

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur

# BHAGAVATA

The e-magazine of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math

Issue No.40

February 2023

## DHARMA

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We find that we are able to achieve what we want when we apply our best efforts. This is also true for our spiritual practice. We must endeavour to apply all of our energy to follow in the footsteps of our spiritual teachers (guru-varga) to eventually reach our goal. The more we follow their instructions, the more mercy we will receive from them. By their mercy, we will be able to chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra purely. The pure chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra is the best spiritual practice to reach our final destination, Goloka Vrindavan. We are searching for eternal happiness all of our life. We can be successful in finding this eternal happiness if we chant the Mahamantra.

*His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj*

*President, Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math*



## MAGHI PURNIMA

Today is Maghi Purnima as per the Vedic calendar, and it is also the appearance day of Srila Narottam Das Thakur Mahashaya. Some say that he appeared on this day, whilst others say that he took initiation from Srila Lokanath Goswami Maharaj (Manjulali Manjari in the eternal abode) on this day. However, it does not matter. Taking initiation from a guru is considered to be like taking a new birth. Srila Narottam Das Thakur is Champak Manjari in the eternal abode. He is a significant personality in Gaudiya Vaishnavism. There is a pastime (before the birth of Srila Narottam Thakur) where Lord Chaitanya went to the Padma River (close to where Srila Narottam Thakur was born) and left prema for him there whilst calling out 'Nuru Nuru' (short for Narottam). At that time, no one understood to whom Lord Chaitanya was calling out. Years later, Srila Narottam Thakur was born into a royal family there and became a devotee of Lord Krishna. Srila Narottam Thakur was born in a village called Kheturi in the Rajshahi district in current Bangladesh. He was the only disciple of his Gurudev. Interestingly, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur appeared in the same family lineage as Srila Narottam Das Thakur. Our Srila Prabhupada was also the only disciple of his Gurudev HDG Paramhansa kula-chudamani Thakur Srila Gaur Kishore Das Babaji Maharaj. Srila Narottam Das Thakur extensively spread Lord Chaitanya's message. Then, years later, Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur continued preaching the message of Lord Chaitanya in and around India, as well as abroad. Therefore, this is a very special day. Srila Narottam Das Thakur composed many deep and profound songs, which we will only realise through the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. Chanting will make our life completely peaceful and blissful.

## THE ETERNAL TREASURE

Our previous teachers of this spiritual path are the treasures of this universe. We will realise their true value in our lives as our faith in them gradually develops. Looking back into our scriptures, we can see that our ancient sages revealed certain truths about the world around us. Thousands of years later, with the help of modern tools and technology, science has come to the same conclusions. One example of this is that for hundreds of years, scientists classified plants and trees as non-living. They did not believe that trees have life, but when the scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose presented the world with evidence that trees have life, the science world accepted this as a fact. However, thousands of years ago, Maha-muni Veda Vyas mentioned in one of the scriptures called the Padma Purana that the Lord created this material world with 8,400,000 species of life and that the soul transmigrates through all these species of life.

*jalaajā nava-lakṣāṇi  
sthāvarā lakṣa-vimśati  
kṛmayo rudra-saṅkhyakāḥ  
pakṣiṇām daśa-lakṣaṇam  
triṁśal-lakṣāṇi paśavaḥ  
catur-lakṣāṇi mānuṣāḥ*

These verses describe the number of different categories of living entities within this material world. *jalaajā nava-lakṣāṇi* - there are 900,000 different types of aquatic species, *sthāvarā lakṣa-vimśati* - 2,000,000 species of non-moving living entities (trees, plants, stones, etc.), *kṛmayo rudra-saṅkhyakāḥ* - 1,100,000 different species of reptile, insects and worms, *pakṣiṇām daśa-lakṣaṇam* - 1,000,000 different species of birds, *triṁśal-lakṣāṇi paśavaḥ* - 3,000,000 species of animals, *catur-lakṣāṇi mānuṣāḥ* - 400,000 species of humans.

This verse is worth expanding on because it shows us the vast number of species of life



that the soul journeys through and makes us question which of these species of life the soul can make spiritual progress in and allow us to exit this cycle of life and death. Apart from the 400,000 different species of humans, the other 8,000,000 species of life have a fixed nature, behaviour, and food habit. This has been fixed by the Lord. They are unable to change their food habit, behaviour, and nature. However, human nature can change and adapt accordingly. Human nature, culture, and food habit is not fixed by the Lord.

