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edited by
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1 Introduction to This Issue

[This is a revised version of the original. The gaps have been filled in with the essays and translations I originally intended to include but never got around to. The guest essay by Advaita Das has been much revised and the old essay removed. A link now ties that section to Advaita Das's corner of the Bhajan Kutir where his revised essay is now posted. That essay continues to grow and change and updates will be posted to that page as he makes them available. Also I finally got around to including the Kṛṣṇāhnikā-kaumudī (Moonlight on the Daily Sports of Kṛṣṇa) of Kavi Karṇapūra and the complete essay of Dr. Radhagovinda Nath on the question of sannyāsa in Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism. I also replaced the projected essay on Levinas with one that I wrote and delivered at a conference on the first verse of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. I still hope to think and write on Levinas from a Caitanyite perspective. When that finally happens I will include it here. Until then this issue of Nitai-zine is substantially done at long, long last.]

Here it is at last. I apologize for the long delay in producing this issue. My only excuse is that it is huge. When every thing is complete, it will amount to over a hundred pages of printed text. Part of the reason for that is the large Letters section. I have gotten a number of interesting letters since the last issue and with the permission of the writers of those letter, I have published them along with my responses. A number of interesting questions were raised in these letters and I hope that you will enjoy reading them.

Secondly, I have a special treat in this issue. An old friend and devoted Vaiṣṇava, Advaita Das, has sent me an excellent essay he wrote on the institution of *guru-paramparā* in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. It is a long essay with numerous scriptural quotes. Our guest author first tackles the question of why initiation is necessary, quoting from a number of scriptural sources. Secondly, he argues in a number of different ways that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was not initiated into the Gauḍīya tradition and, finally, she discusses the topic of eligibility for *rāgānugā-bhakti*. As an appendix the article contains a list of known disciples of the genuine Vaiṣṇava lineages. There are nearly a hundred listed and there are sure to be many more missing from the list. Since the article is quite long, it is not quite ready yet. I have more in the way of formatting and editing to do before I post it. It should be done in a couple of days, however.

Of the other articles, only the essay “Escape from the Hall of Mirrors and “Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī” are complete at present. “Escape from the Hall of Mirrors” is

the name of my reminiscences on that crucial period in my own life when I made the transition from the narrow, almost agora-phobic world of ISKCON to the open spaces of the wide world of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. I refer to ISKCON as the Hall of Mirrors because of the self-aggrandizing, self-enamored qualities encouraged by ISKCON. Closed to the outside world, those within the Hall of Mirrors know nothing of what lies beyond and care even less, quite happy to lavish all their attention on themselves. In addition, the mirrors reflecting other mirrors give the impression of being surrounded by infinity, but it is just an illusion. The Hall of Mirrors is a metaphor for that fertile environment for the cultivation of the megalomaniacal egos of so many budding *jagad-gurus* who believe theirs is “the way, the truth, and the life.” No one gets to Kṛṣṇa, but through them. There is perhaps no more shameless display of egocentrism than the claim: “I am the most fallen,” shameless, because it camouflages itself in the dress of humility. It is the mantra of the Hall of Mirrors.

“Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī” is the first in a series of articles that is intended to explore the rich world of vernacular songs. Beginning from the 15th century, some of the finest songs of the Vaiṣṇava tradition will be translated and their authors introduced. Gradually, the beautiful landscape of Vaiṣṇava vernacular poetry will begin to take shape. The Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī is surely one of the great treasures of Vaiṣṇava experience and teaching. It was indeed the main vehicle of the spread of the movement of Śrī Caitanya.

The rest of the articles are in process and will be appearing over the next few days.

This is the best *Nitai-zine* ever and I hope that it continues to grow and continues to raise challenging and important questions about the tradition founded by Śrī Caitanya. Please write me and let me know what you think of it.

Rādhe Rādhe!

Nitai Das

2 Escape from the Hall of Mirrors: Part One

In the last issue, I said I would describe my departure from ISKCON and some of my experiences both before and after leaving. The beginning of the end occurred when Dr. Kapoor dropped his bombshell on me, informing me that Bhaktisiddhanta was not properly initiated. When, after several days, the shock finally subsided somewhat, I began to consider my options. I had by then left Prabhupad's traveling entourage where I had for almost three years been the Sanskrit editor, and had settled in Vrindaban. In addition, I was then serving as the head *pujari* for the Krishna-Balarama Mandir. Krishna and Balarama are particularly beautiful images and it was a great pleasure to serve them. I got to live in a nice room in the new guest house, eat good prasada, teach some of the evening classes, attempt to educate the Gurukula kids in Sanskrit, and take my two-hour turns in the twenty-four hour *kirtan*.

I was a respected, senior member of the community. Living in Vrindaban was great for someone with even a little facility with the languages. In the afternoons, when the rest of the bhaktas were coming out of their siestas, I would occasionally sneak out and attend a class on the *Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*, the Sanskrit grammar composed entirely of the names of Kṛṣṇa written by Śrī Jiva Goswami, at Haridas Shastri's ashrama not far from the temple. Haridas Shastri was a wonderfully learned Vaiṣṇava with nine *tirthas* after his name, each *tīrtha* representing an above average expertise in an area of Sanskrit philosophy and literature. A Bengali educated in the traditional system (the Pāṭhśālā or Ṭol system) in Benares, he apparently had assisted Kṛṣṇadās Bābā of Kusumasarovara in his efforts to edit and publish all of the major works of the Gaudiya tradition. He had also been a śikṣā disciple of the great Vaiṣṇava scholar and saint, Pandit Ramkrishna Das Bābā. At the time that I began attending his classes he was engaged in reprinting all of the works previously published by Kṛṣṇadās Bābā and some others besides. In the afternoon, he offered free classes on any of the Goswami works to anyone who showed up. There were usually a half a dozen men young and old, probably from various surrounding ashramas, there to study with him. Unfortunately, my Hindi and Bengali were not at that time strong enough for me to make much of his detailed explanations of the text, so I was an infrequent student.

Occasionally I succeeded in sneaking out in the evenings, usually when someone boring like the then temple president, Akṣayānanda Mahārāja, or some other foolish visiting *sannyasi* gave the evening lecture. Instead I went to hear the enthralling Nrsimha Vallabha Goswami read and elaborate one of Viśvanātha

Cakravartin's short poems. His lectures were then being given in the Rādhādāmodara Temple. There I sat among the white-clad little old ladies and men listening as the great Goswami teased out the *rasa* of every line, sometimes of every word, of Viśvanātha's beautiful *Prema-samputa*. His language, though Bengali, was so Sanskritic that even I could follow it. What a master! I will never forget how on one particular evening, in a particularly emotionally charged part of the text, I heard a loud honk and a thud a couple of rows behind me. A *bhakta* had keeled over in a faint and one of the neighboring ladies was fanning him. Goswami looked up, paused for a bit to be sure that the man was alright or at least being cared for, and then continued reading. Such eruptions of *bhāva* were not uncommon at the readings in Vrindaban and they happened fairly frequently in Nrisimha Vallabha's readings. All in all things were pretty good. The place was brimming with interesting people and it was Vrindaban.

Still, I could not get past the disappointment. I felt like I had been scammed. It was as if I had been sold something very valuable and suddenly it turned out to be a fake. All those years we had been told, and in turn told others, that ISKCON was the only real descendent of the religious movement of Śri Caitanya, and that turned out to be a lie. I had given up everything and devoted myself to following and serving Prabhupad in whatever way I was able. My family had cut itself off from me and I from it; my father had even pronounced me dead; and for what? I really felt cheated and angry. I decided that I had come too far to give up then, and besides, although living in Vrindaban was wonderful, there were some irritants that came along with living in the ISKCON complex. I had developed a desire to chant 64 rounds of Hari-nāma and it was hard to find time to do that in the temple context, especially in a culture that did not value such practices. I was constantly subjected to suspicion because of that and because of my excursions into the town in the evening to hear readings. Eventually, I was told that I was no longer allowed to visit the town in the evenings. Worse, however, was the sense of spinning my wheels that I felt at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple. I had the feeling that none of us were making any advancement. There was something corrupt and corrupting in the atmosphere and I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was. I could tell a couple of stories that would illustrate this corruption, but that would carry us too far afield. Suffice it to say that I felt a dis-ease while staying there.

The next time I visited Dr. Kapoor I expressed a desire to get properly initiated. I may have even asked him if he would initiate me. He had already told of his emotional meeting with Gaurāṅga Das Bābā. He politely declined and recommended instead, and in extraordinary terms, a bābā who lived way out in the bush,

He said this bābā was a *siddha-mahapurūṣa*, a great one who had realized *Kṛṣṇa-preman*, one of only a few alive in the holy abode at that time. Dr. Kapoor said that this bābā was known by different names, Maunibābā because he observed periodic vows of silence, Bāṅgālī Bābā because he was a Bengali, Tinkudi Bābā from his nickname as a child, but that his initiation name was Kiśori-kiśorānanda Bābā. He also told me that this bābā was quite unusual because, although he came from a highly respected family of caste Gowsamis tracing back to Nityananda Prabhu, he had left family life behind and had adopted a life of deprivation and solitary worship. He warned me that getting initiation from him would be difficult, because he led an extremely austere life, living out in the wildest parts of the Vraja-maṇḍala where few people dared to go. Dr. Kapoor spoke of others, too, who occupied very high places in the climb towards *Kṛṣṇa-rati*. He mentioned, in particular, Kṛṣṇacaraṇa Das Bābā, who eventually became the guru of my friend and colleague, Jagannath Das.

The name "Tinkudi Bābā" operated like a powerful mantra in my mind. It kept returning to me again and again. I had no idea where he was and how I would ever meet him, though. My only choice was to wait. I don't recall how I met them, but I had become friends with a couple of Vrajavāsīs, a young man name Parimal Bishwas and his grandmother Vinaparni. They had settled in Vrindaban and lived in a small rented house near the Ranganath temple. Occasionally, I visited them and joined them for dinner. Vinaparni was an excellent cook and I knew them both to be Vaiṣṇavas. It was perhaps only a couple of days after first hearing the name of Tinkudi Bābā from Dr. Kapoor that I asked Parimal about this Bābā. He looked up with surprise on his face and blurted out: "He is my guru! How did you hear about him?" I told him about my conversations with Dr. Kapoor and repeated the good doctor's praise for the bābā. I also asked him what he knew about the initiation of Bhaktisiddhanta. Parimal was the first of those I talked with about it to confirm it. He had learned of it from his grandmother, who it turned out had formerly been a disciple of the Gaudiya Math, and who was among those who left somewhat after the time of Puridas. When I asked her later, she, too, confirmed Dr. Kapoor's statement. She had been closely connected with Haridas Sarma who had acted as Puridas's secretary towards the end of his life. Haridas Sarma had helped Puridas publish the later volumes of the wonderful set of editions of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava texts that Puridas is famous for. Haridas's name is given as the publisher of the Puridas editions beginning sometime in the 1950s.

I asked Parimal if he would help me meet the bābā. He responded with an enthusiastic affirmative and a few days later came to tell me that Bābā was in

Cakleswar on the bank of the Manasarovar near Govardhan. He was there to celebrate the ceremony of the feeding of the sixty-four saints (*cau-sasti mahant seva*) to honor a great Vaiṣṇava who had just passed away. Parimal agreed to take me there and introduce me. A few days later I was on a bus to Mathura and from Mathura out to Cakleswar with Parimal by my side.

When I first met Bābā, tears did not begin flowing from my eyes like Dr. Kapoor's did when he and his wife met their guru, Gaurāṅga Dās Bābā. I didn't feel like I had met an old friend again after a very long time. Instead, I was a bit surprised at Bābā's appearance. It was only slowly, after watching him move about giving directions to his disciples and others on how to celebrate the entrance of a fellow devotee of Kṛṣṇa into eternal sport that I began to get a sense of who he was. I first noticed the way he dressed. He wore only a *kaupin* or loincloth over his genitals and a cloth over his shoulders and his hair was long, stringy, and uncombed, hanging down to his shoulders. Around his neck were some of the largest tulsi beads I had ever seen and on his forehead was the *tilak* (sectarian mark) typical of Nityānanda-paribār (associates of Nityānanda), made not out of the white, powdery *gopi-candana* that was typical of ISKCON and Gaudiya Math, but out of the dark, thick, greyish mud which, as I later found out, came from Rādhākuṇḍa. Except for the *tilak*, he looked more like a Śākta than a Vaiṣṇava. I suddenly realized that I had seen his picture a year or two before in a tiny stall in one of the markets of Navadwip where I had gone to buy a copy of the classic book on the Holy Name (*Śri Śri Nāma-cintāmaṇi* by Kānupriya Goswami. The stall owner, after bringing out the book, brought out a picture of Tinkudi Bābā thinking I would also want one of those. I took one look at the picture and thought to myself why does he think I want a picture of that mad tantric? I had no idea who I was looking at at that time.

As I watched him I began notice how genuinely jovial he was and how humble. He seemed thoroughly happy. He had next to nothing and yet he was happy. All of his clothes were made of burlap. Even his slippers were made of burlap. Apart from that he had nothing else but his beads. I couldn't imagine Prabhupad walking on such cloth with his bare feet even once, let alone wearing it constantly. What a difference there was between the really humble, simple lifestyle of this poor servant of Kṛṣṇa, who depended for everything on Kṛṣṇa, and that of Prabhupad, who lived like a king wearing silk and gold and complained if his food wasn't prepared just right. It was as if at some point Kṛṣṇa had offered these two devotees of his a choice. Prabhupad had chosen Kṛṣṇa's wealth, his army so to speak, and Bābā had chosen Kṛṣṇa himself. A whole new world of Vaiṣṇavism began to open

up before me in the presence of Tinkudi Bābā, a world strange and beautiful and, truth be told, also somewhat terrifying, especially to someone like me who had not fully surrendered to the will of Kṛṣṇa. How much easier it appeared to be to be a Prabhupad and sit on a fancy lion-throne surrounded by thousands of dotting and adulating disciples. Bābā sat out in a lonely *kutir* in the distant reaches of Vraja, wild snake-infested places where few people dared to go. He ate whatever could be begged from the local villagers, and if they gave nothing, that is what he had.

Reflecting back on my first experience of Bābā a couple of things stand out. The first is the realization that part of the shock of my first meeting with Bābā was contributed by the sense of having come face to face with something very ancient in India. His nakedness, his simplicity, his possessionlessness, his austerity, and as I later discovered later his ecstatic madneses, all point to a kind of religious lifestyle and experience that is quite ancient in India. One need only recall the naked philosophers that Alexander the Great encountered when he came to India, three centuries before the common era. One of these gymnosophists accompanied Alexander back to Greece and displaced Aristotle as the conqueror's teacher. Even in the time of Alexander, however, such asceticism was ancient. The hymn of the *Rig Veda* called "The Long-hair" (10.136) indicates similar practices at least seven centuries before Alexander. The second verse of that hymn reads:

The ascetics, swathed in wind, put dirty red rags on.
When gods enter them, they ride with the rush of the wind.
(O'Flaherty, p. 137)

Certainly much has changed in the intervening thirty centuries. Then it was Rudra; now it is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Still, much remained the same. I felt like I had arrived in the company of Rūpa and Sanātana. Certainly, they lived much like this.

The second thing is that in Bābā I am reminded of the belief in the "righteous man" in the Jewish mystical tradition called Kabbalah. The righteous man or *tsaddiq* is like a pillar that extends to heaven and upholds the entire world. It is said in the tradition: "the righteous one is the foundation of the world." If it weakens, the world cannot endure. If the world contains just one righteous person, that person sustains the world. (Matt, p. 78) I wonder if it is similar with the *siddha-mahāpuruṣa*, that they are the foundation of the world. Without them the world would collapse. The other thing about the *tsaddiq* is that often it is impossible to

recognize one. There is a wonderful story from the *Zohar* called "The old man and the ravishing maiden" in which the righteous one appears as an old donkey driver who seems rather cracked. Similarly, I wonder if the *siddha* is often to be found in unlikely places. Perhaps, he is not to be found on the *siṃhāsana* in front of the lights and cameras, but out in the darkness lit up only by the dim glow of a kerosene lantern and perhaps it is only because of him that Kṛṣṇa has not smashed the whole world.

3 Guest Article: The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Institution of Paramparā (by Advaita Das)

Visit the new, updated version of this essay [here](#).

4 Moonlight on the Daily Sports of Kṛṣṇa (Kavi Karṇapūra)

The poem translated here is the work of Kavi Karṇapūra,¹ one of the great Vaiṣṇava poets in Sanskrit belonging to the first generation of the followers of the 16th Century Hindu saint, mystic, and reformer, Śrī Caitanya. He was the youngest son of Śivānanda Sena, one of Caitanya's close followers. According to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's hagiography of Caitanya, the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (C.c., Antya, 16.68-69), at Śrī Caitanya's request Kavi Karṇapūra composed the following Sanskrit verse in praise of Kṛṣṇa when he was a young, uneducated boy seven years of age:

śravasoh kuvalayamakṣnor
añjanamuraso mahendramaṇidāma
vṛndāvanaramaṇināṃ
maṇḍanamakhilaṃ harirjayati (*Āryāśataka*, 1)

Victory to Hari who is the complete ornamentation of the lovely women of Vṛndāvana, the lily of their ears, mascara of their eyes, the sapphire necklace on their breasts.

