

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur

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Śrī Balarām is the root of Śrī Sankarṣan, who expanded in five forms namely, Śrī Kārnodakashāyi Mahāviṣṇu, Śrī Garbhodakasāyi Mahāviṣṇu and Śrī Kṣīrodakasāyi Mahāviṣṇu, Mahāsankarṣan and Śrī Śeṣa. Śrī Balarām is guru-tattva. Without Lord Balarām's mercy, we are incapable of establishing our eternal identity as the servant of Kṛṣṇa. Thus, the root of our inspiration to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahamantra is Śrī Balarām. Hence we all should take shelter of Śrī Balarām to become eligible as a servant of the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa.

In the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission,

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj

President, Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math



ŚRĪ GURU PUJA

by
HDG Srila Bhakti Promode Puri
Goswami Maharaja

One should first worship the spiritual master and pray for his mercy before commencing with the worship of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and his associates. Then one should take his permission to worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa along with their entourage.

This is the injunction described in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, which quotes Kṛṣṇa's following statement—

*prathamam tu gurum pūjya
tataś caiva mamārcanam
kurvan siddhim avāpnoti
hy anyathā niṣphalam bhavet*

One should first worship the spiritual master and only then me. One who proceeds in this fashion will attain success; if not, his puja of the Deity will be fruitless. (HBV 4.344)

In the same book, Nārada Muni says,

*gurau sannihite yas tu
pūjayed anyam agrataḥ
sa durgatim avāpnoti
pūjanam tasya niṣphalam*

One who worships anyone else in the presence of the guru is destined for misfortune. His worship of the Deity is without benefit. (HBV 4.345)

The *Smṛti-mahārṇava* says,

*rikta-pāṇir na paśyeta
rājānam bhiṣajam gurum
nopāyana-karaḥ putram
śiṣyam bhṛtyam nirikṣayet*

One should never go empty-handed to see a king, a doctor or a teacher. One should not look upon a son, disciple or servant while bearing gifts. (HBV 4.343)

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* first states the importance of the spiritual master in the following manner:

*yasya deve parā bhaktiḥ
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanah*

Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, who is his manifestation and not different from him, is the meaning of his teachings revealed. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

This means that one should have deep faith in the Supreme Lord, but above and beyond that must also have an equal amount of faith in the spiritual master, understanding him to be the Supreme Lord's *prakāśa-vigraha* and non-different from him. Only then will the truths revealed by master Svetasvatara in this upanishad be made clear to him. In his commentary, Sanatan Goswami says these meanings (*arthāḥ*) are *puruṣārthāḥ*, i.e., the objectives of human life, up to and including the fifth and ultimate goal, love of God. In other words, without such devotion to both spiritual master and Supreme Lord, the ultimate goal of the revealed scriptures, love of God, will never be attained.

The *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* then cites three important verses from the Bhagavatam stress the worship of the spiritual master. This first is found in the Seventh Canto, spoken by Nārada Muni:

*yasya sākṣād bhagavati
jñāna-dīpa-prade gurau
martyāsad-dhīḥ śrutam tasya
sarvam kuñjara-śaucavat*



O King! The spiritual master, the giver of transcendental knowledge, is the Supreme Lord himself, His manifest form or *prakāśa-vigraha*. If someone has the false idea that he is an ordinary human being, a mere mortal, then all his study of scripture is as useless as the bathing of an elephant. (7.15.26)



It is essential to note that even though someone engages in intense practices of devotion to the Lord, it is all useless if he thinks of the spiritual master as an ordinary man. This is being pointed out in this verse. The words *sākṣād bhagavati* clearly indicate that one must think of the guru as the Supreme Lord Himself, and not as his partial expansion. He is the source of all expansions, the object of all devotional service, who has become incarnate in the form of a servant to himself. This is expressed in the words of Vishwanath Chakravarti's *Gurvaṣṭaka*: *kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya* – “his identity with Kṛṣṇa is due to his being most dear to him.”

Since it is the Lord, the supreme object of worship, who is personally present as the spiritual master, if one has the deranged intelligence to think of him as an ordinary mortal, then whatever he has heard from him—whether it is the mantras received at the time of initiation or instructions in the scripture and devotional practice—ceases to have any effect.

The second verse is taken from the Tenth Canto, where Kṛṣṇa speaks to His friend Sudama, who was a student together with him at the home of his spiritual master Sandipani Muni in Avantipura.

*nāham iḥyā-prajātibhyāṁ
tapasopāśamena ca
tuṣyeyāṁ sarva-bhūtātmā
guru-śūsrūṣayā yathā*

I, the soul of all beings, am not as pleased by the performance of the prescribed duties of the four ashrams as I am by service to the guru. (SB 10.80.34)

The four duties of the ashrams are indicated in this verse by *iḥyā*, which means sacrifice. According to Sridhar Swami, this is a reference to the prescribed religious duties of the householder, while Vishwanath Chakravarti takes it to mean that of the brahmachari. *Prajāti* is interpreted by Sridhar Swami to mean *prakṛṣṭā-janma* or the second birth that comes with the investiture of the sacred thread, or the beginnings of the student or brahmachari life. Vishwanath, however, sees this as meaning *putrotpādanam*, or having children, which is householder dharma. *Tapasā*, or austerities, are the essence of the retired life (*vānaprastha*), while *upāśama* or complete renunciation is the essence of sannyasa. Vishwanath and Sridhar are agreed on these two.



