

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakura

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President & Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja

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We often see that we are faced with numerous problems in attempting to reach our material goals. It is the law of nature that sometimes we succeed in achieving our goals, and sometimes we fail. However, it is certain that whenever we take shelter of Supreme Lord wholeheartedly, success is assured. As an example, in the battle of Kurukshetra, outwardly Pandavas seemed less powerful than Kauravas, but Lord Krishna's support allowed Pandavas to conquer the battle. Therefore, it can be understood that if we surrender wholeheartedly to Lord Krishna in each step of our life, we gradually reach our goals, and attain eternal peace and forever bliss.

In the Service of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission,

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja



VĀSANTI-RĀSA (PASTIMES IN THE SPRING)

by Srila Narottama Das Thakura
vrndāvana ramya-sthāna divya-
ciñtāmaṇi-dhāma
ratana-mandira manohara
abrta kālindī-nire rāja-haṁsa keli kare
tāhe śobhe kanaka-kamala

tāra madhye hema-pīṭha aṣṭa-dale beṣṭita
aṣṭa-dale pradhānā nāyikā
tāra madhye ratnāsane ba'si āchen dui-
jane
śyāma-saṅge sundarī rādhikā

o-rūpa-lābanya-raśi Amiya pariche khasi
hāsyā-parihāsa-sambhāṣaṇe
narottama-dāsa kaya nitya-līlā sukhs
maya
sadāi sphurukā mora mane



The beautiful place known as Vrindavana is a transcendental abode in the spiritual world and is entirely made of divine touchstones. There are many beautiful temples made out of jewels, and swans known as *rāja-haṁsa* play in the waters of river Yamuna, which flows through that transcendental land. In

the water of that divine river, there is a beautiful hundred-petal golden lotus.

In the midst of that lotus, there is a golden platform surrounded by eight petals. Situated upon those eight petals are the principal *sakhis*, headed by Lalita and Visakha. On that golden platform, the Divine Couple sit on a jeweled throne. In the company of Lord Syama, sits the beautiful Radhika.

The beauty and sweetness of Sri Radha and Govinda's forms during their conversations, which are filled with smiles and laughter, is emanating showers of nectar. Narottama dasa says, "May these eternal pastimes, filled with transcendental joy be ever manifest in my heart."

From Prarthana – Songs & Prayers of Loving Devotion by Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura

LORD NITYANANDA'S PASTIMES WITH MALINI DEVI

by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura

Lord Nityananda was always in the mood of a child while He stayed at the home of Srivasa Pandita. He never displayed any other mood. He would not even eat by himself. Srivasa Pandita's chaste wife Malini Devi considered Him her son and would feed and serve Him as a mother serves her child. In this way Malini always felt ecstatic in Lord Nityananda's presence.

One day a crow came, snatched a brass cup filled with ghee, and flew up on to the trees. When the crow flew out of sight, a great anxiety was born in Malini's heart. Later the crow returned, but Malini saw the cup was not in its beak. Malini Devi knew that her husband Srivasa Pandita would become angry that the cup of ghee, which was meant for Lord Krishna's puja had been stolen. Thus she wept, thinking in her heart that there is no solution to this problem. At that



time Lord Nityananda came and saw Malini weeping with tears streaming from her eyes. Smiling, Lord Nityananda compassionately asked, "Why are you weeping? Tell me what makes you suffer. I will surely destroy/end all your sufferings."

Malini Devi said, "My Lord, please listen. A crow stole a cup of ghee and flew away. "Lord Nityananda said, "O My Mother, do not worry. Please wipe away your tears for I will get back your cup." Smiling, Lord Nityananda said to the crow, "Oh, crow, return the cup at once."

Lord Nityananda resides in the hearts of all living entities so who has the power to disobey Him? Hearing the Lord's order, the crow flew away and out of sight. Anxiously Malini watched it go. It returned quickly, holding the cup in its beak. and set it down before Malini. Seeing these wonders, Malini was overcome with bliss. Knowing well the power of Lord Nityānanda, she arose and began to pray to Him.