In another place Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (C.c, Antya, 12.49) mentions an incident, apparently when Karṇapūra was an enfant or small boy, in which Caitanya placed his toe in his mouth. The two stories are connected and Karṇapūra is regarded in the Caitanya tradition as the poet whose "power of poetic speech was bestowed by the foot of Śrī Caitanya."

Karṇapūra is thought by some to have been born in 1524 CE, about nine years before the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya. Karṇapūra's earliest work was an extended poem on the life of Śrī Caitanya called "The Ambrosial Career of Caitanya" (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya*). This was written when he was 16 years old according Biman Bihari Majumdar² and is dated 1542 at the end of

¹The poet went by many names: Paramānanda Dāsa, Paramānanda Sena, and Kavikarṇapūra and was jokingly called Purī dāsa by Caitanya himself. In this work, he refers to himself both as Paramānanda Dāsa and Kavi Karṇapūra.

²Śrī Caitanyacariter Upādāna, p. 97

the work itself, which would make his birth date 1526. Whatever the truth, he was apparently a talented poet from an early age and was thoroughly steeped in the tradition of classical Sanskrit poetics and dramaturgy as well as the culture of devotion to Śrī Caitanya. His most famous work is a play on the life of Caitanya called the "The Rise of the Moon of Caitanya" (*Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*). This play, written in 1571, focuses in greater detail on the later life of Caitanya than his earlier poem on the same subject and is a more mature reflection on the meaning of the life and teaching of Śrī Caitanya. His other works include: *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* (on Sanskrit literary criticism), *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū* (on Kṛṣṇa's life in Vṛndāvana), *Āryaśataka* (one hundred hymns in praise of Kṛṣṇa), *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (on the dual identities of the associates of Caitanya in Caitanya's sport and in Kṛṣṇa's sport), and this work, the "Moonlight of the Daily Play of Kṛṣṇa" (*Kṛṣṇāhnika-kaumudī*).

The date of the *Moonlight* is not known. It may be the earliest of the works of the genre called "remembering the sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa" (*līlā-smaraṇa*), however. Remembering is the third among the nine types of *bhakti*, or devotional cultivation, recommended in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (BP, 7.5.23) for the development of the highest goal of the Caitanya tradition, divine love or *preman*.³ According to the great Vaiṣṇava scholar, Haridāsa Dāsa, in the introduction to his edition of the text: "*smaraṇa* is the recollection of a desired object in an uninterrupted flow like the flow of a stream of oil. The Gosvāmin of Vṛndāvana undertook a life-long effort for the purpose of developing this practice of *smaraṇa* and spreading in the world the substance of their own experiences. Following the injunction of the *Padma Purāṇa*: *smartavyaḥ satataṃ viṣṇuḥ*, "Viṣṇu is always to be remembered," and Rūpa's Gosvāmin's own recommendation: *kṛṣṇaṃ smaran ...*, "remembering Kṛṣṇa ..." (B.r.s, 1.2.294), they established the practice of recollecting the sports of the eight periods and wrote books suitable for that practice so that not even one moment of the day or night might be wasted. What distinguishes this particular text is that there are enough instances of difference between it and the works based upon the *Smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotra* of Rūpa Gosvāmin, that it may have been written before Rūpa's treatment of the sports and thus in ignorance of it."⁴ If this reasoning is sound, the *Moonlight* was written before the

³The other eight are hearing about, glorifying, serving the feet of, worshiping the image of, praising, considering oneself the servant of, practicing friendship towards, and offering oneself to Viṣṇu.

⁴Kavi Karṇapūra, *Kṛṣṇāhnika-kaumudī*, edited and translated into Bengali by Haridāsa Dāsa, pp. i-ii. (Navadvīpa: Haribol Kuṭīr, G 455 [1941])

Smarāṇa-maṅgala-stotra.

There is some doubt as to whether Rūpa Gosvāmin, the great poet and theologian of the Caitanya tradition, was actually the author of the *Smarāṇa-maṅgala-stotra*. Rādhākṛṣṇa Dās Gosvāmin, the author of a commentary on the *stotra*, claims that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (16th century CE), the author of the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* in which the *stotra* is embedded, was its author. He wrote it under the guidance of Rūpa, however, when Rūpa was close to death.⁵ Rūpa is thought to have died slightly before or after 1560 CE⁶ and at least one scholar argues that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja wrote or began writing his *Govinda-līlāmṛta* in 1560.⁷ Kavi Karṇapūra's *Moonlight* was probably written before 1560, therefore.

Kavi Karṇapūra's poem is relatively short compared to the other works in this genre. It contains only 704 Sanskrit stanzas which makes it about twice as long as the *Bhagavad-gītā*.⁸ The longest work in this genre is the *Bhāvanā-sāra-saṅgraha* of Siddha Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābā (18th century) which contains 3091 stanzas. The *Sāra-saṅgraha*, however, is a compilation of stanzas from thirty-four other works including Karṇapūra's. The largest work in this genre composed by a single author is undoubtedly the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja which contains 2588 stanzas, making it the longest metrical poem ever written about Kṛṣṇa. Viśvanātha Cakravartin's (17th century) *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* sits in the middle with 1240 stanzas.

It is hard to say which of the three is the finest work of poetry. Each of them has its own strength and weakness. Of the three, Kavi Karṇapūra's is perhaps the sweetest to the ear. It is clearly meant to be recited and heard. His use of rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration is superior to that of the other two. On the other hand, the attention he pays to rhythm and alliteration sometimes cuts into the substance of what he has to say. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's work is more elaborately conceived and executed, but does not show the same facility with language. It leans more toward the didactic side of poetry, depending more on meaning (*artha*) than on sound (*śabda*). Teaching the insights of the tradition was a more weighty part of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's project in his poem. This does not mean that he does not often create beautiful stanzas. He does, but when he does he tends to re-use

⁵Rādhākṛṣṇadāsa Gosvāmin, *Daśaślokiḥāṣyam*, edited by Haridāsa Śāstrī, pp. 8-9. (Vṛndāvana, Mathurā: Sadgrantha Prakāśaka, G. 486 [1972 CE])

⁶Narechandra Jana, *Vṛndāvaner Chay Gosvāmī*, pp. 88-89.

⁷Biman Bihari Majumdar, *Śrīcaitanya-cariter Upādān*, p 297.

⁸The *Bhagavad-gītā* has about the same number of stanzas, but its *śloka* form of stanza is typically half as long as the longer and more complex poetic stanzas in the *Kaumudī*

their structure whenever he can and that sometimes makes his work more formulaic. Viśvanātha Cakravartin best understands and expresses the *rasa* or aesthetic feeling of the sport. For that reason his work is considered more touching and "sweeter" by members of the tradition. As the last of the writers, he also had the advantage of inheriting a tradition that had been more or less settled. The earlier writers, especially Karṇapūra, lived and wrote just as the tradition was being formed. As a result, Karṇapūra's theology and vision of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's daily sport differs from what became the accepted *marga* (path) in the tradition. As a contemporary of the fabled Six Gosvāmin of Vṛndāvana, Karṇapūra's outlook represents a road explored, but not taken by the later tradition. Perhaps for this reason Kavi Karṇapūra's work was less frequently used and extolled, in spite of the high quality of its poetry. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja was a disciple of the Gosvāmin and, being intimately familiar with their writings, represented their orientation – the orientation that was to become the mainstream one in the tradition. His work is the one that has exerted the greatest influence on the tradition and is the one that is generally studied and used today in teaching the visualization practice. The didactic dimension of the text was, no doubt, more appealing to those wishing to learn the philosophy of the tradition and the details of its practice at the same time.

As an example of how Kavi Karṇapūra differs from the other two writers, one can point to the way he handles Kṛṣṇa's exercise of divine power. As a result of the understandings of Kṛṣṇa's nature that arose out of the studies, discussions, and realizations of the Six Gosvāmin of Vṛndāvan, the Caitanya tradition became sensitive to the tension between Kṛṣṇa's divine majesty and his capacity for intimacy. The majesty of Kṛṣṇa refers to his immeasurable godly opulence and overwhelming divine power (*aiśvarya*). This is the power with which universes are created, maintained, and destroyed. His capacity for intimacy refers to what the Caitanya tradition has called his sweetness (*mādhurya*). It is his attractiveness and his willingness to reciprocate with those who are attracted to him on a personal and loving level. According to this tradition the feelings of awe, reverence, and insignificance that one has when witnessing the exercise of divine power or finding oneself in the presence of unlimited godly opulence interfere with the devotee's desire for intimacy with Kṛṣṇa. One has difficulty embracing someone as a friend or a lover who has just wielded some immense, mysterious, and frightening power to do incredible and miraculous feats. Love and affection are replaced by fear and trembling and one feels helpless and insignificant in the presence of such might. Thus, the experience of majesty is thought to drive one away from deity, and sweetness is thought to draw one closer. The Kṛṣṇa tradition has inherited a scriptural legacy

that presents both aspects of deity, but to the Gosvāmin sweetness is the one preferred. Thus, the works inspired and influenced by the Gosvāmin have very little display of majesty in them, which means that Kṛṣṇa is rarely found to leave aside his human aspect and reveal his godliness.

Kavi Karṇapūra, on the other hand, sometimes has Kṛṣṇa's divine power appearing in the sport and influencing it. An example is found in the First Chapter of the *Moonlight* (1.43):

Not spotted on the path, nor in the house, nor in the forest, through their own inherent and surpassingly loving power, the two who are loved by all the world, sporting on the path and giving pleasure to the eyes of their companions, were radiant then.

Their divine power is exercised to hide them from the eyes of any people they might encounter on their way back from their bower hideout, where they have spent the night in each others' arms, or, as the text says, fighting throughout the night in "the battle of erotic love (*kāma-saṅgrāma*).” And again, once they have arrived home safely the poet says (1.45):

Just as the bodies of warriors, in great pain from wounds of arrows, are cured by skillful doctors with medicines for the healing of wounds, so when the marks of physical love appeared on them, their bodies became free of marks through the nature and influence of the yoga-power.

Thus, even the telltale marks of love are removed from the bodies of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa by the yoga-power so that none in their families would discover their nighttime activities.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja handles the trip back from the forest to the village a bit differently in his *Govinda-līlāmṛta*. Instead of the having the divine power cover the eyes of any potential spotters, it is the devoted love of Rādhā's companions that seeks to hide and protect her from notice. In a lovely little verse Rūpamañjarī, Rūpa Gosvāmin's identity in Kṛṣṇa's sport, conducts her mistress safely back home, mounting her on the chariot of her desire to protect her reputation (GL, 1.113):

Rūpamañjarī, desiring to bring her [Rādhā] safely to her home, seated her in the chariot of her [Rūpamañjarī's] own mind and then followed her, covering the path with the curtain of her eyes, which were dark and restless out of fear and love.

Even Kṛṣṇa appears to be uncertain that they won't be caught. He is portrayed as craning his neck in every direction looking out for trouble (GL 1.111):

Kṛṣṇa, thinking that the friends of Candrāvali [Rādhā's main rival] were on his left, the cowherders were in front of him, and the crooked Jaṭilā was coming up behind him, and being anxious to watch his frightened lover moving off to his right, returned to the village with his neck turning this way and that as he turned his eyes in one direction and then another.

The marks of love-making in Kṛṣṇadāsa's work become occasions for the quick and clever thinking of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's close friends as they try to protect them from discovery by their elders. In Kṛṣṇadāsa's work Kṛṣṇa never oversteps the limits of human-like action and as a result is engulfed in a network of loving relationships with his devotees.

Is the occasional display of majesty in Kavi Karṇapūra's work an obstacle to the experience of Kṛṣṇa as a object of intimacy? Viśvanātha Cakravartin commenting on Kavi Karṇapūra's *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū* (Fifth *Stavaka*) argues no. He cites a stanza that says in effect that the manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's majesty in the form of his killing of various demons like Pūtanā and others do not cause the love of those around him to contract. Rather, in the worry created in those companions for Kṛṣṇa's welfare in those situations, majesty causes their love to increase. If, Viśvanātha adds, one were to decide instead that something like the fortune of Nanda (Kṛṣṇa's father) is the cause of Kṛṣṇa's survival in those instances, then one would have to say that the appearance of his majestic power at those times is pointless. The often used example is that of Kṛṣṇa's mother Yaśodā who when she, in an episode related in the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, discovers the whole cosmos inside her small boy's mouth exclaims: "my gosh! what's happened to my poor son?!" Though she is puzzled, her motherly feelings of love for Kṛṣṇa are not weakened in the least. Here as before there is no way to construct any other cause. Viśvanātha Cakravartin defines the trait of

sweetness in Kṛṣṇa in his *Moonlight on the Path of Passionate Devotion (Rāgavartma-candrikā)* (Second *Prakāśa*) as Kṛṣṇa's not overstepping the limits of his human condition when majesty is manifested or when it is present but not manifested. When, for instance, he kills the evil witch Pūtanā, he does so as a human child suckling at her breasts. His stealing of yogurt and butter from the houses of the cowherders and his arousing the erotic desires of the cowherd women are examples of his sweetness when his majesty though present is not manifest. Judged in this light, Kavi Karṇapūra does not excessively represent the majesty of Kṛṣṇa in his works, though its presence is felt more than in the writings of the other writers of this tradition.

4.1 The Text: Chapter One

रजनिचरमयामे स्तोकताराभिरामे
किमपि किमपि वृन्दादेशजाताभिनन्दा
विततिरकृत राधाकृष्णयोः स्वापवाधा -
मतिमृदुवचनानां शारिकाणां शुकानाम् ॥ 1 ॥

1. In the final period of the night, lovely with its scattered stars, a flock of very soft-speaking yellow-breasted black birds (*śārikā*) and parrots, pleased by the order of Vṛndā, somehow interrupted the sleep of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

प्रथममनुपरोधा बोधयामास राधाम्
असकृदमृतकल्पैः शारिकालिः सुजल्पैः ।
अथ कृतसुखदोहः कृष्णमुद्धूतमोहः
किमपि शुकसमूहः प्रेमदत्तोपगूहः ॥ 2 ॥

2. First an unrestrained group of black birds awakened Rādhā with repeated nectar-like, fine words; then a group of parrots, giving great joy, free of illusion, sometimes embraced by Kṛṣṇa lovingly, awakened Kṛṣṇa with indescribably soft words.

ब्रजपतितनयाङ्कासङ्गतो वीतशङ्का
विधुमुखि किमु शेषे निर्भरं रात्रिशेषे ।
प्रमदमधुपपुञ्जे मा परं तिष्ठ कुञ्जे
न गणयसि विगर्हा किं गुरुणामनर्हाम् ॥ 3 ॥

3. O Moon-faced! How is it that you, made fearless from contact with the lap of the son of the lord of Vraja, are still sleeping deeply at the end of the night? Don't stay any later in this bower filled with drunken bees. Aren't you not forgetting the undeserved reproach of your elders?

4.2 Awakening Rādhā

अगणितकुलनिष्ठा मा निकुञ्जे शयिष्ठाः
परिहर सुरतघ्नं स्वापमुद्गच्छ शीघ्रम् ।
समजनि सविशेषः पश्य दोषावशेषः
कुरु न गतसमाधां बन्धुवर्गस्य बाधां ॥ 4 ॥

4. Don't lie here in the bower oblivious to your family's reputation. Give up sleep, the killer of love-making, and get up quickly! Look! The end of night with its special signs has arrived. Don't cause unjust troubles for your relatives.

इयमजनि दिगैन्द्री दृश्यतां देवि सान्द्री -
भरदरुणिमधारा त्वत्पदाब्जानुकारा ।
इयमपि च वराकी सत्त्वरा चक्रवाकी
परिमिलति रथाङ्गे जातविच्छेदभङ्गे ॥ 5 ॥

5. Look, Goddess, the eastern direction has become awash with deep red, imitating the color of your lotus feet. And this poor ruddy goose quickly meets her lover, whose separation from her is now ended.

अपि तव मुखशोभामाप्तुकामोऽतिलोभाद्
अपरिकलितकामः स्वं वपुस् त्यक्तुकामः ।
चरमशिखरिशृङ्गं प्राप्य पश्यैव तुङ्गं
व्रजति शशधरोऽस्तं वारयेदद्य कस्तम् ॥ 6 ॥

6. Besides, this suicidal moon longs desperately to see the beauty of your moonlike face. This longing unfulfilled, he wants his own body to waste away. Look! He has reached the high peak of the final mountain and is beginning to set. Who can stop him now?

सुदति कुमुदिनीनामङ्गमासाद्य लीना
मदमधुकरमाला कालमासाद्य लोला ।
सरति कमलिनीनां राजिमेतामदीनां
भवति समय एव ग्लानिहर्षादिदेवः ॥ 7 ॥

7. O Beautiful Teeth! A garland of drunken bees, having found the laps of the water-lilies and merged with them, now realizing the time, grows restless and moves toward this blossoming line of lotuses. Time alone is lord of exhaustion and exhilaration.

