, fascination and attraction from the Absolute Realm. It is continuous and automatic, and this is the prime thing at the root of everything. Goodwill. Goodwill is at the basis of everything.

Mercy and grace are present in different forms.

Before taking *sannyāsa* Mahāprabhu drew together all His near and dear and spoke with them. During wartime there is a state of emergency, and similarly Mahāprabhu's advice came with the mood of urgency: "Always think of Kṛṣṇa. Whether you are eating, sleeping, or awake; day and night always think of Kṛṣṇa. You are in danger. You are in a situation of emergency where at any moment death can take you away from your present position. So consider it as an emergency and go on with cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, *Kṛṣṇānuśilana*. By hook or by crook try to stay afloat upon this Kṛṣṇa consciousness—continuous Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

It is not just a case of going to church once a week, or praying five times a day, or thinking of God at least three times in a day, but you are to remember and serve Kṛṣṇa always.

When Mahāprabhu went on His preaching tour to South India, He similarly instructed:

yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa

(*Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 7.128*)

“Whoever you meet, speak to them about Kṛṣṇa. This is My request and order to you all. Save the many suffering souls because they are in danger. Help them because they are drowning in ignorance and illusion. Try as much as you can to rescue them from this drowning position. Rescue the drowning. Take the risk, jump into the ocean and bring out those who are drowning in ignorance and illusion. Try to drag them from darkness to light.”

If there is a fire and intimation is received by the fire brigade, it will be mockery if they refer it to the headquarters, wait for an order from there, and only then go to extinguish the fire. Mahāprabhu said, “*Āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*: I am distributing the relief work for all who are drowning in the ocean of Māyā. Go on with this relief work.”

While in the Madras branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭh I went to see the Education Minister for a recommendation letter to help our preaching in the area under his jurisdiction. He said to me, “Swāmiji, they are all Tamil speaking. They do not know English or your Bengali or Sanskrit, therefore first you learn Tamil and then you can go there to preach.”

I replied, “Suppose I am going along the road in the Tamil countryside and I find a boy drowning in a pond, should I go to learn Tamil and then communicate with the people? Or should I try my best by means of gestures and postures to alert the people to rescue that drowning boy?”

The education minister said, “You are so extreme?”

“Yes. We see such urgency. It is an emergency that somehow Kṛṣṇa consciousness must be injected through some mediator, whether he be English-speaking, Hindi-speaking or whatever. Some impression must be given everywhere.”

Mahāprabhu issued an order, “*Yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*. It is an emergency. Whoever you find, talk about Kṛṣṇa. Don't wait for any certificate from the authority. I am issuing a general certificate, a letter of authority to you all.”



Holiest Engagement

“At least you are My intimate friend, so I won’t deceive you. You can believe Me. I promise.” How shamelessly Kṛṣṇa expressed Himself! He has come so intensely to plead for Himself, for our benefit. A record is kept in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* for our guidance.

Even more than that, Kṛṣṇa Himself came as Mahāprabhu in order to preach for Himself. He came as His own canvasser with a group and brought Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī along with Him: “If necessary I shall show how charming a position you can have in Devotional Service. I shall show you how service can be so beautiful and dignified. Come along with Me.”

Baladeva came as Nityānanda to canvass. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came to canvass for Themselves as Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda. Vṛndāvana came to canvass for itself as Nabadwīp.

We are more indebted to the canvasser than the actual party. We are connected more intimately and we are thankful to the canvasser first, especially when the Lord Himself has come to canvass. How beautiful, how magnanimous, how sacrificing! What sort of Love Divine is found there!



We came to seek something good, and Mahāprabhu proposed the direction. I became somewhat charmed there, and felt, “Yes, this is very charming, very beautiful, and

very capturing.” Then I searched for one who could distribute such things of satisfaction to my inner heart, and somehow I found my Master. He is canvassing exclusively for Mahāprabhu, and very strongly—surcharged with infinite energy to work on account of Śrī Gaurāṅga. With such intensity was that great dynamo! Then I accepted him and tried to offer myself to be taken within his shelter. I led my life following his order as much as I could, and now also I find that I am still under his shelter and doing some sort of duty as asked and ordered by him. In this way I am passing my days trying to have the core of his advice from the different Scriptures such as the *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and trying to find the culmination of what Mahāprabhu and our Gurudeva expressed. With deeper and deeper thinking, I gradually received some satisfaction. If I were to not say that I am getting satisfaction then I would be doing some injustice to Gurudeva and his associates. No other ideas or proposals can draw my attention. Rather, I am gaining firmer faith day by day in the teachings of Mahāprabhu, Vyāsadeva, the *Vraja-līlā*, etc. Though Their Nature is infinite, I find Their position is becoming stronger within me, and I must be satisfied with what little I can get. At the same time I feel in my good faith that this sort of life must be extended to others also. Thus I am passing my days.

