

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur

BHAGAVATA

The e-magazine of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math

Issue No.39

November 2022

DHARMA

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

In this issue

Guru: The universal teacher	2
The devotee's prayer	6
The rasa dance	7
Main Vaishnava Festivals September- November – December 2022	9



All initiating and instructing gurus are the representatives of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, the ultimate guru. A guru is not an individual, but a tattva (truth). But due to the lack of knowledge of guru tattva, people treat their guru as an individual. Consequently, such people promote and glorify their guru to be the best whilst minimising, ignoring, or blaspheming other Vaishnava gurus and it displeases Krishna. On this topic, my spiritual master, HDG Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur used to say that Krishna is the ultimate guru, and that He appeared in the form of Hare Krishna Mahamantra to deliver everyone. If you take shelter of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra, then you will be able to realise the meaning of guru tattva properly and easily, and will have respect for all Vaishnavas accordingly.

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj
President, Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math



GURU: THE UNIVERSAL TEACHER

Guru is not an individual. Guru is the representative of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, who is the Absolute Truth. A guru can be someone who preaches, initiates, and/ or inspires others to be connected with the Supreme Lord. Those who are initiating others into this spiritual path are called *diksha guru*. Those who give spiritual instructions are called *shiksha guru*, and those who inspire others to follow this path are known as *vartma-pradakshak guru*. We need a guru to learn anything in this world. Anyone who has made academic progress has done so with the help and support of a teacher (guru). If you want to gain deep knowledge in science, you must approach a science specialist. The same goes for all other subjects, like languages or mathematics. Gurus who impart material knowledge are only required until we no longer need them. Once we have gained what we need from them, then their importance in our lives ceases to exist. On the contrary, a spiritual guru's importance in our lives never ends because a spiritual guru is eternal since they are the representative of Lord Sri Krishna Himself, the ultimate spiritual guru. The Supreme Lord is *sat-cit-ananda*. *sat* is eternal, *cit* is consciousness, and *ananda* is bliss. When the soul is inside a body, the body is alive, and the living entity will be conscious of its surroundings because the soul originates from the Supreme Lord and is connected with Him. This is why the desire to be eternally blissful exists in all living beings.

The scriptures inform us that if one has unwanted mundane desires (*anartha*), then the Supreme Lord will not bestow His mercy on us. These material desires exist within us because we have fallen into this material world. Consequently, we have become trapped in the web of the illusory energy, and as a result, we have forgotten our connection with the Lord. The scriptures

remind us that we are completely dependent on the Lord.

*tvameva mātā ca pitā tvameva
tvameva bandhūśca sakhā tvameva
tvameva vidyā draviṇaṁ tvameva
tvameva sarvaṁ mama devadeva*

“You are the mother, you are the father, you are the relative, you are the friend, you are the education, you are wealth, you are everything for me, O Lord.”

To deliver us from our present miserable condition, the Lord appears to us in the form of initiating guru, instructing gurus, and sastra (scriptures). When all three come together, then we call Him Balaram. According to the scriptures, we know that in this age of quarrel (Kali Yuga), the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna descended in the form of Lord Sri Caitanya and Balaram came as Lord Sri Nityananda.

Lord Nityananda appeared in a village called Ekachakra and Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in Mayapur. The distance between these two holy places is about 160 km. We know that both of them started the sankirtan chanting, but how did they meet? The history is explained here:

Nityananda Prabhu's birth name was Kuber. Kuber's father was called Hadai Pandit and his mother's name was Padmavati. One day, when Kuber was just a small boy, a sannyasi came to their house, and he was hosted by Kuber's parents. In the book Prema Vilas, it is mentioned that this sannyasi could be Lakshmipati, Vishwarup, or Madhavendra Puri-pad. The sannyasi was extremely pleased with their hospitality. When it was time for the sannyasi to leave, both Hadai Pandit and Padmavati asked if they could render any further service to please the sannyasi. The sannyasi asked for something on the condition that, that they would fulfil his desire. The sannyasi then asked for Kuber to accompany him on his travels to various pilgrimage sights as his assistant.