स्मितकमलमुखीनां मण्डली ते सखीनां
मिलति परमहृष्टा स्वस्वगेहादभीष्टा ।
सुमुखि विगतदोषे या किल त्वां प्रदोषे
निविडतिमिरपुञ्जं प्रापयत् केलिकुञ्जम् ॥ 8 ॥

8. The lovely circle of your friends, who in the flawless beginning of the night helped you reach the bower of love-sport, then full of deep darkness, is gathering from their own bower-houses now, thoroughly thrilled, with smiling, lotus-like faces, O Sweet-faced one.

सुमुखि नयनमुद्रां मुञ्च निर्धूय निद्रां
कलय वदनमासां विद्युदुद्योतभासां ।
रतिविगलितभूषां व्यस्तपर्यस्तवेषां
विलुलिततनुमेतास्त्वां भजन्तां समेताः ॥ 9 ॥

9. O Sweet-faced! Put aside your sleep. Break the seal on your eyes. Look at the faces of these friends whose complexions gleam like lightening. They have gathered to serve you whose ornaments are loosened, whose clothes are scattered here and there, and whose body has been tossed about by love-making.

वियदतिलघुतारं त्वद्वपुः क्षुण्णहारम्
विगलितकुसुमानां वस्मि शेषालिकानाम् ।
त्रितयमिदमिदानीमेकरूपं तदानीं
अपि यदपि तथापि त्वद्वपुः श्रीभिरापि ॥ 10 ॥

10. Even though the sky with its few scattered stars, your body with its crushed necklaces, and the bodies of the Śephālikā trees with their fallen fragrant flowers, are now alike – and were also alike [in beauty] then [at night] – your body [alone] still possesses its excellences.

त्रुटितपतितमुक्ताहारवत्ते वियुक्ता
भवदुडुततिरेषा स्वल्पमात्रावशेषा ।
चिरशयनमवेक्ष्यारुन्धती ते विलक्ष्या
भवदिव परिवक्त्रे पश्य सप्तर्षिचक्रे ॥ 11 ॥

11. Just as your pearl necklace has become rent and the pearls fallen, the stars have become scattered, only a few remaining. It looks as if chaste Arundhatī, seeing your long sleep here, has hidden [being embarrassed] in the crooked circle of the seven sages. See for yourself!

निजकरपरिपुष्टा पश्य सेयं प्रविष्टा
शशिमुखि ललिताङ्गी सन्निधौ ते कुरङ्गी ।
कुरु सकृपमपाङ्गे किञ्चिदञ्चत्तरङ्गे
भवतु वत कृतार्था प्रीतये ते समर्था ॥ 12 ॥

12. Look, Moon-faced, that lovely bodied doe, that you have fed with your own hands, enters and comes close to you. Compassionately give it a glance, however wavering, so that it may be fulfilled and able to please you.

नवकिशलयबुद्ध्या जातितोऽन्तर्विशुद्ध्या -
रुणपदकमलन्ते स्वादितुं कृष्णकान्ते ।
त्वरितमुपसरन्ती त्वत्सखीनां वहन्ती
करसरसिजघातं याविधत्ते प्रयातम् ॥ 13 ॥

13. Thinking them new buds, and by nature innocent hearted, O Lover of Kṛṣṇa, your doe darted forward to taste your pink lotus feet. Receiving a slap from the lotus hands of your friends, she has returned to her place.

शशिमुखि तव फेलामात्रभोगे सखेला
तव पदजलपानामोदमात्रावधाना ।
अपि भवदवलोकाभावसञ्जातशोका
तव मुखशशिविम्बालोकमात्रावलम्बा ॥ 14 ॥

14. Moon-faced! Thrilled by the mere taste your lip's nectar, devoted solely to the joy of drinking your foot wash, yet saddened by the absence of your glance, she waits, longing to glimpse the circle of your moon-like face.

हरिरतिकुतुकी ते नेत्रयुग्मं मिमीते
नयनयुगममायप्रेम यस्याः प्रमाय ।
किमपि विमलमुक्तामालया चारुवक्त्रा
नियतमुपमिमानः संशयं निर्धुनानः ॥ 15 ॥

15. Feigning curiosity, Hari measures your eyes after measuring hers, full of deceitless love, and, resolving his doubt and comparing them always with a string of pure pearls, he says something sweet in praise of the doe's eyes.

इति निगदितवत्यः शारिकाः प्रेमवत्यः

सुखदपदार्था वाचमुत्थापनार्थाम् ।
यदि किमपि विरेमुः पत्रिणस्तं प्रणेमुः
समुपसृतनिकुञ्जाः प्राप्तसंमोदपुञ्जाः ॥ 16 ॥

16. Having thus spoken statements meant to awaken, filled with pleasing words and meanings, when the loving yellow breasted black birds fell silent, the parrots, filled with delight, drawn near the bower, offered obeisance to him.

4.3 Awakening Kṛṣṇa

अथ शयनसतृष्णं बोधयामास कृष्णं
विततिरपि शुकानां कृष्णहर्षोत्सुकानाम् ।
श्रवणसुखदसौम्यैः स्निग्धशब्दार्थरम्यैः
सरसतरमनल्पैः कूजितैः सीधुकल्पैः ॥ 17 ॥

17. Then the group of parrots, anxious to please Kṛṣṇa, awakened him who wanted more sleep with sweet calls – calls which, like nectar to the ears, were gentle and pleasing and beautified with affectionate words and meanings.

प्रणयरसगभीराश्चारुशब्दार्थधीराः
कलसुमधुरकण्ठाः प्रेमजल्पेष्वकुण्ठाः ।
सति समयविवेके बोधयाञ्चक्रुरेके
न खलु वत विदग्धाः कार्यकाले विमुग्धाः ॥ 18 ॥

18. When they knew what time it was, some of them, profound in the *rasa* of friendship, learned in charming words and meanings, with voices both low and sweet, unembarrassed by sensual words, clever, and not bewildered in a time for action, awakened him.

जय जय गुणसिन्धो प्रेयसीप्राणबन्धो
व्रजसरसिजभानो सत्कलारत्नसानो ।
इह हि रजनिशेषे किम्मना नाथ 'सेषे
समयमवकलय्यापीष्यते कुञ्जशय्या ॥ 19 ॥

19. Victory, victory! Ocean of good qualities! Friend of the life of your dear one! Sun of the lotus of Vraja! Mountain of the true arts! What are you thinking, Lord, to be lying here at the end of night? Knowing the time, do you still prefer the bower bed?

मदमधुपयुवानः प्राप्तदोषावसान -
च्युतकुसुमवनान्तः स्वापमुद्यातवन्तः ।
दधति कतिपयथ्यां केलिमम्भोजवीथ्यां
सति समयविवेके के विमुह्यन्ति लोके ॥ 20 ॥

20. Young intoxicated bees, when night ends in the midst of the forest of fallen flowers, give up their sleep and play among the rows of lotuses. When one knows the time, who on earth is bewildered?

क्वचन मुखविषादः क्वापि हास-प्रसादः
क्वच दयितवियोगः क्वापि कान्तस्य योगः ।
कुमुदकमलवीथ्योर्वैसदृश्येऽतितथ्ये
भवति किमु न कालः क्षोभशोभाविशालः ॥ 21 ॥

21. Somewhere there is the sadness on the face, somewhere else the favor of laughter, somewhere there is separation from the beloved, somewhere else union with the lover. When the dissimilarity between the rows of lilies and rows of lotuses so evident, is not time great in disturbance and beauty?

त्वमसि समयवेत्ता सर्वदुःखैकभेत्ता
भवसि भुवनबन्धुः सद्गुणग्रामसिन्धुः ।
व्रततिभवनतल्पं मूर्तिमन्मोदकल्पं
यदपि तदपि मुञ्च स्वस्ति तेऽस्मादुदञ्च ॥ 22 ॥

22. You are the knower of time, the one destroyer of all miseries. You are the friend of the world, you ocean of fine qualities. Although your bed in this house of vines is like pleasure embodied, nevertheless, give it up; rise from it with good fortune.

सुभग रजनिशेषे स्वापगेहे सुशेषे
त्वमिति हि जननी ते संशयम् स्वं धुनीते ।
समयमथ विदित्वा जागरार्थं त्वरिता
स्वयमियमुपगन्त्री स्नेह एवात्र मन्त्री ॥ 23 ॥

23. Handsome one! Your mother has quieted her doubts and trusts you are sleeping soundly at the end of the night in your own bedroom. Realizing the time now, she will be coming quickly to awaken you, her affection for you her guide.

अयमपि च शिखण्डी जागरित्वैव खण्डी
कृतसुललितकेकः कालनिष्ठाविवेकः ।
प्रमिलति तव निद्राहानयेऽधीदरिद्राः
शिव शिव निजसेवाकालमुज्झन्ति के वा ॥ 24 ॥

24. Even this lonely peacock awakens and, calling out very sweetly, aware of the passing of time, comes to break up your sleep. Śiva, Śiva! What persons indeed, not lacking in intelligence, would miss the hour of their own service?

अपि शरदि दुरापस्रंसनो यत्कलापः

प्रबलतरगरिम्ना तावकेनैव धाम्ना ।
निरवधिबलमानस्निग्धताद्योतमानः
क्व नु समयविपन्नस्त्वत्पदाब्जे प्रपन्नः ॥ 25 ॥

25. When his tail does not grow sparse even in the autumn and instead shines with an ever stronger sheen through the more intense weightiness of your influence, when will he, surrendered at your lotus feet, ever be distressed by time?

विविधमणिसदच्छं मण्डलीकृत्य पुच्छं
प्रतिनियतमकुण्ठः प्रोल्लसच्छ्यामकण्ठः ।
तव सह दयिताभिः पश्यतः प्रीणिताभिर्
जनयति ललितानि प्रत्यहं यः सुखानि ॥ 26 ॥

26. He spreads his tail, as pure and beautiful as heaps of jewels, his neck shining blue and always free of wrinkles. Every day as you watch he creates the amorous amusements of you and your pleased lovers.

जय सुभग नमस्ते श्रूयतां सत्वरस्ते
चिरशयनसपीडः कौत्ययन्ताम्रचूडः ।
उअप्रतनिजसेवाकालसंमोदपीवा
न हि समयविदग्धः कार्यकाले विमुग्धः ॥ 27 ॥

27. Fortunate one! Triumph be yours! We bow to you. Listen as this rooster, perturbed by your late sleep, crows, his body swollen with joy because his time to serve you has come. One so expert at telling the time is not likely to be confused when it is time to act.

इति कलवचनानां शारिकाणां शुकानां
रुतमतिशयरम्यं श्रोत्रपेयं निशम्य ।

विहितशयनबाधा सा जजागार राधा
प्रथममथ स कृष्णः स्वापलीलावितृष्णः ॥ 28 ॥

28. Hearing the lovely calls of the soft-voiced parrots and yellow breasted black birds (*śārikās*), so sweet to the ears, first Rādhā woke, her lying in bed now become an obstacle; and then Kṛṣṇa woke, his taste for the sport of sleep diminished.

4.4 Pleasure's Fatigue

युगपदुभयनिद्राभङ्गविध्वस्तमुद्रा
युगपदुभयनेत्रापाङ्गभङ्गी विचित्रा ।
युगपदुभयघूर्णाजातसंक्लेशपूर्णा -
भवदुभयविलोकाभावतः प्राप्तशोका ॥ 29 ॥

29. When the seal keeping their eyes closed was destroyed by the simultaneous interruption of their sleep, wonderful was the manner of the simultaneous side-long glances of their eyes, troubled by their eyes' simultaneous drowsy rolling and gripped by saddeness because of inability to see each other.

प्रसभमुभयदोष्णोः पीडनं संसहिष्णोर्
उभयवपुष एकीभाव आसीद् विवेकी ।
सुरतसमरलीला या पुरासीत् सुशीला
किमिव पुनरुपायात् सा समेषोरुपायात् ॥ 30 ॥

30. Their two bodies, each tolerating the forceful squeezing of the other's arms, though distinct, soon became one. Will the beautiful sport-combat of love that occurred before happen again with the encouragement of the god of love?

उभयपुलकजालै रत्नसूचीसलीलैर्
उभयरभससूत्रैर्दीर्घदीर्घातिचित्रैः ।
युगपदुभयतन्वोः सीवनं दिव्यभान्वोर्
अकृत कुसुमचापेनैव योगे दुरापे ॥ 31 ॥

31. With their [full] union hard to achieve [under the circumstances], the flower-bowed one nevertheless sewed their brilliantly shining bodies together with the wondrous, longer-than-long thread of their exultation and with the play of the jewel-like needles of their erect hair.

युगपदुभयजृम्भारम्भणस्योपलम्भाद्
उभयदशनकान्तिः खाप्यनिर्व्यूढशान्तिः ।
उभयमुखसहायाऽन्योन्यनिर्मञ्छनाया -
गमदिव समतत्त्वं मङ्गलारात्रिकत्वम् ॥ 32 ॥

32. As both began to yawn simultaneously, the glow from their teeth, helped by [the radiance of] both their faces, possessed of some indescribable, uncontrived peace, seemed like an auspicious ceremony of lights to welcome one another.

युगपदुभयदोष्णः पीडनेनैव कोष्णः
प्रणय इव हृदिस्थः स्वीकृताश्रुव्यवस्थः ।
उभयनयनपक्ष्मा स्नावयन् शोकलक्ष्मा -
वददिव कृतरोषं भाविविच्छेददोषम् ॥ 33 ॥

33. By the simultaneous pressing of their arms, a small warmth, like a longing in the heart, transformed into tears which, flooded their eyelashes and seemed to speak angrily of the fault of the coming separation dominated by sadness.

4.5 Rising from Bed

अथ शयनतलात्तावुत्थितौ सम्प्रमत्ताव्
इव सपदि विबुध्य स्वस्वनीवीं निबध्य ।
विरहमसहमानौ चित्तपीडां दधानौ
न ययतुरकृतार्थौ तस्थतुर्नासमार्थौ ॥ 34 ॥

34. Then, awakening quickly, the two, rising up from their bed as if intoxicated, tied up their respective belts and, unable to bear the separation, feeling pain in the hearts, did not leave, feeling unfulfilled, and did not stay, being unable

जयत उदितवत्या लोचने ते सुदत्या
अलसवलितघूर्णे स्वापलीलाविशीर्णे ।
विकचकमलमध्ये साधु माध्वीकमध्ये
स्तिमितमवरुवद्भ्यां सोपमे खञ्जनाभ्याम् ॥ 35 ॥

35. May the two eyes of [Rādhā] the risen one with beautiful teeth be victorious! Rolling from fatigue, contracted from the sport of the sleep, they resemble two wagtails [small, long-feathered birds] moving slowly in a fully blossomed lotus – purified by honey.

विलसदलसपूर्णेः पक्ष्मभिः प्राप्तगूर्णेः
सममतिरुरुचाते लोचने चारुणी ते ।
अलिभिरुपहताभ्यां सोपमे पङ्कजाभ्यां
शयनगतरसस्य प्रेयसो माधवस्य ॥ 36 ॥

36. At the same time, those two charming eyes of her dear lover Mādhava, who had found joy in sleep – those two eyes with their flickering eyelashes full of the fatigue of the love-game – shine splendidly like two lotuses overrun by honey bees.

मुमुचतुरथ कुञ्जावासमुद्गीप्तगुञ्जा -
 चयवदरुणरागेणारुणे दिग्विभागे ।
 रतिरणविजयान्ते निह्नुवानौ निशान्ते
 निजनिजतनुयष्टी तौ त्रपाभुग्नदृष्टी ॥ 37 ॥

37. Then, those two left the bower house as the eastern sky was turning red with the reddish blush of bright *guñja* berries. Hiding their bodies, made lovely at the end of night by victories in the battles of love-making, they left, lowering their eyes in embarrassment.

4.6 The Beauty of the Love Nest

क्वचन घुसृणपङ्कः क्वापि सिन्दूरजोऽङ्कः
 क्षतविरहविपक्षप्रस्रुतासृक्सपक्षः ।
 क्वचन कुसुमदाम च्छिन्नकोदण्डधाम
 क्व च विलुलितहारश्छिन्नमौर्विप्रकारः ॥ 38 ॥
 क्वचन मृगमदाङ्काः कुत्रचित् कज्जलाङ्काः
 स्मरनरपतिदन्तिच्छेदकल्पाः स्फुरन्ति ।
 स हि रतिरणरङ्गः कौतुकोद्यत्तरङ्गः
 समजनि सुमुखीनामागतानां सखीनाम् ॥ 39 ॥

38-39. Here appeared a smear of flower pollen, there spots of crimson *sindur* powder like blood spilled from an enemy destroyed by a wound, here a flower garland like the broken body of a bow and there a disordered necklace like a broken bow-string, here spots of musk and somewhere else spots of collyrium like cuts of the elephant of King Love. That battle field, left after the battle of love, became a place for rising waves of amusement in their sweet-faced friends who arrived on the scene.

4.7 Leaving the Bower

उभयमुभयचित्ते न्यस्य चित्तं सुचित्ते
प्रणयरसविपाकैः सन्ततं सातिरेकैः ।
क्षणविरहस्हाभ्यं केवलं विग्रहाभ्यां
लघुलघुपदमेतौ दम्पती तौ प्रयातौ ॥ 40 ॥

40. Each fixing the other's heart in their own, well examined by the constantly increasing ripenings of love's joy, with only their two bodies, which could tolerate momentary separations, did that couple with slow steps begin to leave.