In the eleventh canto, Kṛṣṇa tells his dear friend Uddhava,

*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān
nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

O Uddhava! Know verily that I am the preceptor, so never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy the preceptor, thinking him to be an ordinary man, for he is the sum total of all the demigods. (SB 11.17.27)

Sanatan Goswami in his commentary states that envy (*asūyā*) in this verse means to find fault (*doṣa-dṛṣṭi*). The *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* goes on, quoting a verse from another source—

*sādhakasya gurau bhaktiṁ
mandīkurvanti devatāḥ
yan no'tītya vrajed viṣṇuṁ
śiṣyo bhaktyā gurau dhruvam*

The gods do everything they can to diminish a disciple's devotion to his spiritual master, because they are afraid that through such bhakti the disciple will pass them by and attain Vishnu before them. (HBV 4.350)

And the following verse confirms the worshipable nature of the guru—

*gurur brahmā gurur viṣṇur
gurur devo maheśvaraḥ
gurur eva param brahma
tasmāt sampūjayet sadā*

The spiritual master is Brahma, he is Vishnu, he is Lord Shiva. The spiritual master is the Supreme Brahman, and so one should worship him always.

This verse is frequently recited as a pranam mantra with *tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ* in the last quarter.

At this point it might be worthwhile citing the seventh verse of Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur's *Gurvaṣṭakam*

*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvyata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

I worship the lotus feet of my spiritual master, who is said by all scriptures to be Lord Hari himself, and is indeed thought of that way by all the saints. But this identity is due to his being very dear to the Lord.

The Supreme Lord, the Param Brahma, Sri Kṛṣṇa is the supreme object of devotion or the *viṣaya-vigraha*. He has appeared in this world as the *āśraya-vigraha*, or reservoir of devotion for Kṛṣṇa. He does so in order to show me by his personal example the path of devotional service. He is Kṛṣṇa's dearmost personal associate. He is none other than Kṛṣṇa himself appearing to me as guru.

This is the way we should understand the tattva of the spiritual master. Otherwise, we may fall into the trap of equating the guru with God in every aspect, and thus give exclusive precedence to the worship of the spiritual master and neglect the worship of Kṛṣṇa or any of his avatars, thinking that they have no importance.

*tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotṛyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*

In order to realize the truth, one should take gifts in hand and approach a spiritual master who is learned and fixed in Brahman. (Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.11)

Here the word *vijñāna* should be taken to mean knowledge combined with pure loving devotion. Since this verse is spoken in the Upanishadic setting, the words *samit-pāṇiḥ* refer to the wood used for the sacrificial fire. In the modern setting, this would mean gifts of some other sort, as



stated above in HBV 4.343. The spiritual master or sat guru is described here as *śrotriyaṁ* and *brahma-niṣṭham*, meaning that he knows the meaning of the Vedic scriptures and is fixed in devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Finally, the prefix *abhi* means that one should go to the spiritual master in body, mind and words. In other words, one should approach him physically, but in the appropriate humble frame of mind and inquiring spirit.

In the Cāndogya Upanishad, the following statement is found:

ācāryavān puruṣo veda

Only one who has taken a spiritual preceptor can know the Supreme Truth. (Chā.U. 6.14.2)

The Katha Upanishad says (1.3.14):

*uttiṣṭhata jāgrata
prāpya varān nibodhata
kṣurasya dhārā niṣitā duratyayā
durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti*

The Veda Purusha gives beneficial instruction to the pious in the form of these words: “Rise up! Awake! Seize the benefits of this human form of life and become fully conscious! This path is a razor’s edge, sharp and difficult to tread.” (KathaU. 1.3.14)

The purport here is, “Stop worrying about your material sense gratification! Give up all anarthas, or sources of harm, and awaken to your true identity. Approach a great personality and get his blessings and then apply yourself to knowing the Lord. This world is like a razor’s edge, meaning that it brings great suffering, and is difficult to tread, for without God consciousness, no one can traverse it. Great sages seek out and glorify the Supreme Brahman, through which the entanglement in material life comes to an end. Therefore you must approach such a great soul as your spiritual

master and learn the art of devotional life, for without it no one can cross over this material existence.”

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* ends with the following words—

*yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanah*

Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, who is his manifestation and not different from him, are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

The Śruti also makes the following statement—

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

This Soul cannot be reached through debate, nor through the intellect, or through much study. He whom this soul itself chooses reaches it. To him, it reveals its own form. (KathaU 1.2.23)

This means that one cannot know the Paramatma through debate, nor through the use of reason, nor through scholarship. When the individual soul turns to God and his service through the shelter of the Sat Guru, and begs for his mercy, only then does the Paramatma reveal his own transcendental form to him.

