

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakura

BHAGAVATA

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DHARMA

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

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A bona-fide spiritual master is always designated by the previous teachers, and he is completely engaged in chanting Hare Krishna Maha-mantra with purity. Our spiritual practice is a treasure box, and the key to that box is our most revered spiritual master. He is our only source of deliverance from material entanglements. Today is the holy advent day of my most worshipable Spiritual Master, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur. The entire Gaudiya Parampara will be extremely pleased to see us taking shelter of his lotus feet, and advancing our spiritual lives through chanting Hare Krishna Maha-mantra.

In the Service of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission,
His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja
President, Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math



SRI GURU

**By His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti
Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami
Maharaja**

There are two words here - 1. *śri*, and 2. *guru*. Generally, people know that *śri* means 'beauty' and *guru* means 'heavy'. But in the Vaishnava community, we know that *śri* means Radharani and *guru* means the Acharya who is teaching us by example, how to serve Krishna in the most precious manner. We know in the entire universe only Srimati Radharani is eligible to perform such highest quality of service. Srimati Radharani is the universal Acharya. Whoever is following wholeheartedly in the footsteps of Srimati Radharani is known as *guru* in this universe. Such followers are connected with Krishna through Srimati Radharani; therefore, this *guru-tattva* is the universal tattva. In this context, *tattva* means universal truth, and *guru* is the universal form of truth.

On 18 October 1898, one of the universal forms of truth appeared during the festive season of Navaratri celebrations, on the fourth day of the waxing moon (Gaur Chaturthi). In the village of Ganganandapur Jessore district, presently in Bangladesh territory appeared the divine child, Pramode Bhushan, in an orthodox brahmin family. This divine child gradually grew up under the guidance of one of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's godbrothers, Sri Bhaktiratna Thakur. In 1915, according to the inspiration of Bhaktiratna Thakur, Pramode Bhushan met his *Guru*, Bimala Prasad, in Mayapur, at the present-day Sri Chaitanya Math. It was the day that Srila Gaur Kishore Das Babaji Maharaj departed from this mortal world. During the meeting, he saw an effulgent form, a tall white-robed brahmachari with a grave voice. As soon as Pramode Bhushan saw that divine form, he felt an eternal connection and decided to accept him as his *Sri Guru*. Pramode Bhushan got the chance to meet Bimala Prasad and spent one night with him at Sri Chaitanya Math. During that

time, they had the chance to have a personal conversation and then Pramode Bhushan came to know that Bimala Prasad is the son of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Pramode Bhushan's heart was stirred and he felt a desire to take shelter of Bimala Prasad. Now, his inner feeling upon first seeing Bimala Prasad, combined with Bhaktiratna Thakur's inspiration confirmed to Pramode Bhushan that in the near future, he will accept initiation from this divine effulgent personality, Bimala Prasad.

In 1917, Pramode Bhushan got the chance to meet Bimala Prasad for the second time, at the Yogapith Temple. In 1919, he again met the divine personality at No. 1 Ultadanga Junction Road, Kolkata. This time, Bimala Prasad was the monk, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur; in short, every one called him Srila Prabhupada. Everyday, Srila Prabhupada used to give discourses in the afternoon time on the Srimad Bhagavatam and Pramode Bhushan would attend the daily discourses. Once in 1921, Pramode Bhushan was bitten by a scorpion while attending to a discourse. Despite the severe pain, he still attended the discourse. After the discourse was over, Srila Prabhupada came to know and advised him to stay in the temple and asked him to simultaneously continue his job at the port commission.

On the day of Sri Krishna Janmastami 1924, Srila Prabhupada mercifully gave initiation to Pramode Bhushan and awarded him the name, Pranavananda Das Brahmachari. From that day, he gave up his job at port commission and completely and whole heartedly dedicated himself in the service of his *Guru*. Srila Prabhupada kept Pranavananda Brahmachari under his loving service as 'editor' till his last breath. On the day of Amalaki Ekadashi, 1947 during the time of Navadwip Dham Parikrama, Pranavananda Brahmachari took the renounced order of life (*sannyāsa*) from his god-brother, Srila Bhakti Gaurav Vaikhanash Goswami Maharaja, at Champahati Gaur Gadadhar Temple, Rtdwip, which is one of



the island of Nabadwip. After the *sannyāsa* ceremony, he was given the name “Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami”.

Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami wholeheartedly followed the footsteps of his spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. The eternal identity of Srila Prabhupada is Sri Nayanamani Manjari (here *nayana* means ‘eyes’ and *mani* means ‘diamond’), meaning Srila Prabhupada is a shining ray of Srimati Radharani's eyes. Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur was connected with Srimati Radharani through Srila Prabhupada.



As per our earlier discussion, *Sri Guru* means the one who is teaching us how to serve Sri Krishna according to the direction of Srimati Radharani. In order to teach how to serve Sri Krishna under the guidance of Srimati Radharani, Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur established Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math in 1989 at Sri Dham Mayapur, Ishodyan. According to the desire of Srila Prabhupada, the branches of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya started expanding at various holy

places, including Sri Jagannath Puri and Sri Dham Vrindavan.

Now, we, the followers of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math, along with other followers of Srila Prabhupada's mission are trying to follow the final instruction of Srila Prabhupada, "Everyone unitedly should take shelter of Srimati Radharani and spread the loving message of Sri Rupa and Raghunatha with full enthusiasm, maintaining a harmonious relationship with each other".

On the advent day of my beloved spiritual master, I humbly pray to all the members of the *parampara* and the divine couple Sri Sri Radha Krishna, to please encourage us to follow the aforementioned last instruction of Srila Prabhupada sincerely. In fact, Gaudiya means one who is following in the footsteps of Srimati Radharani. I would like to establish Gaudiya Vaishnava Philosophy in my heart and in the entire Gaudiya community, and wish everyone to go back to the eternal home, together. We know from Vaishnava scriptures that the Lord fulfills the desire of the pure devotees. My spiritual master, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur is a pure devotee, a self realized personality. His eternal identity is Palash Manjari. I pray to my spiritual master as well as to all the pure devotees to pray for me, and fulfill my ultimate desire to attain the eternal service of Sri Sri Radha Gopinath in Goloka Vrindavan.

Nitai Gaur Haribol!

B.B. Bodhayan



VYASA PUJA

**By Nityalila Pravista Om Vishnupad
108 Sri Srimat Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha
Goswami Maharaja**

“*Vyāsa-pūjā* cannot be performed by a non-devotee who lacks knowledge of *śuddha bhakti* (pure devotion). The offering of floral tributes to Srila Gurudev in the *vyāsa-pūjā* is symbolic of the fulfilment of his heart’s desire through the rendering of immaculate service to God”.

(Srila Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Thākura)

The devotional scriptures recommend observing the anniversary of Sri Gurudev’s advent in four ways. (1) performing the *guru-pūjā* ritual, (2) remembering him always, (3) praying for his grace, and (4) chanting his glories. The greatest impediment in carrying out the spiritual command is that conditioned souls are not capable of doing *guru-pūjā*, nor of remembering him, nor praying for his grace and chanting his glories. The Guru and the Vaishnavas are essentially transcendental and as such are beyond human comprehension. The Supreme Lord is the transcendental Supreme Person; therefore, his worshippers too are transcendental.

The transcendental reality is by nature self-effulgent. How can the conditioned souls know the self-effulgent reality? The example of the sun is appropriate in trying to understand this. The sun is self-luminous. The only way to see it is through its own light. At nighttime, no one can see the sun by his own efforts. When the sun rises, however, it reveals itself as well as other things in the world. In like manner, the self-effulgent transcendental reality God reveals Himself to a completely surrendered soul. Unconditional surrender is the only way to realize unchallengeable Truth God.

This unconditional surrender or *śaraṇāgati* is the highest, most secret and conclusive teaching in the Gītā. But Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu indicates in his dialogue with Sri Raya Ramananda that the *śaraṇāgati* in the Gītā is external. Why? Because, on the one hand Sri Krishna has to give a guarantee to the surrendered soul to rescue him from sin and, secondly, there is no mention of submission to the pure devotee the absolute grace incarnate counterpart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Submission to a bonafide Guru the absolute counterpart of God is also essential to learn the sixfold process of *śaraṇāgati* since it can only be imparted by a realized saint, i.e, a bonafide guru or *śuddha-bhakta*.

