

*Nitai-zine*

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# 1 Introduction to This Issue

At long last another issue of *Nitai-zine* has found the light of day. It is a mystery to me how these things get done, however. I make a plan, gather together a few ideas, and begin to work on it, but it is never very long before there is an interruption or I am seduced to some other work. I keep returning, to be sure, but never for very long. Tiny bits and pieces are fit into place in the large mosaic of "the Plan," but they never seem to add up to much. Time flows by, as is its wont, far too quickly. One week fades into two and two into three. Before long a month passes, then two. Pieces keep getting added, but they never appear to make much of a difference in the huge face of the project. Then one day one stands back to take a look and there it is, a definite shape, a discernible image, something is present that was not there before. That is the condition of this issue of the *zine*. Not everything is in place, but there is a definite form supported by a tangible substance. How it got this way, however, I really haven't a clue. It is not hard to conclude that there must be some invisible hand operating in all of this. Here, then, is what lies ahead in this issue.

I set out in the present part of "Escape from the Hall of Mirrors" to pick up where I left off in Part One. I had just met Śrī Tinkudi Bābā and entered what seemed to be a long transition period in which I tested the waters outside of the ISKCON boat. I was living at the Krishna-Balarama Temple in Vrindaban, editing some *Bhāgavata* remnants, sections of the text that Prabhupāda has translated, but that had not been edited yet for diacritics, typos, quotes and so forth. Prabhupāda also asked me to devise a curriculum for the Gurukula that would get it accredited by the Government of India. Secretly, I was also trying to find evidence that either confirmed or disconfirmed Dr. Kapoor's shocking claim about the inauthenticity of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and its founder Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. As I settled in to describe that period in this issue's lead essay, I almost immediately got sidetracked. I began to remember some of the afternoon meetings I had with Dr. Kapoor in those days and some of things we discussed. One topic that loomed big in my mind was the proper manner of chanting the Mahāmantra. Dr. Kapoor took the position that the Mahāmantra was only for *japa* [private recitation] and not for *kīrtan* [public glorification]. This is, of course, the position of the followers of the Nitai-Gaura Rādhē-Śyām tradition that was established by Śrī Rādhāramaṇacaraṇa Dās Bābā. I decided to pause and take an ex-

tended look at the arguments on both sides. While this doesn't advance the narrative stream very much, it should prove to be an interested read.

Well after I started this essay, however, I received the sad news that Dr. Kapoor had passed away this past April. He was a great Vaiṣṇava and will be sorely missed. Fortunately, he has left behind a large body of work through which he lives on in our physical world. Were it not for him, I may not have escaped from that maze of mirrors called ISKCON. Perhaps I would still be wandering lost in that self-contained world of narcissism and pseudo-infinitudes. Fortunately, Dr. Kapoor removed one of the panels and allowed me to see beyond into the real world of Vaiṣṇavism. My humble respect goes to him. May he do the same for all of you through his books. Let there be no confusion, however. Dr. Kapoor's major writings are in praise of the very Vaiṣṇavas that the Bhakti-what-not Swamis of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and ISKCON have persistently calumniated. That calumny is a matter of public record. Where he stood on those issues and what line he looked to for Kṛṣṇa's grace should be abundantly clear. It was not the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

There are in this issue two guest essays by former ISKCON members who also saw the light and made the transition from ISKCONism into Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. The first is by Radhapada Das and contains a kind of symbolic indication of what the transition out of ISKCON and into Vaiṣṇavism is really about. Radhapada's name in ISKCON was Rati Das and was changed by his guru, Śrī Ananta Das Bābā, to Radhapada Das at the time of his initiation. Rati Das means "servant of sexual desire" and Radhapada Das means "servant of the feet of Rādhā." What an interesting change of names! Only Nityānanda Prabhu could have played such a joke: ISKCON, the servants of sex, and Vaiṣṇavas, the servants of Rādhā. The second essay is by Karunamayidas and describes the unfolding of his relationship with his guru, Śrī Krishnadas Bābā of Rādhākuṇḍa, who many in ISKCON, especially those in Vrindaban when I was there, never tired of belittling. Now where are they? Both essays make interesting reads and both authors are to be commended for their honesty and courage. May their paths lead them to *bhakti*.

Next, we have the first part of a series that I hope will continue for some time. This series seeks to make available and explore some of the early biographical materials on the life of Śrī Caitanya. It is called *The Gospel of Śrī Caitanya (according to Murāri)*. This is a translation of the first two chapters (maybe more) of the *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Murāri

Gupta. Murāri Gupta was an older contemporary of Śrī Caitanya. He was fifteen years old when Mahāprabhu was born, an eyewitness to his life in Navadvīpa. Eventually, I would like to see this text completed and combined with translations of the other biographies of Caitanya to circulate as a kind of Vaiṣṇava Bible, an answer to the Christian New Testament. Gospel merely means "good news" after all. Perhaps one day we will see beside every Gideon's Bible in every hotel and motel room across America a copy of the *Gospel of Śrī Caitanya*. Better still, why not bind them in the same cover as Gideon's and replace those sordid tales of betrayal, suffering, death, and scarcity with the story of Śrī Caitanya's teachings of love and abundance? Hopefully, a small start in that direction is made here.

The next item is another installment of Manindranath Guha's little work on the Holy Name called *A Drop from the Ocean of Nectar of the Holy Name*. Manindranath Babu was once a member of the Gauḍīya Maṭha behemoth, but he too escaped and found shelter with the saintly Śrī Kanupriya Goswami who is recognized as the Ācārya (Master Preceptor) of the Holy Name. The Goswami's three volume work on the Holy Name called *Nāma-cintāmaṇi* (Wish-Jewel of the Holy Name) is one of the finest presentations of the theology of the Holy Name in the recent Caitanya tradition. Manindranath Babu's short book is a brief presentation of some of the main teachings found in the Goswami's work. Manindranatha Babu has also recently passed away unfortunately. He too leaves behind a rich legacy of excellent small books and, with his wife Śrīmatī Sāvitrīdevī, some fine editions of important Gauḍīya texts. Look for more of his work in the pages of this *zine*. In this issue we present his discussion of offenses to the Holy Name.

We have next to return to a question that was raised in a previous issue of the *zine*, that is, what is the role of the institution of *sannyāsa* in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Previously, roughly the first half of an essay by Dr. Radhagovinda Nath on the question was published in *Nitai-zine*. This issue contains the second half of that essay and concludes Dr. Nath's argument that *sannyāsa* does not belong in the Caitanya tradition. Dr. Radhagovinda Nath was both a great scholar and a great Vaiṣṇava and his contributions to the Caitanya tradition are immense. His editions of and commentaries on the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* have surpassed all other available editions and commentaries of those works. His edition of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* was used as the basis of the recently published translation of the work into English by Drs. Edward Dimock and Tony Stewart in

the Harvard Oriental Series.

The next item "Men Who Would Be Women" is a reworked version of a paper I presented at a recent conference at Truman State University. In it I seek to think about the fundamental transformation of consciousness that the Caitanya tradition seeks to bring about. That transformation is couched in the language of gender, a movement from maleness to femaleness. What do these terms mean for the founders of the tradition and do they mean the same things today? The terms male and female cannot apply merely to the physical and psychological characteristics of men and women for presumably women too need to shed their maleness in order to gain intimacy with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. There is thus a metaphorical use of the words in the tradition that needs to be illuminated. That is part of what I try to do in this little essay. Hopefully, it will be a thought-provoking read.

Last but not least, in this issue we have an important new department in the *zine* that will attempt to provide careful and critical book reviews of books, recent and classic, on various aspects of the Caitanya and related traditions. I often get email from readers asking if I can recommend some good books on the Caitanya tradition or asking what I think of this or that book. I've decided to tackle such inquiries by examining two or three books in each issue of *Nitai-zine*. In this issue, you will find reviewed the classic book by Dr. Mahanamabrata Brahmācari called *Vaiṣṇava Vedānta: the Philosophy of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī*. This work is a revision of the author's doctoral dissertation for which he was awarded a doctoral degree from the University of Chicago in 1935. This was one of the first detailed presentations of the thought of Śrī Jīva in the context of other Vedāntins like Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja in the English language.

The second book reviewed in this issue is the new English translation of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* by Dimock and Stewart referred to earlier. This translation is one of the major contributions of Dr. Edward C. Dimock to the study of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism in the United States and Europe. It consumed over twenty years of his life as he worked on it, revised it, and waited for Harvard University Press to publish it. It finally appeared last year (2000). Unfortunately, Dr. Dimock did not have a long time to enjoy the pleasure of seeing his work finally in publication. He, too, sadly passed away this year. Dr. Dimock was the father of the study of the Caitanya tradition in the United States and deserves great credit for his work in the field. He was

an insightful and sympathetic scholar of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and had many students who loved him. I was one of them. One of his leading students, Dr. Tony Stewart, assisted him with the translation toward the end and helped edit and push the manuscript through the publication process, adding his own expertise on the biographical materials relating to Śrī Caitanya.

Lastly, we will critically examine the *Waves of Devotion: a comprehensive study of the Nectar of Devotion* (2000) by Dhanurdhara Swami. Swamiji builds his work on the foundation of the *Nectar of Devotion* by Prabhupāda Śrī Bhaktivedānta Swami which is a summary translation of Śrī Rūpa's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Somehow this book has fallen into my hands. Since it is with me, I have decided to review it. It is a nicely printed and well bound book, filled with charts and diagrams. The author claims to have corrected numerous mistakes made by "inexperienced, young devotees" in the transcription of this text for Prabhupāda way back in the early days of ISKCON. Since neither the Swami nor his assistants know much if any Sanskrit, it remains to be seen if he has introduced as many of his own. This review should be interesting.

In future issues there will be reviews of some of the works of Dr. Kapoor, a critical examination and comparison of the three translations of the *Tattva-sandarbhā* of Śrī Jīva (Satya Narayana Das's, Tripurari's, and Stuart Elkmann's), and reviews of some the works of Ananta Das Bābā available in English and of some of the translations of the works of the Gosvāmin done by Advaita Das. We will also look at some of the forgotten Vaisnava classics that are rare these days but still might be found floating around somewhere and some of the other works of Tripurari Swami, Satya Narayana Das, Narayana Maharaja, and a slew of others. Hopefully, these reviews will help readers decide which they may spend their precious time on.

Well, this is what lies ahead of you, dear patient reader. Is it all here now? Heck no, but some is and much of the rest is nearly ready. Regular updates of the *zine* will be made over the next few months. If you look back at the title page you will see a version number. The first version is set at 0.1. Each time I add something significant or make some significant changes the version number will be increased by .1. When this issue is complete, the version number will read 1.0. To see what has changed look at the Table of Contents for titles that contain some content (registered by the number of pages they fill). So check back every couple of weeks.



Jaya Rādhe Śyām Gaur!

Nitai Das

## 2 Escape from the Hall of Mirrors: Part Two by Nitai Das

After I met Tinkuḍi Bābā, sometime in 1975, the world seemed like a different place altogether. The despair I felt when I discovered the absence of authentic initiation in ISKCON turned into hope. I was filled with a new enthusiasm. I went back to my normal life at the Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple in Vrindaban where I had settled after leaving Prabhupāda’s traveling party.

For about two years I had travelled with Prabhupāda as his Sanskrit Secretary. During that time we circled the earth at least four times. I had joined the party in 1973 because the editors at the Press were worried about a slow down in the pace at which my predecessor, Pradyumna Prabhu, was working. At that time Prabhupāda was translating the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Cantos Four, Five, and Six. It was the Sanskrit Secretary’s job to collect the tapes that Prabhupāda made each morning, get them typed, check them over for typos or uncertainties, add the diacritics to the transliterated Sanskrit verses and quotations (sometimes hunt for those quotations, too), and make any minor editing changes that were needed. If there was any question about a translation or citation, the editor went straight to Prabhupāda to ask about it. Pradyumna had travelled with Prabhupāda for about a year or two, but after a while he began to lapse into periods of inaction or at best ineffective action during which the typed manuscripts, hot off the holy Dictaphone, so to speak, began to pile up. Eventually even Prabhupāda became frustrated. He once affectionately referred to Pradyumna Prabhu as a “dead horse” and pointed out that it was useless to try to beat a dead horse into action. At last, Prabhupāda agreed to adding another member to the party to help Pradyumna get caught up. At that time I was the head of the Sanskrit Editing Department at the Press which was then in Brooklyn and, well, I jumped at the opportunity to travel with Prabhupāda. Naturally, neither my wife at the time, Rastrapalika, nor my chief assistant, Jagannatha Das, were very pleased, my wife, because of the separation involved, and Jagannatha because he felt it should have been him, since he had no family ties. Perhaps he was right.

My time traveling with Prabhupāda was a magical time. At first Pradyumna and I travelled together with Prabhupāda working jointly to diminish the backlog. Then at some point Pradyumna dropped off the travelling party

for a while, I forget why. That left me to handle the editing alone. At some points I was the *only* traveling secretary, handling the duties of all the others in the traveling party: cooking for Prabhupāda, giving him his daily massages, seeing to his laundry, and helping him with correspondence, and editing his manuscripts. Perhaps in a later installment I will recount some of my experiences as one of Prabhupāda's traveling secretaries. For now, however, suffice it to say that after nearly two years of nearly ceaseless wandering around the globe with Prabhupāda, I was happy to settle down in Vrindaban, edit the tail end of the *Bhāgavata* backlog, teach Sanskrit to the new Gurukula students (Gurukula was the name of the ISKCON school in Vrindaban) and, at Prabhupāda's request, work on a curriculum for the Gurukula that would get the school accredited by the government of India. Those were the tasks I returned to, somewhat reluctantly, after meeting Bābā.

Working on the Gurukula curriculum was fun and interesting, however. My plan of action was to find a curriculum that was already accredited by the government of India and reproduce it, but using books from within Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition. I decided to check into the traditional Sanskrit school system to see what they used as a curriculum. I visited some of the local Vrindaban Pāṭhaśālās (schools) and even enrolled in one for a time. Working from a copy of the curriculum they used, which was established and supported by the respected Sampūrṇānanda Saṁskṛta Viśvavidyālaya in Benares, the primary Sanskrit institution in India, I began replacing the texts with comparable ones belonging to the Caitanya tradition. I visited several of the leading Caitanya Vaiṣṇava scholars in Vrindaban to ask for advice on texts to incorporate in the curriculum. I visited Sri Nrisimha Vallabha Goswami, Dr. Achyut Lal Bhatt Goswami, Haridas Shastri, Vanamali Das Shastri, Dr. O.B.L. Kapoor and many others who were learned in the Caitanya tradition. Based on their advice I created a curriculum that had everything the traditional curriculum had, except that most of the texts were written by the great Vaiṣṇava teachers in the tradition of Mahāprabhu. The areas of study included in the traditional curriculum were Sanskrit grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), literary criticism (*alaṅkāra-śāstra*), ritual (*smṛti*), philosophy (*darśana*), literature (*sāhitya*), astrology/astronomy (*jyotiṣa*), arithmetic/mathematics (*gaṇita*), and an optional choice of modern languages (Hindi, Bengali, English, etc). The course of study generally lasted eight years and concluded with the bestowing of the degree or title Śāstrī on those

who successfully passed the exams. The first set of exams, one in each of the eight areas, was administered after three years, the second set after another three years, and the degree exams two years after that. There were higher degrees like Ācārya and Vidyāvāridhi comparable to the Master's and Doctoral degrees, but I didn't worry about those then. Those generally required an original piece of research. There were a few texts from outside the Caitanya tradition that my informants thought were so fundamental that they recommended they be part of any Vaiṣṇava's education. These were texts like the *Vedānta-sāra* of Sadānanda, the *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* of Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, the *Tarka-saṅgraha* of Annambhaṭṭa, and a few others. The curriculum I developed then has more or less become the basis for the curriculum of the Caitanya Sanskrit Ṭol currently operating through Nitai's Bhajan Kutir.

Apart from my work on the curriculum, editing, and teaching in the Gurukula, I would often go in the afternoons to visit Dr. Kapoor. He would offer me some *prasādī* (offered) sweets from his household deities and we would talk for hours about points of philosophy and practice. Dr. Kapoor was very kind to me and took some risks with me that I hope he never came to regret. As we sat together in the small sitting room of his house which was part of the compound of the Rādhāramaṇa Temple, his hand was always in his bead bag and the Mahāmantra was always being repeated just beneath his breath. He told me much about his own religious life, his conversion, as a young philosophy professor, from the aridity of monistic Vedānta to Caitanya theism at the hands of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, his first meeting, much later, with Gaurāṅga Dās Bābā, the power of the line of Boḍo Bābā (Śrī Rādhāramaṇa Caraṇa Dāsa Bābā) who was the guru of the guru of Śrī Gaurāṅga Dās Bābā, the wonderful ability of both Boḍo Bābā and Rām Dās Bābā (Gaurāṅga Dās Bābā's guru) to create *kīrtans* spontaneously that answered unspoken questions in the minds of those who happened to be listening. He explained a great deal about the meaning and power of the famous chant that has become the trademark *kīrtan* of the tradition following Boḍo Bābā:

*bhaja nitai gaura rādhe śyāma  
japa hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma*

Worship Nitai and Gaura (Caitanya),

Rādhā and Śyāma.  
Utter Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Rāma

Dr. Kapoor claimed that the short Bhaja Nitai Gaura chant compressed the whole of Caitanya Vaiṣṇava practice into a few sweet and rhythmic words, easy to remember and easy to chant. He said it had extraordinary powers, that apart from inducing powerful religious ecstasy it could cure the sick and even raise the dead. He also told me of how at various times in his life when he was in some kind of difficulty or confusion, Boḍo Bābā himself had appeared to him in his dreams and shown him his mercy by giving him help and guidance. Since the first of those experiences the Bhaja Nitai Gaura chant had been a source of solace, protection, joy for him. Though Dr. Kapoor didn't tell me about how this chant came about during those talks, I recently looked up the account of how it was revealed in the biography of Boḍo Bābā called *Nectar of the Acts [of Boḍo Bābā] (Carita-sudhā)* compiled by Rām Dās Bābā. Here is a paraphrase of the biography's account of that event.

This extraordinary chant was revealed by Boḍo Bābā in the midst of an intense *kīrtan* he led during a prolonged stay in Krishnagar. While singing a particular *kīrtan* song Boḍo Bābā went into a deep trance. Tears began to flow from his eyes in streams and his body was covered with goose-bumps. An instant later his body shook violently like a tree in a powerful wind and he fell unconscious on the ground. The devotees surrounded him and began to chant the Holy Name. Seeing in his body the rising and falling of waves of powerful emotions, the devotees became astonished. When he became paralyzed with emotion, it seemed as if his body was devoid of life. Then in an instant he would laugh, in the next moment he would cry, a moment later he would shiver and a moment after that he would be covered with goose-bumps. After a while he came halfway to consciousness and stutteringly uttered:

*bhaja nitai gaura pābe rādheśyāma  
japa hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma*

The meaning here is a little different from the form above:

Worship Nitai and Gaura (Caitanya)  
and you will get Rādhā and Śyāma.  
Recite Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Rāma

Some of the devotees who surrounded him began to sing these words and that grew into a *kīrtan* that lasted long into the night. One group would sing the first line and another group would respond with the second, each group seemingly trying to overpower the other. Some time later during the *kīrtan* Boḍo Bābā, leaning against a wall, his eyes half open, his body drenched in tears and covered with goose-flesh, a smile on his face, raised the pointing finger of his right hand and swayed back and forth in intense emotion. At some point, too, a wonderful, mind-attracting aroma filled the place, but none of the devotees could find its source. Around about midnight, the *kīrtan* began to wind down, but Boḍo Bābā continued to be overwhelmed with feeling.<sup>1</sup>

At the time that Boḍo Bābā fell into his ecstasy, he was singing a song which apparently he composed. The short Bhaja Nitai Gaura chant seems to have condensed out of that longer song as its essential meaning. As such, the longer song is a kind of commentary on the short one. That longer song is this:

Nitai and Gaura dance like Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa  
Everyone sings "hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma."  
If you really want this Gaurāṅga,  
become a servant of Nityānanda.  
Even one who says only with his mouth:  
"I am a servant of Nityānanda"  
will perceive the true form of Gaura.  
The love of the *gopī* as in the *Bhāgavata*  
one will get only from Nityānanda in this world.  
Nityānanda is the giver of love;  
Gaurāṅga is his greatest treasure.  
In the pleasure of the Rāsa dance,  
one will meet Śrī Rādhāramaṇa.  
Climbing aboard the boat "hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma,"

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<sup>1</sup> *Carita-sudhā*, vol. 2, pp. 33-34.

cross over the ocean of rebirth to Vṛndāvana.  
My Nitai frolics, my Nitai plays,  
All who are maddened with love he makes his own.  
Here my Nitai dances, overwhelmed with emotion.  
Whomever he finds, even a Cāṇḍāla, he takes on his lap.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Kapoor told me that contrary to the misinterpretations of various ISKCON and GM members, the juxtaposition of Nitai-Gaura and Rādhē-Śyāma is not meant to imply the identification of Nityānanda with Rādhā. Such an identification is never made in the line of Boḍo Bābā. Only someone completely ignorant of the history and meaning of the song would make such a claim. This song is clearly about the power of Nityānanda as the one who can conduct one to the feet of Gaurāṅga who is in turn the joined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The power and influence of Nityānanda is so much a part of the teaching of Boḍo Bābā that those who knew him and those who are initiated in his line consider him to be a *śaktyāveśa avatāra* or empowered incarnation of Nityānanda. The idea that one must approach Mahāprabhu through Nityānanda is not an uncommon one in the Caitanya tradition.