All these verses from the Srutis clearly indicate the necessity of approaching a spiritual master and taking instruction from him. Similarly, the other great branch of Vedic knowledge, the Smṛiti, makes the same assertion. In the Bhagavad Gita, Kṛṣṇa



teaches us all through the words he directs at Arjuna,

*tad viddhi pranīpātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

Try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire submissively and render service. Self-realized souls can impart knowledge because they are seers of the truth. (Gita 4.34)

Kṛṣṇa is saying: Throw yourself at the feet of a spiritual master who has seen the truth. Prostrate yourself before him, please him with sincere service, and then beg him to reveal the truths of spiritual life, saying, “O Gurudeva! How have I fallen into this material existence where I must suffer the three kinds of miseries? And how can I be delivered from it?” In response to these heartfelt inquiries, the spiritual master who has direct experience of the Supreme Brahman will divulge his understanding to the disciple.

Verses such as these from the Smṛiti have the same purpose as those from the Śruti, such as *tad-vijñānārthan*.

Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed the world through his dear associates Sri Rupa and Sanātana Goswami in the three kinds of spiritual knowledge: sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana. The essence of these instructions can be summarized as follows: The Veda is called *āmnāya*, or that knowledge which is self-revealed. Based on this body of knowledge, one should learn about Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa’s energies and Kṛṣṇa, and the nature of Kṛṣṇa’s relationships with His eternal associates. One should also understand the nature of the individual soul, in both his bound and liberated states. Finally, one should conclude his understanding of sambandha, or metaphysics, by learning about the

fundamental relationship of inconceivable oneness and difference that exists between God and the individual soul. Abhidheya is the means by which the soul attains God: that is devotion or bhakti. Prayojana, or the ultimate state of perfection is love of God. These are the ten pillars of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings.

The sat-guru is the great personality who knows these ten principles. These are the ten divisions of knowledge that the student should attempt to master from him. The conclusion of all the scriptures—Śruti, Smṛiti, Purāṇas and Pancharātra—is to worship the Lord under the guidance of the spiritual master.

Lord Brahma says in the scripture known as the *Vāmana-kalpa*—

*yo mantraḥ sa guruḥ sāṅśāt yo guruḥ sa
hariḥ smṛtaḥ
gurur yasya bhavet tuṣṭas tasya tuṣṭo hariḥ
svayam
guroḥ samāsane naiva na caivoccāsane
vaset*

The mantra is the guru himself, and the guru is said to be the Lord himself. If the spiritual master is pleased with his disciple, then the Lord himself is pleased with that person. One should never sit on the same level as the guru, or worse yet, on a seat higher than the guru’s. (HBV 4.353)

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KṚṢṆA DVAIPĀYANA VEDA VYĀSA

by
**Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan
Goswami Maharaj**

In different ages and to meet a particular purpose, the Lord descends on Earth in various incarnations known as avatars. When the Lord chooses to expand Himself and appears with a particular power to execute a specific activity, it is known as śaktyaveśa avatar. The Supreme Lord appeared in His 17th incarnation in His śaktyaveśa avatar known as Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, the son of Parāśara Muni and Satyavati Devi. The main purpose of this avatar was to compile and organise the Vedas, and thus he is more famously known as Veda Vyāsa (vyāsa means to divide).

When Satyavati was an unmarried youth, still living with her father, during the day she used to carry passengers on her boat to cross-river Yamuna. One day, Parāśara Muni was crossing the river on her boat when he became very attracted to Satyavati's beauty. Desiring to be with her, he created an island with thick fog surrounding them with his mystical powers. From this union, Satyavati gave birth to a baby boy. He was dark in complexion and was born on an island, hence he was given the name Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana.

India is known as Bharat-varsha (Land of Bharat) after the great emperor, cakravarti (universal ruler) Bharat. He ruled the sub-continent from the capital of his kingdom called Hastinapur. When the time came to hand over the kingdom to the next in line, King Bharat could not find any one of his sons to be worthy of being an ideal king. Instead, he found all the qualities of an ideal king in one of his citizens called Shantanu and so he crowned Shantanu as the new king. Shantanu first married

goddess Ganga, and they had a splendid son called Bhiṣma. When Ganga returned to heaven through her own will, Shantanu, later, being attracted to Satyavati, married her and so Satyavati became the queen of Hastinapur. They had two sons called Chitrāngad and Vicitravīrya. Chitrāngad died at the hands of a Gandharva, and Vicitravīrya was left to rule the kingdom. He married two sisters called Ambika and Ambālīka. A dark period set over the royal family when Vicitravīrya suddenly died of a lung infection, leaving no heir to the throne.