There are different types of humans worldwide (such as Chinese, African, European, Asian etc). Outwardly, they may look different, but physiologically, all humans are the same. Their nature, culture, and food habits are not fixed by the Lord. All these things are the result of one's association. Most people seem to think that meat is essential for the body's nutrition, in contrast to those practicing Vaishnavism (especially the followers of Lord Chaitanya who are practicing under the shelter of His Divine Grace Saccidananda Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, His Divine Grace Srila Gaur Kishore Das Babaji Maharaj, and His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur—he founder acharya of all the branches of the Gaudiya Math). These followers will not accept any meat, eggs, fish, or foods containing onion and garlic, yet they are healthy and have a varied and balanced diet. Around the world, people are gradually realising the harm that meat-eating causes to the health of the body. Many are turning to veganism. From this, we can see that we choose the type of food we eat depending on our principles, association, and taste. Our diet is not fixed by the Lord.

Similarly, the culture we follow also depends on our association. For example, in South India, wedding ceremonies are held after sunrise, but in North India, it is the opposite. North Indians get married after sunset because that time is favourable. Also in

South India, people consider taking bananas on a journey auspicious, but in North India, bananas are inauspicious for the journey. Another example is the use of the thumb finger. In India, showing the thumb finger to someone is an insult, whereas it is a good gesture in the west. The language one speaks also results from one's environment and association. Therefore, we conclude that human culture, a person's nature, and food habits are not fixed by the Lord.

The association plays a key role in our ways of life and the beliefs we hold. People misuse their intelligence when under the influence of the wrong association. An example is the importance of cows in our society. The ancient Indian medicine system called Ayurveda describes the significance of many products from a cow, such as cow urine, dung, and milk. Ayurveda prescribes cow urine to cure many chronic diseases, and that cow dung has antiseptic and purifying properties. Cow milk is used to make cheese, yoghurt, and cream, which are then used to make a variety of sweets and eatables. However, people are misusing this free will, and instead of having compassion for all living beings, they are killing cows (as well as other animals) for their meat and flesh. They consider this to be food and suitable for their body.

When I was a small boy, I once read a story about a greedy person who kept a duckling. When the duckling grew and became a duck, it started to lay golden eggs. He was amazed to see the golden eggs and thought that if he killed the duck, he would be in possession of many more golden eggs, so he killed the duck. To his disappointment, there were no golden eggs inside the duck. If he did not kill the duck, then he would have got a golden egg every day, and that would have been enough for his livelihood. In this way, cows are beneficial for society. They give us so many things which are helpful for our health and the environment, yet people kill cows to enjoy the meat. In the same way that the mother nourishes her child with her



breast milk, the cow is also like the mother of society because she gives us beneficial things.

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, manifested his pastimes in Vrindavan and played with the cowherd boys and the cows, He showed us the importance and significance of cows. He demonstrated this by worshipping the cows and accepting sweets and different preparations made from milk and its products.

It is disappointing to see that as modern society ‘advances’, more people neglect and forget the instructions given to us by our previous teachers. Commercial products made from harmful chemicals are being widely used and are compromising our health.

As explained before, Jagadish Chandra Bose concluded that trees have life in recent history, but Maha-muni Srila Veda Vyas, explained to us through the Padma Purana that every living entity has a soul, and this soul enters a material body and goes through the cycle of birth and death. But, as soon as we get this human form, we have a unique advantage, and that is that we have the intelligence and free will to escape from this painful cycle of birth and death. To do this successfully, we must first apply our intelligence correctly and get the right association, where we can accumulate all the previous ancient knowledge, which is a treasure for our life and the universe. To implement the ancient cultures into this modern times, Lord Chaitanya appeared 537 years ago and taught us by His own example how to follow the treasured ancient teachings our previous teachers kept for us. Some of the important teachings are how to maintain our human life whilst keeping due respect to all living entities and develop the best consciousness to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna (who is the root cause of eternal happiness in this entire universe).

