

“Just Try to Learn the Truth”

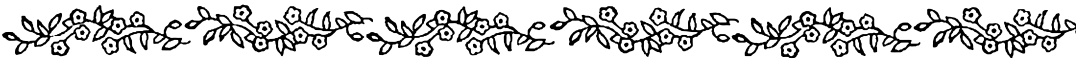
*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

—Bhagavad-gītā 4.34



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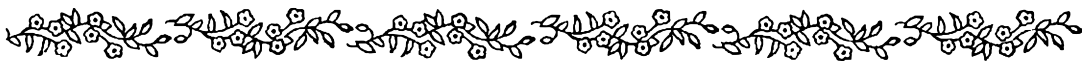
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Tad viddhi pranipātena has been compiled from lectures and informal talks delivered by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, interviews with friends, family, godbrothers, disciples and followers of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami & from information on how the author met his spiritual master Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja.

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“Just Try to Learn the Truth”

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa



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तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ ३४

*tad viddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realised soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”

—Bhagavad-gītā 4.34



Dedicated to my divine spiritual master

*Sri Srimad
Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*



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Introduction

This book relates the story of a conditioned soul (Māyā Dāsa*) in search of the Absolute Truth. Of course, Māyā Dāsa did not know it was the absolute truth that he was searching for. He just thought that there must be something else other than what was going on in his own life. He had grown up in a family hidden in the back streets of Perth, Western Australia and was caught in the web of the bright lights and mod-cons of this make believe, so-called picturesque, ephemeral existence.

One day, however, Māyā Dāsa actually finds something that he feels is greater than all this when he purchases an ancient scripture from India called the *Bhagavad-gītā*. After reading the commentaries by His Divine Grace Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda he attempts to take the given instructions [see quotes below] to heart.

“The path of spiritual realisation is undoubtedly difficult. The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself.”¹

“Satisfaction of the self-realised spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. Inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding. Unless there is submission and service, inquiries from the learned spiritual master will not be effective.”²

“Transcendental life begins when one accepts a bona fide spiritual master. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, clearly states here that this process of knowledge is the actual path.”³

*Māyā Dāsa: the servant (*dāsa*) of illusion (*māyā*).

He realises the need for a bona fide spiritual master, but there is one problem; he does not know what a *spiritual master* is, and does not know where to find one.

In spite of that, the search for a bona fide spiritual master who is a *tattva-darśi-guru*, or in other words, one who has realised and knows the Absolute Truth Śrī Kṛṣṇa [*tattva-jñātā*], and who is a seer of the Absolute Truth [*tattva-draṣṭā*], begins.

Māyā Dāsa does not have a clue what to do and what not to do, where to go and where not to go. He ponders the situation until a wandering band of *brahmacāris* arrive in Western Australia who encourage him to give up his meager, shallow and lost existence.

He sets out for New South Wales to continue his search. It was not until almost ten years later that he finally meets a *sādhū*, in a thatched roof hut, in the middle of nowhere, in India.

After entering that hut, Māyā Dāsa notices the effulgence coming from the *sādhū* who seems to know him better than he knows himself, even though they had not previously met. Even worse, the *sādhū* knows what he is thinking and knows his every thought. This effulgent personality has an uncanny knack of knowing past, present and future! After asking many questions, the *sādhū* explained things to him that he could never have figured out by himself. The *sādhū* further explained to him that he should give up being *māyā-dāsa* and become *kṛṣṇa dāsa**!

Once outside the hut again, Māyā Dāsa was totally astonished, and cannot believe his good fortune. He realised that this *sādhū* knew his heart, which was not in very good shape, and that far from his search for Truth being finished, it had only just begun.

Your lowly servant,

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa (Māyā Dāsa).

*Kṛṣṇa dāsa: the servant (*dāsa*) of God (Kṛṣṇa).

Chapter one



Tad Viddhī Pranīpatena

As an adolescent, I was fascinated by the ancient cultures of gods and goddesses, which had preceded our modern, western civilisation. I would read a lot about them, and especially explore their religious traditions. I sensed that there was a mystery behind all the variegated manifestations of life surrounding us, but I could not really quite put my finger on it. Upon reading about their gods and goddesses, I became convinced that they existed. However, among the people I knew, I was the only one that thought in this way. Everyone was a Christian, and they all believed that only Lord Jesus-Christ was “the Light, the Way and the Truth.” The Truth, yes, this is what I was looking for. However it evaded me...!

As I was growing into an adult, I read every esoteric book I could find, but the amount of spiritual knowledge I gathered did not amount to much. It was all quite vague, highly speculative, and approaching at best only the impersonal aspect of Godhead. I had to find the truth, but where?

At the end of December 1979 I went to Sydney, in New South Wales, and, as I was walking around Sydney, looking at the sights I was approached by a young lady who asked me for a donation and told me she would give me a book. The book looked very nice. It was a hardbound *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is with colour pictures. I did not know what the *Bhagavad-gītā* was at

that time but I gave her a donation in return for the book. I returned to Western Australia and I read the book three times.

Finally after many years of searching, there it was: the Truth I had been looking for! It was speaking to me from every page, every verse and every purport. Not long after that I met the devotees in Perth who had opened a small centre in the city. They had opened a small preaching centre in my city. It seemed unbelievable and too good to be true. Upon meeting them and hearing them preach, I decided to join them. I was 27 at the time and knew that I had to do something. I could not sit in Perth anymore doing what everyone else was doing, which was madness. I was searching for something much more metaphysical and that was just not occurring in Perth in 1980.

The Bhagavad-gīta

As previously mentioned, I read the *Bhagavad-gītā* three times, which took me to another place, far from the hum-drum of day-to-day life. Which was to get in the car, go to work, get in the car, come home from work, the weekend is here, we have to go out “to have a good time”, we have to enjoy — all “quite boring piffle”. The *Bhagavad-gītā* seemed to take me elsewhere. Consequently, I postulated that if I travelled to that place where they studied it regularly, then I would be rightly situated. While going through the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* I found the “recipe” to learn the truth in the following verse,

*tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānānāṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśināḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a bona fide spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realised soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”⁴

I thus understood that I would have to meet a *guru*, spend time with him and be trained in spiritual life, as Kṛṣṇa had stated.

There were three points:

- (1) approach a spiritual master.
- (2) inquire from him submissively, [I get to ask him questions, interesting].
- (3) render service unto him.

It was crystal clear! In the purport to that verse it was clearly explained that mental speculation could not help one to progress spiritually. I understood that was the reason why all my previous readings had remained sterile. So I had to find a *guru*! I did not even know what a *guru* was! It also said in the purport that the *guru* was supposed to be genuine, “bona fide”, and a self-realised soul. What did that mean? I thought that I would have to go to India to find a bona fide spiritual master.

Chapter Two



Mahaprabhu's Sankirtana Mission

At the end of 1980 beginning 1981, I left the entirety of what I owned (which was not much) and joined the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON), which was founded by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977).

I left a full time job in the perfume and cosmetic industry in Western Australia and joined a spiritual community in New South Wales. I began chanting 16 rounds a day (*japa*)* and following the four regulative principles.** The principles were designed to make us into ideal devotees, with all our daily activities centered around Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I knew I had to find a spiritual master. It had been explained to me by a devotee (Upananda dāsa from the USA), that now Śrīla Prabhupāda had left the planet his mercy had entered eleven ācāryas, all born in the western world. It was explained they were the 'present' mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and one of these men would become my spiritual master.

***Japa**—the soft recitation of Kṛṣṇa's holy names as a private meditation, with the aid of 108 prayer beads.

**The four regulative principles are 1. no meat eating; 2. no illicit sex; 3. no intoxication and 4. no gambling. Meat eating destroys austerity; illicit sex destroys cleanliness; intoxication destroys mercy and gambling destroys truthfulness. As far as the Vedic scriptures are concerned the last principle left in this age is truthfulness and that is tottering!

Hence here I was in ISKCON and my spiritual master had already been selected for me. It seemed I did not have to go to India after all. Of course, I had not been introduced to him, but that was a mere formality. There was a little photograph tree in the Perth temple, with Śrīla Prabhupāda's picture at the top and underneath him, his eleven western disciples. They were then considered the next successors in Śrīla Prabhupāda's line. Great, my problem was solved. *Tad viddhi praṇipātena*, approach a spiritual master, done!

Bhaktivedanta Āsrama

There I was, at the picturesque Bhaktivedanta Āsrama, at Colo River, in New South Wales, 4,000 kilometres from home (WA), in an idyllic setting, with cows, horses, a river, a big lake, mountains, peacocks, orange trees, and an orchard with over 400 mandarine trees. Jayadharma dāsa was the temple president, and there lived many other nice devotees. The temple also had an incense business called Spiritual Sky, which helped maintain the āsrama and farm.

Lagudī Prabhu Arrives In Australia

Well, as likely as not, and to my very, extremely good fortune (only I did not know it at the time), within six weeks of my arriving at the Colo River Bhaktivedanta Āsrama, a devotee arrived from India and I had the honour of picking him up from the airport; (although I did not know that it was an honour until many years later). His name was Lāgudī dāsa. When he arrived at the Sydney airport, he paid full *danḍavats* (prostrated obeisances) on the ground to all the devotees that were present there although they were all very much his juniors. He was from Yugoslavia (which is no longer a single country), and his

English was very difficult to understand. He spoke a great deal but I could not fathom most of it, so I just nodded politely and said ‘yes’ whenever it seemed to be appropriate, although I did not have the slightest idea what he was speaking about. He discoursed to one and all for long periods of time. He had just come from Bhubaneswar, which was in Orissa, that ‘out of the way place’ where Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was residing. He was preaching to everyone about a great *sādhū*, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, saying what a powerful preacher he was and how surrendered he was to his spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda. Of course I did not even know who Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was and where Orissa was and that Bhubaneswar was in the state of Orissa, although I had an idea of India. Little did I know that in the future I would actually meet that bona fide *guru*, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, and that he would become my spiritual master. I was very covered over by ignorance (hence *māyā-dāsa*).

One day the Regional Secretary for New South Wales came from the Sydney temple to the farm—Bhaktivedanta Āśrama—and behind closed doors was speaking quite loudly to Lāguḍi dāsa about his ideas. “We have eleven *ācāryas*. So why are you trying to change this and present someone new?” Lāguḍi dāsa tried his level best to try to convince the Australian ISKCON leaders about the exceptional spiritual characteristics of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, and how Australia would undoubtedly greatly benefit from his visit, so they should invite him down under, but they were against the idea. Their answer was, “We do not need any *svāmī* from India, we have eleven *ācāryas* and they are doing the job very nicely, they are empowered for time, place and circumstance to distribute Kṛṣṇa Consciousness to the western world...” Of course, according to the leaders, the then current *ācārya* for Australia was likewise empowered for ‘time, place and circumstance’ to distribute Kṛṣṇa Conscious-

ness in Australia, therefore there was no need for a *svāmī* from India to enter Australia and preach.

The Religionist

When you joined the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in Australia it was taken for granted that your *guru* was the current zonal-*ācārya*.

When I finally met the “Zonal-*ācārya*” for Australia, it was explained to me that I had to take initiation from him. However, I was not able to see the extraordinary qualities of a transcendental personality that I had been reading about and was expecting to see, in him. Although I had not met any other realised beings to support my doubts as we were so swept up in the fervour of it all, so I took initiation, externally anyway.

Sankīrtana

There existed at that time in the Society a phenomenon colloquially called “*sankīrtana*”. This meant that all the devotees went out and sold all kinds of paraphernalia, like records, T-shirts, perfume, candles, etc.

From what I could surmise by reading the books of Śrīla Prabhupada, *sankīrtana* was something different. In his books, the word ‘*sankīrtana*’ was defined as the congregational glorification of the Lord through chanting His holy name, the most recommended process for spiritual upliftment of mankind in the present age (Kali-yuga).

Śrīla Prabhupada himself would refer to to the distribution of spiritual literature as the *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*, the “greater drum”:

“...This press was considered by my Guru Mahārāja as *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*. He said. You’ll find in the picture: there is this

mṛdaṅga and press. He was very much fond of press...” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.12-13 – New Vṛndāvan, June 11, 1969)

“...My Guru Mahārāja used to say, that, ‘This is *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*.’ *Mṛdaṅga*, that drum, you have seen, that is small *mṛdaṅga*. If I beat on this drum, maybe a few yards, people can heard from few yards. But this is... The books are distributed, it can go from country to country, from continent to continent...” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11 – London, September 12, 1973)

“...This press propaganda, the publication propaganda, is *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*.’ So just to satisfy him we are trying to publish this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, very, very authoritative books, in English...” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.7 – Vṛndāvana, April 24, 1975)

He explained that the sound of the traditional Bengali clay drum used while chanting the *mahā-mantra* – *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare* in the streets along with hand cymbals or *karatālas*, was an activity called *nagara-saṅkīrtana*. The transcendental sound could be heard from a couple of blocks away, yet the books could go all over the world. I presumed, since we were going out of the temple to sell ‘stuff’ just like when we were going out to chant in the streets and distribute magazines and books, along with the chanting party, our business activities were colloquially called ‘*saṅkīrtana*’ by extension...!

Some relatives of mine came to Sydney to see me and inquired as to what we do and what I did. As I was in charge of all the ‘*saṅkīrtana*’ devotees, I explained to them the situation

and they responded, “Oh you are in sales and you are the sales manager.” I was somewhat shocked but in reality that is what it was. What I had tried to leave behind in Perth WA, I had become that again...!

The Sankīrtana Movement

However, according to my understanding from what I had read in the scriptures so far, the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrīmān Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very different to how it was practiced in Australia. The following verses give a brief description of the *saṅkīrtana* movement according to *śāstra*:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ*

“In the Age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions.”⁵

*kalim sabhājayanty āryā
guṇa jñāḥ sāra-bhāgināḥ
yatra saṅkīrtanenaiva
sarva-svārtho 'bhilabhyate*

“Those who are actually advanced in knowledge are able to appreciate the essential value of this age of Kali. Such enlightened persons worship Kali-yuga because in this fallen age all perfection of life can easily be achieved by the per-

formance of *saṅkīrtana* [congregational chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord].”⁶

*tasmāt saṅkīrtanaṁ viṣṇor
jagan-maṅgalam aṁhasām
mahatām api kauravya
viddhy aikāntika-niṣkṛtam*

“Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, the chanting of the holy name of the Lord is able to uproot even the reactions of the greatest sins. Therefore the chanting of the *saṅkīrtana* movement is the most auspicious activity in the entire universe. Please try to understand this so that others will take it seriously.”⁷

*nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ yasya
sarva-pāpa praṇāśanam
praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas
taṁ namāmi harim param*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, Hari, the congregational chanting of Whose holy names destroys all sinful reactions, and the offering of obeisances unto Whom relieves all material suffering.”⁸

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitarāṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsivādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

“Let there be all victory for the chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which can cleanse the mirror of the heart and stop the miseries of the blazing fire of material existence. That chanting is the waxing moon that spreads the white lotus of good fortune for all living entities. It is the

life and soul of all education. The chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life. It gives a cooling effect to everyone and enables one to taste full nectar at every step.”⁹

*dui hetu avatari’ lañā bhakta-gaṇa
āpane āsvāde prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*

“Thus with two intentions the Lord appeared with His devotees and tasted the nectar of *prema* with the congregational chanting of the holy name.”¹⁰

*sei dvāre ācaṇḍāle kīrtana sañcāre
nāma-prema-mālā gāñthi’ parāila saṁsāre*

“Thus He spread *kīrtana* even among the untouchables. He wove a wreath of the holy name and *prema*, with which He garlanded the entire material world.”¹¹

*matta-simha-prāya prabhu karilā gamana
premāveśe yāya kari’ nāma-saṅkīrtana*

“Almost like a mad lion, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu went on His tour filled with ecstatic love and performing *saṅkīrtana*, chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names as follows.”¹²

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

“The Lord chanted:

*Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! he
Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! he
Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! rakṣa mām
Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! pāhi mām*
That is, “O Lord Kṛṣṇa, please protect Me and maintain Me.”

He also chanted:

*“Rāma! Rāghava! Rāma! Rāghava! Rāma! Rāghava! rakṣa
mām Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! pāhi mām*
That is, “O Lord Rāma, descendant of King Raghu, please
protect Me. O Kṛṣṇa, O Keśava, killer of the Keśī demon,
please maintain Me.”¹³

*ei śloka paḍi’ pathe calilā gaurahari
loka dekhi’ pathe kahe,—bala ‘hari’ ‘hari’*

“Chanting this verse, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu,
known as Gaurahari, went on His way. As soon as He saw
someone, He would request him to chant “*Hari! Hari!*”¹⁴

*sei loka prema-matta hañā bale ‘hari’ ‘kṛṣṇa’
prabhura pāche saṅge yāya darśana-satṛṣṇa*

“Whoever heard Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu chant
“*Hari! Hari!*” also chanted the holy name of Lord Hari and
Kṛṣṇa. In this way they all followed the Lord, very eager to
see Him.”¹⁵

The Śrī Caitanya Upaniṣad

In the *Śrī Caitanya Upaniṣad*, quoted by His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura from the text of the *Ātharva Veda*,

the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya is predicted and described*:

“Carrying firewood in his hands, Pippalada humbly approached his father, Lord Brahmā, and asked, ‘O my Lord, please tell me how I may attain an auspicious life.’ ”

“Lord Brahmā replied, ‘Be satisfied by remaining always celibate, and perform austerities. Carefully control the activities of the mind. In this way you will attain an auspicious condition of life.’ ”

“Pippalada followed these instructions, and after having become pure in his own heart and mind, he again approached his father and asked, ‘O my Lord, please tell me how the sinful living entities in the Kali-yuga may be delivered.’ ”

“Who should be the object of their worship, and what *mantra* should they chant in order to become delivered? Kindly inform me.”

“Lord Brahmā replied, ‘Listen carefully, for I shall give you a confidential description of what will happen in the Kali-yuga. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda, the supreme enjoyer, whose form is transcendental, who is beyond the touch of the three modes of material nature, and who is the all pervading Supersoul residing in the hearts of all living entities, will appear in the Kali age. Appearing as the greatest devotee, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will assume a two-armed form of golden complexion in His abode of Goloka Vṛndāvana manifested on the bank of the Ganges at Navadvīpa. He will disseminate pure devotional service in the world. This incarnation of the Lord is described in the following verses.”

* Author’s note: Prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and description of previous yugas and incarnations. Please see notes and references number 16.

“The one Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the master of all transcendental potencies, and who is known only by devotional service, appears in innumerable transcendental forms. He has appeared with red, black and white complexions, and He shall also appear in the golden form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He shall assume the role of a perfect devotee, and He will teach the conditioned souls the path of pure devotional service.”

“I offer my obeisances unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is understood by the study of Vedānta philosophy. He is the master of all transcendental potencies, and He appears as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

“One who understands that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is known by the study of Vedānta philosophy, who is the original cause of the universe, and who is the oldest, the original person, crosses beyond this world of birth and death. This is the proper understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and aside from this there is no other way for one to achieve liberation.”

“Appearing in this golden form, the all powerful Supreme Lord will fill the entire universe with transcendental bliss by the chanting of His own holy names [*saṅkīrtana*].”

“In this way the Supreme Lord manifests two of His transcendental potencies - His *hlādinī-śakti* (the potency of transcendental bliss) and *saṁvit-śakti* (the potency of transcendental knowledge).”

“The Supreme Lord will chant a *mantra* consisting of the names of Hari, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. [The *mahā-mantra*—Hare

Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare].”

“These three names of the Supreme Lord (Hari, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma) may be explained in the following way — Hari means: He who unties [*harati*] the knot of material desire in the hearts of the living entities; Kṛṣṇa is divided into the two syllables ‘*kṛṣ*’ and ‘*ṇa*’. *Kṛṣ* means: He who attracts the minds of all living entities, and ‘*ṇa*’ means “the supreme transcendental pleasure.” These two syllables combine to become the name “Kṛṣṇa”; and Rāma means: He who delights [*ramayati*] all living entities, and it also means: He who is full of transcendental bliss. The *mahā-mantra* consists of the repetition of these names of the Supreme Lord.”

“The *mahā-mantra* [Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare] is the best of all *mantras*. Although it is very difficult to understand this *mahā-mantra*, it may be understood when one engages in pure devotional service of the Supreme Lord.”

“Those who seriously desire to make progress in spiritual life continually chant these sixteen splendid names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and in this way they cross beyond the bondage of continued material existence. The chanting of these holy names of the Lord is the greatest of all *mantras*, and it is the most confidential of all secrets.”

“Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead who appears as Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and Lord Vāsudeva. He is the original father of Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, Bṛhaspati, all the demigods, and all moving and non-moving living entities. He is the original cause of all that is temporary and all that is eternal. Nothing exists separately from Him, and therefore He is everything. He is described in the following verses.”

“This material world is temporary, whereas the individual living entities who try to enjoy matter are eternal and superior to it. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to both the temporary material energy and the eternal living entities. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Person, the Absolute Truth, the original cause of all causes.”

“One who worships the Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, with devotion and always remembers Him becomes free from all sins and completely pure. Easily understanding the truth about the Personality of Godhead and becoming free from all material lamentation, such a devotee attains the supreme goal of life, which is unattainable by those averse to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”^{17*}

Approach A Genuine Vaiṣṇava Guru

A Bona Fide Guru From A Bona Fide Sampradaya

As providence may have it, this zonal *guru* was found out to be, lacking the correct spiritual impetus to assist the aspirants on the path of *bhakti* (devotional service) and had to stand down, in the year 1985. Then, as a direct result, my search for a bona fide *guru* continued, and became even more urgent because of the following descriptions that I found in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*avaiṣṇavopadiṣṭena
mantrēṇa nirayaṁ vrajet
punaś ca vidhinā samyag
grāhayed vaiṣṇavād guroḥ*

*Author's note: Translations with full Sanskrit verses for Śrī Caitanya Upaniṣad are in notes and references section. Please see reference number 18.

“One who receives his *mantra* from a *guru* who is a non-devotee or addicted to sensual pleasure is doomed to a life in hell. Such a person must immediately approach a genuine Vaiṣṇava *guru* and again accept the *mantra* from him.”¹⁹

*samprādyā-vihīnā ye
mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ
ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti
catvāraḥ sampradāyinaḥ*

*śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakā
vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ
catvāras te kalau bhāvyā
hy utkale puruṣottamāt*

“Unless one is initiated by a bona-fide spiritual master in a bona-fide disciplic succession, the *mantra* he might have received is without any effect. For this reason four Vaiṣṇava disciplic successions, inaugurated by Lakṣmī-devī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and the four Kumāras, will appear in the holy place of Jagannātha Purī, and purify the entire earth during the age of Kali.”²⁰

*rāmṇujam śrīḥ svī-cakre
madhvācāryam caturmukhaḥ
śrī-viṣṇu-svāminam rudro
nimbādityam catuḥsanam*

“Lakṣmī-devī chose Rāmānujācārya to represent her disciplic succession. In the same way Lord Brahmā chose Madhvācārya, Lord Śiva chose Viṣṇu Svāmī, and the four Kumāras chose Nimbārka.”²¹

Disciplic Successions of the Kali-Yuga

Many years later Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami explained the importance of those verses to me:

“...These are the most important verses about the *sampradāyas* — disciplic successions — of the Kali-yuga. In the Kali-yuga there are four bona fide *sampradāyas*: Śrī, Brahmā, Rudra and Sanaka *sampradāyas*. The Śrī-sampradāya also known as the Rāmānuja-sampradāya begins from Lakṣmī devi and the *ācārya* is Rāmānujācārya. The Brahma-sampradāya, or Madhvācārya-sampradāya begins from Lord Brahmā and the *ācārya* is Madhvācārya. The Rudra-sampradāya or Viṣṇusvāmī-sampradāya begins from Lord Śiva and the *ācārya* is Viṣṇusvāmī. Then there is the Sanaka-sampradāya or Nimbārka-sampradāya of the four Kumāras, the *ācārya* is Nimbārkācārya, or Nimbāditya...”²²

Faith in the Disciplic Succession

What Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami explained to me was all in line with what Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has written in his Bhaktivedanta purports:

“...Unless one is extremely expert, he cannot understand the expert management of the supreme expert. One can understand, however, if one is fortunate enough to meet a bona fide spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession from Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Mother Lakṣmī or the Kumāras. These four *sampradāyas*, or disciplic successions of knowledge and transcendence, are called the Brahma-sampradāya, Rudra-sampradāya, Śrī-sampradāya, and Kumāra-sampradāya. *Sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ*.