"For He who brought His guru's son back from the dead, who protects all the worlds,

and who has the power even to bring souls back from the abode of Lord Yama, what is wonderful in taking a cup of ghee back from a crow? For Ananta Sesa, who carries the countless universes on His head, who in His pastimes is not even aware of the universes' weight on His head, and whose holy name destroys the material illusion that has no beginning, what is the glory of bringing a cup of ghee back from a crow? For You, who in ancient times were Lakshmana and lived in the forest, who were the guardian always staying by Sita's side, who only looked at Sita's feet on the ground, but never at her directly, and who with arrows killed Ravana's dynasty, what is glorious about taking back from a crow a cup of ghee? After understanding Your great power and glory, Yamuna Devi meekly approached Your feet and offered prayers. For You, who protect the fourteen worlds with Your power, what is the glory in taking back a cup of ghee from a crow? Still, whatever You do is never small or unimportant but always eternal and transcendental. This is declared by the four Vedas."

Hearing these prayers, Lord Nityananda smiled and then, resuming His mood of a child, said, "I will now eat." As Malini looked upon Lord Nityananda, milk began to flow from her breasts.

From Chaitanya Bhagavata by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura, translation by Kusakratha Das

GLORIES OF SRIMAD ADVAITA ACHARYA

*By His Divie Grace Srila Bhakti Promode
Puri Goswami Thakura*

Advaita-tattva

In *Caitanya Caritāmrita*, Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami quotes the following evidence from the diary of Svarupa Damodar to describe the ontological principle of Advaita Acharya:



*mahā-viṣṇur jagat-kartā māyayā yah
srjaty adah
tasyāvatāra evāyam advaitācārya īśvaraḥ
advaitam hariṇādvaitād ācāryam bhakti-
śāsanāt
bhaktāvatāram īsam tam advaitācāryam
āśraye*

Maha Vishnu is the master of the universe, which He creates through His power of Maya. Advaita Acharya is the incarnation of this form of the Supreme Lord. He is known as Advaita because He is none other than Hari, as Acharya because He is the preceptor of devotion. I take shelter of the Supreme Lord Advaita Acharya, who is the incarnation of a devotee. (*Caitanya Caritāmrita* 1.1.12-13)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has written, “Maya has two functions, and Maha Vishnu appears in two ways according to those functions. When He is within the material world as creator, He is the universe’s effective cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*) in His form as Vishnu. In the unmanifest material energy (*pradhāna*), appearing in the form of Rudra, He has a second identity as Advaita.”

Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has also written about Advaita Acharya in his *anubhāṣya* to *Caitanya Caritāmrita* 1.6.12: “Lord Advaita Acharya is Maha Vishnu. He is the supreme preceptor. Vishnu’s activities are auspicious because of his existence as the owner or master of the universe. He is the root source of all auspiciousness. Anyone who cannot understand that the complications that are ever present in the material universe are beneficial in a way that is pure, eternal, complete and free is deprived of his true spiritual activity, devotion to Krishna.”

Advaita Acharya was also known as Kamalaksha: “He is the noblest personality in the universe, the spiritual master of the Vaishnavas; he thus has two names that

come together as Advaita Acharya. Because in appearance he has eyes like lotus flowers, he also has the name Kamalaksha.” (*Caitanya Caritāmrita* 1.6.30-31)

Vrindavan Das Thakur has also described Advaita as both the foremost of the Vaishnavas and as Shiva: “Residing in Navadwip is the foremost and the most fortunate of all Vaishnavas, Sri Advaita Acharya. He heads all spiritual masters in knowledge, devotion and renunciation. He especially teaches devotion to Krishna in the same way that Lord Shankara did.” (*Caitanya Bhāgavata* 1.2.78-9)

Advaita’s Appearance

Advaita Acharya appeared in the village of Navagram near the city of Sylhet as the son of the Varendra Brahmin Kubera Pandit and his wife Nabha Devi, on the seventh day of the waxing moon in the month of Magh. Kubera Pandit is identified in the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (91) with the god Kubera, Mahadeva’s friend and leader of the Guhyakas.