Knowledge of the divinity descends through the preceptorial channel. If the difference between knowledge acquired through the inductive process and that which descends through the deductive process is not understood, actual devotional life will not start.

The holy advent anniversary of my most revered *śikṣā guru*, His Divine Grace Parama-pūjyapāda Parivrajakācārya Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Srimat Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur will be celebrated this year on Thursday, September 24, 1998. As I am a fallen soul, I am unable to narrate the infinite glories of a *śuddha-bhakta*. It is also beyond my capacity to express all that I have seen and understood through my external physical proximity with Parama- pūjyapāda Śrīmat Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāja. I was blessed in attaining a relationship with my most revered *dīkṣā guru*, His Divine Grace Om 108 Śrī Śrīmat Bhakti-dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja Viṣṇupad, and my *śikṣā guru*, Parama-pūjyapāda Srimat Puri Goswami Thakur after they had already become tridandi sanyāsīs. I have therefore no direct experience of Srila Puri Goswami Maharaja’s previous life, but I heard from my Guru Maharaja and other revered god-brothers of my Guru that Srimat Puri Goswami Thakur was engaged by his

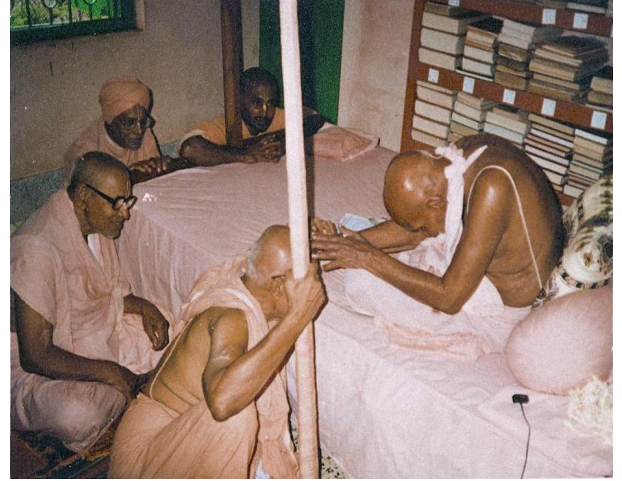


Gurudeva Prabhupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakura to work in the publication department of the Sri Chaitanya Math. He subsequently became the head of the Editorial Board. His accuracy and swiftness in writing correct Bengali, his deep and vast knowledge of scriptures, his wonderful ability to lucidly explain intricate points of devotional philosophy along with scriptural evidence, his scholarly writing on any spiritual or devotional subject universally known and adored by all Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

Our Guru Maharaja always showered him with profound respect as his elder godbrother. Srmat Puri Goswami Thakur was so closely connected with Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math that he accompanied Guru Maharaja at all Math's function in all places. Once when Srmat Puri Goswami Thakur was with Guru Maharaja at Sri Purusottama Dham during the Ratha yatra festival, I was astonished to see him chanting the entire Ratha yatra chapter from *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta* continuously from the Jagannatha Temple all the way to Gundica. Whatever devotional forms he practices he performs with great devoutness and sincerity. Although endowed with extraordinary qualities, he has no vanity, but always remains humble. This is a very conspicuous quality in his character.

We have remarked his devoutness in the performance of Deity *abhiṣeka* and installations, temple consecration ceremonies, and all other devotional ritualistic ceremonies, with exacting attention to every detail. His performance of Sri Vraja-mandala Parikrama on foot by holding the shoulder of a devotee at the age of 85 – is certainly unique. When I first joined Sri Gaudiya Math institution, I had the opportunity to go with Srmat Puri Goswami Thakur to different places in West Bengal. I was attracted to hear his inspiring speeches and his melodious, sweet-voiced *kīrtana*.

He is now a centenarian. So, physical movement for him at this stage is neither advisable, nor indeed possible. Nevertheless, his blessings as president of the World Vaishnava Association (WVA) will be a boost to that organization and a source of inspiration for all time to come.



Lastly, I pay my innumerable prostrated obeisances to the lotus feet of my most revered *śikṣā guru*, Parama-pūjyapāda Parivrajakācārya Tridaṇḍī Svāmi Srmat Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, on the holy occasion of his advent anniversary and pray to him for his causeless mercy, his forgiveness of all offences which I may have committed knowingly or unknowingly, and that he bestows on me exclusive devotion exclusive devotion to Sri Gauranga Mahāprabhu and Sri Sri Radha Krishna.

Vaishnava das anudas

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

Sri Caitanya Gaudiya Math
Head Office- 35 Satish Mukherjee Road,
Calcutta- 26

*Written on the 100th advent anniversary celebration
of His Divine Grace Parama-pūjyapāda
Parivrajakācārya Tridaṇḍī Svāmi Śrmat Bhakti
Promode Puṇ Goswāmī Mahārāja*



Offering by Sri Ramdas Das Adhikari

Dear Gurudeva,

It is now been twenty long years since I was able to hold your lotus feet. It feels like a lifetime has passed since you departed this world and left us to try and find our way back to that state of being that was so easy when you were physically here. Simply serving you was both the process and the destination. Being your menial servant was such an easy and sure way to be purified and feel rightly situated. The glow of your radiant love, your compassionate smile, and holy blessings were so complete, that there was never a feeling that there could be any other treasure worth having. I never wanted to ever leave. I remember the terrible feeling when responsibilities called me to return home to the West, when my heart sank and I felt awful that my life was not simpler and that I could not stay in the math. I envied my god-brothers who could stay there with you and simply be present in your divine service. But you also blessed me with so many nice instructions and gave me so much service. Although I have not yet really started to perform all those services and instructions, I have faith in your blessings that somehow in this life I will begin.

Please Gurudeva, be merciful to this fallen wretch of a disciple. Please continue to tolerate my inadequate attempts to serve your mission and your devotees. Please bless me to give up material attachments, false pride, bad habits, and bad association. Please help me to value the chanting of the Holy Name more than any other activity in my life, the sastra more than any other object in my life, and again reaching your divine service as the only goal in my life.

I am at a loss for words as to how to glorify your divine grace on this auspicious occasion. How can a dim particle of sand really glorify the brilliance of the sun? It is impossible to adequately address your glories or describe your divine pastimes. But

if you allow me Gurudeva, I will try my best to do so by helping Srila Bodhayan Maharaja with the publication of your biography. I pray that you will allow me to serve you once again with a publication to bring your amazing and selfless life of devotion to the eyes and ears of those who already love you as well as those who do not yet know that the personification of purity, humility, and love once walked among us on this earthly plane. I pray that far and wide all types of people will come to know of your beautiful activities.



This year has been very difficult for the planet and most of us, but it reminds me to be grateful and remember again that if the rest of my life is terrible and disappointing, that I am still more blessed than I can ever conceive of, having had the opportunity to serve your divine grace. No greater treasure can possibly exist in this world and nothing else is worth aspiring for once having tasted the sweetness of your service or the magnitude of your gentle blessings. On my



hands and knees Gurudeva, I beg for your mercy and pray that somehow I may cross this ocean and be with you once again.

Your humble servant,

Ramdas das adhikari

Note:

The Biography of beloved Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, A Divine Spiritual Gem will be published this year in three languages – Bengali, Hindi and English. The above picture is an illustration from the working drafts of the book to-be published.

Homage by Sri Ananta Madhab Das

Strong faith in the self-realized *guru* and in the entire *guru-parampara* constitutes the backbone of the bhakti. That strong faith brings us to *akhanda-guru-tattva* (the embodiment of the complete principle of *guru*), Sri Baladev Prabhu. We will ultimately see that Gurudeva is the manifestation of Sri Nityananda or Sri Baladev Prabhu. From the point of view of unalloyed devotion, it is not an offering only. Bhakti does not consist in offering something mundane, something gross. Bhakti is the automatic, spontaneous propensity of the unalloyed heart to serve Guru and Gauranga. Unalloyed devotion of a fully submissive heart is called bhakti. Our most respected Guru Maharaja is the dispenser of such exalted devotion.