The knowledge of the Supreme received from such a *sam-pradāya*, or disciplic succession can give one enlightenment. If one does not take to the path of disciplic succession, it is not possible for one to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one understands the Supreme Lord through devotional service with faith in the disciplic succession and then advances further, he awakens his natural love for God, and then his success in life is assured.”²³

Chapter Three



Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swamī

Vṛndavana - 1974

An interview with Guṇārṇava dāsa interviewed by Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa.
(Little or no editing done.)

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was born into an exalted family, who were Vaiṣṇavas, mystics and extraordinary *kīrtaniyās*. His ancestors were devotees for many centuries in Orissa and prior to that they came from Bengal. After leaving family life at the age of forty four, as had been predicted from his very birth by astrologers, he travelled throughout India as a wandering mendicant in search of a bona-fide *guru* who would give him *sannyāsa* so that he then would be able to fully commit himself to the preaching mission of Śrīman Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His last ‘port of call’ was Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma in the hope to find there what he was looking for. In Vṛndāvana at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir construction site he noticed a sign, “International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, Founder Ācārya His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.” This prompted Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami to walk onto the property.

The following interview with Guṇārṇava prabhu, who is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda gives a backdrop of events in the early days of the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple in Vṛndāvana, and into this backdrop of events, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami entered.

The Radha-Damodara Temple

Guṇārṇava dāsa: It was 1972, in the summer of June, when we were finally getting somewhere with building the temple. And that was the point where we started building huts to live on the land. Previously, before that, we were living in rooms at the Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple on the roof.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Who is we?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Guru dāsa and Yamunā devī dāsī, Caitya-guru dāsa, a *brahmacārī*: a Bengali *brahmacārī* called Sac-cid-ānanda, Yādavācārya from Los Angeles; and another devotee from Los Angeles called Satyavrata. And for a while there was a *sannyāsī*... Oh, and there was Subal Swami, and another *sannyāsī* called Devānanda Swami, one of the early *sannyāsīs*.

So the *sannyāsīs* were going here and there, but pretty much the four or five of us, we were there, and Guru dāsa and Yamunā dāsī had separate rooms. So, every morning we would do *hari-nāma saṅkīrtana* going to the land in Rāmaṇ Reti from the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple and then arrive there, pay our obeisances [and chant the *prema-dvani* prayers] Jaya Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa... you know, and then we would walk back chanting *japa*.

The Move onto the Land

Guṇārṇava dāsa: So at a point around June 1972 that all stopped, and we decided to move onto the land. Prabhupāda wanted us to live there. So we built these huts out of bricks, mud and cow dung, with a straw roof; and that's where we lived. And, slowly but surely, we started digging out the foundations of the temple. We didn't have a lot of money. That was the problem; it's always

a problem, isn't it? If you don't have money you can't do much. So the foundation work was being done slowly; cement was a big problem: we hardly had any cement. In those days, cement was scarce. There were a lot of quotas. You had to go to Mathurā and see if you could be allocated “x” amount of bags; that was how it was in those days. So, due to the lack of money and the lack of cement, there was very slow progress. At that time, Guru dāsa and Yamunā dāsī were also in charge of construction and they would come on a rickshaw from Rādhā-Dāmodara temple — they didn't live on the land — and one of the huts was made into an office; that's where they spent their time; she used to type all Guru dāsa's letters to Prabhupāda. He used to give her dictation; they'd keep a few accounts, do different things. But nothing really happened, there were no plans, there was no artist's conception of the temple, nothing. So it wasn't until Surabh came — I met him in Calcutta when I went to Rathayātrā in 1973 — and he was asked by Prabhupāda to come to Vṛndāvana and start doing something.

So when he came, we shared a hut together, and part of the hut was transformed into a little architect's office — he had a drawing board, pencils, all kinds of stuff — and it was only when he came that things started to happen. Prabhupāda started thinking about giving more money, because, you know, Prabhupāda was very reserved; he wanted to see if there was other ways of collecting money... Oh, there was a devotee called Tejīyas (he actually had quite a lot to do with the Bhubaneswar temple in the early days) and he was in Delhi at that time, and he was also responsible for trying to make life members or collect from life members for the Vṛndāvana temple. But it was nothing substantial. So that's when Guru-krpā came and Prabhupāda ordered him to go to Japan. He had a collecting party called the Nāma-haṭṭa party; there were about eight to

ten *brahmacārīs*; so there was Yaśodānandana, Guru-kṛpā and their *brahmacārīs*, and they collected a lot of money. As a result, Prabhupāda would give the money to us — although he didn't give the money to us directly, it was held in trust in Delhi and it was sort of filtered through to us — and I would say about in the middle of '73, that's when Gour Govinda Mahārāja came...

Your Guru Maharaja Was Like a Wandering Mendicant

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: '74.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Was it '74? Not '73. And you can imagine how, you know, try to look at it through your Guru Mahārāja's eyes... These devotees of the Nāma-haṭṭa party were rough and rowdy... But when they came, I have to say; we used to have the most incredible *kīrtanas*. There was no temple. There was only some concrete foundations and some pillars with iron rods reinforcements, coming through the concrete. But we used to have these incredible *kīrtanas*, which used to go on literally for hours. We had a really strong bond with them, because we were the so-called builders of the temple, and they were the collectors of the money for the temple. When they used to come from Japan, it was wonderful to see them; they were rough and rowdy but they were very disciplined as well; and they really relished being in Vṛndāvana for those breaks. They'd stay for about three weeks and then go back. So this was pretty much like that for the advent of your Guru Mahārāja around that time. Prabhupāda was coming fairly regularly to Vṛndāvana. That was the mercy, really. This was Prabhupāda's pet project. Well, he had two pet projects, Māyāpura and Vṛndāvana. He said, "I don't care if all other temples in ISKCON close, but Vṛndāvana

and Māyāpura must remain open.” So they were very important projects, like - Meccas.

So, your Guru Mahārāja was like a wandering mendicant, he wore saffron cloth. He had different cloths, some were knee length, and others were a little bit longer, and he had like a *chaddar*, that’s how I remember him. I didn’t see him with anything else pretty much; he had some books, although I didn’t even know where he kept them. I always used to see him with his bits of cloth. But Prabhupāda took a lot of care of him, he really took him close. They used to spend a lot of time together. Because he was older... What age would he have been?

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Mid forties, forty-five to be exact.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Oh! There you go! He was twice as old as us! I was in my early twenties; twenty-two, twenty-three, and he was in his mid forties. So Prabhupāda took him right under his wing, and I do not know what they used to discuss. You know they used to talk mostly in Hindi, sometimes in English — but he used to come... I forgot where he used to stay initially. Do you know where he used to stay? I think your Guru Mahārāja was living in Rāmaṇ Reti somewhere, in a humble dwelling because he was inviting Prabhupāda to come, sit and take *prasāda* somewhere. In Rāmaṇ Reti there were a lot of *āśramas*, and there was always *prasāda*. A lot of these people that would retire to Vṛndāvana, they would always make sure that the *sādhus* were fed. There was no shortage of *capātīs*, *dāl*, rice, *subji*; there was plenty.

Then eventually, when he came to see Prabhupāda, he would stay longer and longer, and then, as the temple began to develop, Prabhupāda was simultaneously building his house. And I remember that there was another Indian gentleman; his name was Yogi Bhajan, and if I am correct, he was a Māyāvādī, and for some reason Prabhupāda gave him *sannyāsa*. I remember,

sometimes I used to see Yogi Bhajan and Gour Govinda Mahārāja together. They took *sannyāsa* from Prabhupāda approximately at the same time but of course, on completely different levels. And then, from what I can recollect, he stayed around Vṛndāvana for some time. But I think Prabhupāda was heading towards a focus for Gour Govinda Mahārāja.

At that time, that was the building of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir, it was all about Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, yet, although Prabhupāda was trying to get a Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir built in Vṛndāvana, he was also thinking about Bhubaneswar. So I think, at a point, Prabhupāda told him, “I’d like you to go to Bhubaneswar and start a temple.” And of course, it started from scratch, as he had no money.

A Mood of Awe and Reverence

I never had the fortune to really get to know Gour Govinda Mahārāja closely; it was as if we were a little bit in a mood of awe and reverence with him. We were just building the temple, we were overseeing the workers — we had over three hundred workers there when it was really going — so we were quite focused. He was a quiet man, you know, and he liked being on his own. He was always on his own, wandering. Before he met Prabhupāda, he was always going here, there, everywhere. It’s interesting, isn’t it? It’s almost like destiny is very clear, isn’t it? His birth, where he was born, the quality of his parents, a traditional Vṛndāvana family, the auspicious area where he was born... And then taking up chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and just wandering, reading *śāstra*, living very simply... That’s one thing about Gour Govinda Mahārāja: he didn’t eat a lot. I don’t think that I ever saw him eat. That is what I am saying, he kept to himself, he didn’t socialise; he was with his thoughts, he was

with Kṛṣṇa, he was very happy to meet Prabhupāda, he saw Prabhupāda as the real thing. It didn't take him long to make up his mind to take initiation. He then, pretty much soon after that, he went off to fulfill the orders of his spiritual master, and he was pretty much absorbed in that project for many years. He stuck at it. So that's pretty much it. I didn't really have a lot of time to associate with him, he wasn't long there.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: You said the last time when Śrīla Prabhupāda and Guru Mahārāja met; it seemed to you like they already knew each other [instant recognition]...?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Yes! Well, I think that was it. You know, it's difficult to talk about this, because, I guess, when you become advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is a knowing that we don't know. So there was a knowing between those two personalities [Śrīla Prabhupāda and Gour Govinda Mahārāja]. There was a knowing about Kṛṣṇa consciousness; there was a knowing about where their *sevā* lay. What they used to talk about, who knows? Because we weren't present, and that was why he never became familiar; you know, when you have respect for somebody, you don't artificially go over and become familiar just for the sake of it. What's the point? That's not good.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: So you were like that with Guru Mahārāja. Did anyone else feel like that?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Well, there were only a few of us, but we were all like that.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Really?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Yeah! We were very respectful, and whenever he saw us, he was also very respectful. He would come over, talk for a little bit, and then he'd be off. That's how he was, that's my

remembrances of him. Why should he waste time, talking away like if he was a *brahmacārī* or some guy from L.A.? You know, you are kind of talking and relating, you go on and on and on, unnecessary most of the time... That was his culture, and his nature. He was a *sādhū*, and *sādhūs* control their senses.

Sometimes Gour Govinda Mahārāja would just walk around the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir construction site and he would just be looking at everything, touching the steel reinforcements — there was steel coming out of the ground — he would touch that, run his hands along it, touching the concrete, touching everything, as if he was trying to understand every facet of the construction all at once.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Looked After Us Like a Father

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: You also said that Prabhupāda would come to the hut where you were staying and sit on the bed, talk with you all, and if anyone was sick he would arrange medicine...

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Yeah!

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: But you said that when Gour Govinda Mahārāja entered onto the property that all stopped.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Well, you know, things evolved a bit. When we first went to live on the land, Prabhupāda looked more after us, like a father; whenever he would come — it wasn't for long periods — he would always ask about our well being, “Are you all right?” That's why I also started a *goshalla*, because Prabhupāda said, “I want you to start a *goshalla*, we need milk, proper milk, because my disciples are not strong health wise; it is important that they are healthy in India, Vṛndāvana.” Living

in Vṛndāvana is like living under a microscope. Prabhupāda said that living for three years in Vṛndāvana is like thirty years living in the west. It's spiritually intense. I've had reactions when I was a *brahmacārī*.

There Was No Sense Gratification

Guṇārṇava dāsa: It was a hot summer; I thought to myself that, "I'm going to live on mangoes, beautiful mangoes." After three or four days eating mangoes — you'd eat four or five mangoes through the day — I had horrendous boils, because of the sugar in the mangoes, the natural sugar. I had boils, they were so horrible, incredible. They needed lancing so all the poison could come out, and then, when boils go back down, they leave a crater. It was amazing the state of my legs... That was the spiritual intensity of Vṛndāvana; there was no sense gratification. If you tried to have sense gratification in Vṛndāvana, it wouldn't work; it is impossible, you know, you'd suffer straight away.

What Good Fortune

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Getting back to your Guru Mahārāja, those were my main recollections. I wasn't fortunate enough to have more association. But what I did see was perceived from a distance, more than from close up, intimate. He didn't know anybody from ISKCON, and we were all young. Try to think, if you are in your mid forties, a *sādhū*, you are very set in your ways. He was more interested in trying to connect with Prabhupāda to find out what he should do next; after having met Prabhupāda, that was his focus and Prabhupāda very quickly gave him initiation.

Those were the days; those days never to be experienced again; fortunate we are! Those were sweet days, it was just

total causeless mercy how I was able to go to Vṛndāvana in the early seventies and work on that project. It's incredible, because before the project started being built, we were living there for about eighteen months, almost two years before anything substantial started happening. So, like I was saying earlier on, we were fortunate to associate with that level of Vaiṣṇava. So what good fortune! I don't know, I don't know, if anyone would say to me," Would you like to relive those years?" I would say, "Absolutely! Tomorrow!"

A Generation of Incredible Older Vaiṣnavas

Guṇārṇava dāsa: In those days, there were still many of Prabhupāda's godbrothers around; there may have been fifteen to twenty of them in their eighties going into their nineties, and they used to come periodically to meet Prabhupāda. You could see them together, walking down the road, chanting on beads; there were *sannyāsīs*, there were *grhasthas* and there were *vānaprasthas*. I also remember Prabhupāda's Godbrother Ānanda prabhu who was a *naistika-brahmacārī**, a *brahmacārī* all his life. He was about eighty nine years old.

So, we were surrounded by a generation of incredible older Vaiṣnavas. And I must say that Gour Govinda Mahārāja was one of those Vaiṣnavas. I've got to say so. I just wish that we would have had more opportunity to associate, but look, we were focused, we had a temple to build, and like I said before, he had his focus, plus he wasn't there for very long. Once he had taken *sannyāsa*, he didn't spend hardly any time in Vṛndāvana. So you are fortunate to have connected with such a wonderful Vaiṣṇava.

**Naistika-brahmacārī*: That means he had never any experience of sex. He never married.

They Had Never Actually Physically Met

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: So I would like to get back to this particular point to make sure I have it right: you said that there was a lot more association with Śrīla Prabhupāda before, but that when Guru Mahārāja came, that started to diminish because Śrīla Prabhupāda had Guru Mahārāja under his wing; and you did not get the association with Śrīla Prabhupāda because he was spending most of his time with Guru Mahārāja.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Yes!

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: So that's a fact?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Yeah!

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: You also said that you could see the definite connection, even though they had never actually physically met.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: O Yeah! Yeah!

He Came Specifically to Meet Prabhupada

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Would you say that this was somewhat different than for the new devotees coming to Rāmaṇ Reti.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Oh sure, no question! It was meant to be. It was like... You know, when Kṛṣṇa comes into the material world, He comes with his entourage and paraphernalia, to do whatever His pastimes are. So it's almost like that; Prabhupāda coming into this world, sent by Kṛṣṇa to do a service to his guru, and him, Gour Govinda Maharaja, coming. Kṛṣṇa arranged the connections, of which your Guru Mahārāja was one, a vital cog in the wheel. We were all Prabhupāda's soldiers, we

were all from *mleccha** families. We were from the west, taking drugs, you know, we were really out of it people. I always see my relationship with Prabhupāda like that: I will always be a soldier. That's what soldiers do: they work hard, but your Guru Mahārāja wasn't a foot soldier, he was special, he had a special connection with Prabhupāda.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Could everyone on the property see it?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Could? You imagine! Prabhupāda didn't give him the same service to do; he didn't say, "Oh, go to Mathurā and get cement". He didn't say, "You go and work with these boys on the construction site." He had a mission, and the mission was clear. So they used to talk about that, but we weren't present.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: How did the other devotees on the property feel about Guru Mahārāja?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: There were only a few of us, but we were all very respectful. Yeah, very connected! What I mean by 'connected' was that, even though we didn't talk about it, we all felt and we all had a spontaneous respect for your Guru Mahārāja. The way he came... He came specifically to meet Prabhupāda. That was his business in Vṛndāvana.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: That was Guru Mahārāja's big thing. That was it, really...

Coming from the West

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Guru dāsa was the temple president at that time?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Guru dāsa was the temple president, but of

*Mleccha: meat eater.

course there was no temple to be president of. I remember coming from Wales. I was just a raw kid. I had never left Wales in my life, and all of a sudden I was in Vṛndāvana to help build this beautiful temple. I was associating all of a sudden with these unique personalities, and getting plucked out of that area of the world, you know, out of what I was doing. I was living in London in a house. I was a hippie, searching for the truth. By getting plucked out of there and going to Vṛndāvana I grew up very quickly, and I learned a lot. I matured. Just like I said earlier, Prabhupāda said that three years in Vṛndāvana is like thirty years in the west. I matured very quickly and I was doing incredible things, Prabhupāda empowered us to do stuff.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: So you and the other devotees on the land thought that Guru Mahārāja was a little different?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: He was! He was special.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: You felt he was a real Vaiṣṇava not just...

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Well, look, see it through our eyes, try to see it right, empathically: here is us coming from the west — we were kids really, raw kids — trying to do some service in the name of being a soldier, and all of a sudden you meet *sādhus*. I mean, your Guru Mahārāja was born in that unique place, in a unique family, with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Jagannātha, deities, you know, so we have to respect that, you can't touch that.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: But you didn't know about that then...

Guṇārṇava dāsa: We didn't know it, but at the same time we saw how Prabhupāda was behaving...

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Behaving with him [Gour Govinda Swami]?

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Yeah! So that was the measuring stick.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Right: the *guru* is acting like that, so we should also.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Prabhupāda was treating him differently than he was treating us.

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: Even though Śrīla Prabhupāda was very nice to you all...

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Oh yeah! But that is for them to know; this was Vaiṣṇava etiquette, we didn't enter into that. We respectfully observed from a distance; but definitely special things were happening in Vrndāvana, and your Guru Mahārāja was one of them. So how fortunate we were to be in the association of all these generations of Vaiṣṇavas! And they've all gone, they've all moved on...

I Thought He Was a Bābājī

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: You mentioned another point: he was coming to *maṅgala-ārati* and he was always the first one there.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: Oh yeah! Always the first one! It was as if he didn't go to sleep. I can't even remember where he used to stay. He was always the first one at *maṅgala-ārati*, chanting with his bits of cloth. When I think about it now, I remember that I thought at that time that he was a *bābājī*, you see, because his cloth was short like theirs; so I thought like that, because in Rādhā-Kuṇḍ and around the Braj area, there were a lot of *bābājīs* — most of them wore white though — but I thought that he was a *bābājī*...

So I was very respectful because I saw how Prabhupāda was treating him. Prabhupāda treated him in a special way, but we just didn't know what was happening. That was not for us to know it was not like if it was a secret you can't know; it's just what was happening there, and we were sort of here, and it just went on.

A Mature Cultured Vaiṣṇava

Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa: There is another thing you said, like someone said something to Śrīla Prabhupāda about my Guru Mahārāja and Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “He’s not a new man, you’re all new men.” Were you there for that?*

Guṇārṇava dāsa: I can’t remember whether I was there, but I know of the incident. I don’t know the details; it’s so long ago... It’s interesting, I am just seeing now how it’s important for someone else to be present to evoke the memory of the past. I wouldn’t have thought of that but now that you are saying that, I think there was some incident; I don’t know whether it was an inquiry, a devotee asking Prabhupāda, who was it... I can’t even remember the incident. Although I do remember the reply now that you say it like that. I don’t know if it was an issue or anything; it may have been some sort of an inquiry about Gour Govinda Mahārāja. I do remember hearing about that, Prabhupāda saying about him that, “He’s not a new man, you are all new men.” See, it just expands on, it confirms what I’ve

*Author’s note: Comment by Bhāgavata dāsa [now Bhāgavata Mahārāja].

Bhāgavata dāsa: After Gour Govinda Swami took *sannyāsa* many *sannyāsīs* and Governing Body Commissioners [GBC] started complaining, “How has he taken *sannyāsa*? He’s a new man!” Then Śrīla Prabhupāda told them, “He is a devotee from his birth, you are new men!”

Author’s note (ii): Gour Govinda Swami took first initiation from Śrīla Prabhupāda after approximately one month, took Gāyatrī Mantra after another one month, and approximately four months after that he took *sannyāsa*. Therefore by material calculations it could be said that Gour Govinda Swami was a ‘new man’ [within a six month period he took first and second initiation and *sannyāsa*], however, that is material calculation and Śrīla Prabhupāda knew the heart of his disciple Gour Govinda Swami as he knew the hearts of all of his disciples. This is one of the symptoms of a true *sādhū*: he knows the heart.

been saying before, that Prabhupāda had a special relationship with him. I mean, he was an older Vaiṣṇava; looking back at us, we were just kids, and this was a mature, cultured Vaiṣṇava. So Prabhupāda had talks with him, Kṛṣṇa conscious talks, association: *sādhū-saṅga*. Obviously that must have been some sort of immature enquiry, because I know for a fact that we wouldn't say anything like that, "He is new." That's why I am saying that Surabhi, Satyavrata, myself, whoever else was there, that I knew, we were respectful and we kept our distances. I mean you spoke when you were spoken to, right?

Chapter Four



The Grand Festival for Mahaprabhu

Mayapura - 1979

From the time Lagudi prabhu arrived in Australia he was presenting a great deal of information. The essence of what he revealed will be presented in this chapter.

Early 1979 in Māyāpura during the second festival after the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja fell sick. No-one knew what the illness was he was suffering from. The doctors could not ascertain the problem and said that he was not actually sick, although he certainly seemed to be ill.

The Symptoms Lasted Four Months

Lāguḍi dāsa *brahmacārī* had acted as Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja's servant for the period of four months—one month prior to the Māyāpura Festival, two months in Māyāpura and one month in Bhubaneswar—and had personally witnessed the different symptoms that developed in the body of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja from this mysterious illness.

Lāguḍi dāsa had said, "I am very much indebted to Gour Govinda Mahārāja, I know that I was offensive to him somehow

or other when he was sick, but he did not take offence at me. I had the chance to be with him for all that time; he stayed in Māyāpura for two months; he could not be moved, and then when he was better we put him into the bus and took him to Bhubaneswar. When we arrived at the Bhubaneswar land nearly everyone who lived there had left.”