Bhiṣma approached Satyavati to ask for advice on what is to be done to ensure the progeny of the kingdom. Bhiṣma had taken a vow of celibacy and hence could not serve as a brother to continue the progeny of the kingdom. At that time, Satyavati explained about her son Veda Vyāsa who was in the Himalayas writing commentaries on the Vedas. She remembered Vyasa with the permission of Bhiṣma and Vyāsa appeared immediately. Satyavati explained how Vicitravīrya was one of her sons and thus Vyasa was his brother and should perform the act of expanding the progeny of the kingdom. Ambika closed her eyes upon seeing Veda Vyāsa and thus gave birth to the strong but blind Dhṛtarāstra. Ambālīka became afraid upon seeing Veda Vyasa and thus gave birth to the meek Pandu. Satyavati told the elder daughter to again go to Veda Vyasa but she did not listen and rather sent her maidservant. The maidservant upon seeing Veda Vyasa acted just in accordance with Vyasa and pleased him and thus gave birth to the intelligent, Vidura.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva is the writer of the *Vedānta sūtras* as well, which give the conclusions of all the Vedas. He is also the author of the natural commentary on the *Vedānta sūtras* which is the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. After splitting the Vedas into four, He wrote the *itihāsas* and puranas for the general direction of the people. Seeing through his divine vision the deterioration of the coming era, Veda Vyasa's work was for the greater



well-being and benefit of mankind, yet he did not feel content and satisfied within himself.

He sat in meditation on the banks of the Sarasvati River at the Samyaprasa *āśramā* located about 1000 feet above Badarinārayana temple at Badarikāśrama.

Nārada Muni appeared and asked Him, “Why do you seem so unhappy? What is wrong?”

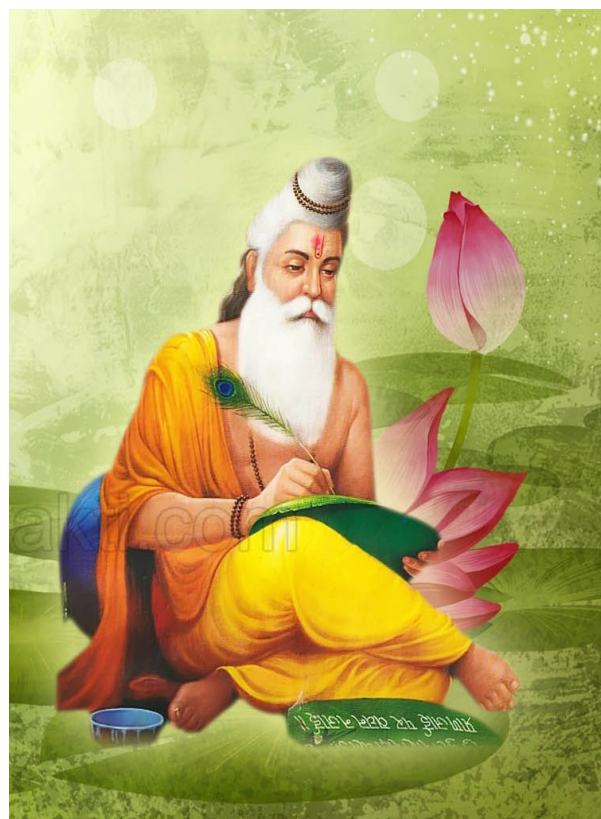
Vyāsa Dev replied, “My dear Gurudev, I have explained everything for the well-being of mankind, yet I do not feel happy and satisfied. What is my fault? Please tell me what should I do?”

Nārada Muni is Vyasa Dev’s spiritual master, and here Vyāsa Dev is showing how a disciple should surrender at the lotus feet of his Gurudev.

Nārada Muni explained, “You have written a wealth of literature, but it is not sufficient. This is because you have given importance to *dharma* (one’s material duty), *artha* (economic development), *kāma* (sense enjoyment) and *mokṣa* (liberation). You have discussed *jnāna yoga* and *karma yoga* mixed with *bhakti yoga*. You must exclusively present pure *bhakti-yoga*. That is what you should do.”

Vyāsa Deva pleaded, “kindly guide me how should I do this.”

Nārada Muni instructed, “You have done everything for the welfare of mankind, but the true welfare of all living entities is knowing about the spotless qualities, pastimes, form, and Holy Names of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. You must discuss the Lord’s attractive qualities, His beautiful form, His sweet pastimes and the power of His Holy Names. This will be the true well-being of all.”



As instructed by Nārada Muni, all these truths manifested in the heart of Vyāsa Deva and he composed the *amala purana* (spotless scripture) called *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. He taught the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to his son, Sukadeva. Sukadeva Goswami, thereafter, spoke the Srimad Bhāgavatam to King Parikshit and the many sages and great sadhus who were assembled there; Suta, the son of Lomaharsana was also present there. Then, for the third time, this *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* was spoken by Suta Goswami to Saunaka and the other munis at Naimisāranya.

All followers of Sanatana Dharma worship Śrīla Veda Vyāsa on His appearance day on the tithi of Āsādhī Purnima (full moon day); This full-moon-day is appearing four days after sayan Ekadasi day. This day, we, Śrī Gaudiya Vaishnavas are observing Vyāsa-Puja.



What is Vyāsa Puja?