Although I am very much unqualified to judge the *guru tattva*, I have to come to understand that there are two ways to see our Gurudeva. In this connection an analogy can be given of the Himalayan Mountains. The height of the Himalayas is one thing and its depth is another. We can somewhat see its height, but we cannot see what is hidden within the ground. However, we cannot know how deep our Guru Maharaja is.

The striking verses of Guruastakam such as,

*“śrī-rādhikā-mādhavayor apāra-
mādhurya-līlā guṇa-rūpa-nāmnām
prati-kṣaṇāsvādāna-lolupasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam”*

gives a right picture of the heart of Srila Guru Maharaja. At every moment Sri Gurudev is experiencing intense greed in his heart to taste the unlimited sweetness of the holy names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha in Vrindavan.

Another verse, No- 6 of Guruastakam:

*“nikuṣja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai
yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇīyā
tatrāti-dāksyād ati-vallabhasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam”*

Sri Gurudev is always present with the *sakhis*, planning the arrangements for the perfection of Yugala Kishor's amorous pastimes (*rati-keli*) within the kunjās of Vrindavan. Because he is so expert as a manjari, in making beautiful arrangements for their pleasure, he is very dear to Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. So, I offer, my humble prayers unto the lotus feet of Sri Guru Maharaja.

Our Guru is full of *gopibhava*. It is quite impossible for a novice devotee like me to understand the unfathomable depth of my beloved Guru Maharaja.

Hence, I aspire to have a very clear and intimate, loving association with my beloved Guru Maharaja life after life. Oh Srila Guru Maharaja! please bless me so that I can be a speck of dust at your lotus feet.

Your most humble servant,

Ananta Madhab Das (Bhaktishastri)
Gopinath Gaudiya Math, Mayapur



Humble Offering by Sri Govardhan Das

On this blessed occasion of the appearance of our most beloved Guru Maharaja, I prostrate myself in full dandavats at the lotus feet of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, my spiritual master who is the source of all mercy and the direct representative of Lord Krishna's heart. It is only by his compassion for the fallen and infinite mercy that a fallen rascal, such as myself, has the extremely fortunate opportunity to have his association and that of his successor Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj, through whom we have been successfully connected to the glories of our dear most Guru Maharaj.

As we face the challenges of crossing the ocean of material misery and suffering, from lifetime to lifetime, it is our Guru Maharaj and his association that remain a constant beacon guiding us through the trials and tribulations of material existence. Taking his foot dust on our heads and devoting our lives to serve in the mood of humility as demonstrated through his actions and pastimes, we are affording the opportunity to further develop our *sādhana* and increasingly devote our lives to the fundamental goal – establishing our eternal relationship in service of the supreme lord through his direct representatives.

By carefully following the instructions of our Guru Maharaja he will manage our life in such a way that we will have good association in our next birth. This is a great mercy. By good association in our next birth, we will chant *harināma* daily and will have some greed to hear Krishna's sweet pastimes and then through Gurudev's mercy, *anarthas* will disappear and we will advance up to the stage of *ruci* (taste in chanting and other devotional activities). From this advanced stage we will take birth and go up to *āsakti* (spontaneous attachment for Krishna), and then we will attain *bhāva* (transcendental emotions just prior to

prema, or pure love for Krishna). After some time, again we will take birth and be situated in *bhāva* (*suddha-sattva*). After that we will have *svarupa-siddhi* (perfection of one's original, constitutional position in relation to Sri Krishna, or in other words the realization of one's original and eternal relationship with Krishna), and then we will take our next birth in *prakata* Vraja (the Vraja in any of the universes in which Krishna has descended and is performing His pastimes). Then, after entering *prakata* Vraja and associating with the *nitya-siddha rāgātmika bhaktas* (the eternal associates of the Lord who are serving Krishna in the relationship that he, himself, has just entered), we will be able to go back to Godhead, back to home. Only at this time will we enter Krishna's abode. Entering Krishna's abode is not like eating a rasagula. The mercy of our Gurudeva and all of our Gaudiya acaryas manifests in this way. By and by, our Gurudev is taking the aspiring devotees to the Lord's divine abode."

I humbly beg for the opportunity to follow this path, surrendered to my beloved Gurudeva and devote my life and future lives to this one true goal – to serve and associate with the *nitya-siddha rāgātmika bhaktas* fully immersed in the service of the Lord Sri Krishna.

Govardhan das

Offering by Arjuna Das

God is Beautiful!

It is often said that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. What may be beautiful for one, may not be so for another. Most mothers will feel their baby is the most beautiful one in the world, even if friends and family draw a very different conclusion. In the times of great painters like Rubens and Rembrandt, chubby woman (presently termed 'obese') were considered beautiful. Nowadays thin and lean figures seem to comply more to the beauty standards. Is not all of beauty relative



then? Does something like universal beauty even exist?

In the Bhagavad Gita, it is said that the joy (read ‘beauty’) and sorrow we experience through the senses in an egocentric way is temporary and illusory, and the cause of suffering and bondage. I think an honest reflection on life leads us to conclude that this is a true statement. Still, according to Bhakti Vedanta, the devotional branch of Indian spirituality, there is a type of beauty or joy that is considered to be absolute. That means, it is beautiful under all circumstances and does not have an opposite. This type of beauty is said to be *nirguna*; it is beyond (*nir*) the material modes of nature (*guna*), which are intrinsically dualistic. On the experiential level, this type of beauty produces a taste (*rasa*), which can be described as a state of rapture that feels ecstatic (*ānanda*) in and of itself.

This is more than just a theory. Most of us have probably experienced some variety of non-dual beauty that is ‘transcendental’ to the dualistic beauty that underlies all sensory experience. That may have occurred in the vastness of a nature experience, maybe by looking at the milky way sky in the desert, or maybe in a sacred place where a vibration is perceived that is ‘otherworldly’. It may have been during a meditative experience in which the mind has become completely silent. Or it may have been (as in my case) in the company of a saintly person whose consciousness permeates the atmosphere with a transcendental presence. Even if these glimpses may have been brief, the experience of such a state confirms the existence of a transcendental type of beauty. Would it be possible to enter in a perpetual state of such an experience? The Vedanta traditions confirm that we can reach such a permanent state by following a *sādhana*, a practice that is giving (*dhana*) us truth (*sad*) by leading us to the Source of consciousness.

In the presence of my divine preceptor, Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, I

have experienced he was in a perpetual state of transcendental consciousness. The atmosphere is his room, and in the whole Math, had a transcendental vibration that is hard to describe in words. The presence of God becomes tangible in the association of such a great soul.

In the bhakti traditions, God is defined as the reservoir or embodiment of all divine pleasure and beauty. *akhila rasāmrita murti*. And that transcendental embodiment manifests as both masculine and feminine to facilitate the play of love. As God cannot be limited, there are countless names to describe the individual aspects of Divinity, all indicating different moods and characteristics. The individual soul is said to have an eternal identity (*sva-rūpa*), a perfected form made of pure consciousness (*siddha deha*) in which loving exchange in service in the Lila of the Divine couple becomes possible. In bhakti, all there is, is emanating from the Dance of Divinity. The individual soul, by the necessary freedom of choice it is endowed with, can either choose to dance along in loving service in the transcendental reality of the Divine Couple, or dance its own dance of self-centered separation in the world of time and space. This materialistic world of separation is facilitated by Divinity as true love and beauty are based on freedom of choice. It is not an unreasonable proposition.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj calls this “The Vrindavan Proposal”. It is where God in a human-like form made up of *sat-cit-ānanda* becomes closest to the individual souls, as if one of them. It creates the possibility of loving exchange in *līlā*, divine love play. Divine Love and Beauty is the internal potency of God, the *hlādinī-śaktī*, the feminine aspect of Divinity. This is also not merely a theory, but there is a *sādhana* which we can follow by which this eventually becomes a tangible and experiential reality. This is path of bhakti yoga.