Fixed in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

When Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja came to the Māyāpura Festival, he had not been eating for a few days; he had been fasting and his health had become worse and worse until he actually became delirious. Generally when a person becomes delirious, they just speak all nonsense, they just go a little crazy, but Gour Govinda Mahārāja was simply chanting, ‘Nītāi-Gaura! Hari bol! ‘Nītāi-Gaura! Hari bol!’ Many tried to talk to him but he would not respond, he would just look up and say, ‘Nītāi-Gaura! Hari bol! Nītāi-Gaura! Hari bol!’ This was certainly an indication of his being fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Previously, when he was in good health, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja would walk twenty miles at a time, and when he was sick he would just fast. The devotees would ask him, “Are you sick?” Where upon he would reply, “No, I am fasting.”

He Should Not Go to Anyone Else

On Tuesday, 27 February, 1979, the disappearance day of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Śrī Rasikānanda Prabhu, a godbrother of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja left this world at 9:00 A.M. in Calcutta. Two days later, on Thursday, March 1, 1979, a festival of mourning was held in his honour at the Śrī Caitanya Gaudiya

Math in Māyāpura. Many *sannyāsīs* from ISKCON had been invited to Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's disappearance festival and had assembled at his *maṭha*, next to the ISKCON temple in Māyāpura. Amongst them was Gour Govinda Swami. During the highlight of a wonderful ecstatic *kīrtana*, Gour Govinda Mahārāja fell to the ground and began to moan and roll around in the dust. No one could ascertain the problem. Two *sannyāsīs* carried Gour Govinda Mahārāja back to Lāguḍī's room and they said, "He should only go to Lāguḍī, not to anyone else." Everyone thought that he had some type of tropical fever, but no one knew what, so they felt it best that he be with his friend Lāguḍī dāsa Brahmācārī.

Lāguḍī dāsa: I was invited to the ceremony for Śrīla Prabhupāda's godbrother, Mādhava Mahārāja, but I did not go. I was in my room when I heard a knock at the door. I opened the door and saw two *sannyāsīs* holding Gour Govinda Mahārāja, and they said to me that I should look after him. I thought that it would only be for a few days because he had never been sick in his whole life. He had never had any real illness!

None Were Successful

No sooner had Gour Govinda Mahārāja been taken to Lāguḍī's room than Bhāgavata dāsa arrived. He was the president of the Bhubaneswar temple at that time. Bhāgavata dāsa was very concerned for Gour Govinda Mahārāja's health, so he brought all the doctors and *kavirājas* that he knew of to try and cure Gour Govinda Mahārāja's illness. Yet none of them was successful, and could not even bring about any improvement of his condition.

Some of the devotees, in their concern for Gour Govinda Mahārāja, began to wonder if he was possessed by a ghost, so they sent a devotee to Navadvīpa to bring an exorcist. A tantric exorcist came and examined Gour Govinda Mahārāja, and said, “No, no, this is no ghost. This is definitely no ghost.”

Śrīla Niskīncana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja Arrives

Lāguḍi dāsa: Bhāgavata dāsa came and brought a lot of people; then Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s godbrother, came, brought by a Bengali *sannyāsī*, and started speaking in Bengali to Gour Govinda Mahārāja and to that *sannyāsī*. The *sannyāsī* translated it for us in English I remember this.

Śrīla Niṣkīncana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was a great well-wisher to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples and when they would ask him questions, his usual answer was, “*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.*” Although highly educated in the schools of his native Bengal and fluent in English, he spoke English only rarely. Mostly, he just kept chanting *Hare Kṛṣṇa*. Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda himself had spoken of Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja as *niṣkīncana*, “having no material attachments,” and *paramahansa*, “a swanlike pure devotee.”

Bhāgavata dāsa: Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja came into the room, took one thread from his *dhōtī* and put it under the nose of Gour Govinda Mahārāja. I was familiar with this

technique because it describes in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* how Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya did the same thing [to Lord Caitanya when he had collapsed in the Jagannātha temple]. Bābājī Mahārāja felt Gour Govinda Mahārāja’s pulse, looked at his eyes, and felt his head. Then he rose, and turning to me he laughed and said, *bhāva, bhāva*’, indicating to me that Gour Govinda Mahārāja was experiencing *kṛṣṇa-premā*....

Lāguḍī dāsa: The *sannyāsī* was interested to find out from Gour Govinda Mahārāja through Bābājī Maharaja who would be the next *ācārya* of ISKCON. He was interested to know what Śrīla Prabhupāda had said as to who would be his successor, because he knew he was a very special personality. They knew that Śrīla Prabhupāda liked Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī very much, of whom he had said that he was a *mahā-bhāga-vata* and a *paramahansa*, not just a *parivrājakācārya*. Everyone knew that he knew Kṛṣṇa and they wanted to ask him to ask Gour Govinda Mahārāja if he knew what Kṛṣṇa wanted with ISKCON, now that Śrīla Prabhupāda had left. They wanted to figure it out, they could not understand what was going on.

Why Are You Bothering me?

When Bābājī Mahārāja said that Gour Govinda Mahārāja was not sick, this *sannyāsī* said, “Ask him now, ask him who will be the next leader of ISKCON.” The *sannyāsī* felt that Gour Govinda Mahārāja knew who would be in charge. When the Bābājī asked, “Who will now replace Śrīla Prabhupāda?” Gour Govinda Mahārāja replied, “No one!” When they started to put more questions to Gour Govinda Mahārāja, he said, “Why are you bothering me? I am serving Kṛṣṇa. Leave me alone.” He was completely absorbed in his internal relationship with

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, so he did not like to hear all these questions. Then Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī turned to the devotees in the room and said, “We should not disturb him. He is saying that we should all go away.” After a short silence he added, “Let us leave him; he is not sick, he has entered into his *rasa* with Kṛṣṇa. Do not bother him; he is serving in his relationship with Kṛṣṇa. He is in the spiritual world; he is in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.” Then Bābājī Maharaja left us.

Please Forgive Me for All My Offences

Although he was externally greatly incapacitated, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was even more humble than he usually was. He would apparently come to a little external consciousness and would say that he had offended such and such devotee, and he would ask, “Please bring this devotee.” When others brought that devotee he felt he had offended, Gour Govinda Mahārāja would just fall down flat on the floor, offer prostrated obeisances, touch that devotee’s feet and say, “Please forgive my offences; I have offended you so much.” The surprised devotee would say, “Mahārāja, how could you offend me? You are so saintly! You have not done anything to offend me, Mahārāja.” Then after some time, he would again say, “Oh, I have offended this devotee, please bring him here,” and again the devotee would be brought, and Gour Govinda Mahārāja would do the same thing, saying, “Oh, please forgive me for all my offences.”

Do Not Disturb Him

Lāguḍi dāsa: We called other doctors, but we were advised not to give Mahārāja medicine if he did not want to take

it. “Do not force him”, they said, “and if he does not want to eat, then do not force him.” He neither ate nor drank. He was in *kṛṣṇa-prema*. This is what Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī had told us. Bābājī Mahārāja believed that he was a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

From what I can understand, Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī was very encouraged that Śrīla Prabhupāda had one disciple like this: a *mahā-bhāgavata*. I was there in the room when Bābājī Mahārāja paid his obeisances to Gour Govinda Mahārāja and said, ‘He is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, do not disturb him.’

Narayana Ramanuja Dasa The Ayurvedic Doctor/Mystic

For Gour Govinda Mahārāja’s welfare, the devotees took him to an Ayurvedic doctor whose name was Nārāyaṇa Rāmānuja Dāsa. The *kavirāja* observed Gour Govinda Mahārāja and said, “He is maturing his perfection, then he will be able to drop down to the *madhyama-adhikārī* platform, he will mature this *prema-bhakti*.” The *kavirāja* said, “In four years he will either disappear because he has matured his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa will let him stay and preach. It is up to Kṛṣṇa. These are the symptoms before entering into *prema-bhakti*—perfection, and one cannot go back if he has gone too far.”

Then the devotees asked the *kavirāja*, “Śrīla Prabhupāda was matured, he could play at *madhyama-adhikārī*, but if one is not matured, how can he play it both ways?” The *kavirāja* said to them, “If he does not disappear, if Kṛṣṇa does not take him, then he will become a rare personality, a great preacher—an *ācārya*! Everyone will see.”

He Was Aloof from the Body

Laguḍī dāsa took the opportunity to learn from his association with Gour Govinda Mahārāja during this time, and later on said, “I could realise at least that I am not the body. I perceived that there were like two persons in the body of Gour Govinda Mahārāja. One person was inside, and a different activity was going on. One person was inside and one was the body; they were different, two kinds of activity were going on. I could at least understand that I was not the body. I could not realise this while reading the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda. I did not have the full understanding that I was not the body; but after experiencing Gour Govinda Mahārāja’s symptoms, I was put into the situation that I could really believe that we are not the body, we are a spiritual soul, and we can enjoy spiritual *rasa* without depending on the body. I came to realise this by watching Gour Govinda Mahārāja in this so-called ‘sick period’ of his life. I was able to realise that the soul is aloof from the body, because he was aloof from the body—so aloof. He was not depending on the body, he was not depending on anything external—for living, for anything. I perceived he did not depend on food, not on anything.”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja was neither eating very much, not drinking, nor apparently sleeping for this whole period. If he did anything, it was very little; these were not normal conditions of life. Sometimes he would have one cup of water a day, maybe, and sometimes not. Laguḍī dāsa would give him water and he would knock it over. Laguḍī dāsa said that he could see two persons—the outside person looked very strange, and the inside person was very happy—in ecstasy!

Take Him Out of the Dhama

He was taken to many other doctors; they all said the same thing, “He is not sick.” Then he was taken on the Māyāpura temple bus to a physician who administered herbs. On the way to this doctor, one devotee told everyone on the bus, Laguḍī dāsa included, to chant their *gāyatrī-mantra* for ghosts, and they all broke their sacred threads. However Laguḍī dāsa did not chant his *gāyatrī* and did not break his sacred *brāhmaṇa* thread. Laguḍī dāsa said, “I just chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. I knew that his maturity would be shown and his preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They thought they should chant their *gāyatrī* to scare ghosts off because they thought that Gour Govinda Mahārāja was being attacked by ghosts.” Gour Govinda Mahārāja did not know where they were taking him; he never knew.

The name of the doctor they were going to see was Ratnagarbha Mahārāja. When they arrived at his practice, the *kavirāja* administered herbs to Gour Govinda Mahārāja’s neck and on the basis of his diagnosis he said, “No he is not sick.” But he also said, “There is too much spiritual potency here for him. Take him out of the *dhāma*. Get him out of Māyāpura, the internal relationship is too strong. Get him out of the *dhāma*, do not go to either Vṛndāvana or Māyāpura; and no big *kīrtanas*; do not go to the Yamunā or the Ganges.”

He was then taken back to the Māyāpura temple and back to the room. He was still the same. One of the managers from the Māyāpura temple came to see what was going on and Laguḍī explained the situation to him and he said, “Just keep him locked up in the room.”

Laguḍī dāsa: So I looked after him, but it was not easy. We had him locked in the room and he was trying to break

out—kicking, ripping up things. He was kicking the door; he wanted to get out. We tied his legs and hands with a *dhōṭī*. He was so strong, he would stand up and then fall down. It was unbelievable; it would scare me. We had two rooms, one was a bedroom and the other was a bathroom. I would carry him to and from the toilet; he had gone from his normal body weight to half his normal body weight; he was very easy to carry around. His legs had become thin like arms, but he was so strong. I could not hold him down. Previously, he would walk up to twenty miles a day to preach door to door. He never took a taxi or rickshaw, he walked everywhere. This was the first time he had been sick. He had never been sick.

His Body Changed

Gour Govinda Mahārāja would show all day long great humility by paying obeisances flat on the ground. In the long building, if some devotee passed by he would immediately offer full *daṇḍavats* (prostrated obeisances) to anyone and everyone. Some would step on his hands accidentally, because they did not expect him to do that. They would just walk by, not even entering the room, just walk by — and he would see them and offer full *daṇḍavats* whether it was an older devotee or a younger devotee.

At one stage, Gour Govinda Mahārāja could not hear, and he forgot all the languages that he knew; and he spoke many languages, including Oriya, Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali and English. His whole body transformed; sometimes he was sweating, sometimes shivering; his body changed colour, from white to blue, to a red colour, to pink. Laguḍī dāsa was witnessing the whole transformation of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja.

The Most Amazing Thing Happened

At one stage of his supposed illness, he thought that there was a swing in the room, like one used for swinging the deities. Laguḍī dāsa could not understand what he was doing; Laguḍī dāsa would just sit in the room chanting *japa* and Gour Govinda Mahārāja was sometimes laughing and sometimes crying, sometimes rolling on the ground.

Then the most amazing thing happened, in Laguḍī dāsa's own words, "Suddenly, he changed body, and looked like a woman, from the top to the bottom, a whole transformation — his body looked like a woman's, with a *sārī* on..." No longer was there a *sannyāsī* (swami) sitting there, but a young female wearing a *sārī*. The body had completely changed...!"

The Symptoms of Sattvika-Bhava

Laguḍī Prabhu and Gour Govinda Mahārāja were godbrothers and friends, however, Laguḍī had acted as Gour Govinda Mahārāja's servant for approximately four months and had personally witnessed many symptoms on his body.

***Author's comment:** This may be too much for your mind to deal with however; as time went on other devotees experienced this transformation in Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja. Also we are three-dimensional beings, we see according to length, breadth and height; however *sādhū-guru* is from the fourth dimension, the spiritual dimension! Our three dimensional mind cannot yet deal with the fourth dimension. "...We are conditioned souls, we can only conceive such a thing that has three dimensions; length, breadth and height. We cannot conceive a *vastu* or something that has four dimensions. This is very deep philosophy. Not an easy thing. We cannot conceive of such a thing that has four dimensions. How can we conceive? The Supreme Lord is in that sphere where there are four dimensions, so how can we conceive with our materially conditioned senses? We cannot conceive at all..." (Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja excerpt from a lecture on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 5.84-86, 14 September 1989, Bhubaneswar, India)

The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* describes the symptoms of transcendental ecstasy, *sāttvika-bhāva*. They are eight in all: 1. becoming stunned, 2. perspiring, 3. hair standing on end, 4. faltering of voice, 5. trembling, 6. changing of bodily colour, 7. tears and 8. devastation.

Laguḍī Prabhu witnessed at different times these eight transcendental symptoms in the body of Gour Govinda Mahārāja. It should also be understood that symptom number 6, changing of bodily colour, is a very rare symptom to observe.*

“How Long Have I Been Sleeping?”

After several months he gradually came to a little external awareness; he asked Lāguḍī dāsa, “What is this?” pointing to his bead bag. Laguḍī responded, “It is a bead bag.” Then when his health was more sound, he became even more restless, because Laguḍī had to explain to him that he was the body, the hand, the foot. He would ask, ‘What is it?’ And when Laguḍī explained it to him, “This is a hand—your hand; this is a foot—your foot; this is your body”, he thought Laguḍī was crazy. Poking at Laguḍī’s hand he said, ‘What is it?’ Then poking at his own body, ‘What is this?’ Laguḍī said, “This is a material body,” and with that answer, Mahārāja cried out and fell down to the ground. Lāguḍī said, “That was because he realised that he was still in a material body. It was painful for me to see how he acted, as if he was coming from a dream.” Then after some time Laguḍī began reading to him from the Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, only the Bengali verses and the English translations.

*The *Nectar of Devotion* has these symptoms described especially about the body-changing colour on page 227. It is also described in the *Nectar of Devotion* that the body changing to the colour red is a very rare symptom to see even in the body of a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

Lāguḍī felt that it was the greatest boon of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy for him, to associate with Gour Govinda Mahārāja during this time, for the period of four months. Though all these things were happening to Gour Govinda Mahārāja, Laguḍī believed that Mahārāja did not know anything about it at all, and when he came back to external consciousness he asked Laguḍī, “How long have I been sleeping?” Laguḍī answered him, “Four months—four months lost.” But Gour Govinda Mahārāja thought that he had just been asleep for a few minutes!!

But He Was Not Sick!

Gour Govinda Mahārāja’s outward appearance had changed; he looked like a different person. After all that had happened in Māyāpura, when he finally arrived back in Bhubaneswar all the new *bhaktas* (aspiring devotees) came and looked at him, and then they all left. In Laguḍī Prabhu’s own words, “They were all scared of his appearance and they all ran away.” He would not speak to anyone; Laguḍī would just say, “He is sick, he is sick!” When guests came to see him, Laguḍī would again say, “He is sick” and just close the door. But he was not sick! Throughout the whole period he gave no lectures and had practically no dealings with anyone except Laguḍī dāsa.

After the initial three months, it took one more month for him to come back to external consciousness. Just slowly, slowly; he did not say anything to anyone, he would just sit and look at himself quietly, not saying anything. Then when Laguḍī was in the room with him, when devotees and other people would look through the crack in the door, he would be laughing, laughing to himself, as if he was hiding something.

He Will Go Back To Godhead or ...

Laguḍī dāsa: I could not forget his forgetfulness of the body, but later on I studied *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—The Pastimes of Lord Caitanya—and I could gain some idea that it is possible to forget the body.

When he was better, he changed his attitude to others and he began to laugh. Previously he had never spoken English much, and his classes were different. He would never talk to anyone in English, very little. No big preaching to Westerners, only in Oriya. He did not chastise anyone before as he did now in class (1990). Previously he was not worried about external things, dualities, petty things, as we are, “This is good and this is bad.” His mood was completely different after these four months. One *kavirāja* said, “He will go back to Godhead or he will stay and deliver others, and in the future he will be recognised; wait and see.”

Author's comment (i): When I did this interview with Laguḍī prabhu, in North Sydney Australia, (1990) Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja was there, along with His Grace Caitanya Chandra dāsa and Parameśvara dāsa was recording the conversation. When the interview was completed and I asked Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja if he would like to comment on the interview with Laguḍī prabhu, he smiled and said, “what I'll say?” The information in this chapter is what Laguḍī prabhu had been saying from the outset. From the first time he began speaking with the devotees at the Colo river *āśrama* he was actually just preaching the glories of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. In 2002, at the Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, Laguḍī prabhu said to me, in regards to this incidence [early 1979], “there is one more thing that I have not told you...!”

Author's comment (ii): This same information is in *Kṛṣṇāṅgita-vigraha*, the authorised biography of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja. Whilst I was writing the life story I had the assistance of a professional proofreader. At that time he had just been given a copy of *The Science of Self Realisation* and was reading it. Then he began working on the biography of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja, when he had finished working on the life story and read almost half of *The Science of Self Realisation*, he said to me one day, “I thought you Hare Kṛṣṇa's were just a bunch of hippies but after reading *The Science of Self Realisation* and the life story of your spiritual master I can see Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very, very deep.”

Chapter Five



Kṛṣṇa Can Make an Arrangement

The Lord in the Heart

I had not yet seen nor heard Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami speak; in fact, I still did not know who he was, but Laguḍī Prabhu had been constantly glorifying him, and until 1988 I still did not really know ‘what was what’, all I knew was that I needed to find a *guru*, a real *sādhū*, a real Vaiṣṇava — someone who was truly Kṛṣṇa’s man. This would be a very difficult task. If one wants to find a bona-fide *guru*, what should one do? Pray sincerely from within the core of one’s heart, otherwise you will be cheated again and again. The Paramātmā [Supersoul] is in the heart He knows what we are thinking...! Pray to Him!

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām
hṛd-deśe ‘rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.”²⁴

*sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*

*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*

“I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas am I to be known; indeed I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.”²⁵

*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.”²⁶

These three verses explain how the Supreme Lord is in everyone’s heart, He will hear your prayers, He will hear the whisperings of your mind and heart, and He will witness your words, deeds and actions. The Supreme Lord has stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *gatir bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī*, “I am the goal, the sustainer, the master, the witness...”²⁷

And if you want to hear the messages of the Supreme Lord who do you go to?

*yāha, bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne
ekānta āśraya kara caitanya-caraṇe*

“If you want to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,” he said*, “you must approach a self-realised Vaiṣṇava and hear from him. You can do this when you have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”²⁸

How to Find a Sadhu?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami explains how to find a sadhu.

Devotee: How does one recognise a *sādhu*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Cry before Kṛṣṇa. Only He can help you to find a *sādhu*. You can’t recognise a *sādhu*. You have no vision to see the *sādhu*. If you try by yourself to recognise *sādhu*, then you will be cheated. If you are serious, then cry before Him. “Kṛṣṇa! I am Your servant!”

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūli-saḍṛśaṁ vicintaya*²⁹

Mahāprabhu has taught us this. This is crying before Kṛṣṇa. “O *nanda-tanuja*, son of Nanda Mahārāja, I am Your *kiṅkarā*, Your servant. Somehow or other I have fallen here in this dreadful ocean of material existence and I have been drowning from time immemorial, but I want to serve You. How can I serve You? How can I become a speck of dust at Your lotus feet? Please help me.” Just cry. Without the help of a *sādhu* you cannot approach Kṛṣṇa. You can’t utter Kṛṣṇa’s name. When

*Author’s comment: “...he said...” refers to Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī was the incarnation of the *gopī* Lalitā. He served as the secretary and intimate associate of Lord Caitanya at Purī and would assist in the Lord’s feelings of separation by reciting appropriate verses and singing devotional songs.

you cry like that, Kṛṣṇa is there in your heart as Paramātmā. He will say, “Oh now he is crying for Me.” Then He makes an arrangement.

This is the proper way. If by your own effort you try to recognise a *sādhū*, you will be cheated. You can't see a *sādhū*. You have no vision at all. You see only all outward, external things. You can't see the real thing. There are many persons who are only outwardly *sādhūs*. You will be enchanted by their external activities: “Oh, he is a great *sādhū*! Yes, he is producing gold!” You will be cheated. You can't get a real *sādhū* [in this way].

A real *sādhū* is one who is completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, day and night, twenty-four hours. He has obtained Kṛṣṇa. He is with Kṛṣṇa. He can give you Kṛṣṇa. You can't see him. You have no vision. Only you can cry for Kṛṣṇa from the core of your heart. This is not an external cry. It is internal. Then Kṛṣṇa, who is in your heart, will see that you are crying and He will help you. He will make arrangement for you to meet such a *sādhū*. That is the arrangement of Kṛṣṇa. When you meet such a person, you will feel some spontaneous attraction from the core of your heart. That attraction is the proof.

Devotee: To meet a *sādhū* is so rare. How can one get the opportunity?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: It's a fact that it is rare, but if you are really crying for it, then Kṛṣṇa can make an arrangement. It is impossible for you, but nothing is impossible for Kṛṣṇa...!³⁰

Erroneous Psychological Irk

In 1988 I was standing outside of a bank in Murwillumbah, New South Wales with Laguḍī Prabhu, whom I had given a lift into the township from the New Govardhana farm, and he was talking to me for a long time. To tell you the truth I honestly thought that he was speaking to me about money and banking, and about the amount of interest you can earn, but what he was really talking about again was Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, and I was again not able to understand him. Perhaps this was some erroneous psychological irk from my previous life.