Vyāsa Puja means to worship Vyāsadeva, the energy incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who is the spiritual master of the entire spiritual lineage. All initiating spiritual masters represent Vyāsadeva. Therefore, on their appearance days, the disciples arrange a Vyāsa Puja for their initiating spiritual master. His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur is the prominent personality in the Brahma Mādhava Gaudiya Sarasvata parampara as he systematically spread the pure loving message of Lord Caitanya, establishing a non-sectarian society in the name of Gaudiya Math. According to the desire of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Prabhupada's disciples, grand disciples, and great-grand disciples established so many units of Mahāprabhu's mission for the sake of massively spreading the message of Lord Caitanya with non-sectarian and non-judgmental mood.

In order to establish non-sectarian and non-judgmental mood in Lord Caitanya Mission, Śrīla PRABHUPĀDA taught us to arrange the Vyāsa Puja as follows:

In the middle is the Kṛṣṇa-pancaka. Pancaka means five. Kṛṣṇa is in the middle surrounded by Vasudeva (in the East), Sankarsana (in the South), Pradyumna (in the West), and Aniruddha (in the North). On the southern side of the Kṛṣṇa-pancaka is the Vyāsa-pancaka. Vyāsadeva is in the middle surrounded by Paila Muni (in the East), Vaisampayana Muni (in the South), Jaimini Muni (in the West), and Sumanta Muni (in the North). On the northern side of the Kṛṣṇa-pancaka is the ācārya-pancaka. In vision of Gaudiya Vaishnava members — Bhagavata-ācharya, Sukadeva Goswami is in the middle surrounded by Ramanujācarya (in the East), Madhvācarya (in the South), Visnusvāmi ācarya (in the West), and Nimbāditya ācarya (in the North). On the western side of the Kṛṣṇa-pancaka is the Sanakādi-pancaka. Visvakṣena is in the middle surrounded by Sanaka (in the East),

Sanatana (in the South), Sanandana (in the West), and Sanata-kumara (in the North). On the eastern side of the Kṛṣṇa-pancaka is the Guru-pancaka. Diksa-guru is in the middle surrounded by Parama-guru (in the East), Paramesthi-guru (in the South), Paratpara-guru (in the West), and Brahma (in the North). On the southern side of the Vyasa-pancaka is the Gaura-pancaka. Gauranga is in the middle surrounded by Advaita ācarya (in the East), Nityānanda (in the South), Srivāsa (in the West), and Gadādhara (in the North).

Yours in the Service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission,

B.B. Bodhayān Swami

Written by HDG Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj on the occasion of Vyasa Purnima, (also known as Guru Purima across India) in July, 2021

PERFORMING THE ROLE IN KṚṢṆA'S PLAY

by

***Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan
Goswami Maharaj***

All Glories to Sri Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sāraswata Sampradāya (lineage). All Glories to my beloved Grand Spiritual Master His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswati Goswāmi Thākura PRABHUPĀDA & my beloved Spiritual Master His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswāmi Thākura.

Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original personality of Godhead. In order to manifest a play, Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into four principal forms, known as Śrī Vāsudev, Śrī Sankarṣan, Śrī Pradyumna and Śrī Aniruddha. To fulfil the desire of Kṛṣṇa, Sankarṣan further expands Himself into five forms called, Śrī Kārnodakashāyi Mahāviṣṇu,



Śrī Garbhodakasāyī Mahāviṣṇu and Śrī Kṣīrodakasāyī Mahāviṣṇu, Mahāsankarṣaṇ and Śrī Seṣa. Śrī Kārnodakasāyī Mahāviṣṇu glanced towards māya (illusion) and created the material universe. To decorate the universe, from the navel of Śrī Garbhodakasāyī Mahāviṣṇu, appeared a lotus stem and from the top of the lotus flower, appeared *Brahmā*, the first living entity of this material universe. Along the entire length of the lotus stem is where the fourteen planetary systems are situated. Above Earth, the seven planetary systems (*lokā*) are *Bhū*, *Bhūvah*, *Svāh*, *Moho*, *Janā*, *Tapā*, and *Satyā*. Below Earth, the seven planets are *Tal*, *Atalā*, *Vitalā*, *Sūtalā*, *Rasātalā*, *Talātalā* and *Pātalā*. All of these planetary systems are material worlds. The topmost planetary system, *Satyā lokā*, is where *Brahmā* appeared. Then *Brahmā* was instructed by the Supreme Lord to create all living entities. The scriptures give detail about the number of species in each group. In total there are 8.4-million different species going through the cycle of birth and death. 900,000 of the total are aquatic species, 2 million are nonmoving living entities such as trees and stones, 1,100,000 are insects, maggot-worm and reptiles, 1 million different birds species, 3 million different animals and 400,000 human species. These are the total 8.4 million species of living entities that exist within the material worlds.

This material world is compared to a stage, and all the living entities are compared to actors on that stage. But in the drama of material existence, what should be our role on this stage? The stage has been set by the Lord for us to perform our role of service in pleasing the Lord and satisfying the Lord's senses. The Lord has given humans sufficient intelligence to use our free will correctly and play the right role in this stage of material existence.