Our previous teachers said that the material world is full of misery. Here, everything is changing daily, and as such, we should not run behind worldly things. All living things are in search of happiness. For example, ants look for sweet things to eat, and dogs run behind those who give them affection. In this regard, I would like to tell you about an experience I had with a dog once. In 2005, I was on a farm called Saranagati in Canada. It was run by the ISKCON devotees. Next to Saranagati farm, there was another farm called Bhumi Farm owned by Balakrishna Prabhu. They had a dog named Laddu. Three cars full of devotees pulled up to the farm, and everyone got out of their car. As soon as we all got out, Laddu came running over and started licking everyone’s feet out of excitement and wagging his tail in happiness. I was not particularly fond of dogs because I had a bad experience of being chased by a mad dog when I was a young boy. As a result, when Laddu came near me to lick my feet, I shouted at him and told him to go away. In the five days that I was at the farm, I noticed that Laddu went near to everyone except me. I saw that he was a loving dog, but because I shouted at him on the first day, he kept his distance from me. I called Laddu to come to me, but he never did. I realised then that animals also have feelings and emotions, and they will only go to those people who give them affection. I noticed the same with rabbits, too. Many people keep rabbits as pets, and they also go to people who feed them lovingly. Humans are also drawn to people who show them love and affection. Love is eternal, but in this material world, nothing is stable and permanent, and so, this so-called ‘love’ found in the material world is also not permanent. The embodiment of pure love is God Himself—the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna. We must apply our intelligence and seek eternal and pure love, which is permanent. To introduce us to the concept of pure and eternal love, Sri Krishna appeared in the form of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (as a devotee of Sri Krishna), and demonstrated how to apply our love





towards Krishna, how to develop compassion towards all living beings, keep friendship for relatives and neighbours, and how to chant the Mahamantra with firm faith. Lord Chaitanya also revealed how chanting the Lord's Name; Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare, is nondifferent to the Lord Himself. The Mahamantra is pure, eternally liberate (they are also the qualities of the Lord), and so it is the same as the Lord Himself. This truth is revealed in the Srimad Bhagavatam:

*nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś  
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ  
pūṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto  
'abhinnavān nāma-nāminoḥ*

We have been instructed and inspired to chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra whilst maintaining a balance between our material duties and spiritual practice by Lord Chaitanya and His spiritual descendants (our previous teachers), in this current age of Kali Yuga. I am trying to emphasise the point of keeping a balance between our material and spiritual life, because some devotees following in the line of Lord Chaitanya get swept away with newly found spiritual knowledge and neglect their material duties thinking that the Lord will take care of everything and that they do not need to work. They think that our material duties will be taken care of by the Lord and since they do not want material gain, they also stop working. This is their wrong understanding of how to be in this material world. The Lord emphasised the need to maintain both your material and spiritual life.

This material world is created by the Lord, and even the atheists who don't believe in the Lord are also created by the Lord. All living entities, whether they are aware or not aware, believers or non-believers – all are part and parcel of the Lord. Therefore, the Lord says, 'keep compassion for all living beings.' He never said to accept some and to

ignore others. If we look at this matter closely, we will see that even atheists or non-believers inherently believe in the existence of God. How? As mentioned previously, every living being wants to be loved. The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna is the embodiment of pure love. So, whoever wants to be loved, they are essentially seeking the Supreme Lord. Love is light, and even the trees whose consciousness is covered (*acchadita chetan*), seek light. If we place a plant in a dark room with light coming through only one window, you will see that the plant will bend towards the direction of the light. The Lord is the symbol of light, and darkness represents illusion (*Maya*). Even though humans have been given the best intelligence, they are still trapped in darkness (illusion) because they do not seek to find the light.

*kṛṣṇa-sūrya-sama; māyā haya andhakāra  
yāhān kṛṣṇa, tāhān nāhi māyāra adhikāra*

Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswamipad says in the Chaitanya Caritamrita (Madhya Lila 22.31) that Krishna is like the sun and Maya is darkness (illusion). Where Krishna is present, there cannot be any darkness and, therefore, no illusion. Maya has no influence in Krishna's presence. She (Maya Devi) is the servant of Krishna and is fully surrendered to His will.

Krishna confirms this in the Bhagavad Gita:

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī  
mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante  
māyām etāṁ taranti te*

Lord Krishna says His Maya is 'guna-mayi' – Maya is full of qualities. She has been appointed by the Lord to keep all the living entities covered in her illusory energy. If the living entities are not connected with and serving Krishna, then her illusory energy causes them distress.



Due to the influence of this so-called ‘modern’ society, people are losing faith in the Lord and are attracted to illusion, expecting to find the light (eternal peace and happiness), and love.

But this material world is always changing. Its nature is that nothing here is eternal, and so, day by day, our suffering is also increasing. Our treasured Maha-muni Veda Vyas mentions the importance of the ‘Go Mata’, (the cow is referred to as the mother cow), Vrinda Devi (tulasi or holy basil), and Ganga Mata (Mother Ganges). I have already explained the utility of ‘Go Mata’ in our lives and how ignorance is leading people to commit horrendous violence towards her. Similar things are also happening elsewhere. Ganges water is extremely holy and pure. Her water is stored in homes for purifying oneself and the environment. Stored Ganges water will not grow mould and bugs compared to other water stored in bottles. Again, due to people’s ignorance and influence of the material energy, we are damaging the river and affecting the quality of the Ganges water. This misuse of the holy river water is slowly having a degrading effect on society. Artificially they may be trying to make pure water, but it is not spiritually pure and will not have the same effect as Ganga, Yamuna, Kaveri or any other holy river water given to us by the Lord. Regarding the tulasi plant, - the Lord accepts all offerings only when it is offered with a tulasi leaf. The Lord says:

*bina tulasi prabhu eka nahi mani*

“I will not accept any offering without tulasi”

We know from the book Hari Bhakti Vilas that there are five benefits of having a tulasi plant. They are:

1. The Lord is pleased with one who keeps the tualsi plant at home.
2. If one offers water to the tulasi plant every day, then that person will become

free of fear from the god of death (Yamaraj).

3. If anyone looks at the tulasi plant in the early morning and with devotion, then whatever sins they committed unknowingly the day before, the reactions of those sins will be eradicated.
4. Simply touching the tulasi plant will fully purify the body without the need to take bath in Ganga water.
5. Offering tulasi with sandalwood paste at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord with full devotion will take us to the abode of the Supreme Lord.

These are the five benefits of tulasi plant mentioned in the Hari Bhakti Vilas. Nowadays, people have lost the awe and reverence for the tulasi plant and use it for its medical properties to cure their ailments instead of worshipping her. There is a lack of respect for this extremely holy plant which is very dear to Lord Krishna. Nowadays, we are keeping other plants at home but not the tulasi plant.



In summary, it can be said that society has started to neglect and disrespect the things



that the scriptures declare as our ‘mothers’. This is the cause of the degradation of our culture, nature, and food habit. Consequently, we cannot access and implement the Lord’s teachings in our lives. There is a well-known English proverb which says that ‘you are what you eat’. Our ancient scriptures also agree with this statement.

*Ahara suddhau sattva-suddhih  
Sattva-suddhau dhruva smrtiḥ*

“If the food we eat is pure, then this will purify the mind and consciousness. When the mind and consciousness are pure then we will be able to meditate on the Lord.”

Pure food is that which can be and is offered to the Lord. Current society is confused about what pure food is and will wrongly advertise both vegetarian and non-vegetarian as pure food. In truth, food is pure when it is offered to the Lord with devotion, and then we accept the Lord’s remnants.

Society’s degradation is also a result of greed for money. People become intoxicated by smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol. This is a trendy way of celebrating in social gatherings, and it has become a fashion for families to drink alcohol together. The instructions given to us by the previous teachers have been forgotten. Their instructions are valuable to a happy and healthy life.

The previous teachers said that ‘the Lord has established all the systems in this world. We should not ignore His systems.’ For example, we know from present science that plants take in carbon dioxide and give out oxygen, and living beings inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Through this symbiotic relationship, the Lord is keeping balance in the material world, but modern scientists say that there is no God. So how is it possible? Who made this system of reciprocation between plants and other living beings? Did any scientist establish this system, or was it God?

We always want daylight. People are always running towards places where they can view the sunrise and take in the sun’s rays. But who created the sun? Shastra says that the sun is another expansion of the Supreme Lord – one that protects us from darkness and helps us to produce food. Without the sun, it is impossible to produce flowers and food from trees. Scientists know how helpful the sun is, as we now rely on solar power to generate electricity.

Water feeds everything in this world. Without it, there would be no life. Science says that water comes from clouds and that the sun is part of the water cycle. But who is giving us water? The answer is Indra Dev – another expansion of the Supreme Lord. Thus, if we look, we can see that everything that is needed to sustain our life is an expansion of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. If we surrender ourselves to the Lord, we can realise His mystical charisma. In this regard, a *Srimad Bhagavatam* Catur sloki (which is the direct dialogue of the Supreme Lord to the first living being, Brahma) says:

*jṣānam paramaguhyam mē  
yadvijñānasamanvitam  
sarahasam tadaṅgam ca gṛhāṇa gaditam  
mayā  
yāvānaḥ yathābhāvō  
yadrūpaṅgaḥ karmakḥ  
tathāiva tattvavijñānamastu tē  
madanugrahāt  
ahamēvāsamēvāgrē  
nānyadyatsadasatparam  
paścādahaṁ yadētacca yō: vaśiṣyēta  
sō: smyahaṁ  
ṛtē: rtham yatpratiyēta na pratiyēta  
cātmani  
tadvidyā dātmanō māyām yathā: ’bhāsō  
yathā tamah  
yathā mahānti bhūtāni  
bhūtēṣū cāvacēṣvanu  
praviṣṭānyapraviṣṭāni tathā tēṣu na  
tēṣvahaṁ*



