



Hare Krishna Society Prabhupada Disciples Association



Monthly Newsletter

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Under the Authority, Guidance and Inspiration of
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the Krishna Consciousness Movement and
Foremost Exponent of Krishna Consciousness in the Western World



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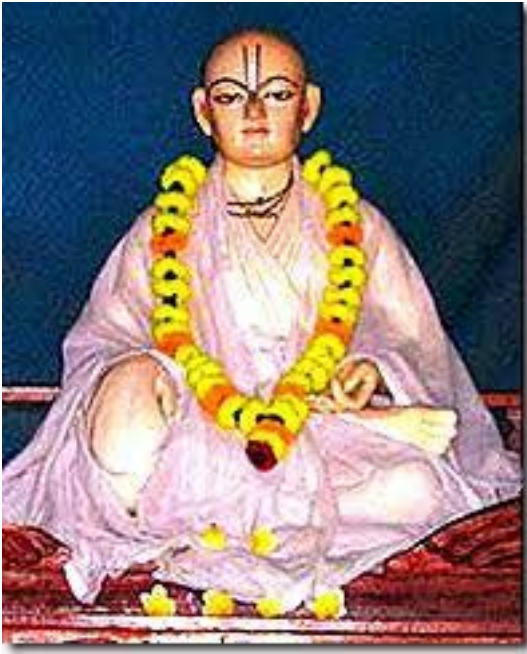
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Mayapura Calendar-Jun & Jul 2024

Jun 3	Dvadasi (suitable for fasting) Fasting for Aparā Ekadasi Srila Vṛndavana Dasa Thakura -- Appearance
Jun 4	Trayodasi, Break fast 04:49 - 09:19
Jun 16	Ganga Puja Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana -- Disappearance Srimati Gangamata Gosvami -- Appearance
Jun 17	Ekadasi (not suitable for fasting)
Jun 18	Ekadasi (suitable for fasting) Fasting for Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi
Jun 19	Dvadasi, Break fast 04:50 - 07:30
Jun 20	Panihati Cida Dahi Utsava
Jun 22	Snana Yatra Sri Mukunda Datta -- Disappearance Sri Sridhara Pandita -- Disappearance
Jun 23	Sri Syamananda Prabhu -- Disappearance
Jun 26	Sri Vakresvara Pandita -- Appearance
Jul 1	Sri Srivasa Pandita -- Disappearance
Jul 2	Ekadasi (suitable for fasting) Fasting for Yogini Ekadasi
Jul 3	Dvadasi, Break fast 04:54 - 07:12
Jul 6	Gundica Marjana Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura -- Disappearance Sri Gadadhara Pandita -- Disappearance
Jul 7	Ratha Yatra Sri Svarupa Damodara Gosvami -- Disappearance Sri Sivananda Sena -- Disappearance
Jul 11	Hera Pancami (4 days after Ratha Yatra)
Jul 12	Sri Vakresvara Pandita -- Disappearance
Jul 15	Return Ratha (8 days after Ratha Yatra)
Jul 17	Ekadasi (suitable for fasting) Fasting for Sayana Ekadasi
Jul 18	Dvadasi, Break fast 05:00 - 09:28
Jul 21	Guru (Vyasa) Purnima Srila Sanatana Gosvami -- Disappearance 1st month of Caturmasya begins (green leafy vegetable fast for 1 month)
Jul 25	Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami -- Disappearance
Jul 28	Srila Lokanatha Gosvami -- Disappearance
Jul 29	The incorporation of ISKCON in New York
Jul 31	Ekadasi (suitable for fasting) Fasting for Kamika Ekadasi

Śrīla Prabhupāda Glorifies Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura

Compiled by Narasimha dāsa and Yaśodā nandana dāsa



Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's Birth

*nārāyaṇī—caitanyaera ucchiṣṭa-bhājana
tānra garbhe janmilā śrī-dāsa-vṛndāvana*

nārāyaṇī—of the name Nārāyaṇī; caitanyera—of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu; ucchiṣṭa-bhājana—eater of the remnants of food; tanra—of her; garbhe—in the womb; janmilā—took birth; sri-dasa-vrndavana—Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura.

Translation Nārāyaṇī eternally eats the remnants of the food of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura was born of her womb.

Purport In the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, a book written by Kavi-karṇapūra that describes all the associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and who they previously were, there is the following statement regarding Nārāyaṇī:

*ambikāyāḥ svasā yāsīn
nāmnā śrīla-kilimbikā
kṛṣṇocchiṣṭam prabhuñjānā
seyaṁ nārāyaṇī matā*

When Lord Kṛṣṇa was a child, He was nursed by a woman named Ambikā, who had a younger sister named Kilimbikā. During the time of Lord Caitanya's incarnation, the same Kilimbikā used to eat the remnants of food left by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That Kilimbikā was Nārāyaṇī, who was a niece of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's. Later on, when she grew up and married, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura was born from her womb. A devotee of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is celebrated in terms of devotional service rendered to the Lord; thus we know Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura as the son of Nārāyaṇī. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura notes in this connection that there is no reference to his paternal ancestry because there is no need to understand it. [Cc. Ādi 8.41]

Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's as the author of Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata

*vṛndāvana-dāsa—nārāyaṇīra nandana
'caitanya-maṅgala' yeṅho karila racana*

vrndavana-dasa—Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura; nārāyaṇīra nandana—son of Nārāyaṇī; caitanya-mangala—the book of the name Caitanya-maṅgala; yeṅho—who; karila—did; racana—composition.

Translation Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, the son of Śrīmatī Nārāyaṇī, composed Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala [later known as Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata]. [Cc. Ādi 11.54]

Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's as the reincarnation of Vedavyāsa

*bhāgavate kṛṣṇa-līlā varṇilā vedavyāsa
caitanya-līlāte vyāsa—vṛndāvana dāsa*

bhagavate—in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam; kṛṣṇa-līlā—the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa; varṇilā—described; veda-vyāsa—Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva; caitanya-līlāte—in the pastimes of Lord Caitanya; vyāsa—Vedavyāsa; vṛndāvana dāsa—Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura.

Translation Śrīla Vyāsadeva described the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Vyāsa of the pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu was Vṛndāvana dāsa.

Purport Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura was an incarnation of Vedavyāsa and also a friendly cowherd boy named Kusumāpīḍa in kṛṣṇa-līlā. In other words, the author of Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, the son of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's niece Nārāyaṇī, was a combined incarnation of Vedavyāsa and the cowherd boy Kusumāpīḍa. There is a descriptive statement by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in his commentary on Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata giving the biographical details of the life of Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura. [Cc. Ādi 11.55]

*vṛndāvana-dāsa ihā 'caitanya-maṅgale'
vistāri' varṇilā nityānanda-ājñā-bale*

vṛndavana-dasa—Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana dāsa; *ihā*—this; *caitanya-maṅgale*—in his book *Caitanya-maṅgala*; *vistāri*—expanding; *varṇilā*—described; *nityānanda*—of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu; *ajñā*—of the order; *bale*—on the strength.

Translation By the order and strength of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has elaborately described in his *Caitanya-maṅgala* all that I have not. [Cc. Ādi 17.330]

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the glories of Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata

Cc. Ādi 8.33

*ore mūḍha loka, śuna caitanya-maṅgala
caitanya-mahimā yāte jānibe sakala*

ore—O all of you; *mudha*—foolish; *loka*—people; *suna*—just hear; *caitanya-maṅgala*—the book of this name; *caitanya*—Lord Caitanya's; *mahima*—glories; *yate*—in which; *janibe*—you will know; *sakala*—all.

Translation O fools, just read Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala! By reading this book you can understand all the glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Purport Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's *Caitanya-bhāgavata* was originally entitled *Caitanya-maṅgala*, but when Śrīla Locana dāsa Ṭhākura later wrote another book named *Caitanya-maṅgala*, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura changed the name of his own book, which is now therefore known as *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. The life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is

very elaborately described in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has already informed us that in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* he has described whatever Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has not mentioned. This acceptance of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī indicates his acceptance of the disciplic succession. A writer of transcendental literature never tries to surpass the previous *ācāryas*.

Cc. Ādi 8.34

*kṛṣṇa-līlā bhāgavate kahe veda-vyāsa
caitanya-līlāra vyāsa—vṛndāvana-dāsa*

kṛṣṇa-līlā—the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *bhāgavate*—in the book *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *kahe*—tells; *veda-vyāsa*—Vyāsadeva, the editor of the Vedic literature; *caitanya-līlāra*—of the pastimes of Lord Caitanya; *vyāsa*—compiler; *vṛndavana-dasa*—is Vṛndāvana dāsa.

Translation As Vyāsadeva has compiled all the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana dāsa has depicted the pastimes of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the great potency of hearing Caitanya-bhāgavata

*vṛndāvana-dāsa kaila 'caitanya-maṅgala'
yāñhāra śravaṇe nāśe sarva amaṅgala*

vṛndavana-dasa—of the name Vṛndāvana dāsa; *kaila*—compiled; *caitanya-maṅgala*—the book named *Caitanya-maṅgala*; *yāñhāra*—of which; *śravaṇe*—by hearing; *nāśe*—annihilated; *sarva*—all; *amaṅgala*—inauspiciousness.

Translation Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana dāsa has composed Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala. Hearing this book annihilates all misfortune. [Cc. Ādi 8.35]

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the result and benefit of hearing Caitanya-bhāgavata

*caitanya-nitāira yāte jāniye mahimā
yāte jāni kṛṣṇa-bhakti-siddhānta sīmā*

caitanya-nitāira—of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu; *yate*—in which; *jāniye*—one can know; *mahima*—all glories; *yate*—in which; *jāni*—I can understand;

kṛṣṇa-bhakti—of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa; *siddhānta*—of the conclusion; *sima*—limit.