One should not have even a whiff of smell for their own sense gratification, regardless of the varnashrama they belong to. To

elaborate, if a person is a householder, he or she should think that the house is for Kṛṣṇa's services. They should marry for Kṛṣṇa's happiness, conceive children for Kṛṣṇa's services and look after the children as Kṛṣṇa's servant. The child should be raised accordingly with the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. If a person is following the renounced ashram, then he or she should also have Kṛṣṇa in the centre of their daily activities. To further explain this point, let us imagine a circle with a dot in the centre of that circle. The circle revolves around that one point in the centre. Likewise, Kṛṣṇa is the centre point in the circle of life of all the living entities and our activities must revolve around Kṛṣṇa's pleasure for us to live in absolute harmony. Therefore, it does not matter which ashram one belongs to, the only motivational centre point should be Kṛṣṇa.

The farther we move away from Kṛṣṇa and distance ourselves from Him, the closer we move towards *māya* and the easier we fall in the trap of *māya*. We can think intellectually only when we are in this human form of life. When we do so, we understand the main reason of our suffering in this material world. Our challenge is to remove our suffering, but most of the time we think that suffering can be removed by earning lots of material wealth. Even after collecting lots of wealth, we will ultimately face death. The Supreme Lord becomes unhappy seeing the suffering of human beings, to whom he gave sufficient intelligence and free will too. So, in order to teach us the actual way-out from our suffering, the Lord appears in the form of His pure devotees. We get this information from the famous Vaishnava book, Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta written by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraj Goswāmipad,

*guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe
guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa krūpa kareṇa bhakta-
gaṇe*

The literal meaning of this verse is that Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa appeared in the form of *guru*; all



the devotees are getting mercy of Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa via the *guru*.

“*guru*” means “heavy”. Heavy because He is the representative of Kṛṣṇa. There are two syllables in the word “*guru*” i.e. ‘*gu*’, which means darkness of ignorance and ‘*ru*’ means effulgence which removes the darkness. Hence Guru is the person who can bring us out of the darkness of material universe to the light of transcendence. He teaches us the method of spiritual practice by his own example. Therefore, Guru is not an ordinary human being. He should be appointed by Kṛṣṇa’s representative.

There are several types of Gurus. First is *vartmah pradarśak* guru who shows us the true spiritual path and guides us towards a *sad-guru* (true spiritual master). For example, when I was a little boy, my grandfather Madan Mohan Das Adhikari prabhu, disciple of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Sarawati Goswāmi Thākura, founder *acārya* (initiating spiritual master) of all Gaudiya maths and mission, inspired me by his spiritual practice and used to take me to meet his godbrothers. I met many of my grandfather’s godbrothers including, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Goswāmi Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakshak Sridhardev Goswāmi Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Kusum Śaraman Goswāmi Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Kumud Santa Goswāmi Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Vichār Yāyāvar Goswāmi Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Kamal Madhusudhan Goswāmi Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Mayukh Bhāgavat Goswāmi Mahārāj and many more.

Once, my spiritual master came to my grandfather’s residence. As soon as I met with him, I immediately felt a deep attachment towards him. His softness, humility, scholarliness and other Vaishnava qualities attracted me. My grandfather often used to say, “All my godbrothers are self-

realised personalities (*jīvan mukta mahāpuruṣa*). Whoever you feel attachment towards, you are free to take initiation from him, that is if my godbrother accepts you as his disciple.” Thus, my spiritual master His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswāmi Thākura accepted me as his disciple, eight years after I had first approached him and after testing my perseverance in different ways. For example, when I first approached him to accept me, he said “You have made the wrong choice; for I am a poor brahmin sannyasi and I live in my godbrother’s temple. I don’t have any centre or temples. You will suffer if you take initiation from me. It is better for you to take initiation from an *acārya* who has many centres and then you will have many places to stay.” I responded by saying “It is not a problem for me, and I still would like to take initiation from you”. He replied, “You are too young, you have not graduated and if you do not graduate with a good education standing, then you will not be able to understand the deeper meanings of different scriptures, and so on”.

Through my grandfather who was my *vartma-pradarśak guru*, I found my initiating spiritual master. My Spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswāmi Thākura after my initiation, was also my *śikṣa guru*. My spiritual master used to say, “All my godbrothers who are physically present right now are all eligible to teach you”. Also, he added that His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswāmi Mahārāj (*acārya* of Sri Caitanya Gaudiya Math) and His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Vijayan Bhārati Goswāmi Mahārāj (general secretary of Sri Caitanya Gaudiya Math) can give me *śikṣa* as well. Thus, they are all are my *śikṣa gurus*.

There is another type of *guru* called *caitya-guru*, who is residing in our heart as *paramātmā*. This is actually *kṣīrodakaśāyī mahābhuṣiṇi* who resides in hearts of all living entities as the super soul – *paramātmā*. Eventually, this *caitya guru* will come to us



in the form of our initiating *guru* (*dikṣa guru*). I hope that you all can understand from this brief summary of the role of the four different *gurus* in our spiritual life.