*ētāvadēva jīṣāsyam  
tattvajīṣāsunā: 'tmanah  
anvayavyatirēkābhyām yatsyātsarvatra  
sarvadā  
ētanmataṁ samātiṣṭha paramēṇa  
samādhinā  
bhavāṅkalpavikalpēṣu na vimuhyati  
karhicit*

The Supreme Lord said to Brahma, “I am giving you the extremely hidden knowledge, the scientific knowledge, where all my mystery is. But if I tell you everything, don't think you will be able to understand this mystery without my mercy.” To get the mercy of the Supreme Lord, we must surrender. Lord Chaitanya taught us that the life and soul of devotional practice is surrendering. We know this knowledge from the writings of HDG Saccidananda Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur:

*śnī-kr̥ṣṇa-caitanya prabhu jīve doyā kori'  
swa-pāṇsada suīya dhāma saha avatari'*

*atyanta durlabha prema koribāre dāna  
śikhāya śaraṇāgati bhakatera prāna*

To bestow compassion on all living beings, the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna appeared as Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with all His associates in the holy dham of Navadwip, Mayapur. The compassion in His teachings allows us to go through the doorway of devotion and teaches us that surrendering is the life and soul of devotional practice. But to whom do we surrender? We must apply our best intelligence to find this answer. Due to material influence, our intelligence is not directed toward devotion but rather toward working under illusion. To apply our intelligence in the correct way, our previous teacher Srila Narottam Das Thakur said that we must pray from the bottom of our hearts to Krishna for the holy association. Holy association means associating with pure devotees of Krishna—who we consider to be initiating and instructing spiritual masters (*diska* and *shiksa guru*). The Lord will take

us to our *diksa* and *siksa guru*, and also bring them toward us.

In this regard, I would like to tell you a story about my spiritual master. He appeared in Jessore District, Ganganandapur village on the bank of the Kapaktksha river (in current Bangladesh). My grand spiritual master His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur appeared in Puri Orissa, and eventually moved to Mayapur and took a vow to chant 1 billion Holy Names (which takes more than ten years, even when chanting 192 – 3 lakhs – per day). While completing his vow to chant 1 billion Holy Names, my spiritual master was pulled by the Lord towards Srila Prabhupada. Similarly, if you look at the biography of HDG Srila Bhakti Daiyta Madhava Goswami Maharaj (founder acharya of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math), you can see that he searched for his guru in the Himalayas, but he met his guru, Srila Prabhupada, when Srila Prabhupada was staying at 1 Ultandanga Junction Road in Kolkata. In this way, you can say that Srila Madhava Goswami Maharaj was pulled by the Lord towards Srila Prabhupad. Whoever is surrendered from the bottom of their heart to the Lord and begs the Lord for holy association and to be delivered from this miserable condition, the Lord always pulls them towards His pure devotees. In Chaitanya Caritamrita, one of our great previous teachers, Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswamipad instructed us on whom we should surrender to in order to be delivered from this miserable and mundane world:

*guru vaishnava bhagavan tiner smaran  
tiner smarane hoy vighna vinashan  
onayashey hoy nijo banchito puron.*

In this text, Srila Kaviraj Goswamipad says that we should first surrender to our initiating guru, then our instructing guru, and then we can reach Bhagavan. Bhagavan is always in His eternally blissful abode. If we want to go there, we should be free from the bondage of this material world. To become





free of this condition, the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna appeared as Sri Krishna Chaitanya and instructed us to chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra and practice pure devotion. This is the only way to be completely free from our desires for sense enjoyment. We enjoy ourselves through these 5 senses; There are five main sense enjoyment objects and they are; *rupa* (form), *rasa* (taste), *shabda* (sound), *gandha* (smell), *sparsha* (touch). As soon as we become free from these desires, we can make our *citta* (the combination of our mind, heart, and consciousness) pure. If our *citta* is pure, we can reach the eternal abode. Modern material teachings will not allow us to be free from our sense-enjoyment. Instead, they inspire us to become more attached to sense-enjoyment. As human beings, we have been given the best intelligence by the Lord, and we should run behind the eternally blissful abode and not material life.

According to the above discussion, we should engage ourselves in the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra, which will allow us to feel compassion for all living beings, amicable relations with everyone, and pure love for the Lord. If a person has pure love for the Lord, they will see all living beings as souls and will not kill them. Instead, they will deliver them. You may think that the vegetables that we eat also have life. They are delivered if we offer them to the Lord – the Lord delivers them, and we accept His remnants. By taking only prasada, we will increase our devotion. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna explained to Arjun that:

*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke  
jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*

“All living beings are eternal parts of Me.”