Translation By reading Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala one can understand all the glories and truths of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda and come to the ultimate conclusion of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Purport *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* is the authoritative reference book from which to understand devotional service, but because it is very elaborate, few men can understand its purpose. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the original commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which is called *nyāya-prasthāna*. It was written to enable one to understand the Absolute Truth through infallible logic and argument, and therefore its natural commentary, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is extremely elaborate. Professional reciters have created the impression that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* deals only with Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā*, although Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā* is described only in the Tenth Canto (chapters 29-35). They have in this way presented Kṛṣṇa to the Western world as a great woman-hunter, and therefore we sometimes have to deal with such misconceptions in preaching. Another difficulty in understanding *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is that the professional reciters have introduced *bhāgavata-saptāha*, or seven-day readings of the *Bhāgavatam*. They want to finish *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* in a week, although it is so sublime that even one verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, if properly explained, cannot be completed in three months. Under these circumstances, it is a great aid for the common man to read Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, for thus he can actually understand devotional service, Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said:

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-
pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate*

“Devotional service to the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic scriptures like the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, *Nārada-pañcarātra*, etc., is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.” Due to misunderstanding *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, people are misled regarding the science of Kṛṣṇa. However, by reading Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's book one can very easily understand this science.
[Cc. Ādi 8.36]

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains why the title of the book was changed from Caitanya-maṅgala to Caitanya-bhāgavata

Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's *Caitanya-bhāgavata* was originally entitled *Caitanya-maṅgala*, but when Śrīla Locana dāsa Ṭhākura later wrote another book named *Caitanya-maṅgala*, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura changed the name of his own book, which is now therefore known as *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. The life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is very elaborately described in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has already informed us that in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* he has described whatever Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has not mentioned. This acceptance of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī indicates his acceptance of the disciplic succession. A writer of transcendental literature never tries to surpass the previous *ācāryas*. [Cc. Ādi 8.33]

Śrīla Prabhupāda shows how Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja explains that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has personally spoken through Vṛndāvana dāsa

*manuṣye racite nāre aiche grantha dhanya
vṛndāvana-dāsa-mukhe vaktā śrī-caitanya*

manuṣye—a human being; *racite*—compiled; *nare*—cannot; *aiche*—such; *grantha*—book; *dhanya*—so glorious; *vṛndavana-dāsa*—the author, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura; *mukhe*—from his mouth; *vaktā*—speaker; *śrī-caitanya*—Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Translation The subject matter of this book is so sublime that it appears that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has personally spoken through the writings of Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura.

Purport Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has written in his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*:

*avaiṣṇava-mukhodgīṇaṁ
pūtaṁ hari-kathāṁṛtam
śravaṇaṁ naiva kartavyaṁ
sarpocchiṣṭaṁ yathā payaḥ*

Transcendental literature that strictly follows the Vedic principles and the conclusion of the *Purāṇas* and *pañcarātri-vidhi* can be written only by a pure devotee.

It is not possible for a common man to write books on

bhakti, for his writings will not be effective. He may be a very great scholar and expert in presenting literature in flowery language, but this is not at all helpful in understanding transcendental literature. Even if transcendental literature is written in faulty language, it is acceptable if it is written by a devotee, whereas so-called transcendental literature written by a mundane scholar, even if it is a very highly polished literary presentation, cannot be accepted. The secret in a devotee's writing is that when he writes about the pastimes of the Lord, the Lord helps him; he does not write himself. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 10.10), *dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te*. Since a devotee writes in service to the Lord, the Lord from within gives him so much intelligence that he sits down near the Lord and goes on

writing books. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī confirms that what Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura wrote was actually spoken by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and he simply repeated it. The same holds true for *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī wrote *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in his old age, in an invalid condition, but it is such a sublime scripture that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja used to say, "The time will come when the people of the world will learn Bengali to read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*." We are trying to present *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in English and do not know how successful it will be, but if one reads the original *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in Bengali he will relish increasing ecstasy in devotional service. [Cc. Ādi 8.39]



Śrīla Prabhupāda Glorifies Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

Los Angeles, June 14, 1970

So today is the birthday of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa? So, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, you have seen in my Bhagavad-gītā his name: dedicated to Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who has written the commentary on Brahma-sūtra, Govinda-bhāṣya. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is our ācārya. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is a fourth-generation ācārya from Lord Caitanya—fourth or fifth. Anyway, he is one of the ācāryas. Just like Gosvāmīs, they are ācāryas; Śrīnivās Ācārya.

So ācārya paramparā, disciplic succession. So, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is also ācārya in this Gauḍīya-sampradāya. So, his special gift . . . every ācārya means he gives some special things. Previous ācārya has given, and the next ācārya gives something more. That is the symptom of ācārya. In the incarnation also, just like Lord Buddha incarnation. Then Śaṅkarācārya, then Rāmāṇujācārya, then Madhvācārya then, in this way Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

So, every ācārya is giving a further lift. So Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa also gave a further lift to this sampradāya. What is that? Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa wrote commentary on Brahma-sūtra, Vedānta-sūtra. Vedānta-sūtra, his Vedānta-sūtra commentary is known as Govinda-bhāṣya, commentary of Govinda. The history is that this Gauḍīya-sampradāya did not write any commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, because according to our sampradāya we accept this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the commentary of Vedānta-sūtra: *bhāṣyo 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇām* (CC Madhya 25.143).

Lord Caitanya has recommended, it is stated in the Śrīmad . . . that this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the real commentary of Vedānta-sūtra. Vyāsadeva is the writer of the philosophy, Vedānta-sūtra, and he personally, under the instruction of his spiritual master, Nārada, personally wrote this commentary, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, on his own book, on his own philosophy, Vedānta-sūtra. If a writer, if the author himself, writes some commentary, that is the perfect, because he knows what is what.

Therefore, because the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is there, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, they did not attempt to write another separate commentary on the Brahma-sūtra. Any intelligent man can understand that this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra. The Vedānta-sūtra begins with *janmādy asya* (SB 1.1.1), *athāto brahma jijñāsā*, and

Bhāgavata says *jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā* (SB 1.2.10). Brahma jijñāsā and tattva-jijñāsā is same thing: “The human life is meant for inquiring for the Absolute.” In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is there. And the next aphorism in the Vedānta-sūtra is *janmādy asya yataḥ* . . .

(break) This Gauḍīya-sampradāya did not take unnecessary trouble again. The ācārya's sampradāya . . . if my previous ācārya has written something, so he will not touch those points, but he will write something which can develop further. That is ācārya, not that chewing the chewed—somebody has written something, and he is also writing the same thing. No. If he at all writes, he will write something which will beautify, or glorify, or magnify the former idea. That is the . . .

So, this Vaiṣṇava sampradāya did not write commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, because they knew that already Vyāsadeva, our original guru, he has already written Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu has recommended, and it is stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *bhāṣyo 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇām* (CC Madhya 25.143). This is the real commentary on the Brahma-sūtra. But those who are smārta-brāhmaṇas, they objected in Jaipur.

In the Jaipur there is Govinda-seva temple of Govindaji. The king of Jaipur took away when Aurangzeb was harassing Hindus and he was breaking some of the Hindu temple, at that time from Vṛndāvana the Govinda mūrti—not only Govinda, Govinda Gopinatha and Madana-mohana—these mūrtis were taken from Vṛndāvana to Jaipur. The king of Jaipur, he was Vaiṣṇava.

So along with the Deity, the priest or the worshiper, I mean to say, those who were engaged in the temple worship, they were also taken. That is the system. So, they were as usual worshiping, but some of the smārta-brāhmaṇas, they objected that, “Gauḍīya-sampradāya is not bona fide.” Why not bona fide? Just like Dr. Staal objected that this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not Vedic. Therefore, I immediately protested, “No, it is cent percent Vedic.”

So, when the smārta-brāhmaṇas, they objected that, “This Gauḍīya-sampradāya is not Vedic . . .” How one is Vedic? Any sampradāya, if you inaugurate some party, then he

must comment on the Vedānta-sūtra; otherwise, that party is not bona fide. That is Vedic rules: one must understand what is Brahma-sūtra. So, because there was no particular commentary on the Brahma-sūtra by the Gauḍīya-sampradāya on account of presence of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, so they objected.

So, this information was given at that time to Vṛndāvana. Vṛndāvana . . . Viśvanātha Cakravartī—you have heard the name of Viśvanātha Cakravartī; he is also ācārya and vastly great scholar. So, all the Vaiṣṇavas requested him that, “Please write a commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra; otherwise they are objecting that we are not Vaidic.” At that time he was very old, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, so he thought it wise, he asked this Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana—he happened to be just like his disciple—that, “I am very old now. I cannot go out of Vṛndāvana. So, you take up this job and write one commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra immediately.”

So, he took up the matter. He has written many other books, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana. So he immediately started for Jaipur, Govindaji’s temple, and . . . this is the ācārya that, “Unless I am authorized, unless I am empowered, how I can write?” This is Vaiṣṇava. Not that, “Because I have got some A-B-C-D knowledge I can write something.” No.

Just like one civil service officer, Mr. Gupta, sent me one commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā. Perhaps you know, we have delivered that . . . returned that panacea. So, I immediately pointed out that, “There are so many discrepancies. We cannot publish this.” So, they have taken back. So, he thought that because he is ICS officer, civil service officer, very big officer in India, therefore he can write commentary on Bhagavad-gītā or . . . these nonsense things are going on. Anyone, he has got some A-B-C-D knowledge, he thinks that, “I can write something.” No. You cannot write anything unless you are authorized by the disciplic succession. You have no access in it.

So, this Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana went to, I mean to say, Jaipur, and for three days continually he laid himself flat, just like we offer obeisances in that way, without taking any food and water, asking permission from Govinda, “Whether I shall write?” Of course he was ordered, but still, to confirm it, that “Viśvanātha Cakravartī has asked me to write, but if You confirm it, then I shall begin writing.” So Govindaji informed him, “Yes, you write. I give you order,” “I immediately write.” So, he began to write this bhāṣya, commentary of Vedānta-sūtra, and it came out very, very successful.

Govinda-bhāṣya commentary on Vedānta-sūtra available, this is in Sanskrit. But we are describing the same conclusion in our different books. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also the same

conclusion is there. You don’t require to read separately, but because the smārta-brāhmaṇas challenged that, “You are not Vaidic because you have no commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra,” so this Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana gave us the Govinda-bhāṣya.

Of course, other Vaiṣṇava ācāryas like Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, they have given commentary on Bhagavad-gītā. But we Madhva-Gauḍīya sampradāya, we are benedicted by this Baladeva Ācārya prabhu. And his life is that he . . . he was . . . he appeared in the family of a vaiśya community. His forefathers were agriculturists, but he became a great devotee and great scholar in Sanskrit, and he has got his commentaries on Bhagavad-gītā and Vedānta bhāṣya, and he has written many other books, all in Sanskrit.

So, his birthday, appearance day, is today. So, it is our duty to commemorate the memory, I mean to say, activities of the ācāryas and offer our respect and ask from them benediction for our progress. That is the system. Therefore, we have listed the appearance and disappearance of the ācāryas. We should take advantage of these auspicious dates and offer our respect to the ācāryas.

Thank you very much.

Devotees: All glories to Prabhupāda. (end) 70 06 14 - Lecture
Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana Appearance

A Brief History of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

by Nandarani Devi Dasi and Dayananda Dasa



Their voices rose with the sun. It was early morning in an Indian village school. The boys sat in neat rows behind palm-leaf manuscripts, committing their lessons to memory. As they chanted their grammar rules, their rhetoric lessons, and their logic aphorisms, each boy chanted loud enough to hear himself over his neighbour, resulting in a blend of high-pitched voices.

This school, attended by Baladeva early in the eighteenth century, closely resembled village schools that existed in India for thousands of years.

The system had endured because it was effective, producing brilliant and disciplined scholars, and Baladeva was among the best of them. Before coming to school, Baladeva, the son of a merchant, had lived for several years near the Orissan town of Remuna.

