

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakura

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On this auspicious occasion of Nityananda Trayodashi (Appearance Day of Lord Nityananda, who is the guru-tattva), I am praying to my spiritual master HDG Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, my grand spiritual master HDG Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakur Prabhupada, and all the members of our guru-parampara, Brahma sampradaya, to bestow their mercy upon us, so we may progress spiritually and realize the taste of divine love in this lifetime, thus allowing all of you to be delivered from this material world.

*In the Service of Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission,
His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja*



A SNAPSHOT FROM THE LIFE OF SRILA NAROTTAM DAS THAKUR

by HDG Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan
Goswami Maharaja

In the spiritual abode, the eternal form of Srila Narottam Das Thakur is Champaka Manjari. After the disappearance of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Narottam Das Thakur represented Him in spreading the divine love (prema). Narottam Das Thakur was a prince born as the son of King Krishnananda Datta in Kheturi, a place in present day Bangladesh. He was born on the full moon day of the Bengali month of Magh. While Mahaprabhu was on His way to Vrindavan, upon reaching Padma river He had kept His divine prema there for Narottam Das Thakur, saying, “Naru! Naru!”; this was before the birth of Narottam Das Thakur. When Narottam Das Thakur was 12 years old, Lord Chaitanya appeared in his dream and told him to go to Vrindavan to take initiation from Srila Lokanath Goswami. During that time, it was not easy to go to Vrindavan from Bengal. There were no proper paths and so many ferocious animals, dacoits and various dangers were present on the way. But Narottam Das Thakur could hear the sound of Lord Krishna’s flute and he followed the sound as his guide to Vrindavan. Narottam Das Thakur met Jahnava Mata, Nityananda Prabhu’s potency (shakti), for the first time on the way and got her blessings as well.

Upon his arrival in Vraja, Narottam met with Srila Lokanath Goswami. He received Lokanath Goswami’s special mercy, for he became his one and only disciple. Lokanath Goswami was extremely renounced and had made a vow not to accept any disciples. But Narottam Das also had made a vow - to take initiation from none other than Lokanath Goswami. Narottam Das repeatedly asked Lokanath Goswami to give him initiation but Lokanath Goswami was very firm in his

refusal. In order to win his favor, Narottam one day went in the middle of the night to clean the area in the forest that Lokanath Goswami used as a toilet. Lokanath Goswami was so surprised to see that the place was cleaned day after day and he became curious to find out who was doing this service. So one evening he went and hid in some bushes, quietly doing his japa the entire night waiting to see who was this person rendering such service to him.

At midnight, Lokanath Goswami saw someone approach and begin cleaning the area. When he saw who it was, he was astonished that Narottam Thakur, son of King Krishnananda Datta, was engaged in doing such a lowly task. Lokanath Goswami felt embarrassed and asked Narottam for what purpose he was doing this. Narottam Thakur immediately began to cry and fell at Lokanath Goswami’s feet in distress “O, master, my life is useless unless I obtain your mercy.” When Lokanath Goswami realized the depth of Narottam Thakur’s humility and saw his anguish, Lokanath Goswami’s resolve to never accept anyone as disciple softened and he accepted Narottam Das Thakur as his only disciple and imparted vaishnava mantras to him.

This is a perfect example of how one can win over his/her worshipful deity through honest and selfless service. Narottam Das Thakur took initiation from Lokanath Goswami on the full moon day of the month of Shravan (July-August period). Sri Lokanath Goswami and Sri Narottam Das Thakur played this pastime to show to the whole world the value of selfless and sincere service, especially to the people of Northern Bengal at that time.

Srila Lokanath Goswami was a very renounced vaishnava, but he saw in Narottam Das Thakur someone who not only had an educated and refined background; but an enthusiasm and taste for expanding Sri

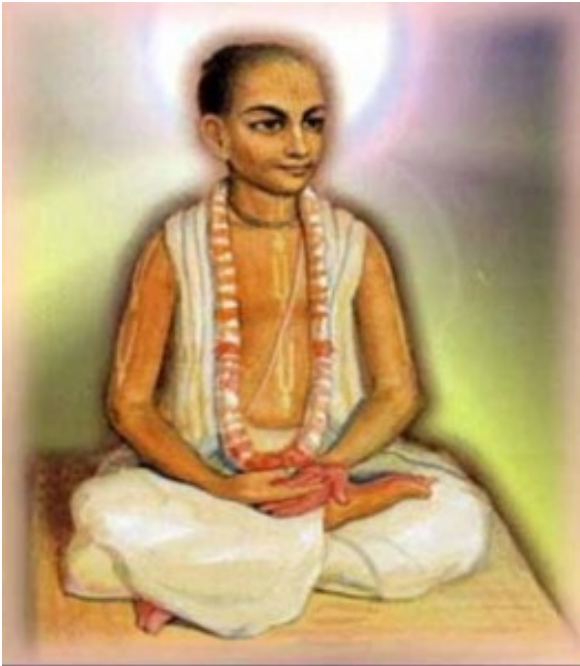


Chaitanya's sankirtan mission. As a result, he ordered Narottam to go back to his homeland and propagate Krishna consciousness.

In his anthology of songs, Narottam Das Thakur wrote:

*aneka-duhkhera pare, layechile vraja-pure,
krpa-dore galaya bandhiya
daiva-maya balat-kare, khasaiya sei dore,
bhava-kupe dileka dariya*

“After suffering much sadness, O Lord, you brought me to Vraja, pulling me by the rope of mercy you had tied around my neck. Maya and fate forced me back into the well of material existence by cutting loose that rope of mercy.”



Narottam Das Thakur used to go begging for alms everyday. Renounced people are meant to only beg as much as is needed for the day and consume whatever alms have been received within the same day. There is no question of saving some of the alms for a later day. People started coming to Narottam Das Thakur, begging for alms, and he used to give them some food. Lokanath Goswami noticed this and realized that this is only possible

since Narottam Thakur was saving up his alms for later. This is known as the tendency to save (*sancaya-vritti*). As a result, Lokanath Goswami ordered Narottam Das Thakur to leave Vraja, as this was not acceptable for one who lives in Vraja and told him it was better for him to go home and spread Krishna Consciousness.

Later on, Narottam Das Thakur spread Krishna consciousness throughout India, through composing jewel-like songs in his compilations *Prema-bhakti-chandrika*, *Prarthana* which included writings such as *Sri-rupa-manjari-pada*, *Radha-krishna-prāna-mora*, and so on. In his song, *Ei bar karuna koro*, Narottam Das Thakur writes:

*tomāra hrdaye sadā govinda visrāma
Govinda kahena mama vaisnava parana*

“Govinda always reside in your (vaishnavas's) heart. Govinda says, “The vaishnavas are My very life and soul.”

Once, two vaishnavas from Odisha, named Ram Das and Shyam Das, approached Jiva Goswami in Vrindavan, asking him, “What is the benefit of serving vaishnavas?” Jiva Goswami, with a smiling face, told them, “When you both are on your way back home to Odisha, stop by Kheturi and meet Narottam Das Thakur. When you meet him, act like you are feeling extremely hungry. You should go to meet him at the exact time when the pujari in his temple is preparing the plate to offer to his deities. Even if the pujari tells you to wait, you should act like you are so hungry that you cannot survive without eating immediately.” When it was time for Ram Das and Shyam Das to go back to Odisha, they went to Kheturi, following the instructions of Jiva Goswami. They arrived at the time as explained by Jiva Goswami and acted according to his instructions. When Ram Das and Shyam Das were acting very hungry to the pujari, the pujari asked them,



“What type of vaishnava are you? You are not willing to wait for the Lord to eat. Rather, you want to eat, immediately.” At that time, Narottam arrived and told the pujari to feed Ram Das and Shyam Das the unoffered food. Then Narottam Das Thakur told the pujari to cook again and offer it to the deities. That night, Lord Chaitanya appeared in the dream of Narottam Das Thakur and asked him, “Do you believe what you wrote in your song, *Ei bara karuna karo?*” Narottam Das Thakur was totally confused why the Lord asked him that. Lord Chaitanya continued, “If you believe in the words you wrote, then why did you order your pujari to cook again? I already honored the offering through the vaishnavas, Ram Das and Shyam Das.” Narottam Das Thakur woke up before sunrise. Ram Das and Shyam Das were taking rest in a room nearby. Then, Narottam Das Thakur went to Ram Das and Shyam Das and asked them, “Were you really hungry yesterday in the afternoon?” Ram Das and Shyam Das described the instructions they had received from Jiva Goswami in regards to understanding the result of serving vaishnavas. Narottam Das Thakur shared his dream with them. In this way, Ram Das and Shyam Das understood that serving vaishnavas is actually considered to be direct service to Lord Chaitanya who is the combined form of Radha and Krishna.