I Nearly Missed The Boat


You see, if you do not listen then how can you understand? Therefore, because I could not understand Laguḍī Prabhu, I was, in point of actual fact, missing out! I was actually missing out on the association of *sādhū-guru-vaiṣṇava*. I nearly missed the boat, so to speak.

It was really Jagat Patī Prabhu and Dīna Bandhu Prabhu that helped me understand what Laguḍī prabhu was saying, about who Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was, otherwise I was a lost fellow. So I am very grateful to Jagat Patī Prabhu and Dīna Bandhu Prabhu who spent a great deal of time with Laguḍī Prabhu and explained to me what he was saying.

So finally, after eight years from the day when Laguḍī Prabhu had first arrived in Australia and I had picked him up and had driven him to the Bhaktivedanta Ashram in Colo River, the three of us made the decision to go to Bhubaneswar. Consequently we

went to India, to the state of Orissa (now Odisha), to a small hut in Bhubaneswar, near a village called Nayapalli on the National Highway No. 5, in the hope to meet the amazing personality whom Laguḍī prabhu had incessantly been speaking about. Therefore I would like to take the opportunity to offer my heartfelt *danḍavat prāṇāms* and many thanks to Laguḍī Prabhu, Jagat Patī Prabhu and Dīna Bandhu Prabhu.

Chapter Six



Bhubaneswar

“That Out-of-the-Way Place.”

There were three of us, Jagat Patī Prabhu, Dīṇa-bhandu Prabhu and myself (Nimāi Paṇḍita dāsa). We actually did not have these names yet, as we had not taken initiation from Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja. The three of us came from Australia in search of a bona fide *guru*, but so far we had not met him. Back in 1989 Bhubaneswar was such an out of the way place, that practically no one would visit there, plus the fact was that it was very austere. At that time, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja had seven or eight Western disciples, and of course many Oriya (local Indian) disciples. Most of them were very well versed in the scriptures as they had been listening to Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja for numerous years and could present the *siddhānta* most eloquently, some of the Oriyas could even present the *siddhānta* in English much better than the Western aspiring Vaiṣṇavas.

We arrived in Bhubaneswar at about 4:00 am on the train from Calcutta — a nerve racking hectic experience — and at about 5:00 am, we arrived at the temple on a couple of rickshaws. It was still very much a construction site, not the wonderful building that we see in Bhubaneswar today.

He Was the One We Had Come to See

When we arrived at the front gate of the temple compound, there was no key for the gate, as the Temple Commander had misplaced it. So, we threw our bags inside the compound and climbed over the gate. Here we were, we had finally arrived inside in the Bhubaneswar temple compound. As we picked up our bags, we saw to our right that there was a thatched mud-hut/cottage where a light was burning and we said to each other, “He must be in there, I wonder what he is doing?” We had heard from Lagudī Prabhu of his greatness, but he was very hidden from the ISKCON mainstream. Nonetheless, he was the one we had come to see.

A Bucket Full of Holes

We were given a room in the guesthouse, which was also still under construction, so we were living in an unfinished room. We were given a bucket with which we were to take bath, so I went to the toilet (a tin shed) and then proceeded to fill the bucket to take bath outside of the tin shed toilet. Well, the bucket was full of holes, and I had to scoop the water out very quickly before the water from the bucket emptied out through those holes. In retrospect I may say that the bucket full of holes was most probably an indication of our spiritual life, it was full of holes. We had nothing and we needed help. We were lost souls!

In a lecture many years later Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja said:

Have you received *prema*? No? Mahāprabhu is the giver, and we are the receivers. We should receive *kṛṣṇa-prema*,

but why can't we receive it? When He gives, how can you receive? If I give you something, "All right, take this" then how will you take it? You will put out your hands to receive it. Mahāprabhu gives *prema-rasa*, the loving mellow.

*ānanda-līlāmaya-vigrahāya
hemābha-divya-cchavi-sundarāya
tasmai mahā-prema-rasa-pradāya
caitanya-candrāya namo namas te*

"O Lord Caitanya-candra, whose form is full of blissful pastimes, whose complexion is as splendid as gold, and who gives in charity the most glorious mellow of pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You."³¹

Mahā-prema-rasa. *Rasa* means "mellow", it is liquid. When we speak of mellow, *rasa*, it is not solid but it is liquid. *Prema-rasa* is to be tasted, relished. Mahāprabhu is the giver and we are the receivers of this *rasa* but how can we receive it? You may stretch out your hands and say, "Yes, please give me!" But this is mellow. If someone gives you some mellow, you should approach with a container, a receptacle to accept it in. If there are holes in your container, how can you take it? Everything will pour out. Therefore, with what type of container will we approach Mahāprabhu to receive the *prema-rasa* He is giving?

If you go to the Ganges with a pot filled to the brim with filthy, nasty things, how can you collect Ganges water? You must examine the pot to see whether it is suitable or not. If it is filled with filthy things, first remove them and wash it out. Empty it, and then you can fill it with Ganges water. Similarly, Mahāprabhu is giving *prema-rasa*, the loving mellow. How can we approach Him, and with what kind of receptacle? Do you know?

Another question arises. You can put cow's milk in an earthen pot, but can you put a lioness's milk in the same type of pot? No, because a lioness's milk is very strong. If you put it in an earthen pot, which is porous, it will crack and everything will pour out. To hold a lioness's milk you need a golden pot. Similarly, Mahāprabhu gives *prema-rasa*, the loving mellow, and you must approach Him with a proper non-porous container.

It is said that Caitanya is like a lion, Caitanya-siṁha. He roars like a lion. He has the shoulders and waist of a lion and He was born on the full moon evening of the month of Phālguna, during the zodiac constellation of Leo, the lion. Therefore He is *siṁha*, Caitanya-siṁha. Consequently when He gives *prema-rasa*, what type of container is required to receive it? The proper receptacle is the heart. You cannot receive it with your hands or any container other than your heart. Only with that container you can receive the *prema-rasa* given by Mahāprabhu.

You should first examine your heart to check that there are no holes in it. Is it a pure heart? If there are holes or nasty things in it, how can you receive *prema-rasa*? Lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance, and envy are the nasty things. These are the holes in the container. Though Mahāprabhu gives *kṛṣṇa-prema* indiscriminately to one and all, why is it that not everyone is receiving it? How will our hearts be free from all these nasty things? How can we take care of the heart, so that we may receive Mahāprabhu's mercy and make a success of our human birth?³²

Holes in the Bucket and Holes in the Heart!

In this way we took bath; with holes in the bucket and holes in our heart! Then we went to the ground floor of the construction site, which was to be the restaurant. It was dark

and still under construction, and this is where there was a makeshift temple room.

At that time there was another *sannyāsī* there, a westerner, who gave class that morning, but I was so tired that I could not stay awake and, to tell you the truth, I could not wait until the class ended, no offence intended to that *sannyāsī*.

Do You Want to See Guru Maharāja?

After class, a devotee named Nru Hari dāsa came up to us and said, “Do you want to see Guru Mahārāja?” We immediately responded, “Yes!” This was such a quick invitation to see the *sādhū* we had come for! So, we followed Nru Hari dāsa who ushered us into Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja’s room.* Now, we did not know what to expect, and when I entered into Mahārāja’s room, I was somewhat taken aback by the effulgence emanating from his body and his mood of humility. There he was, the personality that Śrīla Prabhupāda said was, ‘a devotee from his birth’. The personality about whom Śrīla Prabhupāda had said, ‘Kṛṣṇa has sent him’. That same personality Śrīla Prabhupāda said would take him to Orissa, to Purī and to Jagannātha, was sitting there, on fire, literally. A blazing effulgence was emanating from his body. We all witnessed this! The room was not very well lit up, it was dark inside, but he was glowing, effulgent. His whole appearance, demeanor, everything, certainly took me by surprise, and he was humility personified! The humility effervesced from him, and he was very calm. Then he spoke to us ...

* In fact the more time I spent in Bhubaneswar, and then when I became Sri Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami’s secretary I realised that he would personally welcome all the travelling devotees and when they left he would see them off again to wish them well with their *sevā* and *bhajana*, and with their up and coming journey.

Effulgent Like the Sun

The greeting that he gave us was a very friendly one indeed, which we did not expect as, from our experience over the years, this was usually not the case from those that were senior to us. He was just so unexpectedly humble; it was such a great pleasure to meet him. At that time Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was a very concealed personality. Jagat Patī Prabhu and Dīṇa-bhandu Prabhu desired to take initiation from him immediately, but I was still dumbstruck, and I did not know what to do. All I knew was that I had not met anyone like this before, ever! “We must be in the right place, Kṛṣṇa has led us to the right place and to the right person” I thought. We had been reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and had been fervently praying to Kṛṣṇa to send us a spiritual master who was not of this world, one who was the real thing, and here he was! We had *darśana* with him, we spoke and then we left the room, somewhat bewildered. Outside his room we spoke together, all three acknowledging that we had clearly noticed his effulgence in that dimly lit room. We easily came to the conclusion that this was not a normal devotee; this was a real transcendentalist, who was “effulgent like the sun.”

The train trip from Delhi to Calcutta had been nasty and the train trip from Calcutta to Bhubaneswar was just as bad; we had slept on wooden benches, it was so uncomfortable like a carriage you would put horses in, but here we were and the austerities had all been so worth it, just for that one meeting we just had. What a personality!

Meeting Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was a life changing experience. I sincerely felt that my then supposedly spiritual life, was more like play-acting at spiritual life, to say the least. It was more like rote, parrot fashion spiritual life, or, if you

like, an echo of spiritual life. Like so many, I was engaged in vague-introspective-guess-work. I had previously thought that I was a devotee, but I came to realise that the terms '*bhakta-praya*', a semblance of a devotee, or '*bhakta-abhasa*', a shadow of a devotee, were more appropriate.

Srī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Deva...

The next day Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja gave class, but even before the class started, he began singing so many songs and chanting so many verses. When I heard this even before he spoke, I was astounded. Then and there I realised that I was in the right place; this was the person we had been praying to meet. There was no doubt that he was a pure Vaiṣṇava! Then when he began to chant "*śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya deva rāti mati bhava bhaje ...*", that was it! I was in a state of shock! I could not believe that such a sound vibration existed. Then of course he began to speak. While he was speaking I realised that anything I had ever learned was; well, I did not know anything. I was at the beginning now! Now I was at the starting point of spiritual life. I had been in that proverbial boat, rowing all night, but in the morning the anchor was still down and I had gone nowhere, thinking I was going somewhere. Not until I met Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja did I realise that the anchor was down and now I had to attempt to lift it up, with his help and guidance of course, to achieve the desired result, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. Previously I was just fooling myself.

Recommendation for Initiation

After class that day, Dīṇa-bhandu and myself went into Bhubaneswar town to attempt to change our return airline

tickets. Upon our return to the temple, Jagat-pati explained to us that he had asked Mahārāja for initiation. Then he told us that he had also asked for us...! “What”, we exclaimed, “you asked for us?” We, of course wanted to get Mahārāja’s private *darśana* and ask for ourselves, but we did not get the chance, Jagat Patī Prabhu had done it for us. The initiations were in some weeks away on Rāma-navamī, so we stayed and took initiation.

There was a law in ISKCON that the new initiates had to have a recommendation from a senior devotee. Dīṇa-bhandu, Jagat-pati and myself, were staying with Jayadharma on his farm, and as he was a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he gave us a recommendation for initiation. So that was shown to Mahārāja and he accepted it.*

Calcutta

As we were going to stay for some extra time and because we were not able to extend our airline tickets in Bhubaneswar, we had to go to Calcutta. Whilst in Calcutta, we visited the local ISKCON temple. We stayed there for less than twenty-four hours, just for enough time to change our airline tickets.

Whilst there, we heard one devotee give class. During the class, unbeknown to the speaker, his time was running out because *darśana-āratī* was to begin. Just as he was about to make a philosophical point, the conch was blown, much to his surprise. He was astonished and very disturbed that the blowing of the conch had interfered with his speaking. In fact, he was

*Author’s comment: As a matter of fact, after initiation and on my return to Australia, I had a recurring dream over many nights for up to two or three weeks. Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja would appear to me and take me on book distribution every night and would instruct me on what to do and what not to do. It was quite amazing. I had not previously, and have not since experienced anything like this.

still disturbed about it at *prasādam* time, as he was talking about it with other devotees. Then upon our return to Bhubaneswar, while Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja was giving class the same thing happened to him. He was giving class and the conch blew just whilst he was speaking. He simply smiled and said, “Now we must greet the Deities.” He was not perturbed in the slightest way. I could see that he was not affected by this event at all.

He stayed Mainly in Orissa

After taking *sannyāsa* and leaving Vṛndāvana, following Śrīla Prabhupāda’s desire Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami remained mostly in Bhubaneswar, translating the English translations of the Vedic scriptures of his spiritual master into Oriya (now Odia), the language of the state of Orissa. This was one of the services that Śrīla Prabhupada had entrusted to him, in addition to building a temple there and preach to the devotees.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s Prema-Nama Sankīrtana

Lord Caitanya, or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is understood by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Golden Avatāra of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who descended into this world 528 years ago in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu inaugurated the *yuga-dharma* (the spiritual practice recommended for a particular era) of *saṅkīrtana*—*prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, to teach pure love of God. Like Bengal, Orissa, where Bhubaneswar is situated, is one of the major places of the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*nīlācale ei saba bhakta prabhu-saṅge
dui sthāne prabhu-sevā kaila nānā-raṅge*

“I have especially mentioned all these devotees because they accompanied Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Bengal and Orissa and served Him in many ways.”³³

“Most of the devotees of Lord Caitanya lived in Bengal and Orissa. Thus they are celebrated as Gauḍīyas and Oriyās...”³⁴

“...Most of the devotees of Lord Caitanya at that time were Gauḍīyas and Oriyās, inhabitants of Bengal and Orissa. There are still many hundreds of thousands of His followers in Bengal and Orissa...”³⁵

“...Śrīla Gosvāmī was extremely pleased to have quite unexpectedly found two such worthy disciples. He said, “May the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who mercifully appeared in Navadvīpa to acknowledge the Gauḍīyas of Bengal and the Oriyās of Orissa as His own, Śrī Nīmāi Paṇḍita, the son of Śacīmātā, bless us with spiritual bliss...”³⁶

As can be seen from the quotes above, the devotees from Bengal and Orissa played a major part in the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prema-Nama-Sankīrtana

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would quote these verses many, many times whilst speaking on the glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

*dui hetu avatari' lañā bhakta-gaṇa
āpane āsvāde prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*

“Thus, with two intentions, the Lord appeared with His devotees and tasted the nectar of *prema* with the congregational chanting of the holy name.”³⁷

*sei dvāre ācaṇḍāle kīrtana sañcāre
nāma-prema-mālā gāñthi' parāila saṁsāre*

“Thus He spread *kīrtana* even among the untouchables. He wove a wreath of the holy name and *prema*, with which He garlanded the entire material world.”³⁸

*punaḥ ati-utkaṇṭhā, dainya ha-ila udgama
kṛṣṇa-ṭhāñi māge prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*

“Natural humility and eagerness then awoke in Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He prayed to Kṛṣṇa to be able to chant the *mahā-mantra* in ecstatic love.”³⁹

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was intensively translating the Vedic scriptures and Śrīla Prabhupada's books into Oriya; devotees that stayed in Bhubaneswar with him in those early days would say that, “It did not matter what time of the night you would go to bed or wake up, that light was on in the hut of Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja and he was translating the books!”

Every day, relentlessly, day-in, day-out, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was translating, preaching, and going out on *saṅkīrtana* (performing *kīrtana* and distributing the books of his spiritual master), and publishing articles on the Vaiṣṇava

philosophy in his own words, which Śrīla Prabhupāda had encouraged him to write. His genuine detachment and natural renunciation befitted the observances of a Vaiṣṇava *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī*, and he fully dedicated himself in spreading Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission of *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Sannyasa

“...The Vedic *śāstras* practically prohibit the adoption of *sannyāsa* in the age of Kali because less intelligent men may accept the *sannyāsa* order for cheating purposes...”⁴⁰

*aśvamedham gavālabham
sannyāsam pala-paitṛkam
devareṇa sutotpattim
kalau pañca vivarjayet*

“In this age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of *sannyāsa*, the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man’s begetting children with his brother’s wife.”⁴¹

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would comment on this verse and say, “... ‘*Sannyāsa*’ in this verse means *karma-sannyāsa*. The Māyāvādīs taking *sannyāsa*, that is forbidden, but Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa*, *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa*, that is not forbidden...” Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would also explain the term “Vaiṣṇava” and say, “‘Vaiṣṇava’ is not a cheap term. ‘Vaiṣṇava’, ‘*bhakta*’ and ‘devotee’ are all synonymous terminology and the real devotees, the real *bhaktas* are His Divine Grace Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami Prabhupāda, His Divine Grace Śrīla

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, etc. These are the real Vaiṣṇavas...”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would also say, “... there are many so-called Vaiṣṇavas but actually they are at best aspiring Vaiṣṇavas. This is not a cheap process, *bābā!*”

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami also stated that to fall down from *sannyāsa* was a great offence and was tantamount to kicking the *guru* in the face.

There was one *sannyāsī* who fell down in ISKCON and wished to return to the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. When Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was asked for his opinion on this, he narrated the following story to his fellow godbrother *sannyāsīs*: “In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, during the times of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, there was one *sannyāsī* who had fallen down from the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. He then wanted to return to the mission but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura informed him that it was not possible for him to return as a *sannyāsī*, but that he could only return and stay in the Gauḍīya Maṭha mission as a *brahmacārī*. However, initially, for a period of six months he would have to remain at the gates of the temple and bathe the feet of all the pilgrims that were visiting the temple with his tears of repentance.”

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is written:

*yaḥ pravrajya grhāt pūrvam
tri-vargāvapanāt punaḥ
yadi seveta tām bhikṣuḥ
sa vai vāntāśy apatrapaḥ*

“One who accepts the *sannyāsa* order gives up the three principles of materialistic activities in which one indulges in the field of household life — namely: religion, economic

development and sense gratification. One who first accepts *sannyāsa* but then returns to such materialistic activities is to be called a *vāntāśī*, or one who eats his own vomit. He is indeed a shameless person.”⁴²

In his purport to this verse Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda writes:

...If one accepts *sannyāsa* at an immature stage, there is every possibility of his being attracted by women and lusty desires and thus again becoming a so-called *ghastha* or a victim of women. Such a person is most shameless, and he is called *vāntāśī*, or one who eats that which he has already vomited. He certainly leads a condemned life. In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement it is advised, therefore, that the *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* keep strictly aloof from the association of women so that there will be no chance of their falling down again as victims of lusty desires...⁴³

“One Month Sannyasī”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: ...there is a temple, Tarakeśvara, in Hoogli district. So Lord Śiva... So people, I mean to say, pray that “If my ... this disease is cured or if I get this victory, I shall become a *sannyāsī* for a month.” (Laughs) So that system is going on. They become *sannyāsīs* for one month. There are hundreds and thousands.

Dr. Patel: They... [break]

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is called “one month *sannyāsī*.” That is not mentioned in the *śāstra*, but it has come into custom. [break] ...and if he returns, he is called *vāntāśī*, yes, “eating the vomit.”⁴⁴

A Devotee From His Birth

It should be understood from the outset that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was a perfect *brahmacārī* (celibate student life) prior to marriage; he was a perfect *gṛhastha* (married life) and never once fell down from the principles of Vedic life, even whilst in married life; he was a perfect *vānaprastha* (retired life). Then of course, after meeting His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda, when he took *sannyāsa* (the renounced order of life)*, he was a perfect *sannyāsa* to his last breath in this mortal world.

In the words of his own spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda; “Gour Govinda Swami is a devotee from his birth...” and “... Gour Govinda Swami, Kṛṣṇa sent him...”

Kṛṣṇa Sent Him

On the 5th January 1977, in Bombay. Śrīla Prabhupāda had this to say about Gour Govinda Swami.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He likes Oriya language.

Gopala Kṛṣṇa: Who? Gour Govinda Swami? He is a very sincere devotee.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes, undoubtedly.

Gopala Kṛṣṇa: Very sincere.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa sent him. In Vṛndāvana, he said, “Please give me shelter.” I thought that, “There are so many Indian who come and go.” So when he insisted, “All right, you stay.”

Harisauri: Yeah. He took *sannyāsa* at the opening of the temple. I remember that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He’s a good boy.

*For more information on these topics please see *Kṛṣṇālīngita-vigraha*, volume one, the authorised biography of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

Harisauri: He has stuck it out for a long time in Orissa. He's been there a long time, by himself a lot of the time too.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes. He's organizing nicely.

Gopala Kṛṣṇa: He's very sincere. He follows all the regulations very rigidly. He gets up in the morning, ideal example.

Jagadisa: He understands the philosophy quite well.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. And he is educated...

The most striking point here is that Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "...Kṛṣṇa sent him..." Gour Govinda Swami was not present at this discussion.

The Saving Grace

After a few days of associating with Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja, I thought that if such a personality came to Australia, then all the problems of the Australian ISKCON zone would be finished. He was such a powerful preacher! It seemed that there was no question to which he did not know the answer. Of course, the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* gives the following definition of a *guru*:

*kṛpā-sindhuḥ su sampūrṇaḥ sarva-sattvopakāraḥ
nisprāḥ sarvataḥ siddhaḥ sarva-vidyā-viśāradaḥ
sarva-saṁśaya-saṅchettā 'nalaso gurur āhṛtaḥ*

"One who is an ocean of mercy, who is fulfilled in all respects, who is possessed of all good qualities, who always works for the benefit of all souls, who is free from lust, who is perfect in all respects, who is well-versed in the scriptures and who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa, is to be known as a *guru*."⁴⁵

After only spending a short time in Bhubaneswar with Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja we felt that he was the living example of the above definition of *guru*. He was definitely an ocean of mercy. He would be the saving grace for Australia if we could just arrange for him to travel because there was a problem: he could not walk properly.

What the Astrologers Said

As related in the beginning of *Kṛṣṇāliṅgita-vigraha*^{*}, when Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja was a small child, the famous astrologer/psychic Nityananda Khadiratna came to Gadāi-Giri from Dhenkanal and was consulted about him. The astrologer said, "... This boy is full of devotion. Kṛṣṇa (God) Himself has sent this child from His own abode, *nityā-dhāma*, to this material world for preaching His message and to deliver the fallen conditioned souls."

As related in the end of *Kṛṣṇāliṅgita-vigraha*, many astrologers were consulted about Gour Govinda Mahārāja. One of them said he was Bṛhaspati, the spiritual master of the demigods, in his last life; another said that he was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura who had come again. The astrologers said that he would stay on the planet for up to ninety years. Another astrologer said that he had free will and that he might leave at any time he wanted.[†] Gour Govinda Mahārāja would just laugh when he heard these things. We also have seen at the beginning of the same life story, that his great grandfather, his grandfather and two uncles Jagannātha Giri and Gopinatha Giri had the ability to leave their body at will, and that they did so.

^{*}The authorised life story of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

[†]The astrologers knew that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami could leave this world at will, and he did!

Purity Is the Force

As we all know, Śrīla Prabhupāda would say that utility is the principle, books are the basis, preaching is the essence and purity is the force. If there is no purity then all will be lost.

It should also be understood Gour Govinda Mahārāja was taught to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* by his grandfather from the age when he was just beginning to speak, and he chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* throughout his whole life.