भ्रमभरविपरीते वाससी नीलपीते
प्रकृतिमगमयित्वा नोपनीते वसित्वा ।
अलसमथ मिथोसे न्यस्य जातप्रशंसे
भुजयुगलमभीतौ जग्मतुर्दम्पती तौ ॥ 41 ॥

41. They put on each others clothes, blue and yellow, switched by mistake and though not worn before, without realizing the truth; and then, placing their fatigued arms on each other's praiseworthy shoulder, that couple fearlessly went forward.

पथि पिशुनमतिभ्यः शङ्कमानौ गुरुभ्यः
चलचकिततरङ्गौ निक्षिपन्तावपाङ्गौ ।
परमगुणगभीरौ कामसङ्गामधीरौ
ययतु रतिवितन्त्रौ राधिकाकृष्णचन्द्रौ ॥ 42 ॥

42. Uncertain of not finding their mean-minded elders on the path, casting flickering and startled glances about them, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa moved on, steeped in the finest qualities, bold in the contest of love, servants to erotic desire.

न पथि न भवने वा लक्षितौ तौ वने वा
सहजसदनुरक्त्या स्वीययानन्दशक्त्या ।
परिजननयनानामुत्सवानादधानाव्
अथ पथि विहरन्तौ रेजतुर्लोककान्तौ ॥ 43 ॥

43. Not spotted on the path, nor in the forest, nor in the house, through the magic of their own inherent and surpassingly loving power, the two who are loved by all the world, sporting on the path and giving pleasure to the eyes of their circle of friends, were radiant then.

विरमति रतियज्ञे कौतुकात्तत्र जज्ञे
यदवभृथमिहैतौ स्नानतश्चारूपूतौ ।
अथ किमपि पदार्थौ सारभूतौ कृतार्थौ
गृहमधि परिशिष्टां रात्रिमेवाशयिष्टाम् ॥ 44 ॥

44. When the sacrificial rite of love-making came to an end, the two became charmingly purified from bath, curiously like the purity produced by the concluding rite of a sacrifice [avabh.rtha]. Then these two indescribably fundamental beings, their desires fulfilled, slept the rest of the night in their homes.

तनव इव भटानां बा, नघातोत्कटानां
क्षतविगमभिषग्भिः शोधिता योगयुग्भिः ।
अतिसरति रताङ्के तत्तनू निर्गताङ्के
विवभतुरनुभावाद्योगशक्तेः स्वभावात् ॥ 45 ॥

45. Just as the bodies of warriors, in great pain from arrow wounds, are cured by skillful doctors with medicines for the healing of wounds, so when the marks of physical love appeared on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, their bodies became free of those marks through the nature and influence of the yoga-power.

Thus ends the first ray of the *Moonlight of the Daily Play of Kṛṣṇa*.

5 Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Dharma and Sannyāsa (Complete)

Some people ask about the place of the institution of sannyāsa (formal renunciation) in the religious tradition of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.⁹ Therefore, a little reflection on this topic will be done here.

In what condition is taking sannyāsa appropriate? That is the first thing that should be considered. The *Maitreyī Upaniṣad* (2.19) says:

यदा मनसि वैराग्यं जातं सर्वेषु वस्तुषु ।
तदैव सन्न्यसेद्विद्वानन्यथा पतितो भवेद् ॥

When detachment to all things is born in the mind, then one should renounce. Otherwise one would become fallen.

That Upaniṣad also says (2.20):

द्रव्यार्थमन्नवस्त्रार्थं यः प्रष्टार्थमेव वा ।
सन्न्यसेदुभय-भ्रष्टः स मुक्तिं नाप्नुमर्हति ॥

For things, for food and clothing, or for power — one who renounces for any of those things is fallen both now and in the future and does not deserve liberation.

But Mahāprabhu himself has said that in the Age of Kali there is no prescription for *sannyāsa* citing as evidence the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* (1.17.7):

अश्वमेधं गवालम्भं सन्न्यासं पलपैत्रिकम् ।
देवरेण सुतोत्पत्तिं कलौ पञ्च विवर्जयेत् ॥

⁹This essay is from the Appendix to his edition of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja.

The *aśvamedha* [horse] sacrifice, cow-killing (in the Madhuparka rite), renunciation, offering meat to the forefathers [?], begetting sons by means of the husband's younger brother; these five are to be rejected in the Age of Kali.

From this it is understood that even for one who has the qualification specified in the *śruti* cited above, sannyāsa is not recommended in the Age of Kali.

In Vārāṇasī, after listening to the primary meaning of the *Vedānta-sūtra* from Mahāprabhu at the house of the Maharastrian *brāhmaṇa*, one of Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī's chief disciples sitting in the ashram thinking about the Lord's explanation of Vedānta said:

*śrīkṛṣṇacaitanyavākya dṛḍha satya māni
kalikāle sannyāsera saṃsāra nāhi jini*

I consider the statements
of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya
to be completely true.
In the Age of Kali
we do not overcome
the cycle of rebirth by sannyāsa. (C.c., Madhya, 25.27)

From this, too, it is understood that in the Age of Kali sannyāsa is without utility.

What has been said above, however, is only the general rule. Let us see whether there is any specific rule mentioned in the statements of Mahāprabhu or not.

In Vārāṇasī, in the context of describing “that which is to be conveyed” (*abhidheya-tattva*, ie. bhakti) to Sanātana Gosvāmin, on the topic the behavior of Vaiṣṇavas, Śrī Mahāprabhu said:

*asatsanṅatyāga ei vaiṣṇava ācāra
strīsaṅgī eka asādhu kṛṣṇābhakta āra
esaba chāṛiyā āra varṇāśramadharmā
akiñcana hañā laya kṛṣṇaikaśaraṇa*

Giving up association with the unholy,
this is the practice of Vaiṣṇavas.
One who associates with women is one;
the other is the unholy non-devotee of Kṛṣṇa.
Rejecting all these and varṇāśrama-dharma,
without possessions one should find
one's only shelter in Kṛṣṇa. (C.c., Madhya, 22.49-50)

This instruction of Mahāprabhu is about the rejection of *varṇāśrama-dharma* for Vaiṣṇavas. Varṇāśrama-dharma means the caste system and system of stages of life. In scripture is found the prescription for four stages of life: the student stage of celibacy, the householder stage of marriage, the stage of the hermit, and the stage of renunciation (sannyāsa). Renunciation is the fourth stage of life. For those who practice the path of bhakti, Mahāprabhu has said that this (sannyāsa) is also to be rejected. Rejection of the system of castes and stages is counted as one of the practices of Vaiṣṇavas.

In the context of the sixty-four limbs of bhakti as means (sādhana-bhakti), the Lord has not given any instruction for sannyāsa. Instead he has said: *jñāna vairāgya bhaktira kabhu nahe aṅga*, “knowledge and renunciation are never parts of bhakti.” (C.c., Madhya, 22.82)

The Gosvāmin headed by Rūpa, who follow the footsteps of r Mahāprabhu, have established the example of worship in the Vaiṣṇava tradition and have published books, such as the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* showing the path of worship. In their books, an instruction for the practice of sannyāsa is not found anywhere. Also, none of them took sannyāsa. They only wore the cloth of those without possessions (niṣkiñcana). Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmin received one piece of an old cloth from Tapana Miśra at Vārāṇasī and with that made a kaupin and outer cloth. This is the dress of one without possessions.

When Śrī Jagadānanda went to Vṛndāvana, he one day invited Sanātana Gosvāmin for food. A sannyāsī by the name of Mukunda Sarasvatī gave Sanātana an outer cloth. Sanātana tied that outer cloth on his head and went to keep Jagadānanda's invitation. Then:

*rātula vastra dekhi paṇḍita premāviṣṭa hailā
mahāprabhura prasāda jāni tānhāre puchilā
kānhā pāile ei tumi rātula vasana*

*mukundasarasvatī dila kahe sanātana
śuni paṇḍitera mane duḥkha upajila
bhātera hāṇḍī lañā tānre mārīte āsila*

Seeing the reddish cloth, the Paṇḍita
became overwhelmed with love.
Thinking it the remnant of
Mahāprabhu, he questioned him:
“Where did you get this reddish cloth?”
“Mukunda Sarasvatī gave it,” replied Sanātana.
Hearing that, sadness arose in the Paṇḍita’s mind.
Taking up the rice pot, he came to hit him. (C.c., Antya.13.51-53)

Sanātana was embarrassed. Seeing that, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita placed the pot
on the stove and said to Sanātana:

*tumi mahāprabhura hao pārśadapradhāna
tomāsama mahāprabhura priya nāhi āna
anya sannyāsīra vastra tumi dhara śire
kon aiche haya ihā pāre sahibāre*

You are the chief of the associates of Mahāprabhu;
There is no one else as dear to Mahāprabhu as you.
You wear another sannyāsī’s cloth on your head.
When something like this happens, how can one tolerate it? (C.c.,
Antya, 13.55-6)

Then Sanātana said:

*sādhu paṇḍita mahāśaya
caitanya tomāsama priya keha naya
aiche caitanyaniṣṭhā yogya tomāte
tumi nā dekhāile ihā śikhiba kemate
yāhā dekhivāre vastra mastake bāndhila
sei apūrva prema pratyakṣe dekhila*

Right! Paṇḍita Mahāśaya!

No one is as dear to Caitanya as you.
This kind of unwavering faith in Caitanya is suitable in you.
If you did not show me, how would I learn this?
To see that, this cloth was tied on my head;
Unprecedented love have I seen before my very eyes.
It is not fitting for a Vaiṣṇava to wear reddish cloth.
I will give it to some visitor; what need have I with it? (C.c., Antya,
13. 57-60)

Here Sanātana has said: *raktavastra vaiṣṇavera parite nā yuyāya*, “It is not fitting for a Vaiṣṇava to wear reddish cloth.” Here this is not a reddened cloth or a red-colored cloth. This is the color of cloth that Mahāprabhu used as an outer cloth (saffron), because Jagadānanda Paṇḍita mistook it for a remnant of Mahāprabhu. This was the outer cloth of a sannyāsī named Mukunda Sarasvatī. This was the color of cloth that sannyāsīs used as outer cloths. Reddened (rakta) means dyed or colored cloth. From Śrī Sanātana’s statement it is understood that far from taking sannyāsa, Vaiṣṇavas should not even wear cloth colored like that of sannyāsīs.

Someone is perhaps able to claim that the Rāmānuja Sampradāya or the Madhva Sampradāya is Vaiṣṇava, but in these communities sannyāsīs are found. In answer to this it is said that the practices of each community of practitioners is in accordance with attainment of that community’s desired goals. The objective of the Rāmānuja Sampradāya or of the Madhva Sampradāya is not the same as that of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya. The object of worship of those two communities is the Lord of the Supreme Heaven, Nārāyaṇa; the object of worship of the Gauḍīya community is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of leader of Vraja, in Vraja. The mood of those two communities is the mood of lordly opulence (*aiśvarya*) in Vaikuṅṭha; the mood of the Gauḍīya community is the mood of pure sweetness (*mādhurya*) free of knowledge of opulence in Vraja. The desired objective of those two communities are the liberations headed by sharing of a world (*sālokya*), etc.; the desired objective of the Gauḍīya community is service (*sevā*) whose purpose is only the happiness of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Desire for liberation is contrary to the mood of the Gauḍīya community, contrary to worship (*bhajana*). For this community:

*kṛṣṇabhktira bādhaka yata śubhāśubha karma
sei eka jīvera ajñāna tamodharma
ajñānatamera nāma kahiye kaitava
dharma artha kāma mokṣa vāñchā saba*

Obstacles to Kṛṣṇa-bhakti
are all auspicious and inauspicious works.
That is one living being's
trait of the darkness of ignorance. (C.c., Adi, 1.52)
The darkness of ignorance
is called the fraudulent (kaitava):
All desire for piety, wealth,
sensuality, liberation, and so forth. (C.c, Adi, 1.50)

The *Bhāgavata*'s "highest religion free from fraud"¹⁰ is the religion to be practiced by the Gauḍīya community. The observance of varṇāśrama-dharma is favorable to the attainment of the liberations headed by sharing of world (*sālokya*). For this reason, those who desire liberation observe varṇāśrama-dharma.

The Tattvavādī teacher who followed Śrī Madhvācārya said to Mahāprabhu in connection with his community's means and goal:

varṇāśrama-dharma kṛṣṇe samarpaṇa
ei haya Kṛṣṇabhaktera śreṣṭha sādhana
pañcavidha mukti pāñā vaikuṅṭhe gamana
sādhyāśreṣṭha haya ei śāstranirūpaṇa

Offering varṇāśrama-dharma to Kṛṣṇa,
this is the highest means for the devotee of Kṛṣṇa.
Attaining the five kinds of liberation and going to Vaikuṅṭha,
this is the highest objective according to scripture. (C.c., Madhya,
9.238-9)

Śrī Rāmānujācārya, too, in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* and on the *Gītā* has talked about the observance of varṇāśrama-dharma.

Previously it was said that sannyāsa is a part of varṇāśrama-dharma. Since the Rāmānuja community and the Mādhva community, both desirous of liberation, observe varṇāśrama-dharma, taking sannyāsa is not prohibited for them. This for them is a specific rule. But the Gauḍīya community is not desirous of liberation; varṇāśrama-dharma and the sannyāsa that is included in it is not suitable to their

¹⁰धर्मप्रोज्झितकैतवोऽत्र परमो (भाग. 1.1.2)

form of worship. The sannyāsa that is found in Vedic scriptures is the sannyāsa of varṇāśrama-dharma. Other forms of sannyāsa are not found in Vedic scriptures. The sannyāsa that was started in the Buddhist community, which is inimical to the Vedas, is not the sannyāsa that is approved by the Vedic scriptures. The community of sannyāsī of ten names was started by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, to many in imitation of the Buddhists. Whether the titles of the ten-named sannyāsī, Giri, Purī, Vana, Bhāratī, and so forth, were in use among the sannyāsī who followed the Vedic scriptures is not known. In later times many followed the form of sannyāsa in imitation of Śrī Śaṅkara, but did not take the titles of the Śaṅkara tradition. Whether their sannyāsa is the sannyāsa endorsed by the Vedic scriptures or not is a subject for the consideration of scholars.

One might ask: after deciding “practicing it myself, I will teach everyone dharma,” Śrī Mahāprabhu made his descent. In this context, if sannyāsa is prohibited in the Age of Kali and if sannyāsa is antithetical to the practice of path of pure bhakti, why did the Master himself take sannyāsa?

Here is the answer. First of all, in connection with the prohibition against sannyāsa in the Age of Kali, it is prohibited for living beings (jīva) in the Age of Kali. Mahāprabhu is not a living being. There was no need for him to take sannyāsa as a form of spiritual practice. He is the Lord himself, Vrajendranandana (Son of the King of Vraja), therefore he is beyond rules and regulations. Rule and regulations are for the living beings. In the Dvāpara Age Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Vyāsadeva that he in some special Ages of Kali becomes a sannyāsī and distributes bhakti for Hari to humans affected by the age.¹¹ In the *Mahābhārata* one finds a similar statement: “Of beautiful complexion, golden limbed, fine featured, with moon armlets, he becomes a sannyāsī, controlled and peaceful, intent on faith and peace.”¹² In order to fulfill all these statements of scripture, Gaura-Kṛṣṇa accepts sannyāsa. This is his sport. The purpose for which he reveals this sannyāsa sport he communicates with his own words:

*yata adhyāpak ār tāñr śiṣyagan
dharmī karmī taponiṣṭha ninduk durjan
ei sab mor nindā aparādh haite
āmi nā laoyāile bhakti nā pāre laite*

¹¹अहमेव क्वचिद्ब्रह्मन् सन्न्यासाश्रमाश्रितः । हरिभक्तिं ग्राहयामि कलौ पापहतान् नरान् This is a Purānic statement cited in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (1.3.15)

¹²सुवर्णवर्णो हेमाङ्गो वराङ्गश्चन्द्राङ्गदी । सन्न्यासकृत् शमः शान्तः निष्ठाशान्तिपरायणः ॥

*nistārīte āilāṅ āmi hailo viparīt
e sab durjaner kaiche haibek hit (Cc, 1.17.253-5)*

All the teachers and their students,
dharmīs, karmīs, ascetics, blasphemers, rogues,
if all of them, from calumny of and offense to me,
do not accept me, they will not accept bhakti.
To deliver them I came; the opposite has occurred.
How will I help all these knaves?

*e sab jīver ava”sya karibo uddhār
ataeva ava”sya sannyāsa karibo
sannyāsīr buddhaye more praṇata haibo
praṇatite habe ihār aparādh kṣay
nirmala hṛdaye bhakti karibo udaya (Cc, 1.17.257-9)*

I must certainly raise up all these living beings.
Therefore, I must accept sannyāsa
Thinking me a sannyāsī they will pay homage.
Through their homage their offenses will diminish.
In their purified hearts bhakti will rise.