On the fifth day of the waxing moon in Bengali month of Kartik, Narottam Das Thakur asked his disciples to take him to the Ganga. He told them to pour the Ganga water on his body with their hands. Right before the eyes of his disciples, Narottam Das Thakur’s body began melting into milk form and started flowing into the Ganga. The disciples started crying profusely and their tears got mixed with the Ganga water and milk. After his disappearance, Narottam Das Thakur’s disciples collected this milk and Ganga water and made a samadhi called the samadhi of milk (*dudha samādhī*) near Kheturi.

We can see some similarities between Srila Narottam Das Thakur and Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. Srila Narottam Das Thakur was the only disciple of Srila Lokanath Goswami. Similarly, Srila Prabhupada was the only disciple of Srila Gaurkishore Das Babaji. Both of them massively preached the message of divine love of Lord Chaitanya.

In this way, Narottam Das Thakur left behind a legacy of the top-most level of prema-bhakti in the age of deception. He displayed a mood of complete humility and tolerance. The Gaudiya Math’s main basis of teachings are the works of Srila Narottam Das Thakur, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and their spiritual descendant, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. Most of the members of the entire vaishnava community are trying to follow in the footsteps of these three divine personalities. I am sure that those who follow the teachings of Srila Narottam Das Thakur, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, will surely attain the ultimate goal of human life, a taste of divine love for the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha Gopinath. In this way, they will make their way to the spiritual abode, Goloka Vrindavan.

Written by Swami B.B.Bodhayn on the occasion of the Appearance Day festival of Srila Narottam Das Thakur, February 2020



SRILA PRABHUPADA'S DISCOURSE ON THE OCCASION OF THE APPEARANCE DAY OF SRI NITYANANDA

by HDG Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati
Goswami Thakur Prabhupada

*āmāra prabhura prabhu śrīgaurasundara|
e baḍa bharasā citte dhari nirantara||*

We are in the midst of many problems in this world. We cannot rest our faith in anything of this world. Our only faith is that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the master of Sri Nityananda Prabhu; I have received that Nityananda Prabhu as my master. Sri Nityananda Prabhu is the direct expansion of Mahaprabhu (*svayam-prakāśa tattva*). Sriman Mahaprabhu is Vrajendranandana Krishna, the supreme transcendental truth (*para tattva*). Sri Nityananda Prabhu has two arms and is the *svayam-prakāśa* part of the *catur-vyūha* (Sankarshana). Sri Nityananda Prabhu eternally resides in Goloka-Vrindavan. Sri Nityananda Prabhu is Sri Baladeva; Sri Narayana and others are His expansions. Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Advaita Prabhu are controllers (*īśa-tattva*). It is said in the Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita (Adi 1.14):

*ek 'mahāprabhu', āra 'prabhu' – dui jana|
dui prabhu seve mahāprabhura caraṇa||*

Sriman Mahaprabhu is one and only one. Therefore, the Vedas state, *ekamevādvitīyam* - meaning one without a second. Sri Gaurasundara is the Supreme Lord Himself (*svayam-rūpa*). Sri Nityananda Prabhu is His direct expansion (*svayam-prakāśa*). Sri Nityananda Prabhu is very close to Sriman Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu is the controlling principle (*īśa-tattva*). All of the Supreme Lord's bodily expansions are manifested in different places in different

people and they are known as Acharyas. Thus, the following is said in relation to Sri Acharyadeva in the scriptures –

*ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyānnāvamanyeta karhicit|
na martyabuddhyāsūyeta sarvadevamayo
guruḥ||
yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā
gurau|
tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante
mahātmanaḥ||
'mannāthaḥ śrījagannāthaḥ madguruḥ
śrījagadguruḥ'*

When a jiva understands the divine spiritual master (*śrī guru-pāda-padma*) to be the expansion of the Supreme Lord, then that jiva attains auspiciousness. One should not be jealous or envious of this point regarding the spiritual master. The five enemies lust, anger, greed, illusion and intoxication (*kāma, krodha, lobha, moha, mada*) are present in the reservoir of envy. When these five enemies gain strength, envy is formed.



Today is a day of great bliss because it is the appearance day of He who is the object of worship for Gaudiya Vaishnava devotees, the one who intoxicated the world with divine



love for Sri Gaura, and the one who distributed Sri Gaurasundara to the jivas of this world – Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Srila Thakura Mahasaya has written in his *Padāvalī*:

*‘gaurāṅga’ balite habe pulaka śarīra|
‘hari hari’ balite nayane ba’be nīra||
āra kabe nitāicāṇḍa karuṇā karibel|
saṁsāra-vāsanā mora kabe tuccha habell|
viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha habe manal|
kabe hāma heraba śrīvṛndāvana||*

When will I gain respite from all activities of this material cycle of birth and death? Having gained respite from all material activities, when will my consciousness experience ecstasy with the hairs of my body standing on end by chanting and chanting the name of Sri Gaurasundara? In worldly language, a word and that which the word refers to are completely separate. The worldly sight, fragrance, sound, taste, touch, thought and so on are totally materially and externally oriented. The sounds of Vaikuntha, coming from the eternal mouth containing transcendental knowledge and situated in divine love bring about ecstatic symptoms such as hair standing on end, etc. When will I attain that state?

*āra kabe nitāicāṇḍa karuṇā karibel|
saṁsāra-vāsanā mora kabe tuccha habell|*

Will such a day come for me, when I will be released from all worldly bondages? Bhagavan is our eternal shelter; however, I have not understood this. As long as we do not understand this point, we must remain busy in this temporary material connection. Without the mercy of Sri Nityananda, this pure analysis and understanding cannot be attained. Despite the material miseries causing us so much burning and pain, throwing us into a miserable condition, we still do not think of Bhagavan even once.

*nitāicaraṇa satya, tāṇhāra sevaka nitya,
nitāipada sadā kara āśa|
e adhama baḍa duḥkhī, nitāi more kara sukhī,
rākha rāṅgā caraṇera pāśa||*

Sri Guru Nityananda’s divine lotus feet are our one and only refuge. In the words of Sri Vrindavan Das Thakur,

*āmāra prabhura prabhu śrīgaurasundara|
e baḍa bharasā citte dhari nirantara||*

Srila Thakur Mahasaya writes:

*āra kabe nitāicāṇḍa karuṇā karibel|
saṁsāra-vāsanā mora kabe tuccha habell|
viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha habe manal|
kabe hāma heraba śrīvṛndāvana||*

Through the attraction of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, who is the direct expansion of Sri Krishna, we will achieve release from this dense and dark material cycle of birth and death (*samsāra*). As long as we forget serving Krishna, we will remain in the *samsāra*. Even when our consciousness is utterly anxious to enjoy the sense objects like beautiful forms, tastes and so on, there is no alternative to achieving release from those attachments apart from the mercy of the lotus feet of Sri Nityananda. One cannot engage in the spiritual practice of remembering Sri Hari (*hari-bhajana*) without taking shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Nityananda. If one does not engage in *hari-bhajana*, then he will be bound to go to the abode of Yamaraja after death. People who are averse to Sri Hari will suffer the results of their pious activities in heaven (*svarga*) and the results of their sinful activities in hell (*naraka*). Despite suffering the three-fold miseries of material life, if our intelligence still does not develop, then how will we attain the supreme eternal destination?

*viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha habe manal|
kabe hāma heraba śrī vṛndāvana||*



When will I give up the tendency to enjoy material sense objects and go near Krishna? When will I contemplate topics related to Krishna, thereby giving up the tendency to enjoy and to renounce and rather become inundated in the mellow of *kr̥ṣṇa-bhakti*?

kabe hāma heraba śrī vṛndāvana

Vrindavan is the eternal object of service for the jivas. It is stated in the *Talavakāra Upaniṣad*:

*taddha tadvanaṁ nāma tadvanam
ityupāsitavyam*

tadvan refers to His forest or the expansive forest. *tadvan* means that which has been explained as the object of service – the magnificent Sri Vrindavan Dham. It is stated in the Srimad Bhagavatam:

*vedyaṁ vāstavamatra vastu śivadaṁ
tāpatrayonmūlanam*

When one is unable to know the actual reality, then there is means of being freed from the burning suffering of the three-fold miseries of the material world.

