

Introduction

to the first English edition

This book is unique and very significant. It presents for Western readers the life and teachings of a recent *ācārya* in a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava (rather than a Western) environment. Here we directly see the activities and interactions of deeply realized Vaiṣṇavas within an authentic Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava culture. We are also privileged to witness the guru-disciple relationship in a line of empowered *ācāryas*, and to see a variety of expressions of *guru-niṣṭha*.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has presented an overview of essential Gauḍīya *siddhānta*. He has shown practically how an *ācārya* preaches and teaches, from the ‘jungle-cutting’ challenges to *māyāvāda* and the threats of *apasampradāyas* and *apasiddhānta*, to the *prajojana* of *vraja-bhakti*. This present volume therefore has a very important role in the protection of our *sampradāya*, both in dispelling illusion and in establishing the real goal.

This is a more or less literal translation of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja’s Hindi biography of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī. We request the reader to be patient with our efforts. The English language is not capable of conveying the deep significance of one *mahā-bhāgavata*’s statements about another *mahā-bhāgavata*. In addition, the patterns of speech in Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja’s eloquent, literary Hindi are quite different from those in conventional written English, and it is impossible to translate one into the other. Over and above that, our incompetence and inexperience must necessarily give rise to all sorts of imperfection, inaccuracy and inconsistency. We have tried not to burden the Western reader with many unnecessary Sanskrit words and terms. However, we cannot appreciate or understand the Gauḍīya presentation of *tattva* and *rasa* without becoming familiar with many Sanskrit words and terms for which there are no exact English equivalents. We have tried to introduce these in a systematic and reader-friendly way, using translations in the body of the text and in footnotes.

This book has been produced by the combined efforts of many disciples and followers of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. The list of the names who helped is far too long to publish.

Śrīla Mahārāja has glorified his Guru Mahārāja, saying that he accepts the very insignificant service of his servants as being very great. We pray that Śrīla Mahārāja will show us the same mercy, but in much greater measure, because of our deep and real lack of qualification. He has accepted so much trouble and disturbance in trying to help his Western disciples and followers, who find no other shelter at the present time. We do not yet know what *guru-sevā* actually is, but we helplessly pray to him that he will kindly continue to help and inspire us to become free from

our deep attachment to *māyā-vāsanā*, and to dive deep into the ocean of Śrī Rūpānuga Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* and *sādhana-bhajana*.

It is said that the grandfather is much more affectionate than the father. We surrender at the lotus feet of *ācārya-kesarī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, whose preaching has helped to save us from a dark destiny and to bring us towards the light. We humbly pray that he will bless our very feeble efforts to serve his beloved disciple Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, his dear Godbrother and *sannyāsa* disciple Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, and our whole Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava paramparā.

We pray at the lotus feet of *jagadguru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda for a particle of service to his disciples and successor *ācāryas*, who are kindly and boldly continuing his mission and protecting his *sampradāya*.

On the occasion of the disappearance day of
Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
Śarada Purnimā, Samvat 2055 (October 24th, 1999)
The publishers

Introduction

(to the Hindi edition)

Today I am most pleased that we have published the biography of *paramārādhyā nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottaraśata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, combined with his *tattva-siddhānta* and teachings. The absence of this important scripture had been causing unease for a long time. The preaching of *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is increasing every-where today by the effort of the disciples and grand-disciples of *jagadguru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. He is the *mahā-puruṣa* who is mainly responsible for preaching Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *viśuddha bhakti* and *harināma-saṅkīrtana* throughout the entire world. This was predicted by the Seventh Gosvāmī, Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. As Bhagīratha brought down Bhāgīrathī Gaṅgā, so Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda re-established the flow of *bhāgīrathī bhakti*. That is to say, Śrīla Ṭhākura again established the long-lost desire of Śrī Śācinandana Gaurahari, who is the most magnanimous form of Vrajendranandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, resplendent with the *bhāva* of Śrī Rādhā. My most worshipful Śrīla Gurupādapadma, who is Śrīla Prabhupāda's intimate follower, has especially made the fulfillment of Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire the sole duty of his life. In this regard he had all kinds of help from many of his God-brothers, amongst whom Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja is prominent. Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī's causeless compassion and inspiration encouraged Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja in his preaching, and I (the author) am also making some slight endeavour to fulfill his

innermost desire. Any success I am achieving in this endeavour is only due to his special mercy.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī is the *sannyāsa-guru* of Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, who is the outstanding preacher of *śuddha bhakti* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* throughout the entire world in modern times. I am an insignificant person in all respects, but by his transcendental and causeless mercy I am also very successfully preaching the teachings of Gaurasundara everywhere in the world to fulfill his innermost desire. Seeing this, all faithful people at home and abroad are very eager to learn about this transcendental *mahā-puruṣa's* supramundane character, his life-story and the speciality of his conceptions. These people have repeatedly requested me to publish his biography. Many of my respectable God-brothers have also made the same request. However, I had to postpone the project because I was busy with other services, and also had some problems with my health.

Thirteen years ago, in 1985, my Godbrother *pūjyapāda parivrājakācārya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, who is the President and *ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, and a follower of transcendental knowledge, compiled Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, which is an account his life, *tattva-siddhānta* and teachings. This book is written in Bengali, and is based on *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's articles, essays, poems and writings which have been published in the daily *Nadiyā-prakāśa*, and the weekly and monthly *Śrī Gauḍīya* and *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*. In this book he has very briefly described Śrīla Gurupādapadma's supramundane life-story and the speciality of his conceptions. This is extremely beneficial for those who speak Bengali, but not for the vast numbers of faithful people who speak Hindi. This lack has been causing unease for a long time. I pray at the lotus feet of my Godbrothers and especially at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurupāda-padma, who is the ocean of compassion, to install power in my heart to be able to fulfil this task of making his life-story available in Hindi. I had the good opportunity to stay with Śrīla Gurupāda-padma personally and perform all kinds of *sevā* from 1945 until he entered *aprakāṣa-lilā* in 1968. I stayed close to him, hearing his lectures, his scriptural debates with opposing parties, and his discussions and questions and answers at different places. During this whole time I took notes in my note book. Sometimes I could not stay quiet near him, and with great humility I enquired from about deep and confidential subjects, and I also had discussions with him. I wrote all these subject matters in my note book, and they also became inscribed in my heart. These discussions and interactions with Śrīla Gurudeva proved very useful for me.

While we were living in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā, we repeatedly requested Śrīla Gurudeva's younger brother, Śrī Pulina Vihārī Guhaṭhākurtā, to write a booklet about Śrīla Gurudeva's life beginning with his childhood until the time that he joined the *maṭha*. This he did, and on the request of our God-brothers, Śrī Yāminīkānta Dāsa (M.E.B.T.), Jiraṭa High School's very able

principal, wrote Śrīla Gurudeva's biography in Bengali poetry based on this booklet. In addition to the topics covered in Pulina Bihārī Guhaṭhākurtā's booklet, Śrī Yāminīkānta Dāsa also incorporated some details about Śrīla Gurudeva's life in Caitanya Maṭha and the later inauguration of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Pūjyapāda Vāmana Mahārājajī took help from this for his biography on Śrīla Gurudeva. The primary materials for this present edition are Śrī Yāminīkānta Dāsa's book, together with my own note book and memories. I personally heard from Śrīla Gurudeva's mouth the many incidents from his own life and from the lives of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Gaurakīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and Śrī Vamśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

I have divided Śrīla Gurudeva's biography into eight parts. The faithful readers may carefully read the different subject matters in this book, and judge the results for themselves.

Śrīmān Haripriya Brahmācārī and Śrīmān Navīnkr̥ṣṇa Brahmācārī 'Vidyālaṅkara' have worked very hard to prepare the manuscript for this book. The service endeavours of Śrīmatī Śānti Devī Dāsī and Śrīmān Purandara Brahmācārī in composing and correcting this book are notable. In addition to this, the efforts of Śrī Omprakāśa Vrajavāsī (M.A., L.L.B.) 'Sāhityaratna,' Śrīmān Śubhānanda Brahmācārī 'Bhāgavata-bhūṣaṇa,' Śrīmān Premānanda Brahmācārī 'Sevāratna,' Śrīmān Parameśvarī Brahmācārī, Śrīmān Puṇḍarīka Brahmācārī and others in proof-reading and performing other tasks in connection with this book are extremely praiseworthy. My humble prayer at Śrīla Gurupādapadma's lotus feet is that he may shower abundant kindness upon them and may engage them in his desired service.

On the occasion of the appearance day of
Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
Samvat 2055 (February 3, 1999)
An aspirant for a particle of mercy
of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas,

Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

Life and Teachings of

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna

Keśava Gosvāmī

First Part

Bhāgavata Guru-paramparā

In accordance with the needs of the times and for the welfare of the world, the supremely merciful Śrī Bhagavān and His dear associates descend, bringing the gifts of their instructions. They drive far away all godless persons, whose atheistic thoughts are averse to *dharma*, and they establish *sanātana dharma* in the form of *śuddha-bhakti*, which is the means for the eternal welfare of the *jīvas*. In the present *yuga* with its powerful influence of Kali, Śrī Gaurasundara, the munificent incarnation of Kali-yuga, saves the fallen souls by bestowing *prema* (love of God) which had not been given previously. His followers, who are themselves in the line of Śrī Svarūpa Damodara and Rūpa Gosvāmī, have appeared on this earth as Śrī Gaurasundara's potencies in the form of *ācāryas*. They appear in order to immerse the ignorant *jīvas*, who are intoxicated by materialism, in *śuddha prema-dharma* (pure love of God).

By the desire of Śrī Bhagavān, these *ācāryas* use infallible scriptural evidence and irrefutable logic to demolish and utterly destroy the non-vedic doctrine of *ācārya* Śrī Śaṅkara. This philosophy, which is known as *brahma-vāda*, describes *para-brahman* (1) as *nirviśeṣa* (2) and *niḥśaktik* (3). It is a concealed form of *bauddha-vāda* (Buddhism), *advaita-vāda* (monism) or *māyāvāda* philosophy. Having accomplished this, the *ācāryas* have established the authentic and transcendental *bhagavat-tattva*, which establishes Parabrahman as *saviśeṣa* (4), *sarvaśaktimān* (5), and *rasa-svarūpa* (6). Among these followers of Śrī Gaurasundara, the most

worshipable *ācārya kesarī pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-simha om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja* is the foremost. Śacīnandana Gaurahari, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, possessing all the specialities of the previous incarnations and radiant with the mood and luster of Śrīmatī Rādhika, appeared 500 years ago together with His own associates. In a very short time, through the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, Śrī Gaurahari spread *bhakti-rasa*, the mellows of pure love of God, throughout the entire world. In order to fulfill the Lord's innermost desire, His dear associate, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, established *śuddha bhakti rasa* in his Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrī *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* and other literature. Recently, Jagad-vareṇya7 *Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda*, the crown jewel of the *ācāryas* in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, powerfully inundated the whole world with the wave of pure *bhakti*. Amongst the *mahā-puruṣas* who sincerely and selflessly contributed to spread the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī is the foremost.

Real knowledge of transcendental matters can never be obtained through the material senses, for *Bhagavān*, *bhakti* and the *bhakta* are all beyond the purview of sense perception. In this world one may be able to describe the character of literary, historic, political, munificent or moral personalities, along with their identity and circumstances of birth. However, it is not possible to describe the character of a *bhakta* of Śrī *Bhagavān* through the material senses, for *bhaktas* are perceived purely by their own mercy. We can only understand something about the extraordinary transcendental character of the *bhaktas* of *Bhagavān* when, by their grace, they display their character in the pure heart of a person devoted to the service of *Bhagavān* (*sevānmukha*).

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tatha gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23)

“All the hidden meanings of the *śrutis* are revealed only in the heart of that great soul who has the highest transcendental devotion towards Śrī *Bhagavān* and also His representative, Śrī *Gurudeva*.”

Transcendental objects have no birth and death and no father and mother; this is true of *Vaiṣṇavas* as well. They are not subject to birth and death, nor do they have worldly family, caste, or *āśrama*. In this material world the *Vaiṣṇavas*' material situations are only a performance of *prakāṣa* (manifested) and *aprakāṣa* (unmanifested) pastimes. By the desire of Śrī *Bhagavān*, *Vaiṣṇavas*, or *bhaktas*, appear in this world in some family or lineage, but the *śāstras* forbid us to think that they have a material origin.

*arcye viṣṇau sīladhīr-guruṣu naramatir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir-
viṣṇor-vā vaiṣṇavānām kalimala-mathane pāda-tīrthe 'mbu-buddhiḥ
śrī-viṣṇor-nāmni mantre sakala-kaluṣahe śabda-sāmānya-buddhir-
viṣṇau sarveśvareśe tad-itara-samadhīr-yasya vā nārakī saḥ*

Padma Purāṇa

“One becomes a resident of hell if he thinks the Deity to be mere stone; Gurudeva to be an ordinary human being; the Vaiṣṇavas to belong to some caste; the water which has washed the lotus feet of Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas to be ordinary water; the mantra and holy names of Viṣṇu, which destroy all sins, to be ordinary sounds; and the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu to be equal to the demi-gods.”

Therefore, according to the transcendental scriptures, those who attempt to determine a Vaiṣṇava's birth, family, caste, etc. in the material world are fools, hypocrites and offenders to that Vaiṣṇava. “*Na karma-bandhanam janma vaiṣṇavānām ca vidyate* – “Vaiṣṇavas are not under the jurisdiction of birth and karma” (Padma Purāṇa). *Sātvata śāstras* prohibit considerations of material birth, family, caste and so forth for Vaiṣṇavas.”

Transcendental knowledge which is received through the *bhāgavata guru-paramparā* is the real identity of the Vaiṣṇavas. *Śruti* (8), *smṛti* (9) and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the spotless *purāṇa*, are the indisputable methods for defining the Vaiṣṇava family lineage. Paramārādhya-tama Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja has personally described his own Vaiṣṇava family succession in *Gauḍīya-gīti-guccha*, which he compiled and edited. He describes it as follows, following in the footsteps of Śrī Kavi Karṇapūra, Śrī Baladeva Vidyā-bhūṣaṇa and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

*śrī kṛṣṇa-brahma-devarṣi bādarāyaṇa-samjñakān
śrīmadhva-śrīpadmanābha-śrīmannṛhari-mādhavān
akṣobhya-jayatīrtha-śrījñānasindhu dayānidhīn
śrīvidyānidhi-rājendra-jayadharmān kramādvayam
puruṣottama-brahmaṇya-vyāsātīrthāśca samstumaḥ
tato lakṣmīpatimśrīmanmādhavendrañca bhaktitaḥ
tacchiṣyān śrīśvarādvaitanīyānandān jagadgurūn
devamīśvaraśīṣyaṁ śrīcaitanyañca bhajāmahe
śrīkṛṣṇapremadānena yena nistāritam jagat
mahāprabhu-svarūpa-śrīdāmodaraḥ priyaṁ karaḥ
rūpasanātanau dvau ca gosvāmī pravaraḥ prabhu*

*śrījīvo raghunāthaśca rūpapriyo mahāmatīḥ
tatpriyaḥ kavirāja-śrīkṛṣṇadāsa-prabhurmataḥ
tasya priyottamaḥ śrīlaḥ sevāparo narottamaḥ
tadanugatabhaktāḥ śrīviśvanāthaḥ saduttamaḥ
tadāsaktaśca gauḍiyavedāntācāryabhūṣaṇam
vidyābhūṣaṇapādaśrībaladevasadā śrayaḥ
vaiṣṇavasārvabhaumaḥ śrījagannātha prabhustathā
śrīmāyāpuradhāmnastu nirdeṣṭā sajjanapriyaḥ
śuddhabhaktipracārasya mūlībhūta ihottamaḥ
śrībhaktivinodo devastat priyatvena viśrutaḥ
tadabhinnasuhṛdavaryo mahābhāgavatottamaḥ
śrīgaurakīśoraḥ sākṣād vairāgyam vighrahāśritam
māyāvādi-kusiddhānta-dhvāntarāśi-nirāsakaḥ
viśuddhabhaktisiddhāntaiḥ svāntaḥ padmavikāśakaḥ
devo'sau paramo haṁso mattaḥ śrīgaurakīrttane
pracārācāra-kāryeṣu nirantaram mahotsukaḥ
hari-priyajanairgamyā om viṣṇu-pādapūrvakaḥ
śrīpādo bhaktisiddhānta-sarasvatī mahodayaḥ
sarve te gauravaṁśyaśca paramahamsavighrahāḥ
vayañca praṇatā dāsāstaducchiṣṭa grahāgrahāḥ*

Bhāgavata paramparā

*kṛṣṇa haite caturmukha, haya kṛṣṇa sevonmukha,
brahmā haite nāradera mati
nārada haite vyāsa, madhva kahe vyāsadāsa,
pūrṇaprajña padmanābha gati
nṛhari mādhava vaṁśe, akṣobhya-paramahamse,
śiṣya bali' aṅgikāra kare
akṣobhyera śiṣya jaya- tīrtha nāme paricaya,
tānra dāsye jñānasindhu tare
tāhā haite dayānidhi, tānra dāsa vidyānidhi,
rājendra haila tānhā haite
tānhāra kiṅkara jaya- dharma nāme paricaya,
paramparā jāna bhāla mate
jayadharmā-dāsye khyāti, śrīpuruṣottama yati,
tāhā ha'te brahmaṇyatīrtha sūri
vyāsātīrtha tānra dāsa, lakṣmīpati vyāsadāsa,
tāhā ha'te madhavendra purī*

*mādhavendra purīvara, śiṣyavara śrī īśvara,
 nityānanda śrī advaita vibhu
 īśvarapurīke dhanya, karīlena śrīcaitanya,
 jagadguru gauramahāprabhu
 mahāprabhu śrīcaitanya, rādhā kṛṣṇa nahe anya,
 rūpānuga janera jīvana
 viśvambhara priyaṅkara, śrī svarūpa dāmodara,
 śrīgosvāmī rūpasanātana
 rūpa priya mahājana, jīva raghunātha hana,
 tānra priya kavi kṛṣṇadāsa
 kṛṣṇadāsa priyavara, narottama sevāpara,
 jānra pada viśvanātha āśa
 viśvanātha bhaktasātha, baladeva jagannātha,
 tānra priya śrībhakati vinoda
 mahābhāgavatavara, śrīgaurakīśoravara,
 hari bhajanete jānra moda
 śrīvārṣabhanavīvarā, sadā sevyasevāparā,
 tānhāra dayitadāsa nāma
 ei saba harijana, gaurāṅgera nijajana,
 tāndera ucchiṣṭe mora kāma*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original jagadguru of the Śrī Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava guru-paramparā. It was He who transmitted the science of *śuddha-bhakti* to the heart of Caturmukha Śrī Brahmā. Śrī Brahmājī, in turn bestowed this knowledge on Śrī Nārada, who gave it to Śrī Vedavyāsa. Vedavyāsajī accordingly passed on the knowledge in the line of *paramparā* to Śrī Madhvācārya. It was then imparted from *guru* to disciple in this order: Śrī Padmanābha, Śrī Nṛhari, Śrī Mādhava, Śrī Akṣobhya, Śrī Jayatīrtha, Śrī Jñānasindhu, Śrī Dayānidhi, Śrī Vidyānidhi, Śrī Rājendra, Śrī Jayadharmā, Śrī Puruṣottama Tīrtha, Śrī Brahmaṇya Tīrtha, Śrī Vyāsa Tīrtha and Śrī Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha Ācārya, who was the *guru* of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī’s disciples were Śrī Īśvara Purī, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Ācārya. Jagadguru Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu made Śrī Īśvara Purī very fortunate by accepting the shelter of his lotus feet. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s beloved Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara followed in the line, and was succeeded by His dear Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī accepted the shelter of Śrī Rūpa’s lotus feet. The object of mercy of these two was Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. Śrī Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s beloved disciple was Narottama, and Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura’s disciple was Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s object of mercy was Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who was followed in line by Sārvabhauma Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted the shelter of Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa

Bābājī's lotus feet. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's dearmost disciple was Mahābhāgavata Śrī Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī. Śrī Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī's object of love was Śrī Vārṣabhānavī Dayita Dāsa Jagadguru Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākurajī, who flooded the entire universe with the flow of prema-bhakti, as it was practised and taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Amongst Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's beloved disciples, the foremost is Jagadguru Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. These Vaiṣṇavas are all Śrī Hari Gaura-sundara's dear associates and it is our desire to honour their remnants."

This bhāgavata guru-paramparā, beginning from *jagatpitā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa and extending to Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda, is Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's only family lineage.

Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva humbly revealed his own identity during the Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* of 1948. Grief-stricken and crying in great separation at the *samādhi* of *jagadguru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda in Māyāpura, Śrīla Gurudeva said, "Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is supremely merciful. Śrī Gaurasundara, non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is also supremely merciful. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is the Deity of mercy personified. And Śrīman Mahāprabhu's associates, the Six Gosvāmīs, are also causelessly merciful. These things I have heard. Without doubt I was present in one form or another during their time, but no one bestowed mercy upon me, because they knew me to be extremely heinous and sinful. But Śrīla Prabhupāda pulled me up by my hair. I am such a fallen wretch, such a great materialist with an uncontrolled nature, but he has made me a dust particle at his lotus feet. He who, due to his causeless mercy, is even more exalted than the Lord Himself, has today made me his own."

In this speech *paramārādhyā* Śrī Gurudeva described his own family by referring to his relationship with *jagatpitā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa; Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari; the *akhaṇḍa guru-tattva* Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is non-different from Baladeva Prabhu; and Their dearmost associate, *jagadguru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Nowhere did he mention his material family lineage.

Appearance

Om viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja appeared on January 24th, 1898, Māghī Kṛṣṇa Tṛtīyā. He took birth in a respected and wealthy Vaiṣṇava family in the renowned village of Vānarīpāḍā within the Variśāla district of East Bengal (presently Baṅgladeśa). Śrī Gurudeva appeared in the form of a remarkable divine child, illuminating all the directions with light. Many eminent Vaiṣṇava saints, prominent scientists, government officials and scholars have appeared in Śrī Gurudeva's family, the celebrated Guhaṭhākurtā

dynasty of Eastern Bengal. His father's name was Śrīyut Śaratcandra Guhaṭhākurtā and his mother's name was Śrīyutā Bhuvanamohinī Devī. Śrīyut Śaratcandra Guhaṭhākurtā was religious, truthful, munificent, humble, and above all, a *bhakta* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He had a gentle disposition and never became angry. Although he held a high government post in the law courts, throughout his life he never accepted a bribe. His qualities charmed everyone in the courts, from the highest to the lowest.

Śrī Guhaṭhākurtāji was an initiated disciple of the well-known saint, Śrī Vijaya Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī of the Advaita *parivāra*. Śrī Vijaya Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī had formerly been a renowned *siddha yogi*, but after hearing about *śuddha-bhakti* as preached and practised by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he became attracted and was converted to vaiṣṇavism. Thus Śrī Guhaṭhākurtā was also a staunch follower of vaiṣṇavism. He regularly studied *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other devotional literature, and he daily practised the various aspects of *bhakti* such as *harināma kīrtana*, *jaṇa*, *pūjā*, and meditation. Municipal magistrates, judges, eminent lawyers and respected and learned persons in the community came to his home to hear his commentaries on the *Gītā* and other religious literature.

Śrī Gurudeva's mother, *śrīyutā* Bhuvanamohinī Devī, belonged to a family of landholders. She was respected as a wealthy and highly learned woman who was dedicated to morality, and was very serious and thoughtful. She was skilled in all kinds of work, and in her father-in-law's house she was responsible for housekeeping and also for all the tasks related to the land. On the one hand, Bhuvanamohinī Devī was a veritable deity of motherly affection and compassion. On the other hand, she was a strict matriarch for her sons and subordinates. She would use her great expertise to smooth out and solve all the extremely complicated problems related to the land.

Everyone became happy when the transcendental infant *mahā-puruṣa* (great soul) appeared in the home of this virtuous and prosperous couple. The newly-born child had effulgent eyes and a beautiful physique endowed with all auspicious signs. This vision of his beauty enchanted the elder men and women of the neighborhood, inspiring them to praise and bless both the parents and the child. Seeing the baby's golden-toned limbs and splendid, fair, moon-like face, people started to call him 'Jonā,' which is short for 'jyotsnā' (moonbeam).

The renowned astrologers of the area were amazed upon seeing the auspicious astrological configurations, zodiac sign, nakṣatra, tithi, particular day and numbers in the chart, for the time of birth of this child. With great attention they advised Śrī Śarat Bābū to take special care of the child's upbringing. They prophesied to Śrī Gurudeva's father, "Some day in the future this boy will be famous as a transcendental and brilliant *mahā-puruṣa*. According to his horoscope, this boy will become *bhakti-prajñāna*, an eminent scholar of *bhakti* scriptures. He will also be a *brahmacārī-sannyāsī* and an *ācārya*. He will be brave, wealthy, renounced, a

conqueror of the senses, tolerant, steady-minded, munificent and a topmost religious mahā-puruṣa. He will have a tall, beautiful body possessing exquisite qualities.”

Years later, the predictions of those astrologers were supported by Śrī Vaikuṅṭhanātha Mahodaya, the famous astrologer of Narmā, a village within the Medinīpura district. He was astonished to see Śrī Gurudeva’s horoscope and with delight he wrote, “This person took birth at the moment when all auspicious yogas were present. Additionally, the inner state of Jupiter is present in the middle part, which will begin to give good results from the age of 4 years and 3 months. After that, a rājayoga is indicated which denotes inexhaustible, miraculous service to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the controller of Vidhātā (Brahmā) who controls the destiny of the jīvas. This signifies that the flow of inconceivable śakti of śuddha Vaiṣṇavas will through him bring inner realizations to the bewildered jīvas. This day will come soon. Additional reflections are not required. In a short time countless śuddha Vaiṣṇavas will come together to praise the limitless glory of the unparalleled Jagadguru Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.”

The paṇḍits and astrologers named the baby Śailendranātha Guhaṭhākurtā, but he was popularly known as Jonā. The respected Śrī Śarat Bābū called his dear son Janārdana. Later on the boy became known as Vinodabihārī. Seeing the astonishing transcendental beauty of her son and thinking it too good to be true, Śrīyutā Bhuvanamohinī was constantly fearful that the boy would not remain alive for long. She always prayed intensely to the Lord to grant her son a long life.

Childhood

There is a proverb: “Coming events cast their shadows before them,” and even from early childhood remarkable events occurred in Śrī Gurudeva’s life. Once, his affectionate mother was visiting Dūdhal, her father’s village. She gave the baby a full-body oil massage, put him to sleep in the morning sunshine in the courtyard, and then busied herself nearby with household chores. Suddenly, a big eagle caught the tiny baby in its talons and flew into the sky. Seeing this, the mother screamed, neighbors started shouting, and everyone began to chase the eagle. Near the village was a pond in which large pieces of betelnut bark were floating like little boats. For some reason—who can tell why?—the eagle flew down and slowly placed the child on the boat-like bark. Seeing this, the people came running, lifted the boy from the water, and put him in his mother’s lap. The mother, who was almost unconscious with terror, again returned to life. Everyone felt that this was not an ordinary child and that Bhagavān had sent him for some special purpose.

In the future this child would become the Founder Ācārya of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and would fulfil the Lord’s and His devotees’ innermost desire. He would become renowned all throughout the world as Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, a preacher of the pure vaiṣṇava-dharma and śuddha-bhakti which was practised and taught by Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

From his childhood the boy Vinodabihārī began to attract everyone with his transcendental qualities. Women, men, young and old all loved him dearly. Śrī

Śaratcandra Mahodaya took his son to temples, āśramas, religious assemblies and wherever discourses on Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam or the Gītā were being held. Śrī Śarat Bābū was the object of love for all of Vijaya Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's disciples in the village of Vānarīpāḍā. He had the qualities of a sādhu and was extremely good-natured. Bhuvanamohinī Devī was an ideal religious and learned woman. In this way, the boy's upbringing began in an atmosphere of loving support and religious life.

By the time Vinodabihārī was eight years old, his family had moved to the district of Noyākhali and his father was employed in the Court of Lakṣmīpura. It was at this time that Śrī Śarat Bābū left this world. He had made suitable arrangements for his three sons' education while he was present, but after he passed away, Bhuvanamohinī Devī had to face the entire responsibility of the children's upbringing and education.

While his father was alive, Vinodabihārī had studied at the National School in Noyākhali, which offered both academic education and vocational training. In addition to his textbook studies, Vinodabihārī took a great interest in craftsmanship. The bench, stool and table he made in school were used in his home for a long time. Some time after his father's demise, he returned to his paternal village of Vānarīpāḍā and enrolled at the local secondary school. During this period, the foundation stone was laid for the development of his learning and multifarious talents.

During those days, social service was acknowledged as an essential element in the building of character in a student's life, its ultimate aim being human welfare through ethical endeavours. Vinodabihārī was an exceptionally brilliant student with an incomparable ability for organization. Because of his character and training, his managerial skills always reflected high standards of religion, justice, and morality. At that time the community had no organization to help the poor and sick. Together with many enthusiastic youths, Vinodabihārī established an organization which cared for the poor, the sick, and even those with contagious diseases, free of charge. Destitute people were offered various forms of aid, including food and clothes. The young men involved were generous and compassionate towards the wretched and distressed, and their organization quickly became quite famous.

One day Vinoda returned home from school late in the evening. His anxious mother was standing at the entrance of the house with a stick in her hand. Bhuvanamohinī Devī, the forceful daughter of zamindars (land barons), was strict with her children. As soon as Vinodabihārī entered the house, she grabbed his hand and angrily demanded, "Where have you been? Tell me! You are becoming independent, wandering around here and there at night in the company of street children. I don't want this. Where were you? Speak up!" The boy stood calm and silent, completely without fear. When his mother again demanded an answer, he replied in a serene voice, "Some of us students have established a charitable organization which serves the destitute, helpless and sick people in various kinds of ways. I use the money you give me for snacks to help these people. We also go from house to house begging food

and clothing for them. Today a destitute, childless woman was suffering from cholera. After collecting money we arranged for her to get a good diet and medical treatment. I have been engaged like this all day until this evening, and I haven't even bathed or eaten. Now this old woman is somewhat healthy. That's how I have been engaged until just now." As soon as his mother heard this, the stick fell from her hands and her eyes filled with tears. Unable to utter a word, she embraced her son with both arms. She promised that in the future she would never again try to discipline him. What mother would not feel herself successful after giving birth to such a child? In the future that same boy, seeing the jīvas caught in the grip of māyā, would accept sannyāsa and make a promise to free the jīvas from that bondage. Student-life, protection of the zamindārī (land holdings) and the beginning of spiritual life

Vinodabihārī's mother made him entirely responsible for dealing with their tenants while he was only in the eighth grade. Expertise in legal matters and administration is not usually apparent in one so young. However, Vinodabihārī was honoured and renowned amongst the tenants for his intelligence, generosity, mercifulness and refined consideration of justice.

In high school Śrī Vinodabihārī studied statistics, and then went on to study science in college. He was skilled in sports, especially football, and was the captain of the football team and other teams and clubs. While he was in college, Vinodabihārī was rewarded every year for outstanding social welfare work. The headmaster of the college, observing the young man's organizational ability and outstanding character, as well as his record of social welfare work, kept him in his own house and personally tutored him with affection.

During this period, Vinodabihārī worked with other students to establish the monthly magazine, 'Prasūna'. Everyone, students and teachers alike, praised his poems and essays. Along with other intelligent and influential fellow students, he also established a society for the protection of religious values. It was then that Śrī Vinodabihārī proclaimed that he would remain a brahmacārī throughout his life. At that time India was striving under Mahātmā Gāndhī's leadership for freedom from British rule. Not caring for their own lives, people all over India were joining the struggle for independence, either through non-violent civil disobedience or through armed revolution. The student community was also involved and Vinodabihārī, who was still in high school, became a revolutionary leader. Hiding in forests and jungles, he took part in preparing a revolt against the British rule. The police were unable to apprehend him.

Even while this was going on, Vinodabihārī still passed the entrance examinations for Uttarapādā College, near Calcutta. After studying there for one year, he shifted to Daulatapura College. There he astonished the principal and professors of the college with his explanations of the difficult and complicated philosophical verses of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. Sometimes he would argue with atheistic professors about

transcendental subject matters, rendering them speechless with his irrefutable arguments and śāstric conclusions.

Vinodabihārī was now developing a taste for hearing the Gītā, Bhāgavatam and Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta and for serving Śrī Bhagavān and the bhaktas. At the same time he was becoming less involved in the engagements of atheistic society, and was losing his attraction for the atheistic university education and for receiving his degree. He became extremely eager to understand the real nature of the Supreme Truth. A verse from Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 9.41) gave a shocking jolt to his heart.

bhārata bhūmite haila manuṣya janma jāra
janma sārthaka kari kara para-upakāra

“One who has taken birth as a human being in the land of Bhārata (India) should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people.”

What is the nature of the ātmā (soul) and Paramātmā (Supersoul)? How is it possible to have success in human life? Now he began to conduct research into these transcendental subject matters.

While Śrī Vinodabihārī was living in Vānarīpādā, he had become close to his two learned and religious paternal aunts, Śrīyutā Sarojavāsini and Priyatamā devī. They were respectively the first and second women disciples of the world-renowned Jagadguru Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhu-pāda. Both women were well-versed in bhakti-śāstra and were accomplished poets and authors, and their personal devotional life and their teachings on bhakti had a great influence on their nephew.

In 1915, Vinodabihārī went with his two aunts for a darśana of Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda at the time of Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā. Vinodabihārī was drawn to Śrīla Prabhupāda from the very first time he saw him and heard his brilliant teachings. On that occasion Vinodabihārī took a firm vow that he would follow in the footsteps of this mahā-puruṣa for the rest of his life and would spend all his time in his service. After taking part in the nine-day Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and after hearing hari-kathā on Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā day, he offered himself completely at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda, understanding him to be worthy, accepted him and gave harināma to this dear disciple. Now the life of Vinod became exclusively religious.

A few days after Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, when most of the pilgrims had departed, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave brilliant lectures to the remaining group of devotees. It was then that he expressed his resolve to establish maṭhas on each of the nine islands of Śrī Navadvīpa dhāma; to establish other Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭhas and centres for preaching śuddha-bhakti in the prominent cities of Bengal and throughout India; and to establish a printing press for the printing and distribution of transcendental periodicals which would propagate the siddhānta of śuddha-bhakti everywhere, in all the Indian languages.

Hearing about this desire of her Gurudeva, Śrī Yutā Sarojavāsini devī became happy at heart, but she inquired from Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Right now, here at Yogapīṭha,

there are not even enough brahmacārīs to play the gongs and ring the bells at āratī. How will so many maṭhas be taken care of?” At that time the boy Vinodabihārī was sitting nearby, listening with full concentration to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s hari-kathā. Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed to him and said, “Vinodabihārī will manage all the maṭhas and preachingcentres.” Later this prediction came true. By Śrīla Prabhupāda’s blessings, years later Vinodabihārī became the Maṭha Superintendent of the main Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and all the branch maṭhas, and managed them all with great expertise. Furthermore, after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance from this world, Vinodabihārī established the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti with Gauḍīya Maṭhas and preaching centres throughout India and around the world and thus preached śuddha-bhakti everywhere.

Taking darśana of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and receiving his blessings

In those days, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was renowned throughout Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala as a siddha bābājī. He had appeared in a village in East Bengal, but early in his childhood he left his family and went to Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana to perform bhagavad-bhajana. There at Sūrya Kuṇḍa, where his sādhana-bhajana was strengthened by his strict renunciation, he would hear hari-kathā in the association of Vaiṣṇava Sārvabhauma Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, a disciple of Śrī Madhusūdāna dāsa Bābājī. Śrīla Gaura Kiśora’s renunciation was so severe that from time to time when he felt hungry, he would eat mud from Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa or the Yamunā River. As a result, he became partially blind. Like the Six Gosvāmīs, he would reside in one place for only a few days—sometimes in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, in Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana, in Varsāna, in Nandagrāma, in Bhāṇḍīrvana, or any of the other places associated with Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. He lamented intensely in feelings of great separation from Śrīmatī Rādhikā and would sing in a loud voice,

*koṭhāya go premamayī rādhe! rādhe!
 rādhe rādhe go, jaya rādhe rādhe
 dekhā diye prāṇa rākha rādhe rādhe
 tomār kāṅgāl tomāy ḍāke rādhe rādhe
 rādhe vṛndāvana-vilāsini rādhe rādhe
 rādhe kānumanomohinī rādhe rādhe
 rādhe aṣṭasakhīra śīromaṇi rādhe rādhe
 rādhe vṛṣabhānunandinī rādhe rādhe
 (gosāī) niyama kare sadāi ḍāke rādhe rādhe
 (gosāī) ekbār ḍāke keśīghāṭe
 ābār ḍāke vaṁśīvaṭe rādhe rādhe
 (gosāī) ekbār ḍāke nidhuvane
 ābār ḍāke kuñjavane rādherādhe
 (gosāī) ekbār ḍāke rādhā kuṇḍe*

ābār ḍāke śyāmakunḍe rādhe rādhe
(gosāi) ekbār ḍāke kusumvane
ābār ḍāke govardhane rādhe rādhe
(gosāi) ekbār ḍāke tālavane
ābār ḍāke tamāla vane rādhe rādhe
(gosāi) malin basan diye gāya
vrajer dhūlāya gaḍāgaḍī jāya rādhe rādhe
(gosāi) mukhe rādhā rādhā bale
bhāse nayanera jale rādhe rādhe
(gosāi) vṛndāvane kuli kuli keṇde beḍāya
rādhā bali rādhe rādhe
(gosāi) chapānna daṇḍa rātri dīne
jāne nā rādhā-govinda bine rādhe rādhe
tāra para cāri daṇḍa suti thāke
svapane rādhā-govinda dekhe rādhe rādhe

When he could no longer tolerate the separation from his worshipful Deity, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, he traveled from Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana to Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. According to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, it is possible to commit aparādha (offences) against Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dhāma (abode). Without being free from aparādha, one cannot have the genuine mercy of these three and obtain Vraja prema, pure love of God in the mood of the inhabitants of Vraja. However, Śrī Gaura, Śrī Gaura's name and Śrī Gauranga's dhāma are causelessly merciful, and do not accept any offence. If one so desires, one can easily obtain Vraja prema by taking the names of Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda in Gaura Dhāma,

kṛṣṇa nāma kare aparādhera vicāra
nāma laile aparādhīra na haya vikāra
bahu janma kare yadi śravaṇa kīrtana
tabhu ta na pāya kṛṣṇa pade prema dhana
caitanya-nityānande nāi ei saba vicāra
nāma laile prema deya bahe aśrudhāra

Sri Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Adi-lila 8.24, 16, 31)

For this very reason, Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and other eminent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava mahājanas came from Vṛndāvana and performed bhajana in Śrī Gauḍa-bhūmi. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura confirms this siddhānta,

gauḍa-maṇḍala bhūmi yevā jāne cintāmaṇi
tāira hoyā braja bhūmevāsa
gaura prema rasārṇave se taraṅge yevā ḍūbe
se jaya vrajendrasuta pāsa

“Those people who recognize the land of Śrī Gauḍa-maṇḍala as cintāmaṇi, or spiritual touchstone, and who reside there with great faith, quickly obtain residence in Vraja-bhūmi. Those who are immersed in the great ocean of love of Sacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari obtain the loving service of the lotus feet of akhila-rasāmṛta mūrti Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. This is the supreme mystery.”