The question may arise that how non-dual beauty can be experienced if it has no opposite? Does any meaningful experience not depend on a comparison with something that is different? In the transcendental reality, are there also things that are not (or less) beautiful to appreciate or even experience transcendental beauty? The perspective of the bhakti schools on this point is that Divinity is endowed with an internal potency or *śakti* that in a spiritual realm of non-dual purpose (love for love's sake) creates apparent opposites, which makes room for experience of different waves of *ānanda*. This potency is also called Yoga-maya, or Divine Enchantment. The dynamics that creates the experience of opposites is an interplay of union (*sambhog*) and separation (*vipralambha*). Both are of the nature of an ever-increasing beauty and love. *ānandambhudi vardhanam, prati padam purmamritasvadanam*. Lord Sri Caitanya has described this transcendental realm as an ever-increasing ocean of bliss, which at every step creates a complete fulfillment in the Soul.

The experience of divine beauty is the birth-grace (not the birth-right) of every soul, if only it chooses to serve the Source. Still, I think we need to be very careful in comparing “spiritual” beauty with “mundane” beauty. Because at some level they are also connected. In the bhakti tradition, when we read about the descriptions of the beautiful nature of the transcendental forms and pastimes of the Divine Couple, they resemble what is generally accepted to be beautiful in the world of matter. The depictions of the spiritual realm of Vrindavan are not of a barren dessert wasteland with dry bushes, but of lush forest groves with blooming flowers. Likewise, the descriptions of transcendental forms of Radha and Krishna have connotations with beauty we are familiar with in our own culture: slender waist, full bosom, broad shoulders. Things we usually lust over in a dualistic way in our conditioned state.

To harmonize the relative with the absolute is one of the big challenges in bhakti. Anthropomorphism, understanding the Divine in human terms, is never far away. We cannot help but to project our mundane experience on the Absolute reality. Our preceptors have warned us about this. The importance of non-duality as the backdrop of anything truly transcendental cannot be underestimated. The danger in the bhakti schools is that in the conditioned stage we project the duality we experience in the realm of time and space unto the spiritual realm, and then mistakenly think that certain mellows of Love (like *manjarī-bhāva*) are “higher” and more desirable than any other love relation. The result is not seldom a very mundane type of wannabe consciousness, coupled with strife and superiority tendencies.

I think it is one of the great contributions of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta and his followers like Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, to put a lot of emphasis that the safe approach towards the Spiritual Realm of transcendental form and beauty is through kirtan, the chanting of the Sacred Names of Divinity. This is in itself a *rāga* practice, as there are no rules for chanting the Divine Names, although grace is said to manifest only when we fully open ourselves for it without any reservations or conditions in a mood of selfless service.

Eventually, through the sound vibration of the Names (*nāma*), the transcendental beauty of the Attributes (*guṇa*), Form (*rūpa*) and Pastimes (*līlā*) are revealed to the *sādhaka* (practitioner) who is chanting in the spirit of service. Our acharyas have stated that premature dwelling and imagining about the form and pastimes easily creates obstacles on our path. Their concern has been that transcendental forms and pastimes of God are not to be openly and indiscriminately discussed. In our present conditioned state, we have little business to interfere in the private love life of Divinity. It is too sacred, and too much prone for



misunderstanding. It will be revealed to the sincere practitioner by divine grace when the *sādhana* stage has finished. This understanding I have received from my divine preceptor, and it feels true, at least for myself.

In conclusion, the bhakti view is that the world is only truly beautiful in relation to God. The illusory energy is God's instrument that gives all souls the possibility to live disconnected from Divinity. The resulting suffering flows out of our own choice, but is at the same time Divinity's grace to urge us back to their loving embrace. When there is no relation to God, life becomes void of true meaning and therefore rather ugly.

As conditioned soul's solace is to follow the path set out for us by the pure devotees, who have no inclination other than to serve God, and show the path back to the Divine Couple by unalloyed service. The life and teachings of Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur are a living example of all the divine qualities that manifest in a liberated soul: deep humility, and exemplary service attitude, simplicity, vast and deep knowledge of the revealed scriptures, and giving honor to everyone else. We celebrate his divine appearance and I pray with folded hands for the sincerity and determination to follow his life and teachings.

Arjuna Das

***A Low Born Sinner's Humble Offering
by Sri Gauraraja Das and
Padmamanjari Devi Dasi***

Dear His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, please accept our humble prostrated dandavat pranams at your divine lotus feet on this occasion of your divine appearance day. We were fortunate to get your holy darshan in Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math Temple in Sri

Jaganath Puri in 1998 just after Karthik. As the verse in CC Madhya lila 22.54 says:

*sādhū-saṅga', 'sādhū-saṅga' — sarva-śāstre
kaya
lava-mātra sādhū-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya*

Even a moment's association with a pure devotee can give us perfection. We are experiencing this in our daily lives that the brief darshan we had of your Divine Grace still remains fresh and is giving us strength and inspiration in our daily devotional practice. We are experiencing the meaning of eternity. You are the exemplary portrayal of humility in accordance with the 3rd verse of *Śikṣastakam* by which we remember you, and pray daily to achieve at least one percent of it. We would also like to offer our heartfelt pranams at your divine lotus feet in giving us the association of your dear-most disciple His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj, through whom we are continuing our seva and our connection to the *guru-varga*, after the disappearances of our *harinam* and *diksha* Gurus. Kindly continue to shower your blessings on this low born sinners.

Hare Krishna!

Gauraraja Das and Padmamanjari Devi Dasi

***Offerings by Sri Rama Devi Dasi,
Ashok, Sakshigopal Das and Yamuna
Devi Dasi***

All Glories to His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramode Purī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura!
All Glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga!

*om aṣṭāna-timirāndhasya jṣānāṣjana-
śalākayā
cakṣur unmlitam yena tasmai śn-gurave
namah*



*śñ-caitanya-mano-‘bhiṣṭam sthāpitaṁ
yena bhū-tale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-
padāntikam*

*vāschā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya
eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo
namah*

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-
pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāṁne gaura-tviṣe
namah*

*śñ-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śñ-advaita gadādhara śñvāsādi-gaura-
bhakta-urnda*

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare
hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

As unfortunate as we are for not having obtained the divine association of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Purī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura, we are grateful to have heard of His Divine Grace’s glories through the lips of those who have served him. And through those narrations of His Divine Grace’s glories, we are able to have a glimpse of the wonderfully amazing qualities of such a rare gem of a Vaishnava.

Unlike the *jñānīs* and *yogīs* who vainly attempt to seek the Absolute plane through their own efforts, the pure devotees of the Lord demonstrate in their lives the true process of communion with the Supreme Absolute Truth—by means of surrender and service to those who are already in communion with Him. It is the most practical and efficient process of realising the Supreme, and which frees one from the troubles and failings of our false ego, intelligence, and mind. His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Purī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura was the exemplar of such a Vaishnava, who

was not only in communion with the Supreme Lord Krishna, but who also showed to the world the way to surrender and unconditionally serve a dear servitor of the Supreme Lord.

Despite possessing all the good qualifications desired by the common populace, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Purī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura was not at all attached to temporary decorations and designations, and was one-pointed in his surrender and service to his own spiritual preceptor, His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. A true spiritual preceptor is himself a true servitor of his own spiritual preceptor, and by virtue of such unconditional surrender and service, is himself fully endowed with the Divine Grace. Such a personality is indeed a shelter of all beings in this universe, who are seeking hither and thither for the shelter of ultimate happiness, trying frantically to be freed from the throes of sufferings in this material existence of life. It is stated in Canto 11 of *Śñmad Bhāgavatam*:

*nimajjyonmajjatām ghore
bhavābdhau paramāyaṇam
santo brahma-vidaḥ śāntā
nau dṛḍhevāpsu majjatām*

“The devotees of the Lord, peacefully fixed in absolute knowledge, are the ultimate shelter for those who are repeatedly rising and falling within the fearful ocean of material life. Such devotees are just like a strong boat that comes to rescue persons who are at the point of drowning.” (*Bhāg.* 11.26.32)

Unfortunately, fallen conditioned souls such as us, are unable to understand this simple yet vital message of the holy *Bhāgavata*, that the ultimate shelter in this universe is in the shade of the lotus feet of the person



Bhāgavata, whose very life is the embodiment of the teachings of the sacred *Bhāgavata* scripture. Instead, we spend our precious human energy and life in serving wicked and miserly men just for a drop of flickering material happiness, paying little or superficial regard to the message and messenger of Godhead.