Secondly, there is a his example of worship. There are two aspects of the Lord — his godly aspect and his *bhakta* aspect. In his godly aspect he has accepted *sannyāsa* in order to deliver the living beings. In his *bhakta* aspect he has established, himself and also by means of his companions, an example of worship. If *sannyāsa* were compatible with the method of worship he taught, he would have instructed his companions to take *sannyāsa*, too, and somewhere in his elucidation of the sixty-four varieties of bhakti as practice he would have mentioned *sannyāsa*. The Master did not do that and among his companions no one took *sannyāsa*. Even though as God he took *sannyāsa* in order to deliver the living beings, as *bhakta* the Master said:

*ki kārya sannyāse mor prem nijadhan
ye kāle sannyāsa kailo channa hailo man (Cc, 2.15.52)*

What is the use of this *sannyāsa* of mine? My true treasure is love.
When I took *sannyāsa* my mind became covered.

The suggestion of this statement of the Master's is perhaps that in the effort to obtain love there is no need for *sannyāsa*. From Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa's *Caitanya-bhāgavata* we learn that *sannyāsa* is unfavorable to the worship on the path of *bhakti*. Mahāprabhu has revealed that, too, through the words of Śrīpāda Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya (see the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Antya, Chapter Three).

One more thing should be considered. It is said in the *Bhāgavata* (10.33.31):

ईश्वराणां वचः सत्यं तथैवाचरणं क्वचित् ।
तेषां यत् स्ववचोयुक्तं बुद्धिमांस्तत् समाचरेत् ॥

The words of the controllers (forms of god) are true and sometimes their actions are too. What is in accord with their words the wise should do.

In the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* on this verse it is said: "One should accept as authority and follow the instructions of the Lord. One should consider the behavior of the Lord and that behavior which is in agreement with his instructions one should follow. Behavior other than that one should not follow. In terms of following, the Lord's instructions carry more weight than his actions."¹³

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (3.24) it is said:

वर्तितव्यं शमिच्छद्भिर्भक्तवन्न तु कृष्णवत् ।
इत्येवं भक्तिशास्त्राणां तात्पर्यस्य विनिर्णयम् ॥

Those desiring their well-being should behave like the bhakta not like Kṛṣṇa. This is the clear conclusion of the bhakti scriptures.

¹³वच आज्ञा सत्यं प्रमाणत्वेन ग्राह्यं स्ववचनेन अविरोद्धमिति स्वशब्देन तेषामेव तथा वि-
चारादाज्ञाया बलवत्तरं व्यञ्जितम् । बुद्धिमानिति तत्तद्विचार्य इत्यर्थः । अन्यथा निर्बुद्धिरेव इति
भावः ।

Mahāprabhu is the Lord himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Gaurakṛṣṇa. If, because he (Mahāprabhu) took *sannyāsa*, some bhakta following him disregards his example and takes *sannyāsa* too, that would be contrary to the bhakti scriptures. This is because accepting *sannyāsa* was an action of Mahāprabhu and that action is not in agreement with his instructions. In his instructions Mahāprabhu nowhere recommended taking *sannyāsa*. Rather, by saying that *sannyāsa* is prohibited in the Age of Kali and by implying the rejection of *sannyāsa* in his rejection of the *varṇāśrama-dharma*, his instructions are opposed to the taking of *sannyāsa*.

If someone says here: “Since the Master is the Lord himself, his taking *sannyāsa* may not be an action that can be followed. But if a bhakta who follows him takes *sannyāsa*, then there is no fault in someone’s following the action of that bhakta and taking *sannyāsa*. Doesn’t the scripture teach acting like a bhakta?” It must be replied that if some bhakta takes *sannyāsa*, his taking of *sannyāsa* would be contrary to scripture. Following an action contrary to scripture cannot be recommended. In the commentary on the verse from the *Ujjvala-nīlamṇi* cited above Viśvanātha Cakravartin after considering the issue concludes: “Whether one is a perfected bhakta or a practitioner bhakta, a bhakta’s actions that are in accordance with scripture are to be followed. Other actions are not to be followed.”¹⁴

If someone says that Śrī Nityānanda also took *sannyāsa*, it must be pointed out that Śrī Nityānanda is also deity. He is Baladeva of the Vraja sport. That not all of the actions of the deity can be followed has already been demonstrated. The *sannyāsa* of Śrī Nityānanda was part of his sport. Then again after he arrived in Navadvīpa he broke his staff and waterpot with his own hands and threw them down and Mahāprabhu threw that broken staff and pot into the Ganges. After Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, Nityānanda broke his staff and threw it into a river on the way to Nīlācala. Neither of them ever again used the staff of the *sannyāsa āśama*.

Another question might arise. One of Mahāprabhu’s other intimate companions, Śrī Puruṣottama Ācārya, took *sannyāsa* and became known by the name Svarūpadāmodara. He was already on the path of *bhakti*. Why then did he still take *sannyāsa*? In reply it must be said that he did not take *sannyāsa* because he thought it was favorable to or helpful for the practice of *bhakti*. When he heard that the Master had taken *sannyāsa* he thought: “My lord who is millions of times more dear to me than my own life will endure the hardships of the *sannyāsa āśrama* and I will enjoy the pleasures of household life? That won’t do at all. I will also

¹⁴Comm. on Un., 3.24.

bid farewell to the pleasures of family life (*saṃsāra*) and take sannyāsa.” Thinking in this way and being unsettled at the thought of the hardships of the Master’s life in the stage of sannyāsa, he ran to Kāśī like mad man and took sannyāsa. That also was not complete sannyāsa. He didn’t take the *yoga-paṭṭa*¹⁵ and he didn’t take the staff and waterpot. Moreover, he was an eternally perfect companion bhakta. That all of the actions of a perfected bhakta cannot be followed has been stated before.

Someone again might say that sannyāsīs like Paramānanda Purī, Raṅga Purī, Brahmānanda Purī, and so on were associates of Mahāprabhu and he showed them great respect. If sannyāsa were not pleasing to the Lord why would he act like that? In answer it must be said that all those sannyāsīs had previously taken sannyāsa in the Śāṅkara community and they later entered the path of bhakti. Even though they entered the path of bhakti their names and dress remained as before. They did not take sannyāsa after entering the path of bhakti. The Master did not ask them to give up their former names and dress out of a sense of etiquette towards them. In this context there is one other matter to consider. In all of those communities in which the institution of sannyāsa is practiced, each one has a particular title indicative of the sannyāsāśrama. If a sannyāsī rejects one community and enters another community he has to give up his previous title and takes the title used in the new community. Since there is no institution of sannyāsa practiced in the Gauḍīya community there is no title indicative of the sannyāsāśrama in it. Therefore, if a sannyāsī from another community joins the Gauḍīya community there is no question of his being required to give up his previous title.

From the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* of Vṛndāvana Dāsa (Antya, 3.22-30) we hear how Mahāprabhu has revealed the incompatibility of sannyāsa with the culture of bhakti from Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, allowing himself to be the brunt of his comments. Enchanted by the Master’s *māyā* Sārvabhauma said to the Master:

*baḍoi kṛṣṇer kṛpā haiyāche tomāre
sabe ek khāni kariyācho abyabhāre
parama subuddhi tumi haiyā āpane
tabe tumi sannyāsa karilā ki kāraṇe
bujha dekhi ki āche sannyāse
prathamei baddha haya ahaṅkāra pāśe
daṇḍa dhari mahājñānī haya āpanāre
kāhāreo bolo hasta joḍ nāhi kare*

¹⁵A cloth worn over the back and knees during meditation.

*yār padadhūli laite veder vihit
heno jan namaskāre tabhu nahe bhīt
sannyāsīr dharmo bā balibo seho nahe
bujho ei bhāgavate jeno mat kahe*

प्रणमेद्दण्डवद्भूमावाञ्चचाण्डालगोखरम् ।
प्रविष्टो जीवकलया तत्रैव भगवानिति ॥¹⁶

*(praṇameddaṇḍavadbhūmāvāśvacāṇḍālagokharam
pravi.s.to jīvakalayā tatraiva bhagavāniti)
brāhmaṇādi kukkura caṇḍāla anta kari
daṇḍavat karibek bahu mānya kari
ei je vaiṣṇavadharma sabhāre praṇati
sei dharmadhvajī yār ithe nāhi rati
śikhāsūtra ghucāiyā sabe ei lābh
namaskār kare āsi mahā mahā bhāg*

Large indeed is Kṛṣṇa’s mercy to you.
Only one thing have you done wrong.

Though you are yourself most intelligent,
why have you taken sannyāsa?

Look, let’s see what there is in sannyāsa.
First one is bound by the ropes of arrogance.

By simply taking up a staff a person becomes a great scholar.
He does not fold his hands before anyone.

Those whose foot-dust, the Vedas enjoin, he should take on his head
now offer homage to him instead and yet he is not afraid.

Whether that is the dharma of sannyāsīs or not, I won’t say.
Look, here is the way the *Bhāgavata* puts it:

“One should offer homage, like a stick on the ground, [to all] down to
the dogs, Cāṇḍālas, cows, and donkeys, thinking ‘the lord is present
there as his part, the living being.’”

¹⁶Bhāg., 11.29.16 and 3.29.34.

From the *brāhmaṇa* to the dog and Cāṇḍāla,
one should pay them homage holding them in high regard.
That is Vaiṣṇava dharma — homage to all.
He is a pretender to dharma who has no taste for that.
Taking off his topknot and thread, he gains only this,
that the great ones now come and pay homage to him.

At the end of the names of the bhaktas is the word *dāsa*, servant. But before the names of those who take sannyāsa is the word *svāmin* and after *mahārāja*. Śrī Mahāprabhu has said: *ṭṭṇādapi sunīcena taroriva sahiṣṇunā, amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*. But sannyāsa stands as an obstacle on the path of following this instruction of the Master and stands contrary to the the verse indicative of the practitioner spoken by the Master: *nāhaṃ varṇī na ca narapatiḥ ...*

Through all these considerations it is seen that the acceptance of sannyāsa is not sanctioned by the scriptures for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who follow Mahāprabhu.

I have heard that someone has said that if one does not take sannyāsa worship is not possible. This is an incredible statement. Of all of the companions of Mahāprabhu by means of whom he established the models for worship, nearly all of them were householders. Even though Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha Dāsa, Raghunāth Bhaṭṭa, and the others did not remain in the householder stage, not one of them took sannyāsa.

In truth, Mahāprabhu's sannyāsa is one of his sports connected with his essential nature.

6 Bhāgavata 1.1.1: A Vision of the Absolute (Nitai Das)

6.1 Introduction

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is one of the great classics of world religious literature and yet it is often not found in lists of such classics. Since its composition, perhaps as early as the middle of the first millennium of the common era, perhaps as late as the end of that millennium, it has taken India almost by storm, becoming one of the main focuses of commentarial attention by a number of traditions, and a mainstay in rites of religious recitation and exposition. In its philosophical and psychological sophistication, the subtlety and beauty of its language, its vision of religious experience as ecstatic and emotionally intense, it represents an important stage in the gradual transformation of the Hindu religious ethos into its modern forms. Coming as it does in the third great stage in the development of the Hindu tradition, it builds on and transforms the main elements of the first or Vedic stage and the second or Epic stage. Thus, in many places the *Bhāgavata* reflects and provides commentary on various seminal hymns of the Veda and passages of the Upaniṣads. It also builds upon the narratives of the *Mahābhārata* and acts as a critique of the teachings of the great epic, especially those concerning dharma. Thus, the *Bhāgavata* cannot be fully or properly understood without a deep familiarity with those previous texts. We shall see this heritage clearly reflected in the first verse of the Purāṇa.

The *Bhāgavata* is a member of a vast class of texts called the Purāṇas. The Purāṇas were originally repositories of old legends and tales which included creation stories, secondary creation stories, stories of the births and genealogies of the gods, and accounts of the periods of time, and dynastic histories. These five subjects, therefore, comprise the famous five defining characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of the Purāṇas.¹⁷ A collection of ancient lore such as this, now lost to us, is probably what is meant by Purāṇa in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.10) where it is said:

एवं वा अरेऽस्य महतो भूतस्य निश्चसितमेतद्
यद्गवेदो यजुर्वेदो सामवेदोऽथर्वाङ्गिरस इतिहासः पुराणम्

¹⁷Matsya Purāṇa, सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च । वंशानुचरितान् चैव पुराणं पञ्चलक्षणम् ॥

Or thus it is this exhaled breath of this great being which is the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, Atharvaveda, the Itihāsa, and the Purāṇa.

Perhaps portions of the old Purāṇa have survived in the later Purāṇas.

The *Bhāgavata* expands the five characteristics into ten and places the first nine in a relationship of dependence on the tenth, known as the *āśraya*, the foundation, the shelter, the fundamental and absolute truth. The ten characteristics of a Purāṇa according to the *Bhāgavata* are: creation in general, special creation by the demiurge Brahmā, maintenance of the creation, grace, desires, the Manu periods, discourses on deity, cosmic dissolution, liberation, and finally the resort or foundation.¹⁸ This tendency of the Purāṇic literature to expand beyond being mere repositories of ancient lore into being expressions of India's many and diverse visions of the absolute is noticeable in all of the Purāṇas. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is classified as a Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa which means that the vision it presents of the absolute is shaped by a long tradition of religious practice and reflection that came to regard the old and somewhat minor Vedic god named Viṣṇu as the supreme god or Bhagavān. Other Purāṇas are classified as Śaivite or Śākta, depending on whether they are thought to focus primarily on the great god Śiva or the great goddess Śakti. The *Bhāgavata* in particular focuses on Kṛṣṇa, thought by the older tradition to be merely a descent or *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, as its highest vision of the deity.

The *Bhāgavata* is not a small work. It is said in other Purāṇas and in the *Bhāgavata*'s own colophons to contain 18,000 Sanskrit verses. A verse here means a two line metrical composition that generally presents a complete thought or statement. The verses are composed in a variety of meters, the most common of which is the *śloka* which consists of 32 syllables, 16 syllables to a line. While most of the verses in the *Bhāgavata* are of this sort, there are also verses in as many as thirty-four other meters scattered throughout it. Moreover, there are sizeable sections of prose in the text. In actuality, however, there are only 16,256 verses in the text as we have it today. Nevertheless, compare that to a work like the *Bhagavad-gītā* which only has about 700 verses. The *Bhāgavata* is about 23 times as large. A recent translation (1976) in the *Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* series extends to five volumes and over 2,200 pages. The ISKCON translation is even longer, extending to over twenty volumes, but that is bloated by commentary.

¹⁸अत्र सर्गो विसर्गश्च स्थानं पोषणमूतयः । मन्वन्तरेशानुकथा निरोधो मुक्तिराश्रयः ॥ भाग. 2.10.1

Of the over sixteen thousand verses in the *Bhāgavata*, some stand out as being particularly important. There are, for instance, the four verses referred to as the *Catuḥślokī*, thought to be the original four verses of the *Bhāgavata*, the seed verses from which the rest of the text has grown.¹⁹ They are as follows:

अहमेवासमग्रे नान्यद्यत्सदसत्परम् ।
 पञ्चादहं यदेतच्च योऽवशिष्येत सोऽस्म्यहम् ॥
 ऋतेऽर्थं यत्प्रतीयेत न प्रतीयेत चात्मनि ।
 तद्विद्यादात्मनो मायां यथाभासो यथा तमः ॥
 यथा महान्ति भूतानि भूतेषूच्चावचेष्वनु ।
 प्रविष्टान्यप्रविष्टानि तथा तेषु न तेष्वहम् ॥
 एतावदेव जिज्ञास्यं तत्त्वजिज्ञासुनात्मनः ।
 अन्वयव्यतिरेकाभ्यां यत्स्यात्सर्वत्र सर्वदा ॥

I alone was before, there being no other that was real or unreal, and after [creation] this am I. What remains [after dissolution], that too I am. That because of which things are perceived or not perceived in the self like light and like darkness one should know to be my own *māyā*. As the great elements are present and not present in beings, high and low, so am I in them and not in them. This much should be known everywhere and at all times, through positive and negative concomitance, by one who wishes to know the reality of the self.

This rather dense statement is reminiscent of certain well known passages of the Upaniṣads describing the primordial state of things with the difference that in those passages the primal being is referred to in the third person, as an "it," whereas here the primal being is represented as speaking of itself in the first person. Take for instance the famous passage from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (1.4.1): आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् पुरुषविधः, "the self alone was this in the beginning in the shape of a person." Another difference between this passage and those of the Upaniṣads is the recognition of *māyā* as the cause of what is perceived and not perceived in the self and the idea that that *māyā* in some sense belongs to the self or to the primordial being.

¹⁹BP, 2.9.32-35.

Another famous and oft-quoted verse of the *Bhāgavata* shows a similar tendency to try to bridge the gap between the impersonal and personal visions of the absolute that belong to the tradition before it. In it it is said (1.2.11):

वदन्ति तत्तत्त्वविदस्तत्त्वं यज्ज्ञानमद्वयम् ।
ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्द्यते ॥

The knowers of reality say that that reality which is non-dual knowledge is described as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.