Considering these conclusions, Śrī Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja began to perform bhajana in the town of Kuliya (presently known as Navadvīpa town). Bābāji Mahārāja’s renunciation was of an extremely high quality, similar to that of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. Eminent mahātmās and bhajanānandis understood that their lives became successful simply by having his darśana. The most exalted mahātmā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, chose this mahā-puruṣa as his guru. Like Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, Bābāji Mahārāja was fully immersed in the bliss of internal worship of the Lord. By this absorption, he was able to distance himself from worldly entanglements, non-devotional materialists and religious hypocrites. Like the Six Gosvāmīs, he spent twenty-four hours a day doing bhajana and, like them, he effortlessly maintained his life by madhukarī bhikṣā, begging from householders to obtain just enough to survive.

It must be remembered that at that time Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, the appearance place of Śrī Gaura, had not yet been completely developed. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was performing bhajana in a mood of deep separation on the bank of the Gaṅgā in Śrī Godrumadvīpa, not far from Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. Śrī Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja often crossed the Gaṅgā from the town of Kuliya to obtain the association of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who was known as the Seventh Gosvāmī. In Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s bhajana kuṭīra they would discuss the magnanimous and sweet pastimes of Śrī Gaura-sundara and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

On one occasion, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora, weary of materialistic company, locked himself in the latrine of a public dharma-śāla (rest-house) in Kuliya and began to perform bhajana. He found this stinking place conducive for bhajana, as he preferred the stench of the toilet to the association of materialists. People wondered where the Bābāji had gone. After two or three days, the sweeper-woman arrived. As she was cleaning the stool underneath the latrine, she heard a tender voice filled with intense longing, chanting, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.” Glancing upwards, she was astonished to see Śrīla Bābāji Mahārāja fully absorbed in chanting harināma. He was not aware of his body or of the bad smell. The sweeper-woman immediately told the chairman of the municipality, and the news soon reached the ears of the district authorities, the police superintendent and others. Everyone came to Śrīla Bābāji Mahārāja and repeatedly requested him to come out of the latrine. “Bābāji Mahārāja!” they pleaded, “we have arranged a bhajana kuṭīra for you on the banks of Bhāgavatī

Gaṅgā. Please go there and perform bhajana.” But Bābājī Mahārāja did not pay any attention to their talk and went on with his ceaseless chanting of harināma. To the incessant requests of the high officials, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja only replied in a feeble voice, “I am unhealthy. I am not able to open the door.” The defeated officials finally left.

A short time later, on the instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī came from Māyāpura with Sarojinī devī, Priyatamā devī and Śrī Gauragovinda Vidyābhūṣaṇa (later, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktigabhastī Nemi Mahārāja) to have the darśana of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. However, despite their repeated requests, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja still gave the same excuse and would not open the door. Śrī Gauragovinda Prabhu then said in a very humble voice, “Oh, Bābājī Mahārāja! Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mercifully accepted us as his disciples. We have come here on his instruction in the great hope of having your darśana. We will be very disheartened if we cannot obtain your darśana.” When he heard this, Śrīla Gaura Kīśora became happy and replied with extreme affection, “You are the object of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s affection. Come in.” Then he quickly opened the door. Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja now gave these devotees his darśana. They saw that he was completely absorbed in chanting his harināma on a harināma-mālā made of a piece of cloth with knots. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja observed Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī’s extremely beautiful youthful form, his sincere desire to perform bhajana, his yukta-vairāgya (appropriate renunciation), and above all his guru-ṅiṣṭhā, firm faith in his guru. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja blessed him, saying, “I have taken all the disasters and obstacles of your life. You should be quite fearless in performing bhajana and spreading the words of Śrīman Mahāprabhu all over the world.” Hearing this blessing, Śrī Vinodabihārī’s eyes overflowed with tears. Falling at Bābājī Mahārāja’s lotus feet, he took his foot dust on his head. After hearing hari-kathā for some time and worshipping Bābājī Mahārāja’s lotus feet, they departed for Śrī Māyāpura.

Years later, when Śrīla Gurupādapadma told us about the blessing of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, he became restless and started to cry, saying, “By the causeless mercy of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, we are today fearlessly preaching śuddha-bhakti in the world. In the course of our preaching, we have met with such hardship and so many obstacles and even danger to our life. But by the mercy of Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, our strength has never become diminished, and the clouds of hardship have been quickly dispelled.”

Thus ends the First Part of The Life and Teachings of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī by
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

Second Part

Leaving home

After Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī received harināma initiation from Śrīla Prabhupāda, he returned home and began his studies at Daulatpura College. From time to time he went to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, and there he listened to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s powerful hari-kathā with faith and full concentration.

In those days, the college syllabus included a study of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. The teacher would try to explain the Bengali and Sanskrit verses of Caitanya-caritāmṛta in class, but he could not really fathom the complex text with its difficult philosophical points and elevated devotional sentiments. Śrī Vinodabihārī, however, understood the profound and complicated ideas of Caitanya-caritāmṛta and he readily explained them so that others could also understand. His erudition fascinated the other students as well as their teacher.

One day during the study of Caitanya-caritāmṛta, they were discussing Śrī Sanātana-śikṣā, the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, and read the verse:

*kṛṣṇera svarūpa-vicāra śuna sanātana
advayajñāna-tattva vraje vrajendranandana*

Sri Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-lila 20.152)

“O Sanātana, please hear about the eternal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is the Absolute Truth, devoid of duality, and He is present in Vṛndāvana as the son of Nanda Mahārāja.”

The teacher began to explain this śloka according to the doctrine of kevalādvaita-vāda. This impersonal philosophy, which is quite opposed to the vaiṣṇava philosophy, states that the parama-tattva, or the Supreme Truth, is brahma-tattva, or the impersonal, undifferentiated aspect of the Absolute. This brahma-tattva is jñāna-svarūpa, or the form or knowledge. It is also nirviśeṣa, without variety; nirañjana, beyond the spell of māyā, or illusion; niḥśaktik, without power; nirguṇa, without attributes or qualities; and nirākāra, without form. Apart from this there is no other reality.

According to the philosophy of kevalādvaita-vāda, it is due to indescribable māyā that this parama-tattva is seen in the form of Īśvara or Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord

who is endowed with personal attributes. The jīva (living being) is also Brahman but understands itself to be a jīva because it is covered by ignorance. The jīva can only unite with Brahman (or in other words, become Brahman), when it removes itself from ignorance and illusion. Yogīs perceive this advaya-jñāna nirviśeṣa-vastu (the supreme non-dual, non-variegated substance) as Īśvara or Paramātmā, the Supersoul. Bhakti-yogīs see it as Bhagavān, who is endowed with all attributes.

When Śrī Vinodabihārī heard his teacher's interpretation, he firmly contradicted it with a sharp rebuttal. He explained that this understanding is completely imaginary, and that it also contradicts the teachings of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and Vedānta-sūtra. He then gave a beautiful explanation of the śloka in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta with evidence from the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Śrī Vinodabihārī explained that Śrī Caturmukha Brahmā, Nārada, Śāṅḍilya, Parāśara, Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vedavyāsa and other great sages are tattva-darśī; they have seen the Absolute Truth. They have explained that there is only one tattva, or truth, and that is advaya-jñāna para-tattva, the non-dual Absolute Truth. Although it is non-dual, it is realized in three apparently different aspects. Dry jñānis (empiric philosophers) use the process of nirviśeṣa-jñāna, or impersonal knowledge, to understand the Absolute Truth as nirviśeṣa Brahman, the impersonal, featureless Absolute. Yogīs realize it as Paramātmā (the Supersoul within the heart), and śuddha-bhaktas (pure devotees) realize that same para-tattva as Vrajendra-nandana Bhagavān by their practice of bhakti-yoga. So the non-dual Absolute is realised first as Brahman, secondly as Paramātmā and thirdly as Bhagavān.

He continued that the meaning of advaya-jñāna, or non-dual reality, is that this Absolute Truth possess acintya-śakti, an inconceivable potency by which the impossible is made possible (aghaṭana-ghaṭana paṭīyasī). The parā-śakti (supreme, trans-cendental potency) of the parama-tattva is manifest in three aspects. The first of these is cit-śakti (the spiritual potency) which, by the desire of para-tattva Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifests Vaikuṅṭha, Goloka Vṛndāvana, the other dhāmas and everything within them. The second is jīva-śakti (marginal potency) which manifests innumerable jīvas. The third aspect, māyā śakti (material, external potency), manifests millions upon millions of material universes. The jīva, being manifested by jīva śakti, has minute consciousness and can be covered by māyā. There is an eternal relationship between on the one hand śaktimān (the possessor of the potencies) and on the other hand śakti (the potency) and the transformations of the potency, namely the jīvas and the material world. This relationship is acintya-bhedābheda. That is to say, śakti, the jīvas and matter are simultaneously and inconceivably one with and different from the Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Without Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the Absolute Truth and the source of all

energies, neither the jīva nor the creation can exist. Thus, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called advaya-jñāna para-tattva, the Absolute Truth without duality. This Absolute Truth is not nirākara¹, niḥśaktik², nirguṇa³, and so on. Bhaktas anoint their eyes with the salve of prema (pure love) and take darśana of advaya-jñāna para-tattva in the form of Vrajendra-nandana. The nirviśeṣa, nirguṇa, nirākara Brahman which the impersonal jñānis perceive is only the bodily luster of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. According to Bhagavad-gītā, the impersonal, undifferentiated aspect of the Absolute (which is the brahma-tattva of the impersonalists) is not para-tattva because it is neither supreme nor independent. It is dependent on Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntiksyā ca*

Bhagavad-gītā (14.27)

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: “In My form as nirguṇa-saviśeṣa-tattva, I have no material characteristics, but I am full of spiritual attributes, and I am indeed the shelter of Brahman, which is the ultimate goal of the jñānis. My svarūpa in the form of nirguṇa-saviśeṣa-tattva is the support of immortality, imperishability, eternality, prema (that love of God which is the nitya-dharma, or eternal religion of the jīvas) and vraja-rasa, the form of complete happiness.”

Śrī Vinodabihārī elaborated with further scriptural references:

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagadaṇḍa koṭi
koṭīṣv aśeṣa vasudhādi vibhūti bhinnam
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam
govindam adi puruṣam tamahaṁ bhajāmi
(Brahma-saṁhitā 5.40)

“I worship the original person, Govinda, whose effulgence is the source of the nirviśeṣa Brahman which is mentioned in the Upaniṣads, which is differentiated from the infinity of glories of the mundane universe and which appears as the indivisible, infinite, limitless truth. Millions and millions of universes emanate from this Brahman effulgence.”

It is important to note that the word Brahman can only be modified with adjectives such as parama when Brahman refers to Svayaṁ Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana (as in scriptural references to Paramabrahman). Therefore, Paramabrahman Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is superior to Brahman. Accordingly, the advaya-jñāna para-tattva⁴ is Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is sarva-śaktimān⁵ and akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti⁶ together with all His associates, jīvas and jagat.

The śakti of Bhagavān is described in the Vedas and its supplementary literature:
parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāviki jñāna bala kriyā ca
(Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8)

“The parā-śakti is perceivable in different forms.”

viṣṇu śaktiḥ parā proktā kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā karmasamjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate
(Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.7.61)

”Viṣṇu śakti is of three kinds—parā (transcendental), kṣetrajñā (the living entity) and avidyā (nescience). Viṣṇu's parā śakti is called cit-śakti, kṣetrajñā is called jīva-śakti, and avidyā is māyā-śakti.”

It is also confirmed in Vedānta Sūtra, śakti-śaktimator-abhedah: “There is no difference between the potency (śakti) and the possessor of the potency (śaktimān).” In this way, Śrī Vinodabihārī established before his class at Daulatpura that Vrajendra-nandana Śyamasundara is both the limit and the direct manifest form of the advaya-jñāna para-tattva.

On another occasion, the teacher chose the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta verse Madhyalīlā 20.108 for the class discussion.

jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa
kṛṣṇera ‘taṭasthā śakti’ bhedābheda prakāśa

“The living entity’s constitutional position is as eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. As a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s marginal energy he is simultaneously one with Kṛṣṇa and different from Him.”

This time too, Śrī Vinodabihārī pointed out that the teacher’s commentary was contrary to the scriptures. The teacher said that the jīva is actually Brahman; Brahman only appears to be the jīva, as a rope falsely appears to be a snake or as an oyster shell appears like ivory. He did not accept that the jīvas are the śakti of Brahman or that the jīvas and the material world are transformation of śakti. Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī used simple examples to explain that it is the nature of the jīva to be an eternal servant of Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord. According to Bhagavad-gītā (15.7), mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātana: ”The jīva is a transformation of the marginal potency (taṭasthā-śakti) of sarva-śaktimān Parabrahman, the Supreme Lord Who possess all potencies.”

Although one cannot find perfect examples in this world to describe transcendental matters, analogies are often useful. Śrī Vinodabihārī used two analogies to explain the nature of the jīva: the relation of the sun’s rays to the sun and the connection of the sparks to the blazing fire. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, and the shimmering particles of light in the rays of the sun can be compared to the infinitesimal jīvas. Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete cit-tattva, full in all knowledge, so the jīvas are minute cit-tattva. However, although Bhagavān is the master of māyā and other śaktis, the jīvas are under the control of māyā. This is because Bhagavān is the basis of all transcendental qualities; He is the actual doer, the enjoyer, and the ego, and He possesses these qualities in full, whereas the jīva only possesses them to a minute degree. The natural relationship of the jīva—indeed his very constitution—is to be connected with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, just as the rays of the sun are connected to the sun. However, the pure nature of the jīva is covered by a subtle and gross material body made of māyā, because he has forgotten Bhagavān. Therefore the jīva aspires to be

the doer and enjoyer because, while recognising his qualities, he forgets his minuteness. It is only by the causeless mercy of a pure transcendental guru or of Bhagavān Himself that the jīva can adopt bhakti-yoga and re-establish his svarūpa, or true spiritual form.

The other example is that of a blazing fire and its sparks. Innumerable, minute conscious jīvas manifest from the taṭasthā śakti (the marginal potency) like uncountable sparks from a blazing fire. Because the jīvas are minute by nature, their consciousness can be covered by māyā-śakti. Jīva-śakti is also known as taṭasthā-śakti. Because of their marginal nature, the jīvas are qualified to go either to the spiritual world (Vaikuṅṭha), or to the material world. When they gain the strength of cit-śakti (the spiritual potency), they can serve Bhagavān in Vaikuṅṭha. Conversely, when they are opposed to Bhagavān, they wander around the illusory material world. This is the profound purport of this verse.

Hearing Śrī Vinodabihārī's explanation which was based on bhakti everyone in his class was struck with wonder that their classmate could understand tattva so deeply. One day Śrī Vinodabihārī became absorbed in contemplating the verses of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. He reflected that this human form of life is extremely rare. Only human beings can obtain bhagavat-tattva, knowledge of the Absolute Truth; it is not possible for other forms of life, such as birds, animals or trees. "I am so fortunate that I have attained this human body by the mercy of the Lord, but I do not know when death will suddenly come. Therefore I must depend on bhakti-yoga to make my life successful before death comes. That means that there is no need for an atheistic education. I have received exclusive shelter at the lotus feet of the supremely merciful and omniscient Śrī Gurudeva Prabhupāda, and my supreme duty is to perform hari-bhajana." Thinking like this, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmacārī left college without taking his final exam. In 1919, he came to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, leaving the ties of love of his affectionate mother and completely giving up everything related to land and home.

His devoted mother wept and said, "I knew that we would not be able to keep Jonā at home. My heart trembled with fear at the astounding incidents in his life. He was no ordinary child. Seeing Jonā's astounding courage and his dedication to truth and altruism, it was easy to imagine his future. Of all my sons, I loved him most. No one is able to understand how much I loved him. When I watched his transcendental behavior and character, and saw his friends and companions, I was always afraid he would become a sannyāsī and renounce the material world. Whatever he did was good, but I cannot stay alive without seeing him." She was beside herself with grief as she said this.

Receiving dīkṣa and guru-mantra

When Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī came to the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, Śrīla Prabhupāda was very pleased to see that he had given up all the illusory affection for his mother and family, and that he was firmly resolved to perform hari-bhajana. At that time Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava was approaching and the arrangements for the huge Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā were under way. Śrīla Prabhupāda appointed his dear servant to be responsible for various tasks in the preparation of the Śrīdhāma parikramā.

The word Navadvīpa means ‘nine islands.’ The flow of the Gaṅgā, also known as the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī, has divided Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s dhāma into an irregular pattern. The Bhāgīrathī proceeds in a zigzag course because she cannot bear to leave the dhāma, and that is why the dhāma is divided into nine parts. Antardvīpa Māyāpura is situated in the middle of these islands on the east bank of the patitā-pāvanī Gaṅgā, who saves the fallen souls. Here Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in the form of Śācīnandana Gaurahari, accepting the inner moods and bodily lustre of Śrīmatī Radhika. Here Śrī Gaurahari performed His transcendental childhood and kiśora pastimes until He was twenty-four. With Śrīdhāma Māyāpura in the middle, the other eight islands are as follows: on the east side of the Gaṅgā are Sīmantadvīpa, Godrumadvīpa, and Madhyadvīpa. On the western side are Koladvīpa, Ṛtudvīpa, Jahnudvīpa, Modadruma-dvīpa and Rudradvīpa. Due to the Gaṅgā’s meandering flow, part of Śrī Rudradvīpa is presently situated on her west bank and part on her east bank.

After Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s disappearance, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Who is non-different from Śrī Baladeva, took Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī on parikramā of these nine islands. Some time later Īśāna Ṭhākura took Śrīnivāsa Ācārya on Śrīdhāma parikramā. Since then, Gaurasundara’s dear devotees have been performing dhāma-parikramā with great faith. In Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara, Śrī Narahari Sarkāra Ṭhākura has described the parikramā in detail. However, for various reasons, the practice of Gaura Dhāma parikramā was discontinued in the course of time. By the power of māyā, even the birthplace of Śrī Gaura, Māyāpura Dhāma, became covered under the rule of the Muslims, who changed the name of Māyāpura to Miyāmpur and destroyed all memories of the dhāma.

It was the Seventh Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who re-discovered Māyāpura Dhāma. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda composed Navadvīpa dhāma parikramā and Navadvīpa-bhava-taraṅga, poetic works glorifying the land of Navadvīpa. In addition, he bought property at the site of the birthplace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and in a small, straw-thatched temple established Deities of Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā, Śācī-Jagannātha-Nimāi and Pañca-tattva. Thereafter, he entrusted the whole responsibility of this undertaking to Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. From that time, Śrīla Prabhupāda started dhāma-parikramā again under Śrīla Ṭhākura

Bhaktivinoda's guidance. Since then, the parikramā of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma has been performed annually with great celebrations.

That year, 1919, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda gave dikṣā initiation to Vinodabihārī at Yogapīṭha on Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā evening after the completion of the parikramā. After the dikṣā ceremony was over, Vinodabihārī very humbly requested at his Guru's lotus feet that he should give him the guru-mantra. Until then Śrīla Prabhupāda had not given the guru-mantra to anyone. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard Vinodabihārī's earnest request he became silent and began to reflect. Seeing him silent, brahmacārījī asked again with ardent desire, "Is it necessary to obtain the guru-mantra and instructions on guru-sevā from some other guru?" Hearing this, Śrīla Prabhupāda began to smile, and gave Vinodabihārī the guru-mantra very affectionately. After this, Śrīla Prabhupāda started to give the guru-mantra to others as well.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had a transcendental rule that when anyone offered him praṇāma, he offered his greetings back by folding his hands and saying, dāso 'smi: "I am your servant." Seeing such humble behaviour on the part of his Gurudeva, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmacārī always hid while offering him his praṇāma. Śrīla Prabhupāda had another transcendental practice: he always addressed his disciples and others using the honorific 'āp' (you). But because he was so satisfied with Śrī Vinodabihārī's intimate service he would use 'tū', 'tuī' (the most informal way of saying 'you') and other loving words to address him. Very few amongst Prabhupāda's disciples received such good fortune.

Ideal maṭha-life

In the house of his guru, Śrī Vinodabihārī became absorbed in his sādhana-bhajana, in studying devotional literature, and in his service in the maṭha. Even though he had come from an educated and respected family, he was completely without pride. His life was an example of the same strict vairāgya (renunciation) that was practised by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. For the service of Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas he performed even the most insignificant tasks in the maṭha with great enthusiasm. In bhakti-sādhana it is absolutely essential to perform all endeavours for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and to give up all enjoyment for His satisfaction. His life perfectly illustrates these two considerations.

In the early days of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, the maṭha residents were performing sādhana-bhajana, but due to the lack of funds, they were sustaining themselves with great difficulty. At that time Śrī Vinodabihārī was the maṭha manager. One day there was only 200 grams of rice in the maṭha, so they cooked all the rice and prepared the leaves of the saḥijana tree as sāg (a green vegetable) and offered it to Ṭhākuraḥjī. There were four brahmacārīs at the time. After the offering, the four

performed prasāda-sevā. Śrīla Prabhupāda happened to come by and saw that the prasāda that his disciples were honouring consisted of a large amount of sāg with only a handful of rice. There were also no leaf-plates to eat from in the maṭha. Seeing this, Prabhupāda became very unhappy and asked, “Is there no rice in the storeroom?” To avoid making Śrī Gurudeva anxious, they humbly answered, “Gurudeva, we are just learning vairāgya.” But Prabhupāda understood everything. When Śrī Vinodabihārī accepted prasāda, he would never say anything if the vegetable or dāl had too much or too little salt, or if the taste was good or bad. He performed his prasāda-sevā with great faith and affection, knowing that mahā-prasāda is non-different from the Lord Himself. While honouring prasāda he never engaged in useless conversation, and never criticised anyone or took part in any other discussion. Seeing this exemplary vaiṣṇava behavior, all the maṭha residents revered him.

By the order of Śrī Gurudeva, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī defends the property of his previous āśrama, his family zamindari

After Vinodabihārī left home, the state of his former household became unsteady. His mother’s health began to fail through separation from her dear son, and the condition of the property also deteriorated because Vinod was not there to manage things. There had been an uprising of the tenants and they were not paying their rent. Śrīla Prabhupāda mercifully sent Vinodabihārī to his previous home for some time to put the management of the land back in order. News of his coming spread everywhere. With great expertise he pacified the tenants and soon everyone began to pay their rent regularly as before. After everything was settled, he took his mother’s permission and again returned to his Guru’s house.

After some time a letter came from Vinoda's home addressed to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Vinoda’s mother was dying. Grief-stricken and longing for her son, his mother desperately wanted to see him in her last days, and she beseeched Prabhupāda to send Vinoda to her quickly. Upon reading the letter, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for Vinodabihārī and ordered him to go to his mother. After listening to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instruction, Vinoda returned to his bhajana kuṭīra and did not come out for the whole day. The next day Śrīla Prabhupāda called a brahmacārī and asked, “I told Vinodabihārī to go to his home. Did he go or not? I have not seen him.” The brahmacārī answered, “Vinodabihārī hasn't left. He is staying in his bhajana-kuṭīra chanting harināma.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda then called for Vinodabihārī and asked, “I told you to go to your home. You haven't left yet?”

Vinodabihārī answered, “Prabhu! I have not gone home.”

“Why not?” Prabhupāda demanded.

Humbly Vinodabihārī replied, “My mother loves me so much, and that is why I have not gone. If on her deathbed she tells me, ‘My son, this is my last instruction: return home and take care of the household,’ then how can I disobey her last request? But then my human birth will become unsuccessful. My guru-sevā, my hearing hari-

kathā, and my sādhana-bhajana will all be ruined. Hari-bhajana is the ultimate duty in life. This duty is only possible in human life. You have said that human birth is very rare. Moreover, to meet a sad-guru like you in any human birth is extremely rare,

sakala janme mātā-pītā sabe pāya

kṛṣṇa guru nāhi mile, bhajaha hiyāya

(Caitanya Maṅgala, Madhya-khaṇḍa)

“You have said that a person who is engaged in sevā to guru and Bhagavān Mukunda is not indebted to his parents, ancestors, demi-gods or others. He is freed from all kinds of debts.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s eyes filled with tears when he heard these words, and he did not say anything more. The brahmacārīs living in the maṭha were amazed at Śrī Vinodabihārī’s devotion for Śrī Gurudeva and for bhajana.

Hospitality

From the time that Śrī Caitanya Maṭha was established, the maṭha residents had great difficulty in maintaining themselves and performing guru-sevā, bhagavat-sevā and all the other services required. From time to time they were subsisting only on sāka-sabji. In those days it was common to sleep on the ground, and to eat off leaves instead of metal plates. Sometimes they didn’t even have leaves, and had to perform prasāda-sevā with great faith right on the cement floor. But, despite the difficulties the maṭha residents were quite happy with this mode of life because they were devoted to bhajana and sevā.

One day at noon two guests came to have darśana of Māyāpura Dhāma. Their names were Atulacandra Bandopādhyāya and Atulakṛṣṇa Datta, and they were both highly placed officials in the Indian Railway. When the guests arrived, they were hungry and thirsty from the midday heat of Jeṣṭha (May-June), the hottest month of the year, but the maṭha residents had already finished their prasāda-sevā. As the men walked in, Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī, the manager of the maṭha, was sitting under a jackfruit tree, overseeing the management of the maṭha property. Seeing the guests’ dry lips, he understood how hot they were, so he sent them both to a nearby kuṇḍa to take bath. By the time they returned from their bath, delicious varieties of mahā-prasada were ready, and the two guests performed mahāprasada-sevā with faith and relish. The guests were lavish in their praise of the maṭha residents’ service mood. Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī then took both of the men to have darśana of Śrīla Prabhupāda. They were deeply impressed by his powerful hari-kathā, and expressed a desire to contribute five rupees a month for maṭha-sevā. When they returned home, they both remembered their promise and started sending five rupees every month. Gradually they developed such a desire to hear hari-kathā that they began to come

to the maṭha as their work permitted. After some time, Atulacandra Bandopādhyāya surrendered to Śrīla Prabhupāda, completely renouncing home, wife, sons, family and everything. However, this troubled the maṭha residents because their budget was so tight that his monthly donation of five rupees had covered most of the expenses of the maṭha. How would they manage now? Atulacandra told them not to worry. After harināma dikṣā, Atulacandra became Atulacandra Bandopādhyāya Bhaktisāraṅga. He began to raise funds among pious, wealthy merchants in Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and other major cities. Once they heard his harikathā, these people would send truckloads of rice, dāl, and vegetables for maṭha-sevā. In addition, he established preaching centres and āśramas in those cities, and was also editor of the weekly magazine Gauḍīya. After Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance he took sannyāsa and his name became Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Until his death he had great faith in our most worshipable Gurupādapadma and considered him his intimate friend. It was Śrīla Bhaktisāraṅga Mahārāja who decorated Śrīla Prabhupāda's intimate and most beloved Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja with the title Pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-simha. This title compares Paramārādhyā Gurupādapadma to a lion which tears to pieces the elephant-like false doctrines of māyāvāda, smārta, sahajiyā and other atheistic schools of thought which are opposed to bhakti. He used scriptural proof and irrefutable arguments to destroy the view of anyone who said anything against Śrīla Prabhupāda's philosophy of bhakti. The other gentleman, Atulakṛṣṇa Dattajī, also gave up his government service and came with his family to Caitanya Maṭha. After receiving harināma-dīkṣā initiation from Śrīla Prabhupāda, he began to perform ekāntika bhajana (exclusive worship of the Lord). He compiled Śrī Gauḍīya Kaṅṭhahāra ('The Necklace of the Gauḍīya bhaktas'). This excellent book contains a collection of verses from the Vedas, Upaniṣads, and other śāstras which establish the siddhānta of śuddha-bhakti.

Sevā of the bṛhad mṛgaṅga

In April 1913, Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda established Bhāgavat Press in Sawnagar Lane in Kālīghāṭa, Calcutta, and began to publish Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Bhagavad-gītā with the commentary of Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura and other literature. After Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura entered nitya-līlā, the press was brought first to Māyāpura and then to Kṛṣṇanagar. There Śrīla Prabhupāda began to publish Sajjana-toṣaṇī, the weekly Gauḍīya and other devotional works. Śrīla Prabhupāda observed Śrī Vinodabihārī's literary and philosophical inclination, and in 1922 appointed him manager of the press, as well as printer and publisher of the Gauḍīya. Śrī Atulacandra Bandopādhyāya Bhaktisāraṅga and Śrī Haripada Vidyāratna (M.A., B.L.) were the editors of the magazine, which consisted of siddhāntic essays. Later that year, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for his intimate associate Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī to come to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and there he appointed him manager of

Caitanya Maṭha. Śrī Vinodabihārī took care of everything but especially concentrated on managing the property of the maṭha, which he did with great expertise. Yogapīṭha in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and ākara maṭharāja Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, began to develop in all respects due to his skillful administration.

Sevā of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura

After Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu entered aprakaṭa līlā and His līlās became unmanifest, the Bhagavatī Gaṅgā changed course many times. Places that had once been in Māyāpura were relocated to the relatively high ground of the west bank. The extensive town of Nadiyā (Navadvīpa), which had previously been on the east bank, became situated on the Gaṅgā's west bank, and the east bank became a deserted, desolate place. During the reign of the yavanas (Muslims), all the sacred places of the Hindus were destroyed, temples were demolished and the names of the places of Mahāprabhu's pastimes were changed. The temples at the birthplaces of Śrī Rāma in Ayodhyā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā were razed, and mosques were erected on their foundations. Their names were changed to Phaijābād and Momīnābād. Similarly, the Muslims changed the name of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's birthplace from Māyāpura to Miyāmpur. Later, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discovered Jagannātha Miśra Bhavan, the birth place of Śrī Gaura, and again called it Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. In this way the name Śrīdhāma Māyāpura once more became known to the world.

Besides changing the name of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, the Muslims had also made a graveyard on the huge courtyard of Candraśekhara Bhavan, which was very close to Jagannātha Miśra Bhavan, and this was still there when Śrī Vinodabihārī became manager of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. He could not tolerate this atrocity and acted fearlessly and boldly. One night, while all were asleep, he had all the graves in the graveyard dug up and placed elsewhere. In their place he had large, beautiful trees and foliage planted and overnight he made a beautiful park with a wall all around it for protection. The next morning everyone was astounded at what had taken place. The local Muslims reported it to the police and filed a case in court. But police officials and governmental investigators could not find any trace of the graveyard; they saw only an old garden. In this way the devotees reclaimed Candraśekhara Bhavan and no one was able to stop them. For this pious act the name of Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī will be written in golden letters in the history of India.

Ideal guru-sevā

Jagadguru Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda was a brilliant Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācārya. In a short time he spread the holy name of Bhagavān and Śrī Caitanya

Mahāprabhu's śuddha-bhakti over the length and breadth of India, and throughout the whole world as well. Fearlessly he declared that a brāhmaṇa is not a brāhmaṇa if he does not worship the complete Brahman, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Anyone in our sampradāya who is not performing bhajana in the footsteps of the Six Gosvāmīs, headed by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī—with body, mind and words—and is not following the siddhānta of bhakti is not a jāti-gosvāmī, temple pujārī, gosvāmī or bhakta. Śrīla Sarasvatī Thākura preached that the arrangement of society in varṇas is based on the different qualities of the people, rather than on their family lineage. This is the verdict of the Vedas, Upaniṣad, Bhagavad-gītā and other scriptures. The following verses offer irrefutable evidence of this conclusion:

(a) catur varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa karma vibhāgaśaḥ (Bhagavad-gītā 4.13)

(b) yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇabhivyañjakam (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.11.35).

People became attracted by Śrīla Prabhupāda's fearless and truthful preaching. However, his teachings about the real nature of eligibility agitated certain corrupt and polluted brahmaṇas and caste gosvāmīs, who were devoid of knowledge and civilised behaviour. Unable to counteract his arguments, they had been repeatedly defeated in doctrinal debates in religious assemblies, and now wanted to kill Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura.

In 1925, as in previous years, the sixteen kosa Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā was held on the occasion of Śrī Gaura Janmotsava. Thousands of devoted pilgrims performed parikramā in an enormous saṅkīrtanaparty. Śrīla Prabhupāda went on foot in the parikramā while the Deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī were borne on the back of a large elephant. At one point, the parikramā party gathered in front of the temple of Praudhā Māyā in Kuliya Dvīpa and the devotees listened to Śrīla Prabhupāda relating the glories of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma. Just then, the so-called brāhmaṇas and caste gosvāmīs of Kuliya Navadvīpa attacked. They hurled bricks, stones, hot water and soda bottles, and their assault caused pandemonium everywhere. The pilgrims were running here and there to protect their lives, and no one cared for anyone else. The violent mob was searching for Śrīla Prabhupāda in order to kill him, but Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī immediately took him to a nearby bhakta's house for protection. There, Śrī Vinodabihārī quickly put on Śrīla Prabhupāda's sannyāsa dress and took his daṇḍa, giving his own white clothes to Śrīla Prabhupāda to wear. After that, he sent Śrīla Prabhupāda to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, and the mob did not recognize Prabhupāda in his disguise. Meanwhile, the police arrived. Some time later, Śrī Vinodabihārī reached Māyāpura safely, still dressed as a sannyāsī. The corrupt police suppressed news of this event, but the famous magazine Ānanda Bāzāra published an account of the atrocity. The educated and respectable people of Bengal were shocked to hear and read about this outrage.

All the Vaiṣṇavas were amazed at Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī's remarkable guru-niṣṭhā (his fixed service to his guru), and the incident was discussed everywhere.

This is how Śrī Vinodabihārī reacted fearlessly when some injustice or atrocity threatened Śrīla Prabhupāda or challenged Śrīla Prabhupāda's views.

Śrī Vinodabihārī's behaviour in this incident calls to mind the gurusevā of Śrī Rāmānujācārya's dear disciple Śrī Kureśa. Long ago, the Śaivite sampradāya dominated South India. When Śrī Rāmānujācārya used scriptural evidence to refute their inaccurate siddhānta, evil-minded Śaivites became inflamed. The Śaivite king invited Śrī Rāmānujācārya to a philosophical debate at Śrī Raṅgam, but this was really an excuse to kill him. Kureśa, who was devoted to his Guru, heard a rumour of the plot. He exchanged clothes with his Gurujī and arrived in the town escorted by the king's soldiers, wearing Śrī Rāmānujācārya's saffron dress and bearing his tridaṇḍa. The king and the people assumed that Kureśa was Rāmānujācārya. Kureśa stood alone against hundreds of learned Śaivites on the other side. A tumultuous debate ensued, in which the Śaivites were defeated. Nevertheless, the king used a cunning device to proclaim Kureśa's defeat. He punished Kureśa by removing both of his eyes, and then banished him. Kureśa did not utter even a single word.

Wandering about, he reached a village far from that kingdom where, by good fortune, Śrī Rāmānujācārya was also present with his disciples. An extraordinary meeting took place between guru and disciple. Kureśa, the ideal guru-sevaka (disciple), threw himself at the lotus feet of his Guru and by Śrī Guru's mercy his eyesight was restored. As he lay in the lap of his Gurudeva crying out of love, Gurujī wiped Kureśa's tears with his own outer cloth and with the other hand blessed him to be free from fear. This same Kureśa later became the famous Kureśācārya. He was a śruti-dhara (one who remembers whatever he hears from the scriptures), and an ācārya expert in Śrī Rāmānujācārya's bhaktisiddhānta.

Similarly, guru-sevaka Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī, the foremost amongst the disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, later became well-known by the name Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti-prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and he preached the words of Śrī Gaurasundara all over the world, fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's manobhīṣṭa (inner desire). (Some Vaiṣṇavas say that the incident at Kuliyā was an excuse for Śrīla Prabhupāda to give his dear disciple the tridaṇḍa sannyāsa dress, even though his sannyāsa ceremony was held later in Kaṭvā, after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance.) For such guru-sevā, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmācārī's name will be written in gold in the annals of the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

In March 1928, during Śrī Gaura Janmotsava, the 34th yearly session of the Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma Śrīdhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā (a devotional assembly) was held, with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda as the chairman. Selected people were praised in this meeting for their different services in the Śrī Maṭha, for their preaching of bhakti or for other tasks. At this time Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī was honoured for protecting the property of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, for the all-round development of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, for his unwearied hard work and endeavour, and for his intimate sevā in fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire.

As manager of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī had two horses of excellent breed, which he used to ride while he was managing the land. In this way he created a splendid impression when he traveled for the service of the maṭha. In the midst of his devotional practices, he was also linked to many social welfare organizations. He was a member of the Nadiyā District Board, the Education and Finance Committee, the Kṛṣṇanagar Local Board, and the Union Board and Bench Court, and he was also the chairman of the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute. He gave advice to the Divisional Commissioner, the District Judge and other highly posted persons on various matters. Everyone, from the highest to the lowest, had special respect for him.

A special contribution to the establishment of Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha and the foundation of the śrī mandira in the city of Calcutta on the September 26, 1928. Śrī Jagadbandhu, a wealthy patron of Calcutta, donated the land for this and later he also met all the expenses of the sevaka-khaṇḍa (the sevakas' quarters), śrī mandira, and the nāṭya-mandira (assembly hall). Śrī Vinodabihārī was instrumental in bringing this to pass, and this is how it happened.

Śrī Jagadbandhu was originally a resident of the village of Vānarīpāḍā in the Variśāla district of East Bengal. Later he started a business in Calcutta and became very wealthy. In Calcutta he lived in Bāgbāzār on the bank of the Gaṅgā in a gorgeous, palatial house. It so happened that Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārījī and his godbrother Mukundavinoda Bābājī Mahārāja were performing bhikṣā and preaching in that area one day for guru-sevā. When they arrived at Śrī Jagadbandhujī's home, they saw on the door a plaque with the inscription, 'The bhavan of Śrī Jagadbandhu dāsa of Variśāla'. Vinodabihārī suddenly remembered that the man was a subject of his family's protectorate. He told the gatekeeper to say that Vinodabihārī from Vānarīpāḍā wanted to see Śrī Jagadbandhu dāsa. When Jagadbandhujī heard this, he immediately ran barefoot to meet Vinodabihārī. Recognizing the brahmācārījī as his landlord, he knelt down and offered praṇāmas. With great respect, he seated both of his guests on chairs and began to listen to their bhagavat-kathā. He became very pleased as he listened to their discourse about the Supreme Lord, and his delight and faith increased even more when he heard that Vinodabihārī had now left home and was engaged in various kinds of sevā to Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda. Jagadbandhujī then said that he also wanted to perform sevā for the maṭha. He revealed that he had previously resolved to donate land to the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha but now, having heard Śrī Vinodabihārī's hari-kathā, he had decided to do more. "Is it right for one person to give a plate and someone else to serve food on it? That will not do. I shall carry the entire financial responsibility for the construction of both the maṭha and mandira." This actually came to pass. In 1930, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Vinodānandajī were installed in Their enormous śrī mandira with harī-nāma saṅkīrtana and much pomp and grandeur. That is how the great endeavour of Parama Niṣkiñcana7 Śrī

Vinodabihārī, who was completely dedicated to the lotus feet of his guru, became the foundation of the establishment of the Bāgbāzār Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha.

A Vedāntic explanation of
the word paramānanda

Every year at Śrī Gaura Janmotsava, a session of Śrīdhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā was held at Śrī Māyāpura Yogapīṭha. During these meetings, Śrīla Prabhupāda would request the maṭha residents to praise and glorify one another. In 1929, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī to glorify Śrī Paramānanda Brahmācārī ‘Vidyāratna.’ Śrī Paramānanda Brahmācārī, an intimate and ekaniṣṭha (single-minded) servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda, was a close friend of Śrī Vinodabihārījī. They lived together—eating, drinking, sleeping and performing sevā for Śrīla Prabhupāda. When Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārījī received this order, he stood up and first offered praise to his Guru, saying,

mūkhaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande paramānanda-mādhavam

“I worship Mādhava, the embodiment of paramānanda, whose mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.”