On this most blessed day of the divine appearance of Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Pūrī Gosvāmī Thākura, let us come to our senses and humbly beseech at the lotus feet of His Divine Grace for his favourable glance upon us so that we would be able to realise this truth and submit ourselves completely and unconditionally, without pretension or pride, and without consideration of personal profit or loss, to the service of the person *Bhāgavata*, and thus perfect the mission of this human existence.

Your unworthy servants,

Rama Devi Dasi, Ashok, Sakshigopal Das and Yamuna Devi Dasi

Visit to Shri Vrindavan Dham by Subhashree Devi Dasi

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah!

*Most humble obeisance at the divine lotus feet of our Spiritual Master Om Vishnupad Ashstottarshat Shri Shrimad Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj!
All glories to all our Guru-varga!*

*“Namah Om Vishnupaday Gaurapresthay
Bhutale*

*Shrimad Bhakti-Pramoday Puri Goswami
Namine*

*Divyagnyana-padatraye cha Pravave janma
janmani*

*Gnyanavairagya-dehaya Sashtre
Siddhanta Samvide*

*Patitanam Samuddhare Yatvesha Dharay
vei*

*Prachara Aachar Karye cha jagarukaya
sarvada
Yatha Uddavasya kumara bhagavat
archane ratih
Vaishnabanam sarvakrutye dakshata
parama tatha”*

We bow down to our beloved grand spiritual master His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, who appeared on this earth as a major follower of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu! Oh Srila Param Gurudev Padapadma! You have mercifully given the transcendental knowledge to us and you shall remain our Master forever, birth after birth. After churning all the scriptures you arrived at the fundamental principles and manifested divine knowledge and renunciation in your persona. For delivering the fallen souls, you took the vow of renunciation. For fulfilling the same responsibilities ordained by Supreme Lord remained ever awake to complete the highest duties *i.e.*, preaching and practicing. Like Sri Uddhav Maharaj, the best disciple of Deva-guru Brihaspati, you engaged yourself in the dedicated worship of Lord Sri Hari from childhood. You had highest expertise in fulfilling all requirements of Vaishnavas. We surrender ourselves at Your Divine Lotus Feet!

The purport of this offering article is to make a sincere and humble attempt to realize in what mood we should visit Holy Vrindavan Dham, the transcendental abode of our most revered Sri Sri Radha Krishna and what our Guru-varga instructed us in this matter.

The name Sri Vrindavan Dham mesmerizes all devotees, particularly, Vaishnavas. By hearing the name itself they want to rush. While taking a turn towards Holy Dham from the Yamuna express way, devotees get glimpses of Sri Yamuna Ji that fills their heart in ecstasy. From the other side when one enters through Chhatikara mind travels in time when Sri Nanda Maharaj moved to Sri Vrindavan and halted there for the night for the first time, keeping all the carts in the



shape of half moon which incident gave the place its name. Every time devotees are ready to visit Sri Vrindavan and they do not wish to return. They feel pangs of separation while departing.

Even common people who are not Vaishnavas in strict sense of the term, also feel that visit to Sri Vrindavan Dham uplift their mood. They say it is always a rejuvenating experience for the mind, body and soul. It is so enriching that they even forget the occasional odd experiences of purse snatching by monkey and overflowing drains with little rain. Forgetting their past experiences, they get ready to visit again soon. That is why Sri Vrindavan Dham is always full with visitors and the local administration takes abundant caution to restrict and discipline the visiting guests. Deities in all the temples allure so much so that people forget their pain when they get *divya darśan* even for a while in the midst of heavy crowd. The soul becomes blissful. The positive aura heals all wounds of mind and body. Many go for circumambulating Holy Dham when their wishes get fulfilled. After Darshan there are other powerful attractions too. Mouth watering prasadam, particularly, lassi, delicious sweets and snacks of Holy Dham attract all food lovers. The list is never ending. Beautiful lighting, fragrance of fresh flowers, temple bells, hymns and prayers sung by devotees, etc., attract people of all ages.

But, Holy Vrindavan is not just any city or town. It is beyond comprehension with our mundane understanding. On a spiritual plane, the above described feelings and understanding are considered peripheral. Due to ignorance, we fail to reach the core. As we can't see Lord with our material eyes, in the same way, we can't see His holy abode too. Transcendental abode of Lord can be visualized only with the transcendental vision bestowed on us by the Mercy of Sri Guru. By sincere and austere practice purity will come in our chanting. Then with the mercy of Sri Guru and Gauranga the top

most secret of Holy Dham will get revealed before us. Moreover, another condition is that we must refrain from committing offenses related to Lord's supreme abode – Dhamaparadh.

Our Guru-varga being extremely merciful on us explained elaborately who can enter the Holy Vrindavan Dham and how. Holy Vrindavan Dham is the divine place where Supreme Lord Sri Radha Krishna manifest there glorious pastimes. The most beautiful Vrindavan Dham that is present on earth now is non-different from the Supreme Golok Vrindavan, Supreme Lord Sri Radha Krishna's eternal abode. Lord Shri Krishna appeared Himself with His divine consort Srimati Radharani and all His eternal associates along with His Holy abode.

Supreme Lord Krishna is the only Master and supreme enjoyer. All jivas are His eternal servants. His sweetness attracts all jivas. Everything that is related to Sri Krishna also attracts all jivas. Therefore, Lord's eternal abode has the same sweetness and has the potency to attract all. Sri Krishna himself said that "*vrindavanam parityajya padam ekam na gachhati*". "Leaving Vrindavan I never move a single step". Lord Sri Krishna, Srimati Radharani, Sakhis, Manjaris and all other associates remains there eternally. All the pure devotees too never move away from Vrindavan. Physically, in the service of Lord they may go to other different places, thus, seem like moving away. But, transcendently they are always present in Vrindavan. The Holy Dham is ever manifested in their heart. They are always present in the service of Srimati Radharani, who is the Supreme Empress of Vrindavan. Therefore, our spiritual masters are always present there in the supreme service of Srimati Radharani. *radhā-dāsyam* is the sole objective of every Gaudiya Vaishnava. If we beg our Guruvarga sincerely, then only with their permission and mercy we can enter Sri Vrindavan Dham. Otherwise, it is impossible to enter there.



At first a person sincerely prays Lord Krishna and when the prayers are accepted Sri Krishna Himself appears as bonafide and authorized spiritual Master, Sri Guru. Sri Guru due to His causeless mercy on all jivas removes the layers of ignorance and ignites the lamp of spiritual knowledge. After receiving the mercy of Sri Guru, an initiated devotee meditates on the transcendental Vrindavan in the manner prescribed in the *ābhidheya-tattva mantra*. In *dhyāna mantra* of *ābhidheya tattva* Sri Sri Radha Govind Dev it is mentioned:

*“Divya vrindāvana kalpa drumadhah
Śrīmad ratnāgara simhasanasthau
Śrī Śrī radhā srīla govinda deva
Prethalibhih sevyā manau smarami.”*

Meaning: I am meditating on the transcendental Vrindavan. There underneath the wish fulfilling tree, there is a grand throne studded with splendid gems on which Supreme Divine Couple Sri Radha Krishna are sitting who are being served by their dear most Sakhis.

Initiation is the process through which a disciple receives the mercy of entire lineage. It is absolutely necessary for a disciple to know the instructions of our previous acharyas. In this context, our Param Gurudev Padapadma, Nityalilapraavishta Om Vishnupad Ashtottarshat Sri Srimad Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur Ji has mercifully given clear direction as how to get entry in Sri Vrindavan Dham, spiritually. He said we individual souls are trapped in this material world. We are under the influence of illusory energy of Lord. In such position we can never get entry into the transcendental realm of Sri Radha Krishna. If we wish to serve the supreme couple in the Holy Dham then we must follow the path shown by Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Sri Vrindavan is the place where Lord Krishna held Rasa-lila with Srimati Radharani and other gopis. These pastimes are highly confidential. Without mercy of Sri Radha Krishna, no one will be able to understand

this *tattva*. Radha and Krishna both are one but for expanding the sweetness and depth of their loving mellows they manifest as two. In the present age both became for deliverance of all living entities. Prince of Vraja, Lord Sri Krishna Himself took the mood and body effulgence of Srimati Radharani and appeared in Nabadwipa-Mayapur as Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In order to give us the ability to enter into the transcendental Dham and confidential pastimes, Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in the golden form as son of Shri Jagannath Mishra and Sachi Mata. Transcendental Navadwip and Vrindavan both are one and the same. Sriman Mahaprabhu performed His Sankirtan pastimes, Sankirtan Ras in the home of Sri Srivas Pandit, just like Sri Krishna performed Rasa-lila in Sri Vrindavan.