From there he had gone to study with the group of panditas at this school, situated idyllically on the bank of the Cilkahrada River. The lush Orissan forests and fertile fields provided ample fruits, vegetables, and grains for a wholesome, varied diet. The boys studied hard, played hard, and grew lean, healthy, and discerning. When Baladeva graduated from school, he did not want to return home to work in his father's shop.

He wanted to be a scholar -- not an ordinary scholar but a true acarya, one who could teach divine wisdom. A pandita had to master logic, philosophy, medicine, or cosmology, but an acharya had to know the scriptures that impart the deepest wisdom. Baladeva decided to study philosophy and

theology.

He would become a Vedantist, an authority on the ancient Vedic books of knowledge. He could not think of any greater way to benefit himself or others.

In search of a preceptor, Baladeva went on pilgrimage to the tirthas (holy places), where he would meet monks and scholars.

In Mysore (now Karnataka), in southwestern India, he came upon a hermitage of holy men who were also called Tirthas, followers of the saint and scholar Ananda Tirtha (A.D. 1197-1273), who was known formally as Madhva Acarya. In the monastery, or matha, Baladeva studied Vedanta and mastered the arts of debate and rhetoric.

These talents would serve him well in a challenge he would later face while still a young man. The challenge Baladeva would meet is of critical importance to the history of Gaudiya Vaisnavism, the spiritual school to which the modern day Krsna consciousness movement belongs.

The Gaudiyas in Vrndavana

By the time Baladeva was born, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas, or followers of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, were well established in Vrndavana, the town in northern India where Lord Krsna had enacted His childhood pastimes some five thousand years earlier.

But life in that area was often insecure. For thousands of years, the Vrndavana-Mathura district had been periodically invaded and pillaged. Yet despite these calamities, Mathura had thrived as a center of trade and culture. Every ancient religion of northern India considered Mathura an important city.

In 1512 Lord Caitanya arrived in Mathura. He found that the places where Krsna had enjoyed pastimes were now obscured, so He spent two months locating and identifying them. Wanting to reconstruct Vrndavana and rededicate it to Krsna, He sent Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami, two of His chief disciples, to the holy city.

Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami accomplished Lord

Caitanya's mission in Vrndavana. Not only did they rebuild the sacred places of Krsna's life, but they also wrote books that presented Lord Caitanya's doctrine in a way suitable for both scholars and laymen. Srila Jiva Gosvami, their nephew and disciple, continued their work.

He supervised the construction of magnificent temples for the worship of Krsna, wrote exhaustive philosophical treatises on the philosophy of Krsna consciousness, and distributed the religious manuscripts of the Vrndavana Gosvamis throughout the Vaisnava world. Largely due to Jiva Gosvami's efforts, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas succeeded in establishing Vrndavana as the principal seat of Vaisnavism in northern India.

Vrndavana had always been a holy pilgrimage site, but under Gaudiya patronage it flourished as a powerful religious centre for 150 years. Gaudiya gurus and temples held sway in Vrndavana, even at the time of Baladeva's arrival in the early eighteenth century.

Govinda Leaves Vrndavana

Unfortunately, the peaceful leadership of the Gaudiyas could not last. In 1669 the Mogul ruler Aurangzeb decreed that Hindu temples and carved images, or Deities, should be destroyed. Deities, priests, and pilgrims were in danger, and faithful devotees of Krsna stopped visiting Vrndavana. Many of those who had the courage to express their faith were beaten or killed. Subsequently, the Vaisnava priests appealed to the Hindu dynasties of Rajasthan for protection for themselves and their Deities.

Protection was guaranteed, and gradually the Deities migrated east, to settle in Mewar and in Amber, the old Jaipur capital. But without Deities, brahmanas, and pilgrims, Vrndavana-Mathura lost much of its glory. One of the principal Deities of Vrndavana was Govinda, a twenty-four-inch black marble image of Krsna in His original aspect as a cowherd boy. Srila Rupa Gosvami had found Him while excavating the holy places of Vrndavana.

Later, warned that Aurangzeb's army would seek to demolish Govinda's splendid seven-story temple, the priests secretly moved the Deity to Radha-kunda, a sacred pond widely known as one of the holiest places in the Mathura district. After a year at Radha-kunda, the priests transferred their divine refugee to Kaman, a fortified city in the Mathura district, where a suitable complex could be built for Govinda.

For more than thirty years He and two other Deities, Gopinatha and Madana-Mohana, remained in Kaman. But most pilgrims avoided the area because of danger from the

ruling Moguls and a clan of people called the Jats, who had risen up against the Moguls. The Rajput kings of Amber found themselves at the pivot of the conflict between the Moguls and the Jat guerrillas.

The kings allied themselves with the Moguls against the Jats but patronised the Vrndavana Deities, whom the Moguls wanted to destroy. **Ram Singh, the king of Amber, had ordered in 1671 that Govinda be transferred to Kaman,** which was then under the jurisdiction of Amber and Jaipur although it was in the Mathura district.

It is said that the transfer was meant to be temporary, the Deity would return to Vrndavana when the political turmoil subsided. But Govinda did not return to Vrndavana. After thirty-three years in Kaman, He made another trip, this time to Amber.

The Ramanandis' Challenge

Govinda's new home had little in common with the forest of Vrndavana, where He had lived so grandly. In Vrndavana, a Vaisnava holy place, Govinda was the unchallenged Supreme Lord. His priest, who stood in the direct line of Rupa Gosvami, the acknowledged leader of the Vaisnavas in Vrndavana, had enjoyed unchallenged authority on questions about the philosophy and practice of bhakti, devotional service to Krsna.

In Amber, however, not all the Vaisnavas worshiped Krsna. During the reign of Prthviraj Singh (1503-1527), a devotee of Lord Ramacandra named Payahari Krsnadasa had settled in Galta, a valley near the present day city of Jaipur.

Payahari was a grand-disciple of Ramananda, the fourteenth century North Indian reformer of the South Indian sampradaya (lineage) of Ramanuja.

Payahari worshiped Sita-Rama, not Radha-Krsna.

Payahari had settled in a cave in the Galta Valley.

He had converted Queen Balan Bai to Ramanandi Vaisnavism, and she in turn had convinced her saintly husband, King Prthviraj, to sponsor the establishment of a Ramanandi monastery in Galta. Thereafter, Galta had become the northern headquarters for the Ramanuja sect. For six generations the Ramanandi mahantas (temple heads) had enjoyed a privileged position in the Amber kingdom.

But Govinda's arrival in Amber and His popularity with the royal family challenged the Ramanandi hegemony. To Jai Singh the arrival of Govinda was especially significant. Despite the presence of so many Hindu sects in his kingdom,

despite his own royal obligations to maintain Vedic and Puranic ritual sacrifices, and despite the unchallengeable authority of the Ramanandi priests, Jai Singh was ultimately a devotee of Govinda.

The arrival of Govinda in his kingdom was a high point in his personal spiritual quest. The Ramanandi priests soon realised that if Govinda became the favoured Deity of the king, the Gaudiya priests would assume religious authority in Amber. What would become of the Ramanandis' ascendancy?

The Ramanandis then approached Jai Singh with a complaint about the Gaudiyas. They questioned the Gaudiya lineage. In India, much is made of one's parentage. If one cannot prove natal legitimacy, one may be cast out as a bastard. The same social standard applies to religious organizations. If a religious group cannot prove its descent from one of the recognized traditions, it risks being dismissed as illegitimate.

Jai Singh wrote to the mahanta of the Gopinatha temple, Syamcaran Sarma, asking him to clarify the matter by explaining the lineage of the Gaudiya devotees. Syamcaran replied with a letter in Sanskrit, quoting various scriptures and other authorities. He explained that the Gaudiya lineage had begun with Lord Caitanya, who was the Supreme Godhead.

After all, a spiritual lineage originating with God is unassailable. Predictably, the Ramanandis were not satisfied. They said, "There are only four sampradayas, not five. Scholars have ascertained this on the basis of the Padma Purana." It is here that our story brings us back to Baladeva.

The Nurturing of Baladeva

Before the Ramanandis had complained in Amber, young Baladeva, living in Mysore, had been instructed in the Vedanta-sutra by the followers of the great Vedantist Madhva Acarya. The word Vedanta consists of two words:

veda (knowledge) and anta (end).

So Vedanta is the culmination of Vedic knowledge. The Vedas are the oldest of the traditional Sanskrit writings compiled by Srila Vyasadeva. Vyasadeva later composed the Vedanta-sutra, which contains in terse codes the essence of the Upanisads (the philosophical hymns of the Vedas). Because the Vedanta-sutra is written in aphorisms, one needs a commentary to understand it. The oldest and most famous extant commentary is that of Sankara Acarya (A.D. 788-820).

Sankara was a monist; he believed in the ultimate oneness of the jiva (living being) and God, and he interpreted the Vedanta-sutra accordingly. After Sankara, four learned

Vaisnavas stepped forward over the course of several hundred years to write Vedanta-sutra commentaries. These Vaisnavas wrote to establish the duality of the jiva and God and thus refute the monistic teaching of Sankara.

These four Vaisnava preceptors -- Sri Ramanuja Acarya, Sri Nimbarka, Sri Madhva Acarya, and Sri Visnusvami -- established the four acknowledged Vaisnava sampradayas.

Subsequently Vaisnava religious leaders belonged to one of these sampradayas and were thus considered legitimate. Ramananda claimed that his lineage originated with Ramanuja. We recall again that Baladeva, in Mysore, had stayed in a matha of the Madhva-sampradaya and studied the Vedanta-sutra commentary of Madhva. He had enjoyed his education, but he enjoyed even more the application of his learning.

He was exhilarated by debates, no challenge was too great for him. And he was eager for the opportunity to enlighten others. Now after becoming a skilled lecturer and debater, Baladeva left Mysore and went to Puri, in Orissa, where he again took up residence in a Madhva matha.

At Puri, Baladeva met Radha-Damodara Dasa, a Brahmana from Kanyakubja (now Kanpur), in north central India. Radha-Damodara was the grand-disciple of Rasikananda, a seventeenth-century preacher who had established the Gaudiya movement throughout Orissa. Radha-Damodara, a scholar of Gaudiya philosophy, explained to Baladeva the position of Lord Caitanya, supporting his points with quotations from Mahabharata and Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Radha-Damodara said, "Sri Krsna Caitanya is the Supreme Godhead Himself. He came to flood the world with Krsna-prema, love of Krsna. Sri Caitanya was not interested in study of many commentaries on Vedanta-sutra, for He considered Srimad-Bhagavatam, written by the same author -- Vyasa -- to be the natural commentary. So, from the Bhagavatam and by His own example, He taught that we must serve the Supreme Lord, Krsna, and absorb ourselves in hearing about Him. Sri Caitanya Himself was always absorbed in Krsna-prema. Thus, He saw no need to write any books."