Śrī Vinodabihārījī then began to describe all the good qualities of Paramānanda Prabhu. “The single-minded guru-sevā of Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu is the ideal for guru-sevakas. He is always with Śrīla Prabhupāda like a shadow, performing tasks such as cooking, cleaning his clothes, managing arrangements for travel, and massaging Prabhupāda’s feet at bedtime. Sometimes Paramānanda Prabhu returns to the maṭha late when Śrīla Prabhupāda is taking rest. But even if it is midnight he will knock on the door and call, ‘Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda!’ for Prabhupāda to open the door. At that time Śrīla Prabhupāda himself will open the door of his bhajana kuṭīra for him. Paramānanda Prabhu is exceptionally expert in constructing temples and maṭhas, in operating the printing press, and in all aspects of running a maṭha. He cannot stay alive without Prabhupāda’s sevā. It is not possible to perform service to Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga without the mercy of Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu, who has such exclusive guru-niṣṭha. All glories to Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu!

prasīda paramānanda! prasīda parameśvara!
ādhi-vyādhi-bhujāṅgena daṣṭaṁ māmuddhara prabho
(Gopāla-tāpanī)

“Have mercy upon me, Paramānanda! Have mercy upon me, Parameśvara! I am bitten by the serpent of material miseries. Prabhu, please save me.”

“In the Vedānta the concept of cultivation of paramānanda, or supreme bliss, is also mentioned: ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt (Brahma Sūtra 1.1.12). The deep meaning of the practice of paramānanda is to engage completely and constantly in the pursuit of the form of paramānanda, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with body, mind and words.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who established the mission to fulfil Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s innermost desire, has instructed us how to cultivate this paramānanda. Ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā: “Uttamā bhakti is

favourable and uninterrupted cultivation of service for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure with body, mind, and words." Unless we cultivate paramānanda favourably—that is unless we practise the process of uttamā bhakti—we will not obtain paramānanda. Therefore in the conclusion of the Brahma-sūtra it is said, anāvṛtti śabdāt anāvṛtti śabdāt.' In the sūtra 'anāvṛtti śabdāt', 'śabda' refers to śabda-brahma, transcendental sound vibration and paramānanda-svarūpa Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name is that very transcendental śabda-brahma.

nāmaś cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ

pūrṇaḥ-śuddho nitya-mukto'bhinnatvān nāma nāminoḥ

"The name of paramānanda-svarūpa Kṛṣṇa is in all respect a transcendental wish-fulfilling gem. Because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are non-different, it is the personification of transcendental rasa, complete, beyond māyā, and eternal."

"Furthermore, in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.7) it is said, raso vai saḥ, rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati, ko hy evanyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt, eṣa hy evānandayati: "Paramānanda para-tattva (the supremely blissful Supreme Truth) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the personification of rasa (transcendental mellows). The jīva can become blissful only by obtaining Him. If parama-tattva paramānanda-svarūpa Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not exist, then who could maintain his life? Who would try to protect his life? Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Brahman, the personification of paramānanda filled with rasa, gives ānanda (bliss) to everyone."

We also see this established in Caturveda Śikhā:

naivete jāyante naiteṣāmajñāna-bandho na muktiḥ sarva eṣahy ete pūrṇā ajarā amṛtāḥ paramāḥ paramānanda iti.

"The name of Bhagavān (which is śabda-brahman), Bhagavān Himself and all His incarnations are not conditioned like the jīvas, nor do they take birth like them. They are complete, unchanging, immortal, and the personification of paramānanda (supreme bliss)."

"The meaning of the word anāvṛtti in the sūtra 'anāvṛtti śabdāt' is 'prevention of rebirth in this material world.' Therefore it is only by cultivating this paramānanda rasa-svarūpa śabda-brahman, that is to say, only by saṅkīrtana of the name of Bhagavān, that we can stop our rebirth forever.

"The pūrva-pakṣa, or first objection, to this statement, is this: "The meaning of paramānanda (highest bliss) is only bhāva, or sentiment, so how is it possible that this paramānanda can have shape or form?" Therefore the sūtra, arūpavad eva hi tat pradhānatvāt in Brahma-sūtra is cited. Parama-puruṣa (Supreme Person), parama-tattva (Supreme Truth) or Brahman is na-rūpavat, in other words 'not like a form.' He does not take form; everyone else takes form from Him. The Supreme Truth is Himself form, of whom it is possible to have darśana. Therefore the next sūtra says, api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām: "Through worship one can certainly have darśana in the heart and directly of the Supreme Truth."

"In the śrutis and Vedānta-sūtra this paramānanda puruṣa, or the supremely blissful Person is called ānandaṁ brahman (blissful Brahman). Ānanda is a synonym of prīti.

All jīvas are actually striving to attain paramānanda. One who wants mukti will search for mokṣa, thinking that that is paramānanda. A sense-enjoyer runs after enjoyment of the senses, considering that to be ānanda. The bhaktas strive for sevā of Kṛṣṇa because they think that is paramānanda. In other words, everyone is simply searching for paramānanda. However, bhagavad-bhakti is the only personification of paramānanda, and therefore it is only through bhakti that one can only attain paramānanda-svarūpa Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the personification of supreme bliss.”

The audience was fascinated by Śrī Vinodabihārī’s lecture. Śrīla Prabhupāda was especially pleased with his vedāntic deliberations and gave Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahma-cārī all his books on Vedānta. “Study this literature with full concentration,” he said. “I have not seen such taste for Vedānta in anyone else. General people say that the term Vedānta refers to nirviśeṣa-jñāna, but Vedānta is really bhakti literature. You should preach from it.”

After accepting tridaṇḍi sannyāsa, Śrī Vinodabihārī thoroughly fulfilled this innermost desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Establishing Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, he bestowed the dress of tridaṇḍi sannyāsa on qualified members of the Samiti and added the title ‘Bhaktivedānta’ to the names of initiates such as Vāmana, Nārāyaṇa, Trivikrama and others. He always preached śuddha-bhakti, the main subject of the Vedānta, and instructed others to do the same. This is the unique distinction of his life.

Śrī Vinodabihārī and the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute

In April 1931, Śrīla Prabhupāda established the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura for education in transcendental subject matters. Śrīla Prabhupāda was the chairman of the managing committee of the school, Śrīmad Bhaktipradīpatīrtha Mahārāja was the headmaster, and among the other members of the committee Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahma-cārī was appointed the director. Śrī Vinodabihārī changed the then prevalent English rules for holidays. He announced that the school would have breaks on pañcamī and ekādaśī instead of Sundays, and a half-day vacation on caturthī and daśamī instead of Saturday. Ekādaśī was chosen because it is called mādharma-tithi, the mother of śuddha-bhakti. Pañcamī-tithi is the appearance tithi of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, and also of Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Previously the holiday was on Sundays, due to worship in the churches. In addition, Śrī Vinodabihārī also established holidays on the different appearance and disappearance days of distinctive Vaiṣṇava ācāryas. Religious teaching was compulsory in this school. Students who failed the exams in the religious subjects were not allowed to enter the next grade, even if they had passed the exams in all the other subjects. Śrī Vinodabihārī defended his emphasis on religious ethics with the argument that the welfare of society is not possible through atheistic education. For this work he received special commendation and praise from the Navadvīpa Dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā.

The title of ‘Kṛtiratna’

In 1932, at the 38th annual session of the Śrī Navadvīpa Pracāriṇī Sabhā, the chairman, Śrīla Prabhupāda, bestowed the title 'Kṛtiratna' (the crown-jewel of all actions) on Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī. Kṛtiratna indicates bhakti and the title was an embodiment of a blessing from Śrī Gaura. The letter read as follows:

śrī śrī māyāpura candro vijayatetamām
śrī śrī navadvīpa dhāma pracāriṇī sabhāyāḥ
śrī śrī gaurāśīrvād-patram
śrī mahāprabhu sevārthaṁ śrīdhāmi-bhūmi rakṣakaḥ
prajāpālanadakṣo yaḥ śrī caitanya-maṭhāśritaḥ
śrī vinoda-vihāyārkhya brahmācārī-varāya ca
prabhupādāntaraṅgāya sarva-sad-guṇa-śāline
dhāma-pracāriṇī-saṁsatsabhyaistamai pradīyate
'kṛtiratna' iti khyātum-upādhi-bhūṣaṇam mudā
gaṅgā-pūrvattastha-śrīnavadvīpa-sthale pare
śrī māyāpura-dhāmastha-yoga-pīṭha-mahattame
guṇeṣu vā suśubhramśu-śakābde'smin śubhāśraye
phālguṇa pūrṇimāyām śrī gaurāvīrbhāva-vāsare
Signed, Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Chairman

“Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārījī, the servitor of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, has protected the land of Śrīdhāma Māyapura for the service of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and is expert in protecting his dependants in every way. He is Śrīla Prabhupāda's intimate servant and is adorned with all the good qualities of a Vaiṣṇava. At the auspicious time of the appearance of Śrī Gaura on Phalguṇa Pūrṇima year 1853 Śakābda Era, the eminent members of the Śrīdhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā have joyfully decorated him with the title 'Kṛtiratna' at Yogapīṭha, the top-most place of Śrī Māyapura Dhāma in Śrī Navadvīpa, situated on the east bank of the Gaṅgā.”

Bhagavata-sevā through
court-case proceedings

Once Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī attended a religious assembly in Kṛṣṇanagar, at which attorneys, barristers, a retired judge and other eminent learned and respected people were present. Many of them gave sincere and thoughtful speeches, and one in particular spoke with great humility and regret. “I have uselessly wasted my whole life in court proceedings,” he began. “My birth has become unsuccessful because I have not performed hari-bhajana, the worship of Lord Hari. Human life can become successful only through hari-bhakti, but I have distanced myself from it. Now in old age my senses are becoming weak, I can not understand anything and death is imminent.” Speaking in this way he prayed at the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas and Bhagavān for bhagavad-bhakti.

At the end of the meeting the respected chairman asked Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu if he would please say something. He stood up and began to speak simply and naturally, but with very powerful language. “The hidden

purport of all śāstras is bhagavad-bhakti. Of all forms of bhagavad-bhakti, the premayī bhakti (bhakti imbued with prema) of the associates of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja is topmost. Therefore Vaiṣṇava Ācārya Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura has said,

ārādhya bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas-tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid-upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pumartho mahān
śrīcaitanya mahāprabhor matam idaṁ tatrādarō naḥ paraḥ

‘Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme worshipful Deity. Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma is worshipful like Kṛṣṇa, because it is the place of His pastimes. Amongst all forms of worship, the gopīs’ worship of Kṛṣṇa is supreme. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam offers the supreme, flawless evidence of this truth. This is the teaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.’

“In the śāstras there are also examples of court-proceedings. I think that the performance of court-proceedings is the best sādhana in hari-bhakti. Besides, court-proceedings are actually hari-bhakti; it is just that people do not understand how to perform them. For those unfortunate souls the opportunity to attain bhagavad-bhakti is very remote.

“We are in the party of the most worshipful Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and our special sevā is to arrange for Her meeting with Kṛṣṇa. On one occasion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to meet with Candrāvalī in her kuñja. Rādhā’s sakhīs made up some excuse to extricate Him from there, and they brought Him to Śrī Rādhājī’s kuñja at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. There, in front of Kuñjeśvarī Śrīmatī Rādhikā He was made to write, ‘I am the servant of Rādhājī. I will never leave Rādhājī and go elsewhere.’ Then He had to sign this declaration. A few days later, though, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, compelled by His nature, neglected His promise and again went to Candrāvalī’s kuñja. Rādhā’s sakhīs, seeing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was so opposed to Śrī Vṛndāvaneśvarī Rādhikā, filed a court-case against Him. Rādhājī’s sakhīs won this court-case against Kṛṣṇa, who was not at that time present in Her court, and they issued a court decree with which He was bound to comply. In this way they arranged His sweet meeting with Śrīmatī Rādhikā by means of a warrant.”

The lawyers, the judge and all the other people were pleased and impressed with Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu’s sweet speech, which was filled with scriptural siddhānta. His philosophical lecture made a deep impression in everyone’s heart and made them realise that the most important achievement in the human form of life is to attain the service of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and nothing else. He then explained that birth in a high family, beauty, education, wealth, etc. are not required for śrī kṛṣṇa-bhajana. On the contrary, Kṛṣṇa bhajana is the qualification and birthright of every human being. Thus, it is necessary for all of us to perform hari-bhajana.

Ideal Vaiṣṇava life

Even though Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī was from an educated and respected ruling family, he did not feel any pride. In his maṭha life he was tolerant, liberal and

soft-spoken, and he would always help the poor and distressed. The vow and purpose of his life was:

bhāla na khāibe āra bhāla na paribe
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevā mānase karibe

”Do not eat very palatable food and do not dress very nicely. Rather, always perform sevā of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana within your mind.”

Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu’s sādhana was to do anything to please Kṛṣṇa and to give up all kinds of enjoyment for himself. With great love he honoured whatever Ṭhākuraḥ mahā-prasāda was served. He never had the desire to eat anything delicious and throughout his life he never mentioned that there was too little salt in the mahā-prasāda or that it was not tasty enough. When he was the manager of Caitanya Maṭha in the maṭha’s early days, he and the other brahmacārīs were living and performing their sādhana-bhajana with great difficulty because of the maṭha’s impoverished condition. Nonetheless, they were completely satisfied with such a life, and their dealings with each other were very affectionate.

First meeting with Pūjyapāda

Śrīdhara Mahārāja

Once after Navadvīpa parikramā, I (Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa) and a few brahmacārīs went to Śrī Caitanya-Sārasvata Gauḍīya Maṭha in Koleragaṇja, Navadvīpa, to have darśana of Paramapūjyapāda Parivṛājakācārya-varya Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārājaḥ. We will never forget his description of his first sight of Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva.

“While I was a student in the last year of law school, I went to have darśana of Māyāpura. First, I took darśana of the Deities in the mandira at Yogapīṭha, and then Śrīvāsa Āṅgana, Advaita Bhavan, Gadādhara Bhavan and other places. While I was taking darśana at ākara maṭharāja Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, I witnessed an astonishing scene. A beautiful young brahmacārī in a very nice white dhotī and kurtā was sitting on a chair beneath a jackfruit tree. He was resting his legs on a table in front of him, the left leg on top of the right, and was slowly swinging on the chair. Both his eyes were closed and it seemed that he was immersed in deep thought. Various residents of the maṭha were coming before him. All of them—whether young or old, wearing white or saffron—bowed their heads to the ground and offered praṇāma to that brahmacārī with great respect, and then went on to carry out their services and tasks. At one point, a well-built, grave sannyāsī came, offered his praṇāma and stood in front of him. Hearing some noise, the brahmacārī opened his eyes, sat up and looked at the sannyāsī. The sannyāsī asked something with great humility, the brahmacārīḥ gave some answer and then the sannyāsī again paid his praṇāma and went away.”

Pūjyapāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja continued, “I watched all this very attentively, and wondered, ‘Everyone is respectfully paying praṇāma to this young man and even important sannyāsīs come to get advice and instructions from him. Who is he?’ I asked a maṭha resident standing nearby about this brahmacārī who had such an

exceptional personality. He told me that his name was Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna, and that he was the manager of the matha. The man said, 'He is the foremost among the intimate servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Although he appears common, he is actually deeply philosophical and learned in bhaktisiddhānta. He has done much towards the development of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Yogapīṭha, and Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and is prominent on the managing committee of the Bhaktivinoda Institute.' I was very impressed by this person.

"Shortly thereafter, I went to have darśana of Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was completely overcome by Prabhupāda's grave personality and powerful speech. At that time I vowed that now I would also leave the perishable world and perform hari-bhajana, because without it, life is useless. Śrīla Prabhupāda recited one śloka from the Bhāgavatam that made an indelible imprint in my heart.

labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvat
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.9.29)

" 'This human birth is extremely rare and is only obtained after many births. But although this birth is temporary, it can give spiritual life. Therefore an intelligent person does not delay even for a moment to endeavour for the ultimate auspiciousness before death.'

"After that I returned to my home, but very soon I gave up my home and household for the rest of my life, and came to Prabhupāda's lotus feet. As a maṭha-vāsī, I had great affection for Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī, and we were close friends. We used to discuss vedāntic siddhānta and the deep concepts of bhakti together, and everyone would faithfully listen to our discussions."

Prabhupāda's opinion of
an ideal guru-sevaka

When Śrī Caitanya Maṭha was well established, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī was sole manager of the property. For the service of the maṭha and mandira he would have to go to the civil court from time to time and meet with influential administrators, and his life style appeared comfortable and opulent. Seeing this external aspect of his life, some ignorant maṭha residents concluded that Śrī Vinodabihārī did not have any special feeling for bhakti and was only expert in material matters. They concluded that he could not have time to follow the different limbs of bhakti, because he was always engrossed in the guidance of subordinates, in court proceedings and in other disciplinary measures, and because he was well known in the community at large. The issue did not stop at the Māyāpura maṭha; some brahmācārīs in the Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda an extensive letter about Śrī Vinodabihārī.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda received this letter, he became very displeased. He wrote back, forcefully defending Vinodabihārī, saying that Vinodabihārī was an

extraordinary and ideal Vaiṣṇava with exceptional guru-niṣṭhā. “He is fully learned in the difficult siddhānta of bhakti,” Śrīla Prabhupāda told the brahmacāris, “and in particular, he has penetrated the deep concepts of Vedānta. He is extremely enthusiastic to perform bhajana, he is exclusively endeavouring to please Śrī Hari, Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, and he has captured the mood of renunciation. Besides, he is affectionate and compassionate and a competent leader with excellent organizational and managerial capabilities. Those who do not consider Vinoda to be a Vaiṣṇava are themselves not Vaiṣṇavas at all. No one can prevent the destruction of those who offend Vaiṣṇavas because they do not understand their inner heart. Their destruction is inevitable.”

Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmācārī was one of the prominent sevakas in the Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha at that time. He was a famous speaker of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and had deep faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda. By good fortune he read Śrīla Prabhupāda’s letter, which gave him strong confidence in Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī. After Śrīla Prabhupāda entered aprakāṣa-līlā, Śrī Narottamānanda left Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and went to Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa together with his Godbrothers, Śrī Vinodabihārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu, Śrī Narahari Sevāvigraha Prabhu and others. He performed sādhana-bhajana at Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and travelled around India, preaching śuddha-bhakti. While at the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, he revealed to our worshipful Gurupādapadma the contents of the letter written by Śrīla Prabhupāda to the brahmacāris of the Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha.

The transfer of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja’s samādhi

In the year 1932, the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī inundated the countryside, and there was water everywhere, in all directions. The Gaṅgā’s strong current had cut the west bank, which was fast disappearing into the flood. On that west bank was located the samādhi of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s most beloved Śrī Gurudeva, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Śrīla Prabhupāda had given Śrīla Gaura Kiśora samādhi with his own hands in 1915 on Utthāna Ekādaśī. Now, when Śrīla Prabhupāda found out that the samādhi of his Śrī Gurudeva was about to be carried away by the flow of the Gaṅgā, he instructed his intimate servant Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī to rescue the complete samādhi by some means or other, and to re-establish it on the bank of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura.

After some days and nights of intense and ceaseless labour, Śrī Vinodabihārī Prabhu and his dear Godbrother and friend Śrīpād Narahari Sevāvigraha Prabhu were able to save the samādhi with the help of other guru-sevakas. Accompanied by saṅkīrtana, they brought it well protected and in its complete form to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Śrīla Prabhupāda was very pleased, and with his own hands he began to dig the foundation for the samādhi on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In this work he was helped by his prominent sevakas Śrīpād Kuṅjabihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Aprākṛta Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī, Śrī Bhaktiraṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrī Narahari Sevāvigraha Prabhu and Śrī Vinodabihārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu. Upon completing the samādhi, Śrīla Prabhupāda became overwhelmed by the pain of separation from his

Gurudeva. When his intimate servants had darśana of Prabhupāda's face, overcome as he was with feelings of separation, tears began to flow like streams from their own eyes. Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī sat close to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and washed those feet with his own tears.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda's Śrī Gurudeva, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, entered aprakaṣa-lilā and Prabhupāda gave him samādhi, the licentious and sinful bābājīs of Kuliya created various obstacles and difficulties. However, in the end they could not do anything and Śrīla Prabhupāda gave him samādhi in Kuliya on the bank of the Gaṅgā. Now, when the samādhi was being transferred to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, the bābājīs again caused extreme opposition and put up many obstacles. When they were unable to stop the transfer, they filed a case in the Kṛṣṇanagar court, naming Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī as the main defendant in the removal of the samādhi.

The case was presented in the court of a scrupulous Christian judge, who deliberated on it very seriously. According to precedent in English law of the period, it was a criminal offence to move a tomb from its original site, and this violation was subject to a severe penalty in the West. When the judge had heard the arguments from both sides, he decided to pronounce a harsh judgement on the accused. Considering this, brahmācārījī gravely told the judge, "Respected Sir, you should know that we are not followers of Christianity. We are pure Vaiṣṇavas following the Indian Vedic tradition and rules. According to vaiṣṇava religion, one is allowed to transfer a samādhi when there are special reasons constituting extraordinary circumstances. There are thousands of cases of this." When the judge heard this, he reversed his decision and passed judgement in Śrī Vinodabihārī's favour, declaring, "The defendant is released without charge." The lawyers and other officials were greatly impressed by Śrī Vinodabihārī's argument, and they lavished praise on his diverse talents. Śrīla Prabhupāda was also very pleased, and entrusted Kṛtiratna Prabhu with all the court proceedings of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha mission. It would have been very difficult for an ordinary person to accomplish what Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī achieved in his service to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Preaching of śuddha-bhakti

In the beginning of 1933, Vinodabihārī and a few brahmācārīs went to Śrīdhāma Purī, Kāṭaka and various places in Orissa to fulfil Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire to spread Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's preaching and practice of śuddha-bhakti. First they went to Puruṣottama Maṭha in Śrīdhāma Purī. There Śrī Vinodabihārī lectured on various topics to the devotees in the maṭha and then they preached at different places in Purī. He also took care of many complicated problems at Puruṣottama Maṭha. From there Śrī Vinodabihārī went to Śrī Saccidānanda Maṭha in Kāṭaka. Besides helping to resolve problems in the maṭha, he gave a significant lecture entitled, 'Transcendental sound in the Vedānta'. Hundreds of students, teachers and very educated and respectable listeners attended the lecture, which was given in the courtyard of a college. Years later, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja recounted this lecture to his

disciples. “One can only acquire initial knowledge of a thing through the ear, that is, through the sense of hearing. Therefore hearing (śravaṇa) has a special significance in the Vaiṣṇava sampradāya. The only means of śravaṇa is through the ear, and not by any other knowledge-acquiring sense (jñānendriya). At the same time, the ear has no access to the experience of the other senses. The eyes can see a ripe mango, the tongue can taste it, the nose can experience its delicious fragrance, and the skin can determine its softness or hardness, but the ears have no relation with the mango. However, the ear can comprehend that which the other senses are unable to see, hear, taste, or touch.

“For this reason, the sad-guru (bona-fide spiritual master) first bestows transcendental sound vibration, or śabda-brahman, through the ear of the sat-śiṣya (qualified disciple). In the line of śrī guru-paramparā, both the transcendental name of Bhagavān and the mantras are called śabda-brahman. One cannot be a sad-guru unless he has realized śabda-brahman, has become learned in the topics of the śrutis, which are the manifestation of śabda-brahman, and is detached from the attraction of material sense objects. When ordinary people say the name Bhagavān it is an ordinary sound and does not have the same transcendental power as the śabda-brahman uttered by mahā-puruṣas.

“The inner mood of the original speaker of the Veda-vedānta, Gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is concealed in the mantras, ślokaś and words of the scriptures, and we cannot experience or understand this inner mood unless we hear from the ācāryas or Vaiṣṇavas in the guru-paramparā. This is because it is only through the śiṣya-paramparā (disciple succession) that one can understand the mood of the original speaker, whether he be Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Nārada, Śrī Vyāsa or someone else. One cannot take this mood to heart through independent intelligence.

sampradāya vihīnā ye mantrās te viphalā matāḥ
ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti cat-vāraḥ sampradāyinaḥ
(Padma Purāṇa)

“ ‘A mantra is useless unless it is received through a sampradāya, and therefore there are four Vaiṣṇava Sampradāyas in Kali-yuga.’

“One special consideration is as follows. The meaning of the words in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other scriptures depends on the original speaker’s accent and pronunciation. For example, there can be many meanings of the sentence, ‘Rāma, where did you go?’ depending on the tone and emphasis with which it is pronounced. The tone of the original speaker, which conveys the real meaning of his speech, can be understood only through the guru-paramparā. Consequently there is a special relationship on the transcendental platform between the spiritual sound vibration śabda-brahman, the ear and the original receiver of śabda-brahman.”

Interest in tattva philosophy

Sometimes Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī had to go on long journeys in the course of managing the branch Gauḍīya maṭhas or for preaching. At those times he invariably kept with him Jaiva Dharma, special issues of the Śrī Gauḍīya, Tattva-sandarbhā and

other philosophical works. He especially absorbed himself in studying these books during train trips. At that time, novice maṭha residents were prohibited from reading and studying Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Sandarbhas, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's Govinda-bhāṣya, Bhāṣya-pīṭhaka and other literature. It was also considered inappropriate for neophytes to study the Tenth Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Only those few devotees who possessed the ability to understand tattva-jñāna (knowledge of reality) were permitted to study these books with a qualified Vaiṣṇava. One day, Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu⁹ was searching for Śrīpād Kṛtiratna Prabhu, and unexpectedly arrived at his bhajana kuṭīra where he was deeply absorbed in studying Tattva-sandarbha. Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu was at that time acknowledged among Prabhupāda's disciples as a prominent authority on bhakti siddhānta, and everyone faithfully accepted his words and conclusions.

Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva immediately took the Tattva-sandarbha from Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu's hands. "Vinoda!" he exclaimed, "You are studying Tattva-sandarbha! Do you understand anything of what you are reading or are you just moving the pages around? Don't you know that it contains deep philosophical siddhānta? Even great scholars can hardly understand this book." Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu remained calm and sober, and stood without making any reply. Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu then demanded, "Why don't you speak? Do you understand anything or not?" Śrī Vinodabihārī answered gravely, "You can ask any question from the book." Śrīpād Vāsudeva Prabhu then asked extremely difficult questions on pramāṇa-tattva, prameya-tattva, sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana-tattva, and Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu answered all his questions in simple language which was easy to understand.

Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu had until then considered Kṛtiratna Prabhu to be an ordinary (though diligent) young brahmacārī who lacked tattva-jñāna. He never imagined that Vinoda would ever be able to answer such profound philosophical questions. Now he was amazed. This incident inspired in him a mood of respect and honour towards Vinoda. He became even more wonder-struck when he read Vinoda's essays and articles. Vinoda's literary style was extremely deep and his refined language was decorated with all kinds of ornaments. After Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu became ācārya, he told his eminent writers and scholarly disciples to learn the art of literary composition from Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī.

Śrī mahā-mantra and kīrtana

In 1933 Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's virahotsava (disappearance day observance) was held at his samādhi-mandira at Svānanda-sukhada Kuñja in Śrī Godruma. Śrīla Prabhupāda was present at this virahotsava with his disciples, including his intimate servant Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī. Pre-eminent Vaiṣṇavas from all of Bengal assembled at the virahotsava and Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his dear Vinod the responsibility of attending to the special guests.

The honourable Śrī Sītānāth Bhaktitīrtha, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, also arrived at that utsava, and was given a room with great honour and respect. He was considered a prominent kīrtaniyā in Bengal and was expert in all kinds of rāga-

raginīs, rhythms, tunes, modulations of the voice, etc. He was also a master of harmonium, esarāj, vīṇā, mṛdaṅga, tablā and other instruments.

After the viraha celebration, Bhaktitīrtha Prabhu seated Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī near him with great affection and started to perform kīrtana. He began to sing śrī mahā-mantra on the harmonium in various rāga-raginīs. As he did this, he modulated his voice in such a way that it took him ten or fifteen minutes to sing the sixteen words of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra from the first ‘Hare’ to the last ‘Hare.’ In addition, he was trying to display bhāva (spiritual emotion) by gesturing excessively with his hands and arms.

Some time later, when Śrī Vinodabihārījī came to Śrīla Prabhupāda, Prabhupādājī chided, “Did you listen to the kīrtana? You could have performed kīrtana of the whole mahā-mantra fifty times during the time it took him to pronounce ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’ only once.” He further instructed Śrī Vinodabihārī, “Those who have no taste for śrī nāma and their iṣṭadeva are only attached to tauryātrika kīrtana with different melodious tunes for the happiness of their senses. I call these people the tāl-ṭhokā sampradāya (persons who are only interested in rhythm and not in inner moods). We can cast out inertia, laziness and all kinds of anarthas by faithfully performing kīrtana of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra in a loud voice. All our desires will be fulfilled when we become absorbed in this kīrtana. Members of the tāl-ṭhokā sampradāya are completely entangled in material gain, adoration and fame. Śuddha Vaiṣṇavas always distance themselves from this and perform the sādhana of kṛṣṇa-nāma by being faithfully absorbed in saṅkīrtana. The transcendental form, quality, and pastimes of nāmī prabhu (the Supreme Lord who is addressed by the name) manifest in the hearts of those who perform nāma-kīrtana in this way. Bhagavata-prema only develops through the chanting of such śuddha-nāma.” Through this incident, Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda taught his qualified disciple about nāma-bhajana.

Once Śrī Sītānātha Bhaktitīrtha Mahodaya stayed for some time at Yogapīṭha in Māyāpura. One day at dawn he started to sing, ‘rāī jāgo rāī jāgo’ in a very sweet voice, accompanying himself on the harmonium. Śrīla Prabhupāda heard about this and stopped the singing. “First wake up yourself,” he said. “That means you should first be established in your eternal svarūpa (spiritual form). Then it is proper to wake up Rāī (Śrīmatī Rādhikājī).” Śrīla Prabhupāda told his disciples that kīrtana with very esoteric verses about unnata-ujjala-rasa (the most elevated relationship of divine conjugal love) should not be performed here and there—in shops, markets, on the street, or before unqualified persons.

Decorated with the title ‘Upadeśaka’

After the Śrī Gaura Janmotsava in 1934, the Śrī Navadvīpa Pracāriṇī Sabhā held its 40th annual session in the avidyā-haraṇa (ignorance-destroying) nāṭya-mandira of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. That year the chairman, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, adorned Śrīpād Vinodabihārī Kṛtiratna Mahāśaya with the title ‘upadeśaka’ (advisor).

śrī śrī māyāpurcandro vijayatetamām
śrī śrī navadvīpadhāma-pracāriṇyāḥ sabhāyāḥ
śrī śrī gaurāśīrvād-patram
sarvātmanā śrīguru-gaursevāsampādkāḥ śuddhamatirnayajñāḥ
sadāśayaḥ satyapathaikarāgī gurupriyo'yaṁ kṛtiratnavaryaḥ
śrīvinodvihāryākhyā brahmacārivaro mudā
upadeśaka ityetadupanāmnā vimaṇḍitaḥ
gaṅgāpūrvataṭastha śrīnavadvīpasthalottame
śrīmāyāpuradhāmaṣṭhe yogpīṭhāśraye pare
vāneṣuvasuśubhrāmśu-śakābde maṅgalālaye
phālguṇa-pūrṇimāyām śrīgaurāvīrbhāvavāsare

Signed, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, Chairman

“Kṛtiratna Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmacārī is pure-hearted, devoted to ethical values, magnanimous and attached to the path of truth. He performs all kinds of service to Śrī Guru, and is extremely dear to Śrī Gurudeva. On this sacred day of the appearance of Śrī Gaurāsundara on Phālgunī Pūrṇimā, year 1855 Śakābda Era, the members of the Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā joyfully decorate him with the title, 'Upadeśaka,' at the auspicious Śrī Yogapīṭha, the topmost place of Śrī Māyāpura, the pinnacle of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma, situated on the eastern bank of the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrthī.”

On the second day of this same occasion the Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rājasabhā also praised Śrī Kṛtiratna Pabhu for accomplishing Śrī Gaurāsundara's innermost desire:

“Upadeśaka Śrīpāda Vinodabihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna Mahāśaya has shown that he is a worthy recipient of the affection of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga by performing activities protecting the affairs of Śrīman Mahāprabhu; by engaging himself in various services for Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and all its associate branch maṭhas; and especially by very expertly managing the present year Śrīdhāma parikramā. His lectures, which are filled with siddhānta, are also extremely praiseworthy.”

His Highness Sir John Anderson, Governor of Bengal, visits Śrīdhāma Māyāpura
Due to the preaching of Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda and his very qualified disciples, many faithful persons began to come from all over India to have darśana of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. Prominent officials in the Indian government also came with faith and eagerness. When news about Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, the birthplace of Śrī Gaurāsundara, reached the ears of His Highness Sir John Anderson, then the Governor of Bengal, he also developed a desire in his heart to have darśana of the sacred place. On the 13th of January 1935, he was called on special business to the District Headquarters in Kṛṣṇanagar. By the desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Paṇḍita Śrīpād Vinodabihārī Brahmacārī 'Upadeśak' 'Kṛtiratna' went with Paṇḍita Śrī Atulacandra Bandopādhyāya Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī to Kṛṣṇanagar to meet the Governor and to invite him, on behalf of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rājasabhā, to come to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. Sir John Anderson respectfully accepted

the invitation, and arrived at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura the next day with an army of followers and supporters. The Governor was welcomed at the entrance gate to Yogapīṭha by Śrīyuta Rāmagopāla Vidyābhūṣaṇa, M.A. from the Dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, and by Śrīpād Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna, who was the secretary of the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute. Kṛtiratna Prabhu and Śrīpād Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī Prabhu then took the Governor to meet with Śrīla Prabhupāda, after which there was a welcoming ceremony in the assembly hall. At Śrīla Prabhupāda's behest, Śrī Vinodabihārījī arranged the Governor's tour of Māyāpura and also took care of providing mahā-prasāda for the guests. After having had darśana of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, the Governor expressed his heartfelt pleasure and said, "My long-cherished desire has been fulfilled today. I will be very pleased to arrange some governmental service for the development of this sacred place." Later, Śrīla Prabhupāda bid farewell to the Governor with royal honour.

The inauguration of Śrī Mandira and the Deities at Yogapīṭha

While Śrīpād Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna was the manager of the zamīndārī of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, he found several letters which provided clear evidence that Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's residence was indeed in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, and that Śrī Śācīnandana Gaurahari appeared under a neem tree there. In those articles of proof the name of the birthplace of Gaurasundara was written under section 399 and the residence was mentioned in section 265.

When Vinodabihārījī first came to Māyāpura, it was simply a forest of tulasī. The Muslims had tried to grow crops there, but no matter what seeds they sowed, only tulasī plants appeared. Earlier, while Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was performing bhajana at night in Godrumadvīpa, he had seen a divine light near a palm tree in Māyāpura. Later Śrīla Bhaktivinoda brought Vaiṣṇava Sārvabhauma Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja to that place. Bābājī Mahārāja was extremely renowned in Gauḍa-maṇḍala, Kṣetra-maṇḍala and Vraja-maṇḍala. At the time he was over a hundred years old, but when he arrived at the place he jumped up and started to dance wildly and energetically with upraised arms. "This land is the appearance place of our Śācīnandana Gauracandra!" he exclaimed.

Later on, Śrī Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī also used to come to this uncultivated land. Sometimes he arrived at midnight, and no one could understand how he got there. When asked, he would reply, "I met some young cowherd boy on the road. He caught me and brought me here. But when we arrived here, I couldn't find that cowherd boy anywhere."

In March 1934, Śrīla Prabhupāda laid the foundation for the construction of a mandira at Śrī Yogapīṭha, Māyāpura. The major responsibility for the construction was entrusted to Śrīpāda Kṛtiratna Prabhu. While the workers were digging the foundation for the mandira, they found an astonishingly beautiful Caturbhujā Deity. When Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī heard this news, he immediately went there with Śrīpāda Narahari Prabhu and other leading maṭha residents, and they were elated to see the extraordinary Deity. When Śrīla Prabhupāda came some time later,

he was also very pleased to see the Deity. He declared that this was the Deity of Adhokṣaja that had been served by Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śrī Śacīdevī. Today this Deity is being worshipped in the tall mandira at Yogapīṭha.

Sakhīcaraṇa Rāya 'Bhaktivijaya,' a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a well-known businessman in Calcutta, carried the entire expense of the grand and gorgeous mandira. The magnificent mandira, which is so high that it seems to kiss the sky, was constructed in a very short time under the supervision of Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu and Śrī Revatīramaṇa Brahmācārī. The ruler of independent Tripura, Śrīmad Vīrvikrama Kiśordeva Śarmā Māṇikyā Bahādura Dharmadhurandhara Mahodaya performed the inauguration of the mandira together with Śrīla Prabhupāda on Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava day, 1935. For the great service of building this mandira, Śrīla Prabhupāda adorned Sakhīcaraṇa Rāya with the title of 'Śreṣṭha Ārya' (the topmost Aryan).

Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī

One day, when Ācārya Kesarī Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja was sitting with his disciples, he told us about a book that he had written called Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī. "Śrīla Prabhupāda felt that Śaṅkara's philosophy would create many obstacles for the preaching of śuddha-bhakti as long as it remained prevalent in this world. It is therefore extremely important to eradicate this philosophy. The philosophy of kevalādvaita-vāda (monism) is refuted by literatures such as Śrīman Madhvācārya's Anubhāṣya, Anuvyākhyān and Sūtrabhāṣya, Śrī Jayatīrtha's Nyāyasudhā and Śrī Vyāsātīrtha's Nyāyāmṛta, which are great weapons like the sudarśana cakṛa.

"These conclusions of Prabhupāda strongly influenced my heart. In addition to these treatises I collected ten or twelve more books on the Vedānta philosophy, and studied them all from beginning to end with great concentration. These books show very clearly that the nirākāra, nirviśeṣa, nirguṇa brahma-vāda or māyāvāda of the modern Śaṅkara differs in all respects from the concepts of Śrīla Vedavyāsa, who wrote Śrī Brahma-sūtra (the commentary on Vedānta) and its natural commentary, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Nowhere in the 550 sutras of Brahma-sūtra do we find words like jñāna, nirākāra, nirviśeṣa, or nirguṇa, which are the very basis of Śaṅkara's commentary. Nirguṇa Brahman is not worthy of worship because it has no compassion. The Brahman of māyāvāda is false and only imaginary; it can never be real Brahman. Consequently, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's imaginary nirviśeṣa brahma-vāda or māyāvāda can never be one and the same as Śrī Vedavyāsa's saviśeṣa brahma-vāda. In Śāṅḍilya-sūtra, Śāṅḍilya Ṛṣi says, brahmakāṇḍaṁ tu bhaktau tasyānujñānāya sāmānyāt: "The Brahma-kāṇḍa (Brahma-sūtra) specifically expounds bhakti, not jñāna." In his Bhakti-sūtra, Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi also refers to Vedavyāsa, who compiled Brahma-sūtra, and to Śrī Śāṅḍilya Ṛṣi as authors of literature on bhakti, and he very clearly states that Vyāsa-sūtra (Brahma-sūtra) is a treatise on bhakti.

"When I was living in Māyāpura, Śrī Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Śrī Vidyāvinoda, who were the editors of the weekly magazine Gauḍīya, once came to me. They insisted that I

should write an essay on māyāvāda for a special issue of the Gauḍīya. Accordingly, I quickly wrote the essay Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī and presented it to them. Later on I found out that the essay was too long for the special issue, but that Prabhupāda had been extremely pleased to read it and wanted it to be published quickly as a small book. Subsequently the essay was lost during the confusion after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance. Fortunately it was found in 1942 in the house of Śrīyutā Uṣālatā Devī, a follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the village of Campāhāṭī. It will be published soon."