*matirna kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā mitho
'bhipadyeta grhavrataṇām|
adānta gobhirviśatāṁ tamisraṁ punaḥ punaś
carvita-carviṇāṇām||*

Those who are averse to serving Krishna are known as *grhavrata* or ones concerned with their household duties only. Such people will never have their minds or paths turned towards Krishna. Sri Prahlad Maharaja analyzed and spoke to his father the following:

*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam
pādasevanam|
arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam
ātmanivedanam||*

*iti puruṣārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiś
cennavalakṣaṇam|
kriyeta bhagavatyaddhā tanmanyē
'dhītamuttamam||*

Individuals who desire ultimate auspiciousness must one-pointedly take shelter of Navadvip Dham. It is necessary to take shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Gaura-Nityananda. It is necessary to serve Their Holy Names and holy abode (dham) and fulfill Their desires. The nine islands of Navadvip are the supreme places to engage in the nine types of bhakti (*navadha-bhakti*). Those who do not follow in the footsteps of the gurus and vaishnavas and who propound knowledge acquired by the material senses never engage in service of the Supreme Lord (*adhokṣaja*).

*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyānnāvamanyeta karhicit|
na martyabuddhyāsūyeta sarvadevamayo
guruḥ||*

Those in whose brains the analysis of this verse has not entered end up possessing solely materialistic intelligence. The *grhavrata* people are busy with the minute materialistic knowledge which is present within the knowledge of the Supreme Lord. It is necessary to give up materialistic household life and develop a household lifestyle centered on the Lord (*grhastha*). It is necessary to follow the example of Sri Srivasa Prabhu. Krishna's senses are transcendental but we engage in satisfying our own material senses through which we create a problematic situation for ourselves; it is necessary to extinguish this problem.

*karmaṇāṁ pariṇāṁ itvād āvirīṣyād
amaṅgalam|
vipaścinnasvaraṁ paśyed adṛṣtamapi
dṛṣṭavat||*

Every person starting from Lord Brahma down to an insect who engages in *karma*-



kānda or the practice of accepting sense enjoyment and rejecting sense enjoyment (*bhoga-tyāga*) must experience inauspiciousness. All material enjoyment of this world is temporary; one must understand that the material enjoyment of the heavens is also of the same quality. The writer of Bengali poetry (*pada-karta*), Govinda Das has sung - *bhajahuṁ re mana śrīnandanandana*

The vaishnava poet, Srila Vidyapati Thakur, has also sung the song *tātala saikate*. It is necessary to have straightforward faith and belief in the lotus feet of Bhagavan. Those who have sincere faith in the lotus feet of Bhagavan must engage in service. It is unsure which day we will die; thus, we do not have time to serve insignificant, temporary, and perishable things. When we have taken birth in human bodies, we shall not serve tiny, impermanent objects. We shall not become *grhavrata*s, who are solely engaged in materialistic household lives. We shall not become servants of dogs. We shall not become like donkeys carrying heavy burdens on our backs. Rather, we shall become carriers of the essence. We shall give up the tendency of flies and follow the tendency of honey bees. Analysis of the insignificant things of this world, looking at them as good or bad, pious or sinful, is all the function of the mind born of matter.

‘*dvaite*’ *bhadrābhadra-jṣān*, *saba* –
‘*manodharma*’
‘*ei bhāla*, *ei manda*’ – *era saba* ‘*bhrama*’||

Today is the auspicious day of seeing the divine lotus feet of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. We will find lots of time to discuss the poetry and prose of this material world; however, it is necessary to discuss the topics of Sri Gaura-Nityananda in this very life. We shall forget all of our material designations of being big or small and must pray so that we can eternally remain as a speck of dust at the lotus feet of

Srila Rupa Goswamiprabhu. This is our prayer:

*ādadānastrṇām dantairidaṁ yāce punaḥ
punaḥ|
śrī madrūpa padāmbhojadhuliḥ syām janma
janmani||*

Let us all have the desire to be followers of Sri Rupa Goswamiprabhu (*rupānuga*):

*rūpa-raghunātha-pade haibe ākutil
kabe hāma bujhaba se yugalapirīti||
rūpa-raghunātha-pade rahu mora āśa|
prārthanā karaye sadā narottamera dāsa||*

Without the mercy of the lotus feet of the spiritual master who is non-different from Srila Rupa and Raghunath Das Goswamis, it is never possible to progress towards remembering and serving the Divine Couple (*yugala-bhajana*). It is necessary to discuss *karmaṇām pariṇamitvāt* at every moment. Prahlada Maharaja has said:

*na te viduḥ svārthagatiṁ hi viṣṇuṁ durāśayā
ye bahirarthamāninaḥ|
andhā yathandhair upanīyamān āstepī śata
stryāmurudāmnī baddhāḥ||*

The *grhavrata* people do not accept that Bhagavan is the sole object of worship. Bhagavan is the one and only path for our own benefit. By not knowing this point, people enjoy the material sense objects (*bhogis*) and renounce the material sense objects (*tyagis*).

śrī kṛṣṇa prema dānena yena nistāritaṁ jagat

Preaching the Holy Name, which is divine love, was the work of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. It will be beneficial for us if we follow in the footsteps of Srila Narottam Das Thakur Mahasaya who was the recipient of Srila Nityananda Prabhu’s mercy. If we imitate Srila Narottam Das Thakur Mahasaya, we will



gain no benefit at all. Despite being the most fallen of human beings (*narādhama*), I became the topmost human being (*narottama*) by imitating Srila Narottama Thakur – such a conception is the identification of *vaiṣṇava-aparādhā* and barbarianism. Jivas can never attain liberation without being anointed with the dust of the feet of the great devotees, or in other words, without becoming the unalloyed servant of the great devotees.

*naiṣāṁ matistāvadurukramāṅghrīm
sprśatyanarthāpagamo yadarthaḥ|
mahīyasāṁ pādarajo'bhiṣekaṁ niṣkiṣcanānām
na vr̥ṇīta yāvat||*

As long as the *grhāvratā* people remain bereft of the anointment of the dust of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord's devotees who possess nothing material, their minds will be unable to touch the lotus feet of Krishna, which destroys all unwanted materialistic thoughts, behaviors and acts.

*ādadānastr̥ṇām dantairidaṁ yāce punaḥ
punaḥ|
śrī madrūpa padāmbhōjadhulīḥ syām janma
janmani||*

“I should have no other ambition than to be the transcendental dust of Sree Rupa Goswami Prabhu only.” It is only through following in the footsteps of Sri Rupa that the mercy of Sri Govinda, the *abhidheyādhī-devata*, can be received.

*dīvyad-vr̥ndāraṇya-kalpadrumādhah śrīmad-
ratnāgāra-sir̥hāsanaṣṭhau|
śrī-śrī-rādhā-śrīla-govinda-devau preṣṭhālībhiḥ
sevyamānau smarāmi||*

This Sri Kadamba tree, the king of trees, is the shelter of the pastimes of Sri Radha Govinda in the divine Vrindavan Yogapitha. The Sri Kadamba tree is non-different from the divine wish-fulfilling tree (*divya-kalpadruma*). The

eternally perfected devotees (*nitya-siddha-gana*) see the Sri Gaura lila happening in the Vraja lila and the Sri Vraja lila happening in the Sri Gaura lila.