The second line of Bhaḥja Nitai Gaura instructs one to do *japa* (private recitation) of the Mahāmantra. This doesn't seem too surprising or controversial. Dr. Kapoor pointed out, however, that this is to be taken quite literally. The Mahāmantra is not for *kīrtan*, but for *japa*. *Kīrtan* is generally understood to mean loud or congregational singing of a song or a chant. *Japa*, on the other hand is defined, in the *Kavikalpadruma* ("Desire-tree of Poets") as pronouncing (a mantra, formula, or prayer) in one's heart or mind (*hṛd-uccāre*) or vocally, that is, loudly with one's voice (*vāci*).<sup>3</sup> He claimed, much to my surprise, that Mahāprabhu is never represented in any of the authentic biographies as singing the Mahāmantra in *kīrtan*. If he is singing and dancing it is with some other form of the Holy Name, not the Mahāmantra. When he chants the Mahāmantra it is in *japa* and it is counted. This was such a radical claim that I at first didn't believe it. After some years of reading and thinking about it, however, I am a bit more sympathetic to the idea, although far from convinced. In ISKCON and GM and, it seems to me, in much of the rest of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava world, the Mahāmantra is both sung congregationally and chanted in *japa*. The idea that this was not what

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<sup>2</sup> *Carita-sudhā*, vol. 2, pp. 32-33.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Radhagovinda Nath's commentary on *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 2.23.76.

Mahāprabhu intended or practiced seemed incredible. If this turns out to be true, then one has to wonder how much else about the Caitanya tradition we have gotten wrong. Perhaps it is not a bad idea to allow a rather lengthy digression at this point in order to look at the evidence on both sides of this question.

Dr. Kapoor cited a number of passages from the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* to support his claim. While I don't remember the exact passages he cited, it seems to me that there are some that support his position and these are probably the passages he referred to. When Mahāprabhu began his *saṅkīrtana* career as it is described in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* he said:

“For so long have I studied and listened.  
Now finish your education: glorify (*kīrtan*) Kṛṣṇa.”  
The disciples asked: “What sort of glorifying do you mean?”  
The Son of Śacī, the Master himself, taught them.  
*haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇayādavāya namaḥ*  
*gopāla govinda rāma śrīmadhusūdana.*  
Showing them the way, the Master raised his hands  
and did *kīrtan* himself with his disciples.  
The Lord of Kīrtan himself led *kīrtan*;  
And all the disciples sang, surrounding him on all sides.<sup>4</sup>

When asked how to do *kīrtan* why didn't Mahāprabhu say "chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra?" Instead he gave his disciples another song, filled with Holy Names to be sure, but not the Mahāmantra. Dr. Kapoor claimed that every time Mahāprabhu is described as doing *kīrtan* in the biographies, he is singing some other form of the Holy Name. While I haven't found all of the passages that describe Mahāprabhu in *kīrtan* in the vast ocean of biographies, those that I have found always portray him as singing something other than the Mahāmantra. Conversely, I have not found him singing the Mahāmantra in any *kīrtan* yet, but then I am still searching.

Later in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* Mahāprabhu seems to say just what Dr. Kapoor claims:

Bringing gifts, everyone came to visit the Master.

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<sup>4</sup>*Cait. Bhāg.*, 2.1.397-401.



Seeing the Master all bowed down.  
 The Master said: “May everyone have *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa.  
 Speak of nothing else but Kṛṣṇa’s qualities and names.”  
 Then the Master himself instructed them all:  
 “Listen to the details of Kṛṣṇa’s Name, the Mahāmantra:  
*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare,*  
*hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare.”*  
 The Master said: “I have spoken this Mahāmantra. With it  
 perform *japa* with persistence (*nirbandha*).  
 From this, every perfection will arise for all.  
**Say it every second; there is no other rule.**  
 Some of you should gather, sitting at the door and all do *kīrtan*  
 clapping your hands:  
*haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇayādavāya namaḥ*  
*gopāla govinda rāma śrīmadhusūdana.*  
 I have told you all of this *kīrtan*.  
 Gathering together wives, sons, and fathers,  
 go to your homes and perform it.”<sup>5</sup>

In this passage, Mahāprabhu does appear to differentiate between *japa* and *kīrtan* and the Mahāmantra seems to be recommended for *japa*. The *haraye* chant is recommended for *kīrtan*. Furthermore, the word *nirbandha*, which I have translated “persistence,” could mean “with a fixed count or number.” Dr. Kapoor also pointed out some passages to me, perhaps from the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, in which Mahāprabhu is represented as chanting the Mahāmantra in *japa* and counting the mantra as he chants it. Moreover, he is represented as chanting one *lakh* or a 100,000 Names a day. I have not been able to locate that passage yet, however.

In the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* Mahāprabhu advises, in a rather ininteresting way, that one should chant the Holy Name a hundred thousand times a day. Here is what he says:

When invited for an alms-meal the Master said laughing:  
 “First you go and become lords of a hundred thousand.  
 I will eat where there is a lord of a hundred thousand.”

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<sup>5</sup> *Cait. Bhāg.*, 2.23.72-80.

Hearing this all the Brahmins became troubled.  
 The Brahmins offered prayers and said: “Goswami,  
 What to speak of a hundred thousand, none of us has a thousand.  
 If you do not take alms-food from us, our households,  
 let them burn to ashes this instant!”  
 The Master said: “Do you know who is a lord of a hundred  
 thousand?  
 He who chants a hundred thousand Holy Names every day.  
 I call that person a lord of a hundred thousand.  
 There do I take alms; I don’t go to other homes.”  
 Hearing the merciful words of the Master, the Brahmins gave up  
 their worry and became joyful in heart.  
 “We will chant a hundred thousands Names, Master. Please take  
 our alms.  
 What good fortune! In this way you teach us.”  
 Every day all the Brahmins chanted a hundred thousand Names  
 in order to have Caitanya Candra take alms-food at their houses.<sup>6</sup>

The Mahāmantra is not explicitly mentioned here, but it is implied. The brahmins at first think that Mahāprabhu is talking about money, but the Holy Names are the wealth that he has in mind. A hundred thousand Names each day works out to 58 rounds on a *japa-mālā* (100000 / 16 x 108). The usual number of rounds chanted is 64, however. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* there is an excellent example of the counting of the Mahāmantra. Mahāprabhu asks what one of his followers Vāṇīnātha, who had been arrested by the king, was doing. The response is this:

He said: ”Vāṇīnātha chants Kṛṣṇa’s Name fearlessly.  
 He says: ’hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa’ without a break.  
 To count he marks on the fingers of his two hands.  
 When a thousand is complete, he cuts a line on his body.  
 Hearing this Mahāprabhu was greatly pleased.  
 Who can understand the twists and turns of Gaura’s mercy?<sup>7</sup>

The counting of the Mahāmantra is apparently so important that even in jail an ingenious system is devised. It is well known that the great teacher

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<sup>6</sup> *Cait. Bhāg.*, 3.10.117-125.

<sup>7</sup> *Cc.*, 3.9.55-7.

(*ācārya*) of the chanting of the Holy Name, Haridāsa Ṭhakura, used to chant three lakhs a day:

In a deserted forest, in a hut, with service of *tulasī*,  
Night and day three lakhs of *nāma-saṅkīrtan* did he.<sup>8</sup>

Here *nāma-saṅkīrtan* must mean *nāma-japa*, because, as Dr. Radhagovinda Nath remarks in his commentary on that verse, one of those lakhs Haridas did loudly for the liberation of all nearby living beings. Moreover, the practice of *japa* appears always to be connected with counting. In the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* is a quote from the the *Vyāsa-smṛti* in which a mantra chanted (*japta*) without counting is said to become fruitless.<sup>9</sup> It is impossible to keep count of the number of Names recited in a session of congregational singing (*saṅkīrtana*). This suggests that occasionally the terms *kīrtana* and *saṅkīrtana* were used for *japa*, especially for loud or voiced *japa* (*vācika-japa*).

There are other pieces of evidence that suggest that counting the number of the Mahāmantra recited was important to Mahāprabhu. Three of his contemporaries mention counting the Holy Names in their praises of Śrī Caitanya. Rūpa Gosvāmī, for instance, says in one of his *Caitanyāṣṭaka* (verse 5):

Will that Caitanya come again before my eyes, on whose tongue manifested loudly the sounds "hare kṛṣṇa," whose shining hand counted the names on a line of knots on his fortunate string-belt, whose eyes were large and whose arms were like two bars moving to and fro.<sup>10</sup>

Here Caitanya is represented as chanting loudly, but counting the Holy Names on a belt made of string. This refers to voiced *japa*.

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<sup>8</sup>Cc., 3.3.92.

<sup>9</sup>H.bh.v., 17.135. Cited in Sundarāranda Vidyāvinoda, *Śrī Śrī Nāmacintāmaṇi-kiraṇa-kaṅkā*, p. 542.

<sup>10</sup>

हरे कृष्णेत्युच्चैः स्फुरितरसनो नामगणना-  
कृतग्रन्थिश्रेणिसुभगकटिसूत्रोज्ज्वलकरः ।  
विशालाक्षो दीर्घार्गलयुगलखेलञ्चितभुजः  
स चैतन्यः किं मे पुनरपि दृशोर्यास्यति पदम् ॥

Another clear reference to counting the Mahāmantra is found in the *Śacīsūnvaṣṭaka* of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvīn. Raghunātha's is another eye-witness account (verse 5):

Accepting these residents of Gauḍa [Bengal] as his own, the Lord instructed them like a father: "Hey, chant 'hare kṛṣṇa,' keeping count." Will the Son of Śacī come before my eyes again?<sup>11</sup>

Here the order to chant the Mahāmantra while keeping count is placed directly in Śrī Caitanya's mouth. This is very likely based on Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvīn's direct experience of Caitanya.

Another eyewitness was Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya who says in his *Gaurāṅgāṣṭaka* (verse 2):

Eyes filled with tears, body filled with goose bumps, torn by suffering out of compassion for living beings, in thousands of Holy Names uttered with number, obeisance to you, O victorious Gaura, with a complexion of pure gold.<sup>12</sup>

Other passages that support chanting the Mahāmantra while counting could be cited here, too. All of these passages seem to support the contention of Dr. Kapoor and the Nitai-Gaura Rādhe Śyāma tradition.

Dr. Radhagovinda Nath, however, has written a long and interesting commentary on the passage cited earlier from the *Caitanya Bhāgavata* (2.23.72-80) in which Mahāprabhu gives the Mahāmantra for *japa* and the *haraye*

11

निजत्वे गौडीयान् जगति परिगृह्य प्रभुरिमान्  
हरेकृष्णेत्येवं गणनविधिना कीर्तयत भोः ।  
इतिप्रायां शिक्षां जनक इव तेभ्यः परिदिशन्  
शचीसूनुः किं मे नयनशरणी यास्यति पुनः ॥

12

स्वगात्रपुलकजललोचनपूर्णं  
जीवदयामयतापविदीर्णम् ।  
सङ्घाजल्पतिनामसहस्रे  
शुद्धकनकजयगौरनमस्ते ॥

chant for *kīrtana*. Dr. Nath argues, without mentioning it, against the position taken by Dr. Kapoor and his guru's lineage. He concedes that Mahāprabhu teaches *japa* for the Mahāmantra, but argues that of the three types of *japa* Mahāprabhu favored loud or *vācika japa*. He cites passages from Rūpa,<sup>13</sup> Jīva,<sup>14</sup> and Sanātana<sup>15</sup> in support of his position. Perhaps this long commentary should be the subject of a separate essay someday. Suffice it to say for now that Dr. Radhagovinda Nath argues that the Mahāmantra not only can be part of *sañkīrtana*, which Śrī Jīva defines as the gathering of many people to sing songs about Kṛṣṇa that are pleasing to Kṛṣṇa,<sup>16</sup> but that repeating the Holy Name is more effective the louder it is. He cites an interesting statement from the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* which, since it is relatively unknown, I give here. Just before presenting the Mahāmantra itself, it is said in the *Purāṇa* (6.59):

From *sañkīrtana* of the Holy Name, Brahman the deliverer (*tāra*kaṃ *brahma*) is revealed.<sup>17</sup>

Since the Mahāmantra is given immediately after this statement, *its* use in *sañkīrtana* is clearly meant.

Another Vaiṣṇava scholar who has written on this question is Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda in the eighteenth chapter of his *A Particle of Light from the*

<sup>13</sup>Rūpa's *Caitanyāṣṭaka*, verse 5, translated earlier in this essay.

<sup>14</sup>Jīva's commentary on *Bhāg.*, 7.5.23: नामसङ्कीर्तनञ्चेदमुच्चैरेव प्रशस्तम्. "And this *sañkīrtana* of the Holy Name is best when loud."

<sup>15</sup>Sanātana's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, 2.3.149:

बाह्यान्तराशेषहृषीकचालकं  
वाग्निद्रियं स्याद्यदि संयतं सदा ।  
चित्तं स्थिरं सद्भगवत्स्मृतौ तदा  
सम्यक् प्रवर्तते ततः स्मृतिः फलम् ॥

If the sense of speech, which agitates all the internal and external senses, should become always under control, the mind becomes steady and engages in complete recollection of the Lord. Thus, remembrance is the result of *kīrtana*.

<sup>16</sup>*Krama-sandarbha* on *Bhāg.* 11.5.32. सङ्कीर्तनं बहुभिर्मिलित्वा तद्गानसुखं श्रीकृष्णगानम्

<sup>17</sup>नामसङ्कीर्तनादेव तारकं ब्रह्म दृश्यते

*Thought-Jewel of the Holy Name (Śrī Śrī Nāmacintāmaṇi-kiraṇa-kaṇikā).*  
For him the following passage of the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* is the defining statement of the connection of the Mahāmantra with *kīrtan*:

Therefore, in the Age of Kali, sacrifice with the Holy Name is the essenceall.

If you practice anything else, you will not pass beyond.

**Night and day repeat the Name, while eating or lying down.**

Its greatness cannot be told in the Veda.

Listen, Mīśra,

in the age of Kali there can be no asceticism or sacrifice.

Whoever worships Kṛṣṇa is most fortunate.

Therefore, in your house worship Kṛṣṇa,  
giving up duplicity and becoming focused,

All of the truths about goals and means  
will be discovered in *saṅkīrtan* of the Holy Name.

The name of Hari, the name of Hari, only the name of Hari;  
in Kali there is not indeed, not indeed, not indeed another way.<sup>18</sup>

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare,*

*hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare.*

This verse is called the Mahāmantra.

Sixteen names and thirty-two syllables is this spell.

Continually practicing it, when the seed of love appears,  
then one will know all the truths of goals and means.<sup>19</sup>

Here, the Mahāmantra is clearly connected with *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* which, as mentioned before is congregational singing of the names of Hari, according to Śrī Jīva. Even loud or vocal *japa* cannot be called *saṅkīrtana* according to him. The instruction that one should repeat the Name day and night whether eating or lying down would argue against the necessity of its being counted. This for Sundarānanda is the over-arching instruction: one should repeat the Holy Name constantly. The counting requirement is only a sub-practice aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of repeating the Holy Name without cessation.

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<sup>18</sup> *Bṛhannārādīya Pur.*, 38.128.

<sup>19</sup> *Caitanya Bhāg.*, 1.10.136-141

After learning of these things from Dr. Kapoor I began to chant a lakh (100,000) of Holy Names a day and it was indeed an uplifting experience. It took me about eight hours in the beginning. As I became better at it, that is to say, as I became better at fixing my mind on the Holy Name I was able to reduce it to about six hours. Those who are able to concentrate intensely, without wavering, can do a lakh in about two and a half hours I am told. When I finally made my escape from ISKCON and joined Tinkuḍi Bābā out in the wilds of Vraja, his first request of me and my first real training in the authentic practice of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism was to chant three lakhs of Holy Names a day. That turned out to be quite a powerful experience, one that I will describe in detail later.

The question of whether or not to use the Mahāmantra in congregational singing, therefore, appears to be quite complicated. Both sides have valid points and strong scriptural support. The followers of Boḍo Bābā appear to take the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* quite literally and prefer doing *kīrtan* with the *bhaja nitai-gaura* chant rather than the Mahāmantra. In addition, they tend to do *japa* almost constantly on their *mālā*, logging at least a hundred thousand Names a day and probably many more. It should be kept in mind that I have not found where their position on the Mahāmantra is argued at any length. I have only used what I recall of Dr. Kapoor’s argumentation. It is very likely that their case is stronger than I have represented it here. The arguments on the opposing side from Dr. Radhagovinda Nath and Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda are better articulated and, therefore, better presented. The debate may not be over, however.

All this should give some indication of how my first explorations of the Vaiṣṇava world outside of ISKCON revealed a strange new world with a different set of rules, practices, and assumptions. It was a world I would have never been able imagine from within the insular world of ISKCON and I was being influenced by that new world in many subtle and delightful ways during my last days as an inmate of the ISKCON asylum. Gradually, I was being drawn out of the safe shadows of the society’s narcissistic madness into the bright light and fresh air of a world exposed to the presence of a powerful and unpredictable “other.”

### 3 My Personal Experience by Radhapada Das

Jaya Rādhe!

My name is Radhapada Das, formerly known as Rati Das. After spending 20 years in ISKCON (more or less, in good times and bad) I received *dīkṣā*<sup>20</sup> from the Mahanta of Rādhākuṇḍa, Bābā Śrī Ananta Das Paṇḍit. One may ask what prompted me to do it? Basically, I did it because I didn't see any light coming from the end of the ISKCON tunnel. In other words, I didn't see even a ray of hope for discovering my spiritual identity (spiritual *svarūpa*), nor did I get any guidance in genuine *rāgānuga-bhakti*.<sup>21</sup>

Now, some may say, and especially those who knew me as Rati Das, that I was too impatient. I should have given it more time. More than anything, I should get more strict and serious about spiritual life as given to devotees in ISKCON by Śrīla Prabhupāda. In answer to them I say that I gave it plenty of time. Second there are those a thousand times more serious and strict than me in ISKCON, whom I don't see as having attained any profound level of spiritual advancement or as being able to teach the techniques of *rāgānuga-bhajana*. Don't get me wrong, there are advanced devotees in ISKCON, but only by ISKCON standards. There are many who have a taste for chanting the Holy Name in *kīrtan* or in *japa* and others that can give great talks on the philosophy and the pastimes. There are many who can perform austerities like *nirjal ekādaśī*<sup>22</sup> and relish deity worship, and also there are devotees who simply like to talk about Kṛṣṇa. Of course, we cannot forget the great souls who have taken the message of Kṛṣṇa to the farthest and most remote regions of the world. Certainly they all are worthy of my deepest respect and veneration. Yes, there are quite a few dedicated devotees serving in a selfless manner. However, I really don't believe that there are devotees of this institution or of the Gauḍīya Maṭha that are having revelations like those described in the biographies of the great *siddha*-s and in the Goswami *grantha*-s

<sup>20</sup>Formal initiation by means of reception of the major *mantra* of the tradition.

<sup>21</sup>*Bhakti* that takes as its model the passionate love for Kṛṣṇa of the people of Vraja, that is, the close servants, friends, parents, and lovers of his youthful days in the land of Vraja.