Later on it was published in the Bengali monthly, Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, and in the Hindi monthly, Śrī Bhāgavat Patrika, and it has also been published as a book both in Bengali and in Hindi. The seventh part of this present book contains a special summary of the contents of Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda enters aprakāṣa-līlā

Śrīla Prabhupāda traveled all over India and preached with painstaking diligence until the year 1936. He gave tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa to exceptionally qualified brahmacārīs and maṭha residents, and through them started to preach śuddha-bhakti through kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana everywhere. He first established Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in Māyāpura, and after that nine maṭhas on the nine islands of Navadvīpa, and approximately sixty-four preaching-centres all over India. He published the daily newspaper Nadīyā Prakāśa and the weekly magazine Gauḍīya in Bengali, The Harmonist in English, Bhāgavat in Hindi, and other transcendental magazines as well. He also published the books Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other devotional literature. Śrīla Prabhupāda sent his expert disciples Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrīmad Bhaktiḥṛdaya Bon Mahārāja and Bhaktipradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja to the West. They preached the words of Śrī Gaura in England, France, Germany and other countries. After they returned, Aprākṛt Bhaktisāraṅga Prabhu was sent to the Western countries to preach again. In this way, the preaching of śuddha-bhakti began everywhere with great enthusiasm.

In the midst of this, in the beginning of 1936, Śrīla Prabhupāda began to display his līlā of ill health. Despite that, during that year he inaugurated a transcendental exhibition in Prayāg, spoke hari-kathā abundantly at Śrīvāsa Aṅgan in Māyāpura on the occasion of Śrī Vyāsapūjā, established Suvarṇa-vihāra Maṭha and śrī vighraha in Śrī Suvarṇavihāra, showered hari-kathā on Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha in Alālanātha on the occasion of Śrī Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, and observed puruṣottama-vrata in Puruṣottama Dhāma. Then he returned to the Calcutta Gauḍīya Maṭha. During this period he often told everyone, "All of you should perform bhajana sincerely; there are not many days left now." Early in the morning of the day that he entered aprakāṣa-līlā, he gave the order to Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja to sing the kīrtana, 'śrī rūpa mañjarī pada.' Śrīla Prabhupāda praised Śrīpād Narahari Brahmacārī Sevāvighraha Prabhu, and told all his disciples that they should be honest like him, and that they should perform hari-bhajana without other ambitions. He then gave his last instruction to the disciples present:

“I have encouraged everyone to perform bhajana and to be indifferent to everything else. For this reason, some people are dissatisfied with me. But one day they will surely understand that I have said this only for the welfare of the world. All of you should with great enthusiasm preach together the mano’bhiṣṭa hari-kathā of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī (that hari-kathā which embodies their innermost desire). Our objective and final aspiration is the dust of the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. You should stay together under the guidance of the āśraya-vigraha (Gurudeva) to please the transcendental senses of advaya-jñāna-para-tattva Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. You should proceed on the path of hari-bhajana with determination, and maintain your life in this material world only for the purpose of hari-kathā. Never give up hari-bhajana even in the most difficult circumstances of slander and countless calamities and insults. Do not become discouraged to see that most people of the world do not accept the idea of pure service to Kṛṣṇa. Never give up your bhajana, your hearing and chanting of kṛṣṇa-kathā, which is your everything. Always continue to perform hari-kīrtana, being ṭṛṇād-āpi sunīca, more humble than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree.”

Having delivered these last instructions, Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, the best of the followers of Svarūpa Damodāra and Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s Nayanamaṇi, entered the niśānta-līlā of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in the last part of the night on December 31st, 1936.

The news of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s entering aprakaṭa-līlā (unmanifest pastimes) quickly spread throughout Bengal and the whole of India. His initiated disciples started to lament loudly in the profound grief of separation. People assembled at Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha from every direction, tormented by separation. Some supposedly very dear disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to cremate him at the Nīmtalā cremation ghāṭa in Calcutta. However, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī, who was learned in bhakti-siddhānta, strongly opposed this proposal and said, “Let me see who has the power to cremate the transcendental body of our Prabhu! Śrīla Prabhupāda has clearly instructed us that he should be given samādhi in his own dear Dhāma, Śrī Māyāpura, at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, which is non-different from Govardhana.” When those present heard his words, they unanimously approved of his judgement, and Śrīla Prabhupāda’s transcendental body was brought to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura on a special train. There, on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī and others selected the place of the samādhi and then gave him samādhi according to the rules of Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā, the sātva vaiṣṇava-smṛti. When the sacred rites of samādhi were completed, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī, grief-stricken and weeping in separation from Śrīla Prabhupāda, fainted. Gradually his Godbrothers were able to help him regain some degree of composure.

After this some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples wanted to perform his śrāddha-saṁskāra according to the smārta tradition. Again, Kṛtiratna Prabhu vehemently opposed this proposal. "According to the smārta doctrine," he said, "everyone becomes a ghost (preta) when they die. It is to deliver people from this ghostly condition that one has to perform their preta-śrāddha. However, according to vaiṣṇava doctrine, the sins of a person who chants nāmābhāsa are destroyed, and he goes beyond birth and death, as we see from the examples of Ajāmila and others. Apart from that, śāstra opposes the performance of preta-śrāddha for Vaiṣṇavas who have been devoted to ekāntikī (single-focused) kṛṣṇa-bhakti, and who have chanted śuddha-nāma for their whole life.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda, the crown jewel of liberated souls, is a nitya-siddha parikāra of Kṛṣṇa (an eternal associate of the Lord). Not only that, he is Kṛṣṇapriyā Śrī Vārṣabhānavī's most beloved. Who will dare perform his preta-śrāddha? There is a fundamental difference between the sāvata-śrāddha of the Vaiṣṇavas and the preta-śrāddha of the smārtas. According to the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā and other vaiṣṇava-smṛti, the only sāvata śrāddha for Vaiṣṇavas is the offering of bhagavata-mahā-prasāda. The observance of viraha-mahotsava for Vaiṣṇava ācāryas has been going on since ancient times, and accordingly we will present our śrāddha-puṣpāñjali to Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet."

All of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples were stunned when they heard his lion-like voice. In the end, everyone unanimously approved of his views and completed the viraha-mahotsava in the manner which he proposed. The following is a portion of Kṛtiratna Prabhu's lecture at Śrīla Prabhupāda's viraha-sabhā.

"Bhagavān has no birth or death, and similarly His associates, the liberated mahā-puruṣas, also have no birth or death. Their bodies are sac-cid-ānanda-maya (composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss), and there is no difference between their body and their soul. Hence, their apparent appearance and disappearance is only for the welfare of the world. However, people who are ignorant of tattva cannot realize this. Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda is an eternal associate of the Lord in kṛṣṇa-līlā and he has appeared here only for the welfare of the world. In a short time he preached śuddha-bhakti throughout the whole world for the welfare of all. Now he has entered the eternal niśānta-līlā of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and, being present in aprakaṭa-līlā, he is still bringing abundant welfare to the world. Only those who are endowed with gross intelligence and who are shackled by ritual can imagine performing the worldly smārta-śrāddha of such a mahā-puruṣa. The disappearance of the associates of Bhagavān has the same meaning as their appearance. Because of this, we can remember separation from the mahā-puruṣas on their appearance days and celebrate meeting on their disappearance days.

"Some want to install Śrīla Prabhupāda's śrī vigraha in śrī mandira according to the pāñcarātrika system, and others have different proposals. They are all right according to their own qualifications. But for the servants who have the topmost guru-niṣṭha, the best service is to preach the innermost desire of Śrī

Gurupādapadma. Mahāprabhu's innermost desire, which is also Śrīla Prabhupāda's, is to preach *Vaikuṅṭha nāma* and *Vaikuṅṭha kathā* everywhere in the world.

“The śrī vigraha of Śrīla Prabhupāda is sac-cid-ānanda-maya. His birth, death, etc. are only a play on the worldly stage for our gross vision, and his eternal form remains intact and unchanged throughout. If there is no meeting, the intense and dire suffering of separation will not end. Therefore, after Śrīla Prabhupāda entered *aprakāṣa-līlā*, he instantly displayed *prakāṣa-līlā* to bestow mercy on his dependent disciples and to console the bhaktas who were grief-stricken in separation from him. How did he do this? After a short time, being decorated with various kinds of flowers, garlands, candana etc., as one of the most beloved of Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana, he became eternally present in *samādhi* in *Sevā Kuñja* on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṅḍa in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura to give instructions on serving the Divine Couple under his guidance.”

At this *viraha sabhā*, the devotees discussed many subjects, such as Śrīla Prabhupāda's *aprākṛta* body, the reasons for his entering *aprakāṣa-līlā*, the *ācārya's* *bhakta-vātsalya* (showing a parental kindness to the devotees) and the appearance of the *ācārya* in the Śrī Dhāma.

Thus ends the Second Part of *The Life and Teachings of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī* by Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

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Third Part

General superintendent of the
Gauḍīya Maṭha and mission

After Śrīla Prabhupāda entered *aprakāṣa līlā*, a governing committee was formed to oversee the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and mission. Mahopadeśaka Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī Bhakti-sudhākara Bhaktiśāstrī was appointed the committee secretary and Śrīpāda Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna the general superintendent. For some time all the duties of the maṭha and mission were carried out enthusiastically, and the preaching of *śuddha-bhakti* continued everywhere, as had been the case earlier. However, after some time the chairman of the governing committee, who was also the *ācārya*, abandoned the behaviour and ethics of the *rūpānugas*, the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and engaged unrestrictedly in practices unfavourable to bhakti. This deviation led to chaos throughout the mission. It was a dark period for the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Some maṭha residents returned to their *gṛhastha* life. Many left Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha to make their own *āśramas*, *maṭhas*, and so forth, and began to perform *sādhana-bhajana* there instead. The publishing of bhakti literature, including the daily, weekly, and monthly magazines in different languages, stopped. Gradually preaching activities such as the Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma *parikramā*, *kārtika-vrata*, *śrī vyāsapūjā* and other observances also stopped.

Under these circumstances, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu left Māyāpura for the town of Navadvīpa with some of his Godbrothers, such as Pūjyapāda Śrīla Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Narahari Brahmācārī Sevāvighraha, Śrī Mahānanda Brahmācārī Sevāniketana, Śrī Vīracanda Brahmācārī and Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmācārī Bhaktikamala Prabhu. There, in the neighbourhood of Tegharīpādā, they rented a house and established Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. From that base, they began to preach śuddha-bhakti.

Obtaining the mercy of Śrīla Vamśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

In those days, Bhajanānandī Śrīla Vamśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was performing bhajana in a solitary place on the bank of the sacred Śrī Gaṅgā Devi on the island of Koladvīpa near Navadvīpa. Bābājī Mahārāja was always absorbed in serving Śrī Rādhā-Govinda with bhāva-laden moods. He also performed bhāvamayī sevā of his Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda Deities. From time to time he had loving quarrels (premakalaha) with Their Lordships. It is extremely difficult even for great mahātmās to understand Śrīla Vamśīdāsa's unusual character, which was full of bhāva. Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda was acquainted with this mahātmā through Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Vamśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja used to chase away many people who sought darśana by insulting them with abusive language. From time to time he would keep fish bones and other dirty things near his bhajana-kuṭīra so that the public would think he was fallen. In this way he kept bad association at a distance. Common people were thus deprived of his darśana and pure harikathā, but to the faithful who practiced bhajana and were averse to worldly things, he gave instructions on bhajana with great affection.

Once Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu went to the bhajana kuṭīra of Śrī Bābājī, who seated Vinoda next to himself with great respect. Śrī Bābājī had a special affection towards the disciples of his intimate friend and best of Godbrothers, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu noticed that Bābājī was frying eggplant on a griddle and turning the pieces over with his hand. When he asked Bābājī if a spatula shouldn't be used, Bābājī gave the answer, "Let me see what Nitāi-Gaura are doing?" His renunciation and uncommon activities astonished everyone.

Sometimes, to deceive the public, Bābājī would prepare a hukka (water pipe) with tobacco and say, "Today no fire, today no tobacco." Nonetheless, he used to keep the hukka in front of his Deities of Śrī Gaura-Nitāi and ask Them to make it prasāda. Then he would immediately say, "My Gaura-Nitāi do not smoke tobacco." It is extremely difficult for ordinary people to understand when bhāva is arising in the heart of a transcendental mahājana and what are the characteristics of those spiritual emotions.

One day Kṛtiratna Prabhu brought his intimate friend Śrī Narahari Prabhu to have darśana of Bābājī. They saw that the distribution of tea prasāda was going on. Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu told Śrī Narahari Prabhu, "If we take this prasāda, we will go to

hell. Bābājī Mahārāja is like Nīlakaṇṭha Mahādeva (Lord Śiva); only he can digest this. Tejīyaśāṁ na doṣāya vahneḥ sarvabhujō yathā (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.29). We ordinary people will die if we take this. It is not advisable for common people to imitate mahāpuruṣas who are endowed with transcendental power. Our duty is the constant practice of their instructions, which bring auspiciousness to the jīvas.” Another day Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu saw that Bābājī Mahārāja was performing bhajana with great concentration in his bhajana-kuṭīra. Many bhaktas who were taking his darśana were also offering donations, and one of them started to gather up the coins. Bābājī at once restrained him, saying, tho, paisa tho. Jekhānakāra paisā sekhana tho. Utpāter kauḍī citpāte jāya: ”Don’t touch money. Leave it wherever it is. Corrupt money is the reason one falls down.” All the actions of a mahā-puruṣa are for the welfare of the world and their instructions are extremely important for true practitioners of bhakti. Those who act according to their instructions will gradually progress in bhajana. Their lives will become blissful and they will attain success in sādhana-bhajana.

On one occasion a new tridaṇḍī-sannyāsī arrived to have Bābājī’s darśana. Seeing him offering his praṇāma, Bābājī said, vāṁskī kaṁcī: ”Young bamboo wrapped in cloth does not make a daṇḍa, and one does not become a tridaṇḍī by bearing it. The significance of carrying a tridaṇḍa is to utilise the body, mind and words completely in the sevā of Bhagavān.” The new sannyāsī was unsophisticated and could not extract the essence of the instruction. He became very happy when he heard Bābājī’s words and said: ki kāj sannyāse, mora prema—prayojana, dāsa kari’ vetana mora deha premadhana (Caitanya Bhāgavata): ”I have nothing to do with sannyāsa; my goal is to achieve prema. Please make me your servant and give me the wealth of prema as my salary.”

Another time some bhaktas came to Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja’s bhajana-kuṭīra for his darśana. They offered reverential praṇāmas at his lotus feet, and with great respect started singing, je ānīla premadhana karuṇā pracur, a song composed by Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. At the end of the song they repeated the last lines again and again: pāṣāṇo kuṭība māthā anale paśība, gaurāṅga guṇera nidhi kothā gele pāba. This viraha kīrtana is filled with lamentation, and the purport is: “Where has Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari gone, He who by His causeless mercy freely and indiscriminately distributed here on earth kṛṣṇa-prema, which is difficult even for Brahmā and Śiva to attain? Where are His associates Śrīla Advaita Ācārya, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Rūpa, and Śrī Raghunātha? Without them I cannot stay alive. Where will I go? Where will I obtain the dust from their lotus feet? If I cannot get their darśana, I will smash my head on a stone, or enter into burning fire.”

After listening to this kīrtana, Bābājī Mahārāja told the kīrtaniyas, “You only sang a song. Whose heart is torn apart? You have nothing to do with this. When the author wrote this kīrtana, he was deeply experiencing the pain of separation. Have you endeavoured to attain that? How can the feelings of viraha or vipralambha,

separation, come before union? Has sambandha-jñāna appeared in your heart?” It cannot be said whether or not the bhaktas performing the kīrtana understood the significance of Śrī Bābāji’s words, but the purport was exalted.

Foundation of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti

After establishing Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu began to consider what would be the best way to re-establish the mano’bhīṣṭa sevā (service to the innermost desire) of his most worshipful Śrīla Prabhupāda. He reflected that the mano’bhīṣṭa sevā of Prabhupāda is the publishing of the transcendental magazines and devotional literature which he, Śrīla Prabhupāda, established. Without that the welfare of the world is impossible. Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu thought, “The bhaktas dependent on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lotus feet are now roaming here and there, uncertain of what to do because they have no place in Caitanya Maṭha. Our sole duty is to organise them and again preach Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions far and wide with the same enthusiasm as before.” With this aim in mind, he rented a house at 32/2 Bospāḍā Lane, in Bāgbāzār, Calcutta, and also bought a small press. After a short time, Śrī Triguṇanātha Mukharjī Mahodaya donated his business, Gaurāṅga Printing Works, to him. Encouraged by this, Kṛtiratna Prabhu began printing devotional literature. Unfortunately, when an early publication, Śikṣā-daśamūlam, was composed, the complete manuscript was stolen. Despite the setback, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu did not become discouraged. Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu and his associate Godbrothers established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in that rented house in Bāgbāzār on the auspicious day of Akṣaya Tṛtīyā in the month of Vaiśākha (April) 1940. Amongst the Godbrothers who were present were Śrī Abhayacaraṇa Bhaktivedānta Prabhu (later Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja)¹, Śrī Nṛsimhānanda Brahmācārī and Śrī Sajjansevaka Brahmācārī (Śrīla Guru-pādapadma’s dikṣa disciple, now Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, the present Ācārya and President of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti). Śrī Gurupādapadma often mentioned in his lectures his internal mood when he named the Samiti. It reflected his understanding that when we develop transcendental life, it is absolutely necessary to adopt the pure teachings of the mahājānas. These pure teachings were presented by Śrī Vedavyāsajī, who compiled Vedānta-sūtra for the ultimate welfare of the jīvas. The Vedānta is the distillation of the Upaniṣads, which are in turn the essence of the Vedas. There are more than 1100 Upaniṣads, and their established subject is the worship of sarva-śaktiman, the possessor of all potencies and the shelter of all transcendental qualities, who is the blissful Parabrahman. In other words, the Upaniṣads teach the practice of bhakti. Only through this practice can the jīva become forever free from birth, death and the threefold miseries, and attain the loving service of the supremely blissful pūrṇa-brahman Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All the mantras or clauses really have one meaning, although there are a few which are apparently contradictory. Śrī Vedavyāsa composed 550 sūtras, or codes, to clarify the very deep and difficult philosophical conclusions of

the Upaniṣads. These sūtras are variously known as Brahma-sūtra, Vedānta-sūtra, or Śārīraka-sūtra. Another name is Bhakti-sūtra.

Our Indian ācāryas have written commentaries on Vedānta-sūtra according to their particular bias, in order to strengthen their own doctrines. The omniscient Vedavyāsa understood that this would happen in the future. Accordingly, he wrote his own commentary on these sūtras, and this is known as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He has clearly confirmed this in his Purāṇas.

artho 'yaṁ brahmasūtrāṇāṁ bhāratārthavinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrībhāṣyarūpo 'sau vedārthaparivṛṇhitaḥ
(Garuḍa Purāṇa)

“Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains the meaning of Brahma-sūtra, and is the purpose of Māhabhārata. It is the commentary on gāyatrī and the essence and explanation of all the Vedas.”

Further,

sarvavedāntasāraṁ hi śrīmadbhāgavatamiṣyate
tadrasāmṛtatṛptasya nānyatra syādratiḥ kvacit
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.13.15)

“The essence of all the Vedas is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Whoever has tasted the nectar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is fully satiated and cannot be attracted to any other Purāṇa or śāstra.”

In Vedānta-sūtra, Śrī Vedavyāsa has clearly established bhagavad-bhakti, loving service to the Lord, through sūtras such as ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt, api samrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyāṁ, anāvṛtti śabdāt anāvṛtti śabdāt and others. Additionally, in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the commentary on Vedānta, bhakti is established through verses such as: sa vai puṁsaṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktiradhokṣaje (1.2.6), mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānāṁ amṛtatvāya kalpate (10.82.44), yasyāṁ vai śrūyamāṇāyāṁ kṛṣṇo paramapuruṣe, bhaktir utpadyate (1.7.7), bhaktyāhamekayā grāhya (11.14.21), and others. Vedāntavid Cūḍāmaṇi Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, the crown jewel of those learned in Vedānta, and Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu have used scriptural evidence and irrefutable arguments to prove that the subject and truth established in Vedānta-sūtra is bhakti and only bhakti.

Modern learned persons have tried to prove that Vedānta establishes jñāna and mukti, but this attempt is based on pure imagination. Actually, the words jñāna and mukti are not mentioned anywhere in the 550 sūtras of Vedānta-sūtra. Ācārya Śaṅkaraintroduced the impersonalist understanding of Vedānta using the terms jñāna and mukti, but he is actually an expansion of Śivajī, who is the supreme Vaiṣṇava, as stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.13.16): vaiṣṇavāṇāṁ yathā śambho. However, for a special reason Śaṅkara Ācārya preached kevalādvaita-vāda or māyāvāda, a false doctrine which is opposed to śāstra.

This society was named ‘Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti’ in order that it should everywhere in the world strongly preach this deep secret regarding bhakti and for the welfare of all the jīvas.

Complete dependence on Bhagavān

Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu was a completely akiñcana and niṣkiñcana Vaiṣṇava, who had fully renounced all his material possessions. Throughout his life he only acted for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, and never collected one paisā for his own happiness or self-interest; he had full faith in Śrī Gurudeva and his worshipful Lord. When he left Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and the turmoil in Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, he was empty-handed. Many Godbrothers joined him in the new maṭha of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti at Vospāḍā Lane, but they were also completely penniless. However, they were devoted to sādhana-bhajana, and somehow maintained their life by the mercy of Bhagavān. One Ekādaśī morning, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu was chanting śrī harināma, his grave face revealing his absorption in a deep mood. Just then, a brahmacārī brought the news that Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mukharjī had come to meet with him. Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mukharjī was his Godbrother, and Śrīla Gurudeva instructed that their guest should be seated respectfully. It was natural for Kṛtiratna Prabhu to treat guests respectfully, but today he did not even have a paisā for the service of his Godbrother, and this disturbed him. Just then, by divine desire, he noticed a chirping sparrow flying here and there, from the house to its nest and back again. Suddenly, the bird dropped from its beak a small packet, which hit the ground with a clanking sound close to Kṛtiratna Prabhu. Out of curiosity he opened the small packet and found 6 1/2 anna in it. He became very happy. With this money he was able to buy fruits and sweets, offer them to Bhagavān, and serve his Godbrother. Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mukharjī was very satisfied by the affectionate behaviour of his Godbrother, and soon a discussion on prema-mayī hari-kathā started between them. Thereafter, the postman brought Śrī Vinodbhīhārī Prabhu a money order for 100 rupees from his Godbrother and good friend Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārāja of Kānpura. Kṛtiratna Prabhu's eyes overflowed with tears as he recognized the causeless mercy of Śrī Gurudeva and Bhagavān. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in Gītā that He will Himself carry the burden of the maintenance and protection of that ekaniṣṭha bhakta who exclusively meditates upon His transcendental svarūpa, and who worships Him with bhakti-bhāva.

ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate

teṣāṃ nityābhīyuktānāṃ yoga kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham

(Bhavad-gītā 9.22)

Why, then, will Śrī Bhagavān not fulfil the desire of a bhakta who is completely dependent on Him, loving towards guests, protective of dependents and endowed with ideal guru-niṣṭhā? Can Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of compassion, not make His name 'Bhakta-vatsala' (loving towards His devotees) meaningful by sending money through a small bird?

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva

Giri Mahārāja

It will not be out of place to introduce Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārāja at this point. He was one of the foremost of Śrīla Prabhupāda's dīkṣa and sannyaśī disciples.

A brahmacārī from boyhood, he was soft-spoken, simple, honest, and endowed with other qualities befitting a Vaiṣṇava. Notably, he was an influential speaker in Hindi, Bengali and English. He impressed everyone, common men as well as educated and respectable people, including Governors and Chief Ministers from many states. One of his main strengths was his ability to create śraddhā towards śrī harināma and bhakti in the community at large by cultivating friendly relationships. He preached bhakti in Mumbai, Poona, Kolhāpura, Kānpura and other prominent cities of India, as well as outside India in Rangoon, Burma, and other places. In accordance with Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire, during a special session of the Navadvīpa Dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārāja was praised for his outstanding Vaiṣṇava qualities.

Accepting sannyāsa

After the establishment of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, Vedāntika Paṇḍita Mahopadeśaka Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu started to travel throughout Bengal and prominent cities of India to preach śuddha-bhakti and śrī nāma. Śrī Śyāmāmananda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Medinīpura (Bengal) was established on Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, 1940. Leading sannyāsīs present included Śrīpāda Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivicāra Yāyāvāra Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Aprākṛta Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī, Śrīpāda Vinodabihārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu, Mahopadeśaka Śrīpāda Hayagrīva Brahmacārī, Śrīpāda Svādhikārānanda Brahmacārī, Śrīpāda Bhūtabhṛta Brahmacārī, and Śrīpāda Rādhāramaṇa Brahmacārī (later, Śrīmad Bhaktikumuda Santa Mahārāja). Many brahmacārīs and hundreds of maṭha residents participated in the celebration, and ten thousand pious people attended the festival. At this gathering a plan was presented to protect the future preaching of bhakti in Śrīla Prabhupāda's lineage. In addition, it was announced that there would be a Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā on foot during the observance of the kārtika vow the following year. After this Janmāṣṭamī festival, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu started to preach in Uttar Pradesh and in areas of Eastern Bengal.

At this time, while Śrī Kṛtiratna was sleeping during the last part of the night, he dreamed that Śrīla Prabhupāda laid his hand on his right shoulder, and spoke to him in a grave voice, saying, "Until now you have not taken sannyāsa. Today I am giving you sannyāsa." In his dream, the complete sannyāsa ceremony took place, and when the ceremony was over Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed Śrīmad Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja to call out "Śrī Keśava Mahārāja ki jaya!" The jaya dhvani was so loud that Kṛtiratna Prabhu woke up. He told his senior Godbrothers about the dream and they were elated to find 'Keśava' among the 108 sannyāsa names.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda had been personally present, he had on several occasions expressed his desire to give sannyāsa to his intimate servant, Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmacārī. He used to say, "Vinoda is sannyāsī by body, mind and words. It only remains to change his outer dress." On one occasion, Śrīla Prabhupāda had planned to give Śrī Vinodabihārī sannyāsa. Dor-kaupin (loin-cloth), daṇḍa and all the requirements had been prepared and all the arrangements were completed, but

Śrīpāda Kuñjabihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, who was the secretary of the Gauḍīya Mission, made a humble submission at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda: “If Śrī Vinodabihārī is given sannyāsa now, it will jeopardize the protection of the maṭha and mission. Please, postpone his sannyāsa.” Because of that intervention, Śrī Vinodabihārī was not given sannyāsa. On another occasion, the arrangement for Vinodabihārī’s sannyāsa was made again in the Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha. This time it was due to the special petition of Bhāgavatratna Prabhu that Śrīla Prabhupāda did not award sannyāsa. On a third occasion, Śrīla Prabhupāda ordered Vinodabihārī in a dream to take sannyāsa, saying, “Vinoda, because you have not taken sannyāsa until now, my entire preaching work is being ruined.” Finally, on the fourth occasion, hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda instructing him to take sannyāsa, and actually seeing himself accepting sannyāsa from Śrīla Prabhupāda in the dream, Kṛtiratna Prabhu took this matter very seriously and vowed to accept sannyāsa on the upcoming holy day of Bhādra Purṇimā in Kaṭvā, where Śrīman Mahāprabhu accepted sannyāsa.

Accordingly, on Pūrṇimā Śrī Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī accepted sannyāsa in Kaṭvā, by the pāñcarātric method of Samskāra-dīpikā, from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda’s dear disciple, Śrīla Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī, the transcendental writer, poet and philosopher. His sannyāsa name was announced to be Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Pūjyapāda Śrīmad Bhaktibhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja performed the priestly duties of the ceremony and instructed the brahmācārī how to put on kaupīn and the outer cloth. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja recited the sannyāsa-mantra. Thus the sannyāsa dress and sannyāsa name given by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the dream became a complete reality. Many of Śrīla Gurudeva’s sannyāsī and brahmācārī God-brothers were present for the ceremony on that day. The entire responsibility for the expenses of the great festival was borne by Śrī Vinayabhūṣaṇa Banarjī Bhaktiniketana Mahodaya, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. In the evening everyone returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Preaching in various places of Bengal

When the personification of mercy, Śācīnandana Śrī Gaurahari, sent Śrīla Rūpa and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīs to Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana, He instructed them to fulfil His innermost desires by composing bhakti literature; by explaining the regulations for vaiṣṇava procedures and conduct (vaiṣṇava-smṛti); by restoring lost tīrthas (pastime places) of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja; and by establishing service of Deities of the Lord. Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana and the other Gosvāmīs completely fulfilled Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s inner desire. They composed Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī, ±aḍ-sandarbhas and other authentic literature on bhakti. They also composed vaiṣṇava smṛtis like Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā, Samskāra-dīpikā and other literature regarding vaiṣṇava sāttvata sadācār (proper conduct among Vaiṣṇavas). They re-established all the places of Kṛṣṇa līlā in the twelve primary forests, secondary forests and other forests.

They established temples for Śrī Madanmohana, Śrī Govindajī, Śrī Gopināthajī, Śrī Rādhā-Ramañajī, Śrī Gopeśvara Mahādeva, Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara and Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda in Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana and Kāmeśvar Mahādeva in Kāmyavan and for other Deities as well. These are the ways in which the Gosvāmīs fulfilled Śrīman Mahāprabhu's innermost desire.

In the same way, Jagadguru Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda fulfilled the innermost desire of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He established a printing-press (bṛhat-mṛdaṅga) for publishing and distributing bhakti literature to spread the message of Śrī Gaurasundara. He revived Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and restored lost places of pilgrimage. He also protected and encouraged proper conduct in bhakti. Thus by these and other projects he fulfilled his Gurudeva's innermost desire.

After him, Tridaṇḍī Yati Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda's dear and intimate disciple, fulfilled Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desires. After Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure from this world, Śrī Navadvīpa dhāma parikramā, the publishing of bhakti literature, the accepting of tridaṇḍa sannyāsa and other activities in this line almost disappeared. But Ācārya Kesari Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja again propagated bhakti throughout the world with his varied expertise and strong preaching.

With irrepressible enthusiasm, the new sannyāsī, Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, devoted himself to the sevā of Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire—to preach Śrī Gaurasundara's message of śuddha-bhakti everywhere. He began by arranging big religious assemblies with discourses, lectures, the reading of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and so forth in Candan Nagar, Vaidyavāṭī, Sevaḍāphulī, Śrī Rāmapur and other nearby towns on the holy banks of the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī. The chairmen of the municipality, well-known lawyers, judges, and respected members of the community in those towns started to cooperate with great respect. After hearing Śrīla Gurudeva's speeches and lectures attentively and with great veneration, these people became so impressed they asked him to establish Śrī Gauḍīya maṭhas in their towns.

In Chuñchuṛā, a town very close to Calcutta, faithful local gentlemen strongly desired that Śrīla Gurudeva should establish a Gauḍīya maṭha in a temple named 'Śrīvāsa-Mahāprabhu Vāṭī', which they were willing to donate without terms and conditions. The ancient Deities of that temple had once been worshiped by Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Gurudeva could not turn down this offer. In April 1943 he accepted this temple and established Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. Even today the worship of those Deities is continuing according to vaiṣṇava tradition. The main office of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, as well as the Gauḍīya Printing Press were relocated to this maṭha from Vospāḍā Lane. Śrīla Gurupādapadma based himself at the Chuñchuṛā maṭha along with some of his Godbrothers and brahmacāris and from there began travelling extensively to preach śuddha-bhakti.

Re-establishment of Śrīdhāma

Navadvīpa parikramā

Due to the expansive preaching of bhakti, an increasing number of faithful and virtuous people were now becoming attracted to Ācārya Kesari. Many gr̥hastha disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda had been disturbed by the bad behaviour and impious activities of the managers of the Gauḍīya Maṭha at that time and had distanced themselves from the mission. Gradually, many of them became drawn by Ācārya Kesari Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's sweet manner and his strong preaching of śuddha-bhakti. They started to perform bhajana again with new enthusiasm. Aiming at this resurgence of interest, in 1942 Śrīla Gurudeva again started the weeklong Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and festival to commemorate the appearance of Śrī Gaurasundara. The enthusiasm of the members of the Samiti was amplified by the participation of many pious people, renunciates, brahmacārīs, sannyāsīs and gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇavas.

The main purpose of festivals such as Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā is to give an opportunity for the inhabitants of the world to obtain śuddha sat-saṅga, the pure association of saintly people. Through this sat-saṅga one has a golden opportunity to nourish various aspects of bhakti. These include hearing śuddha hari-kathā (pure topics pertaining to the Lord); abstaining from alcohol, meat and other prohibited food; having darśana of the Deity of Śrī Bhagavān and of His pastime places; and hearing and chanting the glories of those places in good association. In addition one is afforded an extraordinary opportunity to serve Śrī Harī, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. In Dhāma-māhātmya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu fulfill all the cherished desires and give permanent engagement in premamayī sevā, the loving service of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala, to those who complete the 16-kosa Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and take darśana of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura under the guidance of Vaiṣṇavas.

Manifestation of ācārya-līlā

A year later, in March 1943, the weeklong Śrīdhāma parikramā and Śrī Śrī Gaura Janmotsava culminated in huge celebrations at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa. The number of sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs and gr̥hastha-bhaktas had increased considerably since the previous year. The Śrīdhāma parikramā ended with wonderful enthusiasm as the palanquin of Śrīman Mahāprabhu returned with a splendid saṅkīrtana festival. This time, on repeated requests from his Godbrothers, Ācārya Kesari manifested his ācārya-līlā on the day of Śrī Gaura Janmotsava by giving harināma initiation to Śrī Rādhānātha Kumāra, Śrīmatī Mānadā Sundarī (of Variśāla), and Śrīmatī Hemānginī Devī. Later, after Śrī Rādhānātha Kumāra accepted sannyāsa, he was to become known as Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja.

After Śrīdhāma parikramā Śrīla Gurudeva travelled and preached śuddha-bhakti. He observed dāmodara-vrata (vows undertaken in the month of Kārtika) in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuñchuṛā. Then he spent some time at the Śrī

Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. This was followed by a tour of East Bengal, where he preached along with Dr. Kṛṣṇapada Vrajavāsī, Sajjanasevaka Brahmācārī and other maṭha residents.

Śrī Śrī Jagannāthadeva's Snāna-yātrā and Ratha-yātrā in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuñchuṛā

Tuesday, June 6th, 1944: The Snāna-yātra of Śrī Śrī Jagannātha-deva took place in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā. Śrīla Gurudeva was personally present at this great festival. In an exultant atmosphere resounding with saṅkīrtana and the blowing of conchshells, Śrī Śrī Jagannāthadeva's abhiṣeka (sacred bath) was performed with 108 earthen pots full of scented water sanctified by mantras. At the assembly in the evening, Śrīla Gurudeva explained the underlying meaning and glories of the snāna-yātrā, as explained in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.

The ten-day festival of Śrī Śrī Jagannāthadeva's Ratha-yātrā began on June 20, 1944. Hundreds of gṛhastha-bhaktas from Khulnā, Medinīpura, Vaimchī, Velaghariyā and many other places participated. On the first day of the festival, which was the disappearance day of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gurudeva gave a profound address on the philosophy of viraha (separation) as understood in vaiṣṇava literature. The essence of that lecture is as follows.

“The meaning of the word viraha is ‘vi’ special and ‘raha’ meeting, in other words ‘a special meeting.’ Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari is the personification of vipralambhā-rasa (the mellow of separation). The pastimes which Śrī Gaurahari exhibited when He lived in the Gambhīrā in Śrī Jagannātha Purī are a brilliant example of viraha (also known as vipralambha). In the loneliness of the night, Mahāprabhu tasted with His intimate associates, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānandajī, the different kinds of bhāvas in separation from Kṛṣṇa. In His internal state of consciousness, He was deeply absorbed in the mood of viraha which Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the embodiment of mahābhāva, felt after Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā. Absorbed in this mood, Śrī Gaurahari would lament bitterly and lose external consciousness. Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāyā Rāmānanda would try to console Him, singing verses favourable to His moods. At times they would sing verses from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and at other times from Gīta-Govinda or Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta, or they would sing the verses of Vidyāpati, Caṇḍīdāsa and others. Sometime Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would faint, absorbed in Rādhā bhāva, remembering in His heart a particular pastime of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. This deep absorption of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in remembrance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is called vipralambha or viraha.

“On the viraha-tithi (disappearance day) of the guru or previous ācāryas, the sat-śiṣya (true disciple) meditates upon the transcendental qualities of these mahā-puruṣas and vows to employ their instructions in his life as far as possible. If there is no such contemplation, for example, if one is only busy with arranging for different kinds of nice mahā-prasāda, then it is not a pure viraha-mahotsava.

“After the victory of Laṅkā, Śrī Rāmacandrajī ruled Ayodhyā for a long time. For a special reason, He renounced his consort, Sītājī, 11,000 years after ascending the

throne. Vālmīki Ṛṣi found Sītājī grieving in the forest and gave her shelter in his āśrama. There Sītā and Rāma's twin sons Lava and Kuśa were born and grew to boyhood. The boys were expert singers and sang Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa in the assembly of Śrī Rāma. Through Vālmīki, Śrī Rāma then called Sītājī to the royal assembly in order that she should prove her purity. At that time Sītājī lamented and called her mother, Pṛthvī devī, 'O Pṛthvī devī! If I am pure, and if no thought of any man other than Śrī Rāma has ever touched my inner heart, then split open and take me on your lap.' Hearing this prayer, the earth split open and Pṛthvī devī appeared. She took Sītājī on her lap and again entered Pātāla. Rāma Himself, His brothers, His mothers, and all the people in the assembly started to cry.

"At some theatre the play, 'Sītā Entering Pātāla' was performed. The next day, the play changed venues and opened at another location, and there was a bigger crowd on the second day than on the first day. If there is only a feeling of sorrow in separation, why did such a large number of people gather? To experience pain? Clearly there is also a feeling of transcendental happiness in the feeling of separation. Śrī Bhagavān and His associates are sac-cid-ānanda (full of eternity, knowledge and bliss) so it is not possible that Their birth, death and apparent suffering are worldly. Therefore, even though externally there may be a feeling of sorrow in separation from the ārādhyadeva (worshipful Deity) or the bhaktas of Bhagavān, simultaneously there is an internal feeling of divine and inexpressible happiness. This is the hidden secret of viraha. Therefore, in vaiṣṇava literature it is known as viraha-utsava. Utsava means a festival or celebration that gives happiness."

Listening to this deep exposition, the entire audience was captivated and became speechless. Śrīla Gurudeva's lecture was praised everywhere, and śuddha-bhaktas wove it into a garland to wear around their necks.

On Thursday, June 21st, according to the tradition in Śrī Jagannātha Purī, the Guṇḍicā Mandira mārjana-lilā was observed. Under Śrīla Gurudeva's guidance, everyone went to Śrī Śyāmasundara Mandira some distance away with glorious saṅkīrtana, carrying brooms and earthen water-pots. The temple was swept and washed clean for Śrī Jagannāthadeva. Śrī Gurudeva then told everyone the story of Guṇḍicā mārjana from Caitanya-caritāmṛta.

The inner meaning of Śrī Guṇḍicā mārjana is that it represents the sādḥaka removing different types of anarthas (unwanted things), aparādhas and worldly attachments from his heart, to establish his ārādhyadeva Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda there. If the sādḥaka does not make any effort to throw out the dirt which is opposed to bhakti, pure love for Bhagavān will not appear in such an impure heart, even if he performs śravaṇa and kīrtana for a long time. Such śravaṇa-kīrtana is sometimes ābhāsa (a mere semblance) and is always based on aparādha. Therefore, sādḥakas should try very carefully to remove these anarthas. That is the purport of the cleaning of the Guṇḍicā Mandira.