In regards to how the spiritual practitioners should behave, here Srīman Mahāprabhu's instruction given in the Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita:

*grāmyakathā nā śunibe, grāmyavārtā nā
kahibe|
bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe||
amānī mānada haṣa kṛṣṇanāma sadā la'be|
vraje rādhākṛṣṇa-sevā mānase karibe||*

Those desiring to engage in the remembrance and service of Sri Sri Radha Govinda do not need to listen to the songs of Vidyasundar or to watch movies at the cinema theater. The one and only way to attain deliverance from the useless materialistic thoughts, behaviors and acts is to take shelter of the lotus feet of guru – *ādau guru-pādāśrayaḥ*. Srila Das Goswamiprabhu has described the lotus feet of the spiritual master as follows:

*nāmaśreṣṭhaṁ manumapi śacīputramatra
svarūpam
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajamurupurīm māthurīm
goṣṭhabāṭīm|
rādhākuṇḍam girivaramaho! rādhikā-
mādhavāśām
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrīguruṁ taṁ
nato'smi||*

I offer my obeisance to the lost feet of my spiritual master. The spiritual master has given me the supreme Holy Name, mantra, Sri Gaurasundara who is the son of Saci, Svarupa Goswami, Sri Rupa Goswami and his elder brother, Sri Sanatana Goswami Prabhu, the topmost Mathura, the pasture fields of Vrindavan, residence at Radha-kunda, Govardhan, the greatest of all mountains, and the desire to attain the service of Sri Sri Radha Madhava. The supreme Name, meaning Sri



Sri Radha Govinda's Name, which my spiritual master has given me, the Hare Krishna Name, is the supreme Name. This is because, in comparison to the secondary names (*gauna-nāma*), the primary names (*mukhya-nāma*) are superior. Sri Radha Govinda's Name is even more direct than the primary names and that has been given to us by *śrī guru-pāda-padma*. Chanting the Holy Names (*śrī-nāma-bhajana*) is the supreme spiritual practice. Despite kali-yuga being filled with faults, chanting the Holy Names (*nāma-sankīrtana*) is the primary shelter and destroyer of all faults in this age. Those who chant the Holy Names in a pure state have achieved Krishna since Krishna's Name and Krishna Himself, are non-different.

*kalikāle nāmarūpe kṛṣṇa avatāra|
nāma haite haya sarva jagat nistāra||
kalerdoṣanidhe rājannasti hyeko mahānguṇa|
kīrtanādeva kṛṣṇasya muktasaṅgaḥ paraṁ
vrajet||*

Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhu has sung in his *Sri Nāmāṣṭaka*:

*nikhila-śruti-mauli-ratnamālā-dyutinīrajita-
pāda-paṅkajānta|
ayi muktakulairupāśyamānaṁ paritastvaṁ
harināma saṁśrayāmi||*

The head portion of all the *Vedas* are the *Upanisads*; the *Upanisads* have taken the form of a jeweled necklace which illuminates the tips of Your lotus feet through their radiance. O, Harinama! You are always worshipped by the liberated personalities (Narada, Sukadeva, etc.) who have no desire other than Your pleasure. Thus, O, Harinama! I am taking shelter of You in all respects (being free from all offenses).

(While describing this verse, Srila Prabhupada manifested symptoms of overwhelming ecstasy).

*harer-nāma harer-nāma harer-nāmaiva
kevalam|
kalau nāstyeva nāstyeva nāstyeva gati-
anyathā||*

One who does not chant the Holy Names will end up becoming attached to enjoying sense pleasures or renouncing sense pleasures. If the jivas do not chant the Holy Names, they will inevitably become engaged in enjoying sense pleasures. All the talks of the people of the material world are totally related to material sense pleasure and enjoyment (*bhoga-katha*). You will not hear any topics related to Krishna by being near such people. Committing offense to the Holy Name is not the Holy Name, at all. If one is not engaged in remembering and chanting the names of Hari for even on minute, then that person will have to become attached to the material world. *nama-srestham manumapi* means that our spiritual master has given us the Holy Name (*nāma*) and the *mantra*. The *mantra* and the *mahāmantra* are the merciful features of Sri Nama.

*kṛṣṇamantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana|
kṛṣṇanāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa||*

Through meditating on the *kṛṣṇa-mantra*, one gains liberation from the function of the mind which is to search for sense pleasure. In a consciousness which is free from material attachment and which is inclined towards service, when the mercy of Sri Nama is experienced, then the sweetness of the lotus feet of Sri Krishna will expand. Service to Sri Nama and service to Krishna are one and the same. The liberated personalities (*mukta-kula*) engage in serving Sri Nama. Srila Rupa Goswamiprabhu has said:

*ayi muktakulairupāśyamānaṁ paritastvāṁ
harināma saṁśrayāmi|
na te viduḥ svārthagatim hi viṣṇuṁ durāśyā ye
bahirarthamāninaḥ*



In other words, if we look externally to gain a meaning of reality, we will give up service to Vishnu which is the path of gaining genuine spiritual wealth; if we give up service to Vishnu and become busy in pleasing our own senses, making material gains, and giving considering everything other than Krishna to be of great value, then our self-destruction is guaranteed.

*naiṣāṁ mat istāvadurukramāṅghriṁ
spr̥ṣatyānarthāpagamo yadarthah||
mahīyasāṁ pādarajo'bhiṣekaṁ niṣkiṣcanānām
na vr̥ṇīta yāvat||*

As long we remain bereft of the anointment of the dust of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord's devotees who possess nothing material, our minds will be unable to touch the lotus feet of Krishna, which destroys all unwanted materialistic thoughts, behaviors and acts.

If we are unable to make the dust of the Supreme Lord's devotees, who possess nothing material, as the crowns on our heads, we will all face unfavorable problems. If we are unable to become the recipient of love from Krishna's devotees, then illusion (*māya*) will throw us into the well of material existence.

Who is Krishna? What is divine love for Him? What is it to follow in the footsteps of Sri Varsabhanavi? What is service to Sri Varsabhanavi's sakhis? It is necessary for all of these topics related to spiritual practice and remembrance to be well discussed. In order to know all of these topics, it is necessary to one-pointedly hear from the Supreme Lord's devotees and to follow in their footsteps. By wearing the dust of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord's devotees as one's crown, one gains an eternal empire through which the variegated pastimes of the Supreme Lord can be well understood. Those who are busy with material work (*karma-kānda*) and speculative

knowledge (*jñāna-kānda*) consume the material sense objects and attain self-destruction.

*karmakāṇḍa, jñānakāṇḍa, kevala viṣaya
bhāṇḍa, 'amṛta' baliyā yebā khāya|
nānāyoni sadā phire, kadarya bhakṣaṇa kare,
tāra janma adhaḥpāte yāya||*

Association of *hatha-yogis*, *rāja-yogis*, and scholars who are inclined towards argumentation should be given up. Normally, it is seen in the world that those who are arrogant scholars eventually become bereft of faith in the Supreme Controller, and take the opportunity to try and see if Bhagavan can be rejected through grammatical rules and argumentation. However, all of these demoniac activities are inauspicious for the jivas. It is necessary for everyone to serve the Supreme Lord with all that they have. Service to Bhagavan can be done through elephants, horses, wealth, motors and so on. When one becomes engaged in the gratification of one's own sense pleasures, then service to Bhagavan no longer takes place. It is necessary to give up the thought processes of those devoted to solely material work (*karmis*) and speculative knowledge acquisition (*jñānis*). Through the spread of Mahāprabhu's process of attaining divine love, materialistic sense enjoyers, speculative knowledge seekers, practitioners of the eight-fold path of yoga as well as others all gave up their quests for sense enjoyment and their imagined paths.

*strī-putradikathāṁ jahurviṣayiṇaḥ
śāstrapravādaṁ budhāḥ
yogīndrā vijahurmarunniyamajkleśaḥ
tapastāpasāḥ|
jñānābhyāśavidhiṁ jahuśca
yatayaścaitanyaandre parā-
māviṣkurvati bhaktiyogapadavīṁ naivānya
āśīdrasaḥ||
bhukti-mukti-sprhā yāvat piśācī hṛdi vartate|
tāvadbhaktisukhasyātra kathamabhyudayo
bhavet||*



*etāvajanma-sāphalyaṁ dehināmiha dehiṣu|
prāṇairarthairdhiyā vācā śreya ācaraṇaṁ
sadā||
naiṣāṁ matistāvadurukramāṅghriṁ
sprśatyanarthāpagamo yadarthah||
mahīyasāṁ pādarajo'bhiṣekaṁ niṣkiṣcanānām
na vṛñita yāvat||*

First of all, one should keep far away all thoughts that arise through the function of the mind. The analysis of the 'Gnostic school' is to be completely given up.

*yāvānārtha udapāne sarvataḥ samplutodake|
tāvān saraveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya
vijānataḥ||*

Wells and small bodies of water are known as *udapana*; an enormous body of water is known as a *samplutodaka*. The function that a *samplutodaka* plays in bathing, drinking water and other activities is the same for an *udapana*. Similarly, the work that is achieved by *brāhmaṇas* who understand the purport of all the *Vedas* is the same that is achieved by *brāhmaṇas* who are specialized in only their own branches and who take shelter of the *Upanishads*, that ultimate work being the attainment of sufficient realization of the self.