Radha-Damodara advised Baladeva to study the Bhagavata-sandarbha, by Srila Jiva Gosvami. For days Radha-Damodara and Baladeva met and discussed Jiva's work. Baladeva noted that Jiva did not significantly differ from Madhva. Indeed, the philosophies of Jiva and Madhva agreed on most essential points. Still, Jiva's treatise developed Vaisnava philosophy in an elegant and logical way that deeply impressed Baladeva.

Now convinced that the Gaudiya perspective was true,

Baladeva asked Radha-Damodara to initiate him into the Gaudiya-sampradaya. Baladeva, however, was an already initiated Vaisnava, so Radha-Damodara performed not a formal initiation but a ceremony in which Baladeva agreed to accept and serve Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu as the Supreme Lord. Thus, Baladeva became a member of the Gaudiya sampradaya. Mastering Gaudiya Philosophy.

Baladeva then decided to travel to Vrndavana, the spiritual centre of the Gaudiya sect. But first he went to Navadvipa, where he met the Vaisnavas there and discussed philosophy with them. They all told him to study under Visvanatha Cakravati Thakura in Vrndavana.

Because Baladeva was so eager to meet Visvanatha, he stayed only a short time in Navadvipa before setting out on foot to travel the eight hundred miles to Vrndavana. Arriving in Vrndavana, Baladeva soon met Visvanatha Cakravati, introduced himself, and explained his background and the story of his meeting with Radha-Damodara in Puri.

Visvanatha was gratified that Baladeva had come to study Srimad-Bhagavatam, and he suggested a suitable day for them to begin their studies. He also decided that Baladeva should study the rasa-sastras, texts of advanced devotion, with another scholar, Pitambara Dasa. Baladeva's appetite had been whetted by reading Jiva Gosvami's Bhagavata-sandarbha in Puri.

From Pitambara, Baladeva learned the esoteric meaning of bhagavata philosophy, as found in the rasa-sastras. He then studied the Caitanya-caritamrta, Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami's biography of Lord Caitanya.

The Caitanya-caritamrta is an advanced text for those who have fully studied other Vaisnava scriptures. By completing his study of this culminating work, Baladeva qualified himself for a brilliant future as a Gaudiya scholar. Meanwhile, in Amber the Ramanandis continued to wage ideological war against the Gaudiyas. The Ramanandis did not accept the answer that the Gaudiya mahantas had given to King Jai Singh -- that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was the Supreme Lord Himself and that His sampradaya was therefore beyond doubt.

The Ramanandis insisted on the principle of sampradaya catvarah, "there are only four sampradayas," implying, of course, that the Gaudiyas constituted an unauthorized fifth lineage. Jai Singh prepared himself for the religious confrontation he knew was inevitable. He collected and studied the writings of the Gaudiya sect and compared it with the writings of other Vaisnava sampradayas.

He studied the Bhagavata Purana and its commentaries

by Sridhara Swami, Sanatana Gosvami, and Jiva Gosvami. He pored over the Vedanta-sutra and its commentaries by Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, and Nimbarka.

He explored the works of Sanatana Gosvami, Rupa Gosvami, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Jiva Gosvami, and Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, the principal theologians of the Gaudiya school. And he read Jayadeva's Gita-govinda, the poetry that had often evoked expressions of ecstatic love in Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Jai Singh wanted to reconcile the differences between the principal sects of Vaisnavas. He felt that these differences had no philosophical basis, so continual wrangling could serve no purpose. Having completed his research, he composed a thesis called Brahma-bodhini, advocating the unity of the Vaisnavas.

The king's attraction to Krsna had been sparked during his first visit to Vrndavana, as a child of seven. He had been called there by his father, the military commander of the district, who had been deputed to protect the caravans between Agra and Mathura. From that young age, Jai Singh had considered himself a devotee of Krsna.

Now his study of the writings of the Vrndavana Gosvamis crystallized his sentiments. But his devotion to Radha and Krsna would be tested by the Ramanandis. "The Gaudiyas should not worship Radha and Krsna together," the Ramanandis told him. "Radha and Krsna are not married. There is no precedent for Their being worshiped together! Sita and Rama are together, and Laksmi and Narayana, because they are married. But Radha and Krsna are not married."

Now the Ramanandis were escalating the quarrel. They not only criticized the Gaudiyas' lineage but also found fault with the Gaudiya method of worship. The Ramanandis demanded that Radha be removed from the main altar and be placed in another room, to be worshiped separately. Jai Singh sent word to the mahantas (religious authorities) of the Gaudiya temples. "You must prepare a response to the criticisms voiced by the Ramanandis of Galta Valley. I am sympathetic to your philosophy and practice, but your response must be adequate to silence the Ramanandi panditas, or I shall be forced to separate Radharani from Krsna."

The mahantas of the four major Gaudiya temples of Amber submitted their response in writing. They explained that Rupa, Sanatana, and Jiva Gosvamis shared the same opinion about Radha and Krsna: They could be worshiped either as married (svakiya rasa) or unmarried (parakiya rasa), since both these pastimes (lila) are eternal.

Worship of Krsna in either lila is adequate to establish

a devotee's eternal relationship with the Supreme. The Ramanandis rejected these arguments. Fighting for their religious and political power, they again approached Jai Singh. Because Radha and Krsna were not married, the Ramanandis complained, worshiping Them together condoned Their questionable relationship.

The Ramanandis also criticized the Gaudiyas for worshiping Krsna without first worshiping Narayana. To appease the Ramanandis, Jai Singh told them he would ask the Gaudiyas to place the Deity of Radharani in a separate room. He would also ask them to explain their breach of Vaisnava etiquette in neglecting Narayana worship, and he would ask them to prove their link with the Madhva sampradaya.

Visvanatha Deputes Baladeva

Visvanatha Cakravati, a scholar of great repute, lived in Vrndavana at this time. Visvanatha had been born in 1646 in a Bengali village named Saidabad, where he had spent the first years of his life. Like other aspiring young renunciants, Visvanatha had faced problems with his family, who had betrothed him at a young age to tie him to domestic life.

As a married youth, Visvanatha had studied extensively, and while living with his family in Saidabad he had written brilliant commentaries on Vaisnava scripture. During his life in Saidabad, Visvanatha had taken initiation from Radharamana Cakravati and studied the Srimad-Bhagavatam and other Vaisnava scriptures with Radharamana's father, Krsnacarana Cakravati.

Radharamana was three generations removed from the main preceptor in their line, Narottama Dasa Thakura. Eventually Visvanatha had left his family and gone to Vrndavana, where he had lived at Radha-kunda. He formally accepted the dress of a renunciant and was then called Harivallabha.

He continued writing and preaching, and eventually he became the leader of the Gaudiya community in Vrndavana.

By the time Govinda moved to Rajasthan in 1707, Visvanatha was more than sixty years old. The aging scholar followed the Amber developments with interest. How would Govinda and His priest's fare in that pluralistic environment, at the vortex of the young king's devotion, the Ramanandis antagonism, and the threatening presence of so many sects?

Visvanatha regularly communicated with the mahantas of the Vaisnava temples in Amber. Although he had expected trouble from the Ramanandis, the quarrel had stewed for years before threatening the Gaudiya priests or affecting the Deity worship. Now, he knew, they despaired over the

growing antagonism of the Ramanandis.

Visvanatha called for Baladeva. "We must refute the points of the Ramanandis," Visvanatha told his protege. "It will not be easy, but we can defeat them." Baladeva was outraged by the presumptuousness of the Ramanandi critics. "Why must we establish the legitimacy of our lineage?" He demanded. "The Supreme Lord, Sri Krsna, appeared as Lord Caitanya to establish the true religion for this age of quarrel. When God Himself originates a religious tradition, who may dare question its legitimacy?"

"The Ramanandis do question it" Visvanatha replied, "and they rest their criticism on the statement in Padma Purana that in this age there are four sampradayas, or lines of disciplic succession. The Purana says:

sri-brahma-rudra-sanaka vaisnava-ksiti-pavanah catvaras te kalau bhavya hy utkale purusottama .

The meaning is that the four Vaisnava sampradayas--Sri, Brahma, Rudra, and Kumara--purify the earth."

"Yes," replied Baladeva, "I know this verse. And the Ramanandis say that the words *utkale purusottama* mean that these four sampradayas have their monasteries in Orissa, in Purusottama-ksetra, the town of Jagannatha Puri.

"But the real meaning is that the Supreme Lord, Purusottama, is the quintessence of these four sampradayas. And when He appears in Kali-yuga, He lives in Jagannatha Puri as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. So, the Gaudiya lineage is not a fifth sampradaya but the essence of the four."

Visvanatha and Baladeva spent the night discussing the Ramanandis other points of contention about Lord Caitanya's movement. They developed the strategy by which they would defeat the Ramanandis. Visvanatha sent Baladeva with Krsnadeva Sarvabhauma to Amber. Baladeva's arrival there was unheralded.

He was new to the Gaudiya community, unknown even among the Gaudiya mahantas of Amber. And he was young. No one, even of his own tradition, suspected that a philosophical giant lived within the unpretentious form of this Gaudiya holyman from Vrndavana. Baladeva had difficulty gaining audience with the king. And when he was finally able to do so, the Ramanandis in the court were ready for him.

"Sir," Baladeva said to the king, "I have come to resolve doubts about the Gaudiya-sampradaya and its methods of worship." "Your Highness," a Ramanandi pandita broke in, "we request to speak to him directly!" Jai Singh turned to Baladeva. "You may speak," the king said, confident that if Krsna were indeed

the Supreme Lord, Krsna would arrange for His own defense.

The Ramanandis opened with an offensive they felt sure would guarantee their authority. “The problem,” they told Baladeva, “is that you do not belong to a proper sampradaya. Therefore, we cannot accept the literature written by your panditas.”

“I am from the Madhva-sampradaya,” Baladeva asserted confidently. “I have been initiated in Mysore by a Tirtha of the Madhva order. But Radha-Damodara Gosvami and Visvanatha Cakravati of the Gaudiya-sampradaya are also my gurus. They have taught me Bhagavata philosophy.”

The Ramanandis were surprised. Baladeva’s Madhva initiation meant that they had to accept him as a qualified sannyasi and pandita of an authorized lineage. But they hoped his youth might indicate a lack of skill. They rallied themselves. “You may be from the Madhva-sampradaya, but the other Gaudiyas are not!”

Baladeva retained his dignity and produced a key piece of evidence. “That is the Gaura-ganoddhadesa-dipika, written by Kavi Karnapura more than one hundred years ago. This manuscript details our lineage from Madhva.” Baladeva presented the manuscript for inspection.