But, Srila Param Gurudev Ji Maharaj has highlighted on an important aspect. In Vrindavan, *mādhurya* - sweetness predominates over all other qualities of Sri Krishna. In Navadwip, *audarya* - generosity predominates over all other qualities of Lord. Srila Pram Gurudev Ji explained that however, beneath this immediately visible quality of generosity, same intimate pastimes manifested by Sri Krishna in Vrindavan are present in Navadwip also.

Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur Ji has instructed us in “Shridhama Navadwipa Mahatmya’ as to how a devotee should perceive Sri Navadwip which is non- different from Sri Vrindavan as below:

*cintāmani-rūpa haya ei gauda-
mandala cid-ānandamaya-dhāma
chinmaya sakala [11]*

Transcendental Sri Gauda Mandal is made of wish-fulfilling gemstones. It is always blissful and everything within it is transcendental.

*jala bhūmi vrksa adi sakali cinmaya sadā
vidyamāna tatā krsna-sakti-traya [12]*



The water, land, trees, and so on, all are spiritual there. Shri Krishna's three energies i.e., *sāndhini*, *saṁvit*, and *hlāḍini* exist there eternally.

*svarūpa-saktira sei sāndhini-
prabhava tāra parinati ei dhāmera
svabhāva [13]*

The Dham is a manifestation of the *sandhini* aspect of the Lord's personal energy. According to scriptures Lord Balaram is expansion of Lord's *sandhini shakti*.

*prabhu-līlā-pītha-rūpe dhāma nitya
haya achintya saktira kārya prapanchika
naya [14]*

The Dham is the eternal abode of the Lord. His transcendental pastimes are eternally manifested there. It is the manifestation of the Lord's supreme inconceivable energy and should never be understood as material.

*tabe ye e dhāme dekhe prapanchera
sama baddha-jive tāhe haya avidya-
vibhrama [15]*

Baddha jiva, the conditioned souls of this material world, are under the influence of Lord's illusory energy, Maya. Due to ignorance they get a false notion and see the Dham as material.

*meghachchhanna caksu dekhe sūrya
achchhadita divakara nahi kabhu haya
meghavarta [16]*

Here Shrila Bhakti Vinode Thakur Ji is giving an example as the eyes covered by clouds see that the sun is covered, but the sun is never actually covered by clouds.

*sei rūpa e gauda-mandala cid-
ākara prapanchika jana dekhe jadera
vikāra [17]*

Similarly, people who live only a superficial material life they fail to see the spiritual form

of Sri Gauda Mandal and think that it is only a formation of matter.

*nityānanda-krpa yanra prati kabhu
hayā se dekhe ānanda dhāma sarvatra
cinmaya [18]*

Only when Lord Nityananda Mahaprabhu, who is Guru tattva, blesses someone, that person realizes the blissful, transcendental Dham everywhere.

Thus, our Acharyas have made it crystal clear that without surrendering at the Lotus feet of Sri Guru and getting his mercy, it is impossible to enter Sri Vrindavan Dham. Souls who always reside in Sri Gauda Mandal are the most fortunate souls in this world. Because, they always chant; they have mercy of Sri Nityananda Mahaprabhu; and remain in the company of Srīman Gaurāṅga Mahaprabhu – who is unison of Sri Radha Krishna. Srīla Param Guru Dev Ji elucidating the views of Srīla Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Ji stated that in Navadvīp Lord Sri Krishna is manifested in five aspects, pancha tattva, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Nityananda Mahaprabhu, Sri Advaitacharya, Sri Gadadhar Pandit and Sri Srīvas Pandit. This panchatattva appeared in Kali-yuga and manifested sankīrtan pastimes (*sankīrtan ras*) at Srīvas Aangan which is equated with *rāsa-līlā* in Vrindavan. While discussing this subject, spiritual entry into Vraj Dham in the Samadhi book, Srīla Param Guru Dev quotes from the following kīrtan composed by Srīla Narottam Das Thakur Ji:

*Sri- Gauda- mandala bhūmi,
Jeba jane cinta mani
Tara hoy braja – bhūme bas*

Meaning: Anyone who understands that the territory around Navadvīp is completely spiritual, only that person gets entry into Vraja.

On this most auspicious occasion of Appearance Day of our Param Gurudev we



are praying him to bless us so that our mentality of doer/enjoyer gets destroyed as a result, we will leave the material attachment and our chanting will become pure. Under the shelter of Sri Guru Gauranga and *divya harinām*, we will visualise the transcendental Gauramandala and will ultimately enter spiritually into Sri Vrindavan Dham.

This dasi is dumb, fool and stupid. Does not understand anything. Soulfully begs at Sri Gurupadapadma for their causeless mercy.

Subhashree Devi Dasi

By Anuradha Devi Dasi

All glories to the auspicious appearance day of Om Vishnupad Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur who is an ocean of spiritual wealth.

I am just a beggar at his Lotus Feet. Out of pure inexplicable mercy I fell into the precious dust of his divine presence and cannot still to this day comprehend how lucky I am to have found this goldmine that is enhanced by the diamond like soul of his successor Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj.

Why do we share on such auspicious days, isn't it to recall how boundless the mercy of great mahatma's truly is.

When I first took shelter of Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, I was quite young and had no idea the matchless gift the Lord of my heart had placed on this insignificant soul's path. I am still to this day in awe of the epic trajectory of his life and biography, his pure humility and vast knowledge. Many years ago, after a pilgrimage in India, my *dikṣā guru*, his divine grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj gave me a murti of Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur to bring back to our new math in Quebec,

Canada. I was shocked, firstly, I never expected that one day I could be worshipping his murti, but that I was also the one to carry him back with me, I felt that the murti was priceless and more fragile than a newborn child. I carried the murti on the flight from Delhi to London, once I arrived in London, they had strict rules about carryon and the inspectors wouldn't let me carry the murti with me on the plane, they wanted to send it with the luggage's at the bottom of the airplane. I begged them, tried my best to explain that he was my param Gurudeva, when that didn't work. I tried many justifications, until a voice in my heart called out and asked, "how much would it cost to bring him with me on the flight from London to Montreal?" That language worked for they replied, "go to the counter to figure out with the weight." Once they put the murti on the scale they came back with a total amount of US\$108. I smiled and cried, for I knew my Gurudeva was alive and that the murti had desired to come back with this unworthy soul. These stories are to awaken our attachment to our Gurudeva, whatever we experience we should always bring it back into the context that we are not worthy of such mercy and that our only goal is to dive deep into our bhajan and clean our heart so that our Gurudeva can be worshipped in it everyday, every minute of our lives.

I pray to all Vaishnavas to bless me so I can properly serve his living expansion, Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj life after life.

Dasanudas,

Anuradha Devi Dasi



Vyasa-puja offering 2020 by Arundhati Devi Dasi

A Vyasa-puja offering, in glorification of my Spiritual Master, Nitya-lila pravista jai om Visnu padaya, paramahansa Parivrajakacarya, Asttottara Sata, Vaishnava Thakur, Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur.

*Nama Om Vishnu padaya, Gaura
presthaya bhutale
Srimad Bhakti Promodaya Puri Goswami
iti namine.
Divya jnana padatra ca prabhava jnana
jnanmani,
jnana vairagya dehaya sastra siddhanta
samvide.
Patitanam, samuddare yati vesadharaya
vai, pracaracara karyye ca, jagarukaya
sarvada. Yathoddhavasya kumarad
bhagavadarccane rati.
Vaisnavanam saarva krtye daksata
parama tatha.*

Dear Gurudeva,

Every year my sister and I do our own personal appearance and disappearance offering, verbally, to your photo, Sri Srila Gurudeva. Also, we try to listen to your lectures, which are wonderfully prepared by Ramadas Prabhu.