Scriptures are unlimited. Truths related to the Supreme Lord are unlimited. For the jiva, it is impossible for them to understand it all. Therefore, the essence of all scriptures as well as the analysis and practice of that which is favorable for the remembrance and chanting of the names of Hari is necessary by all means; that is to be accepted from the scriptures. If my thirst is satisfied by drinking as much water as will fit in my palms when put together, then what is the need of the huge ocean for me? Love for Sri Hari is the jiva's ultimate object of desire. The words coming from the mouth of Sri Gurudeva instruct this very principle. Through the mercy of the spiritual master, one gets the mercy of Krishna. Therefore, one should not engage in

excessive scriptural study as is done by those on the ascending path (*arohapanthi*) of spirituality.

*daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā|
māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṁ taranti
te|
ye'pyanyadevatā bhaktā yajante
śraddhayānvitāḥ|
te'pi māmeva kaunteya
yajantyavidhipūrvakam||*

In this verse, through the word *mam*, Bhagavan is explaining, "Serve and worship Me, alone. Take shelter of Me. I am the one and only deliverer. Bhaktas can know Me through bhakti, alone. I take away all material attachments from one whom I bestow My mercy upon."

*yasyāhamanugrṇāmi hariṣye taddhanam
śanaiḥ|
tato'dhanam tyajantyasya svajanāḥ
duḥkhaduḥkitam|| (Srimad Bhagavatam
10.88.8)
avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīṁ
tanumāśritam|
param bhāvamajānanto mama bhūta-
maheśvaram|| (Bhagavad Gita 9.11)
ye yathā mām prapadyante tarṁstathaiva
bhajāmyaham|
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha
sarvaśaḥ|| (Bhagavad Gita 4.11)*

If one understands the usage of the word *mam*, then the question of a formless, featureless God philosophy does not come about. Krishna is saying – '*mam – kṛṣṇam – kṛṣṇam – kṛṣṇam*'.

*kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa!
kṛṣṇa! he|
kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa!
kṛṣṇa! he||
kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa!
rakṣa mām|*



*kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! pāhi
mām||
rāma! rāghava! rāma! rāghava! rāma!
rāghava! rakṣa mām||
kṛṣṇa! keśava! kṛṣṇa! keśava! kṛṣṇa! keśava!
pāhi mām||*

My master, Sri Nityananda, is busy at every moment to make everyone know about this Krishna. My master, Sri Nityananda, and my master's master, Sri Gaurasundara, have both spoken only about serving Sri Krishna; They have not spoken about serving Narayana or any other incarnations. *kṛṣṇa-prema* is attained solely through cultivating devotion for Sri Krishna. Sri Gaura-Nityananda have made this fact known to the world and have said to remember and serve Sri Krishna.

When *kṛṣṇa-prema* is being discussed, then Sri Rupa Goswamiprabhu's verse is to be followed:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam
jñānakarmādyanāvṛtam|
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktiruttamā||*

O, Baladeva Prabho! O, Krishnachandra! Protect us. Sri Gaura-Nityananda have taught the whole world to cultivate remembrance and service to Sri Krishna in this manner. If the jivas do not properly understand the truths related to Vishnu (*viṣṇu-tattva*), then they will gain no benefit. *Saciputramatra* – in this context, it is prescribed that cultivating devotion for the son of Saci Devi, Sri Krishna Chaitanyadeva must be done; this is because Sri Chaitanyadeva did not tell us to do anything other than serving Krishna. Sri Chaitanyadeva came to give His own devotion which had not been given before. In regards to His massive magnanimity, Sri Rupa Goswami says in the *Mangalacarana* of his *Vidagdha-madhava*:

*anarpitacarīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalaul
samarpayitumunnatojjvalarasām
svabhaktiśriyam||*

*hariḥ purāṭasundaradyuti-kadambasandīpitaḥ|
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ
śacīnandanah||*

In relation to the topmost, effulgent mellow – *unnatojjvala-rasa* – it is present at the topmost stage of devotion and service to Krishna. That topmost mellow was distributed by Sri Gaurasundara. Sri Rupa and Raghunatha Prabhus have made this about Mahaprabhu known.

When attachment and the desire to enjoy the material world is completely extinguished, then the words of Sri Rupa-Raghunatha will enter the ears; this entrance will not occur before that stage of being free of material attachment and desire. Srīman Mahaprabhu has explained about service to Krishna. Sri Nityananda Prabhu has explained about service to Sri Gaurasundara. Sri Damodara Svarupa, who was known by the name Purusottama Bhattacharya, has explained about service to Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Sri Rupa-Raghunatha have explained about that Svarupa-Damodara. From studying the literatures written by the Goswamis, it is understood that by discussing such topics about their glories, the confidential essential meanings of the *śruti* scriptures will be manifest in the heart. Srīla Das Goswami Prabhu has said:

*yadavadhi mama kācit maṣjarī rūpapūrvā
vrajabhūvi vata netradvandvadīptim cakāra|
tadavadhi tava vṛndāraṇyārāṣi prakāmaḥ
caraṇakamalalākṣā-saṁdidṛkṣā mamābhūt||*

Srīla Bilvamangala Thakura has said:

*advaitavīthī-pathikairupāsyāḥ
svānandasīmḥāsana-labdhadīkṣāḥ|
haṭhena kenāpi vayam śaṭhena
dāsīkṛtagopavadhūviṇa||*

Srīla Raghunatha Das Goswamiprabhu was a follower of Svarupa Damodara Prabhu, the



leader of the Gaudiya devotees. He praised Sri Chaitanyadeva and Srila Sanatana Goswamiprabhu in this manner:

*yo mām dustaragohanirjala-mahā-
kūpādapāraklamāt
sadyaḥ sāndradayāmbudhiḥ prakṛtitaḥ svairī
krpā-rajjubhiḥ
uddhṛtyātmasarojanindicaraṇaprāntam
prapadya svayaṁ
śrīdāmodarasāccakāra tamahaṁ
caitanyacandraṁ bhajell”
vairāgyayug bhaktirasam prayatnai-
rapāyayanmāmanabhīpsu-mandham|
krpāmbudhiryaḥ paraduḥkha-duḥkhī
sanātanaṁ taṁ prabhumāśrayāmi||*

This material cycle of birth and death is like a well bereft of water. The mud of that well is the attachment to the material body. Having fallen into such a well, there is no means of deliverance. *sadyaḥ sandrakrpambudhiḥ* means He who immediately manifests the merciful water of His true form to those people who are completely surrendered; I take shelter of that Srīman Mahāprabhu Sri Chaitanyacandra.

I was totally bereft of any desire to taste the essence of bhakti. Further, due to my foolishness, I did not even have eyes that could recognize the beauty of the essence of bhakti. I take shelter of the greatest of masters, Srila Sanatana Goswamiprabhu, who is an ocean of mercy, who felt misery upon seeing my miserable condition and made me taste the essence of bhakti through great care, effort and skilled renunciation, which connected everything with the Supreme Lord (*yukta-vairāgya*).

*caitanyacandrera dayā karah vicāra|
vicāra karile cite pābe camatkāra||*

Due to the lack of fine analysis of the *śruti* scriptural teachings, that which the *prakṛta-*

sahajia-sampradayas identify as bhakti is not bhakti at all. Let me repeat,

*vairāgyayug bhaktirasam prayatnair-
apāyayan-mām-anabhīpsu-mandham|
krpāmbudhir-yaḥ paraduḥkha-duḥkhī
sanātanaṁ taṁ prabhumāśrayāmi||*

He always felt despair upon seeing others' misery and he was an ocean of mercy; even though I did not have any desire, he made me, an unknowledgeable and blind person, drink the juice of devotion connected with renunciation through his great care and effort. I surrender unto that Sanatana Prabhu, the giver of knowledge which connects me with Krishna.

Cheating devotion which is connected with attachment for material sense objects is not the true essence of bhakti (*bhakti-rasa*) – not, not, not! Sanatana Prabhu or my eternal guru-pada-padma made me drink the juice of *kr̥ṣṇa-bhakti* even though I was not desirous of it by forcefully making me detached from material sense objects which are inferior to Krishna.

*vaikuṇṭhājjanito varā madhupurī tatrāpi
rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyamudārapāṇīramanattatrāpi
govarddhanah|
rādhakuṇḍamihāpi gokulapateḥ
premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryādasya virājato girigaṭe sevām vivekī na
kah||*

Vaikuntha situated in the spiritual world (*para-vyoma*) is superior in comparison to all other places of the spiritual world. Mathura-mandala, the birthplace of Bhagavan, is even superior to Vaikuntha. The Rasa-sthali where Krishna performed the Rasa-lila in Vrindavan is even superior to Mathura. Govardhana, the place where Krishna roams and performs pastimes freely, is even superior to Vrindavan. Radha-kunda, the place supreme place where



the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-prema* resides in the form of water, is even superior to Govardhana. Will any skilled, analytical, genuine bhakta (*sad-bhakta*) give up service to Sri Radha-kunda, situated at the base of Govardhana, and engage his mind in some other service?