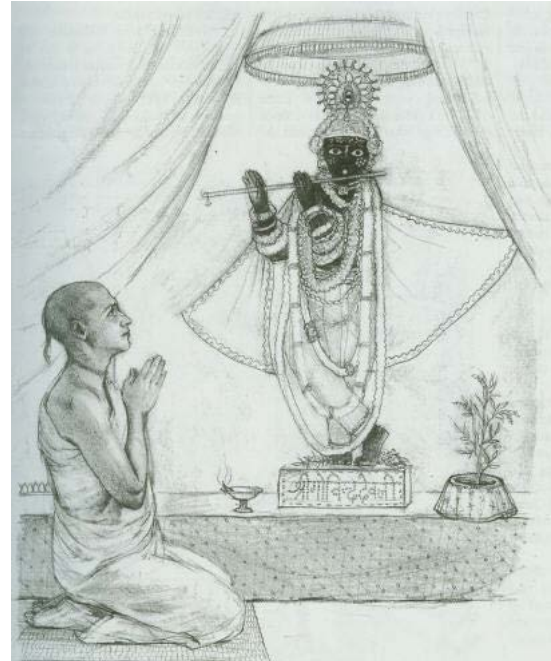
The Ramanandis again argued, “If the Gaudiyas claim descent from Madhva, then you must base your arguments on Madhva’s Brahma-sutra commentary. We know the Gaudiyas have no commentary of their own.” Baladeva thought. The Gaudiyas had never written a commentary on Vedantasutra, because they accepted the Srimad-Bhagavatam as the natural commentary. Vyasa is the author of both of these works, and Lord Caitanya taught that when the author comments on his own work, his opinion is the best.

Baladeva knew that the Ramanandis would reject this argument. But he also knew that if he used Madhva’s commentary, he would have problems, for Madhva’s commentary would not justify the style of worship practiced by the Gaudiyas. So, Baladeva decided he would need to write a Gaudiya commentary himself. This commentary is based on Madhva’s, but could have some allowable differences. “I will show you our commentary,” Baladeva said. “Please allow me to bring it.”

“Indeed, send for it,” granted the Ramanandi spokesman. “That won’t be possible,” replied Baladeva. “It will require several days to write it.” The Ramanandis were stunned. Could Baladeva produce a commentary within a few days? How audacious! But if Baladeva could indeed produce it, the Ramanandis position might be threatened.

Should they grant him the time he required?

Before they could speak, King Jai Singh interjected. “Yes, the time is granted. Prepare your commentary and notify us when it is ready. You should know that unless you present a suitable commentary, we shall accept the criticisms of the Ramanandis as valid. But I shall not act on any of their demands until you have had an opportunity to present your commentary and your arguments.”



Govindaji Inspires Baladeva

Baladeva left the assembly, followed by Krsnadeva Sarvabhauma. Baladeva saw himself a puppet in the hands of the Lord. He had spoken boldly in the assembly, but would the divine puppeteer guide his pen? Baladeva went to Govindapura. Presenting himself before Govinda, he knelt and prayed:

“O Govinda, Your devotee Visvanatha has sent me here to defend You and Your devotees, but I cannot do it! I am just a soul fallen in ignorance.

If You wish, You may empower me to write a Vedanta-sutra commentary that will glorify You. If You wish, I shall write the truths I have learned from Your devotees and Your scripture. And I have faith that by Your mercy these truths will appear most logical.”

Then Baladeva began to write.

Pausing scarcely to rest, he wrote and prayed and wrote again. Days passed and nights, but he did not stop. Some

historians say he wrote for one month. Others say it took him only seven days. In any event, Baladeva soon returned from Govindapura. By now, keen expectancy had been aroused in all the various parties.

Jai Singh, hoping to see the Gaudiyas vindicated, was especially eager to see the commentary. The Ramanandis, however, awaited the commentary with some trepidation, hoping they could defeat it readily. Baladeva entered the court of debate convened in Galta. He stood on one side with the Gaudiya mahantas.

Facing them were the Ramanandi panditas. King Jai Singh presided, and an audience of nobles and scholars was in attendance.

With the king's permission, Baladeva rose. "This commentary," he said, putting forward his work, "is based on Madhva's, but there are some important differences. If you examine it, you will find that it upholds the Gaudiya philosophy taught by Lord Caitanya." A Ramanandi pandita stepped forward and received Baladeva's commentary. "Who is the author of this work?" He asked.

Baladeva replied, "The name of the commentary is Govinda-bhasya. Govinda has inspired this work. I have given the direct meanings of the sutras according to the wish of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. And my comments are based on the teachings of my gurus." The learned members of the Ramanandi contingent examined the first portion of the bhasya to determine whether it was as Baladeva had claimed.

A spokesman conceded, "The influence of Madhva is certainly demonstrable in this commentary, but we should examine some of the differences." Baladeva then addressed each of the Ramanandis' objections to Gaudiya worship. "I have expounded on every aspect of Gaudiya practice in chapter three," he said. "Since your criticisms concern our style of worship, you should turn to chapter three to see how Vyasa, the author of Vedanta-sutra, has provided for our worship.

"You object to our worship of Radha with Govinda on the superficial grounds that They are not married. In verses forty through forty-two I have presented the true position of Radha in relation to Krsna. Radha is the eternal energy of the Krsna and is never separated from Him. Their relationship may be parakiya or svakiya, but that does not affect the eternality of Their union.

The separation of Radha and Govinda you have effected is artificial and therefore offensive to the Lord, who holds deep affection for His female energy. "You have criticized our predilection for worshiping only Krsna, neglecting the worship of Narayana, Visnu, which you say is mandatory for all Vaisnavas.

I have addressed that point in my comments to verse forty-three. According to the Vedanta-sutra, Narayana may be worshiped in any of His forms, including Krsna. No scriptural injunction prohibits the worship of Govinda exclusive of Narayana." Baladeva continued speaking while the Ramanandis stood defenceless. He spoke eloquently and exhaustively.

A rebuttal from the Ramanandis never developed. At the end of Baladeva's presentation, King Jai Singh waited, weighing the evidence. The Ramanandis' silence confirmed his own opinion. He delivered his decision in a brief but conclusive statement. "The evidence supporting the Gaudiya legitimacy is unassailable. Hereafter, the Gaudiyas shall be recognized and respected as an authorized religious sect. I order the reunion of Radha with Govinda."

The Gaudiya mahantas in Amber, free at last from condemnation by the Ramanandis, celebrated by building a temple of victory on the hill overlooking the Galta Valley. The temple Deity was appropriately named Vijaya Gopala, "Victorious Gopala."

At The Feet of Govinda

Baladeva returned to Vrndavana, where he assumed leadership of the Gaudiya community. He continued to write. Faithful to Jiva Gosvami and devoted to Lord Caitanya, he produced commentaries on ten principle Upanisads and nine works of the Vrndavana Gosvamis. He also wrote original works on grammar, drama, prosody, and poetics. He remained the unquestioned authority on Vaisnava theology until his death. (The date of Baladeva's demise is unknown. **His last known written work, Stavamala, was dated 1764.)**

With Baladeva's victory over the Ramanandis, Jai Singh was satisfied. He had found the synthesis of Vaisnava religions. And Radha had been reunited with Govinda on the altar, as She is in eternity. Jai Singh dedicated himself to Govinda and passed a long, and productive life as a king and scholar.

In 1714 Jai Singh moved Govinda to the Jai Nivasa Gardens and installed Him in a garden house, where He was worshiped for twenty-one years. In 1735 the king built a temple for Govinda within the Jaipur palace compound. Jai Singh later installed Govinda as the king of Jaipur and accepted the position of minister for himself.

From that time his royal seal read, sri govindadeva carana savai jai singh sarana: "Lord Govinda, at whose lotus feet Jai Singh takes refuge.

A Rebuttal of the GBC's False Doctrine

By Narasimha dasa

A few years ago, while in Spain, I was handing out The Hare Krishna Society's booklet, *Srila Prabhupada Siddhanta (SPS)*, to a few senior devotees who are old friends of mine. This 64-page booklet points to the fact that in 1977, a few weeks before His disappearance, Srila Prabhupada ordained *ritvik* priests to initiate new devotees on His behalf. He did this specifically in response to the question: "How will initiations be conducted in the future, particularly at a time when you are no longer with us." In response to all such questions, He reaffirmed the same *ritvik* system of initiations that had been functioning in ISKCON for several years prior to 1977.

Recorded conversations cited in *SPS* show that Srila Prabhupada ordered senior devotees to conduct the formalities of initiation on His behalf, and He made an adjustment to allow this system to continue without His physical presence. Several conversations and letters cited in *SPS* illustrate how Srila Prabhupada reaffirmed the *ritvik* system for initiations in ISKCON repeatedly after issuing His official July 9th, 1977 directive, which He wanted sent to all ISKCON leaders and temples. He never mentioned or alluded to another system, such as one wherein the GBC would ordain *diksa-gurus* by electing immature preachers. The concocted GBC system for initiations, which ignores Srila Prabhupada's instructions and Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta* on *guru-tattva*, has produced scandal, confusion, chaos, divisions, and heartache for thousands of devotees, while degrading the reputation of ISKCON worldwide.

Although there was no valid reason to do so, the eleven GBC members who were originally entrusted by Srila Prabhupada to act as His *ritvik* priests conspired instead to reject His order and pose themselves as His chosen successor *acaryas*. In trying to defend their positions, they claimed that Srila Prabhupada was "posthumous," or dead, and was thus ineffective in the matter of initiating and guiding new disciples. They concluded that His official order for *ritvik* initiations should be rejected in favor of their own concocted system for sanctioning *diksa-gurus*. "*Srila Prabhupada Siddhanta*," however, does not dwell on the GBCs deviations but rather focuses on the positive truth. *SPS* is a collection of quotes from Prabhupada's books, conversations and letters that concisely explain the position of the bona fide spiritual master and glorifies the exalted status of Srila Prabhupada and great Vaisnavas in the Gaudiya *sampradaya*. This book points to evidence of Srila Prabhupada's unique position,

while briefly and succinctly explaining the essential *sadhana* and *siddhanta* of the Krishna consciousness movement.

When the local GBC man and guru candidate for Spain, Vedavyasa das, heard about my preaching and read *SPS*, a collaboration of several senior devotees, he wrote a paper titled "*A Rebuttal of Ritvik Philosophy*," which he began circulating in a lame attempt to counteract the information cited in *SPS*. Even the title of his brief paper is misleading. "*Ritvikism*", "*ritvik philosophy*", or "*ritvik-vada*" are concocted terms used derogatorily by misguided persons to insult faithful disciples who understand that Srila Prabhupada is still the bona fide initiating and instructing spiritual master for all ISKCON devotees. The GBC and its followers have deliberately tried to deride the Vedic concept of *ritvik* priests who, in the matter of conducting Vedic rituals, act on behalf of the liberated *Acarya*. They use the transcendental term "*ritvik*" as a profanity to label chaste devotees they condemn as deviants.