Gour Govinda Mahārāja declared that the first memory of his childhood that he could recall were the songs of Narottama-dāsa Thākura sung by his uncles, the famous *kīrtaniyās* from Gadāi-Giri.

At the age of eight he was writing plays on Kṛṣṇa-līlā for the local villages to enact. By the time he was 11, his father had read to him the whole *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6 times.

When he was studying at high school, his uncles would read to him daily from the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and in the evening, after Gaura-ārati, his uncles would read to him from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One chapter was read every evening as part of their *pūjā*. He commented that he particularly liked the story of Mādhavendra Purī and how Kṛṣṇa came to personally deliver milk to His dear devotee*.

By the time he had finished High School, he was totally proficient in the Sanskrit language, he had studied the Mahābhārata (which includes the *Bhagavad-gītā*), the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and had begun a very extensive study program on his own of the four

* This story is from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 4:1.

Vedas (R̥g Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, and Atharva Veda)*, the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas.†

Throughout his whole life, he consumed no meat, poultry, eggs or seafood‡; he never took any intoxication, never gambled, never had illicit sex, never listened to the radio, never went to the movies, never watched television, and never went to a bar or a hotel and never read mundane literature.

He would never read mundane magazines, and he would also not read the newspapers, until when Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Bhubaneswar, and suggested to him that he should read the newspapers. He told him that it would help him in writing articles for the Oriya ‘Back to Godhead’ magazine, because he could see the difficulties that individuals, families, villages, towns, cities, and nations were facing and present Kṛṣṇa consciousness in such a way that their present suffering could be ameliorated. Even though the newspaper was a mundane sound vibration, on the suggestion of his spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, began reading the newspaper and did so from that time on.

Tattva-Vicara

After our return from Calcutta to Bhubaneswar, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami just preached and preached to us. There

* Which are all emanations from the breathing of the great Personality of Godhead. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.11)

† Authors note (1): I may add he kept the notes throughout his whole life and this study program never stopped, throughout his whole life.

‡ Author’s note (2): Once he had left family life, he would not eat anything nor drink water in a public place. He would wait until he returned to the temple take bath, cook and then eat, and that meant eating only *prasādam*, foodstuffs offered to the Supreme Lord.

was no stopping him. Due to his illness he was not able to walk at this time and was carried to class by four disciples in his seat/ *vyāsāsana*, but this did not stop him from speaking incessantly on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. His preaching was amazing. In the main, the classes were on *guru-tattva*, and if we had imagined that we knew something on that subject matter, well, we three Australians were in grand illusion. We actually knew nothing! We were commencing our spiritual life right then and there. For almost ten years it was as if we had been attempting to cultivate the soil, by ploughing it; however, we were not planting any seeds, the seed of *bhakti* was not yet sown. So it was all *jñāna*, knowledge at best. As Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda said himself, “...It is not possible, however, to train oneself without guidance from the spiritual master....”*

The classes were phenomenal. Gour Govinda Swami would sing, “*jaya rādhā-mādhava*”, and then, if it was a class on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he would chant many verses from all different *śāstras* in glorification of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and then he would begin the class. He would speak for about three hours, first in Oriya and then in English, alternating between the two languages for approximately fifteen minutes at a time and the *bhajans* in between made us feel as if we were floating. We truly felt that we were floating on an ocean of absolute nectar.

He would also sing songs in glorification before speaking on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and then again alternate between speaking for fifteen minutes in Oriya and fifteen minutes in English. He would sing the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* verses to a unique tune and include verses from the *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*. These would be sung in his own distinctive style and then he would speak on these verses as part of his class. I had honestly

**Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.4.18-20 purport.

never heard anything like this in my life, and I had travelled all over Europe, all over India, seen so many *gurus*, *svāmīs* etc., but had come across nothing like this.

I had never heard anything like these classes, fifteen minutes Oriya, fifteen minutes English, for about three to four hours, and in between very sweet *bhajans*. This I had never heard, singing *bhajans* in between the class. It was such a wondrous mood, Vaikuṇṭha mood. When Guru Mahārāja spoke, it took us to Vaikuṇṭha, and Guru Mahārāja's *hari-kathā* would tide over our conditioned selves until the next class the next day. The Vaikuṇṭha mood: go to Bhubaneswar and experience the Vaikuṇṭha mood!

It could be said that he was speaking from another time, another place. He was a genuine transcendentalist. He was not just trying to repeat something he had read in a book, or that someone had told him, rather he was speaking from the platform of self-realisation. He was from a different dimension, and affected our hearts!

Here before us was Kṛṣṇa's own man, a true Vaiṣṇava, not a *madhyama-adhikārī* nor a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* but an *uttama-adhikārī*, a first-class devotee. It is said in *śāstra* that a *bhāgavata-uttama*—the best of the devotees, who is expert in Vedic literature and has full faith in the Supreme Lord can deliver the whole world. I was convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that he was a self-realised soul. He was a truly effulgent personality. Indeed, to emit light (effulgence) from your body like he did, means that you are very, very pure!

I was so taken by this rare personality, who had turned my life up-side-down, that it made me realise that his extraordinary life history would be of great benefit to all the conditioned souls and should be made readily available for all to read. So, from

my first visit to Bhubaneswar and after only spending a few days with him, a strong desire to compile his life story and to glorify him entered my heart. I also strongly felt that if he would visit Australia and preach there it would be of great benefit for Australia. Needless to say, the three of us took initiation from him, and he came to Australia.

When I joined the International Society for Kṛṣṇa consciousness back in late 1980, my family members thought that I was mad as we shaved our heads, wore saffron robes and were always in prayer, and then when I tried to organise the first tour of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami to Australia ten years later, the Australian ISKCON managers thought that I was mad. Well, all I can say is that I am pleased I joined up and I am even more pleased that I met Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami and that he came to Australia.

Hearing Is Most Important

Prior to joining, in early to mid 1980, I was listening to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple cassette tape recording with George Harrison. I was also listening to other *bhajans*, and associating with Upananda dāsa who was an older *brahmacārī* from the U.S.A. He would learn *ślokas*, study the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other different Vedic texts and then preach to me about what he had been studying. So when I actually moved to New South Wales, to the *āśrama*, I thought that we would be studying the books, learning *ślokas* and discussing the philosophy. To sharpen the sword of knowledge, so to speak. However this was not the case, in point of actual fact we were trained up to sell things, to somehow or other maintain the

temples. Of course all the free *prasāda* (spiritual meals) and the free books that were given away had to be paid for.

It was not until we arrived in Bhubaneswar temple, that this all changed. Our learning, or structured learning if you like, began by hearing Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami speak everyday. Our real spiritual education began, prior to this it was learning *śloka*s whilst you were driving, whilst walking around selling things, in between phone calls etc. and reading when ever you could. There was no structured system of education. However, because Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami spoke between 3 – 5 hours everyday, and the amount of information that he covered was of such magnitude, we were, so to speak, in a spiritual classroom situation. Our spiritual education had really taken on a new dimension. The only instruction we were given in Bhubaneswar was to hear, hear the *Bhāgavatam* and as I will discuss in chapter eight of this book, hearing is the one most important function we can perform.

An Amazing Journey

Thus for me, this very conditioned soul, it was an amazing journey, and I do hope that I have not wearied you too much with the brief encounter of the events leading up to me joining the movement. It merely was an honest attempt to draw a picture of the real *guru* in contrast with a non bona fide *guru*. There are no similarities what-so-ever. I had met both; the real *guru*'s association was absolute nectar, and the other was not, well, in the words of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja, we should "...take it as a dream..."

Of course there is a lot of rhetoric these days, that ‘no one is a *guru*’ and ‘everyone is a *guru*’, a great dichotomy is upon us, but these are *māyā*’s traps to lure us away from the personal association of pure devotees.

As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said, “The real benefit of visiting any holy place is to achieve the association of the pure-hearted devotees (*śuddha-bhaktas*) of the Lord living there. Establishing intimate and friendly relations with such great souls, let your heart be captivated by performing the charming worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa in their association. Wherever the Lord’s devotees are living, that place becomes a place of pilgrimage. Therefore you should become fixed by constantly remaining in the company of such devotees.” Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also wrote:

śuddha-bhakata-caraṇa-reṇu, bhajana-anukūla

“Unless one associates with a pure devotee, he cannot be influenced to understand devotional service.”

Tad Viddhī Pranīpatena

In chapter one of this book I quoted this verse:

*tad viddhi pranīpātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a bona fide spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realised soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”⁴⁶

Then I wrote: I thus understood that I would have to meet a *guru* and spend time with him, and be trained in spiritual life, as Kṛṣṇa had stated. There were three points:

(1) *Approach a spiritual master.* [I would have to meet him before I could ask him any questions, that is a given]

(2) *Inquire from him submissively.*

(3) *Render service unto him.*

That was crystal clear! Śrīla Prabhupāda said in the purport to that verse that mental speculation could not help one to progress spiritually. I understood that this was why all my previous readings had remained sterile. So I had to find a *guru*! I did not even know what a *guru* was. And it also said in the purport that the *guru* was supposed to be genuine, “bona fide”, and also a self-realised soul. What did that mean? So I thought that I would have to go to India and find a *guru*.

Well we did all that, we went to India, we approached (*praṇipātena*), we inquired (*paripraśnena*) and began rendering service (*sewayā*). It had taken me almost ten years to come to that simple understanding and this was the beginning point. I had just begun.

Śrotavya Listen to Him Explain the Process

Then there was one more point which is described in the Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*sarva-desa-kāla-daśāya janera kartavya
guru-pāṣe sei bhakti praṣṭavya, śrotavya*

“It is therefore the duty of every man—in every country, in every circumstance and at all times—to approach the bona fide spiritual master, question him about devotional service and listen to him explain the process.”⁴⁷

There was one more point, not only is there the need to approach a spiritual master, inquire from him submissively and render service unto him, but there is also the need to listen to him explain the process — *śrotavya*. So this means the process of questions and answers; we must hear the answers to our questions from the bona fide *guru*.

One Must Receive Instructions

As described by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī:

*guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt
kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam
viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā
sādhū-vartmānuvartanam*

“The first four limbs of *sādhana-bhakti* are: [1] to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*, [2] to take *dīkṣā* and receive instructions on service to Kṛṣṇa from him, [3] to serve him with intimacy and affection and [4] to follow the path of the *sādhus*, under his guidance.”⁴⁸

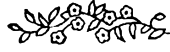
Also Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu “the golden *avatāra*” has said:

*guru-pādāśraya, dīkṣā, gurura sevana
sad-dharma-śikṣā-ṛcchā, sādhu-mārgānugamana*

“On the path of regulative devotional service, one must observe the following items: (1) One must accept a bona fide spiritual master. (2) One must accept initiation from him. (3) One must serve him. (4) One must receive instructions from the spiritual master and make inquiries in order to learn devotional service. (5) One must follow in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas* and follow the directions given by the spiritual master.”⁴⁹

I was very fortunate to meet such a great personality and the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā* verse came alive when I came in contact with such a bona fide *guru*. I can truly say that it made all the difference to my miniscule understandings about spiritual life!

Chapter Seven



The Brahmana & the Acarya

The Brahmana from Śrī Raṅgam

Badrinārāyaṇa Rāmānuja dāsa, a *brāhmaṇa* from Śrī Raṅgam, was born in Orissa, in a family of *brāhmaṇas* who were expert in astrology, palmistry, the four Vedas, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Purāṇas*, and the Sanskrit language. They were expert in all areas of Vedic knowledge and science. He prided himself on his family lineage and their intellectual pursuits. His spiritual master was the previous Ācārya from Śrī Raṅgam, Śrīla Ācāryadeva (1930 – 2012) for the Śrī-sampradāya, which descends from the goddess of fortune Lakṣmī. Śrīla Ācāryadeva is coming in disciplic line from Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya — *rāmṇujam śrīḥ svī-cakre*.

Badrinārāyaṇa Rāmānuja dāsa said that when he walked onto the Bhubaneswar land, which was a very out of the way place; indeed, on his first sight of Gour Govinda Swami, he could see the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* on his body. He could see this because he was trained in that Vedic science. He also said that seeing someone with such symptoms was a very rare occurrence. He could see that he was no ordinary devotee, that he was Kṛṣṇa's man, not another conditioned soul, here

was someone who could deliver all those who came to him.

Although Badrinārāyaṇa dāsa's guru was the Ācārya from Śrī Raṅgam, he took Gour Govinda Swami as his śikṣā-guru, due to seeing the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* on his body.

The symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* according to the *bhāva-mārga*, as stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“Śrī Havir said: ‘The most advanced devotee, or *mahā-bhāgavata*, sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.’”⁵⁰

The Acarya From Śrī Raṅgam Śrī Laksman Ramanuj Jeeyer - Śrīla Acaryadeva

The Ācārya from Śrī Raṅgam, Sri Laksman Ramanuja Jeeyer, Śrīla Ācaryadeva, came to visit Gour Govinda Swami in Bhubaneswar 1991, on the request of his disciple Badrinārāyaṇa dāsa who had spoken to him in depth about the impeccable qualities and great character of Gour Govinda Swami; hence the Ācārya decided to meet Gour Govinda Swami. Badrinārāyaṇa dāsa had said that as far as he could see Gour Govinda Swami had the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* decorating his body. He requested his spiritual master to travel with him to Bhubaneswar

to verify what he had seen, and his *guru* agreed to the proposal.

On reaching Bhubaneswar and meeting with Gour Govinda Swami, he confirmed what his disciple had seen: the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* certainly decorated the body of Gour Govinda Swami. The Ācārya from Śrī Raṅgam explained to the disciples of Gour Govinda Swami what the different symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* were, and how they appeared on the body of their spiritual master. He also said that the birthmarks on his body represented the *avatāras* of the Supreme Lord, Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha.

As quoted in the Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* are:

*pañca-dīrghaḥ pañca-sūkṣmaḥ
sapta-raktaḥ ṣaḍ-unnataḥ
tri-hrasva-pṛthu-gambhīro
dvātriṁśal-lakṣaṇo mahān*

“There are thirty-two bodily symptoms of a great personality: five of his bodily parts are large, five fine, seven reddish, six raised, three small, three broad and three grave.”⁵¹

In his purport to this verse Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

The five large parts are the nose, arms, chin, eyes and knees. The five fine parts are the skin, fingertips, teeth, hair on the body and hair on the head. The seven reddish parts are the eyes, soles, palms, palate, nails and upper and lower lips. The six raised parts are the chest, shoulders, nails, nose, waist and mouth. The three small parts are the neck, thighs and male organ. The three broad parts are the waist, forehead and chest. The three grave parts are the navel, voice and ex-

istence. Altogether these are the thirty-two symptoms of a great personality. This is a quotation from the *Sāmudrika*.⁵²

Śrīla Ācāryadeva was very pleased to meet Gour Govinda Swami and Gour Govinda Swami was very pleased to meet the Ācārya from Śrī Raṅgam. He then requested Śrīla Ācāryadeva if he could supply him with all the information on the *sannyāsa-āśrama* written by Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya. As there had been many *sannyāsīs* falling down in ISKCON, Gour Govinda Swami was collecting and compiling information on the *sannyāsa-āśrama* and wanted to present it to his *sannyāsī* godbrothers and aspiring *sannyāsīs*, so that they would have more information on their *āśrama* and understand more thoroughly the seriousness of the pursuit of the *sannyāsa-āśrama*.

Chapter Eight



Sadhu-Sanga Is the Only Dharma

Many astrologers could see that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was a *mahā-bhāgavata*. The Ācārya from Śrī Raṅgam and his disciple Badrinārāyaṇa dāsa (the astrologer) were able to see that, and so was the ayurvedic doctor and mystic Nārāyaṇa Rāmānuja Dāsa. Those who were trained in ancient Vedic arts verified the greatness and the exalted qualities of Gour Govinda Swami.

Srutekṣita-Patho

The population in general is not trained in those ancient Vedic sciences on how to recognise a *mahā-bhagavata*, a true *sādhu*, but there are exceptions as has been discussed previously. The Vedas recommend for the people in general to adopt the path of *śrutekṣita-patho*: seeing through the ears by the process of bona fide hearing. We should sincerely pray and cry from the core of our heart and beg Kṛṣṇa to send a bona fide spiritual master. Where upon the Paramātmā, who is seated as a witness in our heart, will appear externally in the form of a bona-fide *guru*. From then onwards, our only course of action is to obtain the association of such advanced Vaiṣṇavas [*śuddha-bhaktas*] and hear from them attentively. In this way our cleansing process

begins by; approaching [*praṇipātena*], enquiring [*paripraśnena*], and rendering service [*sevayā*] to such true Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Prabhupāda describes this process in some of his purports,

“...This is clearly indicated herein by the word *śrutekṣita*. The *śrutekṣita* path is to hear from bona fide devotees who are conversant with Vedic wisdom, free from mundane sentiment. By this bona fide hearing process, the neophyte devotee becomes cleansed of all material rubbish, and thus he becomes attached to one of the many transcendental forms of the Lord, as described in the Vedas...”⁵³

“...*Anupaśyati* is the exact Sanskrit word used in this connection. *Anu* means “to follow,” and *paśyati* means “to observe.” Thus the word *anupaśyati* means that one should not see things as he does with the naked eye but should follow the previous *ācāryas*. Due to material defects, the naked eye cannot see anything properly. **One cannot see properly unless one has heard from a superior source**, and the highest source is the Vedic wisdom, which is spoken by the Lord Himself. Vedic truths are coming in disciplic succession from the Lord to Brahmā, from Brahmā to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsa, and from Vyāsa to many of his disciples. Formerly there was no need to record the messages of the Vedas, because people in earlier ages were more intelligent and had sharper memories. They could follow the instructions simply by hearing once from the mouth of a bona fide spiritual master...”⁵⁴

The Mercy of a Great Devotee

Thus by the bona fide hearing process we can also understand who is a bona fide devotee [*sādhū*, Vaiṣṇava *mahājana*] and who is not. The bona fide *sādhū-guru-vaiṣṇava* will touch our

hearts by his words, as had previously been stated; he knows us better than we know ourselves, he can see right through us, we become transparent. Our whole existence is laid bare and the bona fide *sādhū-guru-vaiṣṇava* sees our past, present and future condition! Then he will make a decision on what we should do and what we should not do. Also in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the great *sādhū* Jaḍa Bharata in his discussions with King Rahūgaṇa has said,

“...There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee...”⁵⁵

Accept a Self-Realised Soul

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Supreme Lord Himself instructs Arjuna to accept a self-realised soul to understand the truth:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realised soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”⁵⁶

Commenting on this verse Śrī Srimad Gour Govinda Swami has said:

“...This verse describes the process. First comes *praṇipāta*, which means surrender. *Śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvām*

prapannam (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.7), without surrender and humility you will not be able to hear and you will not develop faith. If you have no humility, and are puffed up, proud, have a very great false ego; thinking yourself to be very intelligent and all knowing, then you cannot surrender. If such a person comes to hear, then this *kathā* will not enter his ears because he has no faith. He has doubts and thinks, 'I know better. I am an all-knowing person'.

"First surrender then hear with full faith. Then one can do *pariprasna-sevā*, service to that *guru*, *ācārya*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *sādhū*, and after pleasing him, then inquire humbly. You have so many doubts, many misconceptions, so you should humbly inquire. A bona fide *sādhū-guru-mahājana*, is coming in the bona fide disciplic succession, a *gaura-priya-jana* [a very dear devotee of Śrīman Caitanya Mahāprabhu], therefore you should accept what he has said and practice that in your life. Then you will get the result. Otherwise, without first having faith, how can you receive anything? You cannot surrender because you have no faith, and this *kathā* will never enter into your ears, because you have no foundation. Without that foundation it is impossible..."⁵⁷

Also in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is described one should approach great sages or saintly persons who know the absolute truth:

ṛṣibhis tattva-darśibhiḥ

"...By great sages or saintly persons who know the Absolute Truth..."⁵⁸

It is advised in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī - *ṛṣibhis tattva-darśibhiḥ*; always consult self-realised souls. They know the truth and they have seen the Absolute Truth.

The Duty of Every Man

In the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta the duty of everyone is explained:

*sarva-desa-kāla-daśāya janera kartavya
guru-pāṣe sei bhakti praṣṭavya, śrotavya*

“It is therefore the duty of every man—in every country, in every circumstance and at all times—to approach the bona fide spiritual master, question him about devotional service and listen to him explain the process.”⁵⁹

The Beginning

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has explained the very first four limbs of devotional service:

*guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt
kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam
viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā
sādhu-vartmānuvartanam*

“The first four limbs of *sādhana-bhakti* are: to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide guru, to take *dīkṣā* and receive instructions on service to Kṛṣṇa from him, to serve him with intimacy and affection and to follow the path of the *sādhus*, under his guidance.”⁶⁰

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu describes the process of devotional service and the first steps are:

*guru-pādāśraya, dīkṣā, gurura sevana
sad-dharma-sikṣā-ṛcchā, sādhu-mārgānugamana*

“On the path of regulative devotional service, one must observe the following items: (1) One must accept a bona fide spiritual master. (2) One must accept initiation from him. (3) One must serve him. (4) One must receive instructions from the spiritual master and make inquiries in order to learn devotional service. (5) One must follow in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas and follow the directions given by the spiritual master.”⁶¹

The Favour of a Pure Devotee

*mahat-kṛpā vinā kona karme ‘bhakti’ naya
kṛṣṇa-bhakti dūre rahu, saṁsāra nahe kṣaya*

“Unless one is favoured by a pure devotee, one cannot attain the platform of devotional service. To say nothing of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, one cannot even be relieved from the bondage of material existence.”⁶²

Sadhu Sastra Guru

sadhu śāstra guru vākya, cittete kariyā aikya

“We must always keep within our hearts the instructions of *sādhu*, *śāstra*, and *guru*. This is the process.”⁶³

*ādaṁ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo ‘tha bhajana-kriyā
tato ‘nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

*athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*

“In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realisation. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realisation, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This taste leads one further forward to attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is matured in *bhāva*, or the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God. Real love for God is called *prema*, the highest perfectional stage of life.”⁶⁴

Association of Pure Devotees *Suddha-Bhaktas*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes the need for association of pure devotees, *śuddha-bhaktas*.

*satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“In the association of pure devotees [*śuddha-bhaktas*], discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear

and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”⁶⁵

“...if one associates with a *sādhū*, the result will be that the *sādhū* will teach him how to become a devotee, a worshipper and a sincere servitor of the Lord. These are the gifts of a *sādhū*. If we want to associate with a *sādhū*, we cannot expect him to give us instructions on how to improve our material condition, but he will give us instructions on how to cut the knot of the contamination of material attraction and how to elevate ourselves in devotional service. That is the result of associating with a *sādhū*.”⁶⁶

The Symptoms of a Sadhu

*titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

“The symptoms of a *sādhū* are that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.”⁶⁷

“...because a *sādhū* engages in the highest philanthropic activities for the benediction of all living entities. Yet although a *sādhū* is not inimical towards anyone, the world is so ungrateful that even a *sādhū* has many enemies.”⁶⁸

Accept a Bona Fide Spiritual Master

*guru-suśrūṣayā bhaktyā
sarva-labdhārpaṇena ca
saṅgena sādhu-bhaktānām
īśvarārādhanena ca*

*śraddhayā tat-kathāyām ca
kīrtanair guṇa-karmaṇām
tat-pādāmburuha-dhyānāt
tal-liṅgeṣārhaṇādibhiḥ*

“One must accept the bona fide spiritual master and render service unto him with great devotion and faith. Whatever one has in one’s possession should be offered to the spiritual master, and in the association of saintly persons and devotees one should worship the Lord, hear the glories of the Lord with faith, glorify the transcendental qualities and activities of the Lord, always meditate on the Lord’s lotus feet, and worship the Deity of the Lord strictly according to the injunctions of the *śāstra* and *guru*.”⁶⁹

*tatra bhāgavatān dharmān
śikṣed gurv-ātma-daivataḥ
amāyayānuvṛttyā yais
tuṣyed ātmātma-do hariḥ*

“Accepting the bona fide spiritual master as one’s life and soul and worshipping deity, the disciple should learn from him the process of pure devotional service. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, the soul of all souls, is inclined to give Himself to His pure devotees. Therefore, the disciple should learn from the spiritual master to serve the Lord without duplicity and in such a faithful and favourable

way that the Supreme Lord, being satisfied, will offer Himself to the faithful disciple.”⁷⁰

Association of the Pure-Hearted Devotees

*tīrtha-phala sādhu-saṅga, sādhu-saṅge antaraṅga,
śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhajana manohara
yathā sādhu, tathā tīrtha, sthira kari’ nija-citta,
sādhu-saṅga kara nirantara*

“The real benefit of visiting any holy place is to achieve the association of the pure-hearted devotees of the Lord living there. Establishing intimate and friendly relations with such great souls, let your heart be captivated by performing the charming worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa in their association. Wherever the Lord’s devotees are living, that place becomes a place of pilgrimage. Therefore you should become fixed by constantly remaining in the company of such devotees.”⁷¹

*tasmān naro ‘saṅga-susaṅga-jāta-
jñānāsinehaiva vivṛkṣa-mohaḥ
harim tad-īhā-kathana-śrutābhyām
labdha-smṛtir yāty atipāram adhvanaḥ*

“Simply by associating with exalted devotees, anyone can attain perfection of knowledge and with the sword of knowledge can cut to pieces the illusory associations within this material world. Through the association of devotees, one can engage in the service of the Lord by hearing and chanting [śravaṇam kīrtanam]. Thus one can revive his dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness and, sticking to the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, return home, back to Godhead, even in this life.”⁷²

Unlimited Transcendental Bliss

“...the place where such Vaiṣṇavas are residing is Vṛndāvana. If Kṛṣṇa is there, that place is Vṛndāvana. Therefore, to go to such a place and meet such a *sādhū*, a dear devotee, a *premi-bhakta*, a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, who has developed *kṛṣṇa-prema*, who has bound up Kṛṣṇa with the rope of love in his heart, that place is Vṛndāvana. If you stay there and associate with such a *sādhū*, hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from his lips and serve that *sādhū*, if he is pleased with you, then you will have mercy. Then you will have unlimited transcendental bliss. That is a fact...”⁷³

The Medium of the Ear

“Kṛṣṇa’s *darśana* can only be attained through the medium of the ear as one hears *hari-kathā* from pure Vaiṣṇavas, there is no other way.”⁷⁴

*tvaṁ bhakti-yoga-paribhāvita-hṛt-saroja
āsse śrutekṣita-patho nanu nātha puṁsām
yad-yad-dhiyā ta urugāya vibhāvayanti
tat-tad-vapuḥ praṇayase sad-anugrahāya*

“O my Lord, Your devotees can see You through the ears by the process of bona fide hearing, and thus their hearts become cleansed, and You take Your seat there. You are so merciful to Your devotees that You manifest Yourself in the particular eternal form of transcendence in which they always think of You.”⁷⁵

“A sage is not, therefore, recognised by sight, but by hearing. One should approach a *sādhū* or great sage not to see but to hear him. If one is not prepared to hear the words of a *sādhū*, there is no profit. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a *sādhū*

who could speak on the transcendental activities of the Lord. He did not satisfy the whims of ordinary citizens.”⁷⁶

“The scriptures enjoin, therefore, that one should associate with *sādhus* only, rejecting all other kinds of association, and by doing so one will have ample opportunity to hear the *sādhus*, who can cut to pieces the bonds of illusory affection in the material world.”⁷⁷

*śrutasya pumsām sucira-śramasya
nanv añjasā sūribhir īdīto ‘rthāḥ
tat-tad-guṇānuśravaṇam mukunda-
pādāravindam hṛdayeṣu yeṣām*

“Persons who hear from a spiritual master with great labour and for a long time must hear from the mouths of pure devotees about the character and activities of pure devotees. Pure devotees always think within their hearts of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, who awards His devotees liberation.”⁷⁸

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadiya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir
ye prāyaśo ‘jita jito ‘py asi tais tri-lokyām*

“Lord Brahmā said, ‘O my Lord Kṛṣṇa, a devotee who abandons the path of empiric philosophical speculation aimed at merging in the existence of the Supreme and engages himself in hearing Your glories and activities from a bona fide *sādhū*, or saint, and who lives an honest life in the occupational engagement of his social life, can conquer Your sympathy and mercy even though You are *ajita*, or unconquerable.’”⁷⁹

“...The favour of the spiritual master is not received through any other part of the body but the ears...”⁸⁰

“...This combination, the instruction of the spiritual master and the faithful execution of the instruction by the disciple, makes the entire process perfect. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura describes in his explanation of the verse in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ*, that one who wants to be certain to achieve spiritual success must take the instruction from the spiritual master as to what his particular function is. He should faithfully try to execute that particular instruction and should consider that his life and soul. The faithful execution of the instruction which he receives from the spiritual master is the only duty of a disciple, and that will bring him perfection. One should be very careful to receive the message from the spiritual master through the ears and execute it faithfully. That will make one’s life successful...”⁸¹

Not Gramophone or Tape Record Speaker

“This is the secret. Unless one is *svānubhāvam*, self-realised, life is *bhāgavata*, he cannot preach *Bhāgavata*. That is not... That will not be effective. A gramophone will not help. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara, recommended, *bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*, that ‘If you want to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you must approach a person who is life living *Bhāgavata*.’ *Bhāgavata pora giyā bhāgavata-sthāne*. Otherwise, there is no question of *Bhāgavata* realisation.”⁸²

“Then what is required? *Namanta eva*. Just become submissive. Don’t think yourself as very great philosopher, theologian, scientist. Just be humble. ‘My dear sir, just be humble.’ *Namanta eva*. ‘Then what will be my business? All right,

I shall become humble. Then how I shall make progress?' Now, *namanta eva san-mukharitām bhavadiya-vārtām*. 'Just hear the message of God.' 'From whom?' *San-mukharitām*: 'through the mouth of the devotees.' Not professional, not gramophone — through the mouth of, through the lips of real devotee."⁸³

"...As they have been trained up to rise early in the morning, this will give you spiritual strength. If you simply becomes a gramophone speaker, then it will not be effective. Gramophone or tape record speaker, that will not be. You must be live speaker. Your living condition should be spiritually, what is called, surcharged..."⁸⁴

"...Simply if you hear about Him, then you will understand. Then you will understand. So hearing is not very difficult job. But you must hear from the realised soul. That is... *Satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvidaḥ*. If you hear from a professional man, that will not be effective. Hearing must be from *sādhū*, from devotee, from the lips of the devotee. Just like Śukadeva Gosvāmī was speaking to Mahārāja Parīkṣit..."⁸⁵

In *Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has said:

Question: By what means can one know Śrī Bhagavān?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda: One will have to hear with faith the *kathā* of Bhagavān coming from the lotus lips of Śrī Gurudeva. There is no way to know Śrī Bhagavān other than by whole-heartedly surrendering unto the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. Only a person who does so can know Śrī Bhagavān."⁸⁶

“...The only condition is that one must give up the habit of dry speculation aimed at becoming one with the Lord. And after giving up such lofty puffed-up vanities, one may very submissively receive the orders of the Lord in the *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Bhāgavatam* from the lips of a bona fide devotee whose qualification is mentioned above. That will make everything successful, without a doubt...”⁸⁷

“...If one wants to learn the meaning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, one must take lessons from a realised soul. One should not proudly think that one can understand the transcendental loving service of the Lord simply by reading books. One must become a servant of a Vaiṣṇava. As Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has confirmed, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*: one cannot be in a transcendental position unless one very faithfully serves a pure Vaiṣṇava. One must accept a Vaiṣṇava guru (*ādaḥ gurv-āśrayam*), and then by questions and answers one should gradually learn what pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is. That is called the *param-parā* system...”⁸⁸

Within & Without

*kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane*

“Kṛṣṇa is situated in everyone’s heart as the *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within. When He is kind to some fortunate conditioned soul, He personally gives him lessons so he can progress in devotional service, instructing the person as the Supersoul within and the spiritual master without.”⁸⁹

Your Pure Devotee

*tasmād amūs tanu-bhṛtām aham āśiṣo 'jña
 āyuh śriyaṁ vibhavam aindriyam āviriṅcyāt
 necchāmi te vilulitān uruvikramaṇa
 kālātmanopanaya mām nija-bhṛtya-pārśvam*

“My dear Lord, now I have complete experience concerning the worldly opulence, mystic power, longevity and other material pleasures enjoyed by all living entities, from Lord Brahmā down to the ant. As powerful time, You destroy them all. Therefore, because of my experience, I do not wish to possess them. My dear Lord, I request You to place me in touch with Your pure devotee and let me serve him as a sincere servant.”⁹⁰

The Mercy of a Great Devotee

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
 na cejyayā nirvapaṇād gṛhād vā
 na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
 vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam*

“My dear King Rahūgaṇa, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realise the Absolute Truth. One cannot realise the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy [*brahmacarya*], strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a *vānaprastha*, accepting *sannyāsa*, or undergoing severe penances in winter by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but

the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee.”⁹¹

*je jena vaiṣṇava, ciniyā loiyā,
adara koribo jabe
vaiṣṇaver kṛpā, jāhe sarva-siddhi,
avaāya pāibo tabe*

“At that time when I learn to properly honour such a pure devotee, recognising his real quality, then I will certainly achieve all spiritual perfection by his mercy.”⁹²

Sadhu Sanga

“We must be in *sādhū-saṅga* at every moment. I am weak. Without *sādhū-saṅga* I cannot possibly save myself. If I remain far away from *sādhū-saṅga*, then I will fall pray to the ill-mentality that ‘I am the master.’ If we do not live in accordance with the instructions of the *sādhū* or the *guru*, then we will be plunged into great calamity. The moment we are without shelter, *māyā* will capture us. Consequently, we will roam here and there in this material world as a servant of *māyā*.”⁹³

“...One desiring perfection or liberation should associate with a person who is already liberated. This is called *sādhū-saṅga*, associating with a perfect devotee...”⁹⁴

“...This love of God is awakened by the association of pure devotees of the Lord...”⁹⁵

The Birth Place of Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti Is Sādhu-Saṅga

(From a lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami)

“...How can one develop *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*? Associate with such a *bhakta sādhu-vaiṣṇava*, who is the embodiment of *śaranāgati*, or full surrender. He is always, twenty-four hours a day, engaged in the loving service of Kṛṣṇa. By his association and mercy one can develop *bhakti*.

*bhaktistu bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgena parijāyate
sat-saṅga-prāpyate pumbhiḥ sukr̥taiḥ pūrva-saṅcitaiḥ*

‘Devotional sentiments are evoked by the purifying association of advanced devotees. The *jīva* can come into close contact with a pure devotee only by accruing the pious results of many previous births.’⁹⁶

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya ‘sādhu-saṅga’
kṛṣṇa-prema janme, teñho punaḥ mukhya aṅga*

‘The root cause of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is association with advanced devotees. Even when one’s dormant love for Kṛṣṇa awakens, association with devotees is still most essential.’⁹⁷

“These are Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s words; *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya ‘sādhu-saṅga*. The birth place of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is *sādhu-saṅga*, and it is the chief limb of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. If you associate with a *premi-bhakta* who has bound Kṛṣṇa with the rope of love in his heart, who carries Kṛṣṇa in his heart, and if you get his mercy then you will develop *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

“Mahāprabhu is a practical teacher. Although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, assuming the mood of a *bhakta*, he came as *sādhū-guru* to teach *bhakti*, assuming the mood of a *bhakta*. What was He doing when He stayed in Jagannātha Purī? He was always with His two intimate devotees Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī. In Vraja-līlā they are Lalitā-sakhī and Viśākha-sakhī. They are Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Ramananda in Gaura-līlā. In Jagannātha Purī Mahāprabhu was always with them. Thereby He has set the example that one should always be in the association of such intimate *premī-bhaktas*. Kṛṣṇa says, *mad-bhakta puṇyabhyadhika sarva-bhūtesa man matih*. ‘Worship offered to My dear devotees is superior than worship offered directly unto Me.’ So Mahāprabhu has set that example in His life; He is always with His intimate associates, Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya...”⁹⁸

While travelling in the USA on 31 May 1994, Śrī Srimad Gour Govinda Swami explained that,

“...Unless you get the mercy of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga how can you cross over this dreadful ocean of material existence, go deeper and reach the shore beyond the material world to the abode of the Lord, which is our eternal home? Therefore we offer our prayer at the lotus feet of that *guru*, the expert navigator who can ferry us across this dreadful ocean, and take us there.

śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
vando mui sāvadhāna mate
jāhāra prasāde bhai, e bhava toriyā jāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti hoya jāhā ha’te

‘The lotus feet of the spiritual master are the abode of pure devotional service. I bow down to those lotus feet with great care and attention. It is through the grace of the spiritual master that we cross over this material existence and obtain Kṛṣṇa.’

It is only by the *prasāda*, the mercy of Śrī Guru that one will be able to cross over this dreadful ocean of material existence and develop *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and get Kṛṣṇa. This is Śrī Guru’s *kṛpā*, mercy.

Śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, *kevala-bhakati-sadma*—the lotus feet of Śrī Guru is the only abode of *bhakti*—*bhakti-sadma*. I offer my prayers. I offer my obeisances there, *sāvadhāna mate*, with the utmost care.

One should understand the meaning of *śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma*. The word *śrī* is very significant. *Śrī* has different meanings: *sobha*, beauty; *sampada*, transcendental wealth or asset; and, *srestha*, the topmost. Śrī Guru means the *guru* who is endowed with *śrī*; the *guru* who is endowed with *prema-bhakti*, that is Śrī Guru. This word *śrī* can only be used to a *guru* who is present, who is always manifest, that is Śrī-guru. So *guru* is eternally manifest, therefore we say Śrī-guru...”

Śrī Guru is ...

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would mention regularly Śrī Guru is:

1. *Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-śrī mūrti* – he is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.
2. *Svarūpa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikāra* – he is empowered by the internal energy of the Lord.

3. *Mukunda-preṣṭhā* – he is very dear to Lord Mukunda, the Supreme Lord who gives liberation from the pangs of material bondage.
4. *Gaura-prīya-jana* – he is very dear to Lord Caitanya who is Prema Puruṣottama Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.
5. *Rādhā-prīya-sakhī* – he is a very intimate maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Guru Has Two Faces

Nityananda Rama and Radha-Priya-Sakhī

(From a lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami)

From the list above we can understand that Śrī Guru is not cheap, it is an extremely elevated position! Also in a question and answer period directly after class Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami had the following to say about Śrī Guru:

Devotee: Lord Balarāma is the original *guru*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: Yes.

Devotee: There are two statements: Balarāma is the original *guru*, and Rādhārāṇī is also *guru*. Who is the real *ādi-guru*?

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami: *Guru* has two faces: he is the manifestation of Nityānanda Rāma, and the other face is *rādhā-priya-sakhī*.

*nikuṅja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai
yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇīyā
tatrāti-dākṣyād ati-vallabhasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“The spiritual master is very dear, because he is expert in assisting the *gopīs*, who at different times make different tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s conjugal loving affairs within the groves of Vṛndāvana. I offer my most humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.”⁹⁹

Baladeva’s Plow Is the First Requirement

(From a lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami)

“...Guru is a very dear girl-companion of Rādhā, he is *rādhā-priya-sakhī*. The other face of *guru* is the manifestation of Nityānanda Rāma.

Baladeva has a plough in His hand and Kṛṣṇa has a flute. Why do Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have a plow and a flute? A plow is used for plowing, deep cultivation of the *kṣetra*, the field, to take out the weeds and throw them away. When a barren field is fertile, then the *bhakti-latā-bija* will be sown. Baladeva’s plow is the first requirement for cultivation. There is *karṣaṇa* and *akarṣaṇa*. *Karṣaṇa* means cultivation, and then comes *akarṣaṇa*, attraction. Then Kṛṣṇa’s flute will attract you. Otherwise, if it is not properly cultivated, Kṛṣṇa’s flute cannot attract you. Both *karṣaṇa* and *akarṣaṇa*, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, plow and flute, are needed...”¹⁰⁰

Śrī Guru Is Radha-Priya-Sakhī

(From a lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami)

“...Śrī Guru is a very dear associate of Kṛṣṇa, *kṛṣṇa-priya-jana*. *Rādhā-priya-dāsī*, he is a dear girl companion of Rādhārāṇī, *rādhā-dāsī*. If you can understand this *rādhā-dāsī*, *rādhā-priya-sakhī*, maidservant of Rādhārāṇī like Rūpa Mañ-jārī, that is Śrī Guru. Then *mula-guru-tattva*, the original *guru-tattva* is *nityānanda-tattva*. So, by gradual descending, that *guru* has come to us, that is *nityānanda-tattva*. So Nityānanda is both *dikṣā* and *śikṣā-guru*, and *caitya-guru* is the manifesta-

tion of Nitaicand. He is *guru-tattva*. There is only a difference of activity, *līlā*, nothing else...”¹⁰¹

In *The Science of Self Realisation* Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“...One may ask whether the *guru* is absolutely necessary. The Vedas inform us that he is:

*tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samt-pāṇiḥ śrotṛyaṁ brahma-niṣṭhaṁ*
[MU 1.2.12]

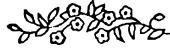
The Vedas enjoin us to seek out a *guru*; actually, they say to seek out the *guru*, not just a *guru*. The *guru* is one because he comes in disciplic succession. What Vyāsadeva and Kṛṣṇa taught five thousand years ago is also being taught now. There is no difference between the two instructions. Although hundreds and thousands of *ācāryas* have come and gone, the message is one. The real *guru* cannot be two, for the real *guru* does not speak differently from his predecessors. Some spiritual teachers say, ‘In my opinion you should do this,’ but this is not a *guru*. Such so-called *gurus* are simply rascals. The genuine *guru* has only one opinion, and that is the opinion expressed by Kṛṣṇa, Vyāsadeva, Nārada, Arjuna, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and the Gosvāmīs. Five thousand years ago Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and Vyāsadeva recorded it. Śrīla Vyāsadeva did not say, ‘This is my opinion.’ Rather, he wrote, *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, that is, ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead says.’ Whatever Vyāsadeva wrote was originally spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Vyāsadeva did not give his own opinion.

Consequently, Śrīla Vyāsadeva is a *guru*. He does not misinterpret the words of Kṛṣṇa, but transmits them exactly as they were spoken. If we send a telegram, the person who

delivers the telegram does not have to correct it, edit it, or add to it. He simply presents it. That is the *guru's* business. The *guru* may be this person or that, but the message is the same; therefore it is said that *guru* is one..." *

* From *The Science of Self Realisation*, by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Chapter 2 - Choosing a Spiritual Master. Section - What is a Guru?

Chapter Nine



A Very Humble Sage With Childlike Simplicity

The Shining Effulgence

This book has shown to the reader some of the wonderful qualities of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami and how we came to be in his association. In his *Anubhāṣya* commentary, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda writes:

“Without being empowered by the direct potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa to fulfill His desire and without being specifically favoured by the Lord, no human being can become the spiritual master of the whole world. He certainly cannot succeed by mental concoction, which is not meant for devotees or religious people. Only an empowered personality can distribute the holy name of the Lord and enjoin all fallen souls to worship Kṛṣṇa. By distributing the holy name of the Lord, he cleanses the hearts of the most fallen people; therefore he extinguishes the blazing fire of the material world. Not only that, he broadcasts the shining brightness of Kṛṣṇa’s effulgence throughout the world.”¹⁰²

We could see the effulgence coming from the body of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. We heard him speak on the *siddhānta*, and we personally associated with him. As Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “How does he walk, how does he talk and how does he sit?”

arjuna uvāca
sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā
samādhi-sthasya keśava
sthita-dhīḥ kiṁ prabhāseta
kim āsita vrajeta kim

“Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, what are the symptoms of one whose consciousness is thus merged in transcendence? How does he speak, and what is his language? How does he sit, and how does he walk?”¹⁰³

We personally witnessed the life of Gour Govinda Swami, totally transparent, no profile what so ever, no ‘I am high and mighty’, no ‘bow down to me’, no ‘don’t you know who I am’, he was just a very humble sage with childlike simplicity, however he could see directly into our hearts. As previously stated he knew us better than we knew ourselves, he touched our hearts. He knew how to administer the correct medicine for one and all.

Pure - Simple - Renounced & Fixed

Śrīdhara dāsa had this to say about his godbrother Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja:

“I met His Holiness Gour Govinda Mahārāja on a number of occasions and I was always struck by his depth of

sincerity and devotion to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission. I always thought Gour Govinda Mahārāja to be like some Vaiṣṇava *sādhū* right out of the pages of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Jaiva Dharma*; very humble, pure, simple, renounced and fixed on remembrance of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and all of His pure devotee followers; an assembly to which he belonged.”

Outside the Material World

Jayadharma dāsa had this to say about his godbrother Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja:

“A number of times I had the pleasure of meeting Gour Govinda Swami in India and during his Australian tours. It is quite obvious that his explanations of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya are not only bona fide and in line with Guru, Vaiṣṇava tradition and Vedānta but also heart moving and inspirational. It is not very often that one obtains the chance to meet a soul who is ‘outside’ the material world, and who pulls others into the transcendental realm by their words and actions.”

The Diamond Under the Haystack

Tamohara dāsa said this about his godbrother Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja:

“I had the greatest respect for Gour Govinda Mahārāja right away. One could see his transcendental spirit. He was un-assuming, joyful, glowing, self controlled, simple, pure, unfettered by illusion...”

“The routine in Bhubaneswar was very simple. We were all resting by nine or ten, then up promptly at about 3.00 am. Gour Govinda Mahārāja was generally up half an hour before us all...”

“Mahārāja was definitely the diamond under the haystack. We who lived with him knew of his advanced status...”