By distributing Mahāprabhu’s message we are not going out to do anything bad, but according to our conception we are trying to do the holiest thing. Our purpose is of the holiest type ever possible to conceive, so we must go forward with this programme to do good for others, the

best for others, and at the same time to get it for ourselves. There can be no engagement more holy than this in the world. It is the holiest engagement and has the blessings of the Lords Nityānanda and Śrī Gaurāṅga. It is duty to Them. It is Their department.

Preaching is the special department of Śrī Gaurāṅga and Nityānanda Prabhu. Nabadwīp Dhām is the place of Their blessings. Our prayer to Them is that, absolving us of all offences, They may utilise us. Here in Koladwīp, Nabadwīp, at the place of forgiveness of all offences, *aparādha-bhañjan-pāṭ*, we are praying that They may forgive us for all our previous offences and engage us in Their service to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness together with Gaurāṅga consciousness



śrīmac-caitanya-sārasvata-maṭhavara-udgīta-kīrtir jaya-śrīm
bibhrat sambhāti gaṅgā-taṭa-nikaṭa-navadvīpa-kolādri-rāje
yatra śrī-gaura-sārasvata-mata-niratā-gaura-gāthā gṛṇanti
śrīmad-rūpānuga śrī-kṛtamati-guru-gaurāṅga-rādhā-jitāsā

“On the banks
of the Ganges in Koladwīp, Nabadwīp,
Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh stands resplendent.
The flag flies high, singing its glories around the world.
There, the residents chant the glories of Lord Gaurāṅga
and aspire to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda
in the line of Śrī Rūpa.”

Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada, sei mora bhajana-pūjana—my everything is Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī’s Holy Feet. We are to discuss so many classifications and positions of *Rasa: śānta, dāsyā, sakhya, vātsalya, madhura*. And in *madhura-rasa* Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s camp is special. Then again there are so many gradations of *Sakhīs*. There is also the class of the *Mañjarīs*, the younger girls, and they have more freedom to approach. When Rādhā and Govinda are in union in a private environment, the *Mañjarīs* can still approach; they have such freedom to visit Them. If any materials of service are necessary, the *Sakhīs* send the *Mañjarīs* to that place. The *Sakhīs* do not approach there. In that way the *Mañjarīs* enjoy the best confidence. The most secret service of Both can be supplied through the *Mañjarīs*. In the highest position they have free entrance, and their leader is Rūpa Mañjarī. She is understood to be the leader of the whole group of younger girls, the *Mañjarīs*, therefore in *Madhura-bhajan* she is all-in-all. This has been taught to us by Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura. For us—and the younger batch—she is our highest resort.

Sei mora sampada—my wealth is there in her feet. *Sei mora bhajana-pūjana*—my worship and service is also in her. *Sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa*—the very wealth and gist of my life is there; and the ornaments of my life, if any there may be, are within her Grace. *Sei mora jīvanera jīvana*—indeed, the very life of my life, if there is anything, that is also her. I am for her pleasure.

Sei mora rasa-nidhi—if there is anything, the source of any and all desirable ecstasy is only to be found there. The mine, source, and fountainhead of all *Rasa* is there in her feet. *Sei mora vāñchā-siddhi*—and if I am to expect any other fulfil-

ment in life, that is also there in her feet. *Sei mora vedera dharama*—if any duty is recommended by the *Vedas* for me, I would like such duty to be at her feet.

Sei vrata, sei tapa—if at all there is any desired fruit from any penance or observance of vows, that is also to be found there —*sei mora mantra-japa*—and the continuous repetition of *japa* all ends there. All things have only one end in my case: they all meet in different phases in the feet of Rūpa Mañjari. If she is satisfied then the variegated nature of my devotional practices are satisfied. *Sei mora dharama-karama*—and any of my conceptions of duty or activity of any phases or form all have one end and meet in one point: the holy feet of Rūpa Mañjari.