In truth, the term "*ritvik*" and the functions of *ritvik* priests are glorious. *Ritviks* are several times mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books and conversations. *Ritviks*, or *ritvijah*, are mentioned throughout the Vedas. For instance, in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* we find the story describing how *ritvik* priests were able to invoke the personal presence and blessings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead on behalf of Maharaja Nabhi. To deride the idea that *sadhaka* devotees should always act as representatives of the bona fide self-realized spiritual master, who is always an exalted *uttama-adhikari*, is offensive and foolish. "*Ritvikism*" is not a philosophy (*vada*), nor is it a deviant or concocted new idea. Rather it is an age-old standard method for conducting powerful Vedic rituals under the auspices of the spiritual master, even without his personal presence.

For many devotees it may be hard to appreciate Srila Prabhupada's final order on initiations without first trying to understand the fully transcendental position of the bona fide spiritual master, as well as Srila Prabhupada's unique position as *jagat-guru* and *sampradaya-acarya*. Anyone blessed at some time, even briefly, with an actual taste of Krishna consciousness and not poisoned by false ambition can easily understand that Srila Prabhupada is both the initiating and instructing spiritual master for all ISKCON devotees.

As usual for those under the spell of false ambition, the above-mentioned GBC man resorts to insulting the messengers, calling the compilers and authors of *SPS* academically “dishonest” and “offensive.” Apparently irritated by our constant glorification of Srila Prabhupada, he lashes out, trying to prove his accusations using straw man arguments. This is a typical GBC MO for dealing with anyone who challenges their concocted idea that the bona fide spiritual master need not be an *uttama-adhikari* and need not be specifically authorized for this service by Sri Guru and Sri Krishna.

Rajen Babu: Isn't the *kanistha-adhikari* qualified to give initiation into the mantra?

Srila Sarasvati Prabhupada: **Where is the *kanishtha-adhikari* coming from? Who gave him the *adhikara*? A *kanishtha-adhikari* can never become a guru.**

Rajen Babu: Can a *madhyama-adhikari* give *diksa*?

Srila Sarasvati Prabhupada: **He can only perform the initial duties of *diksa*. It is the *uttama-adhikari maha-bhagavata Vaisnava* who is actually the *diksa-guru*. There are two types of Vaisnavas – the *ragatmika* and the *raganuga*. Those who are from the eternal realm offer service to Sri Krsna directly. These *ragatmik*as serve Sri Varshabhanavi and Her direct expansions. Those who perform direct service to the *ragatmik*as and take shelter in them through the performance of *smarana* are *raganugas*. These are spiritual gurus.**
(From *Dainik Nadiya Prakasa*, Janmastami Edition, 1934)

This quote above succinctly explains why Srila Prabhupada's order for *ritvik* initiations in ISKCON is perfect. It helps sincere preachers gradually come to the status of *raganuga-bhakti* by strictly following *sadhana-bhakti* as representatives of Srila Prabhupada.

Vedavyasa das's so-called rebuttal of “Ritvik Philosophy” offers no explanation whatsoever as to why the GBC stubbornly refuses to accept Srila Prabhupada's order for *ritvik* initiations. It offers no explanation why this order was rejected by the GBC. It completely avoids the dozens of *sastric* quotes cited in *SPS* that confirm the following:

- (1) A bona fide *diksa-guru* or Vaisnava *acarya* is an *uttama-adhikari*.
- (2) A bona fide guru must be ordered by his guru to accept disciples.
- (3) Srila Prabhupada ordered his disciples to conduct the formalities of initiation on His behalf.
- (4) A bona fide spiritual master does not require

institutional sanction and discipline.

- (5) A liberated, perfect Vaisnava is not limited by material conditions and is above Vedic tradition.
- (6) Srila Prabhupada is available equally to everyone who follows His instructions.
- (7) Srila Prabhupada ordered that all spiritual practices remain unchanged in ISKCON.

Using classic straw man tactics, Vedavyasa das writes: “Therefore the *Ritvik Philosophy* can only hold water if there is evidence from *sastra*, guru and *sadhu* that there is indeed a fundamental difference between *siksa-* and *diksa-gurus*. As it turns out, proof for this cannot be found in Srila Prabhupada's books. Quite the opposite—we find quotes that expose this idea as a false conclusion, an *apasiddhanta*.”

Vedavyasa das offers two quotes confirming that liberated *siksa-gurus* and *diksu-gurus* are the of the same status. (SB. 4.12.32 and Cc. Adi. 1.47) Nowhere in *SPS*, however, do is it suggested that there is a “fundamental difference between *diksa-gurus* and *siksa-gurus*.” Nor does this have anything to do with the real issue at hand. The real questions that Vedavyasa das deliberately avoids are these:

- (1) Why did the GBC reject Srila Prabhupada's order for *ritvik* initiations?
- (2) Why does the GBC condemn thousands of devotees worldwide who believe only Srila Prabhupada can deliver them from the fire of material existence?
- (3) Why doesn't the GBC accept Srila Prabhupada's orders rather than facilitating ambitious persons who want to assume the post of spiritual master without mature realization or an order from Srila Prabhupada?

In *Caitanya-caritamrita*, Srila Prabhupada mentions that the *siksa-guru* who constantly gives one instruction (as Srila Prabhupada does for all true ISKCON devotees) usually becomes one's *diksa-guru*. Vedavyasa das, while attempting to defeat Srila Prabhupada's order for *ritvik* initiations, exposes his misconceptions. He apparently believes that any upstart elected by misguided members of the GBC is of similar status to Srila Prabhupada and *siksa-gurus* like Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Sanatana Gosvami.

In fact, the eternal guru, the *sad-guru*, both *diksa-guru* and *siksa-guru*, are empowered self-realized souls who can deliver the whole world. They never need the sanction, discipline, or guidance of ecclesiastical bodies. This is the real meaning of the statements quoted by Vedavyasa das, which prove that the liberated *diksa-guru* and *siksa-guru* are to be treated equally. To use these statements to deride so-called “*Ritvik Philosophy*” is a weird misuse of scripture. We remain

confident in Srila Prabhupada's conclusive statements cited in *Srila Prabhupada Siddhanta*. SPS, in fact, relies entirely on direct quotes from Srila Prabhupada and His books, without speculation or interpretation.

In defiance of Srila Prabhupada's statements and instructions, Vedavyasa das rejects the idea that a Vaisnava *acarya* must always be a perfect, self-realized devotee, or *uttama-adhikari*. The idea that a bona fide Gaudiya Vaisnava *acarya* need not be a perfect devotee--one directly appointed by Sri Guru and Sri Krishna--is the primary, offensive deviation promoted by the vitiated GBC of iskcon. They challenge the idea that all bona fide *diksa-gurus* in our Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya* are infallible *uttama-adhikaris*, and they reject an official written order from Srila Prabhupada by citing letters to sentimental, wayward disciples who had already left ISKCON and were "initiating" their own "disciples" without authorization. In these rare letters to renegade disciples who were determined upstarts, Srila Prabhupada acknowledged the idea that any one of His disciples could one day become a type of guru by following strictly and preaching purely, without selfish motives.

"When one has attained the topmost position of maha-bhagavata, He is to be accepted as guru and worshiped exactly like Hari, the Personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of guru." (*Chaitanya-charitamrita*, Madhya 24.330, Purport, citing *Padma Purana*.)

Srila Prabhupada's books clearly state the exalted qualities necessary for a bona fide spiritual master and the necessity of a direct order from Guru and Krishna to do this service. A bona fide spiritual master is always humble, selfless, and full with transcendental knowledge. But impatient GBC upstarts cannot wait for their own purification or an order from Srila Prabhupada. They covet the highest position in the universe right now, without authorization or self-realization.

Vedavyasa das says, *"The whole ritvik philosophy hinges on this idea: the position of the diksa-guru is so elevated that only a nitya-siddha maha-bhagavata uttama-adhikari like Srila Prabhupada qualifies to occupy it."*

Here above Vedavyasa das exposes his offensive belief that not all Gaudiya Vaisnava gurus are *uttama-bhaktas*. This is a dangerous idea introduced by GBC pundits, such as Ravindra Swarupa das, to facilitate the false ambitions of guru-wannabees. "Ritvikism" is not a philosophy and certainly not a concocted idea to be hated or argued against. It is a well-documented fact that all bona fide spiritual masters in the *sampradaya* of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are *nyta-siddhas*, or liberated souls of the highest order.

Ritvik initiations were a common practice in ISKCON for several years prior to 1977, and the system was ordered by Srila Prabhupada repeatedly in the latter part of 1977, after He officially established it by a written directive. In fact, *ritvik* priests are mentioned throughout the *sastra* and in several places in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. In SPS, many quotes are presented that prove the bona fide spiritual master must be an *uttama-adhikari* and must furthermore be authorized by his predecessor guru. One who can impart transcendental knowledge to many fallen conditioned souls must certainly be an *uttama-adhikari* empowered to act as the bona fide spiritual master. Such empowerment and authorization can only be offered by Sri Guru and Sri Krishna.

Ironically, while falsely accusing SPS and *ritviks* of promoting the idea that there is "a fundamental difference between *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru*," he apparently does the same thing. He faults the compilers of SPS of neglecting to mention the concept of *siksa-guru*, yet throughout Srila Prabhupada's books he repeatedly speaks of the bona fide spiritual master without referring specifically to the *siksa-guru* or *diksa-guru*, who are one and the same in principle and, for the most part, in person.

Vedavyasa states, *"We should note that the SPS booklet does not mention the position and role of the siksa-guru at all."* He conveniently missed the following quote in SPS on page 23:

"I am the initiator guru, and you should be the instructor guru by teaching what I am teaching and doing what I am doing. This is not a title, but you should actually come to this platform. This I want."
(Letter, August 4, 1975)

Srila Prabhupada has several times confirmed that he wanted his disciples to become gurus by acting as His representatives and becoming pure devotees rather than by adopting titles and positions without authorization. He wanted his disciples to become qualified *siksa-gurus* through strict following, yet he never ordered anyone to assume special exalted titles or posts of *diksa-gurus* in His ISKCON mission. The obvious point that devotees like Vedavyasa das miss is that one needs an order from Srila Prabhupada to accept the title and position of spiritual master—either *diksa-guru* or *siksa-guru*. Srila Prabhupada confirmed that his pure disciples may one day act in the capacity of a representative guru, but he never suggested an ecclesiastical system for nominating *diksa-gurus*.

At the end of his essay Vedavyasa das offers several quotes indicating that Srila Prabhupada wanted his bona fide disciples to become gurus and continue His mission. Unfortunately, he doesn't include references, so I can't easily

confirm whether these quotes are accurate. He condemns us for not including any of these quotes in *SPS*, yet none of these quotes mention an authorization for his disciples to begin initiating their own disciples in ISKCON. These quotes simply refer to a general principle: the guru's bona fide disciples may one day act as gurus. None of his cited quotes suggest an immature preacher may become a *diksa-guru* by self-appointment or ecclesiastical sanction.