Although they did not want to send their beloved son Kuber, they had given their word to the sannyasi and agreed to send their son with him. One day, whilst traveling through the forest, the sannyasi told Kuber to look after his things while he went to bathe in a lake. Kuber stayed back and waited, but the sannyasi never returned. It had become twilight and, having waited all day for the sannyasi to return, little Kuber became fearful and started to cry. Then suddenly, a celestial voice spoke from the sky, “Kuber, you are not Kuber. You are Nityananda. The colour of your clothes is blue, and not what you are wearing now. Look here, there is a blue clothing; wear this and go on pilgrimage.”

Nityananda Prabhu traveled to Vrindavan, and He saw that there were some temples without the deity of Krishna on the altar. Nityananda Prabhu was confused and wanted to know why Krishna’s deity was absent from the altar. A sannyasi informed Nityananda Prabhu that Krishna was not here because He had appeared in Navadwip, Mayapur. Krishna has changed His colour. His complexion is no longer a deep blue, but fair. After hearing this, Nityananda Prabhu made His way to Navadwip, Mayapur, where He was hosted by Nandan Acharya. On the same morning that Nityananda Prabhu arrived at Nandan Acharya’s house, Lord Caitanya explained to the devotees that everyone was very fortunate because a Mahajan had arrived on a chariot holding a flag with a palm tree symbol (*taal dhwaja rath*). Lord Caitanya instructed the devotees to go and search for this Mahajan. Everyone went to look for this Mahajan, but returned feeling despondent because they could not find Him. When they returned to Lord Caitanya, the Lord smilingly said, “come with Me” and took them to Nandan Acharya’s house. It was there that both Nityananda and Lord Chaitanya met for the first time. Together, they started the congregational chanting movement.

We should try to understand the deeper reason why the devotees that were sent by Lord Caitanya could not find Nityananda Prabhu. General people or devotees are unable to find a guru with their material eyes. In order to find a guru, we have to get the mercy of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, who is the ultimate guru. Sri Krishna appeared in the form of Gouranga Mahaprabhu (Lord Caitanya). So, Gouranga Mahaprabhu showed everyone where Nityananda prabhu was. Srila Narottam Das Thakur writes:

*krishna kripay guru mile
guru kripay krishna miley.*

“By the mercy of Krishna we find guru, and by the mercy of guru we can serve Krishna.”

Guru is an integral part of our spirituality. We know from the scriptures that:

*guru rushto hole krishna rakithe na parey
krishna rushto hole guru rakhite pare.*

“If guru becomes dissatisfied with us, then Krishna will not be able to protect us, but if Krishna becomes angry with us, then guru will be able to protect us.”

On the order of Lord Caitanya, both Nityananda Prabhu and Haridas Thakur used to go from door to door to inspire people to chant the Holy Name of the Lord, to serve Krishna, and read about Krishna. Once, whilst doing their daily preaching from house to house, they reached the house of Jagai and Madhai. Although both brothers were born in Brahmin family, they were drunkards, their activities were atrocious, and they committed all kinds of sinful activities. They attacked Haridas Thakur, and both Haridas Thakur and Nityananda Prabhu managed to escape. The day after the attack, Haridas Thakur refused to go out to preach, so Nityananda Prabhu went by Himself. Both Jagai and Madhai were drunk at that time. On hearing Nityananda Prabhu chant the



Holy Name, out of anger, Madhai took a broken dirty piece of a clay pot and hit Nityananda Prabhu on the head. Nityananda Prabhu's head started to bleed. Nityananda Prabhu said to Madhai, “you may hit me again, but chant Haribol with me once.” Both the drunkard brothers were surprised to see that Nityananda Prabhu was not showing any fear of them. Mahaprabhu came to know of this incident and rushed to the spot, and called on His Sudarshan. Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Lord, and Nityananda is the Guru. Although Lord Caitanya became very angry, Guru Nityananda pacified His anger by reminding Lord Caitanya, “Prabhu, You promised not to use any weapons but to deliver people with Your love.’ This is evidence that ‘*krishna rushto hole guru rakhiten pare*’. “ This is why the guru is very important to us. It is not possible to pretend to be a guru. An imposter guru cannot protect one from Krishna’s anger. Sastra stresses the need for a bona fide guru. To get such a bona fide guru, we have to pray to Krishna from the bottom of our hearts. Krishna will certainly send a guru according to the standard of our practice. How will we understand that Krishna has sent this person to us to accept as our guru? Krishna resides in our hearts as Paramatma. Our intuition will confirm that the person sent to us is our guru. We will feel happy and satisfied with their speech, and whatever they speak will be approved by the scriptures. When we feel like this for at least six months, then we should understand that this person has been sent to us by the Lord, and we must approach him/ her for initiation.