Kubera Pandit, a devotee of Lord Narasingha, resided in the village of Navagram near Sylhet in Bangladesh. He was a greatly fortunate follower of the path of devotion; he knew nothing other than the lotus feet of Krishna. His devoted and faithful wife was named Nabha Devi. She is worshipable to the whole world for she is the mother of Advaita Prabhu. (*Bhakti-ratnākara* 5.2041-3)

On the seventh day of the waxing moon in the month of Magh, the great ocean of joy overflowed. In that auspicious moment, the moon of Advaita descended in the blessed womb of Nabha Devi. In his ecstasy, Kubera Pandit made gifts to the Brahmins and the poor. He tiptoed to the birthing room and his heart was filled with gladness upon seeing his son’s face. All the villagers came running to his house and said to each other, “What



pious works did this Brahmin do that in his old age he has been blessed with such a jewel of a son?" The gods rained down flowers without being seen. There is nothing with which this scene can compare. Ghanashyama sings of this great auspicious occasion when a joyous uproar rang around the earth. (*Bhakti-ratnākara* 12.1759-62)

The cause of the Lord's incarnation

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the main body of the devotional movement, and Advaita and Nityananda are its limbs. All three of Them advented with Srivas and other devotees in order to preach devotion to Hari. All those who were senior to Gauranga appeared on earth prior to Him. Advaita appeared along with the other elderly members of Chaitanya's retinue and when he did so, he observed that the sinfulness of the age of Kali had reached a disturbing extreme and that the world was entirely devoid of devotion to Lord Krishna. He thought that a partial incarnation of the Lord would not be sufficient to completely remedy the situation. He felt, "The world will only benefit if the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself descends to the earth." So he began to worship Krishna's lotus feet with Ganges water and Tulasi leaves, shouting and pleading to the Lord to incarnate. With roars of love (*prema-huṅkāra*) Advaita showed his desire for the Lord of Goloka to descend to the earth.

He constantly offered water from the Ganges and Tulasi manjaris while meditating on Krishna's lotus feet, at the same time calling to Krishna with loud roars. This is the way he brought about Krishna's descent. This is the chief reason that Krishna Chaitanya incarnated on earth. The Lord, the bridge of justice, descends at the wish of the devotee. (*Caitanya Caritāmrita* 1.3.107-9)

Advaita Acharya lived in Shantipur. His body is the reservoir of devotional nectar and is

not different from that of Chaitanya. He brought Sri Krishna Chaitanya, whose spotless fame has filled the world, down to this earth. My Advaita is not different from Gauranga, and his wife Sita is the mother of the universe. First he brought Gauranga into this world with his roars, and then he glorified him everywhere. (*Bhakti-ratnākara* 12.3753-6)

All glories to Advaita Acharya, the most merciful, whose roars brought about Gauranga's incarnation. Whoever takes shelter of his lotus feet will obtain the great wealth of love for Gaura. (*Bhakti-ratnākara* 12.3761, 3764)



He constantly served Krishna with great enthusiasm, offering Ganges water and Tulasi manjaris. Absorbed in thoughts of Krishna, he worshiped Him by roaring His name, the sound of which filled the entire universe, reaching up to Vaikuntha. Lord Krishna heard the sound of these roars of love and made Himself visible to humanity, for He is controlled by His devotee. (*Caitanya Bhāgavata* 1.2.81-3)

From *The Associates of Caitanya* by Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur



RAMACHANDRA KAVIRAJA'S MEETING WITH SRINIVASA ACHARYA

By Sri Nityananda Dasa

After spending a day and night with Raghunandana Thakura in Srikhandra, Srinivasa Acharya, took his permission and went back to his parents' home the next morning. Upon arriving he offered obeisance at his mother's feet and soon after a devotee arrived at his home.