The third day of the festival was the day of Ratha-yātrā. Under Śrī Gurudeva's guidance, Śrī Jagannāthadeva was seated splendidly on His cart, and taken to Śrī Śyāmasundara Mandira. Śrī Śyāmasundara Mandira represented Sundarācala, and Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha represented Nīlācala. After this, the devotees performed nagara-saṅkīrtana through the different streets of Chuñchuṛā. From that day until the return yātrā, Jagannāthajī resided in Śrī Śyāmasundara Mandira. During this time, Śrī Gurudeva explained the stories of Ratha-yātrā from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta every evening. On the day of Herā Pañcamī, Śrī Guru Mahārāja also revealed the secrets of the deeply hidden philosophical truths of this festival.

On Friday, July 1st, Śrī Jagannāthajī returned from Sundarācala (Śrī Śyāmasundara Mandira) to Nīlācala (Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha). Once again, the procession was accompanied by nagar-saṅkīrtana. On the day of the return yātrā, Śrī Gurudeva explained from the point of view of the rūpānuga Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, sei ta parāna nātha pāinū, jāhā lāgi madane-dahane jhurī genu (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 13.113) and kṛṣṇa lana vraje jai: "We are returning to Vṛndāvana with our prāṇanātha, the Lord of our life, Śrī Kṛṣṇa." This is the hidden secret of Ratha-yātrā. On the evening of this last day there was a grand festival and wonderful mahā-prasāda was distributed to all the local people.

Preaching and Vraja-maṇḍala
parikrama in 1944

Because of Śrī Gurudeva's itinerant preaching, Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā, and other programs, the number of maṭha residents gradually increased.

Paramārādhyā Śrī Gurudeva now entrusted individual maṭha residents with the responsibility of travelling and preaching. These included Śrīmad Bhaktikuśala Nārasimha Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmācārī Bhaktikamala, Śrī Dīnārtihara Brahmācārī, Śrī Rādhānātha Dāsa and Śrī Viṣṇupāda. These devotees began to preach in Bhāgalpura and various parts of Bihār. Śrī Gurudeva himself went with Mukunda Gopāla Vrajavāsī Bhaktimadhu, Śrī Sajjansevaka Brahmācārī and Bhakta Anil, and preached śuddha-bhakti in Jayanagar, Majilapur, Viṣṇupur, Kṛṣṇacandra-pura, Ambulinga, Cakratīrtha and other places in West Bengal. Then they returned to Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa.

In 1944, Śrī Gurudeva organized the 84-kosa Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā during śrī niyama-sevā kārtika-vrata (the vows and regulations observed during the month of Kārtika). Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktikuśala Nārasimha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktiprakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja, Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmācārī Bhaktikamala and other leading sannyāsīs and brahmācārīs participated in this parikramā. Many palanquins were provided for the convenience of the pilgrims while they travelled through the forest. There was daily worship of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as well as offerings of bhoga, kīrtana and the narration of the glories of the places of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The parikramā was completed in about 40 days and everyone returned to their respective places fully satisfied.

84-kosa Kṣetra-maṇḍala parikramā

After the Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā in 1945, Śrīla Gurudeva travelled with Śrī Dīnadayāla Brahmācārī, Sajjana-sevaka Brahmācārī, Anaṅga Mohan Brahmācārī and others to different places in Orissa to preach śuddha-bhakti and to plan a Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala parikramā. They visited Bāleśvara, Śrī Jagannātha Purī, Kaṭaka, Bāsuliśāhī, Ālālanātha, Vorkudī on the banks of the Cilkā Hrada, Kālūpādā Ghāṭa, Raṅpurgaṛha State, Sonāvalī (a site of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's foot-prints), Nayaragaṛha, Khaṇḍapādā, Kaṅṭilā (Śrī Nīlamādhava), Narsimhapur, Khudrā Road and various other places. Śrīman Mahāprabhu passed through all these places when He went to South India. Ekaniṣṭha (single-minded) bhaktas of Śrīman Mahāprabhu have the heart-felt desire to travel to all those places which He and His associates visited, while overwhelmed in bhāva. Śrīla Gurudeva wanted to do parikramā of those places along with śuddha-bhaktas to awaken the memory of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. After preparing the outline for the future parikramā, he returned to Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā.

On October 16th, 1945, when all the arrangements had been completed, Śrīla Gurudeva started the journey from Howraha Station to Śrī Purī Dhāma in a reserved railway coach, accompanied by pilgrims, sannyāsīs and brahmācārīs from all over India. The party reached Purī the next day, and rested there. Then, under the shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's vijaya-vigraha (the small Deity which is taken out on parikramā), they had darśana of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance place and Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's bhajana-kuṭīra (place of bhajana). They also visited Siddha Bakula, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's place of bhajana; Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's samādhi; Puruṣottama Maṭha; Ṭoṭā Gopinātha; and Śrī Jagannātha Mandira. At Śrī Jagannātha Mandira, they had darśana of Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā. In the evening Śrīla Guru Mahārāja narrated the glories of the dhāma. He said that Puruṣottama Kṣetra is not limited to the city of Jagannātha Purī, which is 5 kosas. Rather, its circumference is 10 yojanas (approximately 80 miles) and the kṣetra, which is 84 kosas in area, has the shape of a conchshell. If anyone within these 84 kosas leaves his body thinking of Jagannātha, he will not take birth in the womb of a mother again, but will attain Vaikuṅṭha. One Satya-yuga, Indradyumna Mahārāja came here with his wife and subjects. He constructed a huge mandira here and, pleasing Śrī Nīlamādhava by his worship, he installed Śrī Nīlamādhava in the form of the four vigrahas, Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadrā and Sudarśana. The arrangements made by him for offering bhoga are followed even to this day. After Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu took sannyāsa, He resided in the Gambhīrā in Jagannātha Purī at his mother's request. There He fulfilled His three inner desires with His intimate associates. Those who are fortunate get the opportunity to travel to the places marked by Śrī Gaurasundara's lotus feet, and have their darśana.

The next day the parikramā party had darśana of Caṭaka Parvata, Ṭoṭā Gopinātha, Yameśvara Ṭoṭā, Lokanātha Śiva, Purī Gosvāmī's well, Mārkaṇḍeya Sarovara,

Narendra Sarovara, Indradyumna Sarovara, Guṇḍicā Mandira, Cakratīrtha and Svargadvāra.

On the third day, the parikramā party arrived at the celebrated abode of Alālanātha, after having darśana of Govardhana Maṭha, which had been established by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya; Sātalahariyā Maṭha established by Śrī Rāmānuja; Jagannātha Vāṭikā; and other various famous places. The Deity at Alālanātha is named Śrī Alvaranātha because He is served by the alvārs of the Śrī sampradāya. Śrīman Mahāprabhu would go there when He was feeling separation from Śrī Jagannātha during anavasara, the time after snāna-yātrā when one is not able to have Jagannātha's darśana. When Mahāprabhu offered sāṣṭāṅga praṇāma (prostrate obeisances) in the temple in this state of separation, the stones under Him melted and an impression of His entire body was left in them. The impression of His body is present on one stone to this day. The parikramā pilgrims had darśana of Śrī Alālanātha, and worshipped that śila with great faith. In a village nearby are the houses and bhajana-kuṭīras of Mahāprabhu's associates, Śrī Rāyarāmānanda, Śikhimāhiti and his sister Mādhavī. These places are worth visiting even today.

On the banks of Cilkā Hrada there is a village where the footprints of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu can be seen. This village has a famous history. It had been arranged that Puruṣottama Jānā, the father of Mahārāja Pratāparudra, would marry the daughter of the king of Vidyānagara here. However, when the king of Vidyānagara came to know that Jānā swept the street in front of Śrī Jagannātha's cart during Ratha-yātrā, he postponed the wedding. Puruṣottama Jānā attacked Vidyānagara with his army, but returned badly defeated. Very upset by the turn of events, he prayed to Śrī Jagannātha and Śrī Baladevajī for victory in the next war. He received an auspicious indication from Śrī Jagannāthajī that his prayer was accepted and therefore proceeded with great enthusiasm with his entire army.

To help Their dear servant, Śrī Jagannātha and Śrī Baladeva went ahead dressed as young soldiers riding on two horses, one red and one white. On the way, They met an old woman carrying a pot of yogurt on her head. Being thirsty, They asked the woman to give Them a drink of the yogurt. When the old woman asked for money, one of the horsemen gave His golden ring to her and said, "We are the king's soldiers. He is coming behind with the army. Show him this ring and he will give you money." Saying this, They again went ahead. A short while later, when the young king came with his army, the old lady showed him the ring and asked for money for her yogurt. On that ring, which the king had himself offered to Śrī Jagannātha, were marked the words 'Śrī Jagannātha.' The king's eyes overflowed with tears, and he became convinced that his ārādhya-deva, Jagannātha and Baladeva, were in the forefront of his army to help him in the war, which, indeed, he won. The king gave the old lady ownership of a whole village, and even today her descendants are enjoying that zamīndārī.

From there the parikramā party reached Vorākudī on one side of Cilkā Hrada. The natural beauty of this place is very lovely. Then the pilgrims crossed Cilkā Hrada on

many boats and reached Raṇapuragaṛha. All of these places of pilgrimage in Orissa were surrounded by deep, thick jungle, where tigers and other dangerous animals were a very real threat. The pilgrims were under protection, but still they went by foot with great care. In spite of the dangers, worship of the Deity, offerings of bhoga, discourses and lectures went on daily as a matter of course.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa appeared in a village near Cilkā Hrada. One evening before the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīla Gurudeva explained about Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's transcendental qualities. This is the story he told the audience. From his boyhood, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was a brilliant person, who was endowed with transcendental intelligence. After becoming expert in Sanskrit he went for special education to Uḍḍipī, Śrīla Madhvācārya's place in South India. There he made a special study of Aṇubhāṣya, Madhvācārya's commentary on Vedānta-sūtra, as well as other well-known literature of the Madhva sampradāya. He also studied Śrī Rāmānuja's Śrī Bhāṣya. Years later, in Purī, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa met Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Gosvāmī, a follower of Nayanānanda in the paramparā of Śrī Śyāmānanda. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was so impressed by Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Gosvāmī's teachings that he took dīkṣā initiation from him. He then travelled to Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana, where he met the learned and topmost rasika Vaiṣṇava Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who taught him how to enter into the philosophical conclusions of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa spent the remaining part of his life dedicated to the service of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, studying the literature of the Six Gosvāmīs and other famous vaiṣṇava treatises. Seeing his qualification, Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura sent him to the philosophical assembly of Galtā Gaddī in Jaipura. There he defeated Rāmānandīs and other scholars who were opposed to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and he established the Gauḍīya siddhānta. It was at this time that he wrote Govinda-bhāṣya, his commentary on Brahma-sūtra. The Gauḍīya sampradāya became established everywhere on the strength of this important literary classic.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu is a solid pillar of the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya and a prominent ācārya amongst the Rūpānuga Vaiṣṇava ācāryas. Nowadays some modern, so-called Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas do not accept him as a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Ācārya. That is their great misfortune. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura calls such ignorant people the spies of Kali.

Śrīla Gurudeva also explained that the sūtra 'ekam evādvitīyam': "The absolute truth is one without a second" (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1) does not refer to a nirākāra nirviśeṣa Brahman (Brahman without any form and qualities). The word 'advitīya' here means the perception amongst many of one unparalleled, supreme tattva. We do not perceive one or the number 1 in the word 'ekam,' because the word 'one' has three letters, and when we write the number 1, it is composed of lakhs of dots. The 'one' mentioned in this sūtra refers to an all-inclusive one Brahman which is second to none. In other words, it can be called 'unity in diversity.' Bhagavān is seen as one

in His feature of sarva-śaktimān², together with the special features of His śrī nāma³, guṇa⁴, līlā⁵ and parikāra⁶.

To illustrate this 'unity in diversity,' we can give two examples. The first is that of the human body, which is made up of a conglomeration of limbs and parts. If even one part is omitted, the body cannot be accepted as complete. In this body the eyes, nose, ears, tongue and other parts have special features. For example, the left and right eyes are not the same, and they act differently. An eye also has many different parts, such as the eyelids and eyelashes. The inner eye, too, has a pupil and many component parts. In the same way, the other parts of the body have individual distinctive features, and all of these are seen as a body when they are combined and working together.

The second example is that of a mile post. One mile is made up of eight furlongs, and roads are marked with seven posts indicating distances from one to seven furlongs, after which a milestone appears. Then there are seven more posts at one-furlong intervals, and then a second milestone is seen. One can think that a mile comes after six or seven furlongs, but really it is eight furlongs which make one mile. The important point is that the idea of 'eight furlongs' does not exist separately; it is relevant only in that it is equal to one mile. Similarly, līlā-puruṣottama Śrī Bhagavān is One when He is together with all the variety of His transcendental and eternal pastimes (cit-līlās). In this variegated world of transcendental līlās there is no other well-wisher and friend like Him. The sūtra 'ekam evādvitīyam' is used to explain this siddhānta.

From Raṇapuragaḍha, the parikramā party reached the Nayāgaḍha district, where the pilgrims were given a royal welcome. Śrī Govardhana-pūjā and Annakūṭa festival were performed there. The king of that area, Rājā Bahādura, participated in the Annakūṭa festival along with his family. Then the parikramā party went to Kaṅṭilā (Nīlamādhava) via Khaṇḍapārā. There, on top of the mountain, they had darśana of Nīlamādhava. The Purāṇas tell the following story about Nīlamādhava. Long ago, in Satya-yuga, Indradyumna, the king of Avantī, heard from some pilgrims about the glories of Śrī Nīlamādhava, the Deity who presided in the area adjacent to Nīlasamudra. He was quite impressed and sent his special envoys to find the exact location of Śrī Nīlamādhava.

One of the envoys was Vidyāpati, the son of his priest. In the course of the young brāhmaṇa's search, he reached the banks of Mahāsāgar, which was close to Śrī Nīlamādhava's mountain. One evening he came upon the house of the chief of the village, a man named Viśvāvasu, who was of the śabara caste. After some investigation, Vidyāpati guessed that this Viśvāsu was Nīlamādhava's pujārī. Vidyāpati then married Viśvāsu's young daughter. Some time later, to confirm his suspicions about Nīlamādhava, he asked his wife where her father went, and whose pūjā he was performing. He appealed to her to arrange that he might have darśana of those Deities.

Viśvāvasu consented to his daughter's wishes, and fulfilled the desire of Vidyāpati. He covered Vidyāpati's eyes with a strip of black cloth and did not remove it until they had reached Śrī Nīlamādhava's temple on top of the mountains. While there, Viśvāvasu went to the temple garden to pick flowers. At that time Vidyāpati then saw an astonishing incident. A drowsy crow was sitting on a branch of a tree, which hung over a lake in front of the temple. As Vidyāpati watched, the crow fell into the water and drowned. The crow's soul immediately took a four-armed, spiritual form, mounted a transcendental airplane and departed for Vaikuṅṭha. When Vidyāpati saw this scene, he also wanted to jump in the lake, but a grave voice from the sky announced, "You have many things to do. Now you must wait." Later, Vidyāpati had darśana of the incomparable Nīlamādhava and then went home with Viśvāvasu. Thereafter, Vidyāpati returned to his king in the town of Avanti with the news of Śrī Nīlamādhava.

Upon hearing that the Lord had been located, Mahārāja Indradyumna departed with his family members and his entire army to obtain the darśana of Śrī Nīlamādhava. But when he arrived at the spot, he only saw a sand mountain; Nīla-mādhava's whereabouts were not to be known. Feeling utterly helpless, the king went to the shore of the ocean to perform worship in order to attain Nīlamādhava's darśana. There Śrī Nīlamādhava bestowed His darśana and said, "O King, at this time I will not take this form of Nīlamādhava. Instead, I will appear as Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarśana, to accept your service and give darśana to the people of the world."

From Kañṭilā, Śrīla Gurudeva and the parikramā party returned to Purī Dhāma, the abode of Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarśana. Along the way, they had darśana of Kaṭaka, Bhuvaneśvara and other sacred places.

Bhuvaneśvara, also known as Ekāmra Kānana, is one of the principal places of pilgrimage in India, and is situated within the maṇḍala of Śrī Kṣetra. In ancient times, Pārvatījī heard all about the glories of Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra, and performed rigid tapasyā in Ekāmra Kānana to obtain darśana of Bhagavān. Because of her devotion, Bhagavān Śrī Hari appeared before her in the form of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. Seeing Pārvatī's austere worship, one teardrop (bindu) fell from His eyes, and this formed a huge lake (sarovara), which became known as Bindu Sarovara. It is said that the word Hindu, signifying the Āryan inhabitants of the area between the Himālayas in the north and Bindu Sarovara in the south, comes from the first syllable 'hi' in Himālaya and the last syllable 'ndu' of bindu.

In Bhuvaneśvara is a huge Śiva liṅga, which is famous as Bhuvaneśvara, and from whom the city takes its name. Nearby is the temple of Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva. Formerly, the bhoga offered in this Vāsudeva mandira was offered as mahā-prasāda to Bhuvaneśvara Mahādeva, and Vaiṣṇavas accepted the prasāda from Śrī Bhuvaneśvara, although they do not accept the prasāda from Śrī Mahādeva anywhere else. Unfortunately, this custom of first offering bhoga to Viṣṇu has been

stopped, and now Vaiṣṇavas no longer accept Śrī Mahādeva's mahāprasāda; they only accept it from the temple of Ananta Vāsudeva.

On November 19th, the parikramā of Puruṣottama Kṣetra was completed and everyone returned to their respective places.

Parental affection for his disciples

To observe the month-long kārtika urjāvratā-niyama sevā in 1946, our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva performed bṛhat (great) parikramā and pañca-kosī parikramā of Kāśī Dhāma together with many sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs and gṛhastha-bhaktas. As in previous years, śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana, lectures, readings of bhakti literature and other activities took place regularly. After this, Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa. From there he travelled with Śrī Sajjanasevaka Brahmacārī, Śrī Anaṅgamohana Brahmacārī and other brahmacārīs and preached śuddha-bhakti throughout Medinīpura, Pūrvacaka, Begunāvāḍī, Kalyāṅapura and other places.

In Kalyāṅapura, Śrī Anaṅgamohana Brahmacārī suddenly became ill. Śrī Anaṅgamohana was an ekaniṣṭha guru-sevaka. His voice was very sweet and he used to sing beautifully in kīrtana. He was also expert in playing mṛdaṅga. In addition, he was extraordinarily skilful in cooking offerings, and in the personal service of Gurudeva. Because of his excellent vaiṣṇava qualities, everyone had great affection for him.

After Anaṅgamohana became ill, Śrīla Gurudeva returned with him to Calcutta. There he started homeopathic treatment with the famous vaidya Captain D.L. Sarkar. Following Dr. Sarkar's advice, Śrī Anaṅgamohana Brahmacārī went to Sidhāvāḍī, an isolated but charming and healthy place on the border of Bengal and Bihār, and Śrīla Gurudeva personally went with him. When the brahmacārī's health did not improve, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja took him to Devaghara in Vaidyanātha Dhāma which was reputed to be good for health. They went there with Trigunātīta dāsa Brahmacārī, Śrī Gaura-Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī, Śrī Sajjanasevaka Brahmacārī, Śrī Govardhana Brahmacārī and others. However, Śrī Anaṅgamohana's health did not improve there either. The brahmacārī was then brought back to Sidhāvāḍī, and he was finally admitted in the Ṭambaram T.B. sanatorium in Madrās. After making all arrangements for Anaṅgamohana's treatment and nursing, Gurudeva returned to the maṭha in Calcutta, leaving Śrī Trigunātīta Brahmacārī and Gaura-Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī to take care of the sick brahmacārī in the Ṭambaram hospital. But in spite of all these arrangements Śrī Anaṅgamohana could not be saved and he left this world on March 2nd, 1950.

I (the author) was with Śrī Anaṅgamohana when he left this world. While I was there, I never saw his face disturbed. During the whole period of his stay in the hospital, he happily chanted the names of Bhagavān or he listened lovingly to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, which we read to him regularly. All the doctors, young and old, were very attracted by his gentle behaviour. On the day of his passing, he suddenly said, "Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are calling me to Vṛndāvana.

Jaya Śrī Rādhe! Jaya Śrī Kṛṣṇa! He Gauracandra! He Nityānanda Prabhu! He Gurudeva!" With folded hands, I requested him, "Prabhu! Please bestow your mercy upon me and in Vṛndāvana call me also."

Upon learning that Śrī Anaṅgamohana was to depart, the whole team of doctors arrived and started to examine him. He hinted to us with a gesture that the women should be removed from the assembly. He took his last breath saying, "Ha Rādhe! Ha Kṛṣṇa!" All the doctors and visitors were struck with wonder.

I meditated on this incident very seriously. Ajāmila became free from the sufferings of birth and death and attained Vaikuṅṭha Dhāma simply by the performance of nāmābhāsa when he uttered the name 'Nārāyaṇa' to call his son. What then can be said of someone who has supreme faith in his guru and who is always chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa, free from aparādha and with sambandha-jñāna? In his last moment he was in such good consciousness, chanting, "He Rādhe! He Kṛṣṇa!" and telling us, "Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are calling me to Vṛndāvana." What will be the destiny of such a high-class guru-sevaka? Surely he will attain Vraja Dhāma. We were never able to imagine the glories of this bhakta earlier. His life is blessed; his guru sevā is meaningful. I understood that this was possible only by the causeless mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, and not by any special sādhana-bhajana. My faith in our worshipful Śrī Gurudeva was intensified, and when I returned from Ṭambaram, I devoted myself to his sevā very faithfully.

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva established Siddhāvāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Sidhāvāḍī in the memory of his dear servant Anaṅgamohana Brahmācārī. Even today, daily worship of the Deity as well as lecture and kīrtana are going on, and every year a viraha utsava is held in memory of the brahmācārī.

Śrāddha ceremony according to
vaiṣṇava rites in Kalyāṇapura

Śrī Rāsavihārī Dāsādhikārī Bhaktiśāstrī Bhiṣagrātna Mahāśaya, an inhabitant of Kalyāṇapur (Medinīpura), zealously endeavoured to invite Śrīla Gurudeva to participate in the observance of the śrāddha ceremony of his mother. To please him, Śrīla Gurudeva attended the program with many of his associates. The priestly duties at this ceremony were performed by Pūjyapāda Śrī Bhaktibhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja, who had a close relationship with Śrīla Guru Mahārāja. He was a special preacher who was expert in Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, English and other languages, and had preached śuddha-bhakti in Kāśī, Prayāg, Paṭnā, Medinīpura and other regions under the guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He had also managed the monthly Hindi magazine Bhāgavat Patrikā during Śrīla Prabhupāda's time.

Here it must be particularly noted that Śrīla Gurudeva was very firm in the philosophical conclusions of bhakti and spoke the impartial truth fearlessly. He was never reluctant to speak the siddhānta of bhakti, regardless of whether his words pleased or displeased others. Although Pūjyapāda Śrautī Mahārāja was his Godbrother and best friend, Śrīla Gurudeva still strongly objected to the errors in this vaiṣṇava-śrāddha ceremony which Srila Śrautī Mahārāja conducted. He has

made a signed statement to this effect in his notebook. The following points are taken from his notes.

(1) Śrīla Śrautī Mahārāja chose Brahmā as the object of worship in this vaiṣṇava śrāddha. Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmān Mahāprabhu and Śrī Gurudeva were not chosen as the upāsya, worshipful object. Śrīla Śrautī Mahārāja said that it is proper to worship Brahmā in vaiṣṇava-śrāddha, because Śrī Vaikhānas Mahārāja has written this in his paddhati. However, the arrangement of choosing the upāsya is given in Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā, Śrī Haribhakti-vilāsa and other smṛtis.

(2) In this ceremony unboiled paddy rice (arva rice) with ghee was sanctified by mantras and given to a smārta brāhmaṇa (Śrī Rāsabihārī's family guru) first, and tridaṇḍī-sannyāsis were given donations after this. This custom is also contrary to vaiṣṇava smṛti which state that substances offered to Bhagavān should be given to Śrī Gurudeva and Vaiṣṇavas.

(3) In regards to establishing the brāhmaṇa (the headpriest) Śrīpāda Śrautī Mahārāja stated that establishing of brāhmaṇa is not a duty, because Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā mentions establishing a murti of brāhmaṇa made of kuśa in the absence of a vaiṣṇava brāhmaṇa, a qualified headpriest. He also said that Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā was composed by Vaikuṅṭha Vacaspati, and not by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, but this is not true. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura collected an old copy by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa from the famous royal library in Jaipur and published it, and the Gosvāmis of Śrī Rādhāramaṇa still have an old copy of a manuscript by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa.

(4) Adhivāsa (preliminary rites) was performed with some smārta mantras, rather than according to the view of Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā.

(5) At this ceremony, giving of charity was performed first, instead of after vaiṣṇava-homa, as stipulated in Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā.

Śrīpāda Śrautī Mahārāja called the above-mentioned smārta guru brāhmaṇa inside the sthaṇḍila (sacrificial altar) and gave a begging bowl, eating plate, wooden shoes, umbrella, bedding and other things in charity to him. This custom is completely opposed to Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, where it is clearly written:

svabhāvasthaiḥ karmajaḍān vañcayan draviṇādibhiḥ
harernaivedya-sambhārān vaiṣṇavebhyaḥ samarpayet

(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 9.103)

“One should trick the non-devotees or those who are grossly involved in karma by giving them unoffered items or wealth, but one should give the vaiṣṇavas the items which have been offered to Bhagavān.”

(6) There was no performance of achidravācana, the chanting of mantras to allay faults as described in Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā for the defects in the prāyaścitta homa. (Uddicya, concluding activities were also left out).

(7) In the vaiṣṇava sacrifice, no sacrifice was performed to guru-paramparā.

(8) Some portion of the ghee of the vaiṣṇava-homa was offered in the fire for each personality's name and a portion was kept in a separate pot, which was mixed with

mahā-prasāda and was given as piṇḍa at the time of offering piṇḍa. This has not been mentioned in any vaiṣṇava-smṛti.

(9) Unoffered uncooked rice, dāl, salt, potatoes, green bananas and ghee were kept in two separate pots, and both were offered in the name of the expired mother of Rāsabihārī. One of these was given directly to the smārta-brāhmaṇa, the family guru, who accepted it sitting on a separate āsana in the sthaṇḍil (sacrificial altar). This is improper in every respect.

(10) In this ceremony there was no worship even of Śrī Vāsudeva as presented in Satkriyāsāra-dīpkā.

(11) Śānti-homa, circumambulation and other vaiṣṇava customs were omitted in this ceremony.

(12) Offering of piṇḍa and offering of bhoga was also not done according to the rules.

(13) It seems that the mantras used in this ceremony were also different from those in vaiṣṇava-smṛti.

(14) Ācamana etc. was also not performed.

(15) Prasāda was given facing south. This is not proper. (Please see page 133 in the Hindi edition of Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā.)

Signed, B.P. Keshab

10.11.47

Preaching in Bihār

In 1945, Śrīla Gurudeva sent Pūjyapāda Bhaktikuśala Nārasimha Mahārāja, Śrī Narottamānanda Bhaktikamala, Śrī Rādhānātha Dāsādhikārī, Premprajana Brahmācārī and others to preach śuddha-bhakti in the area of Dumkā, Sāhibaganja, Rājmahal and Bhāgalpur in the State of Bihār. While Śrī Narottamānanda Bhaktikamala was preaching in Sāhibaganja, he became acquainted with the author, then Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Tivārī, who was working in the office of the police station. Upon hearing brahmācārī's extremely sweet hari-kathā, Śrīman Nārāyaṇa became eager to renounce this material world. Nonetheless, he remained in his service for some time. However, in December 1946, he retired from the police service, and left home to join Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa Dhāma. The following year, 1947, on the day of Gaura Janmotsava after the Navadvīpa dhāma parikramā, Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva gave him śrī harināma and dikṣā initiation. Now he became known by the name Śrī Gaura-Nārāyaṇa 'Bhakta-bāndhava'.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā celebration

February 27th, 1948: Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā was celebrated at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha to commemorate fifty years from the day Śrī Gurupādapadma appeared. On the first day of this occasion there was an elaborate observation of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, including the pūjā of kṛṣṇa-pañcaka, vyāsa-pañcaka, ācārya-pañcaka of Śrī Brahmā and others, sanakādi-pañcaka, śrī guru-pañcaka, upāsya-pañcaka and tattva-pañcaka. Then puṣpāñjali and fire sacrifice concluded the morning ceremony. In the evening program, Śrīla Gurudeva lectured from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and explained the

episode in which Kṛṣṇadvaiپāyana Vedavyāsa obtains realization of the Absolute Truth during his samādhī. On the third day of the festival, on Jagadguru Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's auspicious avirbhāva-tithi (appearance day), Śrīla Gurudeva worshipped the beautiful decorated mūrti of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Ārati took place while singing 'Śrīla Prabhupāda's ārati,' the song composed by Śrīla Gurudeva, and then puṣpāñjali was offered to Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet. Every year after that Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observed Śrī Vyāsapūjā in this elaborate way.

The departure of Śrīla Narahari Sevāvigraha Prabhu

On January 30th, 1948, Nāthūrāma Goḍase shot Mahātmā Gāndhījī at the Delhi prayer assembly. On that very same day, Ajātaśatru Pūjyapāda Śrī Narahari Brahmācārī Sevāvigraha Prabhu disappeared from this world in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma, during the brahma-muhūrta hour. At that time Śrīla Gurudeva was preaching in the Medinīpura area. When he returned to Chuñchuṛā on February 1st, he received a telegram from Śrī Mahānanda Brahmācārī with this heartbreaking news, and became stunned like a stone statue. When his external consciousness returned a short time later, he began to cry, overwhelmed by the piercing separation. Śrī Sevāvigraha Prabhu was one of the foremost disciples and intimate servants of Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Our most worshipful Śrīla Gurupādapadma had a very close friendship with him; they lived together for a long time and served Śrīdhāma Māyāpura in countless ways. Śrīla Prabhupāda turned over the entire responsibility for Śrīdhāma Māyāpura to this dear servant and could then preach śuddha-bhakti everywhere with a peaceful mind. After Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance, both Śrī Sevāvigraha Prabhu and Śrīla Gurudeva left the Gauḍīya Maṭha together and established Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. Like Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Gurudeva entrusted the whole responsibility of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha to Śrī Sevāvigraha Prabhu and could thus preach peacefully everywhere.

In the first issue of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā (the main magazine of the Samiti), Śrīla Gurudeva wrote an essay entitled, 'Virahamāṅgalya', about Sevāvigraha Prabhu.

"Afflicted with the agony of separation, my pen quivering in my hand and progressing very slowly, I will try to pacify the pain of not seeing Śrīla Gurupādapadma and his eka-niṣṭha servant, Ṭhākura Narahari Sevāvigraha Prabhu. "Śrīla Prabhupāda was very pleased to discover his intimate servitor, Paramapūjyapāda Śrī Narahari Brahmācārī Sevāvigraha. He handed over the whole responsibility of his beloved maṭha-rāja, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, to him and happily went to far distant places to preach śuddha-bhakti with full concentration.

"O Naraharidā! Your uninterrupted sevā of Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas will manifest of its own accord in the memory of anyone who takes your auspicious name. You are the embodiment of Śrīla Prabhupāda's dearest Śrī Caitanya Maṭha; when we lived near you, we all thought that we were living in the Caitanya Maṭha. You have

performed the ideal service in a way which is supremely blissful and free from anger. This is the sole aim and objective of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.”

Śrīla Gurudeva also glorified his best friend, Śrīla Narahari Ṭhākura, in his preface to Prabandhāvalī, which was presented on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s disappearance day. There he described him as a brilliant star of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, who is eternally immersed in the flow of nectar coming from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Narahari Sevāvigraha Prabhu appeared in the famous Vasu dynasty of the village of Deyāḍā in the Yaśohar district of East Bengal. In his early life he and his family were initiated with the Śakti mantra. However, he and the majority of his family members were later influenced by Vaiṣṇava association, were initiated into the Kṛṣṇa mantra, and all began to perform sādhana-bhajana. When his elder brother left this world, Śrī Narahari renounced his family and this material world, and took shelter at the lotus feet of Jagadguru Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased with Śrī Narahari’s versatile abilities and service mentality, and appointed him manager of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

Śrī Narahari was like a mother in nurturing the young boys who lived in the maṭha. His daily sevā was to wake them up, feed them and take care of them. Because of this sweet, affectionate behaviour, the maṭha residents referred to him as ‘the mother of the Gauḍīya maṭha’. But everyone, young and old, addressed him as ‘Naraharidā’. He was always chanting śrī harināma and was totally absorbed in the various services of the maṭha. No one knew when he slept and when he woke. Sometimes in the deep night, when everyone else was sleeping, he would sit in his secluded bhajana-kuṭīra and chant śrī harinām with vipralambha-bhāva (feelings of separation from Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa). We have heard that he sometimes used to tie his sikha to a wooden handle high on the wall to force himself to stay awake while he chanted harināma. No maṭha resident ever saw him become angry. Even if someone needed to be scolded for some special reason, he would give them a sweet scolding, smiling, and with great affection.

The following incident took place when I (the author) was new in the maṭha. I was young then, and very energetic. During the morning, the local farmers were bringing vegetables, milk and other products from their neighborhoods to the vegetable market on the street just outside the maṭha. Śrī Sevāvigraha Prabhu and Śrīla Narottamānanda Brahmācārī went outside on the side of the road, and began to bargain for vegetables for the maṭha. The farmers were an unruly lot, and they began to quarrel about everything. Somehow, one of them struck Śrī Narottamānanda Prabhu on the head, drawing blood. Hearing the tumult, I came out, and when I saw the blood on Prabhujī’s head, I lost all self-control. I took a piece of bamboo from the courtyard of the maṭha and hit that insolent farmer on his back so hard that the bamboo broke and the farmer fell to the ground. In a moment, hundreds of farmers assembled, and began to create an uproar, threatening to attack the maṭha.

However, Pūjyapāda Śrīmān Sevāvigraha Prabhu calmly and peacefully settled this difficult situation with great expertise. First, he caught me and locked me up in a room in the maṭha. Then he confronted the crowd alone, and pacified them all with his affectionate behavior and vaiṣṇava qualities.

Sevāvigraha Prabhu had a very affectionate behavior. He went to everyone's home and spoke hari-kathā. He took an interest in people's happiness and distress, and they endured their difficulties because of his sweet words.

Śrīla Gurudeva could never forget his dear Godbrother. Whenever he remembered Śrī Sevāvigraha Prabhu, he became overwhelmed by feelings of separation. Śrīla Gurudeva named the huge entrance gate of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha 'Śrī Narahari Toraṇa' in Śrī Sevāvigraha's memory. This can still be seen today.

The decision to establish a maṭha in Jagannātha Purī and the publishing of a monthly transcendental magazine

After the Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala parikramā, Khuṭiyājī the respected paṇḍa of Purī, as well as many Godbrothers, implored Śrīla Gurudeva to establish a branch maṭha of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Śrī Jagannātha Purī. Śrīla Gurudeva liked the idea. In 1948, after the week-long Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and the Gaura Janmotsava festival, the prominent members of the Samiti made these decisions at an assembly in the Calcutta maṭha:

- (1) Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti will establish a branch maṭha in Śrī Jagannātha Purī.
- (2) Śrī Dvārakā dhāma parikramā will be performed in the upcoming month of kārtika.
- (3) A transcendental monthly magazine, Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, will be published for the next Gaura Pūrṇimā, and this will be the main magazine of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

That very day Śrīla Gurudeva began to work to fulfil the above-mentioned resolves. He gave instructions to collect a block, a rubber stamp, a three-colored picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda, a sign board for the Gauḍīya Patrikā's office and other things. During ūrja-vrata niyama-sevā approximately 150 pilgrims, sannyāsīs, brahmācārīs and grhastha-bhaktas participated in the pilgrimage to Dvārakā. The parikramā party first took darśana of the pastime places in Mathurā and Vṛndāvana, then of Śrī Govinda, Gopinātha, Madana-mohana in Jaipur and Galtājī nearby. Formerly, Vedāntācārya Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa defeated the Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī sampradāya in a major philosophical debate in Galtā, and waved the victory banner of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. In Galtā, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a brilliant lecture on Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and his commentary on Brahma-sūtra. He said that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu defeated the opposition by the inspiration of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and on the strength of Cakravartī Ṭhākura's arguments. The mahantjī of the Śrī sampradāya at Galtāgaddī was extremely impressed by Ācārya Kesari's personality and by his discourse, and had Śrī Ṭhākurājī's mahā-prasāda served to the entire parikramā party.

From there the pilgrims reached Porbandar via Puṣkar, Ajmer, Mehasānā, Mīramgāon, Surendranagar and holā. In Porbandar they had darśana of the temple of Śrī Sudāmā Vipra. They then travelled by ship to Veñṭa Dvārakā and had darśana of the temples of Śrī Dvārakeśajī, Dāūjī, and Rukmiṇijī. The next day, they took the ship to Sonavati and visited Gopī Tālāb and Nāgeśvara Śīva, and finally reached Gomatī Dvārakā. There the pilgrims had darśana of Śrī Dvārakādhiśa, Totādri Maṭha and Gomatī Gaṅgā. After that, the pilgrims returned home via Mehasānā and Āgrā.

Preaching in Medinīpura and Sundarvana

In the month of January, 1949, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja, Śrī Dīnārtihara Brahmācārī, Śrī Sajjansevaka Brahmācārī and Śrī Gaura-Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī blessed the house of Haricaraṇa Dāsādhikārī in Jukhiyā in the district of Medinīpura. They stayed there for some time and Śrīla Gurudeva gave philosophical lectures on sanātana-dharma at religious assemblies in the nearby villages.

Early one morning during Śrīla GuruMahārājajī's sojourn in Jukhiyā, Kṣīroda-candra Bhuīyām, a retired judge from Mohātī Grāma, came for a visit. Śrīla Gurudeva was inside the house chanting harināma on his beads, while Śrī Gaura-Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī (the author) was studying a book in the sweet rays of the winter sun on the verandah outside. Śrī Kṣīroda Bābū, who had been seated on a mat nearby, asked, "What are you reading?"

Gaura-nārāyaṇa answered, "I am reading Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa."

Kṣīroda Bābū inquired, "Who is the author?"

"Jagadguru Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī."

"Why are you not studying Śāṅkara-bhāṣya by Jagadguru Śrī Śāṅkara Ācārya?"

"Because Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is much more authoritative than Śrī Śāṅkara Ācārya."

Kṣīroda Bābū exclaimed, "What did you say? The very recent Sanātana Gosvāmī is a greater authority than Ācārya Śāṅkara? Ācārya Śāṅkara is the direct incarnation of Śāṅkara. He is the author of the definitive commentary on Brahma-sūtra and he vanquished all the contemporary ācāryas of India."

Gaura-nārāyaṇa replied, "Without a doubt, Ācārya Śāṅkar is an āvatara of devādhīdeva Śāṅkara, who is one of the guṇāvataras of Bhagavān (an incarnation who embodies one of the characteristics of the Lord), and he is one of the vibhūtis (opulences) of Bhagavān. According to the śloka, 'vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambho' (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.13.16), Śāṅkara is the topmost vaiṣṇava and bhakta of Bhagavān. Nonetheless, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī is one of Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śacīnandana's most beloved associates and he is also the dearest Śrī Lavaṅga Mañjarī of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Sanātana Gosvāmī's superiority is self-evident."

Śrī Kṣīroda Bābū was somewhat taken aback by this answer. In the meantime, Ācārya Kesari had heard the voices while he was chanting harināma inside the

house and had listened attentively to the discussion. He quickly appeared on the scene, and a philosophical battle started between the Bābū and himself.

Kṣīroda Bābū demanded, “Why don’t you have the brahmacārīs study Śāṅkara-bhāṣya of the Brahma-sūtra?”