Spirituality means to fix our mind towards the Lord and His services. *dikṣa* and *śikṣa guru*s teach us how to fix our mind towards the Lord and His services by example. Therefore, we should follow in their footsteps (*ānugatya*). Also, we must keep in mind that *guru* is not an individual. *guru* is the embodiment of the Absolute Truth (Supreme Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa). One who initiates and guides us, they are the actual representative of Sri Kṛṣṇa. One of our greatest *rasikācārya*, Śrīlā Vishwanātha Chakravarty Thākura wrote in a song called *Guru-Ashtakam*, “*sākshād-haritvenā samasta śāstrer-uktastathā bhāvya eva sadbhī*” meaning that the mercy of Kṛṣṇa comes to the *jīva* (living entity) only through His pure devotee (*guru*), and we understand that all the scriptures reveal the truth that *guru* is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa (Hari). However, there are differences. *guru* becomes old but Kṛṣṇa does not become old (always remain young). We know that Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Rāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa did not have grey hairs, moustache or facial hairs, but we see that *guru* may grow a moustache and grey hairs. Kṛṣṇa is *brihad* (huge) and *parama-īśvara* (controller of all the universes) but on the other hand *guru* is not able to control the entire universe. As per Śrīlā Vishwanātha Chakravarty Thākura how much *guru* is dear to Lord that much Godliness He possesses. Hence it is clear that he is different from Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is the controller of *māya* but *guru* can fall under the illusion of *māya* as per the song below of Śrīlā Bhakti Vinode Thākura:

*prathame chilen tini sadguru pradhān
vrame nāma aparādhr̥ hoy hatagyān
vaishnav̥r̥ viddesh kari chāre nāma rasa
krame krame hoy artha kaminira būsh
(nāma māt̥tyma)*

‘At first he was chief spiritual master. Being desirous of self-recognition, name, fame and having the tendency of blaspheming other Vaishnavas (*sādhū nindā*), he gradually commits *nāma aparādha* (offenses towards the Holy Name). Through *nāma aparādha* he loses the taste for chanting and gradually becomes attached to wealth and sensual desire.

An article written by Śrīlā Bhakti Vinode Thākura states:

“Human beings are not able to get the taste of *hari-nāma* because of their offenses. Transcendental *hari-nāma* is the embodiment of all devotional mellows. When one chants without offenses, then they realise those mellows in their hearts. When one chants the transcendental Holy Name with purity, the heart will become joyful, tears will stream down their eyes, and they will experience symptoms of devotional ecstasy. If one chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra but does not experience these symptoms, then one should know that due to offensive chanting their hearts have become hard like a rock. It is the duty of a spiritual practitioner (*sādhaka*) to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra without offenses. One who instructs an unfaithful person to chant Hari Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra, is a *nāma aparādhi* (causes offense towards the Holy Name).

If someone offers a pearl to pig, the pig will not know the value of it. Since pig does not realise what the pearl is, it will ignore it. Similarly, it is improper to instruct one to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra who does not have faith in chanting. It is our primary duty to increase their faith in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra (by glorifying *hari-nāma* with the help of *hari-katha*.) If there is something that can be done to increase one’s faith, then doing that would be the duty. When they gain enough faith, then can we instruct them to chant *hari-nāma*. Out of false ego whoever thinks themselves to be Gurus and gives *hari-nāma* initiation to



faithless people, then they fall from their position due to their offense towards *harināma*. According to scriptures, Kṛṣṇa appeared in this material world in the form of His Holy Name. Although it is only a syllable, the Holy Name is the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa.”

The *nāma* and the *nāmi* (person with the name, ie, Kṛṣṇa) are nondifferent. Bearing this in our mind that Kṛṣṇa descended from His own abode Goloka Vṛindāvan as His Holy Name, we are playing our part in Kṛṣṇa’s drama on the stage of material existence.

In order to be eternally connected to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we must follow devotional principals in our daily life and take association of pure devotees (*guru* and *Vaishnavas*).

I mentioned earlier how should we place Kṛṣṇa in the centre of our life. As a householder, whatever be our profession in line with devotional principles, everything we do should be connected to Kṛṣṇa. For example, whatever we earn for maintaining our livelihood, we should use it to maintain Kṛṣṇa’s family. Everything we cook, if we offer to Kṛṣṇa then we can honour sanctified food (*prasādam*). We can travel to Holy places that are connected to Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees. In that way, we can engage all our activities in the service of Kṛṣṇa and relate to Him.

All living entities are *Vaishnavas*. This is because all living entities originated from Vishnu. But, we are not serving the Lord and we struggle to fix our minds in serving Him. This material world is full of misery. We have financial success, academic success, and many other ways in which we feel successful, yet we feel that something is missing in our lives. The missing part is that we are away from the role that Kṛṣṇa gave us to perform—to become His eternal servant, being attached in His services. Only then

shall we be able to free ourselves from the 8.4 million species of miserable cycle of birth and death. We must establish our attachment towards Kṛṣṇa and deliver ourselves from the miserable material world and realise our eternal identity.