The initiating guru will also observe the disciple to see if they are eligible to follow the instructions. Both the guru and the disciple have to be satisfied. We can then understand that the guru is bona fide and he is Nityananda Prabhu’s expansion. This guru is existential potency (*sandhini sakti*), and he will engage us in pure devotional practice. In order to reach the abode of the Supreme Lord, we have to observe the devotional path. A bona fide guru is eligible

to give us the connection in this practice. The embodiment of guru tattva is Nityananda Prabhu. Narottam Das Thakur describes the glories of Lord Nityananda:

*nitāi-pada-kamala, koṭi-candra-suśītala
je chāyā jagata jurāy
heno nitāi bine bhāi, rādhā-kṛṣṇa pāite nāi
dṛḍha kori' dharo nitāi pāy*

“Lord Nityananda’s lotus feet are soothing like the moonlight of a million moons and where the entire world finds peace. Without Lord Nityananda’s mercy, one will not be able to get the mercy of Radha Krishna. Firmly hold the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda.”

*se sambandha nāhi jā'r, bṛthā janma gelo
tā'r
sei paśu boro durācār
nitāi nā bolilo mukhe, majilo samśāra-
sukhe
vidyā-kule ki koribe tār*

“Those who have not established a relationship with Nityananda Prabhu have wasted their valuable human birth. Such a person is likened to an animal. He did not utter the name of Lord Nityananda and instead became engrossed in enjoying material life. What use is his education and family in helping him?”

*ahaṅkāre matta hoiyā, nitāi-pada pāsariyā
asatyere satya kori māni
nitāiyer koruṇā habe, braje rādhā-kṛṣṇa
pābe
dharo nitāi-caraṇa du'khāni*

“Maddened with pride, he rejects the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda and thinks that which is false, to be true. With the mercy of Lord Nityananda, you will be able to serve Radha Krishna in Vrindavan. Therefore, hold tightly both the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda.”

nitāiyer caraṇa satya, tāhāra sevaka nitya



*nitāi-pada sadā koro āśa
narottama boro dukhī, nitāi more koro
sukhī
rākho rāṅgā-carāṇera pāśa*

“The lotus feet of Nityananda are the truth and the devotees of Lord Nityananda are eternal. Pray for the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda. Narottama dasa is very unhappy and is praying to Lord Nityananda to make him happy. Please keep me close to Your reddish lotus feet.”

Without the mercy of Lord Nityananda, it is impossible to get the mercy of Lord Caitanya, (the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna). We know from Caitanya Caritamrita that once a great acharya in our lineage named Raghunath Das Goswami went to Lord Caitanya to receive the renounced order of life. Lord Caitanya refused and said:

*sthira hao ghare yāo, nā hao vātula
krame krame pāya loka bhava-sindhu-kūla*

“Be patient and return home. Don't act crazy. Gradually you will reach the abode of the Supreme Lord.”

Raghunath Das Goswami had gone to Lord Chaitanya without first getting the mercy of Lord Nityananda. We know that without the mercy of Lord Nityananda, one cannot get the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Following the instructions of Lord Caitanya, Raghunath Das Goswami returned home. In order to fulfil the instruction of Lord Caitanya, Nityananda Prabhu came to Panihati (which is near to Raghunath Das Goswami's residence). There were many people surrounding Nityananda Prabhu. Raghunath Das Goswami felt fearful and paid his obeisance to Lord Nityananda from afar. Nityananda Prabhu spotted Raghunath Das Goswami, called him, and said:

*‘nikate na aisho chora bhago dure dure,
aji lag paiachi dandibo tumare’*

“O thief, you are not coming near Me. I have got hold of you today, and I will now punish you.”