This devotee was Ramachandra Kaviraja who lived in a village some distance away and had heard of Srinivasa Acharya's arrival. Ramachandra Kaviraja offered his obeisance unto Srinivasa Acharya and then remained silent before him, standing with folded hands. After a short while, he placed five coins before Srinivasa Acharya and again offered obeisance.

Srinivasa Acharya blessed him with affection and asked, "Who are you and where are you from?"

Ramachandra Kaviraja replied, "I belong to Amvasta family and was born in the village of Teliya-budhari. My only desire has been to see your lotus feet." Srinivasa Acharya was extremely affectionate towards Ramachandra Kaviraja. After talking for some time, he requested Ramachandra Kaviraja to bathe and eat something, and arranged a place for him to stay. The next day Srinivasa Acharya asked him how far his village was from Kheturi. Ramachandra replied that it was about eight miles away.

"When did you leave home?" "About five days ago."

Srinivasa Acharya then asked him about his education, and whether he has studied devotional literature. Ramachandra answered all Srinivasa's questions and his words pleased Srinivasa.

One of the following days Srinivasa Acharya ordered his disciple the former Pandita of the King Vyasacharya to debate various philosophical points with Ramachandra Kaviraja. Srinivasa desired to relish their intellectual arguments. First they challenged each another in grammatical rules. Then they argued the relative merits of various literary works. Srinivasa Acharya listened with rapt attention as the two exchanged arguments and counter arguments. The debate gradually turned into a heated quarrel. Ramachandra Kaviraja was expert at logic, and Srinivasa Acharya was astonished to witness Ramachandra Kaviraja's clear dominance over Vyasacharya.

In the end Srinivasa Acharya embraced Ramachandra Kaviraja with great affection. But Srinivasa Acharya saw that Ramachandra Kaviraja became slightly proud of his expertise. He stopped further debate with Vyasacharya and picked up the debate himself with Ramachandra.

A long battle then ensued. Srinivasa Acharya was amazed to hear his opponent's reasoning, and realized how qualified Ramachandra Kaviraja actually was. He said to Vyasa, "It is difficult to understand how qualified this person is! It seems that he has received mother Saraswati's full mercy. I have not met such an intelligent person before."

On another occasion Srinivasa Acharya and Ramachandra Kaviraja debated while Vyasa listened. This debate continued until evening. Both forgot that they had not yet bathed. Finally, remembering, Srinivasa Acharya stopped debating and requested Ramachandra Kaviraja to go and bathe. From that day onwards, Srinivasa Acharya showed his respect for Ramachandra Kaviraja. Only a learned person can understand the extent of knowledge possessed by others. Their love and affection for each other thus grew day by day. Srinivasa Acharya would be



delighted just seeing Ramachandra Kaviraja's bodily luster. He invited Ramachandra Kaviraja to sit beside him and eat together. He realized that Ramachandra Kaviraja was a gem of a personality.

On another occasion Srinivasa Acharya sat down next to Ramachandra Kaviraja and requested him to ask some questions. Ramachandra Kaviraja consented and their conversation went on for the next three hours. Finally, Srinivasa Acharya said, "In this human form of life, we may acquire many good qualities. If one lives piously, his character will be decorated with all good qualities, and if he lives impiously, he will become a reservoir of all bad qualities. Higher and lower births are due to one's good and bad karma."

"A person who understands the difference between the temporary and the eternal is actually a learned. One must desire to study those books by which one can attain freedom from material bondage – the books that cure our material disease. Otherwise, whatever knowledge we acquire will ruin us. Studying books on logic is waste of valuable time. What does one gain by studying such books? We should simply discuss Srimad Bhagavatam and try to understand its contents and purpose. The Srimad Bhagavatam perfectly presents the ultimate conclusion of all philosophical inquiry. One should hear or read Srimad Bhagavatam with attention, and not waste time reading other books."