Therefore, we should establish devotion in our *citta* through devotional association. It is impossible to get devotion through material association. Devotion means pure love for the Lord without any material expectations.

Pure love means that we should give and do everything for the satisfaction of the Lord. These are the teachings given to us by our previous teachers and are the purpose of our presence in this human form. I humbly request everyone to please understand the value of previous teachers and their instructions. This means visiting holy lands, reading and preserving holy books under the guidance of holy people and respecting divine persons and living beings accordingly. We can re-establish our connection with the Supreme Lord by chanting the Hare Krishna Mahamantra under the shelter of pure devotees. Lord Chaitanya (the Supreme Lord Himself) appeared in this Kali Yuga as a devotee and taught us how to practice devotional life. Please try to follow the devotional practice to the best of your ability. If you do this, I am sure it will allow you to achieve your goal of this human life – to reach the eternal abode as the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord, and to become eternally blissful. I leave you with a shloka from the Bhagavad Gita:

*ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ  
punar āvartino arjuna*

“Whatever you do within these 14 planetary systems, you will achieve your destination according to karma”. But, whenever we dedicate ourselves to the Lord wholeheartedly, we shall never return to this material world.

My humble request to all the readers is to please keep firm faith on the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, on previous teachers, and in the scriptures written by Maha-muni Veda Vyas. This will connect you to the Lord and eternally liberate you from this miserable and mundane world.

Please bless me so that I can keep the same faith in them, deliver myself from this miserable world, and establish my eternal identity as the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord.



Desiring for a speck of feet dust of a pure devotee,

An unworthy servant of the loving mission of Lord Chaitanya,

B.B.Bodhayan

*Written by HDG Srila B.B.Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja in January 2023.*

## GLIMPSSES OF THE LOTUS FEET OF SRILA PRABHUPADA

Once Srila (Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura) Prabhupada was viewing the Deities of Sri-Sri Guru Gauranga-Gandharvika-Giridhari at the Sri Caitanya Math, standing on the front porch of the temple. The door of that temple is not very wide and Srila Prabhupada did not have his glasses on.

Standing next to him was one of his dear disciples. The disciple thought perhaps Prabhupada could not view the Deities very well through the narrow doorway. He said, "Prabhupad, this doorway is not very wide. So it is not possible to view the Deities very well from inside." Hearing this, Prabhupad smiled, and he said for the benedit of all of us, "We should not think of the Supreme Lord as an object of our vision. Instead we should meditate on the thought of how we can acquire some qualifications so we can become worthy objects of His vision. We should think about whether He wants to see us, and whether He will want to reveal Himself to us.

*atah sri-sri krsna-namadi na bhaved  
grahyam-indriyaih  
sevonmukhe-hi jihvadau svayam-eva  
spuratyadah*

*(Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, Eastern Wave,  
2.109)*

"The holy name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Sri Krishna are divine and transcendental. They cannot be experienced by material senses. The Lord manifests Himself spontaneously on the tongue of a devotee who is eager to serve Him." Just as a devotee waits to see the Lord with great patience and eagerness, sometimes the Lord also waits with great patience and eagerness to see His devotee. It is described in the *Caitanya-caritamrta* how the hidden Deity of Gopal in Vrindavan was waiting for His beloved devotee, Sri Madhavendra Puri.

*bahu-dina tomara patha kari niriksana  
kabe asi madhava ama karibe sevana*

*(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madya-lila 4.39)*

For many days I have been watching the road for you, and I have been wondering, "When will Madhavendra Puri come here to serve Me?" In this way the Supreme Lord, who succumbs to His devotee's love, waits to see His devotee with great eagerness.

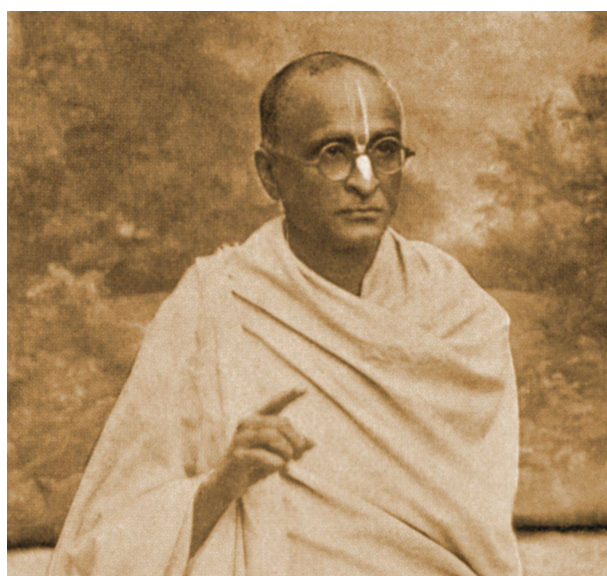
*bhaktera dravya prabhu 'kari' kari' khaya  
abhaktera dravya prabhu 'ulati' na caya*

"The Lord will grab food from His devotee, but He will not even glance at anything given by a non-devotee." This is why the eagerness to serve Him in loving devotion has to be present.