Gurudeva explained, “We have them study Śrī Bhāṣya, Āṇubhāṣya, Govinda-bhāṣya and other commentaries of Vyāsa’s Brahma-sūtra, but not the commentary of Ācārya Śāṅkara.”

“Why not? You don’t study Ācārya Śāṅkara’s commentary, even though he is an incarnation of Śāṅkara?”

“Even though he is an incarnation of Śāṅkara, the views in his commentary are completely fabricated. This false philosophy is in reality only covered Buddhism, and he took shelter of it by the order of Bhagavān, in order to control the Buddhists who were opposed to the Vedas and Īśvara. This is clearly mentioned in Padma Purāṇa (Uttara Khaṇḍa 25.7), māyāvādaṁ asacchastraṁ.”

“But don’t you accept the four mahā-vākyas of the Vedas: ahaṁ brahmāsmi, prajñānaṁ brahma, tattvamasi, and ekamevādviṭiyam and the other clauses that Śāṅkara has established?”

“It is not written in the Vedas or Upaniṣads that these four vākyas (clauses) are mahā-vākyas. If what you are claiming is true, then please support it with evidence.” Kṣīroda Bābū was unable to answer, and sat quietly for some time.

Gurudeva went on, “The only mahā-vākya in the Vedas is om; all other clauses are secondary. Alternatively, you can say that all the clauses in the Vedas are mahā-vākyas. Do you consider that the nirākāra, nirviśeṣa, nirguṇa, and nirañjana Brahman, which Śāṅkara has tried to establish are the same as saviśeṣa, sarvaśaktimān, and ānandamaya Brahman, the shelter of all transcendental qualities, established by Śrīla Vedavyāsa?”

“Why not? All the eminent scholars of India corroborate the doctrine of Śāṅkara.”

“Ācārya Śrī Rāmānuja, Madhvācārya, Nimbānditya, Viṣṇusvāmī, Ballabhācārya, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and other learned persons have completely annihilated the doctrine of Śāṅkara. The nirviśeṣa, niḥśaktik, nirākāra Brahman can never be ānanda svarūpa or ānandamaya. This philosophy is just a kind of hidden Buddhism.” Kṣīroda Bābū still did not understand. He said, “Your statement is thoroughly confusing. Ācārya Śāṅkara clearly established the doctrine, ‘brahma satyaṁ jagannmithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāpara.’ Additionally, he uses the term ‘ānanda-svarūpa’ to indicate Brahman. When the jīva attains liberation from māyā it becomes one with Brahman and perceives ānanda-svarūpa Brahman.”

Gurudeva explained further, “This siddhānta is only Ācārya Śāṅkara’s fabrication. It is against śāstra. I can destroy Ācārya Śāṅkara’s counterfeit idea that Brahman is ānanda-svarūpa, simply on the basis of its inference. Later on, I will demolish the statement that the jīva becomes Brahman by merging into Brahman and that the world is false. First, can you explain why you want to merge into the nirviśeṣa Brahman?”

“Because Brahman is ānanda-svarūpa, the embodiment of ānanda, so the jīva who merges into this Brahman also becomes ānanda-svarūpa Brahman.”

“I say that Ācārya Śaṅkara’s nirviśeṣa Brahman is an embodiment of stool. Do you have any objection to that? If a jīva is able to merge into ānanda-svarūpa Brahman, then he cannot have a separate experience of it. So how, being Brahman, is the jīva able to experience ānanda, if by desiring to merge with nirviśeṣa Brahman it cannot be realized? It is only possible to experience ānanda when one’s existence is separate from it. For example, anyone who tastes sugar is able to say that sugar is sweet. But if the person is made into sugar, how can he experience his own sweetness? Similarly, how can anyone who is made into stool experience his own bad smell? Therefore, it doesn’t make any difference whether you call nirviśeṣa Brahman the embodiment of ānanda or the embodiment of stool. They are one and the same thing, because there is no separate taster.”

Kṣīroda Bābū became completely silent. He offered respects to Śrī Gurudeva by bowing his head and returned to his home.

While we were staying with Śrīla Gurupādapadma, we observed him discussing siddhānta with prominent advaita-vādīs (impersonalists) in this way. Everyone was respectful in the face of his deep personality, his brilliant language, his wealth of scriptural evidence, and his strong arguments. We will present these doctrinal debates in the course of this book.

In the evening Śrīla Gurudeva gave a brilliant lecture on sanātana-dharma to a huge public audience. For almost two and a half hours, ten to fifteen thousand people sat quietly like wooden dolls, reverentially listening to his speech. The following is the essence of that lecture.

“According to the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Vedānta-sūtra, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā and other scriptures, the root cause of creation and annihilation and the limit of para-tattva is Svayaṁ Bhagavān. He is not subject to birth, death or destruction. He is the complete sanātana-tattva because He exists in the past, present and future.

The meaning of the word sanātana is sadā (always) and tan (to continue), and refers to one who is present in the past, present and future. Thus the meaning of sanātana-dharma is the constitutional function of someone who is ever-existing. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is said—

aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ nandagopavrajaukasām
yan mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.32)

“O! How greatly fortunate are Nanda Bābā, Yaśodā Maiyā and all the other gopas and gopīs of Braja. There is factually no limit to their good fortune, because Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the abode of paramānanda (supreme bliss), and the eternal and complete form of Brahman, is their relative and friend.’

“Here Kṛṣṇa is called the eternal, complete Brahman. The jīvātmā is also acknowledged to be this sanātana-tattva because the uncountable souls are eternal

(sanātana) parts of sanātana-parabrahman Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself calls them His eternal parts in Bhagavad-gītā (15.7):

mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ śaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati

“O Arjuna! I am Sarveśvara (the Lord of all). All jīvas are My parts and they are all eternal. Like the empty space inside a waterpot, they are not fabricated or false. Due to being conditioned and opposed to Me, they are struggling intensely with the mind and the five senses in this material world.’

And also,

nityaḥ sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur acalo ‘yaṁ sanātanaḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 2.24)

“This jīvātmā is changeless and immortal. It cannot be cut by any weapon, burnt by fire, moistened by water or dried by air. It is nitya (eternal), all-pervasive, unchanging, steadfast and sanātana (ever-existing).’

“Thus, according to the Vedic śāstras there are two sanātana-tattvas (eternal principles): one is Svāyaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the undivided, complete sanātana-tattva; and the other is the jīva, the divided, aṇusanātana-tattva. The nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, bṛhat-caitanya-svarūpa (the embodiment of complete consciousness) is unchangeable, but if the jīva is opposed to Bhagavān, his pure nature can be covered due to his being aṇusanātana-tattva (eternal but atomic in size). But by nature, the jīva’s dharma (constitutional nature) is śuddha and sanātana. Prema is the only sanātana-dharma of the jīva. The eternal, pure prema is service to Kṛṣṇa, therefore the svarūpa-dharma or sanātana-dharma of the jīva is service to Kṛṣṇa. In different places in the scriptures this sanātana-dharma is referred to as bhāgavat-dharma or vaiṣṇava-dharma.

“The pure sanātana-dharma of the conditioned jīva is distorted by māyā. In such circumstances, the jīva considers the dharma of the gross and subtle body to be his dharma, because he only understands the gross and subtle body. But the dharma of these two bodies is not sanātana-dharma, because it is perishable and prone to change. ‘I am Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist’ and ‘I am a brahmaṇa or kṣatriya’ are identifications of the gross body, so this gross dharma is not sanātana. Nowadays, pure sanātana-dharma is rarely preached due to a lack of pure understanding of the Absolute Truth. Actually the relationship of servant and master between the jīva and īśvara is nitya (eternal) and sanātana (ever-existing). This relationship is what is known as sanātana-dharma.”

After this Śrīla Gurudeva extensively preached śuddha sanātana-dharma, which is also known as śuddha-bhakti-dharma. Accompanied by Śrī Nagendragovardhana Brahmācārī and Śrī Gaṇeśa Dāsa, he preached in the towns of Kulabāḍī, Hamscaudā, Pichladā, Jhīnukkhālī, Narghaṭa, and Terapekhyā. From there they travelled by boat with a party of devotees from Pūrī to Gadāmathurā Saptama Khaṇḍa, Gadāmathurā Pañcama, ṣaṣṭha and Aṣṭama Khaṇḍa, Āīplāṭa Prathama Khaṇḍa, Kedārpur, Āīplāṭa

Dvitiya Khaṇḍa, Sūryapur and various other places. A month and a half later he returned to the maṭha in Chuñchuṛā.

The self-manifestation of
Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā on the occasion of
Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and
Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava

In March 1949, the parikramā and Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava were celebrated with great festivities at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa. On Gaura Pūrṇima day, Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, the transcendental monthly magazine of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, manifested itself. The maṅgalācaraṇa (auspicious beginning) of Śrī Patrikā took place with prayers to Śrī Hari, Guru, and the Vaiṣṇavas. On the masthead of the front cover of this first issue, the name of Śrī Patrikā was written on the top of a mṛdanga and karatālas, surrounded by a lotus, club, conchshell and disc. Below this was a picture of Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

The founder and founder-ācārya of Śrī Patrikā was Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja; the editor was Śrī Mahānanda Brahmācārī Bhaktiśāstrī Bhaktyāloka; and the preaching managers were Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktikuśal Nārsimha Mahārāja and Paṇḍita Śrīmad Jagannātha Ballabha Bābājī Mahārāja. The contributing editors were Mahopadeśaka Paṇḍita Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmācārī Bhaktikamala Bhaktiśāstrī, Paṇḍita Śrīyut Nāmvaikuṅṭha Dāsādhikārī, Paṇḍita Śrīyuta Rādhānātha Dāsādhikārī, and Paṇḍita Śrīyut Gaura-Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī. The office manager was Paṇḍita Kṛṣṇa Kāruṇya Brahmācārī Bhaktimaṇḍapa. The magazine was published by Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā by Śrī Sajjansevaka Brahmācārī and printed by Śānti Press.

The essay ‘Viraha-māṅgalya’ states that it was written with a desire to attain the svārasikī sevā of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī, under the guidance of vipralambha-rasamaya vighraha Śrī Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the eternally liberated, most munificent paramahāmsas who are immersed in His mood. In addition, the magazine included philosophical dissertations by Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, an article about Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā and the article ‘Śrī Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhūṣaṇa’ by Śrīla Gurudeva. There were many other essays which enhanced the splendour of Śrī Patrikā with their research and explanation of prema bhakti. The first issue was dedicated at the lotus feet of Śrī Nṛsimhadeva, the destroyer of all obstacles, whose temple in Devapallī was visited on the first day of the Śrīdhāma parikramā. It was placed in the lotus hands of Śrīla Prabhupāda in his samādhi mandira in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, when the pilgrims visited it on the last day of the parikramā.

The vaiṣṇavas enthusiastically began to sign up for the Patrikā’s yearly subscription. Śrī Ayodhyādhāma, Naimiṣāraṇya parikramā and ūrjā vrata
In April, 1949, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti’s founder and president,
Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhakti-prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja,

was invited to Śrī Gaurāṅga Maṭha in Kesiyāḍī in the district of Medinīpura by the maṭha's founder and president, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktikumuda Santa Mahārāja. Śrīla Gurudeva accepted the invitation and went with many of his associates. Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktigaurava Vaikhānasa Mahārāja and other sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs and grhastha-vaiṣṇavas were also present. After that Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā and celebrated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day and the festival of Śrī Rātha-yātrā very splendidly.

Later that year, in the month of Kārtika, Śrīla Gurudeva organized a parikramā to Śrī Ayodhyā and Naimiṣāraṇya. There ūrjā-vrata niyam-sevā was observed. The pilgrims carried the Deity of Śrīman Mahāprabhu on the parikramā, and they stopped at Ayodhyā's famous Lakṣmaṇ Kilā (Lakṣmaṇ's fort). This is a charming place on the banks of the sacred Sarayu River, which even today reveals the traditions of ancient times. Śrīla Gurudeva, who was managing the entire parikramā, lectured on the glories of the dhāma. Mahopadeśaka Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmacārī Bhaktiśāstrī Bhaktikamala Prabhu particularly attracted an audience to hari-kathā by using black-and-white slides to illustrate his Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam lectures. Under Śrīla Gurudeva's guidance, the pilgrims took darśana of Śrī Rāmacandrajī's birthplace, Śrī Rāmadarbār, Kanakbhavan, Hanumāṅgaḍhī, Dvādaśa Mandira, Vālmiki Bhavan, Darśaneśvar-nātha Śīva, Pāpamocana Ghāṭa, Svargadvāra, Nāgeśvara Mahādeva, Brahma Ghāṭa, Śrī Sūrya Kuṇḍa, Goptāra Ghāṭa and other famous places in Ayodhyā dhāma.

After staying twenty days in Ayodhyā, the parikramā party went to Naimiṣāraṇya via Bālāmu Junction. When they arrived, their first programme was a royal saṅkīrtana at Paramahaṁsa Gauḍīya Maṭha, which had been established by Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Then they took rooms at a large, local dharmaśālā.

At the dharmaśālā, Śrīla Gurudeva read from Mahāprabhu's teachings to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. He explained that it is detrimental for an unqualified person to perform bhajana in a secluded place, for unless the sādha has the association of a superior tattva-darśī Vaiṣṇava (a self-realized soul), the Name uttered in this solitary bhajana is always full of anarthas (offences). Lack of pure association also makes one unable to understand the nature of śuddha-bhakti. Bhajana in the association of elevated vaiṣṇavas is actually real solitary bhajana. Bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgena pariṅyate (Bṛhan-Nārāḍīya Purāṇa 4.33): "One attains pure kṛṣṇa-bhakti by the elevated association of a pure Vaiṣṇava."

Neither a goṣṭhānandī, a bhakta who preaches, nor a viviktānandī (bhajanānandī), a bhakta who engages exclusively in hearing and chanting, actually performs solitary bhajana. This is because even though the viviktānandī performs solitary bhajana, he assists in the goṣṭhānandī's preaching of śrī nāma prema by nourishing a favourable mood. One example of this is the incident when the bhajanānandī Śrīla Gaura

Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja blessed Vinodabihārī Brahmācārī by taking away all the obstacles in his preaching, inspiring him to preach fearlessly.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's instructions to restore lost places of pilgrimage, to establish Deity worship, to compose bhakti literature and to preach nāma-prema are not only for Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī; rather, they are clear directions for all bhakti-sādhakas. Therefore, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and other elevated vaiṣṇavas would meet in iṣṭhagoṣṭhīs to accomplish these tasks of bhakti. Nowadays, many sādhakas with weak faith imitate solitary bhajana, but they soon stray from the path and fall down from the realm of bhajana.

At Śrī Vyāsaḡaddī in Naimiṣāraṇya, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a profound lecture which delved deeply into bhagavat-tattva. He explained this tattva directly and indirectly as he described the bhāgavat guru-paramparā and the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vedavyāsa. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrīla Veda-vyāsa's foremost literary composition, is the actual commentary on the Brahma-sūtra, the conclusion of Mahābhārata, the commentary on gāyatrī, and the ripened, nectarean fruit of the Veda, which is like a desire tree. One who has already tasted this nectar can never become attracted to any other śāstra. This treatise contains astonishing solutions to all problems pertaining to all people, in all countries, throughout all time. While Śrīla Vyāsadeva was in samādhi, he realized the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by bhakti in his pure heart. It is not just a book, but rather it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's literary incarnation.

In Naimiṣāraṇya the pilgrims took darśana of Brahma-kuṇḡa, Gaṅgotrī, Daśāsvamedha Ghāṭa, Gomatīgaṅgā, Yajñavaraha Kūpa, Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsimhadeva, Cakratīrtha and other places. In Miśrikatīrtha they took darśana of Sītā-kuṇḡa, Vālmiki Āśram, the place where Sītādevī entered Pātāla, Dadhīci Muni's āśrama and many other places. When the niyama-sevā kārtika-vrata was completed, the pilgrims returned home.

Śrī Setubandha Rāmeśvara parikramā
and ūrjā-vrata

The following year, 1950, Śrīla Gurudeva, the founder of the Samiti, arranged a parikramā of Setubandha Rāmeśvara to observe kārtika niyama-sevā. Under his guidance, approximately 200 faithful bhaktas had the good fortune of observing the kārtika vrata by performing parikramā of the various South Indian places of pilgrimage which had been purified by the footprints of Śrī Gaura.

The journey began from Howrah Station in Calcutta and the first stop was Jagannath Purī Dhāma. In South India, the pilgrims had darśana of Simhācalam, Maṅgalagiri, Madrās (Chennai), Ciṅgalpuṭ, Kaṅjivaram, Cidambaram, Sīyālī, Māyābharam, Tīrumeḡāmāruḡū, Kummakoṅam, Pāpnāśanam, Tanjor, Rāmeśvaram, Dhanuṣkoḡī, Śrī Vaikuṅṡham, Terucaṅḡūr, Kanyākumārī, Sucindram, Tīruvantar, Trivendrum, Varkalā, Śāṅkarnārāyaṅakail, Śrī Milīputtar, Madurā, Pālnī, Śrī Raṅgam, Vṛddhācalam, Tiruminnāmalāī, Tirupati, Tirumalaī, Tirucāṅur, and Kalahasī. Finally they arrived at Guṅṡūr Junction, and from there returned to Howraha Station. After observing kārtika-vrata with a month of sādhu-saṅga,

sañkīrtana, hari-kathā and darśana of innumerable incomparably delightful places of pilgrimage, all the bhaktas returned home. They were overwhelmed with gratitude towards Śrī Guru Mahārāja. At the time of departure, they fell at his lotus feet with their eyes brimming with tears, and begged for his blessings: “Please bestow your mercy on us so that we can quickly obtain the association of Vaiṣṇavas and gradually progress on the path of śuddha-bhakti.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s viraha-utsava
in Ānandapāḍā

December 26th, 1950: On the occasion of Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance day, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja and some fifteen maṭha residents preached the word of Śrīman Mahāprabhu for seven days in Śaraṇāthīpallī in Ānandapāḍā, in the district of Chaubīs Parganā. The pious people living in the area were very impressed with Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva’s exceptional hari-kathā. The following is the essence of one of his lectures.

“The majority of you have left East Bengal and have come here to India to protect your dharma. The rule of Bhagavān is always to give good fortune to the jīvas. The purpose of human life is not simply to arrange for food and clothing; it is to perform dharma. But what is that dharma? One does not become a Hindu by adopting the behaviour, dress, mannerisms, ways of thinking, and ideology of the yavanas, and paying lip service to Hinduism. We can only be Hindus by genuinely observing the behaviour and views of the Hindu sanātana-dharma. The real reason for the misery of Hindu society today is the people’s lack of faith and devotion to their own dharma. Modern Hindu society has forgotten its dharma and is giving up its own personality because of Western education and contact with Westerners. That is the main reason for people’s misery today. We Hindus have forgotten to devote our life to dharma, so the degradation of Hinduism is inevitable. We have forgotten the instructions and teachings of Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa and instead we are going in the opposite direction. Dharma is a matter of conduct; it is not to be acknowledged only by mouth, but by our actions. Troubled days are before us. If we are indifferent to our dharma, we will suffer the consequences.

“Each person’s house is an āśrama. We live there to practice bhāgavad-bhakti. If we are merely absorbed in eating, sleeping, defending and mating, then staying at home is like residing in hell. Living in such a situation and being addicted to tamasic things, the jīva will become more opposed to Bhagavān. Therefore the one and only duty is to reject tamasic things such as onions, garlic, meat, fish, alcohol, smoking, etc. It is necessary to construct new settlements or villages on the foundation of dharma. The backbone of these new villages should be dharma. Without dharma the human being becomes like a four-legged animal. Only by means of dharma can human beings have worldly and transcendental happiness.”

Preaching sanātana-dharma in Vasīrahāṭa and the reply to Śrī Chaṭṭopādhyāya Mahāśaya’s protest

Throughout 1950, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja extensively preached śrī sanātana-dharma in Medinīpura, Narghāṭa, Śītalpura, Haldiyā, Tamaluk, Bājīpura in Chaubīs Parganā, Vasīrhāṭa and other places. In the large religious assembly of Vasīrhāṭa, Ācārya Kesarī established with a lion-like voice the philosophical conclusions of sanātana-dharma, and refuted the worthless, non-Vedic, kevalādvaita-vāda put forward by the hidden Buddhist, Ācārya Śaṅkara.

Śrī Gurudeva said that bhagavad-bhakti is sanātana-dharma. The constitutional position of the jīva is to be a servant of Bhagavān. Therefore, service of Bhagavān is sanātana-dharma in the past, present and future. This dharma is also known as Vedic dharma, bhagavad-dharma and vaiṣṇava-dharma.

The jīva and the material world are never false. The jīva is eternally a part of Bhagavān, and the material world, which is manifested by Bhagavān's external potency (aparā-prakṛti), is also true although changeable and perishable. The world is not false or illusory like a dream, or like a rope resembling a snake. The ideas of Śaṅkara, which are illusory and contrary to logic, are only respected by extremely dense people.

Śrī Gurudeva concluded his talk by saying, "This is what we are teaching the young men of the Vedānta Samiti."

In Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā's fourth issue, during its second year of publication, a synopsis of the above lecture given by Śrīla Guru Mahārāja was published. After reading the article, Śrī Satyabhūṣaṇa Chaṭṭopādhyāya Mahodaya of Ṭāṭānagara wrote a letter challenging this lecture. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja replied to his letter according to scriptural logic and siddhānta. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's letter is cited below.

"To summon the well-educated community of the world to attain real tattva-darśana (realization of the Absolute) is not to challenge anyone in any way. Careful consideration and comparison has established that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' acintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta (the philosophy of simultaneous oneness and difference) is superior to Ācārya Śaṅkara's advaita-vāda or māyāvāda (impersonalism). Pure Vaiṣṇavas do not have even the slightest trace of faith in Ācārya Śrī Śaṅkara's views, although we see that some proud, mixed Vaiṣṇavas have faith in māyāvāda. We are Vaiṣṇava sannyāsis, and we consider the refinement of society to be part of the purification process of dharma. We have the right to explain the truth of any subject to the educated community for their welfare. Some people may become disturbed when we preach truth, because they consider non-truth to be truth; but in reality we do not want to agitate anyone. We only want to say that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings and practice are the foremost in the entire world. We do not blaspheme Ācārya Śaṅkara, but we are not ready to praise his opinions and doctrines in any way."

Śrīla Gurudeva's answers to Śrī Chaṭṭopādhyāya Mahāśaya's many questions about the philosophy of māyāvāda have been published in instalments in Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā.

Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā,

Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava and Śrī Vighraha's inauguration of Their newly constructed residence

In March 1951, the week-long Śrī Navadvīpa dhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava were performed very splendidly. Faithful pilgrims and bhaktas came to participate, not only from Bengal but from all over India. By the splendid management of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja, all the pilgrims engaged in harināma-saṅkīrtana, listened to wonderful hari-kathā, had darśana of the places of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's pastimes, and obtained the good fortune of the parikramā. Until that time Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha which is Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's original maṭha, was located in a small rented building. This served as a temple where the Deities were worshipped and also as headquarters for the management of the entire Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā. The pilgrims stayed in tents erected in a nearby field. That year the Samiti built huge fences on the field to enclose the extensive area where the arrangements for the parikramā were made. In one part of this field a śrī mandira, a sevaka-khaṇḍa and a bhoga storage area were constructed. In another part, tents were set up for lodging the many pilgrims. Before the parikramā, the Deities arrived at this new temple accompanied by a magnificent nagar-saṅkīrtana.

The great bhāgavat, Śrīyuta Haripada Dāsa Adhikārī of Śrī Rāmapur in the district of Hoogly, and his devout wife, Śrīmatī Jñānadāsundarī Devī, generously financed the construction of the high fences and the temple in the huge field of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. This made them the object of many blessings from Śrīla Guru Mahārāja. Their ideal service and activities inspired other virtuous people to also perform bhagavat-sevā.

Śrīpāda Trigunātita Brahmācārī
Prabhu's veśāśraya

Siddhavāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha in the town of Sīdhāvāḍī in the Vardhamān district was constructed by Śrīpāda Trigunātita Brahmācārī Prabhu. Previously he had been the president of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, the main preaching centre of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja went to Siddhavāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha after Śrī Gaura Janmotsava. On May 11th, 1951, the auspicious opening day of the newly built maṭha, Śrīpāda Brahmācārījī was given veśāśraya (the cloth of a bābājī) by Śrīla Guru Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Trigunātita Brahmācārī was a learned and respected member of the famous Mukharjī family (Sir Āśutoṣa Mukharjī) from the village of Jiraṭa-Bālāgaḍha in the District of Hoogly. His previous name was Śrī Trigunānātha Mukhopādhyāya and after accepting bābājī-veśa he became known as Śrīmad Trigunātita Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. A brahmācārī since boyhood, he was one of the foremost of Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's initiated, ekaṅkṣṭha (having fixed and undivided faith) servants. All the service that he faithfully performed for Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha Mission established by Prabhupāda was outstanding. His renunciation, detachment and service attitude are especially worthy of being

followed. When the ekaniṣṭha guru-sevaka Śrīpāda Anaṅgamohana Brahmācārī was sick, Śrī Trigunātīta affectionately nursed him in a way which is exemplary for all Vaiṣṇavas. It has already been mentioned how he gave Śrī Gauraṅga Press, including all its equipment, to the Samiti. He was very rare in the vaiṣṇava world.

Preaching of śuddha-bhakti
in different places

While Śrī Guru Mahārāja was staying at Śrī Siddhavāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha, he vigorously preached bhakti for three days in Pānjanīyā Grāma on the special request of Śrīyut Bhagavān Dāsādhikārī, a resident of the village. After that, Śrīla Gurudeva preached śrī sanātana vaiṣṇava-dharma extensively in Kākadvīpa, Kalārcaka, Sarbediyā, Ekatārā, Daimaṅḍa, Hārvara, Cānda-nagara, Mathurāpur, Kāmśīnagara and other places in the Chaubīs Parganā District.

That same year, during the month of Kārtika, for the second time Śrīla Gurudeva led 200 sannyāsīs, brahmācārīs and gr̥hastha-bhaktas on the 84-kosa Vraja-maṅḍala parikramā and performance of ūrjā vrata. The pilgrims left from Howraha Station, and after having darśana of Gayā, Kaśī, Prayag and other holy places, they arrived at Mathurā Dhāma.

In Gayā they had darśana of Śrī Gadādhara-pādapadma (the lotus feet of Śrī Gadādhara), Phalgutīrtha, Bodhagayā and the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. In Kaśī they went to Śrī Sanātana śikṣa-sthalī, Śrī Viśvanātha Mandira, Veṇīmādhava, Annapūrṇā, Daś-āśvamedha Ghāṭa and Manikarṇikā Ghāṭa. Then in Prayāga they had darśana of Śrī Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Trivenīsaṅgama, Śrī Bindumādhava, Śrī Rūpa śikṣa-sthalī, Daśāśvamedha Ghāṭa and other places.

In Mathurā, the parikramā party stayed at the large Helanagaṅjavālī Dharmśālā for a few days. During that time they had darśana of the famous Viśrāma Ghāṭa, Dvārikādhīśa, Gataśrama Ṭilā, Dhruva Ṭilā, Pippaleśvara Mahādeva, Raṅgeśvara Mahādeva, Bhūteśvara Mahādeva, Gokarṇeśvara Mahādeva, Śvetavarāha, Kṛṣṇavarāha, Sapta Rṣi, Dīrgha Viṣṇu, Śrī Padmanābha, Kṛṣṇa Janmabhūmi (Kṛṣṇa's birthplace), Kaṁsa Kārāgāra (the prison house of Kaṁsa) and other places.

After that, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, they started Vraja-maṅḍala parikramā of the twelve forests and Kṛṣṇa's places of pastimes in these forests. They did parikramā of the forests on the western bank of Yamunā, namely 1) Vṛndāvana, 2) Madhuvana, 3) Tālavana, 4) Kumudavana, 5) Bahulāvana, 6) Kāmyavana, 7) Khadīravana; and then the forests on the eastern bank: 8) Bhadravana, 9) Bhāṅḍīravana, 10) Belvana, 11) Lohavana and 12) Mahāvana.

At Śrī Govardhana, a huge Annakūṭa ceremony was performed. On other days, the pilgrims did parikramā of Śrī Girirāja, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrī Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Vṛndāvana, Nandagram, and Varsānā. The Samiti arranged prasāda and accomodation for all the pilgrims so that they could concentrate without anxiety on hearing about the glories of the dhāma and listening attentively to classes on bhakti. At the end of the parikramā and vrata, the pilgrims returned to their respective homes with tears in their eyes.

The collecting and publishing of
Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati

In the month of February 1952, Śrī Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā was celebrated with great festivities for three days, from Māghī Kṛṣṇā Tṛtīyā to Māghī Pañcamī, at Śrī Uddhārana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā. On Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's appearance day, he gave valuable instructions in response to the greetings and puṣpāñjali of the Vaiṣṇavas. He said, "Tridaṇḍī-sannyāsis should perform Śrī Gurupūjā on their own appearance days. With this Guru-pūjā it is also necessary together to worship the guru-paramparā, Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala and Sacinānadana Śrī Gaurahari and His associates. Vyāsa-pūjā, guru-pūjā, ācārya-pūjā and upāsya-pūjā are different names for the same tattva (category of a concept). The word kṛṣṇa-pañcaka does not mean five types of kṛṣṇa-pūjā, rather it is a pūjā whose objects are Kṛṣṇa's five manifestation (prakaśas or vilāsas).

"Ācārya Śrī Śaṅkar's vyāsa-pūjā is not a true vyāsa-pūjā; it is only for show. Vyāsa's sampradāya is the foremost in India; India and Indians are indebted to him. But at the present time the educated community of India is showing disrespect towards Vyāsa. This is a very painful matter. Therefore, the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is celebrating Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā very enthusiastically in different places of India. Śrīla Prabhupāda collected the book Vyāsa pūjā-paddhati from Śrī Govardhana Maṭha in Purī. Śrīla Gurudeva also collected the same paddhati from Brahma Maṭha in Pushkar and Śārdā Maṭha of Gomatidvārka. He published Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's revised and modified edition in the third issue of the fourth year of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā. To this day, all the maṭhas of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, and especially the original maṭha, Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa, celebrate vyāsa-pūjā according to this paddhati.

Awarding aṣṭottara-śata-nāmi
tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa

In 1952, with great festivity Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti sponsored the week-long Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava from March 6th to March 12th. On Gaura Pūrṇima day (Monday, March 11th) at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, the founder and president of the Samiti, Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, gave Vedic tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa dress to Śrī Sajjansevaka Brahmācārī, the publisher of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā; to Śrī Rādhānātha Dāsa Adhikārī, the office-in-charge of the Patrika; and to Śrī Gaura-Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī Bhaktabāndhava, the preaching manager of the Patrikā. This was according to the vaiṣṇava sāttvata-smṛti (authentic regulations for vaiṣṇava practice) aṣṭottara-śata-nāmi (108 names) system. Their sannyāsa names became Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja7, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja8 and Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja9, respectively.

The sannyāsa title 'Bhaktivedānta' before the sannyāsa names was completely unheard of until that day. The president of Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, whose nature is

identical to that of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the composer of the Govinda-bhāṣya commentary on Brahma-sūtra, inundated the earth with the flow of Gauḍīya vedānta. Gauḍīya vedānta is non-different from bhakti-vedānta. Its purport is established in the pāramahaṁsī saṁhitā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the authentic commentary on Brahma-sūtra. Pure-hearted, expert Vaiṣṇavas, who know how to extract the essence, realize the very deep secret of bhakti-tattva through Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

On Phālguna Pūrṇimā, the appearance day of Śrī Gaura, the bhaktas had been fasting since morning. Reading of the entire Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata was going on, together with saṅkīrtana. Sometimes local Navadvīpa vāsīs entered the maṭha compound stained with the bright colours of Holi, singing Holi songs accompanied by ḍholak and small cymbals, and throwing showers of coloured powder. Joining the saṅkīrtana, they performed parikramā of the Deities, took darśana of Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Vinodabihārī and Śrī Koladeva and then left. The pilgrims had bathed in the Gaṅgā and were dressed in new clothes. Carrying coloured powder in their hands they first offered it to Śrī Mandira, then they offered praṇāmas to Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, and with great love they embraced one another.

At noon, the saṁskaras (rituals) of dor-kaupīn and daṇḍa were performed, followed by the giving of sannyāsa, the fire sacrifice and other rituals. These were all done according to the rules of the vaiṣṇava-smṛti, Saṁskāra-dīpikā. The sky was filled with the sound of saṅkīrtana and jaya-dhvanī (jubilant cries of 'Jaya!') and the atmosphere was beautified by the deep reverberation of the conchshells and the auspicious ulū sounds made by the ladies. On this glorious occasion, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja gave the sannyāsa-mantra and the aṣṭottaraśata sannyāsī names, names indicative of bhakti, to his three initiated servants in front of an audience of thousands of faithful people. After the ceremony, on the order of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja, the new tridaṇḍi-yatis went out to beg alms, as is befitting in the sannyāsa āśrama. Following the rules of the āśrama, they offered everything they received from begging—grains, money, flowers and fruits—to the lotus feet of their Guru.

In the evening, in an assembly filled with innumerable pilgrims, the three new sannyāsīs astonished their audience by explaining the profound truths and philosophical conclusions of śuddha-bhakti.

Preaching śuddha-bhakti in
various places of Assam

In April 1952, Paramārādhyatama Ācārya Kesarī traveled to the state of Assam to preach Śrīman Mahāprabhu's prema-dharma extensively. He was accompanied by Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktikuśala Nārsimha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Dāmodara Mahārāja, Śrīmad Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīmad Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, Śrī Parameśvara Brahmācārī, Śrī Satya Vighraha dāsa Adhikari, Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmācārī, Śrī Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī and others. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja and the preaching party first visited the house of Śrīmatī Sucitra Bālādevī

in Golokagaṇja. Then they preached very strongly in the town of Dhūvaḍī, where they stayed at the residence of Pūjyapāda Nimānanda Sevātīrtha Prabhu.

Afterwards, on the special invitation of respected Śrī G. N. Niyogī Mahodaya, the chief minister of the kingdom of Abhaypurī, Śrīla Gurudeva gave an impressive lecture on Hindu dharma in the Bijanī royal palace of Abhaypurī. From there Śrīla Gurudeva went to the village of Bhāṭīpādā on the entreaty of the members of the Assam Vaiṣṇava Assembly. Thereafter he lectured magnificently on sanātana-dharma and Mahāprabhu's philosophy at a huge gathering at Gāndhī Maidan in Boṅgāī village.

After preaching in these places, Śrīla Gurudeva went to Mālī, a large, important township in Assam, on the insistence of Śrī Yādavendra Dāsa and Premānanda Dāsa. Mālī is the stronghold of a community which is completely against the philosophy of Śrī Caitanya. The majority of the people there worship niḥśaktik Kṛṣṇa, but do not accept His śrī vigraha. They do not acknowledge Śrī Vyāsadeva's Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as authoritative, but rather favour the modern Bhagavatpothī, written in Assamese by Hankaradeva. They eat fish, meat, onions and garlic and drink alcohol. They are against Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy of śuddha-bhakti and are antagonistic to śuddha Vaiṣṇavas.

One evening a huge public assembly was arranged for Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī and his group of followers. The grounds were packed with ten to twelve thousand people waiting for Śrīla Gurudeva's lecture. Śrīla Gurudeva began to speak on pure sanātana-dharma with his brilliant command of words. He said, "Brajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete eternal Brahman in His feature as sarva-śaktimān¹⁰, saviśeṣa¹¹ and akhila-rasāmṛta mūrti¹². The śuddha-bhakti which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached and practised is actually sanātana-dharma in its complete form. The supreme duty of human life is to completely give up onions, garlic, meat, intoxication etc. and follow the path of sanātana-dharma, which is śuddha-bhakti. The life of those who go against this highest duty and take meat, intoxication and other impure substances is like that of an animal—dharmeṇa hīnā paśubhiḥ samānā (Padma Purāṇa)."

On hearing this, a person in the middle of the gathering stood up and declared, "We don't believe in the philosophy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

Gurudeva replied, "Not only Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and all other śāstras all say the same thing. No sat-śāstra gives a concession for meat eating and intoxication. Bhagavān is not nirākāra, or formless. He has an unprecedentedly beautiful śrī vigraha. Despite having a form, He is still sarvavyāpī (all-pervading) and sarva-śaktimān."

One listener said, "That is not written in Hankaradeva's Bhāgavat. We do not accept this siddhānta; we consider Hankaradeva's Bhāgavat to be authoritative."

Gurudeva explained, "Hankaradeva's Bhāgavat is a modern literature, written only 200 to 250 years ago. The Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and other śāstras are divine, eternal and ever-existing. That is why they are actual evidence and proof."

The listener scoffed, “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is a recent personality, and Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta is also modern literature. Is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s name mentioned in the Vedas? Is there supporting evidence in the Vedas that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Bhagavān?”

Gurudeva said, “Yes, there is evidence. Not only one but thousands of examples are there. Listen carefully.” He looked at Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja, indicating that he should present the evidence. Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja had written in his notebook 40 to 50 śāstric statements that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Bhagavān, and he gave this to Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja who, on Śrīla Gurudeva’s order, started to read out the examples of evidence loudly. However, the opposition was not interested in hearing the proof of their defeat, but wanted to spread chaos in the gathering instead, and they started throwing stones. Other members of the audience objected to such behaviour. Gurujī fearlessly continued with his lecture throughout this disruption. He said, “We sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs are not afraid of death. We are followers of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja and Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura.” After the examples of śāstric proof had been read, the gathering came to an end. Śrī Gurudeva’s fearlessness was discussed everywhere for many days. A fearless speaker of impartial truth is rare in this world.

After preaching in Mālī, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja was requested to speak by the pious members of a religious assembly in the village of Bāmsvāḍī. He gave a penetrating talk entitled, ‘The philosophical concepts that distinguish Gauḍīya vaiṣṇava-dharma from the different apasampradāyas’. Thereafter he and the preaching party traveled to Gauhāṭī. At various places in the town, Śrīla Gurudeva gave lectures filled with scriptural explanations of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s prema-dharma and the subject matter which is established in Vedānta. During the preaching in Gauhāṭī, very praise worthy services were rendered by Śrī Gaurīśaṅkar Chaṭṭopādhyāya, a Divisional Medical Officer of Assam’s Railway, by Śrī M. Salaī, a lecturer at Gauhāṭī College, and by others.

Darśana of Śrī Śrī Jagannāthajī’s

Ratha-yātrā in Śrī Jagannātha Purī

Later that year, during the month of Āṣāḍha (June-July), almost 250 pilgrims under the leadership of Śrī Guru Mahārāja left Howraha Station in a reserved coach and headed first for the Bāleśvara railway station and from there to Śrī Remunā. In Remunā they took darśana of Śrī Kṣīracorā Gopīnāthajī. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja described the pastime of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and Kṣīracorā Gopīnātha as it is told in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.

“Śrī Mādhavendra Purī is the first sprout of the desire tree of bhakti-rasa. Śrī Nāthajī was so satisfied with Śrī Mādhavendra Purī’s service that He appeared on the slopes of Śrī Govardhana, near Ānyora village. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī fulfilled Śrī Nāthajī’s desire by worshipping Him for one month with abhiṣeka and an Annakūṭa festival with extensive offerings of bhoga. Thereafter, also by the desire of Śrī Gopālajī, Mādhavendra Purī walked from Vṛndāvana to Jagannātha Purī to procure Malayan

candana (sandalwood) to offer to Śrī Nāthajī. On the way to Purī, he arrived here in Remunā in the late evening. Bhoga had been offered to Ṭhākurajī. The curtain opened and he had darśana of the astonishing deity of Śrī Gopīnāthajī. In front of the Deity were pots of kṣīra-prasāda, a speciality of that temple. Such a wonderful fragrance was coming from the kṣīra offered to Ṭhākurajī that Śrī Mādhavendra Purī's mind became attracted. He thought, 'If I could taste only a little of the prasāda, I could prepare such a delicious kṣīra for my Śrī Nāthajī.' Meanwhile, the curtain closed. Śrī Purī Gosvāmī then went to the nearby market for bhajana. At night he heard a voice crying out, 'Who is Mādhavendra Purī?' Śrī Gopīnāthajī's pujārī was calling him. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī stood up and said, 'I am Mādhavendra. Why are you calling me?'