The Two Bhagavatas Grantha-Bhagavata & Bhakta-Bhagavata

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was like a great beacon of light spreading the light of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, the light of the instructions of the great sage Śrīla Vyāsadeva and our Brahmā-Mādhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya, all over the planet and it emanated from Ekāmra-kānana-dhāma — Bhubaneswar. He was a *bhakta-bhāgavata*. There are two *bhāgavatas*; one is the book *bhāgavata*, *grantha-bhāgavata*, and the other is the devotee *bhāgavata*, *bhakta-bhāgavata*. He was a living, walking, talking scripture, a *bhakta-bhāgavata*. As quoted in the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:

*eka bhāgavata baḍa—bhāgavata-śāstra
āra bhāgavata—bhakta bhakti-rasa-pātra*

“One of the *bhāgavatas* is the great scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the other is the pure devotee absorbed in the mellows of loving devotion.”¹⁰⁴

*dui bhāgavata dvārā diyā bhakti-rasa
tānhāra hṛdaye tānra preme haya vaśa*

“Through the actions of these two *bhāgavatas* the Lord instills the mellows of transcendental loving service into the heart of a living being, and thus the Lord, in the heart of His devotee, comes under the control of the devotee’s love.”¹⁰⁵

yāha, bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne

“If you want to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,” he said, “you must approach a self-realised Vaiṣṇava and hear from him...”¹⁰⁶

A Personality from the Fourth Dimension

The amount of information that Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami could call upon to explain a particular *sāstric* point was not by any means normal. It could well be considered to be *para-normal* or *supra-mundane*. This can be seen by the way he presented the *siddhānta* to one and all, in the many *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* classes, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes, and the many, many *darśanas* he held privately and publicly. There seemed to be no end to the amount of information that he could call upon to present the Vaiṣṇava *tattvas*. He began his study of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* at six years of age and of the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* at the age of twelve. The huge variety of scriptural references he could quote was not normal for a mere mortal, but perhaps more so for a resident of the transcendental realm. He was a personality from the fourth dimension.

As quoted by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Goswami, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda and Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda in their writings and teachings the fourth dimension is the spiritual world.

“...The Supreme Personality of Godhead is by nature joyful. His enjoyments, or pastimes, are completely transcendental. He is in the fourth dimension of existence, for although the material world is measured by the limitations of

length, breadth and height, the Supreme Lord is completely unlimited in His body, form and existence...”¹⁰⁷

*e sabhāra darśanete āche māyā-gandha
turīya kṛṣṇera nāhi māyāra sambandha*

“Superficially we see that these *puruṣas* have a relationship with *māyā*, but above them, in the fourth dimension, is Lord Kṛṣṇa, who has no contact with the material energy.”¹⁰⁸

*virāḍ hiraṇya-garbhaś ca
kāraṇaṁ cety upādhayaḥ
īśasya yat tribhir hīnaṁ
turīyaṁ tat pracakṣate*

“In the material world the Lord is designated as *virāḍ*, *hiraṇyagarbha* and *kāraṇa*. But beyond these three designations, the Lord is ultimately in the fourth dimension.”¹⁰⁹

“...The transcendental position surpasses these designations and is therefore called *turiyā*, the position of the fourth dimension. This is a quotation from Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary on the Eleventh Canto, Fifteenth Chapter, verse 16, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*...”¹¹⁰

“...Since all the forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are spiritually supreme, They are equally controllers of material nature. Standing on the fourth dimension, They are predominating figures on the transcendental platform. There is no trace of material contamination in Their expansions because material laws cannot influence Them. There is no such rule as cause and effect outside of the material world. Therefore the understanding of cause and effect cannot approach the full, transcendental, complete expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead...”¹¹¹

“...But Your Lordship is transcendental to all these different material stages of existence. You exist, therefore, in a fourth dimension, and Your appearance and disappearance do not depend on anything beyond Yourself...”¹¹²

“...This is the position, transcendently. How we use this word transcendental, that is explained here, what is transcendental. *Turya*. *Turya*, the fourth dimension. Here, in this material world, there are three dimensions: length, breadth and height. And spiritual world, beyond that, not within the measurement of length, breadth and height, that is called *turya*...”¹¹³

“...The mind is changeable, but the soul is unchangeable and eternal. The mind’s activities are to enjoy and renounce matter. The soul’s activity is to serve the Supreme Lord. The mind is able to understand things up to the third dimension, but it has no ability to understand things of the fourth dimension (transcendental objects). It is impossible to understand the Absolute Truth, the transcendental Personality of Godhead, through either material experience or knowledge...”¹¹⁴

“...The transcendental Absolute Truth, the Supreme Brahman, Kṛṣṇa, is not impersonal, not personal, not possessing form, and not formless like an idol. He is of the fourth dimension — beyond the reach of our senses...”¹¹⁵

Also Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami has stated:

“...We are conditioned souls, we can only understand or we can only conceive such a thing that has three dimensions; length, breadth and height. We cannot conceive a *vastu* or thing that has four dimensions. This is very deep philosophy. Not an easy thing. We cannot conceive of such a thing that


has four dimensions. How can we conceive? The Supreme Lord is in that sphere where there are four dimensions, so how can we conceive with our materially conditioned senses? We cannot conceive at all. A parabolic curve, or we may say two parallel lines cannot meet, generally speaking, but in that fourth dimension they meet. However, we cannot understand it, we cannot conceive of it because in our conditional state our knowledge is defective. There are four defects* in the conditioned soul. Our senses are defective therefore we cannot understand all these things so we cannot accept anyone as *mahājana* or *ācārya*, who is under this condition. Those who cannot understand things in the fourth dimension, they cannot be *mahājanas* or *gurus*, and we should not believe in their statements. By accepting a bona fide spiritual master who has this conception of the fourth dimension, then you can understand, through his mercy. Otherwise it is not possible to understand all these *tattvas* spoken here...¹¹⁶

This book is written for the devotees in general in order to highlight a few of the glorious qualities of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. Even though sometimes facing criticism from those who misunderstood him, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami never publically or privately criticized anyone. His main objective was to see that the Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* was presented to one and all in a clear, systematic, pragmatic, lucid encounter with the Absolute Truth, clearly referencing each philosophical point from the words of the previous *ācāryas*.

He appeared in this world surrounded by Vaiṣṇavas chanting the *mahā-mantra* and he left this world surrounded by devotees

* The four defects:

1. Bhrama (the tendency to commit mistakes).
2. Pramāda (the tendency to be illusioned).
3. Vipralipsā (the tendency to cheat).
4. Karaṇāpātava (imperfect senses).

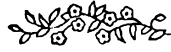


chanting the *mahā-mantra*. This book is only one disciple's presentation of how he met Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

We were beyond doubt blessed to be in the divine association of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja! 'Sādhū-saṅga truly is the only *dharma*'!



About



Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swamī

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami appeared in this world on 2nd September 1929 in the village of Jagannāthapura in the Indian state of Orissa (Odisha). Both the paternal and maternal sides of his family have been Vaiṣṇavas for hundreds of years, dating back to the time of Śyāmānanda Prabhu, and prior to that, in Bengal for many, many centuries. His divine appearance was not like the birth of an ordinary being, he came to this world solely to fulfill the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Tattva-Vicāra

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami dedicated his whole life to preaching the absolute consideration of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, *tattva-vicāra*, and spoke uncompromisingly against accepting *apāra-vicāra*, the apparent consideration. Speaking in his own words, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami said, “... I am stressing only *tattva*. In all my lectures I stress this, *tattva-vicāra*. Do you know the real *tattva* (truth)? You are all following this apparent consideration (*apāra-vicāra*), not *tattva-vicāra*. That mistake is there. You do not know who you are, who Kṛṣṇa

is, who is a *guru*, who is a *sādhū*, and what the relationship is between them, you do not know these *tattvas*...”

By Kṛṣṇa’s Arrangement

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami is a disciple of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977), the Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness. By Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement they met in the sacred land of Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma in 1974.

This transcendental meeting has been nicely described by Gunanarva Dāsa, in chapter 3 of this book. Though they had not met previously, there was immediate recognition between the two great souls; *sad-guru* and *sad-sisya*. Śrīla Prabhupāda commented on his disciple Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami saying (at different times), “... Kṛṣṇa has sent him...” and “... Gour Govinda Swami is a devotee from birth...”

The Three Sevās

Śrīla Prabhupāda entrusted Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami with three important *sevās* (services):

1. To stay in Orissa and build a temple like the famous Temple of Jagannātha in Purī, as Orissa is a very important place in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *līlā*.
2. To translate Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books from English into Oriya.
3. To accept disciples and train them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Upon receiving these instructions from his spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja immediately returned

to Orissa and started working earnestly on plans for what would become the famous Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple in Bhubaneswar, which Śrīla Prabhupāda famously predicted, “This temple will be one of the best ISKCON temples in the world. This place will be the heart of the city.” Gour Govinda Swami also embraced the *sevā* of translating Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books into Oriya as a sacred duty which he continued every day without fail for the rest of his life.

While Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja immediately began to execute the first two instructions given by his spiritual master, the third and final instruction he received from Śrīla Prabhupāda was to prove more difficult to carry out. After many years, he very hesitantly took on the role of being a spiritual master himself, as he understood the position of *guru* was a very heavy responsibility.

Lord Jagannātha Is in Bhubaneswar

Śrīla Prabhupāda had accepted many Western disciples and taught them the glories of Puruṣottama-kṣetra, Jagannātha Purī Dhāma, where Mahāprabhu performed many pastimes in the eighteen years He resided there. However, when Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples went to visit Jagannātha Purī they were refused entrance to the famous Temple of Lord Jagannātha because they were considered foreigners and not Hindus. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “I will build a temple in Bhubaneswar like the Temple of Jagannātha in Purī, because my western disciples are not allowed there. Lord Jagannātha will come and stay in Bhubaneswar, so all my disciples can go there and have His *darśana*.” Śrīla Prabhupāda, who had been donated land in Bhubaneswar, instructed Gour Govinda Swami to stay on the

land and build a temple. He entrusted Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami with the mission of establishing ISKCON in Orissa, the most important place of Mahāprabhu's pastimes, and told him, "Gour Govind, you will take me to Orissa."

Under Extreme Conditions

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami returned to Orissa and stayed on the ISKCON land (near the Nayapalli village) in Bhubaneswar under the most extreme and austere circumstances. There were no facilities at all on the land, no shelter, no building, no running water, no toilet, no electricity, no telephone, no nothing! To take bath one would have to go to a far off paddock where there was a pump and take bath from that pump. The only light available for reading and writing in the early hours of the morning and late in the evening came from a castor oil lamp. Wild bears, tigers and elephants would wander the area, which was also frequented by dacoits (thieves).

On Ekādaśī Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja would fast and chant the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* and on other days he would recite one chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. He would often walk up to twenty kilometres a day to collect donations to build the temple, print literature and to buy foodstuffs to prepare and offer to the Lord.

Seventeen Days

Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Bhubaneswar in 1977 and stayed for seventeen days on the ISKCON property in the mud hut, which had been constructed for him by Gour Govinda Swami. On 2nd February 1977, the auspicious appearance day of Lord

Nityānanda, Śrīla Prabhupāda laid the foundation stone of the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir. This Temple in Bhubaneswar was to be Śrīla Prabhupāda's last founded project.

Instruction Fulfilled

After sixteen years of determined endeavour, and with practically no outside help, (in one of the poorest regions of India) Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami fulfilled the instruction of his most beloved spiritual master when the magnificent Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir was inaugurated in Bhubaneswar in 1991. Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadradevī came of Their own accord, as Śrīla Prabhupāda prophesied, and this Temple now attracts thousands of people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Travelling the World

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami spent many years travelling the world preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. His travels took him to Europe, North America, South America, Canada, Africa, Mauritius, Australia, Asia [Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Bali], the Caribbean — Guyana, Surinama, Trinidad and he preached vigorously throughout the Indian subcontinent, especially in the state of Orissa, where he most notably constructed the glorious Temples of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopinātha and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāl Jīu.

Spellbound

Wherever he went Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami would leave his audience spellbound by his dynamic presentation of

the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He would often speak for up to four hours at a time on topics about Kṛṣṇa, leaving his audience enchanted and always eager to hear more. On occasions he would speak on a single verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, both morning and evening for seven days. There was no question put to him that he could not answer, and hearing from Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami on a regular basis would melt even the hardest heart, convincing one to seriously take to the path of *bhakti-yoga*.

Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami was an expert in his understanding of the *śāstras* and from the depth of his conviction was able to dispel the doubts [*sarva-saṁśaya-saṁchettā*] of those who came to him for spiritual guidance by the depth of his spiritual conviction. He would place great importance on chanting, encouraging and inspiring everyone to chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa without offence, to chant the pure name and thereby achieve the goal of life; to get Kṛṣṇa and develop *kṛṣṇa-prema* in this very life.

Śrī Ksetra
Jagannātha Purī - Bhubaneswar Dhāma

One of the most important aspects of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja's preaching was to reveal the innermost secrets of Purī-Bhubaneswar Dhāma, of Lord Jagannātha, and the reason why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stayed in Jagannātha Purī. He gave the most subtle and clear understanding of the Lord's pastimes in Jagannātha Purī and why Bhubaneswar is so important for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community.

Storehouse of Knowledge

While astrologers predicted that he would live up to the age of ninety and deliver many conditioned souls, Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami left this world by his own volition while speaking *kṛṣṇa-kathā* on February 9th 1996, in Śrī Māyāpura Dhāma on the holy appearance day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

He left behind a veritable storehouse of knowledge concerning the truth about the *jīva*, *māyā*, and the Absolute Truth Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Many of his lectures and talks were recorded at the time, on audio and video, and many of these are now available on the internet, on CD, DVD and MP3 formats, as well as in numerous books published by his disciples and followers.

To gain a greater understanding of the life of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, we suggest reading the authorised biography *Kṛṣṇa-lingita Vighraha: One Who is Always Embraced by Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. For a brief but in-depth look at the life of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami we recommend the booklet *Gour Govinda Swami – Who Was He?* Both of these titles have been published by Tattva-vicāra Publications and are available from www.tvpbooks.com. Readers interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with the publisher: [info @ tvpbooks.com](mailto:info@tvpbooks.com).

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Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swamī Maharāja

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Booklets

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OTHER TITLES

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The Nature of a Mahatma
Rādhā-Prema Makes Kṛṣṇa Mad
Śrī Guru Caraṇa Padma — “*The Lotus Feet of Śrī Guru*”
The Greed of the Lord

Notes & References

Introduction

- (1) *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34 purport, page 259.
- (2) *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34 purport, page 260.
- (3) *Bhagavad-gītā* 13.8 purport, page 630.

Chapter One

- (4) *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 4:34.

Chapter Two

- (5) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.5.32.
- (6) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.5.36.
- (7) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 6.3.31.
- (8) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 12.13.23.
- (9) Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse one.
- (10) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, verse 4.39.
- (11) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, verse 4.40.
- (12) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 7.95.
- (13) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 7.96.
- (14) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 7.97.
- (15) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 7.98.
- (16) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses 11.5.20-32; describing the *yuga-avatāras* for the different ages and culminating in the prediction and advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

śrī-karabhājana uvāca
kṛtaṁ tretā dvāparaṁ ca
kalir ity eṣu keśavaḥ
nānā-varṇābhidhākāro
nānaiva vidhinejyate

“Śrī Karabhājana replied: In each of the four yugas, or ages—Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali—Lord Keśava appears with various complexions, names and forms and is thus worshipped by various processes.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.20)

*kṛte śuklaś catur-bāhur
jaṭilo valkalāmbarah
kṛṣṇājīnopavitākṣā
bibhṛad daṇḍa-kamaṇḍalū*

“In Satya-yuga the Lord is white and four-armed, has matted locks and wears a garment of tree bark. He carries a black deerskin, a sacred thread, prayer beads and the rod and waterpot of a *brahmacārī*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.21)

*manuṣyās tu tadā śāntā
nirvairāḥ suhṛdaḥ samāḥ
yajanti tapasā devaṁ
śamena ca damena ca*

“People in Satya-yuga are peaceful, non-envious, friendly to every creature and steady in all situations. They worship the Supreme Personality by austere meditation and by internal and external sense control.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.22)

*haṁsaḥ suparṇo vaikuṇṭho
dharmo yogeśvaro ‘malah
īśvaraḥ puruṣo ‘vyaktaḥ
paramātmēti gīyate*

“In Satya-yuga the Lord is glorified by the names Haṁsa, Suparṇa, Vaikuṇṭha, Dharma, Yogeśvara, Amala, Īśvara, Puruṣa, Avyakta and Paramātmā.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.23)

*tretāyāṁ rakta-varṇo ‘sau
catur-bāhus tri-mekhalah
hiraṇya-keśas trayy-ātmā
sruk-sruvādy-upalakṣaṇah*

“In Tretā-yuga the Lord appears with a red complexion. He has four arms, golden hair, and wears a triple belt representing initiation into each of the three Vedas. Embodying the knowledge of worship by sacrificial performance, which is contained in the Ṛg, Sāma and Yajur Vedas, His symbols are the ladle, spoon and other implements of sacrifice.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.24)

*taṁ tadā manujā devaṁ
sarva-deva-mayaṁ harim
yajanti vidyayā trayyā
dharmiṣṭhā brahma-vādinah*

“In Tretā-yuga, those members of human society who are fixed in religiosity and are sincerely interested in achieving the Absolute Truth worship Lord Hari, who contains within Himself all the demigods. The Lord is worshipped by the rituals of sacrifice taught in the three Vedas.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.25)

*viṣṇur yajñah prśnigarbhah
sarvadeva urukramah
vṛṣākapiṣ jayantaś ca
urugāya itīryate*

“In Tretā-yuga the Lord is glorified by the names Viṣṇu, Yajña, Prśnigarbha, Sarvadeva, Urukrama, Vṛṣākapi, Jayanta and Urugāya.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.26)

*dvāpare bhagavān śyāmah
pīta-vāsā nijāyudhaḥ
śrīvatsādibhir ankaiś ca
lakṣaṇair upalakṣitaḥ*

“In Dvāpara-yuga the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears with a dark blue complexion, wearing yellow garments. The Lord’s transcendental body is marked in this incarnation with Śrīvatsa and other distinctive ornaments, and He manifests His personal weapons.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.27)

*taṁ tadā puruṣaṁ martyā
mahā-rājopalakṣaṇam
yajanti veda-tantrābhyāṁ
paraṁ jijñāsavo nṛpa*

“My dear King, in Dvāpara-yuga men who desire to know the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme enjoyer, worship Him in the mood of honouring a great king, following the prescriptions of both the Vedas and *tantras*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.28)

*namas te vāsudevāya
namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca
pradyumnāyāniruddhāya
tubhyaṁ bhagavate namaḥ*

*nārāyaṇāya ṛṣaye
puruṣāya mahātmane
viśveśvarāya viśvāya
sarva-bhūtātmane namaḥ*

“Obeisances to You, O Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, and to Your forms of Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. O Supreme Personality of Godhead, all obeisances unto You. O Lord Nārāyaṇa Rṣi, O creator of the universe, best of personalities, master of this cosmos and original form of the universe, O Supersoul of all created entities, all homage unto You.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.29-30)

*iti dvāpara urv-īśa
stuvanti jagad-īśvaram
nānā-tantra-vidhānena
kalāv api tathā śṛṇu*

“O King, in this way people in Dvāpara-yuga glorified the Lord of the universe. In Kali-yuga also people worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead by following various regulations of the revealed scriptures. Now kindly hear of this from me.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.31)

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārśadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair*
yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ*

“In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.32)

(17) *Śrī Caitanya Upaniṣad*, from the text of the *Ātharva Veda*
[excerpted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura] Texts 1 – 19

(18) The *Śrī Caitanya Upaniṣad* (Sanskrit transliteration and English) from:
The Glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu - Bala Books 1984 by Kuśakratha dāsa

Text 1

*atha pippalādaḥ samvit-pāṇir bhagavatam brahmāṇam upasanno
bhagavan me śubhaṁ kim atra cakṣasveti*

“Carrying firewood in his hands, Pippalāda humbly approached his father, Lord Brahmā, and asked, ‘O my Lord, please tell me how I may attain an auspicious life.’”

Text 2

*sa hovāca
bhūya eva tapasā brahmacaryeṇa śaśvad ramasva mano vaśeti*

“Lord Brahmā replied, ‘Be satisfied by remaining always celibate, and perform aus-

**Saṅkīrtana-prāyair*: consisting chiefly of congregational chanting.

terities. Carefully control the activities of the mind. In this way you will attain an auspicious condition of life.”

Text 3

*sa tathā bhūtvā bhūya enam upasadyaha—bhagavan kalau pāpāc channāḥ prajāḥ kath-
am mucyerann iti*

“Pippalāda followed these instructions, and after having become pure in his own heart and mind, he again approached his father and asked, ‘O my Lord, please tell me how the sinful living entities in the Kali-yuga may be delivered.’”

Text 4

ko vā devatā ko vā mantra brūhīti

“Who should be the object of their worship, and what *mantra* should they chant in order to become delivered? Kindly inform me.”

Text 5

*sa hovāca
rahasyaṁ te vadiṣyāmi—jāhnavī-tīre navadvīpe golokākhye
dhāmnī govindo dvi-bhujo gaurāḥ sarvātmā mahā-puruṣo mahātmā mahā-yogī
tri-guṇātītaḥ sattva-rupo bhaktim loke kaṣyātīti
tad ete slokā bhavanti*

“Lord Brahmā replied, ‘Listen carefully, for I shall give you a confidential description of what will happen in the Kali-yuga. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda, the supreme enjoyer, whose form is transcendental, who is beyond the touch of the three modes of material nature, and who is the all pervading Supersoul residing in the hearts of all living entities, will appear in the Kali age. Appearing as the greatest devotee, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will assume a two armed form of golden complexion in His abode of Goloka Vṛndāvana manifested on the bank of the Ganges at Navadvīpa. He will disseminate pure devotional service in the world. This incarnation of the Lord is described in the following verses.’”

Text 6

*eko devaḥ sarva-rūpī mahātmā
gauro rakta-śyāmala-śveta-rūpaḥ
caitanya-ātmā sa vai caitanya-śaktir
bhaktākāro bhakti-do bhakti-vedyaḥ*

“The one Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the master of all transcendental potencies, and who is known only by devotional service, appears in innumerable transcendental forms. He has appeared with red, black and white complexions, and He shall also appear in the golden form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He shall assume

the role of a perfect devotee, and He will teach the conditioned souls the path of pure devotional service.”

Text 7

*namo vedānta vedyāya
kṛṣṇāya paramātmāne
sarva caitanya rūpāya
caitanyāya namo namaḥ*

“I offer my obeisances unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all prevading Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is understood by the study of Vedānta philosophy. He is the master of all transcendental potencies, and He appears as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

Text 8

*vedānta vedyam puruṣam purāṇam
caitanyātmānam viśva-yoniṁ mahantam
tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya*

“One who understands that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is known by the study of Vedānta philosophy, who is the original cause of the universe, and who is the oldest, the original person, crosses beyond this world of birth and death. This is the proper understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and aside from this there is no other way for one to achieve liberation.”

Text 9

sva nāma mūla mantreṇa sarvaṁ hlādayati vibhuḥ

“Appearing in this golden form, the all powerful Supreme Lord will fill the entire universe with transcendental bliss by the chanting of His own holy names.”

Text 10

dve śakti parame tasya hlādinī samvid eva ca iti

“In this way the Supreme Lord manifests two of His transcendental potencies - His *hlādinī-śakti* (the potency of transcendental bliss) and *saṁvit-śakti* (the potency of transcendental knowledge).”

Text 11

sa eva mūla-mantram japatī harir iti kṛṣṇa iti rāma iti

“The Supreme Lord will chant a *mantra* consisting of the names of Hari, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma (the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare).”