*karmibhyaḥ parito hareḥ priyatayā vyaktim
yayurjṣāninas-
tebhyo jñānavimuktabhaktiparamāḥ
premaikaniṣṭhāstataḥ|
tebhyastāḥ paśupālapanākajadṛśas-tābhyopi sā
rādhikā
preṣṭhā tadvadiyaṁ tadīyasarasī tām nāśrayet
kaḥ kṛtī||*

Jivas who are fixed in goodness and engaged in pious activities are dearer to Krishna than jivas who engage in wrongful activities, following their own desires. In comparison to those who engage in pious activities, a *jñāni* who knows the *brāhmaṇa* and who has transcended all three modes of material nature is even dearer to Krishna. In comparison to a *jñāni*, a pure devotee (*suddha-bhakta*) is even dearer to Krishna. In comparison to a *suddha-bhakta*, a devotee fixed in unalloyed divine love for Krishna (*premaikaniṣṭha bhakti*) is even dearer to Krishna. In comparison to the *premaikaniṣṭha bhakta*, the damsels of Vraja (*vraja-sundarīs*) are even dearer to Krishna. In comparison to the *vraja-sundarīs*, Srimati Varsabhanavi is the most dear to Krishna. Srimati Radharani's kunda is as dear to Sri Krishna as She is, Herself, dear to Him. The *kṛṣṇa-bhakta* who has the most fortune will take shelter of Sri Radha-kunda in an unalloyed manner. The banks of Radha-kunda are the supreme place for remembering Krishna (*sarva-sreṣṭha bhajana-sthāna*). Who is foolish enough to give up Sri Radha-kunda and run towards Govardhana, Vrindavan or Mathura? That place which Krishna's dear devotee, Uddhava Mahasaya, did not achieve is the supreme place for remembering Krishna – the banks of

Sri Radha-kunda. Uddhava prayed in this manner –

*āsāmaho caraṇareṇu-juṣāmahaṁ syām
vṛndāvane kimapi gulmalatausadhīnām|
yā dustyajaṁ svajanamāryapathaśca hitvā
bhejurmukundapadavīm śrutibhirvimrgyām||*

Alas! Let me be the servant of the lotus feet of the *vraja-sundarīs* by being born as a shrub or plant or as a herb in Vrindavan as the *Vraja-sundarīs* renounced their own family, relatives and path of righteousness and went to serve Mukunda who is even searched out by the *śruti* scriptures.

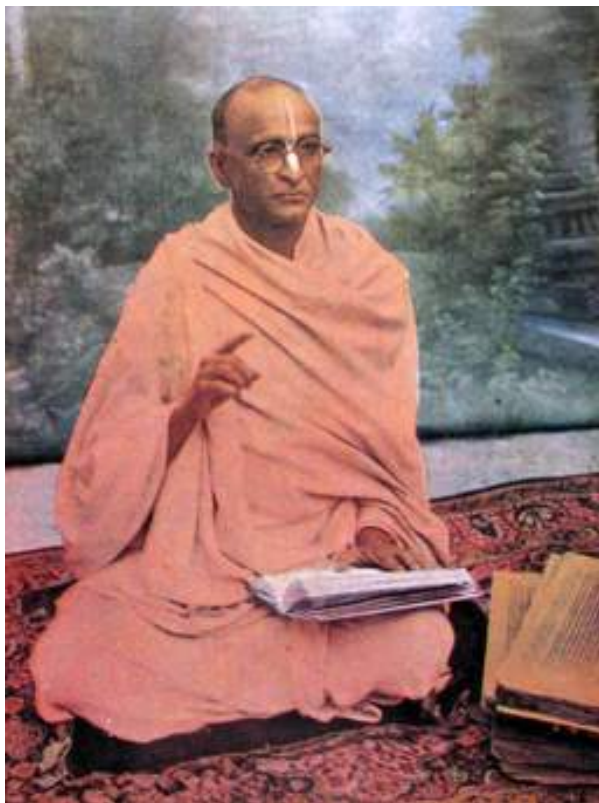
The path of pure remembrance and service to Krishna comes in the spiritual lineage through the words of the spiritual masters. Thus, it is necessary to discuss the *bhagavat-parampara*. Srila Narottam Das Thakur prayed to Sri Rupaprabhu as follows:

*Śrī caitanyamano'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena
bhūtale|
svyaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti
svapadāntikam||*

Sri Rupa Goswamiprabhu made the mind of Sriman Mahaprabhu known through various books such as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlāmanī* and so on. He distributed the essence of devotion through devotional literatures. Srila Jiva Goswamiprabhu and Srila Raghunath Das Goswamiprabhu directly came to now that it is impossible to reside at Radha-kunda without taking shelter of the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu. The supreme and topmost desire is to reside at Radha-kunda where Saivya or Candravali cannot enter. The supreme desire is to serve Sri Govinda by being the servant of Srimati Radharani. Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana Prabhu remembered the *abhidheyādhi-devata*, Sri Govindadeva, and then wrote the *Govinda-bhāṣya* commentary on the *Vedānta-sutra*. Our tens of millions of obeisance remain at the divine



feet of Srīman Nityānanda Prabhu whose life was totally devoted to Srī Gaurāṅga, who is non-different from Srī Nandanānanda.



Discourse given by Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur at Sri Yogapitha, Sri Mayapur Dham on the evening of 5th February 1936; Published in the 'Gaudiya' magazine, number 39, English translation by Swami B.B. Bodhayan on the occasion of Sri Nityananda Trayodashi, 2020

THE REASON FOR OUR DISTRESS

by HDG Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan
Goswami Maharaj

The Supreme Lord is the personification of peace and bliss. This universe is His creation. We are the fortunate living entities who are created by Him in the form of humans. But, why are we so distressed and sad? Even though we have dignified birth as humans, why do we envy each other? What is the way for us to be released from our daily distress, sadness and envy?

No matter where we stay, we must surely follow the rules of the place in which we stay. For example, it can be said that we must follow the rules of the country in which we reside. Otherwise, we will be faced with various difficulties from the government of that country. In order to overcome such difficulties, we will have to face various problems. If we are not pleased with the solution to these problems, then we have to face more problems and the resulting distress. For example, an Indian citizen goes to visit America from India. If that person does not follow the rules of the American Government, then the American Government will surely punish the Indian citizen. Those punishments will put that Indian citizen in a situation of difficulty and suffering. The galaxy has many universes. The main controller or governor of all of the universes is Lord Krishna. This government headed by Sri Krishna has the rule that you must do everything for the pleasure of Krishna. The rule of the government of Krishna is that *brahmanas*, *ksatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras* as well as *brahmacaris*, *grhasthas*, *vanaprasthis* and *sannyasis* must engage in pleasing Krishna through all of their actions. O, living entities embodied in human form, if you act for the pleasure of your own sense gratification and bodies, then you will have to surely experience distress and suffering. In the Chaitanya Charitamṛta, we learn how people who do not follow the rules of the government of Krishna receive punishments:

*kṛṣṇa bhulī' sei jīva anadī bahira-mukha
ataeva māya tare deya saṁsāra-ādi duḥkha*

“When the living entity forgets Krishna and becomes involved in external materialism, then the illusory energy gives that living entity the sufferings of the material cycle of birth and death.”

Now, there are some questions that naturally arise in our minds. What does *samsāra* mean?



People engage in family lives in order to experience happiness. Then why do they experience sadness?