"With great humility, pujārījī placed a pot of kṣīra in Mādhavendra Purī's hands and said, 'Great soul, after I put Śrī Gopīnāthajī to bed, I closed the curtain and went to sleep in my small room. At midnight Śrī Ṭhākurajī came to me in a dream and said, 'My bhakta is performing bhajana somewhere in the market. I wanted him to taste some of My prasāda, but he did not receive any. He is a topmost niṣkiñcana Vaiṣṇava who never begs for his living. I have hidden one of the twelve pots of kṣīra under My clothes. Take it and give it to him now.' After this dream I woke up, opened up the curtain and went inside the Śrī Mandira. It is most amazing! One pot was there inside Ṭhākurajī's clothes. I had removed the offered pots and purified the altar with my own hands. How could one pot remain in spite of this? I closed Ṭhākurajī's door again and brought the pot here to you. Never before have I experienced such a thing as this.'

"When Śrī Mādhavendra Purī heard this, he became absorbed in joyful, ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. However, he thought, 'Everyone will know about this incident in the morning and a crowd will come here for my darśana.' Fearing this fame, he fled Remunā in the dark for Jagannātha Purī. Such a bhakta is exceptional and blessed. From that time, the name of Śrī Gopīnāthajī was changed to Śrī Kṣīracorā Gopīnātha.

"Mādhavendra Purījī reached Śrī Purī Dhāma and took darśana of Śrī Jagannātha. He then obtained the Malayan candana for his Gopālajī, put it on his head and started walking back towards Śrī Vṛndāvana dhāma. On the way, he came to Kṣīracorā Gopīnātha's Remunā again. It was night and he soon fell asleep. As he slept, Gopālajī came to him in a dream and told him, 'Stay in Remunā and rub the Malayan candana on Gopīnātha's whole body. I am that same Gopīnātha. If you perform this service, the heat of My body will be removed.' Śrī Purī Gosvāmī did so, and after receiving Śrī Gopālajī's permission he again returned to Vṛndāvana. Bhagavān is conscious of the hardships that His bhaktas undergo to serve Him, and He performs such transcendental pastimes to increase the glory of His bhaktas in the world."

The pilgrims were fascinated by this pastime. After listening to the story, they took darśana of Śrī Rasikānandajī's samādhi nearby. Then they visited Bhuvaneśvara,

where they took darśana of Śrī Liṅgarāja, Śrī Annanta Vāsudeva, Bindusarovar and other places. Finally they reached Śrī Purī Dhāma. They stayed in Purī for 15 days and took darśana of Ālālanātha, Sākṣī Gopāla, Koṇārka and other places. On Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day they were invited to a large assembly in Śrī Jagannātha-Ballabha's garden. Śrīla Ācārya Mahārāja, the president of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, gave a splendid philosophical lecture full of tattva concerning Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's transcendental character, his erudition and the bhakti-śāstras that he composed. The learned scholars of Purī were very impressed by this lecture.

The next day was Śrī Guṇḍicā Mārjana, after which came Śrī Ratha Yātrā, Śrī Herā Pañcamī, Śrī Jagannātha's return yātrā and so on. Everything was observed with kīrtana and lectures. The pilgrims also had the opportunity to have darśana of Śrī Jagannātha, Gambhīrā, Siddha Bakula, Haridāsa Ṭhākura's samādhi, Ṭoṭā Gopinātha, Caṭaka Parvata, Yameśvara Ṭoṭā, Lokanātha Śiva, Purī Gosvāmī's well, Narendra Sarovara, Indradyumna Sarovara, Guṇḍicā Mandira, Cakratīrtha, Svargadvāra and various other places. In the end, everyone returned home fully satisfied with the wonderful hari-kathā they had heard and the beautiful darśanas they had received.

Śrī Janmāṣṭamī Vrata and Śrī Nandotsava in Chuñchuṛā Maṭha

A few months later, in August (Śrāvaṇa), Śrī Janmāṣṭamī was celebrated with great festivities at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. All the bhaktas in the maṭha observed nirjala fasting (without water) the whole day until midnight. Reading of the entire Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam took place during the day. At midnight, the time of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appearance, the mahābhīṣeka of the Deities was performed, bhoga was offered and arcana was offered according to tradition. Śrīla Ācārya Mahārāja, the president of Śrī Samiti, gave a lecture on the philosophy of Śrī Janmāṣṭamī to the assembled audience. The essence of his lecture is as follows.

“Śrī Gauḍīya vaiṣṇava literature distinguishes between Śrī Bhagavān's janma (birth) and His āvirbhāva (appearance). The word āvirbhāva is filled with aiśvarya (opulence), but janma is filled with mādhyura (sweetness). We are related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is Vrajendra-nandana¹³, Nanda-tanuja¹⁴, Nandātmaja¹⁵ and Paśupāṅgaja¹⁶. Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura has addressed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanaya: “Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my worshipful object,” and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said in His Śikṣāṣṭaka, 'ayi nandatanuja'. Also by Śrī Vāsudeva we understand Kṛṣṇa as Nanda-tanuja (the son of Nanda). Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa appeared in Mathurā, but He did not take birth from Devakī's womb. He appeared in Kāmsa's prison before Devakī and Vasudeva fully dressed and decorated, and holding His conch, disc, club and lotus (śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and padma.) Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not addressed as Vasudeva-tanuja (the son of Vasudeva). The cutting of the umbilical cord and other ceremonies of childbirth were not performed in Mathurā, but they were in Gokula. There, Kṛṣṇa took birth from the womb of Yaśodā Maiyā, and we worship this birth-pastime of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

kṛṣṇera yateka khelā sarvottama naralīlā

naravapu tāhāra svarūpa

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 21.101)

“Lord Kṛṣṇa has many pastimes, of which His pastimes as a human being are the best. His form as a human being is the supreme transcendental form.’

“Only Śrī Rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavas are able to take to heart this distinctive aspect of janma and āvirbhāva which is saturated with mādhyaya. We are praying to Nandanandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of the Śrī Rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavas.”

The audience was very impressed when they heard this profound discussion of bhakti by Śrī Guru Mahārāja.

Parikramā of Śrī Badrikāśrama

and Kedārnātha

The next month, Śrī Gurudeva led yet another parikramā, this time to Śrī Badrikāśrama. On September 4th, 1952, a group of 100 pilgrims departed from Howraha Station in a reserved coach. At first they stopped in Haridvāra for a few days and had darśana of the local places of pilgrimage, such as Harakī Pauḍī, Kanakhala and Satidāha. From there they went to Ṛṣikeśa and stayed in the Bābā Kālī Kamalivālī dharmasālā. There they organized the walking pilgrimage to Kedār and Badrī, and arranged for all the supplies, including luggage, food, water and bedding, to be carried by porters. After that, they began their pilgrimage on foot. Śrī Gaurasundara led the way on a handsomely decorated palanquin. After Him came the sankīrtana party with sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs. Gṛhastha-bhaktas followed, walking with kīrtana, the men and women separate. Those who could not walk rode on hired horses. The local people had never before seen such a big parikramā party. They glorified the beautiful procession and praised the party’s orderly management. The pilgrims walked for almost 45 days. They had darśana of Ṛṣikeśa, Lakṣmaṇajhūlā, Vyāsaghāṭa, Devprayāga, Kīrtinagara, Śrīnagara, Rudrprayāga, Agastamuni, Candrapurī, Guptakāśī, Ukhīmaṭha, Maikhaṇḍā, Rāmpura, Triyugī-nārāyaṇa, Sonaprayāga, Mandākinī, Muṇḍakāṭāgaṇeśa, Gaurikuṇḍa, Kedārnātha, Tuṅganātham Ākāśagaṅgā, Gopeśvara, Vaitariṇīkuṇḍa, Pīpalkoṭhī, Garuḍagaṅgā, Pātālagāṅgā, Yośīmaṭha, Pañcabadrī, Pañcaśīlā, Viṣṇuprayāga, Pāṅsukeśvara, Hanumāna Caṭṭī, Śrī Badrīnārāyaṇa, Taptakuṇḍa, Vasudhārā, Cāmpolī, Nandaprayāg, Ādibadrī and other places, which were all very difficult to reach. Nowadays, the sacred tirthas in the mountains above Ṛṣikeśa are accessible by bus or car, but at that time there were no permanent roads, and it was impossible to reach them except on foot. From time to time there was danger that boulders would fall on the narrow, winding paths. A few times during our pilgrimage this actually happened; all of a sudden a rock would drop from the cliffs into the middle of the group. But by Śrī Bhagavān’s mercy no one was hurt. Disregarding these incidents, the walking pilgrims, with the sympathy and help of the local people, had the unparalleled opportunity to view the beautiful nature and take bath in the pure,

sacred waters of the kuṇḍas at the places of pilgrimage. None of this is possible on today's bus pilgrimages.

Devprayāga is the confluence of the Bhāgīrāthī and the Alakānanda. The current of these two rivers is so swift that if one were to throw a straw in the water it would break into many pieces. From Devprayāga, the Bhagavatī Gaṅgā begins her descent to the plains. By the time she reaches Haridvāra, she is flowing on level ground. Kīrtinagara and Śrīnagara are two charming towns in valleys between arms of the mountains. Here there are big dharmasālās and resting places for pilgrims. Triyugī Nagara and Tuṅganātha are two almost inaccessible places which are always covered with snow. The yajñā fire from the time of the wedding of Pārvatī and Śaṅkara is still burning even today at Gaurī-kuṇḍa, and the pilgrims offered oblations into it. The path to Kedārnātha was almost impassable, although it is more accessible today. It was evening when we reached Śrī Kedārnāthajī with Śrī Gurujī. Snow was falling like cotton from the sky. The pilgrims were shivering from cold, but we had a magnificent view of Kedārnāthajī. On our return, fires were made and everyone warmed up. There was concern about the cold affecting the health of some of the pilgrims, but woollen blankets protected them. Everyone took prasāda and then fell asleep covered with three or four blankets. In the morning, the party took bath, performed sandhyā and ahnika, honoured some prasāda, and then departed for Badrinārāyaṇa.

Yośīmaṭha, a famous maṭha established by Ādi Śaṅkara Ācārya, is a charming place situated in a valley surrounded by many mountains. Camolī is a significant town through which pilgrims go to Badrinārāyaṇa or pass on the trek from Badrinārāyaṇa to Kedārnāthajī. Some pilgrims go from Rṣikeśa to Kedārnāthajī's darśana, and from there pass through Camolī on the way to Badrinārāyaṇa. They then return to Camolī, and from there to Rṣikeśa. That is the route that we followed.

The best and safest time for the Kedār-Badrī pilgrimage is the month of Bhādra. On our pilgrimage, the parikramā party generally stayed overnight at Bābā Kālī-Kamalīvālī dharmasālās. The majority of the places worth seeing are on the banks of Alakānanda.

Śrīla Gurudeva orchestrated the entire parikramā. Everyday he went to sleep after everyone else, woke everyone up, made the arrangements for the coming day and was ready before everyone else. Śrīmad Bhaktikuśala Nārsimha Mahārāja took the pilgrims for darśana. Śrīpāda Svādhikārānanda Brahmācārī (Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī17) performed kīrtana with mṛdaṅga right behind Ṭhākurajī's palanquin. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja made the preparations for the daily worship of Śrī Gaurasundara, managed the facilities for the pilgrims, and supervised the porters who carried the luggage and supplies from one place to another. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja took care of the lamps, and Sudāma Sakhā Brahmācārī was in charge of prasāda and other comforts of the pilgrims.

After staying in the lap of the Himālayas for forty-five long days, performing kīrtana and hearing the glories of Śrī Badrīnārāyaṇa and other sacred places, the pilgrims returned to Howraha and from there to their own places. No one will ever be able to forget the scenic beauty of the Himālayas, so how can these faithful pilgrims ever cease to remember their experience? At the time of parting everyone offered prayers at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva with grateful hearts and tearful eyes.

Śrī Puruṣottama vrata

Members and folowers of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observe Puruṣottama vrata (vows undertaken during the month of Puruṣottama) like Kārtika vrata. Two essays regarding the Puruṣottama month are published in Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā's fourth and fifth issues in the second year. One is about the greatness of the Puruṣottama month and the other gives instructions on how to observe the month. Vaiṣṇava Ācārya Śrīla Thākura Bhaktivinoda has said that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas should observe the Puruṣottama vrata like the Kārtika vrata. Unfortunately, the smārta calendar completely disregards this observance.

The two essays mentioned above describe two kinds of literature: smārta and transcendental. According to the smārta śāstra, karma is the predominating factor, and the special month of Puruṣottama is a leap month when no religious activities should be observed. Therefore it is also called malmās, an impure month. But in transcendental śāstras, this leap month is described as being topmost in all respects and supremely helpful for hari-bhajana.

These two essays relate many significant stories and give much important information regarding this leap month, for example: the eminence of the leap month; the reason for calling it Puruṣottama; the history of Draupadī in the section describing the greatness of the month; the story of King Dṛḍhādhavā narrated by Vālmiki; the rules for bathing in the month of Puruṣottama; the injunction that the only observance for Puruṣottama is pūjā of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; proper and improper things to do during the vrata; the transcendental observances for svaniṣṭha, paraniṣṭha, and nirapekṣa devotees; ekāntika Vaiṣṇavas' natural interest in the month and what is proper to be done; the revelation that the leap month is dear to the bhaktas because it is free from the miseries of karma-kāṇḍa; what is the haviṣyānna (grains for sacrifice), and what are the prohibited things and the proper conduct during the vrata; what is called āmiṣa (non-vegetarian); the result of hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and observing the vrata; the offering of lamps (dīpdān) and its greatness; what is proper to be done on caturdaśī, aṣṭhamī, navamī of kṛṣṇa-pakṣa; the meaning of mantra and namaskār-mantra (when offering praṇamas), nīrājanadhyan and puṣpāñjali-mantra; and the last observances of the vrata and rules for breaking the vow.

Re-establishing the Śrī Gauḍīya

Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhi

Śrī Madanmohana Dāsādhikārī was a rich, respected, gifted and very religious person who lived in Vaimcīgrāma in the Hoogly district. On his repeated requests Śrīla

Guru Mahārāja arrived there in June, 1953, together with Śrī Nārsimha Mahārāja (the editor of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā), Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (Patrikā's preaching manager), Śrī Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrī Trivikrama Mahārāja and some brahmacārīs. For five days various speakers gave lectures on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and śuddha-bhakti in large religious assemblies. Dr. Siddeśvara Bhaṭṭācārya (M.A.) who was the vice-principal of Viśva Bhārtī and had been a lecturer at the School of Oriental Studies in London, discussed Śāṅkara Vedānta or māyāvāda philosophy with Śrī Gurudeva for two hours. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja used śāstric evidence and irrefutable logic to show that the māyāvāda philosophy which Ācārya Śāṅkara established is insubstantial and is opposed to śāstra. At the same time he established that Ācārya Śāṅkara's mukti (liberation) is false and that Ācārya Śāṅkara was not able to obtain such mukti. When the honourable vice-principal heard Ācārya Kesari's deep views supported by śāstra, he was astonished and became speechless. After that, Śrīla Gurudeva preached in nearby Pāṇḍuyā, Muṭukpura and other places and afterwards returned to Chuñchuṛā Maṭha.

On September 29th, 1953 Śrīla Gurudeva re-established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. This Sanskrit Catuṣpāṭhī had been run previously by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti at 33/2 Bospāḍā Lane, Bāgbāzār, Calcutta. It had taught Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa and kāvyā, or literature, and many students had passed their examinations with distinction. Śrīla Gurudeva gave a lecture on Sanskrit, of which the following is a summary.

“In the present age Sanskrit education is being disrespected, but without Sanskrit the welfare of the people is impossible. The word ‘Sanskrit’ means ‘refined’. People who do not know Sanskrit are not qualified to study Vedic knowledge; they are also unqualified for higher education. Higher education means the worship of Bhagavān. In this worship the language, the dīkṣā mantras, the mahā-mantra and so on are all in Sanskrit. Śrī Gauḍīya Catuṣpāṭhī is open to all for the eternal liberation of the baddha-jīvas, and for the expression of transcendental moods in a very refined language.

“Jagadguru Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī composed a transcendental Sanskrit grammar called Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa to expand the education of youths. Reading and studying of Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa is provided to awaken the memory of Śrīla Gosvāmī-pāda in the heart of all jīvas. An important sūtra in this vyākaraṇa is nārāyaṇādudbhūto 'yaṁ varṇakramaḥ: “all varṇas are born from Nārāyaṇa.” There is no difference between the varṇa (letter) of a word and the varṇa (caste) of the jīvas. Therefore creation and destruction and so forth are explained by nāmavādī or sphoṭavādī words. In the viśuddha Sārasvata line (coming from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Prabhupāda) even those who are born in low and untouchable families can become perfect and qualified to perform transcendental sevā for Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

“The prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya is an offender at Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's lotus feet and is also a forceful enemy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti will

drive the outcaste and demoniac thoughts of the prakṛta sahaiyās far away through the preaching of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī.”

On the very first day of the inauguration of the Catuṣpāthī, nine jewels, nine brilliant students were aimed for, who in the future would be revealed as the real preachers of navadhā-bhakti.

Parikramā of Śrī Avantikā

(Ujjayinī) and Nāsik

October 20th, 1953: On the occasion of kṛtika vrata-niyama-sevā, Śrīla Gurudeva left from Howraha station with sannyāsī, brahmacārī and gṛhastha bhaktas to go to Śrī Avantikā, Nāsik and other famous pilgrim places for darśana and parikramā. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, Sudāma Sakhā Brahmacārī and others came with him to take care of the pilgrims. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had previously travelled through all these places.

At first the parikramā party took darśana of Śrī Kurmadeva in Kurmāñcalam. This is the very place where Śrī Jagannāthajī removed the mental agony of the pujārīs by moving the sleeping Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya together with his bed. While Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya was staying in Purī, he had prohibited the pujārīs of Purī from serving Śrī Jagannāthajī because of their chewing of betel, smoking and other bad habits. The pujārīs fasted for several days and prayed to Śrī Jagannāthajī in a distressed mood, “He Jagannāthajī! You are our everything. We have surrendered unto You. Without Your sevā we cannot stay alive.” Hearing their prayers Śrī Jagannāthajī removed Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya at night and put him here in Kurmāñcalam. When Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya woke up in the morning, he thought that he was in a Śiva temple and became very unhappy. But Śrī Kurmadeva consoled him saying, “I am not a Śiva liṅga, but Kurmadeva.” Hearing this voice from the sky, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya became happy and performed pūjā of Kurmadeva.

Next the pilgrims reached Kabūr (Vidyānagar) on the banks of Godāvarī. This is where the transcendental dialogue took place between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāya Rāmānanda, as described in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. After that they reached Nāsik via Paṇḍharpur, Kolhāpur, Mumbādevī (Mumbāi) and Nāsik Road. In Nāsik they took bath in Godāvarī and had darśana of Pañcavaṭī, the place where Sūparṇakhā’s nose was cut, the place where Mārīci was killed, and various other places, and then they reached Avantikā. There they took bath in Chiprā river and took darśana of various different temples, as well as Sandīpanī Muni’s āśrama, where Śrī Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa together with Sudāmā Vipra learnt all kinds of arts. From here the parikramā party went via ākorjī, Nāthadvārā, Puṣkar, Jaipur, Karaulī, Vṛndāvana, Citrakūṭ, and Prayāga, and reached Howraha after a total of 38 days. Then the pilgrims returned to their respective places.

Paṇḍharnātha is a famous temple in Paṇḍharpur. Śrī Viśvarūpa Prabhu came here after taking sannyāsa, and went into aprakaṭa-lilā at the banks of the nearby Bhīmā river. Later, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also came here in search of Śrī Viśvarūpa Prabhu.

Preaching sanātana-dharma in
Śrī Rāmapura, Hoogly

December 15th, 1953: Śrī Ācārya Kesari visited the home of Haripāda Dāsādhikārī, a resident of Śrī Rāmapura, at his special request. Śrīla Gurudeva was accompanied by Śrīmad Bhaktikuśala Nārsimha Mahārāja (the editor of Śrī Patrikā), Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (preaching manager), Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja (office-in-charge), as well as four or five brahmacārīs. Śrī Guru Mahārāja preached śuddha-bhakti for almost 15 days at different places in Śrī Rāmapura. He lectured on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in some places; he spoke on the particular virtue of sanātana-dharma in large religious assemblies; and at other places he talked on various other subjects, such as the superiority of vaiṣṇava-dharma. His philosophical views were complete and full of tattva and irrefutable logic, and they attracted the local teachers, intellectuals, lawyers, judges, businessmen and highly educated people of various classes.

The service and help in the preaching work performed by Kālīpada Gaṅgopādhyāya, the manager of Śrī Rāmapura Dharamaśala, is particularly praiseworthy. This well-known dharamaśala arranged a huge Gītā Jayantī programme at the local school in Ballabhapura. Śrīla Gurudeva was the chairman of the programme and gave a brilliant lecture on the teachings of Gītā for almost 1 1/2 hours. He said that bhakta Arjuna was a liberated soul, and a sakhā and parikara of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was apparently instructing Arjuna when he spoke Bhagavad-gītā, but the teachings of Gītā are actually for ordinary jīvas, and not for Arjuna. Gītā is the primary teaching and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the topmost post-graduate textbook in the kingdom of dharma. Those who wish to enter the kingdom of dharma should carefully adopt these teachings.

The local Ramana Hall was the venue for a huge religious conference on the topic, 'The problems of the present yuga and their solutions.' The audience included eminent and highly qualified people of the town and Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very moving and philosophical lecture for 1 1/2 hours. He said that all problems, whether political, social or economical, will be solved when we follow ṛṣi-nīti (the regulations given by saints and sages). "All these problems existed in India 500 years ago, just as they do now. At that time, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī was the prime minister of Hussain Shah, the ruler of Bengal. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's intelligence was very sharp, and when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu transmitted His śakti into his heart, he was able to leave all material attachments and take shelter at Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet. He enquired from Caitanya Mahāprabhu about the solutions to all the problems of all mankind at all times and in all places. The answers that Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave to these questions are called Sanātana śikṣā. The best, natural and simple way—indeed the only way—for the educated class in Bengal to solve all their problems is to follow this śikṣā. 'Ṛṣi-nīti' indicates the principles of the ṛṣis described in sat-śāstras like the Upaniṣads, Vedānta-sūtra and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. In order to attain their śikṣā, it is therefore necessary to study the ancient Sanskrit scriptures.

How unfortunate it is that the Education Ministry shows so little enthusiasm for this essential aspect of education.”

Preaching śuddha-bhakti in various places in Caubīs Parganā and Medinīpura
January 4th, 1954: Paramārādhya Śrīla Gurudeva visited Aśokanagar Colony in Howraha at the request of the devotees there. He explained Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam for five days, giving a clear analysis of the speciality of vaiṣṇava philosophy compared to other philosophies, especially Cārvāka nitī and the Bolshevik nitī from Russia. He then lectured on ‘The necessity of religious life’ at the huge religious assembly at the local college in Maḥiṣādal in Medinīpura district. After that he gave a deep lecture filled with tattva on ‘Reconciliation of all different religions’ at the religious assembly in front of Śrī Ananta Kumār Dāsa’s mandira in Nātaśāla, close to Gehūkhali.

Later on, in the premises of the High English School of Maṅgalāmāḍo village, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a lecture on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s prema-dharma. On this topic, he said, “The only path to welfare for the jīvas of Kali-yuga is harināma-saṅkīrtana as preached and followed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Certain apasampradāyas have sanctioned drinking alcohol and eating meat and fish. They also put forward the philosophy of yatha mata tatha patha (‘whatever is your opinion is the true way’), but these can never ever be accepted as sanātana-dharma. Scriptures such as the Gītā have clearly refuted these doctrines. The sādhu and the thief have different paths, and their destination can never be the same.

“One cannot attain Śrī Bhagavān by worshipping different demigods. The supreme way of attaining Bhagavān is to worship Him by chanting His names (śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana). The doctrines of the apasampradāyas are opposed to the śāstras and are full of bad siddhānta. Śuddha Vaiṣṇavas are gurus of the four varṇas. Unfortunately, the modern class of so-called Vaiṣṇavas is full of bad qualities, and is a degraded apasampradāya. One cannot gain any benefit by following it. Vaiṣṇavas must perform the topmost bhakti to Viṣṇu and must follow the rules of proper vaiṣṇava conduct and etiquette.”

After Gurudeva’s lectures at Sarveḍiyā, hoḍā, Ektārā, Nāikuṅḍi, Maluvāsān, Pichladā, Golvāḍā, Maṅgalāmāḍo and other places, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja gave lectures on Śrī Gaura-Kṛṣṇa-Rāma līlā with the help of slides. After preaching strongly in this way everywhere, Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Chuṅchuṛā maṭha.

Lecture at the eminent Sanskrit
conference in Chuṅchuṛā

February 6th, 1954: The prominent Sanskrit scholars of India assembled at the local Sanskrit school in Chuṅchuṛā for a huge Sanskrit conference. The assembly unanimously accepted Mahāmahopādhyāya Śrī Yogendranāth (tarka-saṅkhyā vedānta-tīrtha) as chairman, and then began its work. At the special request of the members of the assembly, Śrīla Gurudeva spoke for an hour on ‘Hindu dharma and

vaiṣṇava philosophy'. He began his lecture, which was extremely brilliant and full of deep philosophy, by especially emphasising the need to revive Indian culture and Sanskrit education. He also stressed the necessity to organise institutions such as eminent Sanskrit conferences to augment Sanskrit education throughout India. "None of the ancient scriptures such as the Vedas, Vedānta-sūtras, the Purāṇas and the Itihāsas (histories) have mentioned the word 'Hindu'," Śrīla Gurudeva pointed out. "Nevertheless, those who live between Hindukuśa or the Himālayan mountains in the North and Bindu Sarovara in the South, and who follow sanātana-dharma are called Hindus. Therefore, we should understand that the term 'Hindu dharma' refers to sanātana-dharma. The vaiṣṇava-dharma described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other scriptures is simply and solely sanātana-dharma."

Śrīla Gurudeva then used scriptural logic and irrefutable arguments to establish that Śaṅkarācārya's kevalādvaita-vāda or māyāvāda philosophy is opposed to śāstra, and is a completely imaginary and illusory doctrine. This created a commotion in the assembly, and some people stood up and started to protest against his views. But Ācārya Kesarī displayed his expertise in all śāstras by wonderfully refuting their arguments and establishing the tenets of vaiṣṇava-dharma. The assembled Vaiṣṇavas became very joyful on seeing his unprecedented erudition, but some advaita-vādi scholars became disturbed.

After Śrīla Gurudeva left, other members of the assembly gave lectures. These included Mahāmahopādhyāya Śrī Yogendranātha (tarka-sāṅkhya-vedāntatīrtha), Śrī Jīva (nyayatīrtha, M.A.), Dr. Mahāmānvrata Brahmācārī (M.A., Ph.D.), a teacher from Hoogly College (M.A., kāvyatīrtha) and many expert Sanskrit scholars from Calcutta's Sanskrit College.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā festival in Viṣṇupura Kamārapotā of Medinīpura

February 20th, 1954: The founder-ācārya and president of the Samiti visited the home of Śrī Rādhānātha Dāsādhikārī, a resident of Kamārapotā Viṣṇupura, at his earnest request. Śrīla Ācāryadeva's appearance day, Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, was celebrated splendidly with pūjā-pañcaka according to Śrī Vyāsapūjā-paddhati (which was collected by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and revised by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura). After that, Śrīla Ācāryadeva's sannyāsī, brahmācārī and gṛhastha disciples offered puṣpāñjali at his lotus feet.

Māghī Kṛṣṇapañcamī was the appearance day of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's most worshipful Śrī Gurudeva, Om Viṣṇupāda Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. On that day, Śrīla Gurudeva, together with his disciples and followers, performed arcana-pūjan and offered śraddhā-puṣpāñjali at Prabhupāda's holy lotus feet. After various sannyāsīs had given their lectures at the religious assembly that day, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very significant lecture on Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's transcendental character and teaching. Śrī Rādhānātha Dāsādhikārī became the Samiti's special object of affection for taking care of all the expenses for this Vyāsapūjā celebration.

Preaching sanātana-dharma at

various places in Assam

May 14th, 1954: Śrīla Ācāryadeva started a journey to Assam for preaching śuddha-bhakti together with Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Nārasimha Mahārāja, Śrī Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrī Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, Śrī Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrī Paramadharmeśvara Brahmācārī, Śrī Ānanda Brahmācārī, Śrī Gajendramocana Brahmācārī and some 10 or 12 residents of the maṭha. On May 16th they reached Golokgaṅja station. Śrī Sanata Kumār 'Bhaktiśāstrī' 'Bhāgavatbhūṣaṇa' and other leading bhaktas then brought them with nagar-saṅkīrtana to Śrī Divyajñāna Dāsādhikārī's home, where Śrīla Gurudeva's pūjā-arcana was performed. For several days Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on śuddha-bhakti and the glories of śrī harināma at large religious assemblies. After that, he went with his party to Dhūvaḍī. There he stayed at the Prapannāśrama of his Godbrother, Śrīpāda Nimānanda Sevātīrtha Prabhu and lectured continuously for seven days on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He used logic and śāstric evidence to establish that vedānta-darśana (Vedānta philosophy) stands supreme amongst the ṣaḍ-darśanas (the six philosophical systems of India) and that bhakti is the ultimate subject matter of Vedānta-sūtra.

After this, Śrīla Gurudeva preached bhakti in Kacaharīhāṭa, Khākasiyālī and other places, and then accepted the hospitality of Śrī Prakṛtīśacandra Baruā Bahādur, the prince of Gaurīpura kingdom. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja stayed there for some days and extensively preached sanātana-dharma. Every day he lectured on the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam at the Sanskrit School run by the local rāja. The principal of the school came there regularly to hear Bhāgavatam, along with other teachers and many students. The minister Bahādur of Gaurīpura State and many officials came as well. After that Śrīla Gurudeva preached in Kumārī village and other places and arrived at the famous village Cāpara. There, on the excellent premises of the local English High School, an extensive religious assembly was organised with an audience of some ten to twelve thousand people. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a deep and investigative lecture on sanātana-dharma, which very much impressed the educated, respected and faithful listeners.

In those days a so-called guru called Kṣetramohana Cakravartī was living in Cāpara. Posing as a Vaiṣṇava, he preached many doctrines which were opposed to vaiṣṇava-dharma, and his moral character was also not very pure. The locals invited him and his followers to a debate with Ācārya Kesarī. Śrīla Gurudeva asked him some questions regarding śuddha-bhakti, but Cakravartī could not answer them. Śrīla Gurudeva proved in front of the assembled audience that Cakravartī's doctrines were against śāstra and were not in accordance with any sampradāya. Cakravartī became ashamed. Begging for forgiveness at Śrīla Guruji's lotus feet, he left the assembly.

After this, at the request of the honourable minister Bahādur of Abhayāpurī State, Śrīla Gurudeva and his preaching party visited Abhyāpurī. They stayed there for three days and Śrīla Gurudeva gave very impressive lectures on sanātana-dharma on the premises of the local girls' school. Mahārāja Bahādur of Abhayāpurī was very

impressed by his lectures and very faithfully offered prayers at Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lotus feet. Mahārāja Bahādur's meek and humble behaviour, his non-pretentious life, his truthfulness and generosity, and his sincere faith in religion and in the Lord are all very praiseworthy. After preaching in Cokāpāḍā and Boṅgāī village, Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā.

Establishing Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā and publishing Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā

The 84-kosa Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā 1954 took place with great festivities in the month of Kārtika under the guidance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja. After the pilgrims left, Śrīla Gurudeva along with Śrīpad Sanātana Dāsādhikarī¹⁸, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and other disciples, stayed in Mathurā for some days. Śrīla Gurudeva wanted to establish a preaching centre of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Śrī Mathurā dhāma and from there spread Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's śuddha-bhakti to the whole of North India. Śrīla Gurudeva was a perfect niškiñcana Vaiṣṇava with no financial means whatsoever. Nonetheless, for seven days he and his followers kept searching for a suitable place. On the seventh day they saw an old dharmasālā on the south side of the famous Kamsa-ṭilā and in front of the big hospital in Mathurā. The building was dilapidated, but the location was very good. It was right in the middle of Holigate, the Imperial Bank, the State Bank of India, the Head Post Office, the State bus stand, and the main market. It had 36 rooms and a big hall made of bricks and stones. The party discussed business with the owner of the dharmasālā, but Gurujī did not have even one paisā, so what could be done? Gurujī returned to his own place with his party.

The next day, Śrīla Gurudeva was ready to see another place, but Śrīla Sanātana Prabhu declared, "Today I am very tired. I like the place we saw yesterday. Now I don't want to see any other place." Gurujī said, "It is not possible to collect 40-50,000 rupees at once. At least we would have to put down some money as an advance payment and I don't even have enough for that." Śrīla Sanātana Prabhu then took 7,000 rupees from the belt around his waist and gave the money to Śrī Gurudeva. Everyone stared at Sanātana Prabhu's face in amazement, their eyes open wide. "I have known your desire for a long time," Śrīla Sanātana Prabhu told Gurujī. "That's why I have been roaming about with this money around my waist for a month or a month and a half. Now I don't want to see any other place. Please make arrangement to buy the dharmasāla we saw yesterday." Gurujī said, "We need at least 12,000 rupees as an advance payment to get the written agreement on this place." On hearing this, Śrīla Sanātana Prabhu sent a telegram to his son Śrī Nārāyaṇa Dāsa, to get the rest of the money that was needed quickly. The registration was done in the Mathurā Registration Office.

Śrī Ācāryadeva established Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha on the disappearance day of Jagadguru Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, December 16th, 1954. In accordance with Śrīla Ācāryadeva's desire, preaching of pure bhakti-dharma throughout the whole of North India started from there. Besides

this, also according to his desire, publication of Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā, the Samiti's transcendental monthly Hindi magazine, started there. Śrīla Gurudeva appointed Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as the editor of this magazine. It quickly became very popular in the local educated community, because of its bhāva (sentiments), language and its philosophy which was full of siddhānta. Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā introduced eminent scholars of Mathurā to the supremacy of the philosophical views of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' bhakti-dharma, and they glorified it abundantly.

During Kārtika month of 1955, kārtika-vrata niyama-sevā was organized at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha under the guidance of Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva. Under the auspices of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti the pilgrimage began on the auspicious day October 29th, from Howraha Station. The parikramā party reached Mathurā via Kāśī and Prayāga, and arrived at Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha on November 2nd. From there they started Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā. Śrīmad Bhakti-bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivijñāna Āśrama Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktijīvana Janārdana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikram Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja glorified the dhāma, performed kīrtana and gave hari-kathā. The devotees of the maṭha arranged suitable vehicles, transportation, lodging and so on for the pilgrims. In this regard Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (editor of Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā), Rasarāja Vrajavāsī (publisher and manager of the Patrikā), Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmācārī and Śrī Prabuddha Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī deserve to be mentioned.

At the time of Govardhana-pūjā, the Annakūṭa festival was completed with big celebrations. The vast nāṭya-mandira was filled with preparations for offering. The mathurā-vāsīs had never before seen such a big Annakūṭa festival. Ordinarily in Vraja chappan bhoga (an offering of 56 dishes) is outstanding, but Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti offered 365 different preparations at this huge Annakūṭa. All around Śrī Girirāja Mahārāja were pyramids of rice as well as large and small plates of khicrī, khīr, different kinds of sweets, vegetables, pickles, chutnies, halva, laḍḍū, pūrīs, fruits, roots, green leafy vegetables and other preparations, on all of which were tulasī mañjarīs. Faithful people came from great distances to have darśana, and about five thousand people accepted mahā-prasāda. When kārtika-vrata was completed, all the pilgrims returned to their respective places.

Installation of the Deities and
Annakūṭa festival in Śrī Keśavajī
Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā

November 3rd 1956: On the day of Śrī Govardhana-pūjā and Annakūṭa, Paramārādhyā Śrīla Ācāryadeva established his worshipful Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. In this way he gave his followers and the vraja-vāsīs a golden opportunity for service to the Deities. The Deities' darśana is very sweet and attractive. Those who see Them feel in their hearts that the Deities have been attracted by the unparalleled prema of āśraya-

vigraha (Śrīla Gurudeva) and have manifested Their own prema-maya vigraha (Their form imbued with prema).

There was a great celebration when the Deities were installed. Pūjyapāda Śrī Bhaktibhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja performed the ceremonies of abhiṣeka, arcana and other aspects of the installation, along with Śrī Trivikrama Mahārāja and Rasarāja Vrajavāsī. Śrīmad Bhaktikuśala Nārsimha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktideśika Ācārya Mahārāja, Śrī Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and other prominent sannyāsīs performed vaiṣṇava-homa and other ceremonies. After the abhiṣeka, the Deities were installed in the altar room, and there Śrī Ācāryadeva himself consecrated Them. He quoted a verse which he had composed himself, to explain the tattva-siddhānta regarding the white complexion of the Deity Śrī Vinodabihārījī.

rādhācintā niveśena yasya kāntirvalopitā

śrī kṛṣṇa-caraṇaṁ vande rādhāliṅgita vighrahaṁ

“I worship that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose dark complexion has disappeared and who has become resplendent with a golden complexion, due to being tightly embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhika or thoroughly immersed in separation from Her .”

Śrī Mohinīmohan Rāgbhūṣaṇa Prabhu and Śrī Satyavighraha Prabhu charmed the listeners with their śrī nāma-kīrtana at this ceremony. In the nāṭya-mandira, in front of śrī mandira, Śrī Girirājājī was offered a mountain of laḍḍūs, pūrīs, kacaurīs, rice, paramāṇna, puṣpāṇna, khicrī, different kinds of vegetables, fruits, roots, curd, milk, paneer and other preparations. Many people participated in this ceremony, including professors from various colleges in Mathurā Dhāma, teachers from schools, lawyers, judges and other educated and respected gentlemen. They were all very impressed to hear from Śrīla Ācāryadeva about bhakti-tattva in the Gauḍīya philosophy. After that, they became very blissful on having the darśana of the Deities and honouring delicious mahā-prasāda, which was distributed to almost three thousand people on that day.

Giriścandra Dāsa from Pūrvacaka in Medinīpura district bore all the expenses for the Annakūṭa. Gajendramohan Dāsādhikārī and Śrīyukta Kamalabālā Devī from Kalyāṇapura donated the Deities, Their clothes, ornaments and so on. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti offers special appreciation of their ideal service.