Ramachandra Kaviraja replied, "Thakura, this is why I have come to you. You are my master and I am your servant. Please instruct me and remove my doubts. I have passed my life in vain as if eating mustard cake and salt. I have never even bothered to think about my own good."

"Oh Srinivasa, you are famous as an Acharya both in Vrindavana and in Bengal. Please

now accept this Ramachandra as your servant. I desire to remain at your lotus feet and fulfill the goal of my life. Do not push me away, considering me as fallen and sinful. Your lotus feet are my only hope for deliverance."

"Master, please do not delay. Place your lotus feet on my head, I surrender myself to you without reservation. You are my master birth after birth. May you be known as the Lord of this Ramachandra." Hearing such humble words, Srinivasa Acharya placed his hands on Ramachandra's head. Ramachandra Kaviraja then offered his obeisance to Srinivasa Acharya and took the dust from his feet and placed on his head. Srinivasa Acharya then gave Ramachandra both Harinama initiation and mantra initiation. Srinivasa Acharya taught Ramachandra the process of sadhana bhakti, the limbs of devotional service, and ultimate goal of life. He also taught him the essence of Srila Rupa Goswami's writings. Srinivasa Acharya spoke to him so beautifully that Ramachandra Kaviraja began to cry in gratitude. For the next full month, Srinivasa Acharya taught Ramachandra Kaviraja and Ramachandra listened very carefully.

At the end of that month, Srinivasa Acharya presented his conclusion and added: "Do not be doubtful. If you perform bhajan without offense, all of these truths will be revealed to you."

From Prema Vilasa, Pastimes of Love, by Sri Nityananda Dasa

GLORIES OF PUNDARIKA VIDHYANIDHI

by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura

Now please hear of the glories of Pundarika Vidyaniidhi, who is very dear to Lord Krishna. By the Supreme Lord's arrangement Pundarika Vidyaniidhi descended to this



world to make Catigrama in East Bengal a holy place.

Although Lord Caitanya manifest His own dhama in Navadvipa, He felt separation from Pundarika Vidyanidhi, and sighed deeply. One day, after dancing in kirtana, Lord Caitanya sat down, called out, O Pundarika! O father!", and wept. He called out, O Pundarika! O My father, O my friend; when will I see You?" In this way Lord showed how dear Pundarika Vidyanidhi is to Him. In His pastimes Lord Caitanya manifest many such devotees in this world.

Repeatedly calling out Pundarika Vidyanidhi's name, Lord Caitanya wept, but the devotees could not understand their Lord's mood. They understood the Pundarika meant to Lord Krishna but hearing 'Vidyanidhi', they were unsure of the meaning. They concluded that He must be a dear devotee.

When Lord Caitanya returned to external consciousness, all inquired, "O Lord, for which devotee do You weep? Please tell us the mystery of this. We feel that it will be our fortune to know him. Where was he born and what does he do? O Lord, please tell us, and we will hear."

Then the Lord said, "You are all very fortunate, for You desire to hear of him. His character and activities are all supremely wonderful. By hearing his name, the whole world becomes purified. He dresses like an ordinary man and thus no one can guess that he is a Vaishnava. He was born in Catigrama and is a great *brāhmaṇa paṇḍita* dedicated to *dharma* and honored by all. He always floats in the ocean of pure devotion to Lord Krishna and his body manifests the ecstatic symptoms of tears, trembling, and hairs standing on end. To avoid touching her with his feet Pundarika Vidyanidhi does not bathe in mother Ganga, but rather comes at night

to take her *darsana*. The ordinary people disrespect the Ganga by using her water to rinse their mouths, brush their teeth, and wash their hair. Seeing this, he feels pain in his heart. Therefore, he only sees the Ganga at night. Please hear of his wonderful faith in mother Ganga. Before beginning his worship of the Deity and other spiritual duties, he always drinks a little of her water. He does this to teach true religious duties to all the *paṇḍitas*. Pundarika Vidyanidhi stays in Catigrama, but he also has a house here. He will soon come here and then I will see him. At first no one will recognize him for when they see him, all will think him ordinary man. I cannot be at peace in my mind without seeing him. Therefore, I request all of you to please bring him here somehow."