Vedavyasa das admits that his cited quotes refer only to gurus and spiritual masters--not specifically to *diksa-gurus*--and he offers his own interpretation as to why this is so. He writes, "*We should note that in all these quotes Prabhupada never makes a distinction between siksa- and diksa-guru. He speaks simply of 'guru' and 'spiritual master'.*" Vedavyasa das then concludes his piece with his own wild speculation as to why this is so, stating, "*This is because there is no fundamental difference [between siksa- and diksa-guru], it is simply a difference of function and dealing. With this truth revealed, the ritvik philosophy loses its foundation and collapses. RIP.*"

There is no way to guess why Vedavyasa das thinks the so-called "*ritvik philosophy*" is founded on the idea that there is a fundamental difference between the *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru*. I have never heard any senior devotee in the so-called *ritvik* camp suggest this at any time. Quite the opposite, they all say Srila Prabhupada is both the eternal *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru* for all ISKCON devotees.

People like Vedavyasa have apparently failed to understand there is no fundamental difference between pure Vaisnavas, whether they act as *diksa-guru* or not. They fail to realize that one must first become a pure disciple before becoming a guru of any kind. They have not understood that becoming a bona fide disciple or bona fide guru is no cheap thing. The emphasis throughout Srila Prabhupada's books is to encourage devotees to become pure disciples by carefully understanding the path of *sadhana-bhakti*. There is no emphasis on becoming *diksa-gurus*.

In fact, Srila Prabhupada has clearly advised, "**It is better not to accept any disciples.**" Srila Prabhupada obviously wanted His disciples to become pure devotees and act on His behalf in whatever capacity He ordained or ordered. Such pure disciples are automatically bona fide gurus---though not necessarily initiating gurus who accept their own disciples and regular worship.

Srila Prabhupada never ordered anyone to initiate his own disciples in ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada created many titles and positions for His disciples in ISKCON, but He never ordained anyone to be *diksa-guru*. Nor did He authorize the GBC to sanction, nominate, appoint, or dismiss *diksa-gurus*

in ISKCON. These facts are indisputable for honest devotees. He did, however, clearly describe the function and position of "*representatives of the Acarya*", otherwise known as *ritviks*. And he authorized the GBC to nominate or dismiss such representatives.

Unfortunately, ambitious upstarts are not satisfied with being *ritviks*, or representatives of the *Acarya*. Instead, they aspire, without authorization or mature realization, to become *diksa-gurus* with their own disciples in Srila Prabhupada's mission. Such false ambitions have created havoc in ISKCON throughout the world. Yet these hard-hearted, stubborn upstarts refuse to admit it.

The GBC has done a great disservice in promoting false *siddhanta* and false ambition. They have tried to minimize Srila Prabhupada's position in Iskcon and minimize the exalted qualities and status of Gaudiya Vaisnava spiritual masters. They preach false *siddhanta* to justify their determination to artificially rise to the post of spiritual master. They have ignored Srila Prabhupada's specific orders in this regard and have thus created division in His mission and great harm to His disciples and aspiring disciples while facilitating scandal, chaos, and confusion in Srila Prabhupada's mission and society. Worst of all, they have suggested that Vaisnava *acaryas* are ordinary men who make mistakes and sometimes become degraded.

In this way they have tried to justify their decision to post impure preachers as *diksa-gurus* in Iskcon--preachers who have often fallen into grossly sinful behavior and left the mission, after exploiting it for sense gratification. The GBC callously disavows any responsibility for the misery and doubts they have created for thousands of innocent devotees. They claim that even great devotees fall, and they say that if a devotee has accepted a guru who later becomes a fallen rascal, it is simply due to his or her bad karma. It can thus be concluded that leading members of the GBC have lost their intelligence, having become deluded by the spell of *maya*. All such illusion arises due to false ambition, the original sin of all conditioned souls and the last snare of *maya*.

In truth, the GBC's philosophy on *guru-tattva* has no foundation at all. It floats, for the time being, on the slime of ignorance in the quicksand of Kali Yuga. It will not last. It will rapidly sink into oblivion by the grace of Lord Chaitanya and Srila Prabhupada. Although men like Vedavyasa das and his cohorts in the GBC despise *ritviks* and wish they would all go away and die, this will never happen. Srila Prabhupada, His orders, and His bona fide disciples will live forever by His Divine Grace and the mercy of Lord Chaitanya.

Om Tat Sat.

Shushruma Dhiranam: The Key to Transcendental Knowledge

By Narasimha dasa

“It is said that one result is achieved by worshiping the Supreme Cause of all causes, and that another is obtained by worshiping what is not supreme. All this was heard from the undisturbed authorities who clearly explained it.” (*Sri Isopanisad*, Mantra Thirteen) In his purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada explains, **“Unless one hears from the bona fide *acarya*, who is never disturbed by the changes of the material world, one cannot have the real key to transcendental knowledge.”** *Iti susruma dhiranam, ye nas tad vicacaksire.*

Devotees who have traveled and preached in India can easily understand what Srila Prabhupada identified as the main problem with modern India: **“In modern times the numbers of such pretenders has increased in considerable numbers, and it has become a problem for the pure devotees of the Lord to save the mass of people from the unholy propaganda of these pretenders and imitation incarnations of God.”** (*Sri Isopanisad*, Mantra 13, Purport) Although people in India have natural devotion to the Supreme Lord and His great devotees, such as Lakshmi, Hanuman and Garuda, most are confused or ignorant about the conclusions of the scriptures and thus sometimes get misled into **“worshiping what is not supreme.”** This is because they hear from bogus preachers rather than the pure devotees of the Lord. For this defect, they are unable to distinguish between matter and spirit.

“Presently people are so fallen that they cannot distinguish between a conditioned soul and a liberated soul.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4.18.5, Purport)

“If one tries to mingle the worship of *yogamaya* and *mahamaya*, considering them one and the same, he does not really show very high intelligence.” (*Caitanya-Caritamṛta*, Madhya 8.90, Purport)

Monkey Worshipers and Hanuman Offenders

I am presently residing at Sri Kishkindhya Kshetra, the birthplace of the pure devotee avatar Sri Hanumanji. In a few days from now, a half million people will converge on the nearby tiny village of Hampi for Hanuman Jayanti. Many of the pilgrims, local tour guides and residents here refer to Hanuman’s divine birthplace as “The Monkey Temple.” In fact, all over India, Hanuman is referred to as “the monkey god.” At the same time, here, and at other places in South India, monkeys are worshiped as Hanuman. People feed them all kinds of sweets and junk food. This causes them to become deranged and destructive; they constantly create havoc in the temples and villages. At remote small farms they often destroy entire crops of coconuts and bananas for sport. Nonetheless, they are not only tolerated but freely fed and adored by foolish, misguided persons who consider them expansions of Hanuman. (According to modern Indian law it is illegal for a farmer to kill a single monkey to protect his livelihood, yet it is perfectly legal for big businessmen to export millions of cows for slaughter.)

The other day, while I was walking into the Virupaksha temple (at Hampi) with a bunch of ripe bananas to offer to Lord Shiva, I was attacked by three large languor monkeys, commonly known as “Hanuman monkeys.” Fortunately, I had my umbrella and was able to fight them off. Seeing the fray, some pilgrims protested, shouting, “No, no, give them the bananas. They are Hanuman!” I exclaimed, “Monkeys are animals! Hanuman is a *devata*!”

Actually, Hanuman is much more than an ordinary *devata*; he is a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is offensive to consider Hanuman a monkey or to consider monkeys to be Sri Hunuman-ji. Similarly, it’s offensive to worship a demigod as God or to consider the Supreme Lord a demigod. Such worshipers are condemned in the

Bhagavad-gita and in *Sri Isopanisad*. “Those who are engaged in the worship of demigods enter into the darkest regions of ignorance, and still more so do the worshipers of the Absolute.” (Sri Isopanisad, Mantra 12) Persons who consider the bona fide spiritual master an ordinary man and persons who worship a pretentious upstart as the spiritual master are on the same dangerous path. All such foolish mistakes are avoided by understanding the difference between matter and spirit. Proper discrimination is achieved by hearing from “**the undisturbed authorities who clearly explained it.**” *Iti susruma dhiranam, ye nas tad vicacaksire.*

Vaikuntha Avatars

Queen Kunti Devi prayed to Lord Krishna, expressing her feelings that His pastimes as a human being were sometimes bewildering. Although she was fully aware that Krishna was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, she expressed wonderment at how He seemed to act exactly like an ordinary human being in many ways. For instance, He seemed to take birth from the womb of Devaki. He would offer Kunti Devi and other so-called superiors His humble obeisance. He once cried in lamentation when the mystic demon Shalva presented an illusion before Him wherein Shalva appeared to be beheading Krishna’s father, Vasudeva. As a child, He cried when Mother Yasoda chased Him with a whipping switch. Srila Prabhupada comments in this regard that when Lord Krishna plays a role, He does it perfectly. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu played this “human” role more completely than any other avatar of God by strictly following the rules and regulations of *varnashrama-dharma*. Similarly, the eternally liberated spiritual master plays the role of an ordinary human being for the benefit of all living entities, to show everyone how to become a pure devotee. And he does it perfectly.

“**A *nitya-siddha* devotee comes from Vaikuntha upon the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and shows by his personal example how to become a pure devotee. (*anyabhilasita-sunyam...*) A pure devotee, therefore, is a practical example for all living entities, including Lord Brahma.**” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.10.3, Purport)

“The Personality of Godhead, from His Kingdom,

sends His bona fide servants to propagate this mission of going back to Godhead, and sometimes He comes Himself to do this work.” (Sri Isopanisad, Mantra 11, Purport)

“Whenever and wherever, there is decline in religious practice, O descendent of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion – at that time I descend Myself.” (Bhagavad-gita As It Is 4.7)

In the case of some pure devotees, there is another reason they descend: to show *sadhakas* the pitfalls on the devotional path, as did the great devotee Bharata Maharaja, who became a deer in his next life due to becoming attached to a pet. Sometimes a liberated devotee acts as if he were bewildered or perplexed. In truth, he allows himself to come under the spell not of *mahamaya*, or material illusion, but Krishna’s *yoga-maya*. Srila Prabhupada mentions that when a pure devotee speaks as if he were fallen or unqualified, he is not making a show; rather, he truly feels this way due to deep humility, which is inspired by the Lord’s internal spiritual potency. Usually when a great devotee appears to be in illusion or ignorant, it is for the sake of enacting a pastime of the Supreme Lord. For instance, Arjuna was apparently bewildered on the battlefield of Kurukshetra before the fight, and this gave rise to the great *lila* of Krishna speaking the *Bhagavad-gita*. Those who have heard about the transcendental character of Arjuna from **undisturbed authorities**, know there could be no material reason why Arjuna would hesitate to do his duty, especially with Krishna by his side, driving his chariot.