As a human being, our primary duty is to establish our eternal identity with proper balance between our material duties and spiritual practices. We should not ignore our material duties since we are placed in the material world. In order to attain eternal identity, we should seek for spiritual association to get the help for practising pure devotional path (*sudha-bhakti*). As per our above discussion, human get their nature, culture and language from the influence of their association.

In order to fulfil the following two predictions, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, brought His spiritual descendant, My Grand Spiritual Master His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswati Goswāmi Thākura PRABHUPĀDA, at Śrī Jagganāth Puri through Śrīla Bhakti Vinode Thākura:

1. “*hritkale purushotammāt*” (Supreme Lord’s glories will spread around the world from Purushottam Dham (Śrī Jagganāth Puri) mentioned in Padma Purana, and
2. His own word as mentioned by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraj Goswāmipada in Sri Caitanya Caritāmrita that “in every village and town of this world, His name will spread”.

Lord also empowered PRABHUPĀDA to establish distinguished devotional centres, named Sri Chaitanyā Math and Sri Gaudiyā Math. Śrīla Prabhupada designated His disciples as ‘*vipada uddhārana bhāṇḍav*’ in the last *vyāsa puja* festival, 1936 at Mayapur, in one of His lectures explained as follows:

“We are unable to see *bhagavān* here. The devotees who serve *bhagavān* bestow their



mercy on us and give us the ability to see *bhagavān*. Their activities are to be followed and they are our one and only way towards auspiciousness. Due to having very little knowledge, many people, out of their own insignificant experience, try to equate the mentality of the devotees of *bhagavān* to that of a slave mentality. Let those who speak from a state of mental aberration speak whatever pleases them. However, our understanding will be:

*parivadatu jano yatha tatha va
nanu mukharo na vayam vicarayamah
harirasa-madira-madatimatta
bhuvī viluthama natama nirvisama*

“We will roll in the foot-dust of the devotees. We will not make anybody our disciple; we have not and we shall not either. This is because, if it happens, then we will run in the wrong direction due to being tempted by the tastes of non-devotees. All of you are my spiritual masters (*gurus*). Have mercy on this fallen soul thinking him to be your disciple.”

After my Grand Spiritual Master’s physical departure from this world, in order to expand the loving mission of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and fulfill the desire of their beloved Śrīla PRABHUPĀDA, my spiritual master His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswāmi Thakur established Śrī Gopinath Gaudiya Math. Similarly, my instructing spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswāmi Mahārāj established Śrī Chaitanyā Gaudiya Math; His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakshak Sridhardev Goswāmi Mahārāj established Śrī Caitanya Saraswat Math; His Divine Grace Śrī Bhakti Pragyān Keshav Goswāmi Mahārāj established Śrī Gaudiya Vendānta Samiti; His Divine Grace Śrī Bhakti Vedānta Swami Goswāmi Mahārāj (Prabhupada) established ISKCON; His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sārāṅga Goswāmi Mahārāj established Śrī Śrī Gaur Nityānada temple and so on.

All the societies that are established by our *guru-varga* and their followers have their ultimate goal to encourage spirituality through their activities, hence fixing everyone’s mind towards Kṛṣṇa and His services. If we really want to follow spirituality, then we should seek like-minded and higher association. Amongst all these societies we must seek for the association that is non-sectarian, non-judgemental and maintaining amicable relationships with each other. This will give us taste of Lord Caitanya’s loving mission—*prema* (pure love for Kṛṣṇa). This is the ultimate way to realize our identity.



I humbly pray to my spiritual master as well as all the members of our lineage, Śrī Bhrama Mādhva Gaudiya Saraswata Sampradāya, to bestow their mercy on this fallen soul and give me the potency to perform my role in ‘Kṛṣṇa’s Play’, under your loving guidance, for the rest of my life. I pray that I may fulfil yours and Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya’s desire to spread the loving message by example around the world till the last breath of my life.

Yours in the Service of Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission, and Seeker of tiny particle of dust from the lotus feet of pure devotees.

B.B. Bodhayan Swami

Written by HDG Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj on the occasion of his divine appearance day, on 21 August 2021



VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: 20 AUGUST – 31 SEPTEMBER 2021

Date	Festival
21 August	Appearance day of HDG Śrīla Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj
22 August	Śrī Balarām Purnima (Appearance day of Lord Balarām) End of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda Jhulan Yatra
30 August	Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmashtami
31 August	Nandotsav Appearance day of HDG Śrīla Bhakti Vedanta Swami Maharaj Prabhupad
3 September	Annada Ekādaśī
11 September	Appearance of Śrī Sita Devi, the consort of Śrī Advaita Prabhu
13 September	Lalita Saptami
14 September	Śrī Rādhāshṭami
18 September	Parśva Ekādaśī
19 September	Appearance day of Śrī Vāmandev Appearance day of Śrīla Jiva Goswami prabu
20 September	Disappearance day of Śrīla Haridas Thakur

Bhagavata Dharma

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His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, Founder Acharya of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math, and
His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanata Saraswati Goswami Thakur PRABHUPADA.

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