<sup>22</sup>Observing Ekādaśī, the eleventh day after the new and full moons, by fasting from everything, including water. This is a common practice among the Bābās.



[writings]. In my own personal life, I have felt a vivid transformation of consciousness after taking *dīkṣā* from my Gurudeva in Rādhākuṇḍa. It is said that *dīkṣā* is the process by which transcendental knowledge is transmitted into the heart and obstacles are destroyed. I can honestly say that this was what I experienced after *dīkṣā*. The many years of hearing and chanting the songs and teachings of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura and Bhaktivinoda finally crystalized in my consciousness. No longer were these teachings some mysterious puzzle that I would solve only after death. They were manifesting themselves to me directly. These teachings were slowly being unpacked out of the mystery box and becoming tools for *bhajan* [personal worship]. The teachings of the Goswamis were becoming more meaningful to me. In addition, it became more and more apparent that what I had been practicing before was not the real *bhakti-sādhana* [the practice of bhakti] of a follower of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu's *sampradāya* [community].

I must admit that after twenty years of hearing Vaiṣṇava *aparādha* [offensive language or behavior directed at Vaiṣṇava-s] of the devotees of true *sampradāya*-s, I was a little skeptical about the authenticity of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *guru-praṇālī* [lineage of teachers], known to most devotees in ISKCON as the *Bābājīs*. When I first used to visit Rādhākuṇḍa during the month of Kartik, I had no connection with what was going on there, other than hoping that one day, I would attain some *kṛpā* [mercy] from Śrī Rādhā by bathing there at Śrī Kuṇḍa, doing *parikrama* [circumambulation] and listening to Kṛṣṇa *līlā* [pastime] lectures by an ISKCON *sannyāsī* [renunciant] there. The world of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-s seemed alien to me. I could not relate to the austere appearances of the devotees and places there, especially when I had been hearing for years that everyone there is a dreaded *sahajiyā*.<sup>23</sup> However, just before and after my wife and I became truly initiated, as we began to become familiar with the Vaiṣṇavas and the environment, we began to discover a richness there undecipherable by words, but available through experience. Behind the hard, austere appearances of the devotees that we met, we noticed very blissful personalities among them. Sometimes they appeared to me to possess intoxicated feelings of inner bliss that I had not seen in ISKCON or Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees. My experience in ISKCON

<sup>23</sup>This is a offshoot of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism regarded as heretical by many in the Caitanya tradition. It often involves the use of sexual rites in which the male and female practitioners assume the identities of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. In ISKCON opponents are often painted as Sahajiyā whether it is true or not.

was that despite the opulent surroundings of devotees, many appear morose, uptight or anxious. After some time in ISKCON, I began to seriously consider that I joined a religious society that promised to free one from the problems of life, viz. birth, death, old age and disease, but that failed to give to many even basic satisfaction or peace of mind. Moreover, the lives of many of these devotees were plagued with the ongoing, tumultuous problems raging within the ISKCON society itself.

My wife and I became acquainted with a German lady named Anurādhā initiated by Prana Krishna Bābā of Rādhākuṇḍa. We would visit her often in her humble room in front of Rādhākuṇḍa. One day, when we came to visit her, there was a devotee there from Switzerland whom I knew from before, who had just received *dīkṣā* from Ananta Das Paṇḍit. When she announced that he received *dīkṣā*, something came over me. I had this incredible urge to take *dīkṣā* also and I began to ask what is being offered there regarding spiritual life. They explained to me *siddha-praṇāli*,<sup>24</sup> *mañjarī-svarūpa*<sup>25</sup> and *manasi sevā*.<sup>26</sup> Then I began to consider things more carefully. I knew about these things before, having read books by O.B.L. Kapoor and Bhaktivinoda Thākura, but now I had encountered devotees who were practicing it. In a few days we were introduced to Ananta Das Paṇḍit and we began to visit him regularly and ask many questions. I was encouraged to read his translated commentary on *Rāgavartma-candrikā* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartipāda, which when I began reading I couldn't put down. I was blown away by the combination of the deep philosophy of Viśvanātha and Ananta Das Paṇḍit's explanation of the verses regarding *rāgānuṅga-bhakti*. I was convinced. My wife also read the book and she was eager to take *dīkṣā*, too.

At that time, I was not so sure about the break in the disciplic succession of ISKCON/GM. I had heard something previously, but it was not clear to me. I was not very interested in the subject either. My main concern was to step up into higher education and become "specialized" in learning

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<sup>24</sup>This is the same as *guru-praṇāli*, the lineage of one's gurus going back to the immediate associates of Śrī Caitanya, except that one is taught their *siddha* or eternal names and identities in Kṛṣṇa's sport.

<sup>25</sup>*Mañjarī-svarūpa* Is the most common identity adopted by the members of the Caitanya tradition. It is the identity of a younger female friend of Rādhā. The *mañjarī* combines feelings of friendship and desire for service towards Rādhā. They thus often have access to the most confidential interactions between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

<sup>26</sup>This is service performed, or rather visualized, in the mind. This is the major method of learning and cultivating the identity of the *mañjarī* in Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism.

about *mañjarī-bhāva upāsanā* [the method of worshipping with the feelings of a *mañjarī*], which I was convinced one cannot get in ISKCON/GM. I had had enough of the "work now *samādhi* [realization] later" philosophy. My membership in ISKCON was already casual. I had lost faith in gurus/GBCs<sup>27</sup> and the teachings that went with them. Going back home, "back to Godhead" by becoming a dedicated ISKCON career member had lost its appeal for me years ago. In the temple where my wife was from in Slovenia, the leading book distributor once gave a *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* lecture and said that a person who chanted the Holy Name all day was a *sahajiyā*. I even heard that in one *kīrtan* there, while a devotee was singing the names of Śrī Rādhā, another devotee plugged his ears with his fingers and sung out: "Jaya Viṣṇupada, Jaya Viṣṇupada" (the name of his guru back then). So I had had enough of the un-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, offensive environment of ISKCON. I was hoping deep in my heart for something better to come my way. However, the issue about leaving my ISKCON guru still disturbed me a bit. I even remember crying one night before I took *dīkṣā*. Still, I felt that moving on was the proper thing to do. And you know something, after I did it, I never ever regreted it!

One problem we faced was that my wife and I were working as Gurukula teachers in the ISKCON temple in Vrindaban. Our main concern was how we were going to receive *dīkṣā* without letting anyone know. We wanted to stay in Vrindaban, and I liked teaching; we didn't want to get kicked out. So the solution was — don't tell anybody. We were undercover for over two years. Then slowly, slowly, we started letting our guard down, till eventually we were discovered. We saw it as Śrī Rādhārāṇī's *kṛpā* telling us it is time to move on, to be true to ourselves, and to stop hiding.

In the recent year I have come to terms with the Bhaktisiddhānta issue, that is, his not getting *dīkṣā* from Gaurakiśora Das Bābā. I must admit it was depressing to have the big bubble pop regarding the things we were taught about Bhaktisiddhānta, Bhaktivedānta Swami, ISKCON/GM. I felt misled. Discovering that one had spent twenty years living and telling others about things that were not a part of real Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism can be disheartening. On the other hand, if it were not for ISKCON, I would never have heard about Śrī Caitanya, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Vraja Dhāma, the Goswamis, and so forth. So I owe ISKCON a great deal for pointing me in the right direction. I think

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<sup>27</sup>Governing Board Committee, the ruling body in ISKCON.

that I was probably not ready for real *bhajan* back then, that I needed the institutional teachings and facilities to prepare me for the path of following the Goswamis.

Sometime ago someone presented me with this premise: "Try to stretch your imagination. What if a *mañjarī* from the spiritual world, Nayana Mañjarī (supposedly the *mañjarī svarūpa* of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī) decided to come down to this world and start his/her own lineage?" Could it be possible? The first problem with that idea is why would a *nitya-siddha*, an eternal associate from Vraja Dhāma, descend to this world without the Lord's association?

se saba saṅgir saṅge je kaila vilāsa  
se-saṅga na pāiyā kānde narottama dāsa

Being unable to obtain the association of Lord Gaurāṅga, accompanied by all of these devotees in whose association He performed His pastimes, Narottama Dās simply weeps.

It is generally observed that the *nitya-siddha*-s accompany the Lord when He descends to enact pastimes. If a *pārṣada* (eternal associate) of the Lord did descend after God had wound-up his pastimes in this world, then for what purpose? Surely, it would be to teach something to the world, especially to the devotees of the Lord. It would be greatly appreciated, glorified, and remembered for all time to come by the Vaiṣṇava community. However, from a historical point of view, that was not the case with Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Except for among his followers, he was not accepted within the mainstream of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Furthermore, he heavily criticized the Bābājis and caste Goswamis, the standard followers of Mahāprabhu. At least in my opinion, it doesn't seem likely that an eternal associate of God, who embodies transcendental emotions and *sāttvika* qualities [qualities of peacefulness and goodness] would start a war with other devotees of the Lord.

This was one of the issues I had sorted out regarding my previous connection with ISKCON/Gauḍīya Maṭh. I became convinced, after objectively analyzing the evidence available, that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not take

*dīkṣā* from Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābāji, as claimed by ISKCON/GM. The result is a spiritual practice within these institutions that does not empower its followers to relish and experience the topmost spiritual flavors of the Vraja *bhakti* that Śrīmān Mahāprabhu has kindly brought down into this world, as documented and savoured by the Lord's confidential associates themselves, the Goswamis of Vraja. When we speak of "a follower of Mahāprabhu" it means a loyal adherent to the teachings and conclusions written down by the revered Goswamis. It is mentioned in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Śrīmān Mahāprabhu praised the writings of Rūpa Goswami, and He therefore blessed him and asked all the other associates to bless Rūpa Goswami with the power to describe *bhakti*. Similarly, the Lord blessed Sanātana Goswami, Raghunātha Dās Goswami and so forth. There is no entrance into the kingdom of *mādhurya-rasa* [the experience of sweetness or erotic love for Kṛṣṇa] in Vraja without accepting their teachings, because they are Śrīmān Mahāprabhu's instruments for the propagation of *bhakti*. Śrīmān Mahāprabhu is the combined form of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Their confidantes, the *mañjarīs*, descended in male forms as the Six Goswamis of Vraja.

As I mentioned earlier, I was discovered in ISKCON Vrindaban to have taken initiation from Ananta Das Paṇḍita Bābā. This was one reason for our leaving our service as teachers there, although we were not kicked out. Actually, the administrative heads there were very kind to us throughout our service there, as well as when our inner life and connection with the Rādhākuṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas was discovered. Our main consideration for leaving was financial. It is tough to live in Vrindaban as *grhastha* [householder] foreigners. We also anticipated some trouble from diehards within ISKCON. That was another reason for our leaving. I have probably disrupted relationships with devotees in ISKCON and lost my status as an older devotee and *kīrtan* singer in the society. However, I gained other friends, and especially the merciful glances of some of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava residents of Rādhākuṇḍa. I did lose opportunities to lead *kīrtan* in ISKCON, but I got the opportunity to lead them with the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas near Śrī Rādhā's Lake. In addition, I received a very deep *bhajan* process, techniques in remembering and worshiping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. It is a genuinely fulfilling and real internal experience. This *bhajan* is not dependent on a hierarchical system of managerial leaders who may acknowledge your contributions or not, or on enjoying the thrill of big festivals. It is the path of a life spent inwardly

cultivating your loving relationship with Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, guided mercifully by a true guru.

My humble advice is this for those who are hesitant to traverse the path of *bhajan* as taught by the Goswamis, starting with *dīkṣā* in a bona-fide *sampradāya*: put aside the deep-rooted misconceptions implanted by the ISKCON/GM teachings against Bābājis, the *siddha-praṇālī*, *smaraṇa*, etc., and with a sincere heart, see if you really want to be a true follower of the great Mahājans [saints]. Spend some time reading the Goswami *grantha*-s [books] and associate with devotees who have taken *dīkṣā* in the authentic Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lines.

Jaya Rādhe!

## 4 Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ's 108 Sri Krishnadas Bābā by Karunamayidas

Many westerners know 108 Śrī Krishna das Bābāji (Madrasi Bābā), as he selflessly guided thousands of them to the main shrines around Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's sacred pond, Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ. My first encounter with him occurred in November of 1978, and by his kindness I was able to remain for 5 months at Rādhākuṇḍ. He lived there for 36 years, from the time he received the *dīkṣā-mantra*<sup>28</sup> and *siddha-praṇāli*<sup>29</sup> initiation from Siddha Śrī Sakhicharan das Bābāji who was a *parivāra* [a member of the lineage] of Śrī Narottama.

His most memorable trait was his attitude of service which was expressed by a constant disposition to render any type of service, in particular toward the residents of Rādhākuṇḍ, but also toward anyone else he met. He was *ceṣṭotkuṇṭha* — always alert to serve just for the sake of serving. Of course there are many persons endowed with such a spirit of disinterested service in so many different fields, but Bābā's spirit of service was prompted by an uncommon loving force which didn't belong to this world. Although it was evident that his entire being was floating in this magic bliss-giving love divine, I wasn't yet ready at that time to accept him as a guide. I was entrapped, sentimentally, intellectually, mentally and physically, in the strong grip of numerous erroneous conceptions about the nature of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism (and Vaiṣṇavism in general), especially concerning its practice and the system of *paramparā* or disciplic succession. Unfortunately, I refused to recognize two correlative points: the uninterrupted succession of masters and disciples and the transcendental revelation of Bhaktidevī through that system and the idea that the internal practice of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism (*līlā-smaraṇa* and *manasi sevā*)<sup>30</sup> applied not only to the *jīvanmukta* level (the soul's state of spiritual emancipation), but also to the conditioned one before that. Although aware of my misconceptions, Bābā still gave me shelter,

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<sup>28</sup>This is an initiation rite in which a disciple receives the set of mantra that form the basis of meditation on and worship of Śrī Caitanya, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and their main associates.

<sup>29</sup>The eternal names and identities of the members of one's initiation lineage. These are the names they have in the eternal sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

<sup>30</sup>These are visualization practices involving envisioning the sports or interactive play of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as a participant in that play in a role or identity given by one's guru

located a place for me to stay, fed me, and even nursed me during a period of sickness.

I remember that once we stood on the road just near Śrī Rādhāramaṇa Maṇḍir, and though I was harshly opposing him in some matter, a strong outburst of his transcendental emotions hit my inner being. At that moment, much to my surprise, I spontaneously told myself: "He is my guru." This thought rejoiced my heart, but just for a moment, because my invasive, stained reason refused to accept it. Despite such a handicap, a transcendental loving relationship ran between us, and I was always very happy to be in his company. He was like the good father and I was like the bad son, but we were still linked to each other by bonds of affection. By his mercy, Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ, and all the different, lovely places surrounding it, always remained deeply impressed in my heart, even after I had left it.

Nine years later I came back motivated by an eager desire to render service to Bābā and learn something more about *mañjarī-bhāva-sādhana*.<sup>31</sup> Kartik month was in full swing, hundreds of pilgrims had arrived from Bengal to celebrate it and the main program was to go and listen to the 3 daily lectures of Paṇḍit Śrī Ananta das Bābāji which Bābā always recorded and translated for us in the evening. It was very hot as usual during this period of the year, and most of the devotees in the audience including myself didn't wear shirts. After a few days, during one *pāṭha* [reading/lecture] I suddenly noticed that I was the only one wearing a brahmin thread among all those swanlike, saintly devotees, and this made me feel very embarrassed. Over the following days my uneasiness increased to such an extent that my reason dictated to me that I should give up that brahmin thread. I thought to myself: "After all, I wasn't born in a Brahmin family; so why should I wear its insignia?"

One morning, after having passed through the *saṅga*, I halted in front of Śrī Baṅkebihāriji Maṇḍir, bowed down to Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ, sprinkled the usual 3 drops of water in my mouth, and then deposited my brahmin thread as a offering to Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ. After that I felt the heavy load of my false pride related to that thread stop haunting me like a ghost. The power of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ, Bābā, and the assembled Vaiṣṇava saints had exorcised from me an infernal "spirit." The next day Bābā conveyed to me Paṇḍit Śrī

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<sup>31</sup> Another way of referring to the visualization practice. It literally means cultivation of the feelings of a *mañjarī*. A *mañjarī* is a younger female friend-servant of Rādhā, usually under the protection and guidance of one of Rādhā's eight main friends.



Anantadas Bābāji’s congratulations for my act. As I used to sit not far from him during his *pāṭha*, he noticed that my “false brahmin’s pride” was absent from my chest.

I didn’t have any intention of receiving *dīkṣā-mantra* initiation from Bābā, because I still mistakenly thought of myself as already initiated by another guru. Nevertheless I felt like surrendering to him, serving him closely, and learning from him the things related to *mañjarī-bhāva-sādhana*. Though I didn’t tell him anything of my intentions, somehow he understood them, and one day to my surprise and great satisfaction, he asked me to assist him in accompanying him to the toilet during the night and in drawing water from the well for his wash afterwards. To my even greater satisfaction he told me that I could sleep on the floor in his room.

Although I came now so close to Bābā, I was feeling somehow disconnected with him. Despite our mutual affection and the compatibility of our characters, I sensed that something was missing, something necessary for there to be a real, complete relationship with him. Although his two other disciples were not as intimate with him, I noticed the presence of a very special, supernaturally personal link between them and Bābā, which I didn’t have and which intrigued me.

At one point, feeling more and more the presence of this inexplicable gulf that separated us, I approached Bābā and asked him if he would give me a new *japa-mālā*<sup>32</sup> after first blessing it by chanting Harināma<sup>33</sup> on it. His reply was a categorical no. He pointed out that as I already had received Harināma from another guru, it wasn’t necessary that he should also give it to me. Although I insisted, Bābā didn’t change his mind, leaving me without words and in complete despair.

Few days later, Paṇḍit Śrī Anantadas Bābāji was about to start his usual reading in the Śrī Rādhāramaṇ temple. Before sitting down in the midst of the audience, I hung my rosary bag on the washing line above my head, after completing the round I was chanting. When the *pāṭha* was over, I stood up to take my rosary bag, but to my great surprise it was empty; my rosary had disappeared. Puzzled, I searched everywhere in the courtyard, but without

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<sup>32</sup>These are rosary-like beads for counting the number of times one chants a mantra or the Holy Names.

<sup>33</sup>The Holy Names, specifically the Mahāmantra: hare kṛṣṇa, hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa, hare hare; hare rāma, hare rāma, rāma rāma, hare hare.

success. I immediately excluded the possibility that someone from the assembly had taken it, because, firstly, I didn't believe that a devotee would be interested in stealing the *mālā* of an other devotee and, secondly, I had been sitting under it. If someone had taken it I would have noticed. Rather than upsetting me, however, this incident pleased me, because now I had a good reason to ask Bābā for a new *mālā*. So I told him what had happened and said: "You see Bābā! Now you should give me a new *mālā* and bless it by chanting on it. Otherwise how can I continue my Harināma?" In this way Bābā gave me a new *mālā*. His mercy didn't stop there, however. Some time later, during a morning *parikrama* [circumambulation] of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ, he stopped and told me, with tears of transcendental ecstasy in the eyes: "I was looking for a name for you, and the name '*kāruṇyaghanavigraha*' came to my mind. It is a name of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī which means that she is the personification of condensed mercy. She is so merciful! In his *Aṣṭottara-śatanāma-stotra*, Śrī Raghunāthadāsa Gosvāmin has named Her '*Karuṇāvidravadeha*' or one whose body melts out of compassion. So henceforth you can have the name *Kāruṇyaghanavigraha Dāsa*." Due to the length of this name Bābā later changed it to *Karuṇāmayīdāsa* which basically means the same thing. Bābā's mercy didn't end there either, and towards the end of Niyamasevā,<sup>34</sup> he announced to my great surprise that if I consented he would give me *dīkṣā-mantra* initiation. I was moved, although I still thought of myself as a disciple of another who was both my *vartma-pradarśaka* and Harināma guru. I still also wrongly believed him to be my *dīkṣā* guru. My opposition to the idea was only fleeting, because after seeing that Bābā was so enthusiastic to give me initiation, I readily agreed, not wanting to hurt his feelings by refusing. So at a moment chosen as auspicious, the morning of the 5th of November, Bābā gave me the *kṛṣṇa-dīkṣā-mantra* together with the other *dīkṣā mantra*. He also explained to me their different meanings and how to conduct worship of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Obviously, he also revealed to me the names of the uninterrupted line of gurus going back to Śrī Narottama, together with their spiritual identities, both in the world of Gaura and in the world of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. I was then officially and spiritually affiliated with that great lineage.