“Pilgrims to Hell”

Srila Prabhupada points out that there is another reason that Krishna sometimes acts like an ordinary human being. It is to bewilder the envious atheists --to give them full opportunity to deny God and go to hell. “**If a living being wants to go to hell, the Lord allows him to do so without interference, and if he wants to go back home, back to Godhead, the Lord also helps him to do that.**” (Sri Isopanisad, Mantra Eight, Purport) The mission of the Pure Devotee is the same as that of Lord Krishna. Although he is said to be more merciful than Krishna Himself, his mission is fundamentally the same.

Duplicious, mischievous persons sometimes deride

the authorized *acharya*. *The memoirs and writings of such polluted conditioned souls should be avoided by those serious about advancing in Krishna consciousness.* To a grossly conditioned soul, Srila Prabhupada might have sometimes appeared temperamental, angry, capable of making mistakes, or ignorant of certain facts, but thoughtful disciples are not misled by external appearances. *Maya* can create any illusion before a conditioned soul. These are tests. Only those who are knowledgeable and willing to surrender can understand Sri Guru and Sri Krishna in truth. Otherwise, if one has some other agenda in the Krishna consciousness movement, he will likely make fatal miscalculations regarding Srila Prabhupada, his disciples, or Lord Krishna Himself.

“If the spiritual master is considered an ordinary man, the disciple surely loses his chance to advance further.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 5.12.14, Purport)

“Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord of all that be.” (*Bhagavad-gita* As It Is 9.11)

Why would the self-effulgent pure devotee hide his true glory from his own disciples? He would not. The *sastras*, however, are full of stories of disciples being tested by the guru, or by *maya*'s agents. But a sincere student passes the tests. Duplicious pretenders fail. They get weeded out. Despite their opportunity to associate with Srila Prabhupada and witness his extraordinary devotional mood and unique transcendental qualities, some of his original disciples have fallen from the path due to their **“envy of the exalted status of the spiritual master.”** Under the tight grip of illusion, they began thinking, *“My guru is a regular guy. Let me exploit him and his mission for my own sense gratification.”* Such mundane students are quickly ruined. **“One should consider the spiritual master to be as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In spite of all of these instructions, if one considers the spiritual master an ordinary human being, he is doomed.”** Some so-called disciples deliberately conspired to minimize Srila Prabhupada and remove him as the spiritual master of the Hare Krishna movement. Their motive? They coveted his post. Srila Prabhupada prophetically warned of this:

“As soon as a foolish disciple tries to overtake his spiritual master and becomes ambitious to occupy his post, he immediately falls down.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 5.12.14, Purport)

Many modernly educated Indians have concluded that Krishna's pastimes on Earth were a myth. Such people have all been indoctrinated by Western traditions of atheism and speculation. **“Such faithless persons are described in *Bhagavad-gita* as *mudhas*, foolish as the ass. It is said that the *mudhas* deride the Supreme Personality of Godhead because they don't have complete knowledge from the undisturbed *acaryas*. One who is disturbed by the whirlpool movements of the material energy is not qualified to become an *acharya*.”** (Sri Isopanisad, Mantra 13, Purport)

Such shallow people are unable to appreciate that Lord Krishna has been worshiped as the Supreme Personality of Godhead for thousands of years by the most intelligent and highly qualified people who ever lived in this world. For example, Srila Vyasadeva, Sri Sukadeva Goswami, Sri Madhvacarya, Sri Alavandar, Srila Ramanujacarya, Bilvamangala Thakura, Emperor Kulashekara, King Prataparudra, Emperor Krishnadeva Raya, Ramananda Raya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Six Goswamis of Vrindaban, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and Srila Prabhupada have all accepted Krishna as the Supreme Absolute Truth, as have innumerable other great persons throughout history. Yet according to many deluded, modern-day Hindu leaders, the hundreds of millions of Krishna *bhaktas* throughout the past 5,000 years, and prior, were naïve fools.

In fact, the pseudo-humanitarian politicians and Godless Hindu scholars are the fools. They have tried to exploit Krishna's words and fame for mundane social and political causes while simultaneously claiming Krishna is a myth. Secular party politics and atheistic systems of education have done the worst violence to millions of innocent Indian people by indoctrinating them with a sectarian socio-political consciousness imported from the West. This type of indoctrination leads to disastrous, bloody conflicts or full-scale war. Godless social ideals of secularism and party politics aim to repress the natural, native-born Krishna consciousness of all Indian people.

Avajananti mam mudha, manusim tanum asrita.
(Bg. 9.11)

Another type of miscreant understands that Krishna was a genuine historical personality, yet they think He was an ordinary king who died by an accidental wound to the foot. This brand of ignorant person fails to consider that according to all historical accounts, Krishna easily defeated the greatest warriors and their powerful weapons and armies. Even as a child He easily killed the most powerful mystic demons. So how was it possible that He could be killed by a hunter's single small arrow in His foot? Bad luck? Yet this misleading story of a hunter shooting Krishna's lotus foot is there in *sastras*. Why? Srila Prabhupada explains that one reason is to give envious persons facility to go to hell. Krishna thus fulfills the desires of those who would rather be pilgrims to hell than pilgrims to Vaikuntha. **"If a living being wants to go to hell, the Lord allows him to do so without interference..."** *Na mam duskritino mudhah, prapadyante naradhamah.* (Bg. 7.15)

Dull-minded fools who never hear from proper authorities cannot understand why Krishna disappeared in an apparently ordinary way and seemed to leave a material body behind. Similarly, although Valmiki Rishi described in Ramayana how Ravana kidnapped Mother Sita, the liberated *acharyas* who know the conclusions of all the *sastras* know this incident was a pastime enacted under the Supreme Lord's internal spiritual potency. Lord Chaitanya Himself discovered the passages in the *Kurma Purana* that explain that Ravana kidnapped an illusory form of Mother Sita. This is fully explained in *Sri Caitanya-Caritamrita*. Ravana could never capture the all-spiritual Srimati Sita Devi, who is more powerful than Durga Devi and all demigods combined.

Srila Prabhupada's translations and purports give the final conclusions of all Vedic scriptures. In *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, he explains, **"Persons who are addicted to the impersonal feature of the Lord, whether in meditation or otherwise, are all pilgrims to hell, because as stated in *Bhagavad-gita* (12.15), impersonalists simply waste their time in mundane mental speculation because they are addicted more to false arguments than reality."** (SB. 3.9.4, Purport)

Such people who teach that Krishna's form is temporary or mundane, part of the illusory *maya-shakti*, will certainly go to hell. **"Impersonalists who consider the transcendental forms of the Lord to be products of the material world are surely destined for hell."** He warns that their association is most dangerous and condemned by Lord Brahma, because in truth the personal forms exhibited by the Supreme Lord are meant for blessing everyone in all the universes. **"Therefore, the association of impersonalists is condemned herewith by Lord Brahma."** Equally as toxic is the association of Western indoctrinated pseudo-*sadhus*, pseudo-Hindu politicians and professors, and Hindus, Christians and Muslims who teach that Krishna is a myth. It would be far better for those unwilling to accept the authority of the authorized *guru-parampara* to avoid speculating on the Absolute Truth and the Vedic scriptures. In this way, they could avoid causing great harm to themselves and those who hear from them.

So-called disciples and others who think Srila Prabhupada was an ordinary man are not intelligent. They have not carefully understood Srila Prabhupada's exalted character, unique qualities and predicted activities and symptoms. They have obviously neglected a careful study of his books. *Such people, and those who like to publish, distribute and read their polluted memoirs, will likely suffer serious reactions.* For them, there may be hell to pay. Perhaps Srila Prabhupada will save them, or perhaps not. Srila Prabhupada said one malicious ex-disciple would get another bona fide guru after ten million lifetimes. **"... gurusu naramatir... naraki sah: One who considers that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being... is considered a *naraki*, a candidate for hellish life."** (CC. Antya 6.294, Purport)

Materialistic devotees (*prakrita-bhaktas*) might argue, *"Srila Prabhupada himself said he was an ordinary man, and he presented himself in that way. Why would he mislead us?"* Srila Prabhupada answers, **"That is the teaching of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Guru more murkha dekhi. Caitanya Mahaprabhu is murkha? Why is it He's posing Himself as that murkha?—'I am fool number one.' That means that is liberation. You must always be ready to be chastised by the guru. Then one is liberated."**

(Conv. August 16, 1976, Bombay)

Liberated saints, such as Srila Sanatana Gosvami and Srila Raghunath Das Gosvami, although on the same level as Krishna Himself, often speak of themselves as being fallen and lowly. Such statements are due to their feelings of transcendental ecstasy and should never be taken literally. Liberated *acharyas* show the proper mood that should be cultivated in devotional service. Prakasananda Sarasvati, though an impersonalist at the time of his first meeting with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, was not a dull fellow or an offender. He never accepted that Lord Caitanya was a fool. In spite of the Lord's testing him with the statement: **"guru more murkha dekhi,"** Prakasananda Sarasvati understood that Lord Chaitanya was personally the self-effulgent source of the *brahma-jyoti*. Similarly, sincere disciples are not misled by Srila Prabhupada's examples of humility but rather appreciate his unique, transcendental character and symptoms, which are self-effulgent.

People who think Srila Prabhupada was ignorant or deficient in any way are, at best, foolish and dense. Those who imply that he speculated about the future or lacked full command of English or Sanskrit, or that he neglected to give important instructions, are certainly *narakis*, or candidates for hellish life. Their association may be more dangerous than diehard impersonalists, who Srila Prabhupada said are **"pilgrims to hell."**

As Good as Krishna Himself

Those who carefully read Srila Prabhupada's books and develop fundamental faith in the bona fide spiritual master learn that the supernatural

perfections of mystic yoga **"constitute very little of his godly opulence."** (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.5.6, Purport) The eight-fold mystic powers intensely sought by great *rishis* and demigods, which are rarely achieved by anyone in full, are an insignificant part of the power of a pure devotee --particularly one who acts as Lord Krishna's empowered representative (*saksad hari*). It is described in *sastras* that all the powers of the demigods and great *rishis*, as well as full liberation, which is high above all such powers, wait with folded hands as maidservants of the pure devotee, who generally neglects them.

"Since one cannot visually experience the presence of the Supersoul, He appears before us as a liberated devotee. Such a spiritual master is none other than Krishna Himself." (Caitanya-Caritamrta, Adi-lila 1.58)

"On the whole, the spiritual master is an agent of Krishna. Either he is assistant to the *gopis* or assistant to the cowherd boys. He is on the level of Krishna. That is the verdict of all scriptures." (Letter, Sept. 26, 1969)

"One should consider the spiritual master to be as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In spite of all of these instructions, if one considers the spiritual master an ordinary human being, he is doomed. His study of the *Vedas* and his austerities and penances for enlightenment are all useless, like the bathing of an elephant..." (SB. 7.15.26, Purport)

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For questions or feedback, contact our Managing Editor at yasoda1008@yahoo.com

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