Srila Prabhupada's loving devotion for the lotus feet of his Gurudev is beyond our comprehension. At one time he told us, "When I used to think that I was a big scholar of mathematics and philosophy, by my good fortune I got darshan of the lotus feet of Sri Gurudev. He ignored everything that was previously appreciated in me by others: my truthfulness, my moral and pious life, and scholarship, knowing them to be of little value. When he ignored whatever was good in me, I realized how good he himself was, he who could ignore so many "good qualities" in me; what inconceivable wealth there was in him. Being ignored by him, I



realized that there was no one more fallen than me, more contemptible than me, and that this was my real identity. This great soul did not consider the things which I considered to be highly desirable, such as scholarship and pure moral character, to have any value. Then I realized what was in this great soul was absolutely priceless. I prayed very humbly to the Supreme Lord for His mercy. Later, by the mercy of the Supreme Lord, I realized that without receiving the mercy of this great soul and serving him, nothing good could happen to me.



When I realized that and acted accordingly, by taking shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Gurudev and by receiving his unlimited causeless mercy, I considered my life fulfilled. I have understood that if the people of the world do not receive the same jolt that I received from my Gurudev, then their consciousness will not awaken.

Therefore I am telling everyone, 'I am more stupid than anyone else in the world; please, all of you, do not be stupid like me. Do not live your life within the limitation of a calculating consciousness. Please enter the realm of the unlimited, and you will become very wealthy. I am only asking you to accept that which I have understood, by the

causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord, to be supremely beneficial.'

In another place he wrote, "Even after seeing Srila Gaur Kishore Das Babaji, many people, the immature and the clever, the young and the old, the scholarly and the foolish, those lacking devotion and those proud of their devotion, did not have the proper transcendental vision to see him. This is the transcendental power of a pure devotee. Hundreds of people came to him for his instruction, to fulfill their material desires. But that instruction was actually deceiving them. Many people take the garb of *sadhus*, and many people outwardly act like *sadhus*, but in reality, not only are they not *sadhus*, but they are very far from any *sadhu*. But there is no such impurity in my Lord. By his own example he demonstrated that purity was truth.

His genuine affection was incomparable to anything in this world. He had no dislike for his competitors or his enemies. Even to those who received his mercy, he did not demonstrate any external favor. He used to say "In this world there is no one who is the object of my liking or disliking. I consider everyone to be respectable."

Another inconceivable thing was that often deceitful, materialistic people whose mood was unfavorable to pure devotion, would surround my Gurudev without understanding his real position. They considered themselves objects of his affection yet kept their attachment to petty things. But he did not outwardly make any effort to get rid of them, nor did he accept them in any way.

On the 29th of October, 1934, Srila Prabhupad discovered the place of pilgrimage where Srila Rupa Goswami saw Sri Gopal in the village of Sati-gara in Mathura. I remember in 1935, starting from the 8th of October, Srila Prabhupad observed Sri Damodar-vrata on the bank of his beloved Sri Radha Kunda. Every day he



gave lectures on *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta*, *Upanishads*, and other holy scriptures. Every day he would circumambulate Sri Radha Kunda and would hear or talk about the eight daily pastimes (*asta-kaliya-lila*). At this time, to properly serve Sri Vraja-mandal, he started regular meetings preaching the glories of Sri Vraja-Dham (*Sri Vraja-Dham Pracarini Sabha*). How much he loved talking about Krishna is inconceivable. He would talk about Him for hours on end, and if anyone asked or even gestured for Srila Prabhupad's prasada to be brought in, he would be displeased. There were times when his disciples requested him not to talk very much, being so instructed by experienced doctors. If anyone would ask him how he was, Srila Prabhupad would answer, "I am fine. My only disease is that I am not allowed to talk about Krishna."

He used to say, "To wake up one sleeping soul, to make one conditioned soul aware of his real identity, one should be willing to give gallons of blood."