After speaking these words, the Lord entered an ecstatic trance. Calling out, "Father Pundarika!", He wept. Lord Caitanya knows the glories of His devotees; one whom He favors may also know them. In this way the Lord attracted Pundarika, who thus decided to visit Navadvipa.

From Chaitanya Bhagavata Madhya Khanda, Chapter 7, (9–36) by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura, translation by Kusakratha Das

MAHAPRABHU'S MEETING KING VIBHISANA

by Srila Locana Das Thakura

One day Lord Gaurahari, who was sitting with His associates, asked Govinda to see who was standing at the door. Maharaja Vibhisana was there in the form of a *brāhmaṇa* with an impoverished *brāhmaṇa*. Govinda came back and told Gauranga that two *brāhmaṇas* as were waiting by the door of Tota-Gopinatha temple. On Gauranga's order, Govinda cordially greeted them and led them inside to meet Lord Caitanya.



One *brāhmaṇa* guest sat beside the Lord, and the poor fasting *brāhmaṇa* remained at a distance. To everyone's surprise, Gaurāṅga affectionately addressed the *brāhmaṇa* sitting beside Him: "After a long time, I'm seeing you again." Mahāprabhu and the *brāhmaṇa* cried profusely. Then the Lord caressed the *brāhmaṇa* with His beautiful hands, and inquired about his well-being. None of Lord Caitanya's associates knew this *brāhmaṇa*; nor did they understand the conversation.

Lord Caitanya said to His friend, the *brāhmaṇa* sitting beside him, "You know that *brāhmaṇa* standing in the back is suffering miserably. He lost all his knowledge due to poverty. As a result, he came here harassing and blaming Lord Jagannātha for his difficulties. It is the nature of people to never find fault with themselves. After doing something wrong they blame the Lord. When he suffers from his misdeeds he accuses God, but when he enjoys happiness, he says it's due to his own good qualities. That *brāhmaṇa* intended to die by fasting for the last seven days. What can Lord Jagannātha, who is dear to the *brāhmaṇas*, do for him? However, seeing you has removed his poverty. So now give him an ocean of wealth and make him happy."

The friendly *brāhmaṇa* said, "Yes, my Lord. I shall do as You say." After paying obeisance to the Lord, the two *brāhmaṇas* left. Lord Caitanya's associates were totally perplexed by this exchange between the Lord and the *brāhmaṇas*.

Meanwhile, outside, the poor *brāhmaṇa* inquired the other Brahmana who is Vibhisana: "You told that *sanyāsi* that you are King Vibhisana. After paying obeisance to that *sanyāsi*, why did you just leave without visiting the temple of Lord Jagannātha? You promised to obey the order of that *sanyāsi*. Who is that *sanyāsi* anyway?

Please tell me. I'm a poverty-stricken *brāhmaṇa*; don't play any tricks on me."

King Vibhisana said, "Listen, you foolish dull-headed *brāhmaṇa*! You just saw Lord Jagannātha in person directly with your own eyes. Your desire to attain vast wealth has already been fulfilled. Now I'll take you home to Dravida-desh (South India) and give you that wealth."

Hearing this, the *brāhmaṇa* hit his head in anguish. Then he collapsed on the ground, clasping the feet of King Vibhisana. The *brāhmaṇa* said, "Please take me back to meet the Lord again. I know I'm an ignorant *brāhmaṇa*, but let's go and see the Lord." Agreeing, Vibhisana brought him back to see Lord Caitanya.