Brahman is the absolute as it is in and of itself, unqualified, inactive, and undelimited by māyā. It is the absolute as transcendent. Paramātmā is the absolute in relationship with the cosmos, as the inner witness and controller of all. It is the absolute as immanent. Bhagavān is the absolute as personal deity, as agent, as savior, and as lover. Those three words according to the knowers of reality refer to the same non-dual knowledge or awareness. The authors of *Bhāgavata* sought to find and to proclaim the connection or consistency between those three ways of viewing the absolute. This is the hard sought *samanvaya* or unifying link that Hindu sages and scholars have sought to discover in the many and diverse revelatory texts of the Vedas and Upaniṣads. It strikes one in its own way as not unlike the struggle in modern physics to try to find, or perhaps to forge a unification between general relativity which deals with the huge and quantum mechanics which deals with the miniscule. Brahman represents the large, vast vision of the absolute as undivided, unfragmented consciousness, and Bhagavān as the small, individualistic, personalistic vision of the absolute. The truths that apply to the one seem to contradict the truths that apply to the other. How then can one unify them?

Apart from these verses and numerous other well known verses of the *Bhāgavata* there is the masterful first verse of the Purāṇa which sets the tone and orientation for the whole work. The first verse of a traditional composition in India is called its *maṅgalācaraṇa*, or auspicious performance. It has more to do than merely create meaning. It must get the journey under way, point it in the right direction, destroy any obstacles that may be in the way, gather together and encourage those qualified for the journey, and finally give a brief but enticing glimpse of the destination. It is a ritual act as much as it is an act of speech. In this regard, the first verse of the *Bhāgavata* does not disappoint. It is a model of its genre and fitting spring board into the hyperspace of the text's universe of meaning.

6.2 Verse One

जन्माद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादितरतश्चार्थेष्वभिज्ञः स्वराट्
तेने ब्रह्म हृदा य आदिकवये मुह्यन्ति यत् सूरयः
तेजोवारिमृदां यथा विनिमयो यत्र त्रिसर्गोऽमृषा
धाम्ना स्वेन सदा निरस्तकुहकं सत्यं परं धीमहि

We meditate on the highest truth from which came the birth and so forth of this [cosmos], directly and indirectly, fully versed in the objectives, independent, who extended Brahman [the Veda], about which even the wise are confused, to the first poet through his heart [mind], in which the creation is real [or unreal] like the interchange between fire, water, and earth, and which is always free of deception through its own splendor.

6.3 Analysis

There are so many ways to analyze this first verse of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* many of which are represented in the numerous commentaries written on it. No other Purāṇa has received such commentarial attention. What is striking for me about this first verse is the way it begins. The very first word is *janma*, birth. The Purāṇa begins with the beginning of existence, with the beginning of the universe, with the beginning of one's life, with the beginning of one's study. There seems to be a progression in the very first line of this verse, its first quarter. First comes birth followed by growth and increasing maturity which are represented by the Sanskrit *ādi* (etcetera). Along the way to maturity one develops the ability to think or reason, represented here by the words *anvaya* and *itarataḥ*. These refer to positive and negative concomitances which are essential parts of the science of logic or inference in India. Next comes expertise in the *arthas*, the objectives or goals of human life also known as *puruṣārthas*. Those objectives are wealth, sensual pleasure, piety, and liberation. The sequence concludes with the acquisition of independence. In other words one discovers through all these developments and goals that one is separate from, apart, deferent from, independent of the processes of birth, growth, old age and death. One discovers through those processes the true nature of one's self, that it is independent and as the word *svaṛāṭ* implies self-illuminated.

The second quarter of the verse is concerned with the revelatory process. Brahman, knowledge, is revealed through the heart to the poet. It is not understood even by the wise or learned who become confused about what its real intent or meaning is. It is discovered in one's heart or rather it is revealed there. This is, of course, a recognition of the manner in which the authors thought the Vedas were revealed to humans, not written by them. They are known as *śruti*, that which one hears, not *kr̥ti* that which one creates or concocts. Thus in the Hindu tradition the Veda is regarded as eternal and authorless. In the mythology the Vedas were revealed to Brahmā, the demiurge at the beginning of time and the Vedas acted as the blueprints by which he was able to construct the world. Thus he is the original kavi or poet, the creator creating according to his inspiration, that is, according to the Veda revealed to him in his heart. Still, there is the sense here that what was true for the original kavi is also true for all the later and lesser kavis.

The third quarter describes the process by which one becomes confused or deceived about the nature of reality. In the way that sometimes fire appears to be in water or water on the land or earthly solids in fire, one sees the temporary changing world of the three *guṇa* or three strands as real because it rests in the real absolute. It is because of the reality of the substratum that the superimposed is felt to be real. The substratum imparts reality to that which is perceived in it. Nevertheless, that which is perceived in it is not really real.

Finally, in the last quarter of the verse the highest truth reveals itself in the act of meditation. The deception described in the third quarter as the appearance of something in what it is not is destroyed by the light or effulgence of the highest truth upon which the authors meditate. Moreover, this is not light that comes from some other source. It is light that emanates from the highest truth itself. The highest truth is self-revealing, not just another object that can be illumined by the light of other things. It is the revealer, not the revealed. The very last word in the verse is *dhīmahi*, "we meditate." Besides pointing to the centrality of meditation in Hindu practice, this word is identified by most of the commentators as a reference to the famous *gāyatrī* mantra, considered to be the quintessential hymn of the Vedas, the pinnacle of Vedic mantra, capturing the highest truth and bestowing the highest blessings. Thus, the authors of the *Bhāgavata* while connecting themselves to the Vedic revelatory tradition are suggesting that they are beginning where the Vedas leave off. The plural "we" is explained by the commentators as the teacher meditating along with his disciples. Thus, in the first verse of the *Bhāgavata* we are presented with the image of a teacher meditating along with his disciples in preparation for the great teaching to come.

6.4 Conclusion

The first verse begins with birth and ends with the highest truth. In between almost everything else is encompassed. *Janmādyasya yataḥ* draws in Vedānta since this is the famous second *sūtra* of the *Vedānta-sūtras*. *Anvayād itarataḥ* brings in Nyāya, the discipline of logic in India which works through an understanding of pervasion (*vyāpti*) and an absence of pervasion. With the *arthas* come the four *puruṣārthas*, goals of human life, and their respective fields of study: *artha-śāstra*, *kāma-śāstra*, *dharma-śāstra*, and *mokṣa-śāstra*. The Mīmāṃsā, or the school of Vedic hermeneutics, is also brought in the second quarter of the verse with Brahman, the speech of the Veda, as revealed to Brahmā at the beginning of time. Sāṅkhya and Yoga are not left out either. Sāṅkhya is there in the reference to the *trisarga* or triple creation, the creation by means of the three *guṇa* or strands, and, of course, Yoga is present in the last word of the verse *dhīmahi*, we meditate. Thus all of the major schools of Hindu philosophy, along with most of the minor ones, are drawn into the embrace of this great Purāṇa and the driving force behind its writers appears to be to unify all these diverse elements into a coherent and complete vision of the nature of reality. The authors appear to be searching for the *samanvaya* of *samanvayas*, or in today's terminology the theory of everything. This is consistent with what I see as a fundamental sensibility of medieval and modern Hinduism, the sense that a view or a vision of reality is not right unless it can account for everything.

7 Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī

These are translations of a selection of Vaiṣṇava songs, called in Bengali *Vaiṣṇava-padāvalī* (*padavali* means strings of verse), spanning five centuries. Vaiṣṇava is a general term that refers to a worshiper of the ancient Hindu god Visnu, who is referred to in some of the oldest of the Vedic hymns. The Vaiṣṇava who wrote songs in Bengali were generally worshipers not of Visnu per se, but of the god Kṛṣṇa and his lover goddess Rādhā. For the Vaiṣṇava of this late period in the long history of Vaiṣṇavism the majestic, remote, and awe-inspiring Visnu has been superseded by the beautiful, approachable, and love-inspiring Kṛṣṇa. This transformation was primarily the influence of the Bhagavata Purana (8th cent. ?) in which the relative primacy of the two gods was reversed. Previously Kṛṣṇa was described as one of the incarnations of Visnu, but the Purana teaches that it is Kṛṣṇa who is the source of all forms of god, even of Visnu, and who thus incorporates all the others in himself. By worshiping Kṛṣṇa, therefore, all the others are worshiped as well. This may have been a point that engaged the theologians and philosophers of the period and fueled many a debate among them, but it was not necessarily what attracted the finest poets of the time, not only in Bengali but in many other languages around India. What attracted the poets to Kṛṣṇa was that he is described in the Bhagavata as an intense and passionate lover whose charm and beauty aroused the love of the cowherd girls of his childhood home of Vraja. By extension Kṛṣṇa is capable of attracting the hearts and minds of all living creatures. Kṛṣṇa is a god of love and this is what inspired the thousands of songs written in Bengali and other Indic languages for the last eight centuries. This was the subject of one of India's finest religio-erotic poems the *Gīta-govinda* by Jayadeva (12th cent.) which was written in Sanskrit possibly in Bengal or Orissa. The songs presented here represent only a fragment of the songs of the some of finest Vaiṣṇava poets writing in Bengali from the fifteenth century through the nineteenth century. As the basis of this anthology I am using the fine selection made by Dr. Bimanbehari Mazunder called *Pacasata Vatsarera Padavali*, "Songs of Five Hundred Years" (Kalikata: Jijnasa, 1368 [1962]). It contains some 336 songs in all, which, as anyone familiar with this poetic phenomenon would know, is just a drop in the ocean of Vaiṣṇava padavali. Altogether some 88 poets are represented, including Dr. Mazumder himself whose own songs are included in an appendix under the signature name "Nitai."

Dr. Mazumder wrote a good, but rather brief general introduction to these songs, parts of which I will present at the beginnings of the various installments

of these translations. The general introduction touches on the philosophical ideas behind these songs, the various rasas presented in them (standardized to 64), the various types of heroine portrayed (also numbered 64), and the peculiarities of the language found in the songs. Mazumder's anthology is divided into five sections each representing a century and beginning with the 15th century and each section is divided into several subsections according to the motifs found in the songs. Thus the first section covers the 15th century and has subsections entitled "love in reproach," "meeting during the rainy season," "the sport of the rasa dance," and "love in separation." The other centuries have other subsections. In addition, the section for each century has a short introduction in which the main poets of that century are introduced. Useful information from those introductory sections will also be presented.

7.1 Fifteenth Century Songs Introduction

In the 15th century, before the appearance of Sri Caitanya, there were four song writers: Vidyapati, Candidasa, Maladhara Basu Gunaraja Khan, and Madhavadra Puri. Vidyapati had a copy made of the *Kavyaprakasaviveka* (1510 C.E.) during the reign of Sivasimha. During this reign of Sivasimha, Vidyapati wrote some two hundred songs. Many of his very fine songs are only found in Bengal, not in Mithila or in Nepal. The language of those songs has many differences from that found in Mithila and Nepal. The difference of mood is even greater. It is possible that at the time when a song of Vidyapati was being sung, Bengalis made such changes in it that its mood became Vaiṣṇava and it become easier [for Bengalis] to understand. One Bengali in particular, taking the name of Vidyapati, wrote many songs on the subject of love enjoyment (*sambhoga*) and on other subjects.

The songs presented here are those of the Candidasa whose name stands without an adjective. This Candidasa became so famous that later other Candidasas added adjectives to their names, adjectives like "Big" (bodo), "Twice-born" (dvija), "Original" (adi), "Humble" (dina), etc. Sri Caitanya appreciated the songs of the Candidasa without an adjective.

Maladhara Basu wrote the *Sri Kṛṣṇavijaya* a little before the birth of Caitanya. His home was in the village of Kulina in Vardhaman District. His title was Gu-

naraja Khan. Satyaraja Khan and Ramananda Basu who were dear to the Lord were born in his family.

Madhavendrapuri was the guru of Sri Caitanya's guru Isvarapuri. Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja calls him the 'first sprout of the desire tree of bhakti.' His *preman* (love) was so deep that if he saw a cloud or the neck of peacock he would faint. The Vaiṣṇava padavali that arose as the poetry of the lives of Vaiṣṇavas, got its start from him.

7.2 First Bouquet Love in Reproach (Aksepanuraga)

1.
What can I say, friend;
such is her misery.
Her body is filled
with the flute's breathy poison.
Forcefully it enters her ears.
There it melts her body, mind, and inhibition.
Huge bumps cover her body!
Not seeing with her eyes,
it is as if she sees someone.
In front of her elders,
there are waves of emotion.
With effort she covers her whole body with her cloth.
On soft soft feet she moves about inside the house.
Fortunately today the creator has retained her attire
Body and mind distracted, her girdle comes loose.
What can I say? Vidyapati is mystified.

2.
One cannot describe that wicked flute!
Calling it draws a chaste woman outside.
Pulling her hair it takes her to Syama.
Like a thirsty doe she falls into danger,
A chaste woman forgets her husband;
a sage forgets his mind.

Hearing it, the trees and vines get goose bumps.
What will happen? Women are by nature simple.
Says Candidasa: "But everyone's dancing master is the dark one!"

3.
Piety and works gone, and the elders' pride.
Unsettling, the love of that dark Kanu.
At home what will others not say?
What can I do?
Who does not love? I am sullied.
I cannot go out because of people's talk.
I feel like taking poison to die.
Some call chaste women weak.
The blemish of Kanu has happened;
burning I die in misery.
Unable to eat, unable to stay at home;
thinking about him over and over,
pain has entered my heart.
My body and mind are fevered;
fever has spread though my body.
Candidasa says: "certainly you will be well."

4.
There is no friend to call and ask;
My heart feels restless.
Who does not love?
I alone am at fault.
While I go out the people gossip;
Inside are unbearable thorns.
Having loved, the whole world has turned enemy;
Who will I call my own?
Even if a limb becomes blemished with many faults,
one does not reject it.
Your hearts have become troubled;
together are we in life and death.
The son of Nanda, Kṛṣṇa of Gokula
everyone calls him their own
Wanting him again, I welcomed him,

the fruit of uncountable births.
You will no more call and ask of Rādhā
if I die here and now.
Candidasa says: "you will have everyone,
if he becomes your friend."

5.
On the arrangements of the Creator,
the Maker, the Orderer I throw ashes.
You have made me alone from birth,
not given me a partner.
You have not given me a sensitive friend,
instead only fools and idiots.
This is the way it is
in this your sinful creation.
He for whom my heart cries;
him I have not seen.
For this sinful work,
this is my accounting.
At the door of my house
I will light a fire
and go to a distant place.
"Your distress will some day be over,"
says the poet Candidasa

6.
Fie on those who in living
dominate others!
Greater fie on those who
become controlled by another.
On this sinful forehead
the Creator has written it so.
The ocean of nectar
has become poison for me.
If I, calling it nectar,
dive into it,
why does my heart
suddenly fill up with poison?

If I place a stone on my lap
thinking it is cool,
that stone melts
from heat of my body's fire.
Seeing shade I go to sit
in a grove of trees and bushes.
Those trees catch on fire
along with the leaves and bushes.
If I go to the water of the Yamuna
and jump in,
will my breath be cooled
or does the heat rise instead?
Therefore, how will this
contemptible life go on?
Certainly I will eat
this poison of poisons.
Candidasa says: "You do not know
the ways of fate.
That deep love takes one's life."

7.

Seeing the ocean of the joy of love
I lowered myself into it to bathe.
After bathing I climbed out and, turning to look back,
was struck by a gust of sadness.
Who made this lake of love,
its water so pure?
Crocodiles of sadness swim about it always
making one's very life tremble.
There are flame-like elders, and watery mosses,
and neighbors like barbed fish.
Water chestnuts of family-respect, all thorny,
surround the whole pool.
Spots of algae stick to my body,
if I try to strain it and drink it.
Itching inside of it and outside of it
the Creator has given both joy and misery.
Says Candidasa: "Listen my lovely!"

Joy and misery are two brothers.
If one makes love to get joy,
misery comes along with him.”

8.

Friend, it is all my fault!
If, without knowing better, I reached for love.
Who should I be angry with?
Seeing the ocean of sweet nectar right before me,
I drank til I was happy.
Who would have known
that if you taste it it turns to poison,
that I would find so much misery?
If I had known, even in the slightest,
would I still have done so?
Birth, family, character—all are lost.
Weeping again and again I die.
To heck with so many hopes and expectations.
I choose to see.
First love has no half of a half of a third.
Someone is willing to die for something;
if so, can she do otherwise?
Candidasa says: ”One pursues such love with a good person.”

9.

Listen, friend, to what I say to you.
See what has happened to me for loving.
Who knew that love is a fire?
It constantly burns. How much can I take?
Love is mischievous; who says it is good?
While thinking time has become a skeleton.
Tears flow unceasingly from my eyes.
My shameless breath will not stay steady.
Love has become a second Creator.
That Ruler has made this wreck of me.
Candidasa says: “That is a fine Ruler!
By this passion you will have every success!”

10.

Love, love, what is its form?
It has struck me in my heart.
If my life leaves me, love will not leave.
Whoever created love?
These three letters: “pi-ri-ti” (love),
I don’t know from where they have come.
The thorn of love has punctured my heart
like some inflated doll.
Love, love, the fire of love,
is burning now twice as hot.
Unkind the flame that does not go out,
A spear stuck in my heart.
Candidasa says: “Listen, my lovely,
love does not speak.
If you give up your life for the sake of love,
then love is what you will find.”