Anukūla ha'be viddhi, se-pade ha'be siddhi—I only pray to the Controller who is at the root of all these arrangements of affairs in this world, “Please connect me there. O Absolute Manager, may you grant my prayer that all my tendencies may go to attain her favour.” *Nirakhibo e dui nayane*—and my vision of her will be so very intense and concrete as though I am seeing with these very eyes. It will not be vague, abstract, or imagination, but it will be the most concrete realisation by the grace of the Absolute Manager.

Se rūpa-mādhurī-rāśi, prāṇa-kūvalaya-śaśi—what sort of high-class beauty is there in her holy feet! I want to jump. Let my heart be a lotus.

There are two classes of lotus: the white lotus came from the sun and the red from the moon. The *kūvalaya* is a mixture of the two. The lustre of her body will feed me day and night as the life of my life which is compared to a *kūvalaya*. The *kūvalaya* is fed and nourished by the lustre of the moon, and

her holy feet are the moon, and my very vitality is likened to the lotus. May the lustre of her beauty maintain and nourish my heart of hearts. *Praphullita habe niṣi-dine*—and the lotus of my heart will grow by that ray, and dance.

Tuwā adarśana-ahi—this is my prayer, but what is my present condition? My present condition is in the negative side, my mistress. My present position is such that without having a sight of you, your grace, my heart will burn into ashes. That is my present position. *Garale jārālo dehī*—this is just like the poison of a cobra which produces pain within my heart. I have been bitten by a snake, and what is that snake? It is the snake of your separation. I am not getting any direct contact with you, Your Grace. The serpent's poison has captured my heart and I am going to die. *Ciro-dina tāpita jīvāna*—and this is not a sudden thing, but from the beginning I have been suffering this sort of pain of separation from such a beautiful and hopeful life of fulfilment.

Hā hā rūpa koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā, narottama loilo śaraṇa—but I have now reached the extreme position and for the last time I am begging for your favour, otherwise I am going to be finished.



This was composed by Narottama Ṭhākura in praise of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. In this way he has given us light of the higher quarter of *bhajan* life. Our *sampradāya* is named as the *Rūpānuga-sampradāya*, and our *Guru-paramparā* and all these things are adjusted according to that. He wrote many songs and they are of very substantive firmament, very ecstatic, and of deep faith.



The Author and His Mission

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj is a veteran ascetic preceptor of the original traditional saintly succession ordained by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and he is the Founder Ācāryya of the holy temple of pure devotion in Nabadwīp, West Bengal, India, known as the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. Established by Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj in 1941, this sacred place of worship has become the gem of pilgrimage for devotees the world over who are true aspirants for gaining entry into the divine land of surrender unto the Absolute Good. His spiritual representation is hailed throughout the annals of spiritual India, not only for his encyclopedic command of the revealed Scriptures, but for his undisputed acumen as a bona fide commentator of the archives of scriptural treasures which were revealed by the venerable saintly preceptors of the East. He is an unprecedented oracle who draws out the inner meaning and substance of the Scriptures in an ever-progressive, expanding, dynamic and living conception.

In 1985, three years prior to his departure from this mortal world, Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj fulfilled a personal heart's desire he had cherished for over forty years: he conferred the holy order of *sannyāsa* upon his most beloved, confidential and most senior associate-servitor, Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj, ever renowned for his keen intellect and spiritual foresight, could envisage the grave necessities of his Mission in the future. He

therefore named Śrīla B.S. Govinda Mahārāj as his successor Ācāryya-President for his own *Maṭh*, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, and its affiliated branches.

The Elixir of Nectar which has been carried around the world from Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is still flowing by the mercy of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga represented in the person of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, and through him it has become doubly sweet.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—acclaimed by one and all as the ‘Maker of Gurus’—has presented to us his most precious gem in the personage of Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmi Mahārāj. In Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s own words, we say, “May we thank our lucky stars!”



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*The only standard of life
for a gentleman
is to understand and accept
the position of subordination
to the Absolute Truth.*

*To admit what is proper and real,
and on that basis
make one's life advanced,
is not meanness.*

*To understand one's proper position
and to understand one's proper duty
and discharge it—
that is a gentleman's life.*