I have to confess that only after initiation by Bābā, did I begin to understand that proper initiation into a bona fide line of *dīkṣā-mantra* transmission was not just a formality. It is God's created system, widely prevalent in

<sup>34</sup>A month long set of special practices observed in the month of Kārtika (Oct.-Nov.).

India, through which Sādhana-bhaktidevī [*bhakti* as cultivation] makes Her appearance in a candidate for *prema-bhakti* [divine love].

Later Bābā's mercy extended to the point of revealing to me the details of my own *siddha-svarūpa* (the *mañjarī-ekādaśa-bhāva* or the eleven details of the *mañjarī* identity). He also taught me his gurudeva's *guṭikā* or manual for the practice of remembering Śrī Śrī Gaura-govinda's transcendental pastimes and the nature of my own service to them in a mentally conceived *siddha-deha* [eternal body/identity]. The next step is to advance through the different stages of this practice and ultimately to transcend this mundane world through the blessing of *mañjarī-bhāva-prema-bhakti* (the Love Divine of a *gopī-mañjarī*).

## 5 The Gospel of Śrī Caitanya according to Murāri

## 5.1 Chapter One

स जयति शुद्धविक्रमः कनकाभः कमलायतेक्षणः ।  
वरजानुविलम्बिसङ्गुजो बहुधा भक्तिरसाभिनर्तकः ॥ १ ॥

May victory be his, that one of pure valor with a complexion of gold, whose eyes were wide like lotuses and whose arms reached down to his knees, a dancer presenting many of the rasas of *bhakti*. (1)

स जगन्नाथसुतो जगत्पतिर्जगदादिर्जगदार्तिहा विभुः ।  
कलिपापकलिभारहारकोऽजनि शच्यां निजभक्तिमुद्धहन् ॥ २ ॥

That son of Jagannatha, lord of the universe, origin of the universe, destroyer of the afflictions of the universe, its sovereign, the remover of the sins and burdens of the age of Kali, was born of Saci, bringing *bhakti* for himself. (2)

स नवद्वीपवतीषु भूमिषु द्विजवर्यैरभिनन्दितो हरिः ।  
निजपित्रोः सुखदो गृहे सुखं निवसन् वेदषडङ्गसंहिताम् ॥ ३ ॥  
निपपाठ गुरोर्गृहे वसन् परिचर्याभिरतः शुचिब्रतः ।  
स च विश्वम्भरसंज्ञको हरिर्युगधर्माचरणाय धर्मिणाम् ॥ ४ ॥

He was Hari, welcomed by the finest of the twice-born in the land of the nine islands (Navadvīpa). Giving pleasure to his parents, he lived happily at home. He studied the Veda and its six ancillary subjects while living in the house of his teacher, engaged in menial service and faithful in vow, and he was Hari by the name of Viśvambhara, [come] for the performance of the dharma of the age for the [benefit] of the pious. (3-4)

हरिकीर्तनमादिशत् स्मरन् पुरुषार्थाय हरेरतिप्रियम् ।  
स गयासु पितृक्रियां चरन् हरिपादाङ्कितभूमिषु स्वयम् ॥ ५ ॥

Remembering, he taught the glorification of Hari, very dear to Hari, as the goal of human life. He himself performed the post-mortem rites for his father in Gayā, the land inscribed with the footprints of Hari. (5)

निजसंस्मृतिमात्रसम्पदः पुलकप्रेमजडो बभूव ह ।  
स तदा निजमेव मन्दिरं समगादशरीरया गिरा ॥ ६ ॥

Exuberant with the memory of himself he became paralyzed with love and [covered with] goose bumps. He then returned to his own home, directed by a disembodied voice. (6)

भक्तवर्गमुखवेष्टितः प्रभुः प्रेमपाकपरिपूर्णविग्रहः ।  
हरिकीर्तनसत्कथासुखं मुमुदे दानवसिंहमर्दनः ॥ ७ ॥

Surrounded by the leaders of the devotees, the Master, who was a full embodiment of mature love and yet a vanquisher of the lion of the demonic, enjoyed the pleasure of holy stories glorifying Hari. (7)

अथास्य कीर्तिं श्रवणामृतां सतामुदारकीर्तेः श्रुतिभिः पिपासुभिः ।  
विगाहितुं श्रीयुतसत्कथां शुभामुवाह हर्षाश्रुविलोललोचनः ॥ ८ ॥

Then he whose eyes trembled with tears of joy carried forth the auspicious, holy tales, the glory of the greatly famous one [Hari], which the saintly imbibe like nectar with thirsty ears, in order to submerge [the whole world in the stories]. (8)

भक्तः श्रीवासनामा द्विजकुलकमलप्रोल्लसच्चित्रभानुः  
प्राहेदं श्रीमुरारि त्वमिह वद हरेश्रीचरित्रं नवीनम् ।  
तस्याज्ञामाकलय्य प्रकटकरपुटैस्तं नमस्कृत्य भूयः  
श्रीमच्चैतन्यमूर्तेः कलिकलुषहरां कीर्तिमाह स्वयम् सः ॥ ९ ॥

The devotee named Śrīvāsa, a shining and wonderful sun for the lotus-like family of twice-born, said this to Murāri: "Tell us now of the new acts of Hari." Receiving his order and offering obeisances repeatedly with folded hands, he [Murāri] himself told Śrī Caitanya's story, which removes the corruptions of the age of Kali. (9)

अथ स चिन्तयामास वैद्यसूनुर्मुरारिकः ।  
कथं वक्ष्यामि बह्वर्थां चैतन्यस्य कथां शुभाम् ॥ १० ॥

Then Murāri, son of a Vaidya, wondered: "How will I describe the auspicious story of Caitanya which has so many meanings, (10)

यद्वक्तुं नैव शक्नोति वाचस्पतिरपि स्वयम् ।  
तथापि वैष्णवादेशं कर्तुं युक्तं मतिर्मम ॥ ११ ॥

'which even Vācaspati himself is unable to relate? Still, my mind is intent on carrying out the request of the Vaiṣṇava. (11)

निमला भाति सततं कृष्णस्मरणसम्पदा ।  
वैष्णवाज्ञा हि फलदा भविष्यति न चान्यथा ॥ १२ ॥

"The order of the Vaiṣṇava, enriched by remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, is always flawless. It will certainly bring success and not otherwise."

इत्युक्त्वा वक्तुमारेभे भगवद्भक्तिवृहिताम् ।  
कथां धर्मार्थकामाय मोक्षाय विष्णुभक्तये ॥ १३ ॥

Saying this, he began to recount the story, filled with *bhakti* to the Lord, for the sake of piety, wealth, sensual enjoyment, liberation, and *bhakti* for Viṣṇu.<sup>35</sup> (13)

<sup>35</sup>Here *bhakti* is added to the usual four goals of human life. The implication is that the four by themselves are insufficient.

नमामि चैतन्यमजं पुरातनं  
चतुर्भुजं शङ्खगदाब्जचक्रिणम् ।  
श्रीवत्सलक्ष्माङ्कितवक्षसं हरिं  
सद्मालसंलग्नमणिं सुवाससम् ॥ १४ ॥

I bow to Caitanya who is Hari, the unborn, ancient one, four-armed holding conch, club, lotus, and discus, chest marked with the Śrīvatsa, a jewel on his forehead, finely dressed. (14)

वदामि किञ्चिद्भगवत्कथां सतां  
हर्षाय किञ्चित्स्खलनं यदा भवेत् ।  
तदात्र संशोधयितुं महत्तमाः  
प्रमाणमेवात्र परोपकारिणः ॥ १५ ॥

I will speak a little of the history of the lord for the enjoyment of the good. Should there be a bit of stumbling, may the great ones be able to correct it, as evidence that they are the helpers of others. (15)

नवद्वीप इतिख्याते क्षेत्रे परमवैष्णवे ।  
ब्राह्मणाः साधवः शान्ताः वैष्णवाः सत्कुलोद्भवाः ॥ १६ ॥  
महान्तः कर्मनिपुणाः सर्वे शास्त्रार्थपारगाः ।  
अन्ये च सन्ति बहुशो भिषक्शूद्रवणिग्जनाः ॥ १७ ॥  
स्वाचारनिरताः शुद्धाः सर्वे विद्योपजीविनः ।  
तत्र देवव्रताः सर्वे वैकुण्ठभवनोपमे ॥ १८ ॥

In the thoroughly Vaiṣṇava land renowned as Navadvīpa the brāhmaṇa are all holy, peaceful, devoted to Viṣṇu, born of good families, great, skilled in rites, and deeply learned in the meanings of scripture. And there are many others: doctors, śūdra, and merchants. All are engaged in their own work, pure, sustained by knowledge. All are devoted to the gods in that land similar to Vaikuṇṭha. (16-18)



श्रीवासो यत्र रेजे हरिपदकमलप्रोल्लसन्मत्तभृङ्गः  
 प्रेमाद्रोत्तुङ्गबाहुः परमरसमदैर्गायतीशं सदोत्कः ।  
 गोपीनाथो द्विजाग्यः श्रवणपथगते नाम्नि कृष्णस्य मत्तो  
 ऽत्युच्चै रौति स्म भूयो लयतरलकरो नृत्यति स्मातिवेलम् ॥ १९ ॥

There Śrīvāsa lived, an intoxicated bee rejoicing at the lotus feet of Hari. Always enthusiastic, he sang of his lord with the liqueurs of the highest *rasa*, his arms raised in love. Gopīnātha, too, foremost of the twice-born, intoxicated when the name of Kṛṣṇa reached his ears, he shouted loudly over and over and danced for hours clapping his hands to the rhythm. (19)

बालोद्यद्भास्कराभो बुधजनकमलोद्धोधने दक्षमूर्तिः  
 कारुण्याब्धिर्हिमांशोरिव जनहृदयोत्तापशान्त्येकमूर्तिः ।  
 प्रेमध्यानातिदक्षो नटविधिकलासद्गुणाढ्यो महात्मा  
 श्रीयुक्ताद्वैतवर्यः परमरसकलाचार्य ईशो विरेजे ॥ २० ॥

There the blessed Śrī Advaita lived, a master of the arts of the highest *rasa*, himself the Lord. He was like the newly rising sun, expert in awakening the lotus-like wise folk, an ocean of compassion, and like the cool-rayed moon, the only image of peace for the overheated hearts of the people, superior in his meditations of love, possessed of good qualities in the art and method of dance, a great soul. (20)

यत्र सर्वगुणवानतिरेजे चन्द्रशेखरगुरुद्विजराजः ।  
 कृष्णनामकृषिताङ्गरुहः स प्रस्खलन्नयनवारिभिरार्द्रः ॥ २१ ॥

There lived the king of the twice-born, Guru Candrasēkhara, possessor of all good traits, his lotus-like body drawn to the name of Kṛṣṇa, moistened by the flowing waters of his eyes. (21)

यत्र नृत्यति मुनौ हरिदासे दासवत्सलतया जगदीशः ।  
 खेचरैः सुरगणैः समहेशैर्लास्यमाशु परिपश्यति हृष्टः ॥ २२ ॥

There, when the sage Haridāsa danced, the Lord of the Universe, with the sky-travelling gods and Maheśa, watched the dance with the affection toward his servant, thrilled. (22)

यत्र विष्णुपदसम्भवा सरिद्वेगवत्यतितरा करुणाद्रा ।  
स्पर्द्धया रविसुता सरयूणां या दधार कनकोज्ज्वलं हरिम् ॥ २३ ॥

There is the rapid running river, born of the feet of Vṣṇu, flowing with compassion, prouder than both the Sarayū and Yamunā because it supported the golden-hued Hari. (23)

जगन्नाथस्तस्मिन् द्विजकुलपयोधीन्दुसदृशो  
ऽभवद्वेदाचार्यः सकलगुणयुक्तो गुरुसमः ।  
स कृष्णाङ्घ्रिध्यानप्रबलतरयोगेन मनसा  
विशुद्धः प्रेमाद्रौ नवशशिकलेवाशु ववृधे ॥ २४ ॥

Jagannātha was born there from that ocean of twice-born families like the moon, a master of the Veda like Guru [Bṛhaspati], possessed of all good traits. Like the digits of the new moon, he grew quickly, purified by a mind possessing yoga, strengthened by meditation on the feet of Kṛṣṇa, and moistened by divine love. (24)

इति श्रीचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे अवतारानुक्रमः प्रथमसर्गः ।

## 5.2 Chapter Two

अथ तस्य गुरुश्चक्रे सर्वशास्त्रार्थवेदिनः ।  
पदवीमिति तत्त्वज्ञः श्रीमन्मिथ्रपुरन्दरः ॥ १ ॥

Thus his teacher gave him, who knew the meaning of all the scriptures, the titles: Tattvajña (Knower of Truth) Miśrapurandara (Foremost of the Miśra clan). (1)

तमेकदा सत्कुलीनं पण्डितं धर्मिणाम्बरम् ।  
श्रीमन्नीलाम्बरो नाम चक्रवर्ती महामनाः ॥ २ ॥  
समाहूयाददत् कन्यां शचीं स कुलकृत्शदः ।  
तां प्राप्य सोऽपि ववृधे शचीमिव पुरन्दरः ॥ ३ ॥

Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravartin, the noble-minded, at some time called for him, a scholar from a good family, surrounded by the pious, and, himself the product of a good family, gave him his daughter Śacī. Receiving her he [Jagannātha Miśra] too flourished like an Indra with his Śacī. (2-3)

ततो गेहे निवसतस्तस्य धर्मो व्यवर्धत ।  
आतिथ्यैः शान्तिकैः शौचैर्नित्यकाम्यक्रियाफलैः ॥ ४ ॥

Thereafter, while living at home, his piety increased through [visits by] peaceful and pure guests and the results of daily and desired rites. (4)

तत्र कालेन कियता तस्याष्टौ कन्यकाः शुभाः ।  
बभूवुः क्रमशो दैवात्ताः पञ्चत्वं गताः शची ॥ ५ ॥

Then after some time his eight beautiful daughters were born, but as fate would have it they all died one after another. Śacī, ... (5)

वात्सल्यदुःखतप्तेन जगाम मनसा पतिम्<sup>36</sup> ।  
पुत्रार्थं शरणं श्रीमान् पितृयज्ञं चकार सः ॥ ६ ॥

... her mind scorched by the sadness of parental love, went to her husband, her shelter, for a son. He performed a sacrificial rite for the forefathers. (6)

कालेन कियता लेभे पुत्रं सुरसुतोपमम् ।  
मुदमाप जगन्नाथो निधिं प्राप्य यथाऽधनः ॥ ७ ॥

After some time Jagannātha obtained a son like a son of the gods and he became joyful like a poor man after finding treasure. (7)

नाम तस्य पिता चक्रे श्रीमतो विश्वरूपकः ।  
पठता तेन कालेन स्वल्पेनैव महात्मना ॥ ८ ॥  
वेदांश्च न्यायशास्त्रञ्च ज्ञातः सद्योग उत्तमः ।  
स सर्वज्ञः सुधीः शान्तः सर्वेषामुपकारकः ॥ ९ ॥

The father gave his son the name Śrī Viśvarūpa. Great minded, as a student he learned the Veda and texts of logic in a short time. Possessed of yoga, he was all-knowing, intelligent, peaceful, and a helper of all. (8-9)

हरेर्ध्यानपरो नित्यं विषये नाकरोन्मनः ।  
श्रीमद्भागवतरसास्वादमत्तो निरन्तरम् ॥ १० ॥

Always in meditation on Hari, his mind didn't dwell on objects of the senses. He was constantly intoxicated by the taste of the *rasa* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. (10)

तस्यानुजो जगद्योनिरजो जज्ञे स्वयं प्रभुः ।  
इन्द्रानुजो यथोपेन्द्रः कश्यपाददितेः सुतः ॥ ११ ॥

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<sup>36</sup>हरिम् — हरिदासदासः.

The Lord himself, the unborn source of the universe, was born as his younger brother like Upendra, younger brother of Indra, son of Aditi, was born from Kaśyapa. (11)

हरिकीर्तनपरां कृत्वा च त्रिजगतीं स्वयम् ।  
उषित्वा क्षेत्रप्रवरे पुरुषोत्तमसंज्ञके ॥ १२ ॥

After himself making the three worlds intent on glorifying Hari, residing in the foremost of holy places named Puruṣottama [Jagannath Puri], ... (12)

कृत्वा भक्तिं हरौ शिक्षां कारयित्वा जनस्य सः ।  
श्रीवृन्दावनमाधुर्यमास्वाद्यास्वादयन् जनान् ॥ १३ ॥

performing *bhakti* to Hari, instructing it to the people, tasting the sweetness of Vṛndāvana and causing the people to taste it, too, ... (13)

तारयित्वा जगत् कृत्स्नं वैकुण्ठस्थैः प्रसादितः ।  
जगाम निलयं हृष्टो निजमेव महर्द्धिमत् ॥ १४ ॥

and delivering the whole world, he, worshiped by the residents of Vaikuṅṭha, returned thrilled to his own abode, which possesses enormous opulence. (14)

एतच्छ्रुत्वाद्भुतं प्राह ब्रह्मचारी जितेन्द्रियः ।  
श्रीचैतन्यकथामत्तः श्रीदामोदरपण्डितः ॥ १५ ॥

Hearing of this wonder, the celebrate, conqueror of his senses, Dāmodara Paṇḍita, intoxicated by the story of the Śrī Caitanya, said:

कथयस्व कथां दिव्यामद्भुतां लोकपावनीम् ।  
यां श्रुत्वा मुच्यते लोकः संसाराद्द्वोरकिल्बिषात् ॥ १६ ॥

“Tell the story, divine, wondrous, world-purifying, hearing which the world will be liberated from the horrible calamity of the cycle of rebirth ... (16)

श्रीकृष्णचरणाम्भोजे परमाः प्रेमसम्पदः ।  
जायन्ते सर्वलोकस्य तद्वदस्व हरेः कथाम् ॥ १७ ॥

‘and everyone will gain the highest treasures of love at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, tell that story of Hari. (17)

कस्य हेतोः पृथव्यां स जातः सर्वेश्वरो विभुः ।  
कृतं किमिह तेनैव जगतामीश्वरेण च ॥ १८ ॥

For what reason was the Lord of All, the All-pervading One, born on earth and what did he, the Controller of the Universe, do here? (18)

वक्तुमर्हसि भद्राणि कर्माणि मङ्गलानि च ।  
जगतां तापशान्त्यर्थं प्रेमार्थं सुमहात्मनाम् ॥ १९ ॥

‘You should speak of his benevolent and auspicious actions to reduce the sufferings of the world and to arouse love [for him] among the great-souled.’ (19)

तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं तस्य पण्डितस्य महात्मनः ।  
उवाच वचनं प्रीतो मुरारिः श्रूयतामिति ॥ २० ॥

Hearing that speech of the great-souled Paṇḍita, Murāri was pleased and said “Listen then.” (20)

साधु ते कथयिष्यामि यथाशक्त्या द्विजोत्तम ।  
संक्षेपाद्विस्तरान्नलं वक्तुं शक्नोति भार्गवः ॥ २१ ॥

“Well put! I will narrate for you the best that I can, O best of the twice-born, but only in brief, for even Bhārgava<sup>37</sup> is not able to present this subject at length. (21)

अथ नारदो धर्मात्मा वर्षे भारतसंज्ञके ।  
वैष्णवाग्यो महातेजाः पूर्णचन्द्रसमप्रभः ॥ २२ ॥

Now in the land called Bhārata is the very soul of piety, Nārada, foremost of Vaiṣṇavas, great in might, radiant as the full moon. (22)

कैलाशशिखराकारो मेखलावरभूषणः ।  
ऐणचर्मधरो विष्णोरंशः सर्वजनप्रियः ॥ २३ ॥

Built like the peak of Kailāśa, decorated with the best of belts, dressed in an antelope hide, he is a portion of Viṣṇu and is dear to everyone. (23)

सर्वेषामुपकाराय बभ्रामाकाशमण्डले ।  
महतीं रणयन् प्रीतो हरिनामप्रगायतीं ॥ २४ ॥

In order to benefit all he wandered about in the sky, happily playing his lute which sings the names of Hari. (24)

द्रक्ष्यामि वैष्णवं कुत्र तत्र वत्स्यामि साम्प्रतम् ।  
इतिसञ्चिन्त्य मनसा ददर्श पृथ्वीमिमाम् ॥ २५ ॥

I will see where there is a Vaiṣṇava and there shall I now reside. Thinking this in his mind he surveyed this earth. (25)

कलिना पापमित्रेण प्रथितमलपङ्किलाम् ।  
गामेव स्नेच्छहस्तस्थां प्रचण्डकरशोषिताम् ॥ २६ ॥

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<sup>37</sup>Śukra, the eloquent guru of the Asuras.