Text 12

harati hṛdaya-granthīm vāsana-rūpam iti hariḥ. kṛṣṇḥ smarāṇe tac ca nas tad-ubhaya-melanam iti kṛṣṇaḥ. ramayati sarvam iti rāma ānanda-rūpaḥ. atra śloko bhavati

“These three names of the Supreme Lord (Hari, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma) may be explained in the following way — Hari means: He who unties [*harati*] the knot of material desire in the hearts of the living entities; Kṛṣṇa is divided into the two syllables ‘*kṛṣ*’ and ‘*ṇa*.’ *Kṛṣ* means: He who attracts the minds of all living entities, and ‘*ṇa*’ means “the supreme transcendental pleasure.” These two syllables combine to become the name “Kṛṣṇa”; and Rāma means: He who delights [*ramayati*] all living entities, and it also means: He who is full of transcendental bliss. The *mahā-mantra* consists of the repetition of these names of the Supreme Lord.”

Text 13

mantra guhyaḥ paramo bhakti-vedyaḥ

“The *mahā-mantra* (Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Hare Hare) is the best of all *mantras*. Although it is very difficult to understand this *mahā-mantra*, it may be understood when one engages in pure devotional service of the Supreme Lord.”

Text 14

nāmāny aṣṭāv aṣṭa ca śobhanāni, tāni nityaṁ ye japanti dhīrās te vai māyām atitaranti nānyaḥ paramaṁ mantraṁ parama-rahasyaṁ nityaṁ āvartayati

“Those who seriously desire to make progress in spiritual life continually chant these sixteen splendid names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and in this way they cross beyond the bondage of continued material existence. The chanting of these holy names of the Lord is the greatest of all *mantras*, and it is the most confidential of all secrets.”

Text 15

caitanya eva saṅkarṣaṇo vāsudevaḥ parameṣṭhī rudraḥ śakro bṛhaspatiḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni sthāvarāṇi carāṇi ca yat kiñcit sad-asat-kāraṇam sarvam. tad atra ślokāḥ

“Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead who appears as Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and Lord Vāsudeva. He is the original father of Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, Bṛhaspati, all the demigods, and all moving and non-moving living entities. He is the original cause of all that is temporary and all that is eternal. Nothing exists separately from Him, and therefore He is everything. He is described in the following verses.”

Texts 16-18

*yat kiñcid asad bhunkte
kṣaram tat kâryam ucyate
sat kâraṇam param jīvas
tad akṣaram itīritam*

*kṣarākṣarābhyāṁ paramaḥ
ka eva puruṣottamaḥ
caitanyākhyam param tattvaṁ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“This material world is temporary, where as the individual living entities who try to enjoy matter are eternal and superior to it. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to both the temporary material energy and the eternal living entities. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Person, the Absolute Truth, the original cause of all causes.”

Text 19

*ya enaṁ rasayati bhajati dhyāyati sa pāpmānaṁ tarati sa pūto bhavati, sa tattvaṁ jānāti,
sa tarati śokaṁ, gatis tasyāte nānyasyeti*

“One who worships the Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, with devotion and always remembers Him becomes free from all sins and completely pure. Easily understanding the truth about the Personality of Godhead and becoming free from all material lamentation, such a devotee attains the supreme goal of life, which is unattainable by those averse to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

(19) *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* verse 4.144.

(20) *Padma Purāṇa* quoted from *Prameya-Ratnāvali* text 5 by Śrīla Baladeva Vidhyābhūṣaṇa.

(21) *Padma Purāṇa* quoted from *Prameya-Ratnāvali* text 6 by Śrīla Baladeva Vidhyābhūṣaṇa.

(22) Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami quote from ‘Guru Makes Kṛṣṇa Appear in your Heart!’

(23) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.7.17 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Chapter Five

(24) *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 18.61.

(25) *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 15.15.

(26) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 1.2.17.

(27) *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 9.18.

(28) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya-līlā* verse 5.131.

(29) *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse 5.

(30) Home program in Vancouver, Canada, May 1993 Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

Chapter Six

(31) *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* verse 11.

(32) From a lecture given by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Mahārāja 20 January 1996 Accra, Ghana, Africa. To read this lecture see the book *Tṛṇād Api Sunīcena* chapter 11, published by Tattva Vicāra Publications.

(33) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, verse 10.122.

(34) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, 10.122 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(35) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 25.206 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(36) *Jaiva-dharma* – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura; Chapter Twenty-six Introduction to *Rasa-tattva*, The Principles of Spiritual Mellow.

(37) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, verse 4.39.

(38) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, verse 4.40.

(39) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā*, verse 20.35.

(40) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.19.24-25 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(41) *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa* 185.180.

*aśvamedham gavāmbham
sannyāsam pala-paitṛkam
devareṇa sutotpattiṁ
kalau pañca vivarjayet*

“In this Age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of *sannyāsa*, the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man’s begetting children in his brother’s wife.”

Purport

This is a quotation from the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa* 185.180. (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, 17.164) (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.7.5 purport and *Ādi-līlā* 17.165)

(42) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 7.15.36.

(43) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.36 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(44) From a Morning Walk—April 14, 1974, Bombay.

- (45) *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* verses 1.45-46.
- (46) *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 4:34.
- (47) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 25.122.
- (48) *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verse 1.2.74.
- (49) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 22.115.

Chapter Seven

- (50) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.2.45.
- (51) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, verse 14.15.
- (52) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 14.15 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

Chapter Eight

- (53) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.9.11. purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.
- (54) *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* mantra six purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.
- (55) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.12.12 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.
- (56) *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 4.34.
- (57) From a lecture by Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja lecture on 1st July 1992 in Bhubaneswar, India.
- (58) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 9.10.3.
- (59) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 25.122.
- (60) *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verse 1.2.74.
- (61) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* *Madhya-līlā* verse 22.115.
- (62) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 22.51.
- (63) *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

sādhu śāstra guru vākya, cittete kariyā aikya

“We must always keep within our hearts the instructions of *sādhu*, *śāstra*, and *guru*. This is the process.”

- (64) *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verses 1.4.15-16.
- (65) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.25.25

*satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”

(66) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.21 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(67) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.25.21

*titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

“The symptoms of a *sādhū* are that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.”

(68) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.22 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(69) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 7.7.31.

(70) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 11.3.22.

(71) Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura - *Śrī Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* song 14 verse 3.

(72) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 5.12.16.

(73) Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.

(74) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda – *Upadeśāvalī*.

(75) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.9.11.

(76) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.4.6 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(77) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.13.29 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(78) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 3.13.4.

(79) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 10.14.3.

(80) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.22.7 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(81) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.22.7 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedantana Swami Prabhupāda.

(82) Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.3 lecture May 27, 1974 Rome.

- (83) Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.24 July 8, 1975 Chicago.
- (84) Śrīla Prabhupāda room conversation Mauritius October 5, 1975.
- (85) Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.17 June 12, 1972 Los Angeles.
- (86) From *Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta*.
Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta is a compilation of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's instructions in question-and-answer form.
- (87) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.36 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
- (88) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā*, 7.53 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
- (89) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 22.47.
- (90) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 7.9.24.
- (91) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse 5.12.12.
- (92) Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivīnoda Ṭhākura - *Śrī Kalyāṇa-kalpataṛu* song 12 verse 5.
- (93) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.
- (94) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.31.2 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
- (95) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.20 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
- (96) *Bṛhan-nārāḍya Purāṇa* found in *Jaiva Dharma* chapter 3 by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivīnoda Ṭhākura.
- (97) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, verse 22.83.
- (98) From a lecture by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami delivered on 14 February 1994, Bhubaneswar India.
- (99) *Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam*, verse 6 by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.
- (100) Question and answer period directly after class 23.06.1994 in Bhubaneswar India by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami.
- (101) Śrī Guru Caraṇa Padma The Lotus Feet of Śrī Guru by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 31 May 1994 American Canyon, USA.

Chapter Nine

- (102) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda *Anubhāṣya* commentary; quoted *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, 25.9 purport by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
- (103) *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 2.54.
- (104) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, verse 1.99.

- (105) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, verse 1.100.
(106) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* verse 5.131.
(107) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 2.18 purport.
(108) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 2.52.
(109) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 2.53.
(110) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 2.52 purport.
(111) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 5.41 purport.
(112) Kṛṣṇa Book by Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda , Lord Kṛṣṇa fights with Bāṇāsura.
(113) Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda lecture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.32 Māyāpura March 10 1976.
(114) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, *Amṛta Vāṇī* - Nectar of Instructions of Immortality - Material and Spiritual topics.
(115) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, *Amṛta Vāṇī* - Nectar of Instructions of Immortality - Material and Spiritual topics.
(116) Excerpt from a lecture on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 5.84-86 given by Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami, 14 September 1989, Bhubaneswar, India.

Glossary

A

Ācārya: spiritual preceptor who teaches by example. One who has personally assimilated the confidential meanings of the scriptures (*śāstra*) and engages others accordingly in *sad-ācāra*, or proper behaviour, and who personally follows that *ācāra* or behaviour himself.

Avatāra: literally means “one who descends.”

A partially or fully empowered incarnation of the Lord who descends from the spiritual sky to the material universe with a particular mission described in the scriptures.

Ayurvedic: the section of the Vedas which expounds the Vedic science of medicine.

This science was delivered by Lord Dhanvantari, the incarnation of the Supreme Lord as a physician. He was born out of the ocean of milk when it was churned by the demons and demigods in the Satya-yuga. He expounded on the three categories of medicine.

B

Bābājī: a person who dwells alone in one place and leads a life of meditation, penance and austerity; renounced order, in which one chants and reads.

Bhagavad-gītā: a seven-hundred verse record of a conversation between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, from the Bhīṣma Parva of the *Mahābhārata* of Vedavyāsa.

Bhakta-abhasa: a shadow of a devotee.

Bhakta-praya: an almost devotee.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: A book written by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī in the sixteenth century, who is a confidential associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This book is one of the principal works on the science of *bhakti-yoga*. All of its conclusions are elaborately supported by reference to the Vedic literatures.

Bhubaneswar: The capital of Orissa (now Odisha), the main preaching field of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami. Bhubaneswar is also the gateway to the Jagannātha-Purī Dhāma.

Brahmacārī: A celibate monk.

Brāhmaṇa: A member of the intellectual, priestly class.

A person wise in Vedic knowledge, fixed in goodness and knowledgeable of Brahman,

the Absolute Truth; One of the four orders of occupational life, *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. The *brāhmaṇas* are the intellectual class and their occupation is hearing Vedic literature, teaching Vedic literature, learning deity worship and teaching deity worship, receiving charity and giving charity.

C

Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta: by Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī is a compendium of verses, grouped by the author into 12 chapters, basically divided into two parts: the glorification of Lord Caitanya's devotees and the glorification of Lord Caitanya.

Caitanya-simha: The lion like Lord Caitanya.

D

Daṇḍavats: Prostrated obeisances. Flat like a rod.

Darśana: The act of seeing, usually to see the Deity in the temple and/or a spiritually advanced personality.

Dhāma: Abode, place of residence; usually refers to the Lord's abodes.

Dharma: Religious principles; one's natural occupation. The capacity to render service, which is the essential quality of a living being. The occupational eternal duty of the living entity, regarded as inseparable from the soul himself.

G

Gauḍīya Maṭha: The powerful preaching mission founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

Originally with 64 temples in India and elsewhere, for propagating the sacred teachings of Lord Caitanya throughout India and the world. It was first established in 1918 as the Śrī Bhaktivinoda Āsana. In 1919 he re-established it as the Viśva-vaiṣṇava-rāja-sabhā, an institution originally established by Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī and re-instituted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The organisation ultimately came to be known as the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Gaura-priya-jana: A very dear devotee of Śrīmān Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Gāyatrī Mantra: A sacred *mantra* that a *brāhmaṇa* chants silently three times a day at sunrise, noon and sunset to attain the transcendental platform; the Vedic *mantra* that delivers one from material entanglement.

Guṇārṇava dāsa: A disciple of Śrīla AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda who had a great deal to do with building the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple in Vṛndāvana.

Guru: Spiritual master, he who dispels the darkness.
In the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is said:

‘gu’ śabda ‘sty andhakārasya
‘ru’ śabdas tan nirodhakah
andhakāra-nirodhatvād
guru ity abhidhiyate

“The word ‘gu’ means darkness and the word ‘ru’ means that which dispels the darkness...” Therefore the *guru* is he who dispels the darkness of the disciple.

H

Hari-kathā: topics of Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa.

I

International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON), founder His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977).

ISKCON: International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. The preaching mission of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda founded in 1966.

K

Kaniṣṭha-adhikārī: A third class devotee (lowest) or *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee.

arcāyām eva haraye
pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

“A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the Deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.” (*Śrīma-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.47)

Kavirāja: An Āyurvedic doctor.

Karma-sannyāsa (also known as *jñana-sannyāsa*): Endeavouring for material enjoyment or artificial endeavour for renunciation is known as *karma-sanny-*

āsa or *jñāna-sannyāsa*.

The *sannyāsa* of the *māyāvādī* or the impersonalists, which is forbidden in the Kāli-yuga. As confirmed in this verse below:

*aśvamedham gavāmbham sannyāsam pala-pāitṛkam
devareṇa sutotpattim kalau pañca vivarjayet*

“In this Age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of *sannyāsa* [this refers to *kāma-sannyāsa* and *jñāna-sannyāsa* not *Vaiṣṇava-tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī*], the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man’s begetting children in his brother’s wife.” (*Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa* 185.180)

Kīrtanas: glorification of the Supreme Lord. Narrating or singing the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His Holy Names (*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare*, *Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*); the devotional process of chanting the names and glories of the Supreme Lord.

Kīrtaniyās: performers of *kīrtana*.

Kṛṣṇa dāsa: the servant (*dāsa*) of God (Kṛṣṇa).

Kṛṣṇālingita-vigraha: A personality who is always embraced by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

Such a person is above the considerations of the *varṇāśrama* institution. He is the *guru*, or spiritual master, for the entire world, a devotee on the topmost platform, the *mahā-bhāgavata* stage, and a *paramahansa-ṭhākura*, a spiritual form only fit to be addressed as *paramahansa* or *ṭhākura*.”

Kṛṣṇa-prema: Divine love of God (Kṛṣṇa).

Kūrma: The Supreme Lord’s incarnation as a tortoise.

Kumāras, (or the four Kumāras): The four celibate sons of Lord Brahmā.

L

Lakṣmī-devī: The goddess of fortune.

Lord Brahmā: The first created being in this universe.

Lord Caitanya: see Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Śiva: The *guṇa-avatāra* who is the superintendent of the mode of ignorance (*tamo-guṇa*) and who takes charge of destroying the universe at the time of annihilation.

He is also considered the greatest Vaiṣṇava, or devotee, of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

M

Madhyama-adhikārī: The intermediate devotee.

*īsvare tad-adhīneṣu
bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā
yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

“An intermediate or second-class devotee, called *madhyama-adhikārī*, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent and disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.46)

Madhvācārya: The *sampradāya* ācārya of the Brahmā-Mādvā-Gauḍīya-sampradāya.

Mahā-bhāgavata: A topmost devotee.

Mahājana: A great personality.

Twelve such *mahājanas* are described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.20.

*svayambhūr nāradaḥ śambhuḥ
kumāraḥ kapilo manuḥ
prahlādo janako bhīṣmo
balir vaiyāsakir vayam*

“Lord Brahmā, Bhagavān Nārada, Lord Śiva, the four Kumāras, Lord Kapila [the son of Devahūti], Svāyambhuva Manu, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Janaka Mahārāja, Grandfather Bhīṣma, Bali Mahārāja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and I [Yamarāja] myself know the real religious principle.”

Matsya: the fish incarnation of the Supreme Lord

Māyā Dāsa: the servant (*dāsa*) of illusion (*māyā*).

Māyāpura: The birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that is situated in the Indian state of Bengal.

Māyāvādī: one who propounds the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya, which basically holds that God is featureless and impersonal, that devotion to a personal Godhead is false, the material creation of the Lord is also false, and the ultimate goal of life is to become existentially one with the all-pervading, impersonal Absolute.

This philosophy is adamantly rejected by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Vaiṣṇavas.

Mendicant: A monk that begs alms for his existence.

Mleccha: A meat eater.

Mathurā: Lord Kṛṣṇa’s abode, and birth place, surrounding Vṛndāvana.

At the end of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s manifest *līlā*, Vajra, His grandson, was put in charge of this

sacred city. Lord Kṛṣṇa displayed His pastimes here after leaving Vṛndāvana. It is also the name of the district where Vraja (Vṛndāvana) is located.

Maṅgala-ārati: the daily predawn worship ceremony honoring the Supreme Lord.

N

Naistika-brahmacārī: A life long celibate.

Nimbārka Svāmī: The *sampradāya ācārya* of the Kumāra-sampradāya.

P

Paramahansa: a topmost, God-realised, swanlike devotee of the Supreme Lord.

Parivrājakācārya: The third stage of *sannyāsa*, wherein the devotee constantly travels and preaches.

Prasāda: “The mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” Food prepared for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and offered to Him with love and devotion.

Because Kṛṣṇa tastes the offering, the food becomes spiritualised and purifies anyone who eats it. Literally, mercy. When *sattvic* foods (milk, grains, fruits, vegetables, sugar and legumes) prepared by a devotee are offered to the Deity of Kṛṣṇa as prescribed in the system of *bhakti-yoga*, the offering is transformed into *prasādam*, the mercy of the Lord. *Prasādam* is delicious, nourishing but most important, transcendental. Ordinary food, unoffered to Kṛṣṇa, breeds karmic reactions for every mouthful that is eaten, because so many living entities gave up their lives during the preparation. But food offered to Kṛṣṇa is freed of sin and invokes an attraction to Kṛṣṇa in whomever accepts it.

Prasādam: see *prasāda*.

Prema-bhakti: pure love of Lord Kṛṣṇa (God).

Prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana: love of God and congregational chanting of the holy name.

Prema Puruṣottama Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu: see Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prema-rasa: Transcendental mellow or *rasa*.

R

Rāmaṇ Reti: The area where Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the cowherd boys would play. It is also now the site of the ISKCON Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple.

Rāmānujācārya: The *sampradāya ācārya* of the Śrī-sampradāya.

Rāma-navamī: The appearance of Lord Rāmacandra.

Rasa: The relationship between the Lord and the living entities.

There are five *rasas*: *śānta* (passive awe and reverence); *dāsyā* (servitude); *sakhya* (friendship); *vātsalya* (parenthood); and *mādhurya* (conjugal love). According to his specific kind of *rasa*, the soul displays a spiritual form as Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, friend, parent or conjugal lover.

S

Sādhu: A saint.

Sādhu-saṅga: Association of liberated souls.

“...One desiring perfection or liberation should associate with a person who is already liberated. This is called *sādhu-saṅga*, associating with a perfect devotee...” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.31.2 purport Śrīla AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda)

Sage: One who has or exhibits great wisdom and calm judgment.

Sāmudrika or Sāmudrika śāstra: part of the Vedic tradition is the study of face reading, aura reading, and whole body analysis, which includes palmistry prediction. *Sāmudrika-śāstra* is a Sanskrit term that translates roughly as “knowledge of body features.”

Saṅkīrtana: The sacrifice prescribed for the Age of Kali, namely, congregational chanting of the name, fame and pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Sannyāsa: The renounced order, and fourth stage of Vedic spiritual life in the Vedic system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, which is free from family relationships and in which all activities are completely dedicated to Kṛṣṇa.

Sāttvika-bhāva: The symptoms of transcendental ecstasy.

Self-realised soul: One who has realised who he is and who the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is.

Siddhānta: conclusive truth; demonstrated philosophical precept; authoritative principle of *śāstra*.

Simha: Lion.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta: translated as “the character of the living force in immortality,” it is the title of the authorised biography of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu written in the late sixteenth century and compiled by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, presenting the Lord's pastimes and teachings.

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata: is one of the earliest biographies of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in which the author especially describes Caitanya Mahāprabhu's early pastimes. This biography is written by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura the incarnation of Vedavyāsa in Lord Caitanya's pastimes.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: (1486-1534)—Lord Kṛṣṇa in the aspect of His

own devotee.

He appeared in Navadvīpa, West Bengal, and inaugurated the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord to teach pure love of God by means of *sāṅkīrtana*. Lord Caitanya is understood by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself; The Golden Avatāra of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who descended into the material world some 500 years ago at Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu inaugurated the *yuga-dharma* of *sāṅkīrtana*.

Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa: A book written by Śrīla Sanātana Goswami.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda (1874-1937): The founder *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

An extraordinary powerful preacher, he founded sixty-four missions in India. The transcendently empowered son of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda appeared in this world on February 6, 1874. He is the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura (1838-1915): A great *ācārya* in the Brah-mā-Mādhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya, the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda.

He single handedly resurrected the Vaiṣṇava community that had fallen into disrepair due to so many incongruence's. He wrote over 100 books and was called the Seventh Goswami, a very great title for a very great personality.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977), founder of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON).

The personality who spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the whole of the Western world. He travelled the world 14 times in 12 years, wrote more than 80 books and opened 108 temples. His last founded project was the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India.

The spiritual master of Śrī Śrīmad Gour Govinda Swami Mahārāja.

Śrī Raṅgam: The beautiful and majestic *tīrtha* Śrī Raṅgam is situated in South India in the state of Tamil Nadu.

This is where the Deity of Śrī Raṅganātha, the Lord of Lakṣmīdevī, resides. Śrīla Yāmunācārya (918-1038) and Śrīla Rāmānujācārya (1017-1137) resided in this temple and led the Śrī Sampradāya in their preaching mission.

T

The Golden Avatāra: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

U

Uttama-adhikārī: The topmost devotee or Vaiṣṇava.

śrī-havir uvāca
sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavatya ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

“Śrī Havir said: The most advanced devotee sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he sees systematically everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.45)

V

Vaikunṭha: literally a place without anxieties. The spiritual world where Lord Narayana resides.

Vaiṣṇava: One who has the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu in his heart and mind always.

Varāha: The gigantic boar incarnation (*avatāra*) of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣṇu Svāmī: The *sampradāya ācārya* of the Rudra-sampradāya.

Vṛndāvana: Kṛṣṇa’s eternal abode.

This is where He fully manifests His quality of sweetness; the village on this earth in which He enacted His childhood pastimes five thousand years ago; the topmost transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord. It is His personal spiritual abode descended to the earthly plane. It is situated on the Western bank of the river Yamunā. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was present on earth about 5,000 years ago.

Vyāsadeva (Vyāsa): The empowered incarnation of God, and the greatest philosopher of ancient times.

The son of Parāśara, and the compiler of the original Vedic scriptures, including the eighteen *Purāṇas*, *Vedānta-sūtra*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Upaniṣads*. The son of Parāśara Muni and Satyavatī-devī, Vyāsa is the empowered *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* of God who has written the Vedas some 5,000 years ago. He is also known as Vedavyāsa, Bādarāyaṇa and Dvaipāyana.

Vyāsāsana: The seat of Vyāsa, on which the bona fide representative of Vyāsadeva sits.

Vyāsa-pūjā: Worship of the compiler of the Vedas, Vyāsadeva.

Also worship of the bona fide spiritual master as the representative of Vyāsadeva on his appearance day.

Y

Yamunā: The sacred river where Kṛṣṇa performed many pastimes.

One of the holy rivers of India, flowing through Vṛndāvana. It was here that Lord Śrī

GLOSSARY

Kṛṣṇa sported when He was a young child. The personification of the Yamunā River, known as Kālindī, is the daughter of the sun god and the sister of Yamarāja.

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तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ ३४

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

*“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a
bona fide spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively
and render service unto him. The self-realised soul can
impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”*

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ 4.34



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