The punishment Lord Nityananda gave Raghunath Das Goswami was to feed His devotees. Raghunath Das Goswami happily arranged flat rice, yogurt, and fruits and distributed them to all who were present. This festival is called the Chida Dadhi Mahotsav. After this ‘punishment’, all obstacles in Raghunath Das Goswami's spiritual path gradually disappeared. His family members were not guarding him any longer. Usually, Raghunath Das Goswami would be surrounded by guards. Raghunath Das Goswami found an opportunity to leave his home and go to Mahaprabhu in Jagannath Puri. This time, Lord Caitanya accepted Raghunath Das Goswami. Lord Caitanya gave Swarup Damodar the responsibility of looking after Raghunath Das Goswami's spiritual progress. Swarup Damodar is Lalita Sakhi. Lalita Sakhi is also a guru in the spiritual abode. Without her mercy, no one can get Radha-Krishna's service. In summary, Lord Nityananda is the embodiment of guru tattva, and that His mercy is very important for our spiritual progress.

On the day of writing this, it is the 23rd disappearance anniversary of my beloved spiritual master His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, one of the most prominent disciples of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. I am humbly begging the entire members of the Parampara, through my initiating spiritual master, to please bestow all of your mercy on this fallen soul so that I can carry out the loving mission of Lord Caitanya (of spreading the Holy Name) to every town and village. I pray that I can carry out this mission with purity and that I am able to chant sufficient rounds on beads (at least 64 rounds) for the rest of my life. Please bless me to stay under the feet of the Divine Couple, life after life as Their eternal servant.



Wanting to be a speck of dust at the lotus feet of pure devotees of Lord Caitanya.



An unworthy servant of Lord Nityananda.
B.B.Bodhayan

Written by HDG Srila B.B.Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja on the occasion of the Disappearance Festival of HDG Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, in November 2022.

THE DEVOTEE'S PRAYER

Sri Guru's mercy is everything—*guru-krpa hi kevalam*. Therefore, one should pray as follows:

"I am most fallen and useless, O Lord. May my spiritual master be pleased with me. May he give me the spiritual strength to follow his directions. May all the obstacles in my worship of the Lord be removed so that at the end of my sojourn in this world, I may sit alone, far from the hustle and bustle of the material world, and with a steady mind, chant the Holy Names, with feeling. May the Lord be merciful and allow me to give up my last breath in this way. Knowingly or

unknowingly, I have committed so many offenses to His lotus feet, and even now I continue to commit such offenses. O Lord, please forgive all such offenses and give me a place at Your lotus feet. Make my life complete, by allowing me to associate with those who are dear to You.

"For so long, I have simply made a pretense of being initiated. In fact, I have not done that, which a surrendered soul should do; I have not strictly followed my spiritual master's instructions. Thus, I have not made even a little advancement in spiritual life. All the co'taminations in my heart, prior to initiation are still there today, so how is there any hope of my attaining the divine realization, which is said to be the real sign of initiation? Like a lump of iron, my heart is without feelings. Even though I chant the Holy Names, it does not melt. Thus, I am thinking,

*aparadha phale mama citta bhela vajra-
sama tuwa name na labhe vikara*

"Due to offenses, my heart has become as hard as a thunderbolt. Therefore, no ecstatic transformations take place, when I chant your name."

(Bhaktivinoda Thakura)

*tabe jani tahe aparadha achaye pracura
krsna-nama bija tahe na haya ankura*

"Thus, I know I have committed so many offenses to the Holy Name, for though I have planted the seed of the Name, no creeper of love has sprouted."

(Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.8.29)

"O gurudeva! Now in the evening of my life, I have become so forlorn and hopeless. O Lord! O You, who see no fault in anyone! Be generous to me and give me your mercy. Help me to be free of all offenses, so I develop a taste for the Holy Names, which you have instructed me to chant. Allow me to earn the right to be called the genuine servant of your servants. With your divine



vision, you see me perfectly, externally and internally. You know everything I do. Therefore, I pray, that everything I do - my behavior, my devotional service, may be a source of pleasure to you.