[He saw] the earth muddied with the impurities spread by the Age of Kali, the friend of sin, and in the hands of Mlecchas, desiccated by violent hands, ... (26)

जनांश्च ददृशे तत्र पापव्याधिसमाकुलान् ।  
परापवादनिरतान् शठान् ह्रस्वायुषः कृशान् ॥ २७ ॥

and he saw the people there, troubled by the miseries of sin, engaged in reproaching others, deceitful, with short lives, emaciated, ... (27)

राज्ञश्च पापनिपुणान् शूद्रान् सयवनान् खलान् ।  
स्त्रेच्छान् विकर्मनिरतान् प्रजासर्वस्वहारकान् ॥ २८ ॥

and [he saw] kings skilled in sin, Śūdras with Yavanas, villains, Mlecchas, engaged in evil works, stealers of the possessions of the citizens. (28)

शास्त्रज्ञानपि साधूनां निन्दकानात्ममानिनः ।  
एतान् बहुविधान् दृष्ट्वा चिन्तयामास नारदः ॥ २९ ॥

Seeing many varieties of them, who though knowers of the scriptures were blasphemers of the saintly, and self-enamored, Nārada became worried. (29)

इतिश्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे श्रीनारदानुतापो नाम द्वितीयः सर्गः

Thus ends the Second Chapter entitled “The Lamentation of Nārada” in the First Movement of the poem called the Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.



### 5.3 तृतीय-सर्गः Nārada's Request

कलेः प्रथमसन्ध्यायां निमग्नेयं वसुन्धरा ।  
सर्वेषां पापदग्धानां हरिनामरसायनः ॥ १ ॥

This bountiful earth is inundated in the first segment of the Age of Kali. The medicine of the Names of Hari is for all those scorched by sin. (1)

तारकोऽयं भवत्येव वैष्णवद्वेषिणं विना ।  
आत्मसम्भाविता ये च ये च वैष्णवनिन्दकाः ॥ २ ॥

It is the savior of all but the haters of the Vaiṣṇava, those who adore themselves, and those who libel the Vaiṣṇava. (2)

ये कृष्णनाम्नि देहेषु निन्दयुर्मन्दबुद्धयः ।  
तेऽनित्या इति वक्ष्यन्ते तेषां निरय एव हि ॥ ३ ॥

Dullards who have misrepresented the forms and Name of Kṛṣṇa will say “they are impermanent.” For them, indeed, is there hell. (3)

अत्र किं स्यादुपायोऽयमिति निश्चित्य शुद्धधीः ।  
वैकुण्ठाख्यं परं धाम जगाम करुणानिधिः ॥ ४ ॥

The pure-minded sage, an ocean of compassion, deciding “what should be the means here,” went to the supreme abode called Vaikuṅṭha. (4)

अथ त्रिवेदीपरिगीयमानं ददश वैकुण्ठमखण्डधिष्यम् ।  
स्वतेजसा ध्वस्तरजःसमूहं दिशां दशामाप गुणात् परां मुनिः ॥ ५ ॥

Thus he saw Vaikuṅṭha being praised by knowers of the three Veda, of unlimited power, the gloom of the directions destroyed by its radiance. The sage reached the state beyond the the qualities. (5)

मधुव्रतानां निवहैर्हर्यशः प्रगीयमानं कमलावलीषु ।  
विराजितं रत्नतटाभिरामवापीभिरामुक्तलतासुगन्धिभिः ॥ ६ ॥

[There] the fame of Hari is being sung [even] by groups of bees in rows of lotuses and it is adorned by charming ponds with jewel-encrusted banks and the fragrances of blossoming vines. (6)

माणिक्यगेहैर्वडभीभिरन्वितं गजेन्द्रमुक्तावलिभूषिताभिः ।  
सार्वर्त्तवैः शाखिभिरन्वितं खगैर्विकूजितं चन्द्रशिलापथाद्यम् ॥ ७ ॥

It has houses made of gems with sloping roofs decorated with strings of Gajendra pearls, trees of all the seasons, the calls of many birds, and paths made of moonstone. (7)

तत्र श्रिया जुष्टमजं पुरातनं लसत्किरीटद्युतिरञ्जितालकम् ।  
विकाशिदिव्याब्जजितेक्षणं लसत्सुधाकराराधितसन्मुखोल्लसम् ॥ ८ ॥

There [Nārada saw] the unborn, ancient one, together with Śrī, the curls of his hair colored by the glow of his shining crown, his eyes more beautiful than divine lotuses in bloom, the radiance of his face worshiped by the shining moon, ... (8)

लसन्महाकुण्डलगण्डशोभितं सुकम्बुकण्ठं कनकोज्ज्वलांशुकम् ।  
कृष्णं चतुर्भिः परिघोपमैर्भुजैर्नीलाद्रिशृङ्गं सुरपादपैरिव ॥ ९ ॥

his cheeks lighted by large sparkling earrings, his neck shaped like a conch shell, his clothes bright gold in color, Kṛṣṇa with four arms like thick beams, looking like the peak of a blue mountain surrounded by divine trees. (9)

विराजमानं कनकाङ्गदादिभिर्मुक्तावलीभिर्वरहेमसूत्रैः ।  
सकिङ्किणीजालनिबद्धचेलोल्लसन्नितम्बं वरपादपङ्कजम् ॥ १० ॥

[He is] radiant with gold armbands, strings of pearls, gold chains, his hips brightened by a garment bound by a network of small bells, and lovely lotus-like feet. (10)

तदीयपादाब्जमनोज्ञगन्धमाघ्राय हर्षाश्रुतनूरुहोद्गमैः ।  
विसंज्ञ एवाशु पपात भुमौ स दण्डवत् कृष्णसमीपतो मुनिः ॥ ११ ॥

Smelling the enchanting fragrance of his lotus-like feet, the sage suddenly fell to the ground like a stick unconscious near Kṛṣṇa, with tears of joy and hair standing on end. (11)

ततः प्रसार्याशु करं कृतज्ञो रत्नाङ्गुरीभिन्ननखप्रभं प्रभुः ।  
मुदा स्पृशन्मूर्द्धनि मुनेर्मनोहरं वभाष ईषत्स्मितशोभिताननः ॥ १२ ॥

Then stretching out his hand, the shining of his nails divided by jeweled rings, the grateful Lord, touching the sage on the head, spoken charmingly, his face lit up with a smile. (12)

स्वायम्भुवोत्तिष्ठ मुने महात्मन् यन्नो वदस्यद्य करोमि तत्ते ।  
ममैव कालोऽयमुपागतः स्वयं युगेषु धर्माचरणाय धर्मिणां ॥ १३ ॥

“O Sage, son of the self-born one, o great-souled, get up! Whatever you say now that I will do for you. My time has arrived among the ages to observe the dharma of the pious myself.” (13)

ततः समुत्थाप्य महर्षिसत्तमं महत्तमैकान्तपरायणो हरिः ।  
समादिदेशासनमाशु तस्मै तस्मिन्निविष्टो मुनिराज्ञया हरेः ॥ १४ ॥

Then, raising up the foremost of great sages, Hari, who is keenly intent on the great ones, offered him a seat. The sage was seated by the order of Hari. (14)

अथान्वपृच्छद्भगवान् मुने कथं संप्राप्तवान् मामिह किं तवेप्सितम् ।  
पूर्णस्य कार्यं करवाणि साधो परोपकाराय महद्विचेष्टितम् ॥ १५ ॥

Then, the Lord asked: “Sage, why have you come here to me? What do you desire? Let me accomplish what is to be done by the full;<sup>38</sup> helping others is the work of the great.” (15)

इत्थं सतोयाम्बुदतुल्यघोषं वचोऽमृतं कृष्णदयामृताब्धेः ।  
उवाच पूर्णस्मितवीक्षया हरेर्नमामि लोकान् परिपाहि दुःखितान् ॥ १६ ॥  
॥

[Hearing] this nectar-like speech from the ocean of the nectar of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, which had a resonance like a cloud filled with water, [the sage] said, desiring to see the Lord’s full smile, ”I offer obeisance to Hari! Please save the people who are now in distress. (16)

क्षितिः क्षिणोत्यद्य समाकुला विभो जनस्य पापौघयुतस्य धारणात् ।  
जनाञ्च सर्वे कलिकालदष्टाः पापे रतास्त्यक्तभवत्प्रसङ्गाः ॥ १७ ॥

‘The earth is degenerating at present, overwhelmed, o lord, by carrying the weight of people burdened with sin. Everyone is bitten by the Age of Kali, given to sin, and devoid of your association. (17)

तान् पाहि नाथ त्वदृते न तेषामन्योऽस्ति पाता निरयात्तु सद्गतिं ।  
एवं विचार्य कुरु सर्वलोकनाथ स्वयं सद्गतिरीश नानयः ॥ १८ ॥

‘Save them, lord. Apart from you, they have no one to protect them from hell. Considering this, bring about best course, o lord of all the worlds. Lord, you are yourself none other than the best course.” (18)

इत्थं समाकर्ण्य मुनेर्वचो हरिर्विदन्नपि प्राह किमाचरिष्ये ।  
केनाप्युपायेन भवेद्धि शान्तिस्तद्ब्रूहि तं प्राह पुनः स्वभूसुतः ॥ १९ ॥

<sup>38</sup>A reference to the full or complete incarnation, Kṛṣṇa.

Hearing the words of the sage thus, Hari, though knowing the answer, said: “What shall I do? By what means would there be peace? Tell me that.” The son of the self-born again spoke to him:

स्वयं सुशीतः शतचन्द्रमा यथा भूदेववंशेऽप्यवतीर्य सत्कुले ।  
वात्स्ये जगन्नाथसुतेति विश्रुतिं समाप्नुहि स्वं कुरु शं धरण्याः ॥ २० ॥

“You yourself, as cooling as the light of a hundred moons, will descend into a good family of *brāhmaṇa* and reside there. Attain fame as the son of Jagannātha and create your own well-being for the earth. (20)

रामादिरूपैर्भगवन् कृतं हि यत् पापात्मनां राक्षसदानवानाम् ।  
वधादिकं कर्म न चेह कार्यं मनो नराणां परिशोधयस्व ॥ २१ ॥

‘O lord, this time don’t do what was done by the forms of Rāma and the rest, that is, the killing of sinful, demonic beings. Instead purify the minds of human beings. (21)

तानासुरं भावमुपागतान् हि यदा हनिष्ये क्व तदास्ति लोकः ।  
एवं व्यवस्य स्वधियात्मनो यशः प्रख्याहि लोकाः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥ २२  
॥

‘If you kill those who have become demonic in nature, where does that leave the world? Firmly determining thus in your mind, make known your own fame and let the worlds become happy. (22)

तत्रैव रुद्रेण मुनिप्रवीराः कर्तुं हि साहाय्यमवातरिष्यन् ।  
तथेति तं प्राह हरिः सुरर्षिं सोऽपि प्रणम्याशु जगाम हृष्टः ॥ २३ ॥

‘In this, the most excellent of sages will descend along with Rudra to give you help.’ ”So be it,” he [Kṛṣṇa] told him, the sage of the gods, and he [Nārada], bowing, quickly departed. (23)

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे नारदप्रश्नो नाम तृतीयः सर्गः ॥

Thus ends the Third Chapter entitled “Nārada’s Request” in the First Movement of the poem called the Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

## 5.4 चतुर्थसर्गः Repetition of the Descents

अथ श्रुत्वा तु तत्सर्वं श्रीदामोदरपण्डितः ।  
उवाच परमप्रीतः कथ्यतां नृहरेः कथाम् ॥ १ ॥

Then, hearing all that, Dāmodara Paṇḍita, extremely pleased, said: tell the story of Nṛhari. (1)

के के तत्रावतारेषु स्ववतीर्णा महीतले ।  
अवताराश्च कतिधा तान्वदस्वानुपूर्वशः ॥ २ ॥

Who are the ones who came down to earth in the descents and how many descents are there? Describe them for me in proper order. (2)

इति श्रुत्वा द्विजाग्यस्य वचनं श्रीमुरारिकः ॥  
उवाच परमप्रीत्या श्रूयतामिति सादरम् ॥ ३ ॥

After hearing the statement of the best of the twice-born, Śrī Murāri, with great pleasure and respect, said: please listen, then. (3)

अथ ते कथयाम्यन्यत्स्वांशावतरणं हरेः ॥  
शुद्धभक्ततया ख्यातान् भक्तानीश्वररूपिणः ॥ ४ ॥

Now I will tell you of another descent of portions of Hari, famous as pure *bhaktas*, *bhaktas* having the form of the Lord. (4)

आदौ जातो द्विजश्रेष्ठः श्रीमाधवपुरी प्रभुः ।  
ईश्वरांशो द्विधा भूत्वाऽद्वैताचार्यश्च सद्गुणः ॥ ५ ॥

First was born the best of the twice-born, the Master Śrī Mādhava Purī, and, a portion of the Lord having split into two, Advaitācārya, possessed of good qualities. (5)

तयोः शिष्योऽभवद्देवश्चन्द्रांशुश्चन्द्रशेखरः ।  
स आचार्यरत्न इति ख्यातो भुवि महायशाः ॥ ६ ॥

The deity possessing the light of the moon became their disciple, Candrasekhara. That great one is famous as Ācāryaratna on earth. (6)

श्रीनारदांशजातोऽसौ श्रीमच्छ्रीवासपन्दितः ।  
गन्धर्वांशोऽभवद्वैद्यः श्रीमुकुन्दः सुगायनः ॥ ७ ॥

Born of a portion of Śrī Nārada was that Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. A portion of a gandharva became the Vaidya [doctor] Śrī Mukunda, an excellent singer. (7)

श्रीमच्छ्रीहरिदासोऽभून्मुनेरंशः शृणुस्व तत् ।  
कथितं नागदष्टेन ब्राह्मणेन यथा पुरा ॥ ८ ॥

Śrī Haridāsa was a portion of the sage (Nārada). Listen to that story as it was told previously by a *brāhmaṇa* bitten by a snake.<sup>39</sup> (8)

आदौ मुनिवरः श्रीमान् रामो नाम महातपाः ।  
द्राविडे वैष्णवक्षेत्रे सोऽवात्सीत् पुत्रवत्सलः ॥ ९ ॥

Once there was a great sage by the name of Śrī Rāma, great in austerity. He lived in a Vaiṣṇava holy place in the South and was fond of his son. (9)

तस्य पुत्रेण तुलसीं प्रक्षाल्य भाजने शुभे ।  
स्थापिता साऽपतद्भुमावप्रक्षाल्य पुनश्च ताम् ॥ १० ॥

He had his son cleanse some tulasī and place it on a shining plate. The tulasī fell on the ground and without washing it again ... (10)

<sup>39</sup>It is not certain what this refers to, but this is probably a reference to a story from one of the Purāṇa.

पित्रेऽददात्पुनः सोऽपि श्रीरामाख्यो महामुनिः ।  
ददौ भगवते तेन जातोऽसौ यवने कुले ॥ ११ ॥

he gave it to his father. And he in turn, the great sage known as Śrī Rāma, offered it to the Lord. Because of that he was born in the family of a foreigner (Yavana).<sup>40</sup> (11)

स धर्मात्मा सुधीः शान्तः सर्वज्ञानविचक्षणः ।  
ब्रह्मांशोऽपि ततः श्रीमान् भक्त एव सुनिश्चितः ॥ १२ ॥

He [Haridāsa] was a pious soul, intelligent, peaceful, learned in all branches of knowledge. Though a portion of Brahmā he was a confirmed *bhakta* nevertheless. (12)

अवधूतो महातेजा नित्यानन्दो महत्तमः ।  
बलदेवांशतो जातो महायोगी स्वयं प्रभुः ॥ १३ ॥

The ascetic (*avadhūta*) of great power, Nityānanda, greatest of the great, was born from a portion of Baladeva, great in yoga, the Lord himself. (13)

न तस्य कुलशीलानि कर्माणि वक्तुमुत्सहे ।  
अपि वर्षशतेनापि बृहस्पतिरपि स्वयम् ॥ १४ ॥

I am unable to describe his family, character, or acts even in a hundred years. Even Bṛhaspati himself ... (14)

वक्तुं नेशेऽपरे किंवा वयं हि क्षुद्रजन्तवः ।  
श्रीकृष्णद्वितीयश्चापि गौराङ्गप्राणवल्लभः ॥ १५ ॥

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<sup>40</sup>Yavana is an old word that used to refer to the Greeks, the Ionians, who were left behind by Alexander the Great after his aborted attempt to conquer India. Here it refers to the Muslims who were then living as the ruling class in Bengal.



is not able to describe them, what to speak of others. We are only insignificant creatures. And he is Kṛṣṇa's second, dear to the heart of Gaurāṅga. (15)

अन्ये च शतधा जाता देवाश्च मुनिपुङ्गवाः ।  
पृथिव्यामंशभावेन तान्न सङ्ख्यातुमुत्सहे ॥ १६ ॥

Others, gods and sages, were born by the hundreds on the earth by means of their portions. I am not able to count them. (16)

अथावतारो द्विविधः पुरुषस्य प्रकीर्तितः ।  
युगावतारः प्रथमः कार्यार्थेऽपरसम्भवः ॥ १७ ॥

Now, the descents of the supreme being are proclaimed to be of two kinds. The first is descent connected with ages and the other is an appearance for some specific purpose. (17)

युगावताराः कथ्यन्ते ये भवन्ति युगे युगे ।  
धर्मं संस्थापयन्ति ये ताञ् शृणुष्व यथाक्रमम् ॥ १८ ॥

The descents of the ages are said to be those which occur in every age and which establish religious institutions. Hear about them according to their order. (18)

सत्ये युगे ध्यान एकः पुरुषस्यार्थसाधकः ।  
तदर्थेऽवतरत् शुक्लश्चतुर्बाहुर्जटाधरः ॥ १९ ॥

In the Age of Satya [Truth], meditation is the only means of achieving the goals of human life, For the purpose [of teaching] that, the white one, with four arms and matted hair, descended. (19)

सहस्रचन्द्रसदृशः सदा ध्यानरतो मौनिः ।  
सर्वेषामेव जन्तूनां ध्यानाचार्यो बभूव ह ॥ २० ॥

As bright as a thousand moons, always engaged in meditation, practicing silence, he was the exemplary teacher of meditation for all living creatures. (20)

त्रेतायां यज्ञ एवैको धर्मः सर्वार्थसाधकः ।  
तत्र यज्ञः स्वयं जातः स्रक्स्रुवासिमन्वितः ॥ २१ ॥

In the Age of Tretā [Triad], the sacrificial rite is the one religious institution that brings about all objectives. Then, Yajña was himself born with garlands, sacrificial ladles, and the rest. (21)

याज्ञिकैर्ब्राह्मणैः सार्द्धं यज्ञभुक् स जनार्दनः ।  
यज्ञमेवाकरोज्जिष्णुर्जनान् सर्वानशिक्षयत् ॥ २२ ॥

Along with the *brāhmaṇa*, performers of sacrificial rites, the enjoyer of sacrifice, Janārdana, performed only sacrifice and the Victorious One taught it to all people. (22)

द्वापरे तु युगे पूजा पुरुषस्यार्थाय कल्पते ।  
इति ज्ञात्वा स्वयं विष्णुः पृथुरूपो बभूव ह ॥ २३ ॥

But in the Age of Dvāpara [After Two], ritual worship is able to bring about the objectives of human life. Knowing this, Viṣṇu took the form of Prthu. (23)

पूजाञ्चकार धर्मात्मा लोकानाञ्चानुशासनम् ।  
कारयामास पूजायां सर्वेषामभवन्मनः ॥ २४ ॥

The very self of religion performed worship and brought about the obedience of the people. Everyone's minds became fixed in ritual worship. (24)