8 Letters

Dear Nitaiji,

Thanks for the latest Nitai-zine, it's another triumph. I especially appreciated the clarity of your exposition of logical flaws in the 'Siksha Parampara' idea. But did BSS invent this idea? He appears to have borrowed Baladeva Vidyabhushan's parampara from *Govinda-bhasya*, then added his and his father's associates, excluding Sri Bipin Goswami.

I agree with Dr Nath about Sannyasa, and find a society made up of householders and humble babas to be healthy and desirable. But I have it from a member of Dr Nath's family who lives here that some are members of Gaudiya Math, despite his objections. The reason appears to be the appeal of the security of a large institution. I am also susceptible to this. What to do?

I have also contemplated the possibility of a meeting between modern and Vaishnava thought, but there are a number of problems with this, as well as some interesting possibilities. The principal problem is that after Nietzsche, who has arguably brought the quest of western philosophy begun by the Greeks to a conclusion, all is now in fragments: truth is limited in time and space: true for us right now, but not for them yesterday, tomorrow, or in a different idea-paradigm. (Nietzsche thus brought western universalism closer to the Hindu concept of Svadharma than it has ever been before: The 'God' he killed is only the Christian God.)

-In that context, Vaishnavism, as a sophisticated Little Tradition, is already acceptable in ('post') modern thought.

-Many, beginning with Bhaktivinod I think, have noted that Vaishnavism is making a major contribution to the Christian Theology of Heaven: as the ultimate imaginable state of bliss in devotion to a personal God.

-The impact of Vaishnavite respect for life on western thought can be judged especially through that of Gandhi's Vaishnavism-inspired ahimsa.

-Some devotees are developing an argument that feminine Gaudiya-Vaishnavism is an appropriate antidote to supposedly masculine colonialism in a post-colonial feminist world.

I personally find this last to be based on weak assumptions: non-western feminists find their western female counterparts to be also oppressors (White women

had slaves. How can they claim now to have been on the side of the oppressed all along? This sounds hollow to non-western women and a considerable debate is now raging in feminist circles: even supposedly universalist feminism is faced with fragmentation!)

Also, my own research suggests to me that the Brahmin's practiced a far more insidious form of colonialism than that imposed by any outside power. Dr BR Ambedkar the great Untouchable leader said this. I put it to you that this last (the fact that it is mostly Brahminical: Note eg even Bhaktivinod's active suppression of low-caste vaishnavas) is the most serious obstacle to our project of making Vaishnavism acceptable in modern thought, and thus I have for many years been pessimistic about our chances. But what do you think?

Yours in the aspiration to serve the Supreme Beautiful,

Vishvatma das.

PS: my own preference is for an existentialist-aestheticist approach to Gaudiya Vaishnavism: I believe because it is absurd (Kierkegard), Beauty is its own justification. We are madly seeking the ridiculously beautiful, the beautifully absurd.

Greetings Vishvatma das,

Thanks for your kind words about the latest Nitai-zine and for your thought-provoking comments. As far as I know BSS did invent the idea of a siksa-parampara. I haven't encountered it anywhere else. The idea of a guru-parampara is of course very old. What is generally meant by that, however, is the diksa parampara. That is what the guru-parampara cited by Baladeva is supposed to be. Where that lineage comes from is not clear. It seems to have appeared first either in the work of Kavikarnapura (*Gauraganoddesadipika*) or in the *Navaratna* by Harirama Vyasa Goswami, a disciple of a disciple of Isvarapuri. As Dr. Kapoor has pointed out the lineage is questionable and there are major differences between Gaudiya theology and Madhva theology. Still there may be a connection remembered here.

I am sorry to hear that Dr. Nath's relatives have surrendered themselves to the GM. They ought to ask one of those fat GM sannyasis what he thinks of their relative's vast body of work. What do you think the answer would be? Probably just: "Get in ma belly!!"

I'm only recommending some sort of encounter between modern thought and Gaudiya thought. It may not ever really achieve any significant level of acceptance. Nevertheless, I think it would be enriching for both. Modern thought is so fad driven that it is hard to tell where it will go next. On the other hand Gaudiya thought is so bound to the past that it is hard to move it anywhere else. I suspect that if it survives, it will have to learn some new dance steps.

One of the problem areas is indeed feminism. I don't really think that GV thought has much to contribute there. It mostly needs to learn. Remember, the tradition is mostly the work of men who had little more than their imaginations to help them envision the feminine. It presents a male conception of femininity. We need more women acharyas and more women writers and thinkers to enrich the tradition. The male/female stereotypes that underlie much of the theology have to be questioned and most certainly modified. Much of that stuff is only the trappings of the culture and can be dispensed with, one would hope.

Similarly the question of brahmanism is important. You are of course right that it is a brutal form of colonialism. I prefer to think of it as institutionalized racism. The word jati really means something more like species. The castes are different species of life. This is even more radical than racism. On the other hand, one has to recognize that without the brahmans none of the fine texts and elevated ways of thinking and viewing life would exist. The Upanisads, the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Ramayana*, the *Vedanta-sutra*, the *Bhagavata*, the *Gita-govinda*, the works of Rupa and Sanatana, Jiva, Visvanatha, Baladeva, etc. are all essentially brahman works. Notable exceptions are the works of Kaviparnapura and Kṛṣṇadasakaviraja. They were nevertheless educated by brahmans. Also the brahmanic tradition has been capable of great self-criticism. The *Bhagavata*, for instance, has been characterized as anti-brahmanical. It most certainly was written by a brahman, however. The whole philosophy points beyond bodily identifications, which the caste system is nested in, to a deeper commonality and equality, a humbling recognition for a brahman puffed up with pride of position. Of course, one can always look at this as an example of Marx's opiate function of religion and I think there is truth in that, but not the whole truth. There were plenty of brahmans learning from these texts too. It wasn't just the brahmans telling the other castes to behave and the reward will come later.

Nevertheless, I think that perhaps brahmanism has way outlived its usefulness. That is one of the things that I like the most about Dr. Nath's essay on sannyasa, his demonstration that the caste system is not a feature of Mahaprabhu's vision. I

lament Bhaktivinod's acceptance, in principle at least, of the varnasrama system. I suspect that Bhaktivinod's competitor, Rādhāramāncaran Das, may have been more on track with his firm rejection of that system. It has renewed in me a desire to explore more deeply the thought of Bodo Baba.

Well I have babbled on long enough. Thanks for the letter. It is heartening to know that people read the zine and think about it.

May I use this letter in the next issue? If so, with or without your name?

Thanks again,

your servant,

Nitai das

Dear Nitai,

I appreciate and am in sympathy with your comments. I know little about 19th Century Vaishnavism other than Bhaktivinod and I would certainly like to know more about Bodo Baba and Rādhāramāncaran das. I recently reread Rammohan Roy's discussion on Sati and found him so refreshing after Bhaktivinod's stuffy pronouncements about maintaining social proprieties (including Sati?). On the other hand I believe that Gaudiya Vaishnavism will always be, like fine art, an elite pursuit for connoisseurs, while for a popular ethical mass-religion you can't beat the egalitarianism of Christianity (except for its dull congregational music), or perhaps Sikhism (beautiful kirtans and practical vegetarianism).

A simple but strong feminist critique of GV was already made by Mira(bhai). What answer could the Goswamis have made to her simple challenge? Her sense of a direct relationship with Krishna free of intermediaries (and the liberation it brought her) can also be seen as a Protestant rejection of the caste/gender hierarchy, especially if we see this as reflected in the hierarchy of Krishna's associates described by the Sad-goswamis. But GV is so much more than hierarchical formalism, isn't it? So there must be scope for a Reformed GV, for example emphasizing the humanistic elements in Raghunath das's poetry as does SK De, etc. But I reach an impasse here. Even Raghunath uses misogynistic imagery, while Mira steps right over all that makes GV unique- the detailed lila. Where does this leave us?

I laughed uproariously at the comparison between certain gurus and that fat character in Austin Powers. Thanks for that.

Vishvatma das.

Dear Nitai Das,

The points you've made concerning parampara initiation has rocked me to the core of my being. I haven't even begun sorting this all out. I am partially disabled and I don't see myself as being able to travel to India should it become necessary to do so to get "properly initiated" as you say. Since you have taken initiation from an unimpeachable source perhaps you would have mercy upon me and initiate me yourself.

I do have one anecdotal story about meeting Srila AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. I took my family to see one his lectures at Portland State University and after the lecture we were invited to chant along with the devotees. As I began chanting my head (I don't know how else to say it) lit up with a ecstasy impossible to adequately describe. This lasted approximately 45 seconds. I respect you as a devotee and your works are quoted by other Vaishnavas. Please advise.

I do have one question. Since you quoted Madhya 25.28 "I consider the statements of Sri Kṛṣṇacaitanya to be completely true. In the Age of Kali we do not overcome the cycle of rebirth by sannyasa." (C.c., Madhya, 25.27) - then why did the Lord Himself take sannyasa? Of course, He is the Supreme Lord and He can do anything and I know that the reason for His taking sannyasa was that people might otherwise mistake Him for an ordinary human being. Still it seems strange to me. I will pray for guidance from my caitya-guru - the Lord in my heart and hope to hear from you about these points.

Anonymous

PS: In issue 6 of your ezine your quote from C.c says 25.27. My copy says Madhya 25.28.

Greetings Anonymous,

Sorry for the delay in my response. I was away for a week or so and have been struggling to get caught up with my email. I am flattered that you ask me

for initiation, but unfortunately I am not ready to take on that weighty a role. It may take some time before I reach that level. I would be glad to help you in any other way, however. There are plenty of worthy initiators around these days. I will keep you posted about that. You already have the most potent form of spiritual awakening at your disposal, however, in the chanting of the Holy Name and that seems to accord with the experience of joy that you shared with me. The Holy Name is all one needs. It arranges everything. It purifies, softens, brings joy and peace, and eventually brings one into the presence of one's guru and the Lord. It is important, however, that you sever all connections with the atmosphere of offense that surrounds the GM/ISKCON conglomerate. In my own experience I have found this to be true. Before leaving ISKCON I was acting as the pujari of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarama temple in Vrindaban and in my readings of the Vaiṣṇava texts at that time I noticed that whenever japa of the Holy Name is mentioned it is always mentioned that one should do at least one lakh of rounds. Mahaprabhu is often described as doing one lakh of names and he always counted them in some way. So I began to do that in my spare time. While it was a pleasant, relaxing experience, I didn't experience anything unusual. After I left ISKCON and went to live out in the sticks with my future guru, Sri Tin Kudi Baba, there was a marked difference. Things really began to happen. I won't say what at present, but my experiences out with Baba will appear in the next few essays in Nitai-zine. The next issue should be out in a few days. The point is that the atmosphere of offense in ISKCON was impairing my chanting of the Holy Name. It didn't impair it entirely; nothing can do that. But the difference was remarkable when I left.

If you are able, try chanting at least a lakh (100,000 Names or 64 rounds) a day. Avoid association with ISKCON/GM, don't read their books, watch their shows, visit their temples, chant their mantra, etc. etc. The influence of offense is subtle and dangerous. I and others are in the process of developing other readings and practices completely free of ISKCON influence and based thoroughly on the received tradition. Soon I will create a new page on my website with recommendations for reading and practice. One of the practices I am about to promote centers around Sanatana's wonderful little text the Sri Kṛṣṇa-lila-stava which is being translated on my website. It is composed of 108 pranams that simultaneously recount the sports of Kṛṣṇa as presented in the Bhagavata, 10th canto. Those make excellent daily meditations and are a fine example of true Nama-sankirtana. Nama-sankirtana is not chanting the Mahamantra. The Mahamantra is meant only for japa and must be counted when chanted. Nama-sankirtana is what Sanatana does in the Sri Kṛṣṇa-lila-stava. This may seem hard to believe, but in my intro-

duction to that text (when it is complete) I will provide all the evidence needed to prove that. Thus, I want to produce a book out of that text that can be used as a daily kirtana and/or meditation. It is a powerful text. One who recites it and reads it regularly will get Kṛṣṇa-preman according to Sanatana. You might want to try that out now. Do one obeisance a day after reading the text for that obeisance. When finished, start it again. This amounts to regular and constant remembering of Kṛṣṇa. Hope it works for you.

I will look into the discrepancy you mention in the CC reference. I am using Dr. Rādhāgovinda Nath's wonderful edition, so the difference might arise because of that. But perhaps I made a mistake. The question of why Mahāprabhu took sannyasa is treated in the next installment of Rādhāgovinda Nath's essay on sannyasa, but you basically already have the answer. The reason sannyasa is not recommended for the age of Kali is that humans are incapable of observing it properly. Just look at the examples the GM and ISKCON give us. There are plenty of similar examples outside of Vaiṣṇavism, too. Such a handicap cannot be applied to the Lord, however. 90householders. Of the remaining, the sannyasi were sannyasi before they met Mahāprabhu. I don't know of anyone that Mahāprabhu advised to take sannyasa. The others, like Rupa and Sanatana, were simple renunciants with no social standing or social respect. They were beyond all that. We refer to this kind of renunciation as bhekh nowadays. That is the true form of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava renunciation, not this saffron nonsense.

Hope this helps. Thanks once again for your letter. Feel free to write any time you want.

Radhe Radhe

Nitai Das

Dear Nitai,

Please accept my pranams. Jaya Radhe! I am very happy I can have a correspondence with you. I am not in New York any longer. I moved out in 1994 to travel around Europe. I met my wife in Germany in 1995, we got married and settled in her home country called Slovenia. We lived there till 1997 and then moved to Vrindavan where we lived till May of this year. We were working as Gurukul teachers. I taught academics: English, math, geography, history, science and music. My wife taught Sanskrit. I remember reading in a Bhaktivedanta biography about you writing up a curriculum along with Jagadish for the gurukul

schools, and how you thought that it should be recognized by the government. Then Bhaktivedanta rejected that idea. It's funny because so many things have changed since then. Now they are considering getting it government approved because they don't have enough money to keep it going as a Hare Kṛṣṇa children ashrama school anymore.

Do you know what ever became of Jayasacinandana? When I was a young bhakta I used to admire his kirtans. ¿ What is your understanding and realization about manjari svarupa seva meditation? Regarding visualization: Do you see your entire form performing the seva, as though seeing a movie, or do you just visualize the seva as how you would do things in this external plane?

Y.s.

Rādhāpada dasa

Hi Rādhāpada,

Sorry for the long delay in my reply. Thanks for sketching in your history for me. My daughter, wife and I passed through Vrindaban some years ago and visited the Gurukula. This would have been around 1992. I was impressed with the Sanskritist there at the time. I understand he later left and took initiation from Haridas Shastri, something I considered once upon a time.

Yes, I once planned out a curriculum for the Gurukula with Nandarani devi dasi (Nancy Wright). I took the plan from the traditional Sanskrit education system or the Pathasala curriculum which is accredited by the Gov. of India and replaced the standard texts with Vaiṣṇava works. I found that I could pretty much replace all of the standard texts with the works of the Goswami. Prabhupada also asked me to create this curriculum and get it accredited. For that purpose I made a few trips down to Delhi to visit the Ministry of Education. I also consulted some of the great Vaiṣṇava scholars of Brindavan at that time. Nrisimha Vallabha Goswami was particularly helpful and inspiring. I also consulted with Anantalal Bhatt Goswami, Dr. Kapoor, Haridas Shastri, and others. When I was done I thought I had a very substantial course of study and one that the Gov't of India would surely recognize. Nandarani contributed the English side of the curriculum and we were going to include Math and Science, but had not yet worked out the details. A student passing through the course would be thoroughly grounded in Sanskrit and Vaiṣṇavism and would also be up-to-date in other subjects, too,

able to converse intelligently with anyone. When I showed it to Prabhupad, he hit the ceiling. All he wanted on the curriculum were his own books. He called in all the GBC members who were at Mayapur at the time and roasted me and my curriculum for at least an hour and said quite plainly that in his view "the world didn't need any more scholars. It needed devotees." The GBC members gathered around like so many jackals and each took a bite out of me. The worst was that pompous ass Hridayananda. The next day I visited Prabhupad while he was being massaged to ask a question about one of his translations. I was still the staff editor of his books. He looked at me long and hard. Then he chuckled and said "You are always trying to change me, but I am too stubborn." That was his way of trying to massage my feelings back to health and recognize our close, almost father-son like relationship. Although it was very kind of him, it didn't work. I believe at that time I had already discovered the initiation problem and the curriculum episode convinced me that there was no place in ISKCON for me. I wanted to be both a scholar and a devotee. I left within a few months and found shelter with Tin Kudi Goswami. I have no idea what happened after that. I was too busy chanting (japa) Hari Nama.

I am still rather interested in the education of Vaiṣṇavas as my wild dream of a Tol on my website indicates. No one has responded to that, but perhaps it may still happen.

I don't know what has become of Jayasacinandana. Minaketana Ramadas might know better. He keeps up with people better than I do. He may have even contacted him recently. He maintains the Virtual Mandira site that is linked to my kutir. Check with him.