I know that Srila Gurudeva represents the true principle of *guru-tattva* in every way, in his relationship with Sri Krishna (*sambandha*), in his devotion to Sri Krishna (*ābhideya*), and in his love for Sri Krishna (*prayojana*).

Oh! My Master and Lord, your mind and heart, are like an uninterrupted stream of oil, whose repose are the two divine lotus feet of the Lord. You have that pure devotion, which is able to attract the Lord, your devotion always reveals Him; the Lord is influenced by your devotion, and you show us, that nothing is more powerful than bhakti – *bhaktirevaimam nayati, bhaktirevaimam*

darsayati, bhaktivasah puruso bhaktireva bhuyasi. 13.8 This is why the pure devotee must be self-effulgent, and is why he must follow in authorized parampara. Otherwise, his touch upon one's soul will be fruitless.

One thing I have always noticed in Sri Gurudeva's lectures is that his speech is like a constant flow of transcendental nectar, flowing down to my parched heart. And the clarity of his words, is just like a crystal-clear waterfall, which soothes my mind and purifies my understanding.

My Lord and Master is the light of my existence.

He feeds me the sweet fuel of realization – the soul's sustenance.

Each year that goes by, I realize more and more, the necessity of a pure devotee's presence, either in his *vapuh* or *vani* form, and how important it is to connect with him through prayer.

I will always remember the year 1996, in the Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math, in Mayapur. I was not yet initiated by you Srila Gurudeva, but I had already accepted you as my spiritual master.

There was so much excitement around you – over one hundred voices filled the solitary appearance of the room, where we were assembled. Many devotees were coming for blessings, desiring to receive your mercy by your touch. Many touched your lotus feet, in order to ensure extra special blessings, so my sister and I, desiring the same, approached your lotus feet, but were abruptly and very insultingly shooed away, by the flick of the hand, from your presence, as one would often shoo away a street dog, or an insect. Naturally, that sent great waves of dissatisfaction and anger to our hearts. But at that moment, in my mind, I was more concerned with the question of how to get your special, and needed mercy, that in this way, the men seemed only able to receive. I remember that I burst into tears before you



Gurudeva, like a baby that is denied shelter, and vital milk from her mother. I called out, as if my life depended on your blessings – “Maharaja! How can we, in these forms, receive your blessings”

The room became suddenly filled, with an unprecedented silence, a stillness that I had never experienced before – one could literally hear a pin drip to the floor, the silence was that profound. My desperate cry for your mercy, had arrested all speech, thinking and movement of every single person in that room – they appeared stunned, as if spell-bound.

The silence remained unchanged, as you lifted your right hand in recognition of my plea. It seemed as if time itself had stopped, for one moment, to hear attentively your response. You looked straight at me, oh master, with an unearthly, loving air of peace – your eyes were gentle and compassionate and reassuring. It was as if you looked directly at my heart – nothing could be hidden from you. You saw straight through me, to the deepest area of my being. Then you said. “It is not by physical touch, that one receives the mercy of Sri Guru. But if your desire is intense enough, through prayer, then the *guru* will reciprocate that desire”.

That evening, those words of yours, my lord and master, took away every bit of mental pain and anguish, that was in my mind and body, and replaced it with an ineffable feeling of joy, and of great hope.

Oh! Gurudeva, please be patient with me – I am a very insignificant person, who is aspiring to serve and please you, for, even though I feel that my faith and conviction is strong, my heart is weak, due to distraction. Therefore, I am simply begging you for a drop of your causeless mercy.

As I sit here on a park bench, writing this offering to you Sri Srila Gurudeva, amidst the native sounds of the Hawaiian birds and the

beautiful soft breezes of her islands, I wonder, if it will be at all possible, to one day please you Gurudeva, by my little service, and to have a sincere desire to receive your reciprocation, though I be so fallen.

Your worthless servant, in the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Arundhati Devi Dasi

A Vyasa-puja offering by Krishna Mayi Devi Dasi

A Vyasapuja offering, in glorification of my Spiritual Master, Nitya-lila pravista jai om Vishnu padaya, Paramhansa Parivrajakacarya, Asttottara Sata, Vaishnava Thakur, Srila bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur.

*Nama Om Vishnu padaya, Gaura
presthaya bhutale
Srimad Bhakti Promodaya Puri Goswami
iti namine.
Divya jnana padatra ca prabhava jnana
jnanmani,
jnana vairagya dehaya sastra siddhanta
samvide.
Patitanam, samuddare yati vesadharaya
vai, pracaracara karye ca, jagarukaya
sarvada. Yathoddhavasya kumarad
bhagavadarccane rati.
Vaisnavanam saarva krtye daksata
parama tatha.*

Sri Srila Gurudeva,

I am realizing more and more how merciful you are, to have allowed this fallen soul to become your disciple, and take shelter at your lotus feet. But the goal is to serve and please you Gurudeva.

I know that I am not making much effort to advance, but I am praying for your mercy, my lord, to keep this worthless disciple at your lotus feet, so that I may one day come out of my slumber, and please you.



Your worthless disciple, in the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu,

Krishna Mayi Devi Dasi

Appearance Day Offering by Bhakti Rasa Devi Dasi

To my Grand Spiritual Master His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja, Thank you for being a perfect example of a pure, humble and loving servant of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya, and for perfectly teaching about His sacred mission of spreading the pure chanting of the holy names of Krishna. I am most grateful for the association of your glorious servant His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudh Bodhayan Goswami and all of the Vaishnava devotees of the Gopinath Gaudiya Math. Please bless me that I may serve your servants eternally.

Bhakti Rasa Devi Dasi

Vyasa Puja Offering by Raseshwari Devi Dasi

Vyasa puja offerings for Srila Bhakti Pramod Puri Goswami Thakur, the founder Acharya of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math. He has lived such a wonderful life in Sri Sri Radhakrishna's eternal past times. He is a 'Manjari' serving them.

When he appeared here on this material world, he was like an embodiment of humanity, tolerance, and selflessness. Giving to others was one of his prime mottos. He was the living personification of the third verse of Sri Sikshtashtakam of shriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, which is "*trnad api sunichena; taror iva sahisnuna; amanina manadena; kirtaniyah sada hari*". It simply means that one should chant Lord's name in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than a blade of grass, more forbearing and tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, ready to

offer all respect and politeness to others. Only in such a state of mind, one can qualify to chant *hari-nam* constantly. Srila B.P. Puri Maharaja lived on such pious disciplines.

He had very humble beginnings. Maharaja was in a small village (in today's Bangladesh). If we see almost a century back, he completed his graduation in Chemistry. He was highly educated and secured a job in Calcutta Port Trust as well. But when he came in contact with Prabhupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur (his *guru*, the spiritual master). He left every material commodity for the devotional service of his guru. Job and family compared less to him for complete dedication to his *guru* and *guru-varga*. His *guru* gave him the work of writing, which he administered his whole life. He did his divine pastime for about 102 years. He wrote till he was about 100 years old, even after enduring the hardships of old age and problems associated with the material body. He was able to write even with his shivering hands and cloudy vision, due to possession of such dedication towards his *guru*, and Lord Krishna who gave him the strength to do so. He valued and cherished the shelter of his *guru* and *guru-varga* and never tried to become independent of them. He established Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Matha in 1989, when he was 91 years old.

Once his disciples requested him to not avoid food and sleep for writing, in order to balance his health. Upon hearing this, he told them not to worry about him as he has practiced for these two from childhood. He said, "My body shall not suffer since I have dedicated my life-heart-soul in the service of my Gurudeva, Srila Prabhupada. If I will not be able to do so, I will be a criminal, liar and hypocrite in front of him. Henceforth, there would be no use in protecting this body. He asked his disciples whether they wanted him to commit this sin, because death would be far better than it. He said- according to me if this life ends whilst servicing my gurudev, then I would consider this gifted human



birth accomplished. He also was very interested in preaching and teaching the words of his Gurudev to the world, and motivate them to alter their life into a Krishna-conscious one.