First, we must understand what the word *samsāra* means. Then we can discuss the topic further. The living entities who are embodied as humans attain a particular association of people based on the results of their previous actions. The influence of this association creates the particular nature of the living entity. In this context, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur writes in his book, *Jaiva Dharma*:

“There are two stages of the living entity: 1. liberated state (*mukta-daśa*) and the 2. materially bound state (*samsāra-baddha-daśa*). The pure devotee of Krishna who has never become bound by the illusory energy or who has become liberated from the illusory material world by the mercy of Krishna is a liberated living entity (*mukta-jiva*) and is situated in the liberated state. One who has turned away from Krishna and who is bound in the illusory energy is a materially bound living entities (*baddha-jiva*) and is situated in the materially bound state. The living entity who is liberated from the illusory energy is transcendental (*cinmaya*) and its life's occupation is service to Krishna (*kṛṣṇa-dāsyā*). That living entity is not situated in the material world. That living entity is situated in the completely pure, transcendental world. That transcendental world is known as Goloka, Vaikuntha, Vrindavan, and so on. The living entities who are liberated from the material illusory energy are unlimited. The living entities who are bound in the material illusory energy are also unlimited. In the state of having turned away from Krishna (*kṛṣṇa-bahira-mukhata-daśa*), the illusory energy who is the shadow-like potency of Krishna (*māyā, chāyā-sakti*) binds that materially bound living entity by her three modes, namely the modes of goodness (*sattva-guna*), passion (*raja-guna*) and ignorance (*tama-guna*). Due to the variations in the modes of

material nature, the conditions of the various living entities have become diversified. Analyze the diversifications. The living entities have diverse bodies, moods, forms, natures, tastes, residences and destinations. The living entity enters the material world and gets a new sense of the concept of itself, “I”. In the purified state, the living entity is the servant of Krishna. This was its concept of itself earlier. Now, the living entity thinks of itself, “I am human. I am the Lord. I am an animal. I am a king. I am a brahmana. I am a dog-eater. I am suffering. I am hungry. I am humiliated. I am defeated. I am the husband. I am the father. I am the wife. I am the enemy. I am the friend. I am a scholar. I am handsome. I am powerful. I am weak.” In this way, how many identifications exists? This is known as the concept of “I” (*ahamata*). There is another concept known as belonging to ‘me’ (*mamata*) – “ My house, my things, my money, my body, my sons and daughters, my wife, my husband, my father, my caste, my color, my power, my form, my qualities, my knowledge, my renunciation, my scholarship, my actions, my wealth, my dependents, etc.” In this way, how many different types of “my”s exist. The notion of “I” and “mine” is a huge concept known as *samsāra*.”

The main reason of us entering into this material illusory world is due to our forgetfulness of Krishna being the supreme controller. The following example helps to understand the concept clearly. A person constructed many houses in this material world that is controlled by the illusory energy. That person is constantly thinking, “These houses are mine. I spent so much sweat and effort to make these houses.” If another person tries to exert even a miniscule amount of ownership over any of these houses, then there will be many arguments between this person and the person who constructed the houses. The judge in the court is also a living entity bound by the material illusory energy. The judge analyzes



and determines that the first person is the actual owner of the land and that the second person has exerted deceit and power to enjoy the land and houses. Then, the judge says, “The second person has taken over the houses in an unauthorized manner and must now pay a fine or serve a jail sentence.” Similarly, whatever we do based on this concept of having forgotten that the controller of this material world is Sri Krishna will force us to be punished by the judge of the illusory energy. In the material world of illusory energy, a person who is more attached to the concept of “I” and “mine” faces more suffering in the material world. In reality, if we engage in an appropriate manner in all of our material relationships and engage one-pointedly in the service of Sri Krishna, then we will not face any sufferings. The attachment to the material world of illusion is the root cause of our suffering. In order to better explain this concept, another example has been given below.

There is a small tree filled with thorns from the root to the top of the tree. A person is given the responsibility of taking care of the tree. The tree starts growing very tall and wide. The person takes care of the tree for a long time and starts developing affection for the tree. Now, if the person becomes overcome by attachment to the tree and hugs the tree, then the thorns from the tree will give the person great pain. It would have been proper for the person to not hug the tree and to just water it out of responsibility. Whilst we remain in the material world in our material bodies, we must execute our duties in relation to our material relatives such as family, neighbors and friends; however, it is not proper to become attached to any of those people. Material attachment is just like hugging the thorn-filled tree.

Thus, those who are truly intelligent, complete their worldly responsibilities however, do not become materially attached

to the world. They direct their attachment to the service of Krishna. Being attached to Krishna, they serve Him. Such an intelligent person does not become attached to anything of the material world and thus, does not have to face any suffering due to the illusory energy.

By Swami B.B. Bodhayan, January 2020

RAMANUJA ACHARYA'S HUNGER FOR KNOWLEDGE & LOVE FOR THE LORD

*by HDG Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami
Thakura*

According to the tradition, Sri Ramanujacharya appeared in AD 1017 on the fifth day of the full moon in the month of Chaitra.

When Nambi, Ramanuja's maternal uncle, heard of the birth, he immediately came to Perumbudar to see the child. On seeing his dear friend Asuri Kesavacharya, he embraced him and congratulated him on becoming a father of this jewel-like son. Looking at the child, he saw so many auspicious characteristics that he began repeating over and over, “This child is special and will become a great personality one day.” He said, “This boy should be named Lakshman, for he is just like Lord Ramachandra's younger brother (*rāmānuja*).” This identification remained, and to this day Sri Vaishnavas consider Ramanuja to be an incarnation of Lakshman.

The child grew quickly, and when he came of age, Kesavacharya immersed him in Sanskrit education, for which he developed a great love. As time passed, he underwent all the purificatory rites of a pious Hindu, including



the sacred thread ceremony and was married, at the age of sixteen.

Even after marriage, Ramanuja's hunger for knowledge was such that he sought out a teacher in the Vedanta. He heard of just such a professor named Yadava Prakash in the village of Tirupputkujhi near Kanchipuram and went to join his other students in a study of Vedanta. Yadava Prakasa followed the Shankaraite method of interpreting the Vedanta.

Not long after Ramanuja's birth, his aunt Sri Devi and her husband Kamalanayan Bhatta had also given birth to a son in the village of Majhalaimangalam (or Madhuramangalam), which was also not far from Kanchipuram. Periya Tirumalai Nambi immediately went to see the newborn and congratulated him on his good fortune. Nambi read the child's horoscope and came to the conclusion that he too would be learned in spiritual matters and would eventually renounce material life in order to pursue service to the Supreme Lord. The child was named Govinda. He too received all the rites of passage befitting a brahmin boy and given a good education. When he came of age, his parents got him married also. But when he heard that his cousin Ramanuja was nearby in Tirupputkujhi studying the Vedanta with Yadava Prakasa, he decided to join him and follow the same course of study.

The two cousins were attending classes regularly, but one day their teacher began to comment on the famous Taittirīya Upaniṣad text *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahman* (2.1.3): "Brahman is in essence truth, knowledge and infinity." Yadava Prakash argued, "All these attributes cannot exist simultaneously in Brahman any more than a cow can be without horns, have broken horns, and be endowed with healthy horns all at the same time.

Brahman cannot simultaneously possess mutually contradictory attributes. It goes against reason." Yadava Prakash was attempting to show that Brahman is without attributes, or *nirguṇa*.

Ramanuja objected this misinterpretation. He said, "If God is truth, then to say He has no attributes turns Him into a non-entity, something that has no real substance, no real being. As soon as you accept that God exists, you have to accept that He possesses attributes. If you don't accept His attributes, then He becomes non-truth. We have to accept that there is such a thing as existence. But even more, we must accept that the attributes of truth, knowledge and infinity are not inconsistent with each other as you claim. When the Srutis say that God is truth, they mean that He exists eternally. When they say that God is knowledge, they mean that He is conscious, or spiritual in nature. How could God be unconscious, or something other than spiritual? This would turn Him into just another lifeless lump of matter. Consciousness is thus inseparable from God's existence. God is transcendent spirit; this is His essential nature."

"Finally, it is said that God is infinite. God's existence and His consciousness are not restricted like that of the sense-bound conditioned souls. He is beyond all restrictions. He is not a limited, finite, miserable creature like we are. He is beyond the ability of our senses to grasp."

"Brahman is *satyaṁ*, meaning that he is eternal truth. He is *jñānam*, meaning that he is eternal spirit, the form of pure consciousness; and He is unlimited, in other words not restricted or conditioned by time, space or any mode like an ordinary material object. Therefore the relation between these three attributes of Brahman is one of



interdependence. They are not unrelated entities. A flower can be red, soft and fragrant at the same time, so too can Brahman possess these different attributes without any of them diminishing another. The example of the cow given by Yadava Prakash, on the other hand, is entirely irrelevant. The example of the flower, or that of the sun, whose heat and light are simultaneously existing, are both more fitting. Therefore, Brahman is the unlimited ocean of auspicious qualities, the possessor of infinite transcendental attributes; anyone who denies Him these attributes and says He is *nirguṇa* is talking about something other than the Brahman of the Srutis, who is *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahman*. Indeed, this is a perversion of the meaning of the Sruti. Though scriptures sometimes speak of God being without attributes, the meaning is that He is untouched by the material qualities, and possesses infinite transcendental qualities.”