कलौ तु कीर्तनं श्रेयो धर्मः सर्वोपकारकः ।  
सर्वशक्तिमयः साक्षात्परमानन्ददायकः ॥ २५ ॥

In the Age of Kali [Quarrel], the best religious practice, praising, is the helper of all, the possessor of all powers, the direct bestower of the highest joy. (25)

इति निश्चित्य मनसा साधूनां सुखमावहन् ।  
जातः स्वयं पृथिव्यान्तु श्रीचैतन्यो महाप्रभुः ॥ २६ ॥

Ascertaining this with his mind, Śrī Caitanya, the Great Master, was born himself on earth bringing with him happiness for the holy. (26)

कीर्तनं कारयामास स्वयं चक्रे मुदान्वितः ।  
युगावतारा एते वै कार्यार्थे चापराञ् शृणु ॥ २७ ॥

He encouraged praising and himself performed it with pleasure. These are the descents of the ages. Now hear of the others done for some particular reason. (27)

मात्स्ये तु वेदोद्धरणं कौर्मे मन्दारधारणं ।  
वाराहे धारणं भूमेर्नारसिंहे विदारणम् ॥ २८ ॥

In the Fish Descent there was the lifting up of the Veda. In the Tortoise Descent, there was the supporting of Mount Mandāra. In the Boar Descent, the earth was held secure. In the Man-lion Descent, he split apart [the chest of Hiraṇyakaśipu]. (28)

चक्रे दनुजशक्रस्य वामने भुवनश्रियं ।  
जिग्ये तु भार्गवः क्षौणीं जित्वा राज्ञः सुदुर्मदान् ॥ २९ ॥

In the Dwarf Descent, he made beautiful the world of the Danuja king. But as Bhārgava he conquered the earth defeating the power-drunk kings. (29)

ददौ गां ब्राह्मणायैव विष्णुर्लोकैकतारणः ।  
श्रीरामे रावणं हत्वा यशसा पूरितं जगत् ॥ ३० ॥

Viṣṇu, the world's only ferry, gave the earth to the *brāhmaṇa*. In the Rāma Descent, he killed Rāvaṇa filling the universe with his fame. (30)

श्रीमत्कृष्णावतारे तु भूमेर्भारावतारणं ।  
स्वयमेव हरिस्तत्र सर्वशक्तिसमन्वितः ॥ ३१ ॥

In the Kṛṣṇa Descent, however, Hari himself, accompanied by all his powers, removed the burden of the earth. (31)

बौद्धे तु मोहनं चक्रे वेदानां भगवान्परः ।  
स्त्रेच्छानां निधनञ्चैव कल्किरूपेण सोऽकरोत् ॥ ३२ ॥

In the Buddha Descent, the supreme Lord of the Veda deluded [its abusers] and in his Kalki Descent he killed the barbarians. (32)

एवंविधान्यनेकानि कर्माणि बहुरूपिणः ।  
कार्यावतारा नृहरेः कथिताः परमर्षिभिः ॥ ३३ ॥

Such are the many works of the multi-formed one. Nṛhari's descents for various purposes are described by the great sages. (33)

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमेऽवतारानुकरणं नाम चतुर्थः सर्गः ॥

Thus ends the Fourth Chapter of the First Movement of the poem entitled the Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya called "Repetition of the Descents."

6 *Nāmāmṛta-sindhu-bindu*  
Manindranath Guha

## 6.1 Prologue

Laghu: O Master, Dearest to Mukunda, Teacher of the Holy Name! Today My mind is depressed seeing the frightening direction of this material world. Today I am severely wounded by the blows of desires and subconscious urges. In front of me death spreads open its mouth. In the river of time we are like little bubbles that appear for a second and then dissolve forever. In the midst of this, what is the best and easiest way to regain balance, to conquer death and attain immortality? Please tell me.

Goswami: Look. This material world is like a forest fire, but until the mind is a little cleansed it does perceive the heat. It is a good sign indeed that you are able to perceive it a little. Nevertheless, your question is very timely. An indication of the intelligence of the intelligent and the wisdom of the wise is the gaining of immortality by means of the mortal body.

## 6.2 The Best Way of All

Alright listen then. Different religious prescriptions are found in scripture according to place, time and person. In the peaceful Satya-yuga, when the religious mood was strong, there was the establishment of meditation. Like that, in this tumultuous Kali-yuga, when the irreligious mood is strong, the *saṅkīrtana* (loud, congregational chanting) of the Holy Name is the established practice. When society is troubled by the flames of the three miseries, when even the smallest sign of peace is not found anywhere, when society is fidgeting about in the heat of the conflagration of the sense objects produced by absorption in unnatural enjoyments, a prescription is needed that is capable of putting out that fire and granting highest peace. That is why the most compassionate Lord himself, Gaurahari, has come down from Goloka to earth in the middle of this frenzied dance of the Kali-yuga bringing with him a downpour of the highest nectar in the form of the *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name, the best means of putting out the forest fire, the most powerful and best item in his storehouse. He calls out to the living being burned by the three flames of Kali:

चेतोदर्पणमर्जनं भवमहादावाग्निनिर्वापनम्  
श्रेयःकैरवचन्द्रिकावितरनं विद्यावधूजीवनम् ।

आनन्दाम्बुधिवर्धनं प्रतिपदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनम्  
सर्वात्मस्रपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्णसङ्कीर्तनम् ॥ (शिक्षामृत, १)

It cleans the mirror of the mind, puts out the forest fire of the ills of material existence, is like the moon in revealing the lily of the most auspicious love for Kṛṣṇa, is the very life of the *bhakti* of love, swells up the ocean of joy, in each word of it is found the taste of full nectar, and it floods all the senses with joy; may the *saṅkīrtana* of the Names of Kṛṣṇa gain overwhelming victory.

He also says (C.c., Antya, 4.70-71):

*bhajaner madhye śreṣṭha navavidhā bhakti  
kṛṣṇaprema kṛṣṇa dite dhare mahāśakti  
tār madhye sarvaśreṣṭha nāmasaṅkīrtana  
niraparādhe nāma laile pāya premadhana*

Among the forms of worship, the best are the nine forms of *bhakti*. Love of Kṛṣṇa has the great power to bestow Kṛṣṇa himself. Among those (nine) the best of all is *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name. If one says the name without offense, one gets the treasure of love”

Although *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name is the religion of the age in all Kali-yugas, in this present age of Kali *saṅkīrtana* has a special quality and that is that this time he has given it to the world with his own hand, sprinkling it with a shower of his own limitless mercy. Therefore it is seated in a place of even greater magnificence for which there is no equal. As Śrī Jīva says in the *Bhakti-sandarbha* (273): ”And in Kali, it is mercifully given by the Lord himself. That is its glorification by comparison.”<sup>41</sup>

Śrī Gaura, taking from the Sātvata scripture the *Padma Purāṇa*, has given to the world the religion of the age, *sankirtana* of the Holy Name, with his own merciful commentary:

<sup>41</sup>कलौ च श्रीभगवता कृपया तद् ग्राह्यत इत्यपेक्षयैव तत्र तत्प्रशंसेति स्थितम्

हरेर्नाम हरेर्नाम हरेर्नामैव केवलम् ।  
कलौ नास्त्येव नास्त्येव नास्त्येव गतिरन्यथा ॥

The name of Hari, the name of Hari, only the name of Hari. In the age of Kali, there is no, there is no, there is no other way.

*nāmarūpe kalikāle kṛṣṇa avatāra  
nāma haite haya sarva jagat nistāra  
dārḍhya lāgi harernāma ukti tin bāra  
jaḍaloka bujhāite punar evakāra  
kevalaśabda punarapi niścaya karaṇa  
jñāna-yoga-tapa-karma-ādi nibāraṇa  
anyathā ye māne tār nāhika nistāra  
nāhi nāhi nāhi e tin evakāra*

Kṛṣṇa's incarnation in the Age of Kali is in the form of the Holy Name. From the Holy Name comes the salvation of the whole world. For emphasis *harernāma* is stated three times in this verse. To inform the dull there is again the *eva* [indeed, for sure]. The word *kevela* [alone, only] again creates certainty. Knowledge, *yoga*, austerity, rituals, and so forth are rejected. Whoever thinks otherwise is not delivered. "Not!" "Not!" "Not!" and these with three *eva*-s. (C.c., Ādi, 17.19-22)

The followers of Śrī Gaura join their voices with that of their dear Lord's in praise of the Holy Name.

Sanātana Gosvāmin says:

कृष्ण श्रवणपासात्त्वं निर्यातो ध्यानरज्जुभिः  
ग्राह्यस्ताभ्यश्च निर्यातो नामकीर्तनशृङ्खलैः ।  
त्वङ्गक्लिलोलितेनाद्य न मया जातु मोक्ष्यसे  
वृतो धृतोऽसि गाढं त्वं पीतकौशेयवाससि ॥ (बृ. भा., २.१.१)



Krsna! Getting free from the cords of hearing, you are caught by the ropes of meditation. Getting free from those, too, you are captured by the chains of *sañkīrtana* of your Names. Now, I, who am unsettled by *bhakti* for you, will never let you go. You are surrounded and firmly held by that cloth of yellow silk.

Here, following the teaching of the *Bhāgavata* (2.3.5), the best of the various forms of *bhakti* is shown in the manner of a comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of *śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (praising), and *smaraṇa* (remembering). If the *bhakti* of hearing is like binding with silk threads, the *bhakti* of remembering is like binding with cow ropes. And compared to that the *bhakti* of praising (*kīrtana*) is much more firm like binding with iron chains. Remembering pulls a mind absorbed in hearing away and makes it absorbed in it, and again *kīrtana* pulls a mind absorbed in remembering away and makes it fully absorbed in it. But *kīrtana* of the Holy Name effects such a firm binding that nothing else has the power to pull the mind away. In power the chanting of the Holy Name is the best of all; it has no equal. This has been shown here.

Śrī Jīva says, commenting on the *Bhāgavata* (2.1.11):

“Then, too. it is taught that it is the highest practice of all and the highest goal: this *sañkīrtana* of the name of Hari is recommended for those disgusted (with the material world).”<sup>42</sup>

The teaching is that *sañkīrtana* of the Holy Name is the highest practice and the highest goal for all, for those desiring piety, wealth, sense enjoyment, or liberation, and the single-minded devotee.

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartin says in his commentary on *Bhāgavata* (2.1.11):

Though from scriptures like the *Bhāgavata* and others it is known that *bhakti* is what is to be communicated, the question arises which among all of the forms of *bhakti*, remembering etc., has been ascertained as primary. In answer it is said that the *kīrtana*

<sup>42</sup>तत्रापि सर्वेषामेव परमसाधनत्वेन परमसाध्यत्वेन चोपदिशति — एतन्निर्विद्यमानानां हरेर्नामकीर्तनम्

of the names of Hari that are dear to one has been recognized as the best of all, like the emperor among great kings. Among all the forms of *bhakti*, hearing, remembering, and glorifying are the primary ones (vide Bhāg. 2.1.5). In this verse it is said that among those three, *kīrtana* or glorification is the main one. Again among the various forms of *kīrtana* (glorification of the names, the forms, the qualities, the sports), glorification of the names is the best. Moreover, in this glorification of the names, glorification of the names that fit one's own *bhakti* or, in the sweet rasa, for instance, glorification of names like Gaura, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Rādhāramaṇa, Rādhā, and so forth, is the foremost of all. There is nothing equal or superior to it.<sup>43</sup>

In the present age of Kali, while, on the one hand, all perfections come to one without fail who travels the path of cultivation, depending, wholeheartedly and with respect, on the knowledge that the *kīrtana* of the Holy Names that was initiated and bestowed by Śrī Gaura is the best, on the other, there no other way for living beings to gain salvation. Śrī Gaurahari proclaimed this with his own lips, repeating the truth three times: *nāstyeva nāstyeva nāstyeva gatiranyathā*, “there is not, there is not, there is not another way.” Therefore, Śrī Rūpa said, wishing the best for all the Vaiṣṇavas that would follow him:

श्रीचैतन्यमुखोद्गीर्णा हरे कृष्णेतिवर्णिकाः ।  
मज्जयन्तो जगत् प्रेम्नि विजयन्तां तदाह्वयाः ॥ (ल. भा., ४)

May they rule supreme, the syllables ‘hare kṛṣṇa’ springing from the mouth of Śrī Caitanya, his own names inundating the whole world with love.

Again, Śrī Rūpa reveals his heart's special feeling in a blessing to the world:

<sup>43</sup>नन्वत्र शास्त्रे भक्तिरभिधेयेत्यवगम्यत एव । तत्रापि भक्त्यङ्गेषु मध्ये महाराजचक्रवर्तिवत् किमेकं मुख्यत्वेन निर्नीयते । तत्राह नामानुकीर्तनमिति । सर्वेषु भक्त्यङ्गेषु मध्ये श्रवणकीर्तनस्मरणानि त्रीनि मुख्यानि तस्माद्भारत इति श्लोकेनोक्तानि । तेषु त्रिष्वपि मध्ये कीर्तनम्, कीर्तनेऽपि नामलीलागुणादिसम्बन्धिन तस्मिन् नामकीर्तनम्, तत्राप्यनुकीर्तनं स्वभक्त्यनुरूपनामकीर्तनम् (निरन्तरकीर्तनं वा) निर्नीतं पूर्वाचार्यैरपि न केवलं मयैवधुना निर्नीयत इति ।

निखिलश्रुतिमौलिरत्नमालाद्युतिनीराजितपादपङ्कजान्त ।  
अयि मुक्तकुलैरुपास्यमानां परितस्त्वाम् हरिनाम संश्रयामि ॥ (कृष्ण-  
नामाष्टक , १ )

O Holy Name! The lustre of the crowning jewels of all the Veda honors your lotus-like feet. I seek complete shelter in every way in you who are worshiped even by the liberated.

Here an item of particular note is that Śrī Rūpa who is usually extremely measured with words has used two words that have the same meaning in characterizing his seeking shelter with the Holy Name: *paritas* and *saṁśrayāmi* which mean ‘in every way’ and ‘I take shelter completely,’ respectively. The point of stating one idea twice is that this subject is so important for the practitioner that if he does not grasp it his entire life of practice will become useless. Therefore, the extremely compassionate Rūpa has stated it twice for emphasis.

L: I’ve understood that *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name is the best of all of the forms of worship, but some have an opposing opinion here, don’t they? Is this conclusion only applicable to *vaidhī bhakti* or does it apply to *rāgānugā bhakti*, too? Some say that in *rāgānugā bhakti*, *smaraṇa* is best.

G: What some people say is not supported by scripture. Though in *rāgānugā bhakti* *smaraṇa* is indeed important, still, in thinking hierarchically, importance is not the final word. Beyond importance there is more important, most important, and finally the ‘fourth.’ Viśvanātha Cakravartin makes such distinctions in his commentary on Karṇapūra’s *Ānandavṛndāavana-campū* (14.53).<sup>44</sup> In the world of spiritual cultivation (*sādhana*) that ‘fourth’ is *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Names, beyond which there is nothing.

In this connection, here are the conclusions of the Gosvāmin:

### 6.2.1 Viśvanātha Cakravartin’s Conclusion

Viśvanātha Cakravartin, who has said that since *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name is in ‘fourth’ position it is better than *smaraṇa* and the rest and who has

<sup>44</sup>सङ्गीतनिगमगमकचातुरीतुरीयाचार्या and Viśvanātha’s *ṭikā*: तुरीया चतुर्थी मुख्या-मुख्यतरा-मुख्यतमातोऽप्यतिश्रेष्ठा इत्यर्थः

called it the emperor above kings in many places (comm. on Bhāg. 2.1.11, comm. on Brs. 1.2.230), while agreeing that in *rāgānugā-bhakti smaraṇa* is central, has nevertheless placed *smaraṇa*, like the chief commander of the armed forces, beneath the emperor, *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name.

In the *Rāga-vartma-candrikā* he says:

The subservience of *smaraṇa*, the central practice in *rāgānugā*, to *kīrtana* must indeed be emphasized because *kīrtana* has authority in this age and because it is established by all scriptures as the most excellent of all among the various paths of *bhakti*.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, not just for *vaidhī*, but for *rāgānuga-bhakti* too, *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name is the best.

### 6.2.2 Sanātana Gosvāmin's Conclusion

The predominance of *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name in attaining the service of Rādhā, the highest prize of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, is shown in a comparative way quite clearly in one of the Gosvāmin's verses:

तद्धि तत्तद्भ्रजक्रीडाध्यानगानप्रधानया ।  
भक्त्या सम्पद्यते प्रेष्ठनामसङ्कीर्तनोज्ज्वलम् ॥ (बृ. भाग्., २.५.२१८) ॥

That (service of Rādhā) is attained by *bhakti* in which meditation on and singing about the various sports of Vraja is predominant and which is set ablaze by *saṅkīrtana* of the names of one's most beloved one.

In his commentary on that verse Sanātana Gosvāmin says:

<sup>45</sup>अत्र रागानुगाय यन्मुख्यस्य तस्यापि कीर्तनाधीनत्वमवश्यं वक्तव्यमेव कीर्तनस्यैव एतद्युगाधिकारत्वात्सर्वभक्तिमार्गेषु सर्वशास्त्रैस्तस्यैव सर्वोत्कर्षप्रतिपादनाच्च

Now, the means of attaining the service of Rādhā is stated: “*tad-dhi ...*” By ninefold *bhakti* in which remembering and singing of the various Gokula-sports of Śrī Kṛṣṇa predominate, *preman* is easily achieved. The one qualification that there is in this matter is stated next: *preman* is manifested or purified by *saṅkīrtana* of the names of one’s desired lord or the names of the lord that are most dear to one. Although in using the word *gāna*, *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Names is meant, *saṅkīrtana* of the names most dear to one has been mentioned again in particular. The reason is that compared to meditating on and singing of the Vraja sports, *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Names is a comparatively more intimate means to *preman*, more primary than the primary, than which there is nothing higher.<sup>46</sup>

Or, *saṅkīrtana* of the beloved’s Holy Names is itself the very essence of the attainment of *preman*.

### 6.2.3 The Easiest Way

Why is the Holy Name the easiest way of all to attain immortality? That is found in the first principles of the Holy Name. Now listen to the principles of the Holy Name.

## 6.3 The First Principles of the Holy Name

Just as iron in contact with fire gains the qualities of fire, by mere contact with an immortal thing we, too, are able to become immortal. That immortal thing is the Holy Name.