In one way we are very fortunate that we are the grandchildren of Srila Bhakti Pramod Puri Goswami Thakur and that we have his blessings and mercy, which can easily be achieved if we honestly devote ourselves in the service of our Gurudev, Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj who was appointed by Srila B.P. Puri Goswami Thakur (our beloved Param Gurudev) as the next Acharya of our math. We are blessed to belong in such a beautiful and wonderful family of Gaudiya Math of Srila B.P. Puri Goswami Thakur. I pray to always be under the shelter of our Guruvarga and continue our journey towards spirituality full of peace, bliss, and love. Both B.P. Puri Goswami Thakur and our Gurudev preach and practice *hari-nam*, so one of the important aspects of service and devotion towards *guru-varga* is chanting the Holy Name-“Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare; Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare”.

My prayers at the lotus feet of the divine couple Sri Sri Radha Krishna and Srila Gurudev.
Hare Krishna.

Raseshwari Devi Dasi

Offering by Chaitanya Priya Das

I first of all pay my unlimited prostrated obeisances unto the lotus feet of Divine Spiritual Master Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj who gave me this fortune to be able to write a few words about the divine personality of my Param Gurudev His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur. Subsequently I beg my Param Gurudev who is very dear to Lord Gauranga, to accept my respectful obeisances and at the same time

forgive me for all my past and present offenses committed with and without my knowledge.

Although I was not fortunate enough to get the direct association of our Param Gurudev, I have been hearing from my Gurudev about his divine personality and charisma. I always get enchanted by his natural humility, immense compassion, unfathomable knowledge, love and respect for every living entity and unalloyed devotion towards the Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha Gopinath.

Srila Param Gurudev applied the ointment of divine knowledge (*jnananjana*) to the eyes of uncountable aspirants on the path back to God. He was a dispassionate speaker well versed in the truth about Lord Chaitanya and Sri Sri Radha Krishna. He could speak very charmingly. By hearing him, whoever was overwhelmed with lust, anger, greed or any other mental trouble, would immediately become free of all such difficulties. He was very affectionate to the devotees, sober, merciful and had a spontaneous tendency to smile while speaking.

He is rightly regarded the embodiment of Sriman Mahaprabhu's third verse of the Sikshashtakam. He had deep compassion for all of his god-brothers and he displayed deep humility. He used to put great emphasis on the teachings of *guru-varga* 'as it is'. He stressed the importance of attentive chanting of the Holy Name, which will lead to the higher realms of divine service, as without the basic building blocks of devotion, the higher topics of divine pastimes cannot be realized.

His divine glories are unending, I prostrate before him and beg for forgiveness for my *anarthas* which renders me useless for service. Srila Param Gurudev without your blessings and guidance, I am finished with no capabilities to make any progress beyond this material realm. Please hear my prayer and acknowledge this call for help so that I do not continue to drown in this temporal morass, the ocean of birth and death.



Through your grace, and by your mercy, there is hope and with that knowledge I will endeavour day by day to honour your example and the living presence of your teachings in our lives. Please accept this humble offering at your lotus feet on this glorious day and grant me mercy that I am able to unconditionally and wholeheartedly serve my Gurudev and the entire *guru-parampara* life after life.

Your insignificant servant,

Chaitanya Priya Das

Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Maharaj's Glories by Mahadeva Das & Mahalakshmi devi Dasi

All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga!

We are so fortunate that we got connected to Nitya Lila Pravista Om Vishnu Pada Paramahansa Parivikathacharya Astotrasata Sree Sree Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur through His appointed bona-fide representative Jai Om Vishnu Pada Paramahansa Parivikathacharya Asotrasata Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Gurumaharaj. Somehow our hearts were drenched into the material world since time immemorial and we are really feeling the greatest fortune that we got this connection to the *sampradaya* due to the unalloyed mercy that our *guru-parampara* is showering through them even though we have very little qualifications to be a Vaishnava. We have strong belief that all our current faults and past misdeeds will be vanquished when we properly start following their instruction in our daily life and serve them according to their wish. In *kali-yuga* it is so easy to get trapped with Maya and the only Hope we have for the rest of our life is to receive this mercy properly and further progress in our spiritual life.

Life time of Param Gurudev teaches us 'Simple living and High thinking'. His natural

exalted servitude towards *guru*, humility, tolerance, respecting other Vaishnavas, and Humbleness directing us to follow in his footsteps and get purified by chanting the Holy Name. He has exhibited such high class Vaishnava symptom which is very rare to see in this *kali-yuga*. As long as this world remains, his name, fame, teachings and glories will remain forever.

We both aspire to serve and continue to seek his blessings in order to perfect in our spiritual life.

Your Dasanudas,

Mahadeva Das
Mahalakshmi Devi Dasi

Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Maharaj's Glories by Dinesh Mahadevan

All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga!

Remembering glories of Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur on his appearance day. In the lectures of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakthi Pramod Puri Goswami Thakur, He used to refer certain unqualified spiritual masters as "goru", also known as cow in Bengali. He insisted the importance of taking *diksa* under a qualified spiritual master, otherwise also known as a bona-fide *guru* is so significant that it can impact our lives tremendously and help us get infinitely closer to achieving permanent bliss in the holy abode within Vaikunta loka. Taking *diksa* under such bona-fide personalities is the cornerstone in advancing in our spiritual lives, in order to serve the lotus feet of Radha Krishna. However, can such wisdom be attained if we are not cautious in whom we take *diksa* from? Do we have conviction so firm that we can say "yes, that personality I want to serve throughout my life"? These questions must go through one's mind when he or she is willing to take *diksa*. Without the shelter of a bona-fide *guru*, we will stray



further and further away from our path, leading to chaos and misery in our lives. Every living entity wishes eternal happiness. To be truly devoted to the Divine Couple, we must create a connection between ourselves and Thir servants. It is only natural that we cannot make a beeline to the Supreme Lord by ourselves due to our inferior skill and knowledge to understand Him. Calling ourselves the "servants" of the Lord is deranged, but rather, we should call ourselves servant of the servant of the servant. This connection is called *guru-parampara*. Our offerings to the Lord should only go through bona-fide personalities as they pass our offerings to their *gurus* and eventually, Srimati Radharani who is personally serving Krishna Herself. We will be able to improve by leaps and bounds in our spiritual life when we offer our pranams in that mood of purity and effectively impress the entire *guru-parampara*. This is not possible if we place our faith in the wrong hands and let them manipulate us for their gain. Their greed and lust will create problems for both parties and eventually break down in terms of their character, which once again causes further misery. Such kind of realization and meaning about establishing the connection to the divine couple can be derived by just one word described by pure *sadhus* like Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur. He is

so humble whose existence is so important in the age of Kali for all of us to get inspiration. I offer my dandavad pranams to the lotus feet of Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur and yearn that I can upgrade my spiritual life along with others acquainted with me by his merciful blessings.

Aspiring to serve your dear disciples with your mercy.

Dinesh



VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 2020

Date	Festival
20 October	Appearance day festival of Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur
26 October	Vijaya Dashami; and Appearance day of Sri Madhva Acharya
27 October	Papankusha Ekadashi; and Kartik vrata starts <i>(for those who start on Ekadashi)*</i>
28 October	Disappearance day of Srila Raghunath Das Goswami; Srila Raghunath Bhatta Goswami; and Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami
31 October	Kartik vrata starts <i>(for those who start on Purnima)*</i> ; and Disappearance day of Srila Murari Gupta
5 November	Disappearance day of Srila Narottam Das Thakur
9 November	Appearance day of Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar-dev Goswami Maharaj
11 November	Rama Ekadashi
15 November	Dipavali
16 November	Sri Govardhan Puja
18 November	Disappearance day of Srila Bhakti Vedanta Swami Maharaj
22 November	Disappearance day of Srila Gadadar Das Goswami, Dhananjay Pandit, and Srinivas Acharya Prabhu
26 November	Uttanna Ekadashi; Kartik Vrata end <i>(for those who start on Ekadashi)*</i> ; and Disappearance day of Srila Gaura Kishore Das Babaji Maharaj
29 November	Disappearance day festival of Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur
30 November	Rasa-Purnima; Kartik vrata end <i>(for those who start on Purnima)*</i> ; Appearance day of Srila Nimbarka Acharya; and Disappearance day of Srila Sundarananda Thakur

**Kartik vrata is observed at Gopinath Gaudiya math, from Ekadasi to Ekadasi, which is from 27 October to 26 November, 2020*

Bhagavata Dharma

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Dedicated to:

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

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