Yadava was annoyed on hearing Ramanuja's interpretation, as it was a more logical understanding than the one which saw Brahman as something impersonal and without features. However, all he could do was look at his young student contemptuously and say, “Are you arguing with me?”

One day Ramanuja was massaging the back of his teacher Yadava Prakash, while the preceptor explained the texts from the Chandogya Upanishad (1.6.6-7) that contains the words *kapy āsam puṇḍarīkam evam akṣiṇī*. “Now that golden person, who is seen within the sun, with golden beard and golden hair, golden altogether to the very tips of his nails, whose eyes are like a blue lotus; his name is *ut*, for he has risen (*udita*) above all evil. He also who knows this, rises above all evil.”

However, Yadava Prakash explained the words *kapy-āsam puṇḍarīkam evam akṣiṇī* in accordance with Shankara's commentary:

tasyaivam sarvataḥ suvarṇa-varṇasyāpy akṣṇor viśeṣaḥ | katham? tasya yathā kaper markatasyāsaḥ kapyāsaḥ | āser upaveśanārthasya karaṇe ghaṇ | kapi-prṣṭhānto yenopaviśati | kapyāsa iva puṇḍarīkam atyantatejasvi | evam asya devasyākṣiṇī |

This is translated as follows: “This luminous Divine Being is golden in every part of his form; however, his eyes are different. How? Just like a monkey's lower behind, in other words, that portion he uses to sit on, the portion under his tail, is of a different color. A lotus is extremely effulgent like the behind of a monkey, and so too are the eyes of this Deity.”

When Ramanuja heard this vulgar comparison of the Supreme Lord's beautiful lotus eyes to a monkey's behind, and his eyes filled with hot tears. A few of them spilled over onto the acharya's back. Yadava Prakash looked back at his student and saw the sad look on his face. Yadava asked, “What's the matter, Ramanuja? You seem to be feeling some great inner sadness. Please tell me what is wrong.”

Ramanuja immediately responded, “O Gurudeva! The distorted explanation you have given of these beautiful Vedic lines has pained my heart terribly.”

These words made Yadava Prakash angry and he challenged his student to give a superior interpretation. Ramanuja said, “Can't you see that *ka* here means water, and *pi* is derived from the verb meaning to drink. So the word *kapi* means ‘water-drinker,’ or in other words, the Sun which dries up the water. The word *āsa* means ‘open’ or ‘in full bloom,’ and not ‘that which is sat upon.’ The word *puṇḍarīka*



means lotus. It is well known that the Supreme Lord is envisioned within the orb of the sun, and His eyes are like the lotus flower that blooms under the beams of the sun's rays. This understanding of the text seems much more reasonable to me, as it is widely known poetic trope that the sun is the lover of the lotus.

“I cannot believe that the great acharya Shankara did not know this meaning of the word *kapyāsa*, but he only gave this vulgar interpretation because he wanted to deceive foolish people. His goal was to mislead people away from the personal conception of God and to preach impersonalism.”

Yadava Prakash once again was unable to find a flaw in Ramanuja's reasoning. Nevertheless, he became enflamed at his student's audacity in countering the great acharya's commentary. He said, “Brazen child! If you have nothing more to learn from me, then it is perhaps best that you do not stay here. Give up your studies here and go somewhere else.”

Ramanuja said nothing, but humbly offered his obeisance and left. However, Yadava Prakash was bitter that he had been bested by a mere boy, and he further recognized that such an extraordinarily intelligent and talented person would, through his expertise in interpreting the scriptures, could do great damage to the Advaita school of philosophy. He thus thought, “Ramanuja could become a great enemy of the followers of Shankara by destroying their acharya's reputation. He will bring turbulence into the world of the Vedanta. We must get rid of him somehow or other.”

Motivated in this way by envy and sectarian feeling, he called his more devoted disciples together and began to talk to them of the danger that Ramanuja represented to their school of thought. Finally, Yadava Prakash

said, “Continue to deal with him in a friendly manner so that he does not suspect anything. Then in a few days, we will suggest that everyone go on pilgrimage to the northern holy places like Benares. Then, when he is taking his bath in the Manikarnika Ghat at Benares, make sure he drowns in the Ganges river. You will be able to expiate your sin.

This devilish plot was put into effect, and a short time later, Yadava Prakash's students, including Ramanuja and his cousin Govinda Bhatta, set off on a pilgrimage journey to North India. Govinda somehow learned of the plot, and though the other students suspected that he might tell Ramanuja and did everything to keep the two separate. When they reached the Vindhya Hills, however, Ramanuja fell behind the others and at the same time had to go to the toilet. Govinda managed to escape the eyes of his companions and told his cousin that his life was in danger. “These people have milk in their mouths and poison in their hearts,” he said. “Their purpose is to carry out an evil plot that our own teacher has devised.”

The two then took the opportunity to escape the danger and the unholy association of their fellow students. They left the main highway to follow less frequented paths, setting off through the deep jungle. Their feet were scratched and bleeding from the twigs and roots, but they pressed on. The sun beat down on them, abandoned and alone, without food or shelter, the two cousins became confused about what to do. At this time, they came across a forest-dwelling couple, and even though they made their living hunting and trapping animals, Govinda and Ramanuja considered them to be forms of the Lord who had appeared for their benefit in the middle of the wilderness.



Ramanuja asked them who they were and where they were going. They answered, “We are hunters and we are coming from the ashram of a realized saint in the north country. We are on our way to Satyavrata Kshetram.” The cousins knew that this was the name given in the Puranas to the sacred town of Kanchipuram or Conjeevaram.

Overjoyed that they were headed to a place they knew, Ramanuja asked if they could follow, and the couple gladly accepted to lead them through the forest. After a walking a little ways, the sun set and the four travellers had to look for a place to pass the night. They found shelter under a banyan tree and went to sleep. Towards the end of the night, the hunter’s wife got thirsty and asked her husband to get her some water. He answered that night was nearly over and they were not far from a clear lake where she would be able to drink to her heart’s content when morning came. Ramanuja overheard the conversation and thought, “If I had the strength, or if I knew the area, I would myself serve this kindhearted woman by fetching water to slake her thirst.” And so thinking he dozed off again.

When night ended, there was a gentle breeze blowing when they awoke. Ramanuja had God’s names on his lips and he started reciting his prayers and hymns as he was would do in the mornings. When he felt it was time to set off on their travels again, he looked around for the hunter couple, but saw them nowhere. He called out and searched in every direction but could not find them anywhere. He started walking, but had no idea which way he should be going. He started to become afraid. As the sun rose in the sky, he looked around for some sign of which direction he should go, but remained confused. Then he heard the sound of people making a noise and

followed the sound. He came to a beautiful pond, surrounded by flowers and fruit trees.

He went to the people to ask them where he was, whether there was any town nearby. But when he asked them, they looked at him curiously and said, “Don’t you know where you are? Look over there.” Ramanuja looked and saw that the great gopuram of the Varadaraj temple in Kanchipuram was right there before him. Amazed, Ramanuja began to think that the pair of hunters who had shown him the way in the forest had surely been Lakshmi and Narayan, for how could he and Govinda have travelled the thousand miles from the Vindhya Hills all the way to Kanchipuram in a single night without the miraculous intervention of the Lord? He was overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy at the thought of their unlimited mercy.



From that day on, Ramanuja remained in Kanchipuram, taking water from the same tank each day for the service of the Varadaraj deity.

Translated from the unpublished works of HDG Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur



VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: FEBRUARY 2020

Date	Festival
1 February	Appearance Day of Sri Advaita Acharya
3 February	Disappearance day of Srila Madhva Acharya
4 February	Disappearance day of of Srila Ramanuja Acharya
5 February	Bhaimi Ekadasi
6 February	Appearance Day of Lord Varaha (Varaha dvadashi)
7 February	Appearance Day of Sri Nityananda Prabhu (Nityananda trayodashi)
9 February	Appearance Day of Srila Narottam Das Thakur (Maghi purnima)
13 February	Appearance Day of Sri Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada
19 February	Vijaya Ekadashi
22 February	Sri Shivaratri
24 February	Disappearance Day of Srila Jagannath Das Babaji Maharaj

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Dedicated to:
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His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur PRABHUPADA.

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