नामचिन्तामणिः कृष्णश्चैतन्यरसविग्रहः ।

पूर्णः शुद्धो नित्यमुक्तोऽभिन्नत्वान्नामनामिनोः (पद्म पुराण) ॥

<sup>46</sup>तत्रैव विशेषमाह प्रेष्ठस्य निजेष्टतमदेवस्य प्रेष्ठानां वा निजप्रियतमानां भगवन्नाम्नां सङ्कीर्तनेन उज्ज्वलं प्रकाशमानं शुद्धं वा । गानेत्युक्त्वा नामकीर्तने प्राप्तेऽपि निजप्रियतमानामकीर्तनस्य प्रेमान्तरङ्गतरसाधनत्वेन पुनर्विशेषेण निदेशः किम्वा तत्सम्पत्तिलक्षणज्ञानाय

As the Holy Name and the Holy Named are non-different, the Name is a thought-jewel, the very embodiment of consciousness and *rasa*, full [undivided] and pure [free of connection with *māyā*], eternally liberated [beyond *māyā*], the very nature of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Jīva in a commentary on this verse has said:

The Holy Name is a thought-jewel: it grants all one's desires [i.e., while in contact with the Holy Name, which has the nature of truth, whatever is thought of becomes true. Therefore it is a thought-jewel. See Bhāg., 11.15.26: *yathā sakalpayet ...*]. Since the Holy Name is Kṛṣṇa, it has the nature of Kṛṣṇa. Consciousness and so forth are adjectives of Kṛṣṇa. The reason the Holy Name is Kṛṣṇa is that the Holy Name and the Holy Named are not different. *One eternal, conscious, joyful, rapturous, truth has appeared as two.*<sup>47</sup>

Joyful astonishment is called *rasa*. This *rasa* is consciousness *rasa* — it has no relationship with *māyā*. It is as though a liquid substance, being poured into two molds, one in the form of a human and the other in the form of syllables, settled in two forms. One is the human form — Śyāmasundara, Vaṁśīdhārī, Tribhaṅgi — and the other is the highest syllabic form 'kṛṣṇa.' The two are embodied consciousness and *rasa*, the highest nectar,<sup>48</sup> a condensed ocean of the highest joy.<sup>49</sup> The Holy Name is possesses a full form.<sup>50</sup>

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmin whose very life and decoration was the Holy Name, the highest of nectars, has revealed the truth of the Holy Name with his own lips in a rapturous outburst:

Alas! The name of Kṛṣṇa is an extremely elevated *rasa*-filled thing. Why *rasa*-filled? Because it is composed of soft, sweet,

<sup>47</sup>नामैव चिन्तामणिः सर्वाभीष्टदायकः यतस्तदेव कृष्णः कृष्णस्य स्वरूपमित्यर्थः । कृष्णस्य विशेषणानि चैतन्यादीनि तस्य कृष्णत्वे हेतुरभिन्नत्वादिति । एकमेव सच्चिदानन्दरसादिरूपं तत्त्वं द्विविधाविभूतमित्यर्थः (भ. र. सि., १.२.२३३) ।

<sup>48</sup>परमामृतमेकं जीवनं भूषणं मे — Sanātana Gosvāmin, *Br. Bhā.*, 1.1.9

<sup>49</sup>रम्यचिह्ननसुखस्वरूपिणे — Rūpa, *Nāmāṣṭak*

<sup>50</sup>पूर्णवपुषे नमो नमः — Rūpa, *Nāmāṣṭaka*

syllables, or, because it is made of the *rasa* of eternal being, consciousness, and joy, it is *rasa*-filled. Or, because it presents a particular kind of *rasa*, either the nine *rasa* headed by *śṛṅgāra*, the *rasa* of *bhakti*, or the *rasa* of *preman*. Also, even in the states of separation and union the name appears, therefore it is *rasa*-filled. Or, *rasa* is meant in the sense of passion; this name is accompanied by passion. Or, it without failing brings about love of the Lord. Therefore this name is *rasa*-filled. Or, the name creates in the minds of its servants or of everyone love for itself, therefore it is *rasa*-filled. Or, *rasa* might be understood as a kind of potency this name possesses, it has the greatest of powers, therefore, it is *rasa*-filled. Or, *rasa* can be a special kind of quality — this name delivers all distressed people, therefore it is *rasa*-filled.<sup>51</sup>

It is as if he has drank so much *rasa* that his outburst will never end. Therefore again the outburst continues:

If *rasa* is viewed as a kind of happiness, the name is made of intense happiness, therefore it is filled with *rasa*. Or, the name is sweetness at its highest limit, or supremely sweet, therefore it is filled with *rasa*. This name is sweeter than sweet, extremely sweet, therefore it is incomparable.<sup>52</sup>

The Named himself and the syllables of the Name, these are, without dependence on anything else, fully, that is completely, non-different in power and in sweetness. They are just like the way a mango and an apple molded from solid sugar are independently the same in taste, aroma, and in sweetness.

<sup>51</sup>यतः सरसं कोमलं मधुराक्षरमयत्वात् सच्चिदानन्दरसमयत्वाद्वा । यद्वा रसैरशेषैरेव सह वर्तमानं शृङ्गारादिनवरसेषु भक्तिरसे प्रेमरसे च तथा विरहसङ्गमयोश्च परिस्फुरणात् । यद्वा रसो रागस्तत्सहितमव्यभिचारितेनावश्यमेवाशु श्रीभगवत्प्रेमसम्पादनात् । यद्वा रसो वीर्यविशेषः परमशक्तिमत्वात् । यद्वा गुणविशेषोऽखिलदीनजननिस्तारकत्वात् ।

<sup>52</sup>यद्वा सुखविशेषः घनसुखमयत्वात् । माधुर्यविशेषो वा परममधुरत्वादिति दिक् । यथोक्तं मधुरमधुरेत्यादि । अतस्तस्य नाम्न एव समं तत्तुलमन्यत् किञ्चिन्नास्तीति निरुपममित्यर्थः ॥ (बृ. भाग., २.३.१८४)

Therefore, even though Ajāmila was completely devoid of any connection with the Named, Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, at the time he called his own son named Nārāyaṇa, as a result of the contact of his tongue with those four syllables he got sudden liberation.

Furthermore, in Rūpa’s play *Vidagdha-mādhava* Paurṇamāsī said: *no jāne janitā kiyadbhiramṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇetivarnadvayī*, I don’t know how much nectar the two syllables *kṛṣṇa* are made of. This is the sweetness of the Holy Name. ”One truth, in the form of eternal being, consciousness, joy, *rasa* and so forth, has appeared in as two.”<sup>53</sup> This statement of Śrī Jīva, in his discussion of the Holy Name, is the definitive statement. It has authority everywhere, or, in other words, it is the final conclusion.

The Holy Name is a Vaikuṅṭha substance (Bhāg. 6.2.14) — that is, a substance always without weakness — it does not become impure in any condition — it does not become corrupted by incursion of the faults of an offender nor, in the adumbration of the Name is it changed.

## 6.4 The Holy Name: its Compassion and Generosity

L: If the Holy Name is a condensed ocean of the highest joy then just as when one places one’s hand on a large block of ice and immediately goose-bumps arise at the infusion of its quality of coldness throughout the body, by mere contact with the Holy Name goose-bumps should arise in our bodies at the infusion of the great joy of the Holy Name. But that doesn’t happen. What’s the deal?

G: Just think a little bit. Does the hand always feel the cold when it is placed on a lump of ice? It doesn’t. It depends on the condition of the hand. If the hand is covered with a thick covering of cork, it will not feel any of the cold at all. The degree of experience of cold depends on the degree of covering. In the same way, the degree of our experience of that great joy depends on the degree of our offense. If one’s offense is as hard as quilt of diamond then one will not experience any joy at all and visa-versa.

L: Very well, I accept that. Offense deprives us of tasting the joy. Still, the point is that the need for the gift of the generous is greater for penniless,

<sup>53</sup>From his comm. on (Brs. 1.2.233)



fallen low-lives like us. If those gifts don't reach us then where is the greatness of those gifts? Or, what is the use of calling the giver a 'thought-jewel,' 'bestower of all one's desires,' and so on?

G: Look, there is one who is the crown jewel of givers, an ocean of mercy, whose compassion has no limit and of whose compassion even offenders, the bad, the lowest, the outcasts are not deprived; that is the Holy Name. Even when the ocean of great compassion, the Named One himself, is put off by the foul smell of the rubbish in the heart-courtyard of a sinful offender, and stands at a distance, this Holy Name willingly accepts the lowly work of the sweeper and, sweeping out that courtyard, gradually makes it clean and pure again. Then the Holy Name comes and sits down to rest in that pure, peaceful, temple of the heart, washed in the water of the Gaṅgā. (Narottama Dāsa sings: "in the hearts of the holy, ever Govinda rests") Then can see: the Holy Name is greater than the Named himself in compassion and generosity. Even though the Holy Name and the Holy Named are entirely non-different, the Holy Name is distinguished in terms of greater compassion and generosity. The Name understands the condition of everyone and distributes compassion equally. The offenses of the offender dwindle and the self-less love (*preman*) of those who are offenseless increases. A typhoon arises in his ocean of love (*preman*) during his daily respectful *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name.<sup>54</sup>

L: Still, some contemporary people say that supernatural *bhakti* can never come into the refuse of the natural senses. Along with becoming prepared for service, the senses become supernatural and to these supernatural senses supernatural *bhakti* can come. They cite the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.234) as evidence for this position. It states there:

अतः श्रीकृष्णनामादि न भवेद्ब्राह्मिन्द्रियैः ।  
सेवोन्मुखे हि जिह्वादौ स्वयमेव स्फुरत्यदः ॥

Therefore, the names and so forth of Kṛṣṇa cannot be grasped by the senses. When one is ready for service, they appear themselves on the tongue and the rest.

<sup>54</sup>तस्मात्सङ्कीर्तनं विष्णोरिति अनुदिनमिदमादरे शृण्वनित्यादिषु भक्तेरनेकेषामङ्गानां श्रद्धावृत्ति-सम्यक्त्वादेरपि यद्विधानं तन्निरपराधानां प्रेमवृद्धयर्थम् । नामापराधवतां तु नामापराधक्षयार्थञ्च । (विश्वनाथ टीका भाग. ६.३.२४)

But previously it was said that the Holy Name comes to the natural senses and slowly after a while in contact with *bhakti* the senses become supernatural. What is the real intention of scripture on this topic?<sup>55</sup>

G: Listen carefully to what Viśvanātha Cakravartin has said on this matter. All of your doubts will be overcome and there will be no need for me to say anything more than that.

Alright, let *preman* be without any material quality, but how can mental activity be without material quality? If one claims that a relationship of holder and held obtains between them, then if the mental activity of a practitioner, who has not developed love (*rati*) and whose worship has barely begun, is considered without material quality because it is the holder of *bhakti*, how can anger, hatred, and so forth be present in his mind as obstacles to *bhakti*?

That is right. One cannot say here that the mind becomes free of material qualities through the relationship of holder-held. But, it happens without that. The conclusion of scripture is like this: there is no mixing of the senses with *bhakti* in the form of *kīrtana* of the Holy Name and so forth by its merely entering the ears. Rather, in the endless grinding of *bhakti* against the material mind by means of repeated practice, after rising through the stages of cessation of harmful habits, stability, taste, and attachment, meeting takes place. As long as there is no meeting, the mundane conditions of lust, anger, and so forth in the mind remain harmful.<sup>56</sup>

By merely adding mercury to sulphur powder no real mixing takes place between them. But, with repeated grinding, after a while mixing does occur.

<sup>55</sup>The way that some interpret the verse, "Therefore ... ," is not warranted by scripture. Śrī Jīva in his commentary on this verse says: *bhagavatsvarūpatannāmagrahaṇāya pravṛttaḥ*, "engaged in taking his name which is part of the essential nature of the Lord." In accordance with this, the meaning of the verse is: since the Kṛṣṇa's names are of his the essential nature, they cannot be grasped by the power of the senses. If, however, the tongue and other senses become engaged in taking the names and the rest, the names themselves come to and appear in those senses.

<sup>56</sup>तथाहि प्रथमं स्वानामित्यादिरीत्या भक्तेः कर्णप्रवेशमात्रेणैव झटति न तेन मेलनं स्यात् किन्तु निरन्तरमन्तःकरणेन सह भक्तेरभ्यासः पौनःपुन्येनानर्थनिवृत्तिनिष्ठारुच्यासक्तिभूमिकारोहनान्तरमेव । यावच्च तथा न मेलनं स्यात्तावन्मनोवृत्तयो रागद्वेषादय प्राकृता अनर्थकरा एव । (उ. न्. टीका, १.२८ )

Furthermore, just as when mixing occurs, sulphur's own form disappears and it takes on another form, so is the mundane condition of the mind destroyed and it becomes spiritualized (*cinmaya*). Just as in the mixing of sulphur and mercury a new thing, mascara (*kohl*), is produced, so in the mixing of *bhakti* with the mind *preman* is produced.

In his commentary on the 10th Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10.29.10), Viśvanātha Cakravartin has even more clearly made this point:

the body of the devotee at first is a mixture of material quality (*guṇa*) and absence of material quality (*nirguṇa*). To the degree that *bhakti* gradually increases, the material quality part decreases and quality-less part increases. On the stage of *preman* the material quality-state is completely destroyed and the quality-less condition becomes complete.<sup>57</sup>

It is just like a mango that is at first slightly reddened, then half ripened, and finally fully ripened.

Sanātana Gosvāmin has said the very same thing in the statement "even of those having bodies made of the five elements ..." (in his comm. on *Bṛhad Bhāg.* 2.3.139):

With the appearance of *bhakti*, [in the course of time] the body of composed of five elements obtains the form of eternal being, consciousness, and joy. Moreover, by the force of her power of the compassion, Bhakti-devi is able to appear in any condition [that is, even in a body of the material elements].<sup>58</sup>

L: Śrī Cakravartin in his commentary has spoken of repeated grinding. But isn't anything possible quickly by the power of the thing alone without that grinding?

<sup>57</sup>भक्तदेहस्यांशेन निर्गुणत्वगुणमयत्वञ्च स्यात् । भक्ति-वृद्धितारतम्येन निर्गुणदेहांशानामाधिक्यतारतम्यं स्यात् । प्रेम्ण्युत्पन्ने तु गुणमयदेहांशेषु नष्टेषु सम्यक् निर्गुण एव देहः स्यात् ।

<sup>58</sup>पाञ्चभौतिकदेहवतामपि भक्तिस्फूर्त्या सच्चिदानन्दरूपतायामेव पर्यवसनात्, किम्वा तत्कारुण्यशक्तिविशेषेण तत्र तत्रापि तत्स्फूर्तिसम्भवात् ।

G: Yes, it is possible for it to happen quickly by the power of the thing itself. Still, that is not a common occurrence. It is uncommon, as for instance (1) in the case of success by mercy in which by Kṛṣṇa's mercy or by that of his devotee, even without practice, love is able to arise (see B.r.s, 1.2.15). Again in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* Sanātana Gosvāmin has said: the holy land's power is limitless. By its mercy even without practice some are able to attain that goal (Bṛhad Bhāg., ?). Do you know what this is like? It is like finding money by chance. If, hearing that someone has found money, we tie up our waist cloths and sit in our rooms, making no effort to earn it, then it is almost certain that we will die of starvation. We have to force the descent of his mercy through intense practice. Worship depends upon effort.

It can also happen quickly (2) for someone who is without offense (B.r.s., 1.2.238).

दुरुहाद्गतवीर्येऽस्मिन् श्रद्धा दूरेऽस्तु पञ्चके ।  
यत्र सङ्कल्पोऽपि सम्बन्धः सद्भियां भावजन्मने ॥

The top five forms of *bhakti*, headed by the Holy Name, have a difficult to comprehend power indeed; even by merely deciding to undertake them those whose minds are free of offense obtain love.

Jīva Gosvāmin in his commentary has defined the word *sad-dhīyām* as "those whose minds are free of offense." As soon as a person free of offense pronounces the Holy Name or touches the dust of the holy land, he will be overcome with feelings that produce tears, trembling, gooseflesh and so forth. But the sad thing is that we living beings in the age of Kali are almost all gripped by offense, whether large or small. Therefore, none of this does happen quickly for us. We need the repeated grinding.

## 6.5 The Adumbration of the Holy Name

L: What is the adumbration of the Holy Name?

G: The meaning of the word adumbration (*ābhāsa*) is "vague or unclear manifestation." Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmin has given as the meaning of *ābhāsa*

the word "imitating (i.e., having the same form as, *anukāra*) like a reflection," like when the sun is the original and its image in water is its reflection.

In scripture the following discussion of adumbration of the Holy Name is found:

1. It is the first unfolding of the Holy Name in the mind of a practitioner engaged in cultivating the Holy Name, like the earliest stage of sunrise. (When the Holy Name is not present on the tongue, but is in the mind, it is adumbration of the Holy Name. When it is present on the tongue it is the Holy Name itself not an adumbration) (C.c., Antya 3.182-85)
2. If the Holy Named is joined with any living being through the syllables of the Holy Name in an incidental way completely without expectation, it is the adumbration of the Holy Name. Examples:
  - (a) The story of Ajāmila who in order to call his son named Nārāyaṇa pronounced the word "nārāyaṇa". This is elsewhere called adumbration of the Holy Name by convention.
  - (b) The story of Satyatapas in the Varāha Purāṇa cited in Sanātana's commentary on *Bṛhad- bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.2.173). A *brāhmaṇa* was standing in water doing his daily prayers. At that time a tiger who was about to attack him was struck by the arrow of a hunter and was liberated on hearing in his dying moment the Holy Name from the mouth of the *brāhmaṇa*. This is an example of liberation by the adumbration of the Holy Name.

Nearly all of Kali's living beings are in the grips of some measure of offense. As a result adumbration of the Holy Name has no effect on them (*Krama-sandarbha*, 6.2.20). What then is the purpose of discussing adumbration of the Holy Name? In order to get some sense of the indescribable, unlimited power of the Holy Name.

The statement in scripture that by one adumbration of the Holy Name one gets liberation and eventually attains Vaikuṅṭha applies in the case of absence of offense to the Holy Name; when there is offense adumbration of the Holy Name has no effect. In the latter case, one must depend on practice. The sin and offense of a person possessed of offense to the Holy Name the

Name itself clears away. If one is tirelessly engaged in chanting, the Holy Name will be effective: *nāmānyeva harantyaḥam*.<sup>59</sup> One should take the words *nāmānyeva* to mean “only the Holy Name,” or the adumbration of the Holy Name, but not any thing else.

Here is the victory flag of the mercy of Gaura — without his grace there was no other way for the living beings of the Age of Kali because we had lost the ability to even take the medicine. We are profoundly offensive. It was a case of the Holy Name, the one and only medicine, not coming to our tongues. Before the coming of Gaura, the Holy Name did not come — Śrī Vālmīki is an example of that. At first the name of Rāma would not come to Ratnākara’s tongue. But now the situation is different — now, if anyone desires to repeat the Holy Name, that Name, out of the greatest compassion, comes and dances on his tongue, the mirror of his mind is cleansed, and gradually that servant of the nectar of the Name becomes submerged in the ocean of the nectar of *preman*.

## 6.6 Offenses to the Holy Name

L: What is an offence to the Holy Name?

G: The only cause of being cheated of the mercy of the merciful Holy Name is its displeasure, otherwise known as *aparādha* or offense. That which brings about the displeasure of the Holy Name, causing pleasure (*rādha*) to vanish (*apa*), is called an offense to the Holy Name. The displeased Holy Name contracts its power to protect the sheltered.<sup>60</sup>

L: Then along with learning of the greatness and sweetness of the Holy Name one needs to learn especially well about the difficult-to-control power of offense to the Holy Name. Please graciously describe that to me.

G: Just as the Holy Name’s power is limitless — if one knowingly or unknowingly does Nama *kīrtana* all of one’s sins are uprooted, so is the

<sup>59</sup>अत्र साङ्केत्यमित्यादौ सकृन्नामाभासेनापि यन्निःशेषाघधुननोक्त्या वासनापर्यन्तक्षयमुच्यते । गुणानुवाद इत्यादौ तु भक्त्यावृत्त्यैवेति यत्तत्तु यथाक्रमं नामापराधशून्यतद्युक्तभजनापेक्षया ज्ञेयम् । नामापराधयुक्तानां नामान्येव हरन्त्यघम् । अविश्रान्तप्रयुक्तानि तान्येवार्थकराणीतिपाद्वात् । (क्रम-सन्दर्भः, ६.२.२०)

<sup>60</sup>यदि ते अपराधिनस् स्युरिति तस्याप्रसाद एव स्वाश्रितापालने कारणम् । विश्वनाथ, भाग. ६.२.९-१०

power of offense to the Holy Name limitless — if one knowingly or unknowingly touches an offense to the Holy Name the love even of one who is a great devotee is destroyed. The action of an offense is that gradually love is destroyed and one begins to regard the spiritual as material. The great ones have by their examples given us warning in this thoroughly destructive matter.

One day, while the beloved *bhakta* of Nṛsimhadeva, Prahlāda, was engaged in the service of Viṣṇu, a guard came and delivered the news "two Vaiṣṇava have come to see you and are waiting at the door." Mahārāja Prahlāda then requested him with folded hands "Please ask the Vaiṣṇava to wait for a little bit." Then in the absorption of performing *arcana* he forgot about those Vaiṣṇava. The Vaiṣṇava waited for quite a while and then, blaming their fortune, left. On this side, the great offense of disrespecting Vaiṣṇava touched the heart of *bhakta* Prahlāda and suddenly his mind reversed. He became disfigured with anger and began to say: "Viṣṇu is the enemy of my father. He is on the side of the gods who are opposed to us, the long-standing enemies of our clan. Today I am going to attack Vaikuṅṭha and punish them." Throughout the clans of demons the sounds "Prepare! Prepare!" rose up. Outfitting a huge army Prahlāda went to conquer Vaikuṅṭha. Just imagine what great troubles can rise from just one offense. Fortunately, by his guru's mercy, Prahlāda Mahārāja was protected from that course.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin has also given us an example in this connection. One day he was situated in trance remembering the sacred sport. He was watching Śrī Kṛṣṇa lift Rādhā with both hands to collect flowers from a high branch. Suddenly he released her and Rādhā, grabbing the branch, was left dangling there. Seeing this trick the girlfriends all began to laugh and along with them Śrī Rūpa in trance. At that very moment a crippled Vaiṣṇava was passing in front of Rūpa. He thought "Gosvāmī is making fun of me" and became sad. Because of that Vaiṣṇava's sadness an offense touched Śrī Rūpa's heart and his trance was broken. The sport did not appear any more in his heart. Just see how one offense is able to subtly spread its web of harm. Anyway, later that crippled Vaiṣṇava understood the secret of Rūpa's laughter and his mental balance returned. Śrī Rūpa was able to return to his meditations.