Upon seeing the two *brāhmaṇas* again, Lord Gaurāṅga said, "Oh, why did you come back?" Vibhisana replied, "My Lord, ask the *brāhmaṇa* the reason."

brāhmaṇa said, "O respected Gosvami, I am ignorant. Lord, You are the life and soul of innumerable living entities. Actually, You are Lord Jagannātha Himself. I am the lowest and the worst offender. Due to my bad karma, I suffered from poverty, disease and other miseries. Because of my impoverished condition, I came to You and asked for the wrong diet. Despite my distress, I don't have any taste for the medicine, because I was attached to the wrong diet. But You are the best doctor; so please give me the correct medicine. I'm dying from the misdeeds of my previous life."

Hearing this confession, Lord Caitanya laughed and said, "Lord Jagannātha did you a favor. Go ahead, now suffer what you deserve, either happiness or distress. Ultimately you will attain the lotus feet of Lord Jagannātha."

After hearing this the *brāhmaṇa* offered *dandavats* to Lord Gaurāṅga. The devotees



chanted, "Hari-bol! Hari-bol!" After receiving the boon, Vibhisana and the poor *brāhmaṇa* left the house in a joyful mood.

Then Puri Gosvami said, "Prabhu, for our purification, kindly explain what just happened? Everyone's curious but afraid to ask You. So, taking courage, I asked on behalf of all Your devotees."

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Listen Puri Gosvami, I know that none of you understood what just occurred. That poor *brāhmaṇa* was suffering tremendously while living in South India. Being oppressed by poverty, he came here and harassed Lord Jagannatha. Seeing his miserable plight, Lord Jagannatha felt sorry for him. By the Lord's arrangement, he met King Vibhisana, who was that *brāhmaṇa* sitting next to Me. King Vibhisana pleased that *brāhmaṇa* by giving him abundant wealth."

The devotees exploded with ecstasy upon hearing this story. The land and sky flooded with Krishna *prema*. Everyone danced jubilantly, chanting, "Hari-bol! Hari-bol! Hari-bol!" Happily, all the devotees embraced one another.

From Caitanya Mangala by Srila Locana Das Thakura, translated by Srila Subhag Swami

THE BIRTH OF BHAKTI CREEPER

by Srila Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

Unalloyed devotion unmixed with *jñāna*, *karma*, and other practices can be compared to a wish-fulfilling creeper appearing in the field of the senses. It is the shelter of the aspiring devotees, who, like bees desiring to taste only nectar, have vowed to give up everything except *Bhagavān* and *Bhakti*. The life-giving root of this creeper is the favourable loving service of the Lord. Like a touchstone transforms iron into gold, the touch of these roots transforms the earth of the senses from matter into spirit. Gradually,

the creeper of devotion begins to sprout and two leaves named *sādhana* bhakti unfolds.



The first leaf is called *kleśaghni*, destroyer of material sufferings, and the second leaf is called *śubhadā*, giver of all auspiciousness.

The inner surface of both leaves is the domain of the king called *rāga* or spontaneous devotion. It is very shiny, the sign of its being born out of *lobha* or inner hankering. It is superior due to its smoothness, resulting from the establishment of a pure affectionate relation with the Lord as described in *Srimad Bhāgavatam* (3.25.38) – "Those who see Me as their beloved, relative, son, etc., ..." The outer surface of the leaves is ruled by another king called *vidhi*, or regulative devotion. It is slightly rough in nature, the sign of its being born of scriptural injunctions such as – "Therefore, persons desiring fearlessness should worship the Lord..." *Srimad Bhāgavatam* (2.1.5). It lacks the smoothness of the pure affectionate relationship with the Lord. However, the symptoms of *kleśaghni* and *śubhadā* appear with practically no difference with either the *rāga* or *vidhi* sides.

From Madhurya Kadambini by Srila Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura



MAHAPRABHU'S INSTRUCTION TO RAGHUNATH DAS GOSWAMI

By His Divine Grace Bhakti Rakshak
Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaja

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu instructed Raghunatha Dasa Goswami to always remain meek and humble and to always chant the Holy Name.

*grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā
kahibe
bhāla nā khaibe āra bhāla nā paribe
amānī mānada hañā kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā
la'be
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā mānase karibe*

“Do not talk like people in general or hear what they say. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely. Do not expect honor, but offer all respect to others. Always chant the Holy Name of Krishna, and within your mind render service to Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana.” (C.C. *Antya-līlā* 6.236-7)

We must not attend to worldly talk, neither should we engage in that. *Bhāla nā khaibe āra bhāla nā paribe*, don't seek after the satisfaction of our tongue and belly, and don't try to wear any good dress to be admired by the people. *Amānī mānada hañā kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā la'be*, give honor to all, but don't seek honor from anyone. In this way we will take the Name of Krishna always, continuously.

Vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā mānase karibe, internally in our minds we shall try to serve Radha and Govinda in Vrindavana. As we are in Vrindavana, we are serving Radha and Govinda. That will be our mental aspiration. Externally we are to go on, living our life simply in this way: no good clothes, no good food, no indulgence in worldly topics – neither speaking nor hearing them, always

giving honor to all, and not seeking honor from anyone. In this mood we must go on, *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*.



The same point is also explained by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaja slightly differently as follows:

A safe and entirely wholesome position

*sakhyaya te mama namo 'stu namo 'stu
nityam
dasyaya te mama raso 'stu rave 'stu satyam*

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, the greatest exponent of the faith of servitude to Srimati Radharani - *Radha-dasyam*, says, "I won't allow myself to become fascinated by the proposal of the higher level service as a friend, *sakhyā*. Rather, I shall always tend to do the lower service, *dasyā*, the service of the servant. I shall not consider myself to be a high class servitor and I shall always tend



to go towards the lower class of service. But He may forcibly take me to do a higher service saying, "No, you are no longer to serve there; now you must serve in this higher category."

"But I consider that I am not fit for that confidential service, my Lord. You may engage the higher servitors in Your confidential group, while I may serve in the lower level."

The tendency of the servant will always be toward the lower service. That sort of tendency is safe for us. We should always be tending towards the lower service; and it is His business to forcibly take us up to a higher group, should He wish: "No, you are qualified to render such service, and you should no longer remain in the lower group." But the tendency of the servitor will always be toward the lower service - *dasyaya te mama raso 'stu*: "I would like to be engaged in service as a servant, not as a friend." That should be the normal tendency

of a devotee. With such a mood, he is safe. Even in that world, he should have no ambition except to be the servant of the servant of the servant.

Hearing of such things from the devotees and from the scriptures, we may think such a conception to be exaggeration; but it is the reality, and we should search out this pristine substance within us. This is a safe and wholesome position.

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VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: JANUARY 2018

| Date | Festival |
|-------------|---|
| 6 January | Appearance Day of Sri Ramacandra Kaviraja |
| 7 January | Disappearance Day of Sri Jayadev Goswami |
| 8 January | Disappearance Day of Sri Locana Das Thakura |
| 12 January | Sat-tila Ekadasi |
| 22 January | Vasanta Pancami; Appearance Day of Srimati Vishnupriya Devi; Appearance Day of Srila Pundarika Vidhyanidhi; Appearance Day of Srila Raghunandana Thakura; Appearance Day of Raghunatha das Goswami. |
| 24 January | Appearance Day of Sri Advaita Acharya |
| 26 January | Disappearance Day of Sri Madhvacarya |
| 27 January | Disappearance Day of Sri Ramanujacarya |
| 28 January | Bhaimi Ekadasi |
| 29 January | Appearance Day of Lord Varaha Dev |
| 30 January | Nityananda Trayodasi |
| 31 January | Appearance Day of Srila Narottama Das Thakura; Sri Krishna Madhura Utsav |

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Dedicated to:

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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