"O Lord! Forgive all my offenses, whether I have committed them willingly or unwillingly. Forever give me a place among all your servants, at your lotus feet, where there is no more lamentation, no more fear, no more death. Your feet are the only shelter for one like me, who has found no refuge anywhere in this world. Your feet are the source of ultimate good for one like me, who has found no value anywhere else in this world."

*bhumau skhalita-padanam
bhumir eva lambanam
tvayi jataparadhanam
tvam eva saranam prabho*

"Those who trip and fall have only the ground as an aid to again get up. O Lord! Those who commit offenses to You, have no one but You as a recourse."

So, my dear devotees, tread carefully the path of devotion. Always pray for the mercy of Krishna, the guru, and the Vaishnavas. Remember that progress in devotion depends on progress in humility—that is the art of sadhana.

From the 'Art of Sadhana' by HDG Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, published by Mandala Publishing

THE RASA DANCE

Krishna spoke sweetly to the gopis, whose lotus faces were the residence of their khandana bird eyes:

"My mind has been burning for your association for a long time, and you have similarly been longing for Me. We will

undertake a special festival to fulfill that desire."

The festival in the form of rasa dance is then described:

"Here is Vrindavan where the full autumn moon shines, and you are present with all your skills. I am pleased that the time has come. What else can be done except to celebrate? O dear gopis! What can I do to celebrate except have the rasa dance?"

The full moon of Krishna rising in the ocean of Vraja intently and simultaneously honoured all gopis, like cakora birds, spreading happiness through embraces and kisses. Surrounded by the river bank devoid of low and high ground, devoid of mud, grass, or kusa, He had them join hands in a circle in order to perform the rasa dance."

They formed a circle. Love became full by Krishna's going to the bank of Yamuna. By the bank of the river, His mind became full. By His full mind, His eyes became full. By His two eyes being full, all the gopis became fully satisfied. By all the gopis being satisfied, the festival became complete from the beginning to the end. What more can be said? Even today, the festival has not stopped.

In the midst of the circle He had created, Krishna, attaining a great brilliance, began to think. As the moon shone above, the moon shone below. Though the moon had spots, the gopis on the bank were spotless. The gopis are like a necklace of gold mixed with pearls. If there is an emerald center jewel between each pair of gopis, this would be the most attractive. If I enter between each pair, the arrangement will be perfect. As he thought like this, his desire was fulfilled. He was between each gopi. He also did not know exactly how it happened.

The bank appeared beautiful with Krishna and the doe-eyed gopis. By its reflections, the bank was like the moon itself. The bank



was friends with the moon. The gopis were friends with the bank. The meeting with countless forms of Krishna was the friend of the gopis.



The gopis were in a circle on either side of Krishna interlocked hands. The ropes of their arms bound up Krishna's flawless back. He placed his arms on their shoulders at the beginning of rasa dance. There were thousands of alternately golden and black forms in a circle and Krishna with Radha in the center. Praising new youthfulness, Krishna began rasa dance. Parasara has loudly proclaimed this. I have already described this. Ah! Look, what more can I say? My hairs are standing on end.

From the 'Gopala campu' by Srila Jiva Goswami, published by Manipal Press



KEY VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 2022

Date	Festival
7 November	Dispppearance Day Festival of HDG Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur
8 November	Rasa Purnima
20 November	Utpanna Ekadasi
21 November	Disappearance Day of Srila Narahari Sarkar Thakur
29 November	Oran shashti
4 December	Moksada Ekadasi
12 December	Dispppearance Day Festival of HDG Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad
19 December	Saphala Ekadasi
24 December	Dispppearance Day of HDG Srila Lochan Das Thakur
26 December	Dispppearance Day of Srila Jiva Goswami Prabhu Dispppearance Day Festival of HDG Jagadish Pandit

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.

To subscribe, visit <http://www.gopinathgaudiyamath.com/newsletter/>
<https://www.facebook.com/SrilaBodhayanMaharaj/>