L: My, what incredible power offense has. How does the displeasure of the Holy Name or offense to the Holy Name occur? Kindly tell me about this.

G: One can know how the Holy Name becomes displeased from the *satām nindā nāmnah* verses of the *Padma Purāṇa* (Sarga, 48.46-49). Ten kinds of offense are listed there. Listen to a discussion following Śrī Jīva’s comments, in his *Krama-sandarbha*, on the *Bhāgavata* verse 2.1.11.

1. **Blasphemy of the Good.** It is a fault to blaspheme any living being. That is a general fault, however, not an offense to the Holy Name. Faith is the door through which one enters the world of *bhakti*. “A person who has faith is qualified for *bhakti*.”<sup>61</sup> “By the word faith one means a belief that is strong in the certainty that if one performs *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa all actions are complete.”<sup>62</sup> From this state of mind one’s being a Vaiṣṇava begins. Such Vaiṣṇava from whom the glory of the Holy Name is spread in the world are the good (*sādhu*). Blasphemy of such good ones, or nourishing a feeling of hostility towards them, or not welcoming them or being pleased when one sees them is the most egregious of offense to the Holy Name. Therefore, it is listed first. Even hearing blasphemy of the good is an offense to the Holy Name.
2. **Thinking Śiva Independent of Viṣṇu.** Śrī Kṛṣṇa, after becoming the womb-ocean-lying Mahāviṣṇu who is a part of the causal-ocean-lying Mahāviṣṇu who, in turn, is a portion of Kṛṣṇa’s own Saṅkaraṣaṇa form, takes on the quality of inertia (*tamoguna*) and becomes the Quality Avatāra, Śiva, in order to destroy the world. It is like yogurt coming from milk. Those who think that this Śiva is an independent principle are offenders of the Holy Name. One should see Śiva as the best *bhakta* of the Lord and respect him. Harihara are one self — that is, in dearness.
3. **Neglecting or Disrespecting the Guru.** The guru is a teacher about the spiritual world, a protector, and a friend — more affectionate than a father. The Lord who exists in the form of the guru, having become an incarnation of a *bhakta* in a distributive fashion in the world, is also in the spiritual realm as the collective guru which, though personally having descended [into the world], is eternally present in the

<sup>61</sup> *śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti adhikārī*, C.c., Madhya, 22.64.

<sup>62</sup> *śraddhā śabde viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya, kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarvakarmakṛta haya*, C.c., Madhya, 22.62.



form of the guru at the left side of the Lord.<sup>63</sup> For this reason, the form of Kṛṣṇa and the form of the best *bhakta* of Kṛṣṇa simultaneously coexist in the guru.<sup>64</sup> The Lord is manifested in the form of the individual guru for the benefit of the disciples through the medium of some *bhakta* who possesses love for Him. In worship is in pursuit of passion (*rāgānugā*, when the godly opulent part subsides, one has a sweet vision of the guru as a dear girlfriend of Kṛṣṇa in the *mañjarī* form.<sup>65</sup> Not respecting such an affectionate spiritual father is an offense to the Holy Name.

4. **Blasphemy of Scripture.** Blasphemy of *śruti* [the Veda], *smṛti* [the ritual and law texts], the Purāṇa [ancient histories and genealogies], and the scriptures that follow them, or disrespect for them, or lack of belief in them is one kind of offense to the Holy Name.<sup>66</sup>
5. **Hollow Praise.** Thinking that the passages in scripture that describe the greatness of the Holy Name are just hollow praise is an offense to the Holy Name.
6. **Thinking Fancifully with Respect to the Holy Name.** Thinking of another means in order to lessen emphasis on the greatness of the Holy Name is an offense to the Holy Name. If, out of mental anguish, thought of another means arises with the objective of arriving at one's goal faster, it is not an offense. But if one is impelled by the objective of making the greatness of the Holy Name secondary it is an offense.<sup>67</sup>
7. **Sinning on the Strength of the Holy Name.** The power of the Holy Name delivers the highest goal of human life, the lotus feet of the Lord himself, the very condensation of eternal existence, consciousness, and joy. To use that unlimitedly powerful, supremely ambrosial Holy

<sup>63</sup>य एव भगवानत्र व्यष्टिरूपतया भक्तावतारत्वेन श्रीगुरुरूपो वर्तते स एव तत्र समष्टिरूपतया स्ववामप्रदेशे साक्षादवतारत्वेनापि तद्रूपो वर्तते । (भ. सन्., २८६)

<sup>64</sup>गुरौ मदावेशेन साक्षाद्गुरूपतत्वात् मङ्गलवररूपत्वाच्चेति भावः । (संक्षेपवैष्णवतोषिणी, १०.८०.३४)

<sup>65</sup>साक्षाद्भक्तिरित्वेन समस्तशास्त्रैरुक्तस्तथा भाव्यत एव सद्भिः । किन्तु प्रभोर्यः प्रिय एव तस्य वन्दे गुरोः श्री चरणारविन्दं । श्रीविश्वनाथः

<sup>66</sup>शास्त्राविश्वासिनं नामापराधिनं — विश्वनाथः, (भाग. टीका, १०.३३.४९)

<sup>67</sup>हरिनाम्नि कल्पनं तन्माहात्म्यगौणताकरणाय गत्यन्तरचिन्तनम् ।

Name to acquire sensual pleasures like wealth, followers, and so forth<sup>68</sup> is the greatest depravity toward the Holy Name. It is like using a *śālarāma* stone to crack open nuts.<sup>69</sup>

8. **Thinking Other Auspicious Actions Equal to the Holy Name.**  
The Holy Name is the whole (*aṅgī*). From this whole all the others limbs of worship rise. Thinking that one of those parts is equal to the whole is an offense to the Holy Name. If one is able to survive this offense, that is, if one is able seek shelter with the Holy Name exclusively, thinking it the best of all and with the greatest of respect, Master Holy Name, who is affectionate to those who seek shelter, will protect them from the other nine offenses. This is his promise — *name bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati* (Bhag. gī, 9.31).<sup>70</sup>
9. **Instructing the Holy Name to the Faithless.**
10. **Displeasure on Hearing the Greatness of the Holy Name.**

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<sup>68</sup>“All sense objects are sin” says Śrī Narottama — *viṣaya garalamaya* (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*).

<sup>69</sup>नाम्नो बलाद्यस्य हि पापबुद्धिरिति यद्यपि भगवन्नाम्नो बलेनापि क्, तस्य पापस्य तेन नाम्ना क्षयस्तथापि येन नाम्नो बलेन परमपुरुषार्थरूपं सच्चिदानन्दसान्द्रं साक्षाच्छ्रीभगवच्चरणारविन्दं साधयितुं प्रवृत्तस्तेनैव परमघृणास्पदं पापं विषयं साधयतीति परमदौरात्म्यम् ।

<sup>70</sup>धर्मादिभिः साम्यमननमपि प्रमादोऽपराधो पाप्मे रामाष्टोत्तरशतनामस्तोत्रे विष्णोरेकैकनामापि सर्ववेदाधिकम् । (क्रम-सन्दर्भ, २.३.३)

7 *Sree Krishna* by Premānanda Bhāratī (New  
Treat)

## 7.1 Preface

I beg to present this my humble work to the English reader. It is the history of the Universe from its birth to its dissolution. I have explained the science of creation, its making and its mechanism. In doing so I have drawn my information from the recorded facts in the Sacred Books of the Root-Race of mankind. Some facts and explanation are herein furnished for the first in any modern language. This book embodies true Hinduism.

If read with an open mind, it will serve the reader with illumination and solve many a riddle of life, untie many a tangle of thought. I have spoken throughout from out of the depths of the ages. I have thought absolutely in Sanskrit and expressed myself in English, an imperfect medium for expressing Sanskrit ideas. My object has been to impress my readers with the substance of Hindoo thought in all its purity. This has not been done before even by Hindoo writers on Hindoo religion and philosophy. They have cared to humor the Western readers, by putting in a mixture of Western thought and dressing it up in Western ways of expression. I have not done so, because I know that in reading an Eastern book the Western mind wants purely Eastern thought in pure Eastern dress.

This will afford all soul-hungry readers with enough healthy food and drink. The first part of the book contains the food, the kernel of the soul-coconut; the second part, its sweet milk. The third part is from Kṛṣṇa Himself. It is the purest nectar of spiritual love. Let the reader open his heart to it, and I am sure it will fill it with ecstasy. The soulful reader will thrill with the joyous vibrations of every sentence of the "Messages and Revelations."

The belief that our life begins with the birth of this physical body and ends with its death is the worst superstition, because it is the worst obstacle in the way of our soul's unfoldment. This life has sprung from Eternity, it draws its breath from Eternity, and is finally absorbed by Eternity which is Absolute Love. To know that we, human beings, were never blessed with greater powers than we possess in this age is the saddest of mistakes. To believe that we were once as great and powerful as divine beings and that we can recover that greatness and those powers, is to believe in the actual potentialities of the human mind. This life can be made one long ecstatic song; this life can, if we take the trouble to make it, be made the source

of joy to ourselves as well as to all around us forever and ever; it can even attain to the essence of Godhood, from which it has sprung, be developing uninterrupted God-consciousness.

We all are idolators. Some of us worship idols of Divinity, other worship idols of Matter. Some of us worship the Spirit through suggestive signs and symbols, others worship Flesh, mere forms of animated flesh. Since our mind wants idols for worship, just as our body wants food for sustenance, let us all worship the idols of Spirit in Form. Through its concrete Form-center we can enter into the Abstract spirit of Love — Love which is our one object and goal in life. This Love is Kṛṣṇa and the universe and we, its parts, are the materialized manifestations of that Love.

Premānanda Bhāratī

The Alpine  
55 West 33rd St.  
New York

July 7, 1904

## 7.2 Introduction

### 7.2.1 Life's Source and Search

Beloved! I wish to call you "my beloved," whoever you are who have taken up this my love-message to read, for you are the beloved of my Beloved — Kṛṣṇa. I may not know you, nor you me, and yet we have been together times without number; yet we have loved each other with the truest, the purest, the sweetest love, again and again, when we lived in Love, when we had our being in the Ocean of Love, when we were awake in the consciousness of the One Essence which ever pervades us all — Love.

Beloved! That state, that realm in which we lived and knew and loved each other, we have forgotten, and this forgetfulness is the cause of our separateness, our non-recognition, our want of sympathy, our troubles and quarrels. Going into the depth of Silence — Silence within and without us — I have discovered its secret which is also the secret of our forgotten Love-existence. And this my message to you is the revelation of that mystery which our strayed soul is trying to solve through every effort of the life we are living now.

Beloved! I humbly lay before you this message to read — to help you to recognize your true self, to help you to find your true goal in this life's race. This message is a magic mirror in which, maybe, you will catch the reflection of your soul's all-beautiful image.

You are now engaged, my beloved, in reading this message with the same object for which every one of us is just now engaged in doing various things. It is life's one common object for us all — pleasure. That is the one all-absorbing quest of humanity, nay, of all living creatures, of all creation. We are ever striving, all of us, every minute, to find that one blessing which ever eludes our grasp, ever misses our ken, ever deludes us like the will-o-the-wisp — the one object of our desire, of predominant, spontaneous, practical, natural interest — unmixed, unbroken happiness.

Not only is this quest for happiness ever present within mankind, but also in lower animals, and even in every phase of nature, more or less pronounced or discernible. Every manifestation of nature, man or beast, bird or tree or plant, is ever endeavoring to adjust a state of internal disorder and disturbance — I mean ever endeavoring to bring about a sense or instinct of

that harmonious equilibrium, which we call full satisfaction, complete contentment, absolute happiness.

Now the question may be asked: why is this universal quest for happiness? How is it that every man or woman or child is every minute seeking some sort of happiness or other? The Hindu sages have answered this question to the satisfaction of all intelligent human beings. Why is this eternal search for happiness?

That answer is: because the whole universe, of which we are parts, has come out of that eternal abode of happiness, called bliss, where it had dwelt before creation, like a tree in a seed, and the memory of which dwells still in the inner consciousness of all created beings, though it has dropped out of their outer consciousness.

That abode of happiness is called the Abode of Absolute Love; the Hindu calls it Kṛṣṇa. The word Kṛṣṇa, in Sanskrit, comes from the root “karṣa” — to draw. Kṛṣṇa means that which draws us to itself; and what in the world draws us all more powerfully than Love? It is the “gravitation” of the modern scientist. It is the one source and substance of all magnetism, of all attraction; and when that love is absolutely pure, its power to draw is absolute, too.

In seeking even material pleasure or happiness through life we are ever seeking this Absolute Bliss, only most of us do not know it. The man who devotes his heart and soul to acquiring wealth is, in fact, but striving to attain this blissful state. For what does the would-be millionaire work to make the million but to secure pleasure, the pleasure of good eating, good drinking, good living, good enjoyment — to be happy? He makes the million; but the happiness which he secures, by securing the means of pleasure and by enjoying the pleasures themselves, is not complete. He still feels some void in that happiness, something still wanting in those pleasures to make him fully happy. He therefore piles up more millions, he plunges into newer pleasures, he leaves no stone unturned to find the material objects which will add to his pleasure; and when he has secured all these objects and enjoyed them, he finds himself exactly at the same place where he was before — there is something still wanting to make him completely happy. Finding no newer objects which are likely to add to his happiness, he occupies himself by enjoying what he has already enjoyed over and over again; that is to say, he goes over again the same round of pleasures to delude himself into the

belief that that is the best happiness allowed to mortal man.

But the delusion is temporary and far from complete. The longing, the search for something still wanting, is present all through that delusion — something unknown, but which he thinks he might know and recognize, if he once found it. But, alas, he does not!

Poor Man! He does not know the secret of true happiness, the happiness which is complete in itself, which never ends, which, once secured, never falls short or vanishes, which flows from within the heart through all the channels of the body, out through the pores of it in a continual stream of ecstasy. He does not know that this thing, this unending happiness, is not to be found in material objects; that it cannot be secured by the means or by the instincts of the physical senses, which cognize only material objects.

And why? Why is it that material objects fail to give us that true and absolute happiness, fail to satisfy the hunger of the yearning human heart for that unknown something which it feels somehow must exist, but which ever eludes its ken and quest, and which, alas! it does not realize that it once knew, that it once owned by right of heritage?

The answer is simple, and ought to be convincing to every thoughtful mind. The answer is: because material objects are changeful in their nature and principle; because being nothing but forms of changefulness, they do not possess this permanent, this unchangeable happiness, to give it to those who seek to derive it from them. An object whose very principle is changefulness can afford nothing which is not changeful in its nature. All the pleasures, therefore, that we derive from material objects must necessarily be changeful, which means short-lived, pleasures of short duration, broken pleasure, distinguished by the Hindus from unbroken pleasure, which, because of its unbrokenness and ecstatic taste, ceases to be called pleasure and assumes the name of bliss.

The question now arises, where is this true happiness to be found, if it cannot be found in material objects? Some modern scientists call this unbroken happiness a delusion and a snare of credulous humanity. Modern science has done much, has done wonders in this Western world. None but a fool will deny the glory of its brilliant achievements. But even among those who admire the wonderful progress of modern science, if there be one who fails to find anything in these products of science which is in any way likely



to contribute towards the attainment of contentment by the human mind, that person need not necessarily be a fool. Modern science has excited our wonder, but has failed to make us either contented or happy — contentment and happiness, which are our eternal quest, the one object of our life, the *one* goal to which all creation is running in a blindfolded race. It should rather be claimed for modern science that it has made its followers outward-looking. It has produced conveniences and comforts of life, which have made all people hanker for them; and many, failing to secure them, make themselves discontented and unhappy. Modern science, in a word, has served only to put obstacles in the way of our attempt to realize that one object of our existence — contentment, which affords true happiness.

This leads me to repeat what I have just said, that no true or all-satisfying permanent happiness can be found in material objects, and hence the failure of material scientists to make humanity either contented or happy.

Where is, then, this happiness to be found?

The answer is: within ourselves. It cannot be found in anything outside of ourselves. The continual stream of happiness is flowing at all times from our heart of hearts all through our body, but we cannot perceive it, or feel it, because our mind has been covered by the clouds formed out of our hankering for material objects. Our desire for material pleasures is the only veil that shrouds this fountain of true happiness from our mental vision.

But if our desires for material enjoyments be carefully and intelligently analyzed, we can arrive at only one conclusion, and that is that in hankering for material pleasures we are in fact practically hunting for that happiness which, once enjoyed, lays all hankering for material enjoyments forever at rest. The fact of our material possessions and enjoyments ever leaving within us a wish, more or less pronounced, for something still more enjoyable, still more pleasurable, is the most indirectly direct proof that we are in quest of something which material objects cannot supply; and the fact of this quest being present in all human souls, in all their thoughts and actions at all times forces us to the irresistible conclusion that we once knew or had a taste of the thing we all are eternally searching for; and that, having lost it, we are ever endeavoring to regain it, its absence having rendered us as unhappy and restless as a fish out of its element.

The lost object, this once enjoyed state of the human soul, now absent but ever longed for, is Kṛṣṇa.

It is Kṛṣṇa — perfect state of love or bliss — that is ever drawing us to itself. This Kṛṣṇa was once our home, when this creation, of which we form but atoms, slept for aeons unnumbered in the bosom of Kṛṣṇa, forming but a part of His will. When those unnumbered aeons were numbered, after these atoms of creation had slept for enough time to rest themselves in that bosom of absolute bliss, they were thrust out of that realm into space, to form the universe.

They first manifested themselves as universal consciousness, which, wanting to be conscious of something, developed into ego, and ego developed into the mind, as no ego is possible without the faculty of thought, which is the mind's function. And as thoughts are not possible without objects to think upon, the five fine objects, namely: sound, touch, form, taste and smell, came into existence, along with their gross counterparts and compounds, I mean the five elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water, and earth; while the mind's channels of communication with these fine and gross forms of matter were developed simultaneously, namely, the five cognizing senses: power of seeing (eye), power of hearing (ear), power of smelling (nose), power of tasting (tongue), and power of feeling (skin), with the five working senses, namely, power of speaking (vocal organs), power of holding (hands), power of moving (feet), power of excreting (anus) and power of generating (genitals).

Thus from Kṛṣṇa to earth, Kṛṣṇa's will took twenty-four steps to assume the form of the universe, and myriad steps more to divide the universe into earth, heaven, stars, planets, sun and moon, man and beast and bird; trees and shrubs and grass; mountains and rivers, which go to make it up.

But every particle of this cosmos is conscious, directly or indirectly, in every point, of the home that it has left, the absolute state of bliss it once has soaked in, the incomparable nectar which it has once tasted. Yes, that memory endures; in the memory of that love absolute is the cause of all discontent, of all dissatisfaction, of all strife and effort, of all ambition and achievement. It is the cause as well of every philosophy and transcendental thought, of moral and spiritual uplifting, and of developing the human into the divine.

From Kṛṣṇa have we all come and Kṛṣṇaward are we all tending. And all our actions, good, bad, or indifferent, are but the feeble steps with which we are all endeavoring to cover the journey back to Kṛṣṇa — our home, sweet home — our ever-loved home, from which we have come away as sorry

truants and to which the needle of our soul ever trembles, pointing to us the forgotten path, by which we fled from and by which we are again to return to that home — Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

### **7.2.2 God is Formless and Has a Form**

8 Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Dharma and Sannyāsa:  
Part Two  
Radhagovinda Nath

## 9 Men Who Would be Women by Nitai Das

## 10 Book Reviews

## 11 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. Harināma
2. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Bhajana
3. Vaiṣṇava philosophy/theology
4. Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī
5. Modern philosophy and Vaiṣṇava philosophy
6. Original Translations of Caitanya Vaiṣṇava Works.
7. Anecdotal accounts of your own experiences on the path to Goloka
8. Book Reviews

Other topics besides this will be considered, too.