I am sorry that I can't really answer what last question. I don't practice *manjari svarupa seva*. It is too time-consuming for me at present and one has to learn that from a good *siksa* guru. My guru learned from Manohar Das Baba who taught many of the baba. I would love to go to Manasa-sarovara, to that little community of baba at Cakleswar and learn how to do it. There are numerous maps and diagrams to learn and the correct manner of visualization. It would probably take many months or even a year. Once done, though, it would be great to return to the US and run retreats in some beautiful part of the US teaching others how to do it and how to chant the Holy Name effectively. That would be a huge service and I don't consider Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavism to have been truly transplanted until something like that has been established. Think of it: a program of varying lengths (a week, a month, three months, etc.) in which people come

to a beautiful ashrama, rise early, chant at least a lakh of names a day, eat pure vegetarian prasada, and participate in bhajana under a trained specialist and in the evenings do kirtana. If such a program were organized and executed by devotees duly initiated and trained, it wouldn't take long for participants to realize Kṛṣṇa-preman.

How well does your wife know Sanskrit? Jan Brzezinsky and I have started an online text repository in which we want to keep all of the Gaudiya texts and several others too. The idea is to create carefully edited editions of all the texts and make them available to any one who wants them free. It will be a huge resource for translators and scholars. It will be the foundation for the preservation of the tradition and the first step in the eventual translation of these jewels into English and other languages. If the texts are carefully edited and maintained, then the translations will be much more faithful and authoritative. Would your wife be interested in participating in that? We need people to type and then proofread the texts using a particular system of transliteration that can then be processed into devanagari using Latex. The final result will be high quality postscript documents that can be viewed, down-loaded, and printed on laser printers. If she is interested, let me know and I will send her the details. We have some parts of texts already posted on a page connected to the Yogapitha site (www.yogapitha.org). That page at present is far from what I have envisioned it to be, but it is a start. I am looking around for grant funds to support this work. Let me know what you think.

Radhe Radhe!

Hope all is well,

Nitai Das

Dear Nitai das,

Jaya Radhe! Please accept my pranams. My wife and I have just finished your 5 or 6 articles. They were well done. We liked your sense of humor and boldness. I appreciated your researched info and it has helped me arm myself for future debates with people. Especially this issue about siddha pranalli is a thing from Vrakeswara Pandit and so forth, is a line used often by these GM/ISKCON people to defend their position of why they don't have siddha pranalli. It is a hunk of bull. I also find that among the leading "rasikas" of these institutions that they often steal the information from the hands of the true practitioners of

raganuga bhajan, and pass it off to others, namely their followers, as being their own realization. They do this to increase their prestige. However, it will always remain as information to them because they cannot enter into it. The example is perfect of the bee trying to taste the outside jar of honey.

I must admit that I was not as bold as you as to filing a divorce from ISKCON when my wife and I took diksa and siddha pranalli. We used the institution, in this case the school, to help finance our stay in Vrindavana in order to help us facilitate our bhajan. We were undercover from the beginning of 1998 to just two months ago when our cover was blown. The people in charge were nice to me about it though. Quite some of them don't have faith in ISKCON gurus anymore, so they were open to my being in another line. However, I was fearing religious persecution from some of the die hards, as word was slowly circulating that I became a "rascal." So we left Vrindavan in time before I received any heavy confrontations. I am quite known in the ISKCON world as a kirtan singer. So, one of my "competitors" was glad to see me go. By the way, were are you living these days. I hope to meet you personally one day.

Y.s.

Rādhāpada dasa

Hi Rādhāpada,

I wrote you a long letter yesterday, so I won't say too much today. Can I use this letter in the Letters section of Nitai-zine? You make some good points about GM/ISKCON people stealing information from genuine bhajananandis and your story may be instructive to others who are in the position you were in. I am starting to put together the next issue. If you have anything else you would like to contribute, please let me know. Probably won't be out until after the end of the month. I am currently living in Kirksville, Missouri, also known as the middle of nowhere. I like it, however. My wife teaches English literature at the university (Truman State) here and I was teaching religion at Iowa State University about two hundred miles away. This year I am not teaching. Instead I am working on a number of writing projects. I prefer it to teaching. I hope to finish a book a year for the next twenty or thirty years. Most of them will be on Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism, but I also have interests in Vedanta, Nyaya, Mimamsa, and Kashmiri Shaivism not to mention rasa aesthetics and literary criticism. For such work the seclusion of Kirksville is perfect.

You should use your kirtan gifts to make recordings of some of the great Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa padas. Your presentation will have more potency than your ex-competitor. His singing is corrupted by the offensive atmosphere of GM/ISKCON. That much is evident by his rejoicing over your departure. You are now a real bhakta and he is still a phony. Do you have any recordings at present? I would love to hear your singing. Nowadays it is fairly easy to make good recordings and make them available on the Internet. Maybe mp3.com could advise you on how to do it. I can see that as one of the more powerful forces of attraction in the tradition. What do you think?

hope all is well,

Radhe Radhe!

Nitai das

Dear Nitai Das,

Your scriptural, circumstantial and hear-say evidence that Bhaktisiddhanta did not receive proper initiation seems to be irrefutable. However, the Gita says that every endeavor is covered by some fault. And to suggest that his disciples and the disciples of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada - disciples who have sacrificed their entire lives to spreading the Holy Names - might have to undergo more births and deaths because of it seems just a little cold. Is this how you interpret Lord Chaitanya's unlimited mercy? One may make out a legitimate case for Bilvamangala's not having received proper initiation because he received it from the prostitute Cintamani. And your repeating a hear-say story that Bhakti-siddhanta might be a demon doesn't mean a thing. Vrkasura was a demon but he was also a Vaishnava. Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksa were the door-keepers of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha. There are many such examples. I hope that is not the basis for your criticism against a naistika brahmachari. Be very careful where you cast your aspersions they have the tendency to boomerang against their maker. The faults you seek become yours. That's all I have to say. Just something for you to think about.

nitya krsna das

Greetings Nitya Kṛṣṇa Das,

Thanks for your comments. All viewpoints are important. I assure you that I tried for nearly a year to confirm or falsify the question of Bhaktisiddhanta's initiation. The conclusion that I came to after interviewing numerous people was that Bhaktisiddhanta may have received initiation in dream from Gaurakisora Das Baba, but that such initiations must be confirmed in the flesh. Why, because dreams are unreliable. They may be real, but they may also be false. You call the evidence I present "hear-say" as if to suggest that it has little force. Remember, though, the Vedas are "hear-say." They are repeated by each generation to the next. Someone says and some else hears. What counts is the respectability of the source. Who are my sources? Dr. Kapoor and Lalita Prasad Thakur, Bhaktisiddhanta's own brother and duly initiated disciple of Bhaktivinod Thakur, and what I heard from them was confirmed by everyone else I spoke with. Don't blow off hear-say. Hear-say is sruti if it comes from authoritative sources. I heard the demon story directly from Lalita Prasada Thakur who felt it had been confirmed by his own mother who exclaimed during her pregnancy with Bimala Prasad that it felt like a demon had entered her womb. Yes, indeed, some demons are also Vaiṣṇavas, but the demon that Lalita Prasada Thakur pointed to hated Bhaktivinod and wanted to spoil his work. Behind it all might indeed be the hand of Mahaprabhu, but we can't know that. What we do know is what scripture tells us and that is that initiation in an undisputed lineage is the all important first step in the cultivation of bhakti.

Your example of Bilvamangala is meaningless. First of all, who says that a prostitute cannot be a guru? Secondly, Cintamani is never regarded as Bilvamangala's diksa guru, but as his vartma-pradarsaka guru, the guru who pointed him to the right path. Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja says in his commentary on the *Kṛṣṇakarnamṛta* that Bilvamangala received *gopala-mantra* initiation from Somagiri.

Finally, on the one hand you say that the evidence I have presented seems irrefutable which means that you think it may be true and yet you are upset with me for speaking that truth. The truth may not be very palatable at times, but that should not deter us from searching for it and being willing to recognize it when it confronts us. Still, there are some truths that need not be told and perhaps you think that this is one of them. I would also tend to agree with you were it not for the sad spectacle of *sadhu-ninda* and *vaisnava-aparadha* that so characterize ISKCON and Gaudiya Math discourse. This is really where the danger lies. The offensive atmosphere that pervades both organizations and their offshoots is deadly to the growth of bhakti.

When I was considering leaving ISKCON I looked for a solid reason to do so in scripture and after much searching I found one. The scriptures tell us (Śrī Jiva in the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, 237) that even if one's guru is a fool, one is to be faithful to him, better (and probably safer) from a distance. However, if one's guru is a Vaiṣṇava nindi (vidveṣi), a blasphemer of Vaiṣṇavas, then he is to be left behind. That is precisely the qualification of ISKCON and GM gurus up to and including Bhaktivedanta Swami and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. Their writings and sayings are full of Vaiṣṇava aparadha. That is why I made the difficult choice of leaving the association of ISKCON and provoking the wrath of Prabhupad, whom I loved almost as a father. And that is also the reason I speak up now and shall continue to do so. If you find my message disturbing, you don't need to listen. Perhaps the message is not for you. Perhaps it is their own aspersions coming back to them as you warned would happen to me. I'm not trying to become a jagat-guru. If someone expresses the desire for genuine initiation I send them to someone else. There are plenty of others who are qualified to give initiation. Whether one gets initiation or not, the atmosphere of ISKCON and GM is crippling to bhakti and specifically to the Holy Name. If I can help anyone leave that harmful atmosphere and join the world of genuine Vaiṣṇava thought and practice then I will consider myself both a fortunate and a useful servant of Mahaprabhu.

Thanks for your letter. Though I disagree with your opinions, they are valuable and should be heard. May I put this letter in the letter section of the next Nitai-zine? If not, that is fine. If so, what name should I put on it? I'm sure other readers will be interested in your line of thought.

Hope this meets you in good health,

your servant,

Nitai Das

Dear Nitai Das,

I have no wish to infringe on your right to speak out on this matter. I think that it is important for all devotees to speak of these things among themselves. The fact remains, however, that irregu- larites aside it was Srila Prabhupada who gave me the holy names. It was Srila Prabhupada who initiated me - so I must consider Srila Prabhupada my guru. Swami Tripurari says that it is ludicrous to consider that Mahaprabhu would use anyone less than a suddha bhakta to propogate the chanting of His holy names. And there is scriptural evidence to bear this out.

Srimad Bhagavatam describes the superlative devotee thus:

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhagavatottamaḥ

”The most advanced devotee sees within everything the soul of all souls. Consequently he sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.”

Does Srila Prabhupada fit this description? What did he see? He saw that there was much to be done in the service of Kṛṣṇa, and he had an uncanny way of engaging everything he came in touch with in that service. In all of his involvement with worldly things, which was considerable, he never became distracted for a moment. From a homeless status in the Bowery of New York’s icy winter to temples in every major city of the world with millions of dollars at his disposal, he never changed.

He remained fixed in serving Kṛṣṇa. He ministered to people whom other Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas would not stand in the shadow of for fear of becoming contaminated. He cooked for them and ate their cooking. It seems reasonable to conclude that he was seeing God within everyone, and seeing everything around him as the energy of God.

It is mentioned in *Caitanya Caritamrita* that no one can effectively engage in propaganda of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa without Kṛṣṇa- sakti, ’kali-kalera dharma-kṛṣṇa-nama-sankirtana, kṛṣṇa-sakti vina nahe tara pravartana.’ Following this statement Vallabha praises Mahaprabhu further, telling him that because he has effectively propagated the glory of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa in sankirtana, this itself is evidence (pramana) that he is the bearer of Kṛṣṇa- sakti; ’taha pravartaila tumi, - ei ta ’pramana kṛṣṇa-sakti dhara tumi.’ He further emphasizes this point by saying, ’There is no doubt about it,’ ’ithe nahi tumi.’

Your contention is that being a disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta or Srila Prabhupada is stifling to one’s spiritual life and you point out some stunning failures to support this contention. But there are also some brilliant successes. I know of many devotees who have given up sinful life - meat-eating, intoxication, sexual promiscuity and taken to the chanting of Krishna nama.

Your main point - that there seems to be some irregularity in Bhaktisiddhanta's initiation does merit considerable attention. Furthermore, your points are also backed up by scriptural authority. So - it's quite a problem.

Am I justified in abandoning Srila Prabhupada as my guru? I don't know. I will continue to pray for guidance on this matter.

nitya-krsna das

Dear Nitya Krsna Das,

Thanks for your thoughtful reply. Sorry for my delay in responding. I had some favors for some friends to perform. I strongly disagree with Tripurari on the necessity of a pure devotee for spreading the Holy Name. I don't think he really appreciates the sheer power and play of the Holy Name. The Holy Name is Kṛṣṇa himself. Using an analogy from Manindranath Guha's book, part of which is translated on my website: it is like liquid candy poured into to two different molds, the one a human-shaped mold and the other a syllable mold. The first we call Kṛṣṇa, the second the Holy Name. The Holy Name has all the powers of Kṛṣṇa. No giver is necessary; no initiation is necessary for the Holy Name. I have experienced this in my own life. My first contact with the Holy Name wasn't through Prabhupad. The first time I heard the Holy Name was at a poetry reading given by Allen Ginsberg. After reading his own poetry for an hour or so, he pulled out a harmonium and begin chanting the Holy Name, that is, the Mahamantra. Not only that, he got all of us in the audience to chant. We chanted for perhaps twenty minutes and felt wonderful. I was terribly impressed, though I had no idea what it was about. By your account Allen Ginsberg must have been a pure devotee and he must have been infused by Kṛṣṇa sakti. The Holy Name can go where he will and touch whomever he wants. He is God. The second time I heard Kṛṣṇa's name was in a song that was playing on the radio back in the summer of 1969. I had just registered at college and was lying on the fender of my car in the parking lot of the Univ. of Colorado administration building listening to a rather sweet song called "You get brighter every day" "You belong to everybody, but you can't deny that I'm yours." It blew my mind when at the end the identity of the "you" was revealed: "Kṛṣṇa colors on the wall ..." I still think of that day as a turning point in my life. In a few short months Harinama Das, his wife Prabhavati Dasi, Bhavananda Das, and his wife Palika (?) Dasi opened the Boulder temple. By then I was already in love with Kṛṣṇa. So were the Incredible String Band pure

devotees? I think not. They were nevertheless conduits of the Holy Name and association with the Holy Name has changed my life permanently. Even now, as a sceptic leaning towards atheism, the Holy Name still rings loudly in my heart and I can't seem to exorcise myself of it.

The question of whether Prabhupad was a pure devotee still remains. He may well have been. Quite frankly I would not recognize a pure devotee if one bit me. How can one know what really goes on in another person's heart.? Personally, I think that Prabhupad talked too much about himself and his own successes to have been pure, but I am working with a preconception of what a pure devotee is like that may be entirely off base. Whether he was pure or not really doesn't matter to me. I shall be forever indebted to him for showing me the path. He was my vartma-pradarsaka guru just as Cintamani was for Bilvamangala. Such debts are un-repayable. I haven't abandoned Prabhupad. He simply occupies a different place in my gallery of gurus. All of them have been necessary for me.

It is interesting to see, however, how easily Vaiṣṇava aparadha invades our thinking. Your comment about "other Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas," for instance, is a good example of this. This is no doubt a reference to caste Goswamis. My initiating guru was a caste Goswami and I never saw him go running off to bathe because my shadow fell on him. He never patronized me or kept me at arm's length. He was always extremely kind to me and wanted to see me draw nearer to Kṛṣṇa. In short, your characterization of "other Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas" is false and would have to counted as ninda. That is not to say that there are no "other" Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas who behave the way you described, but to condemn a group for the sins of a few is patently unjust. Such Vaiṣṇava aparadha is a blight that is rampant in ISKCON and the Gaudiya Math. Unlike you, I don't claim that all are infected, though. Still, just as when a herd is infected with some dangerous disease, it is better to try to contain that disease by quarantining the herd and that is the basis of my treatment of the ISKCON/GM complex. I keep my distance. Such Vaiṣṇava aparadha quickly spreads from mind to mind and transforms into namaparadha and more than anything I don't want to offend my friend the Holy Name. How severely inhibited the Holy Name can be as a result of namaparadha is something I have personal experience of and I will write of it in a future Nitai-zine essay. Even namaparadha cannot entirely stop the Holy Name, however.

My advice to you is not to reject Prabhupad. Don't worry for now about the initiation problem. Instead, return to the basics: increase your chanting of the Holy Name and avoid as far as possible the namaparadha. The Holy Name will

take care of everything, including arranging your initiation when the time is right. My initiation guru was very reluctant to give me full initiation when I first went to him. It was not because of my mleccha body, but because of some harmful samskaras that he saw in me. He wanted me to chant the mahamantra in order to clean those away. He ordered me to chant three lakhs of Harinama a day (192 rounds a day). The effect was overwhelming and I will write more about it in a future ezine essay. It needs to be carefully described in detail. Not everything can be said at once.

Hope this letter find you well and gives you something to think about.

your servant,

Nitai Das

9 Next issue

Another big one I hope. You can participate. Send in a letter or an article fitting into one of the following categories:

1. Hari Nama
2. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Bhajana
3. Vaiṣṇava philosophy
4. Vaiṣṇava Padavali
5. Modern philosophy and Vaiṣṇava philosophy
6. Translations of original works.
7. Anecdotal accounts of your own experiences on the path to Goloka

Other topics besides this will be considered, too.