Srila Prabhupad was extremely affectionate to his disciples, and if he found out any one of them was bewildered by *Maya* he would shed tears. In confronting those who had a demoniac mentality, he was deadly like a thunderbolt. Yet in his loving relationships his heart was softer than a flower. In any of his *Maths*, if any of his servants had to face a difficulty due to lack of money, Srila Prabhupad used to take great care to send that money as soon as he heard about it. He could not bear the thought that a devotee had to undergo hardships due to lack of money. He used to become very concerned if he heard of any devotee being ill. His affection could not be compared with that of millions of fathers and mothers.

If we were ever sad and miserable, as soon as we sat near him, all sadness went away due to the shower of his unlimited affection. Even his chastisement seemed very sweet. "Srila Prabhupad has chastised me," we would say with great pride, and considered

ourselves to be very fortunate. All difficulties in our service were made worthwhile a million times over when we could see the signs of pleasure on his affectionate lotus face. What we felt can be expressed by this verse of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura in his book *Sarangati*:

*tomarasevaya duhkha haya yata, seo ta'  
param sukha  
seva-sukha-duhka parama sampada,  
nasaye avidya-duhkha*

The suffering that comes from Your service is also our supreme happiness. Both the suffering and the happiness that come from Your service are our greatest treasure, and they destroy the miseries that come from ignorance.

If we could not properly perform some service which had been ordered by Srila Ourudev, it would cause us great sadness. Our service to Srila Gurudev seemed to consist of everything: devotion, worship, meditation, realization, austerity, and sacrifice. He was most dear to Krishna. Therefore, if we could somehow bring him some satisfaction, we considered that the highest fulfillment of our devotional practice.

If Srila Prabhupad went away from us for a few days, our hearts would ache in separation. We would think day and night, "When will he come back again?"

Alas! How many years have passed since he left this planet! How am I spending my days in this long separation from him? Why is my soul still living here? For the sake of what kind of happiness? Perhaps due to my offenses to the holy name and at the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupad, my heart has become hard like a thunderbolt and it does not feel any pain anymore. If I really loved him, how could I live this worthless life here? O merciful lord, please protect this fallen servant of yours. Even though I'm so fallen, so sinful, and so deviated from the path of





devotional service, please pick me up and put me at the shelter of your lotus feet.

Once you did give me shelter at your lotus feet, considering me the servant of the servant of your servants. We also got the assurance that if necessary, you would come here again and again to rescue the fallen souls, like myself. O merciful Gurudev, your heart is so full of affection! Please forgive all the offenses I have committed at your lotus feet, knowingly or unknowingly. The day before you left us, I clasped your lotus feet on my chest, and you looked at me with eyes full of affection. Please remember that. I am stupid, ignorant, and bereft of scriptural knowledge; I do not know what is good or bad for me. Please correct me and make me worthy of your service. Please make me understand what my faults are and what my offenses are, so I will have the privilege of serving you. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said to Murari Gupta,

*sei bhakta dhanya, ye na chare prabhura carana  
sei prabhu dhanya, ye na chare nija-jana durdaive sevaka yadi yaya anya sthane  
sei thakura dhanya tare cule dhari ane*

(Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya-lila 4.46-47)

Glorious is that devotee who does not give up the shelter of his Lord, and glorious is that Lord who does not abandon his servant. If by chance, a servant falls down and goes somewhere else, glorious is that master who

captures him and brings him back by the hair.

You gave me the Tulsi beads so I could offenselessly take the holy name. But alas, I am still indifferent to that. My worshipable Godbrothers, who are all my well-wishers, have set such examples for me through their own actions, but I was not inspired by that. I do not have the desire to take the holy name, what to speak of having love for the holy name. Have I been deprived of the mercy of the holy name due to my offenses at your lotus feet and the lotus feet of the Vaisnavas? O merciful Prabhupada, please give me love for the holy name. Please inspire me. Let those lotus feet of yours, which I had the good fortune to hold to my chest and which are more cooling than millions of moons, be installed and be worshipped in my heart for all eternity. This is my only prayer to you.

*Spoken by HDG Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami  
Thakur Maharaj*



## KEY VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: FEBRUARY, 2023

Date	Festival
1 February	Bhaimi Ekadasi
5 February	Maghi Purnima, Apprearance Day of Srila Narottam Das Thakur
10 February	Apprearance Day of HDG Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad
16 February	Vijaya Ekadasi
19 February	Sri Sivaratri
1 February	Moksada Ekadasi
23 February	Disppearance Day Sri Jagannath Das Babaji Maharaj, and Srila Rasikananth Dev Goswami

### Bhagavata Dharma

A free e-magazine published in service to the mission of Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya, by:  
Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math,  
Isodhyan, Sri Mayapur  
Nadia, West Bengal, India 741313

On behalf of:

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja, President & Acharya of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math;

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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