Preaching the words of Śrī Caitanya in various places of Assam

December, 1955: Paramārādhyatama Śrī Gurudeva, accom-panied by his initiated sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs, extensively preached Śrī Caitanya’s message in various places in Assam. This time he went to most of the places in Pūjyapāda Śrī Nimānanda Sevātīrtha Prabhu’s preaching area. Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on sanātana-dharma, bhāgavat-dharma, śuddha-bhakti and other subjects at prominent religious assemblies in Golokgaṅja, Dhūbaḍī, Bichandāi, Khānūrī, Rāmapura, Bongāi Grāma, Chakāpāḍā, Khagarpura, Sākomūḍā, Calantāpaḍā, Abhaypurī and other places. He returned to Chuñchuṛā Maṭha after about one month of preaching.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūja festival in Begunābāḍī

Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti has for many years observed Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā according to the Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati compiled by Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and revised by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The original inception of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā took place in Śrīvās Āṅgana in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura about five hundred years ago. Under the guidance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu performed pūjā of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on the seat of Śrī Vyāsa. On this occasion Śrīvās Paṇḍita mentioned the question of a Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati to Śrīman Mahāprabhu. For this reason, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was at great pains to collect this ancient paddhati from Govardhana Maṭha in Purī. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura then revised and developed it to make it useful for his sampradāya. Parama-ārādhayatama Śrīla Gurudeva found this paddhati and introduced the observance of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā combined with pūjā-pañcaka. This ceremony is observed every year with great celebrations in various places.

This year Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā was organized in the vast courtyard of the school at Begunābādī in Medinīpura district, and was celebrated in a grand way for three days, from Māghī Kṛṣṇa Tṛtīyā to Pañcamī. Ten or twelve thousand people participated every day in this festival, and on the last day mahā-prasāda was distributed to a crowd which was too large to count. Girīścandra Dāsādhikārī from Pūrvacaka received special praise from the Samiti for taking care of the entire expenses for the festival.

Śrī Girīścandrajī and his wife both received hari-nāma mantra and dīkṣā from Śrī Ācāryadeva on the first day of the festival. At that time he was 84 years old. As a wealthy landowner, he had previously spent his life in a grandiose way with pomp and show. He had ordered fragrant tobacco from France and other foreign countries, and used to sit on his bed smoking his golden hukka with the help of a long pipe. But during the last 84-kosa Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā he had spent one month hearing śuddha hari-kathā and his heart had changed. Now he was free from worldly attachments and had taken a vow to perform bhajana. Before shaving his head on the day of dīkṣā, he did a last praṇāma to his extremely dear hukka and threw it far away. Everyone was amazed to see his conviction and determination.

On the first day of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva offered arcana-pūjan and puṣpāñjali at the lotus feet of his Paramāradhyatama Śrīla Prabhupāda, after which Śrīla Ācāryadeva's sannyāsī, brahmacārī and gr̥hastha disciples offered puṣpāñjali at his lotus feet. Śrī Trivikrama Mahārāja gave a lecture about Śrī Gurupūjā and our most worshipful Śrī Gurudeva spoke about Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. At the religious assembly in the evening Śrīla Guru Mahārāja read the section in Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata about Vyāsa-pūjā. On the second day, letters of commemoration in various languages were read and Śrī Ācāryadeva gave a lecture. On the third day, Śrīla Ācāryadeva instructed Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and Śrī Rasarāja Vrajavāsī to perform Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā according to the Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati with pūjā-pañcaka of sixteen articles.

A protest against the law controlling Hindu sādhus and sannyāsīs

Since ancient times India has been a predominantly dharmic (religious) country. All aspects of the culture in India—such as tradition, morality, social structure, politics and administration

—have been determined and conducted from a religious perspective since Vedic times. The supremacy of dharma in the Indian society was protected even during the rule of the yavanas and the British. However, after independence dharma has declined very rapidly and to an extent that has not been seen for thousands of years. On July 27th, 1956, a proposal to control Hindu sādhus and sannyāsīs was brought to the Indian Lok Sabhā (the Lower House of the Indian parliament). The rationale behind this legislation was that the behaviour of sādhus and sannyāsīs was becoming more sinful, and that their life style was becoming more contrary to the interests of society at large. Furthermore, there was an increase in the incidence of begging. It was thought necessary to control this, and the intention was to use legislation to remove the calumny on true sādhus and purify society.

At that time, Paramārādhyaatama Ācārya Kesari resided in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā. When his attention was drawn towards this legislation, he protested with a lion-like voice. “The Indian Penal Code has ample regulations to suppress sinful behaviour and activities opposed to society”, he said. “What is the need for this separate law? And why not put a legislation on the Muslim mullās, the Christian pope and ministers and the Buddhists and Jains who are begging? Why cause an uproar about Hindus and no one else? Before any legislation against Hindu sādhus is presented in the Lok Sabhā, it should be publicized throughout the whole country. Only then should the debate be conducted in the Lok Sabhā. It is improper in all respects to neglect this procedure and to make some legislation or law secretly.” Ācārya Kesari started a forceful campaign, protesting strongly against this legislation. He wrote a letter of protest, printed it in Hindi, Bengali and English, and sent it to prominent politicians, social leaders and leaders of religious societies. A copy of the letter was sent to Śrī Nehrujī, who was the prime minister at the time, and also to the members of the Lok Sabhā. The result of this was such an awakening of the people that the Lok Sabhā quickly rejected the legislation. Here is a copy of the protest he wrote.

“The laws, rules and regulations of India are all defined according to śāstric law; no legislation can be accepted in India which is separate from śāstric laws. No person or society can control sādhus and sannyāsīs; they are only controlled by śāstra. We find evidence to support this statement in all the Purāṇas and other śāstras. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.21.12) it is said,

sarvatrāskhalitādeśaḥ sapta-dvīpaika-daṇḍa-dhṛk
anyatra brāhmaṇa-kulād anyatrācyuta-gotrataḥ.

“Mahārāja Pṛthu, who was the sole emperor of the entire world, very firmly applied his system of law and punishment to everyone except for the ṛṣis, brāhmaṇas and acyuta-gotriya viṣṇu-bhaktas (the Vaiṣṇavas).”

“Saints and sādhus are India’s pride and charming beauty. People from all over the world are attracted to this beautiful ornament of India and are ready to construct their own spiritual and social lives accordingly. Indian sādhus and sannyāsīs are very peace-loving. That is why the whole world looks to India for peace. It is extremely improper and completely illegal to check religious conduct by politics.

“It was declared by the Indian constitutional structure that India is primarily a secular state. This attempt by the Indian Lok Sabhā to try to restrict one religion and not others is therefore completely against the constitutional law. If this legislation were passed, the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and other laws would also have to be changed and revised in many fields.

“There is no need to make a new law to control misbehaviour separately. If it is necessary to prepare a separate law to control the misconduct of sādhus, then it is also necessary to prepare a separate law to control the misconduct, the sinful behaviour and the anti-social activities of the Congress party and other political parties. It is more essential to control the political agents than it is to control the ācāryas of the sādhus and sannyāsīs. Another point is that so far there are no laws prepared for control of the black market and other anomalies in society.

“Only sādhus and sannyāsīs can understand the activities of other sādhu and sannyāsīs. How can anyone recognise a sādhu if he is not a sādhu himself, and has never had the association of sādhus and sannyāsīs, or even been near them? How can he judge who is a sādhu and who is a non-sādhu? We need laws which apply to everyone. At present there is no arrangement to control non-sādhus, yet non-sādhus are tightening their waist-belts and jumping to their feet to control sādhus. This is the age of voting, and there are more non-sādhus than sādhus; that is why they can present laws to condone atrocities against sādhus. The majority is creating an atrocity against the minority. We can never call this a good rule.

“Nowadays malice, violence and so forth are directed towards sādhus. Non-sādhus are becoming degraded and ashamed because of their misconduct of in society. They feel abandoned and disrespected by sādhus, and in revenge are presenting bills to control them. This is befitting the age of Kali. The proposal to register sādhus will give all the non-sādhus of India a golden opportunity; they will be able to validate their immoral character by entering their names in the register of sādhus. Actual sādhus do not want to be called ‘sādhu’ and would feel ashamed to be identified as a registered or licensed sādhu. Some sādhus will not even register their names at the government office. Besides, if the licensing officer is anti-Hindu, how can one rely on him to judge who is and who is not a sādhu according to Hindu śāstra?

“Here is another point. Is a gṛhastha considered a sādhu or not, according to the proposed definition? If gṛhasthas are excluded from the sādhu category then gṛhasthas who are actually very elevated will be called non-sādhus. This will be an offense under section 352 of Indian Penal Code, or else a case of defamation under section 500 of the same. If some gṛhastha wants to adopt a virtuous way of life or to become a sādhu, then he will also have to take a license or get his name registered.

Suppose a highly posted official in an office or a law court wants to lead a religious life. Must he certify his goodness with some district magistrate who may be immoral or even vicious? And will that district magistrate have the power to cancel the licence and punish that virtuous official?

“The constitution of India has passed the ‘Widow Marriage Act’ and the ‘Śārada Child Marriage Act’ proposed by the honourable Īśvaracandra Vidyāsāgara, but the Indian public has not accepted them. These laws are lying in some corner of the library of the Indian constitution. This present law will certainly face the same sorry plight if it is forced on the general public against their wishes. We are totally against such a law. We humbly request the members of the Lok Sabhā not to pass this bill. We also request all Indian newspapers and their readers to oppose this blind law with all their power. Indeed, we request the entire society, especially the sādhus and sannyāsīs of India, to unite and raise their voices against this law.”

Inauguration of Śrī Golokgañja

Gauḍīya Maṭha (Assam)

Jagadguru Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarsvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura preached śuddha-bhakti strongly outside West Bengal, for example in Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Madras (Chennai) and Uttar Pradesh. There were many gr̥hastha-bhaktas in these different states who were very expert in the siddhāntas of śuddha-bhakti and who preached in their own local languages. One of the foremost of these was Śrīpāda Nimānanda Sevātīrtha Prabhu from Dhūbaḍī in Assam, who preached Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s message in Assamese all over Assam, under Śrīla Prabhupāda’s guidance. But very shortly after Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarsvatī Prabhupāda entered aprakaṣa-lilā, Śrīpāda Sevātīrtha Prabhu also left this world. At that time he instructed his disciples to continue their spiritual life under the guidance of Paramapūjaniya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Among Śrīpāda Sevātīrtha Prabhu’s gr̥hastha disciples, Śrīmatī Sucitrābālā Devī is a very intelligent woman, and learned in the subtle concepts of bhakti-dharma.

Rāmāyaṇa states, gurorājñā hyavicāraṇīyā: “The disciple’s duty is to follow the guru’s order without consideration.” Sucitrā Devī therefore very insistently invited Ācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to Assam to preach śuddha-bhakti. On her repeated requests, Śrīla Gurudeva arrived in Golokgañj with twelve followers, and preached bhakti strongly in various places. The public was very impressed to see the special quality of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja’s preaching, and to hear the hidden siddhāntas of bhakti, and they resolved to spend time in spiritual life under the guidance of his teachings.

The devoted Sucitrā Devī unconditionally donated her land and newly built residence etc. for establishing a Gauḍīya Maṭha in Golokgañja. This donation was duly registered at the Registration Office in the main town of Gvālapāḍā district, Dhūbaḍī. Her husband, Śrīyuta Devendracandra Dāsa (initiated as Śrī Divyajñāna Dāsādhikāri), especially helped his wife in this transcendental task.

At Śrī Surendranātha Dāsa's request, Śrīla Gurudeva came with his preaching party to Devān village in Gvālapāḍā district on February 11-12th, 1957. A extensive festival took place here at the occasion of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's appearance day and Śrī Nimānanda Sevātīrtha Prabhu's disappearance. Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a brilliant lecture on the life history of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Nimānanda Prabhu at the local religious assembly. Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja explained Gaura līlā with the help of slides. Paṇḍita Śrī Sanat Kumār Dāsādhikārī and Paṇḍita Śrī Vṛndāvana Dāsādhikārī also gave lectures with a brilliant command of words. Honourable Śrī Suren Dāsa met all the expenses for the festival.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā celebration in

Śrī Golokgaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha

February 17th to 19th, 1957: There was a great celebration of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā at Śrī Golokgaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha for three days, while Śrīla Ācāryadeva was present there with his disciples. Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā was carried out under his guidance with pūjā-pañcaka according to Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's paddhati. An extensive religious assembly was held in the courtyard of the maṭha and Śrīla Gurupādapadma submitted an investigative and philosophical lecture on following Śrī Vyāsadeva and Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. Afterwards, mahā-prasāda was distributed to two or three thousand invited and uninvited guests. The service activities of Śrīmatī Sucitrā Bālādevī and her family were very praiseworthy. The unwearying service of Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmācārī and Dhanyātīdhanya Brahmācārī was also very commendable.

Śrī Ācārya Kesārī in the 'All-Bengal Vaiṣṇava Conference'

March 12th to 14th, 1957: Śrīpāṭa Maheśa is a well-known place adjacent to Śrī Rāmapura in Hoogly district in Bengal and the Ratha-yātrā which is held there is like the one in Jagannātha Purī. Previously, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's associate Śrī Kamalākara Pippallāi stayed there performing sādhana-bhajana. On the occasion of the anniversary of his disappearance day an 'All-Bengal Vaiṣṇava Conference' was organised for three days under the auspices of the Sinthi Vaiṣṇava Society and the Śrī Rāmapura Dharma Sabhā. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's founder ācārya, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī was selected as the chairman of this conference. Śrī Gopendrabhūṣaṇa (sāṅkhyatīrtha), Paṇḍit Surendranātha (pañcatīrtha), Śrī Nagendranātha Śāstrī (teacher), Paṇḍit Śrī Phaṇīndranātha Śāstrī (M.A.B.L.) and other famous scholars of Navadvīpa were all present there.

Śrī Vinoda Kīśora Gosvāmī (purāṇatīrtha) addressed the as-sembly. The main guest, advocate Śrī Patitpāvana Caṭṭopādhyāya gave a speech on Śrī Kamalākara Pippallāi's life history, and the scholars mentioned above gave their speeches. Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrīpād Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja made some critical comments on Śrī Phaṇīndranātha Śāstrī's statements. After that, the chairman, Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja gave a lecture full of śāstric pramāṇas on Śrī Kamalākara Pippallāi. In a serious voice, he strongly opposed apasiddhāntic views that prākṛta-sahajiyās had written in unauthentic literature. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta mentions Śrī Pippallāijī, whose life was actually full of pure bhakti. However, the recorded life history which

has been written about him includes some impure and avaiṣṇava views, which are actually against bhakti. At the end of the assembly the audience brought up many questions regarding Śrī Pippallāi, which Śrīla Gurudeva solved.

Observing upavāsa (fasting) on

Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī

Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī has a special significance in the society of Śrī Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas, and they honour this day very deeply. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the most complete śakti of Kṛṣṇa. She is Herself Īśvarī and all other śaktis manifest from Her. For this reason, some people want to regard Rādhāṣṭamī as a jayantī and observe fasting without water, as they do on Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī. In reality, though, even though Hari-bhakti-vilāsa refers to Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī tithi as a vrata, it does not prescribe any fasting for this day. Thus the sahajiyā sampradāya, which observes fasting on this day, is actually exhibiting excessive devotion towards Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is the only smṛti for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and it records in a splendid way, with scriptural references, the system by which vaiṣṇavas should observe vratas and fasting. Satkriyasāra-dīpikā is another prominent text concerning activities prescribed by śāstra. It is improper for a pure Vaiṣṇava to create new vratas and transgress vratas and other rules recorded in these books. Nowadays the registered Gauḍīya Mission, which is run by Congress Company, has changed the śuddha-vaiṣṇava line and has begun to observe Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī vrata according to the doctrine of the sahajiyās.

Observance of vrata and fasting is prescribed in the śāstras only for the appearance days of śaktimān para-tattva (the Supreme Truth who possesses all potencies) or His incarnations. If fasting were observed for the appearance of śakti-tattva, then one would have to observe fasting on all 365 days of the year. This is because, in addition to bhagavat-śaktis, all the ācāryas and gurus in the guru-paramparā are included in śakti-tattva and it is impossible to observe vrata and fasting on all of the appearance and disappearance days.

All the maṭhas under the jurisdiction of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observed Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī vrata on Sunday, September 1st, 1957, according to the method of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. On this day there was abhiṣeka of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, with special offerings of bhoga, lectures on Śrī Rādhā tattva, saṅkīrtana and so on.

On the Rādhāṣṭamī day, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja visited Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha which Paramapūjyapāda Śrīla Bhaktirakṣaka Sridhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja had established in Kolerganja, Navadvīpa. There the ācārya of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti gave a deeply philosophical lecture on Rādhā tattva. Other speakers also offered puṣpāñjalī at the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā by revealing their various conclusions.

Vyāsa-pūjā at Śrī Gauravāṇī-Vinoda Āśrama in Khaḍagpura

February 8th, 1958: Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā was celebrated in a grand way on Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day at Śrī Gauravāṇī-Vinoda-Āśrama in Khaḍagpura. This was made possible by the irrepressible enthusiasm of Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad

Bhaktijivana Janārdana Mahārāja, the president of the āśrama. In previous years Vyāsa-pūjā had been celebrated with great festivities in Śrī Golokgaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Assam, according to the method initiated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. In 1957, the celebrations had been held in Begunabāḍī, Pūrvacak, near Medinīpura. Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja came to this ceremony with his disciples and performed the priestly duties (purohitya) of Vyāsa-pūjā. On the second day of Vyāsa-pūjā, mahā-prasāda was distributed to about five thousand faithful people. A religious assembly was arranged on the occasion of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, and Śrīla Ācāryadeva addressed the assembly as follows: “Not only we Indians, but the whole world, is eternally indebted to Śrī Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vyāsa. He divided the Vedas into four parts to help general people who are trying to study them. He compiled Vedānta-sūtra or Brahma-sūtra in order to reconcile apparent contradictions between Vedānta and Upaniṣads, the essence of the Vedas. He composed the different Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata and finally, in order to make Vedānta-sūtra easily understandable, he himself published the spotless mahā-purāṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, as the commentary on Vedānta-sūtra.

All the religious societies in India believe that somehow or other they are followers of Vyāsa (vyāsānuga). However, when we carefully study the literature composed by Śrī Vyāsadeva we can clearly see that bhagavat-bhakti is the main subject matter in his literature. He has not mentioned the words jñāna and muktianywhere in the 550 sūtras of his famous Brahma-sūtra. On the contrary, he has established bhakti everywhere in the genuine commentary of his Brahma-sūtra, namely paramahamsī saṁhitā Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Although the Śrī Śāṅkara Sampradāya gives prominence to Vyāsa-pūjā, their so-called Vyāsa-pūjā is a mockery. In Ācārya Śāṅkara’s commentary on Brahma-sūtra, he has accused Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Śrī Vedavyāsa of being mistaken. Śrī Śāṅkara has written that Brahman is ānanda-svarūpa (embodiment of bliss), and can never be ānandamaya (blissful). But Śrī Vyāsajī has called Brahman ānandamaya (blissful) in Vedānta-sūtra. In this way, Ācārya Śāṅkara has attempted to refute Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s opinion. Therefore, Ācārya Śāṅkara’s Vyāsa-pūjā is only for show. Śrī Vyāsadeva is worshipped properly in the Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. All tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs should accept the example of the vyāsa-pūjā celebrated by Śrīpāda Janārdana Mahārāja. Nowadays, we see that, in the name of Vyāsa-pūjā, so-called gurus everywhere accept puṣpāñjali and arcāñjali offered to their own feet and they hear and accept praise given to them by their own disciples. However, those who only accept puṣpāñjali and arcāñjali offered to their own feet and who do not follow Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati (which was collected by Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and edited and developed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) are not actually performing Vyāsa-pūjā. On Vyāsa-pūjā day an ācārya will worship guru, guru-paramparā and upāsya. According to this pūjā-paddhati, on that day one should worship the following:

1) guru-pañcaka (Śrī Guru, Paramaguru, Parameṣṭhīguru, Parātparguru, Paramparātparguru); 2) ācārya-pañcaka (Śrī Śukadeva, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Viṣṇusvāmī, Nimbāditya); 3) vyāsa-pañcaka (Śrī Vedavyāsa, Pail, Vaiśampāyana, Jaiminī, and Sumanta); 4) sanakādi-pañcaka (Śrī Sanak, Sanatkumār, Sanātan, Sanandan, and Viṣvaksena); 5) kṛṣṇa-pañcaka, (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha); 6) upāśya-pañcaka (Śrī Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, Gaura, Gadādhara, Śrī Gurudeva); and 7) pañca-tattva (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Nityānanda, Advaita Ācārya, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa).

It is the supreme duty of Śrī Gauḍīya Sārasvata Vaiṣṇavas to follow the Vyāsa-pūjā paddhati used by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

On this occasion, when the disciples of Śrīpāda Janārdana Mahārāja went to him to offer puṣpāñjali at his feet, he instructed them to offer puṣpāñjali first at the feet of their śikṣa guru, Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja. When, on their guru's order, all the disciples came to Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to offer puṣpāñjali, he in turn explained that a disciple should first worship his own Guru's feet and then other Gurus. For this he gave examples and proofs from śāstras. Śrīpād Janārdana Mahārāja could not reject the instruction from his senior god-brother and śikṣa-guru. Accordingly, his disciples worshipped their own Gurudeva and then offered puṣpāñjali to Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Pūjyapāda Janārdana Mahārāja did not forget this event for his whole life. He used to say that he had watched all his god-brothers very closely, but had never seen anyone who was so generous, so learned in siddhānta, and such a fearless speaker of truth as Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja. When he spoke like this, tears used to come to his eyes.

Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti
and Akṣaya Tṛtīyā

April 22nd, 1958: A special festival was observed for Akṣaya Tṛtīyā, and for the anniversary of the inauguration of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Besides the lecture and kīrtana, a special religious assembly was organized that day in Śrī Uddāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchurā. Paramārādhya Śrīla Gurudeva addressed the assembly as follows.

“Akṣaya Tṛtīyā is the first day of Satya-yuga. It is on this day that the road to Śrī Badrīnārāyaṇa is opened every year, and Śrī Candana Yātrā also takes place in Śrī Jagannātha Purī on Akṣaya Tṛtīyā. Śrī Jagannāthajī's whole body is smeared with Malayan candana and Śrī Madana Mohanajī, the vijaya-vigraha of Śrī Jagannāthadevajī, is seated in a well-decorated boat in Śrī Narendra Sarovara to perform His boat-pastimes.

“Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti was inaugurated on this very day in 1940.

Paramārādhya Śrīla Gurudeva established Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as Gauḍīya vedānta following the śloka from Garuḍa Purāṇa, artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇām: 'Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the purport of Vedānta and the purpose of Mahābhārata. It is the commentary of the gāyatrī mantra and the essence of the Vedas.' Gauḍīya

Vedāntācārya Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa also composed Govinda-bhāṣya following this same verse.”

Śrīla Gurudeva went on to point out by comparative study that Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya is the topmost commentary on Vedānta, and that after Govinda-bhāṣya, Śrī Mādhva-bhāṣya is superior to all the other commentaries. He further established that Śāṅkara Vedānta is insubstantial and useless.

Preaching in Golokgaṅja, Assam

May 1st, 1958: Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva went with a preaching party from Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha to Śrī Golokgaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Assam. Whilst there, he stayed with his sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs in Śāntinagar Pallī of Dhūbaḍī city at the house of Śrī Advaitacaraṇa Dāsādhikari, the prominent servant of the Samiti. From there he went to Kālīvāḍī and other places in Dhūbaḍī to give lectures on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. In the Hari-sabhā-maṇḍapa he gave three lectures on ‘The solution to the problems of today’, ‘The necessity for religious life’ and ‘Sanātana-dharma’. The audience were very impressed by his deep and powerful lectures. In addition to Śrīla Gurudeva’s lectures, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīpād Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīpād Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja also gave lectures in different places with the help of slides. Very educated and respectful people helped the preaching party through body, mind, words and wealth.

Establishing a primary school and the method of teaching in Pichladā

Within the Medinīpura district there is a small village named Pichladā, which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited on his way to Śrī Jagannātha Purī. After repeated requests from the village people, Śrīla Gurudeva established Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s pāda-pīṭha (an altar with the imprint of Śrī Mahāprabhu’s lotusfeet) and Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Later, the villagers wanted to open a primary school in the village. For this purpose they formed a School Board, which they duly registered. To run the school they needed a hall. On December 23rd, 1958, they sent a written request to Śrīla Gurudeva (who was at that time in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā) requesting him to donate the old house of the pāda-pīṭha for use as a school. After reading their letter, Śrīla Gurudeva gave his ideas to the village people in the letter which is presented below.

- “1) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti does not have even the slightest faith in the education provided by the present universities. I do not accept education which is opposed to Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s teachings.
- 2) I am not prepared to give up religious teachings for rupees.
- 3) Pichladā has become important by the touch of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s lotus feet. The villagers should therefore live according to the sevā given by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and they should accept whatever religious education that entails.

- 4) Pichladā pādapīṭha is not an atheist pādapīṭha and Vedānta Samiti will not approve of the teaching of atheistic principles on its premises.
- 5) I have no objection to signing the deed if the School Board is willing to educate the students as per the pattern provided by Vedānta Samiti.
- 6) The village people should remember the strong reproach against the activities of the Calcutta University in the essay on acintya-bhedābheda in Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā's 10th issue of the 10th year.
- 7) In Śrīdhāma Māyāpura I established a high school which was sanctioned by the University. The law of the University was broken when priority was given to religious education. This example should also be followed here.
- 8) It is impossible for the country to receive any kind of benefit from disobedient students. Religious ethics are the principal policy.
- 9) Our government recognises many Christian missionary schools. There is no doubt, then, that the primary school in Pichladā can keep religious education as the main priority and still be recognised.
- 10) There should be no interference of any sort which is contrary to the religious objectives of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.
- 11) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti will approve the establishment of any college, school, or Sanskrit school for expanding the field of education. Such a school would be managed by a committee from the Samiti, which would exclude any atheistic line of thought by the department of education.
- 12) The demon Hiraṇyakaśipu sent his son Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja to be educated at ṅaṇḍa and Amarka's school, where the education was controlled by Śukrācārya. However, Prahlāda Mahārāja gave importance to the education in Viṣṇu bhakti, thus violating the orders of the emperor—his father—and the command of Śukrācārya, the main director of the education department. This is our ideal in expanding the field of education.
- 13) Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructed the jīvas of the world about education in Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda saṁvāda in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. We accept these instructions, and not any kind of demoniac ideals.
- 14) According to the University's rules and regulations, every college must observe Saturday as a half-day and Sunday as a full day holiday. However, in the school in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura the holidays were observed on ekādaśī and pañcamī. This is contrary to the University rules. When local Christians and Muslims opposed this, the departmental inspector of the University came and issued an order against me, which I refused to accept. As a result, the aid given by the University was stopped. In spite of this, the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura is still running today, and is still recognised by the government.
- 15) This letter should be read to the villagers. I am establishing and organizing more schools, Sanskrit schools and colleges, so I am well experienced in establishing colleges. We are not at all obliged to follow the statute laid down by the government. People from an independent country are not dependent on others. The

establishment of the school should be done in an excellent manner, so that it is an ideal school in the Medinīpura district. Please explain this to everyone.”

The installation of the Deities in

Śrī Golokgaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha

January 29th, 1959: The president of the Samiti, Ācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, imparted endless benefit to the world by installing the Deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī in Śrī Golokgaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Golokgaṅja, Assam. The daily sevā began in a splendid way. Śrī Bhagavān, the Supreme Absolute Truth who resides in the bhakta’s heart, mercifully appears in the outside world in His Deity form. The bhāva (spiritual sentiments) in Śrīla Ācāryadeva’s heart has been expressed in the bhāva of the Deity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is adorned with unprecedented sweetness, because of embracing Rādhā and accepting Her luster.

rādhā-cintā-niveśena yasya kāntirvilopitā

śrī kṛṣṇa caraṇaṁ vande rādhāliṅgita vighrahaṁ

(Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī-tattvaṣṭakam)

Uṣā kīrtana and nagar saṅkīrtana were performed from the early morning until 8 a.m.; from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. there was abhiseka of śrī vighraha, reading from śāstras, vaiṣṇava homa-yajña, installation activities, arcana-pūja and the bhoga offering. Mahā-prasada was served to invited and uninvited guests until 11 at night. The Samiti’s tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs and learned members spoke at a religious assembly in the evening between 4 to 7 p.m. Finally, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a deep lecture filled with bhāva on śrī vighraha-tattva. He quoted a verse from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 5.1),

padbhyāṁ calan yaḥ pratimā-svarūpo

brahmaṇyadevo hi śatāhagamyam

deśaṁ yayau viprakṛte ’dbhute ’haṁ

taṁ sākṣigopālamahaṁ nato’smi

“I offer my praṇāma to Sākṣigopala, the performer of transcendental activities, who appeared as brahmaṇya deva (the Supreme Lord of brahminical culture) in Deity form and walked for 100 days to reach a distant place only for the benefit of a brāhmaṇa.”

Citing this śloka Śrīla Gurudeva said that śrī vighraha is Svayam Bhagavān. Pratimā nahe tumi sākṣāt vrajendranandana (Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 5.96): “You are not an image; You are directly Vrajendra-nandana.” Śrīman Mahāprabhu also expressed the same sentiments when taking darśana of Jagannāthadeva.

According to Śrī Śankarācārya’s doctrines, the imaginary form of nirviśeṣa brahman is called an image for the benefit of sādhakas. There are five different imaginary forms of nirviśeṣa brahman—Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa—and the worshipper of these forms is called pañca-upāsaka. This view of Śankarācārya is opposed to śāstras and is only a figment of his imagination. Imaginary images of stone etc. can neither walk nor talk. Therefore the Deities are cinmaya (conscious)

and pūrṇa brahman svarūpa (the complete personification of Brahman). Bhagavān is not nirākāra, niḥśaktik, or nirviśeṣa. Arūpavadeva hi tatpradhānatvāt, na pratīkena hi saḥ, ānandāmayo 'bhyāsāt and other sūtras of Vedānta-sūtra prove that Bhagavān has an eternal form, is the possessor of all śaktis and is full of all transcendental qualities.

Śrīla Gurudeva refuted pratīkopāsanā¹⁹ and nirākāra-vāda with irrefutable logic and śāstric evidences. His wonderful lecture on śrī vigraha-tattva was filled with tattva and siddhānta and left deep impressions in the hearts of the audience. He pointed out the difference between idols and śrī-vigraha, and announced very seriously that nirākāra-vādīs and nirviśeṣa-vādīs, who are inimical to the eternal vigraha, have neither the right nor the qualification to install Deities.

Vyāsa-pūjā and inauguration of

Śrī Vigraha in the newly constructed mandira in Śrī Gauravāṇī-Vinoda-
Āśrama in Khaḍagpura

February 27th to March 1st, 1959: There was a grand celebration of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā and the inauguration of śrī vigraha in the newly constructed temple in Śrī Gauravāṇī-Vinoda-Āśrama, Khaḍag-pura. The president of the āśrama especially insisted that Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktijīvana Janārdana Mahārāja and Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja should be present at the festival. Śrīla Ācāryadeva stayed there for four days and performed the priestly duties on this grand occasion. Many sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs under his shelter also participated in the function.

February 27th, Māhgi Tṛtīyā, was the appearance day of Śrīla Ācāryadeva. On that day he personally performed the pūjā of his Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. By the order of Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrī Nityānanda Brahmacārī, who arrived from Ganjām (Orissa), performed the āratī of Śrīla Prabhupāda. During āratī, devotees sang the kirtana 'Śrīla Prabhupāda-āratī', which Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself had composed.

jaya jaya prabhupādera āratī nehārī
yoga māyāpura-nitya sevā-dānakārī
sarvatra pracāra-dhūpa saurabha manohara
baddha mukta alikūla mugdha carācara
bhakati-siddhānta-dīpa jāliyā jagate
pañca-rasa-sevā-śikhā pradīpta tāhāte
pañca mahādīpa yathā pañca mahājyotiḥ
triloka-timira-nāśe avidyā durmati
bhakati vinoda-dhārā jala śaṅkha-dhāra
niravadhi bahe tāhā rodha nāhi āra
sarva-vādya-mayī ghaṅṭā bāje sarva-kāla
bṛhata-mṛdaṅga vādhyā parama rasāla
viśāla lalāṭe śobhe tilaka ujjvala
gala deśe tulasī mālā kare jhālamala

ajānu-lambita bāhū dīrgha kalevara
tapta kāñcana-baraṇa parama sundara
lalita-lāvaṇya mukhe sneha-bharā hāsī
aṅga kānti śobhe jaiche nitya pūrṇa śaśī
yati dharme paridhāne aruṇa vasana
mukta kaila medhāvṛta gauḍīya gagana
bhakati-kusume kata kuñja viracita
saundarye-saurabhe tāra viśva āmodita
sevādarśe narahari cāmara dhūlāya
keśava ati ānande nirājana gāya²⁰

Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja read for two days from the part of Caitanya-Bhāgavata which describes the Vyāsa-pūjā performed in the house of Śrīvāsa. In addition to this, he performed kirtana during these days at respectable people's houses in the town.

At the religious assembly on the evening of the next day, Śrīla Ācāryadeva spoke about Śrī Kṛṣṇa līlā and gave a substantial lecture on the importance of religious life. He said, “Dharmaṇa hīnā paśubhiḥ samānā (Padma Purāṇa): 'A life devoid of religion is the same as animal life'. Eating, sleeping, fear and conceiving children can be seen everywhere, even amongst the animals. If we are entrapped in these four activities, what is the advantage of gaining a human form of life, and how is human life superior to animal life? Therefore, it is written in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.9.29), labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu sambhvānte

mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viśayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt

“This human birth is very rare, because it is attained after many births. Even though it is temporary, it can give the highest truth. We cannot obtain the highest truth without sādhu-saṅga (association of devotees), which is difficult to obtain in any species other than the human form. An intelligent person should therefore endeavour to achieve the ultimate good fortune before death, without delaying for even a fraction of a moment. And what is the ultimate good fortune? The ultimate good fortune is cultivation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa bhakti.’

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā yayātmā suprasīdati
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.6)

“The topmost dharma of human life is Śrī Kṛṣṇa bhakti. And this bhakti should also be without any kind of selfish desires, regular and uninterrupted. By performing bhakti in this manner, the heart feels contented, perceiving the blissful form of Paramātmā.’

“There are many parts of bhagavad-bhakti. Amongst them hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana is the topmost for human beings in Kali-yuga.

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam

kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā

“In śrī hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana there is only a consideration of faith. Only a faithful person is competent to perform nāma-saṅkīrtana. By attaining faith, anyone can perform hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana in any position. Even a person with no faith can get mukti without any difficulty by taking Bhagavān’s name. Why are people indifferent towards hari-nāma-japa or saṅkīrtana when they are so easy to practise? To answer this, one can use the Vedic injunction nāyamātmā balahīnena labhya and the verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.37), bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syāt. We can clearly understand from these references that only a courageous and brave person can accept a religious life and perform hari-nāma. A cowardly person is only involved in material activities like eating, sleeping, fearing and mating. These scriptural references explain that those who are engrossed in statemanship, financial policies, social welfare and so forth, are fearful and cowardly people. Due to fear of māyā and ignorance they are crushed and uselessly ruin their lives flattering māyā. They do not have the courage to get free from māyā’s prison and the agony of illusion.”

On Śrīla Prabhupāda’s appearance day, the devotees performed his arcana-pūjā and offered puṣpāñjali at his lotus feet. After that, the Deities which Śrīpāda Janārdana Mahārāja had installed and worshipped auspiciously entered the newly constructed palatial temple with nine domes. This function was performed according to the pañcarātriḥ method, and was accompanied by śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana. On the same day guru-pañcaka, ācārya-pañcaka, kṛṣṇa-pañcaka, upāśya-pañcaka etc. and vaiṣṇava homa were performed according to Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati. This Vyāsa-pūjā was discussed for a long time afterwards, not only in Khaḍgapura, but also throughout the entire Medinīpura district.

Protest against Vaiṣṇava Darśana composed by Śrī Rādhā Govindanātha Ācārya Kesarī Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja strongly protested against the book Acintya-bhedābheda-vāda published by Bāgbāzār, Calcutta’s registered Gauḍīya Mission. All learned and respectable persons in the society are familiar with Ācārya Kesarī’s protest. Śrīyut Rādhā Govindanātha has composed a large book, Vaiṣṇava Darśana, which is based on the book Acintya-bhedābheda-vāda, the ideas of both books being one and the same. Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī protested against Vaiṣṇava Darśana in the 4th issue of the 11th year of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, page 159-160. “The pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya as followed and preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu is within the Madhva sampradāya. In my essay Acintya-bhedābheda (published in the 9th and 10th year of Gauḍīya Patrikā) I have established elaborate evidence protesting against the book Acintya-bhedābheda-vāda composed by Śrī Vidyāvinoda. In the same essay I have also protested against Nātha Mahāśaya’s book Vaiṣṇava Darśana. The readers will understand my protest by reading this essay. Nowadays different assemblies are protesting against Śrī Rādhā Govindanātha as a result of the publication of this essay. I hope that all the religious bodies in India will protest against this book.”

Śrīla Gurudeva has further written on this subject matter. “We are happy to note that renowned gosvāmīs and bābājī mahārājas etc. belonging to ordinary Vaiṣṇava groups from Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, Mathurā and other different places have unanimously strongly protested against Śrī Rādhā Govindanātha’s book Vaiṣṇava Darśana. On April 22nd, 1959, a huge assembly was arranged in Śrī Amiya Nimāi Gaurāṅga Temple in Vṛndāvana. In this assembly there was a critical review of the aforesaid book. We are presenting a few points of this review for the readers. “First of all, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in this assembly pointed out that Śrī Nātha Mahāśaya is not an initiated Vaiṣṇava in any Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. Moreover, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have since Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s time considered themselves to belong to the Mādhva Gauḍīyas or the Śrī Brahmā-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya. The president of the aforesaid assembly affirmed, with the consent of all the members present, that all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are within Śrī Madhvācārya Sampradāya. However, Nātha Mahāśaya rejects this conception. This shows how ignorant he is of the philosophical tradition. Vaiṣṇavas should not waste their time studying any book which attempts to contradict this truth.

“Secondly, the president affirmed that Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the protector of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, is greatly revered by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. He is a genuine sevakācārya of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as well as being a renowned and prominent philosophical paṇḍita in the Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya Sampradāya. There is not even a shadow of doubt in this regard. Nātha Mahāśaya does not accept Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa as an ācārya of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, and is therefore a great offender at Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s lotus feet.

“The president’s third point is that the views expressed by Nātha Mahāśaya in connection with acintya-bhedābheda-vāda are irrelevant. Consequently, if śuddha-vaiṣṇavas hear from or read the large book Vaiṣṇava Darśana which he has composed and compiled, it will lead to their total destruction. That is to say, they will fall forever from the realm of authentic Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavism.

“This assembly determined, following the previous mahājanas, that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community is accepted as a part of the Brahmā-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya and that Nātha Mahāśaya’s Vaiṣṇava Darśana is worthless, and should not be read by Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.”

Śrīla Ācāryadeva in different places of Assam

May 21th, 1959: Paramārādhyā Śrīla Ācāryadeva travelled from Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa to Śrī Golokgaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Assam, after receiving an urgent letter from Śrī Paramānanda Dāsādhikari (Śrī Palāśa Candraghūha) of Dhūbaḍī. The train was delayed for nearly 12 hours due to an accident at Kaṭihāra Junction. Having heard the news of Śrī Ācāryadeva’s arrival by telegram, the residents of the maṭha welcomed him at Golokgaṅja railway station and respectfully brought him to the maṭha to the accompaniment of saṅkīrtana with mṛdaṅga and karatālas. At the maṭha, the renounced and householder bhaktas performed Śrī Ācāryadeva’s pūjā

and āratī, and the assembled bhaktas had darśana of the unprecedented beautiful Deities of Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī. They praised the devotee who had donated the vigraha, saying, “The transcendental beauty of these Deities is without equal. Such Deities cannot be found anywhere else in Assam.”

Śrī Ācāryadeva addressed the assembled devotees saying, “One should not take darśana of the Deities with the eyes. Proper darśana is through the ears. This is because darśana through the eyes is material and full of faults, so there is always the possibility of delusion. There is much less possibility of error and delusion in darśana through the ears, by hearing. That is why the mantra is given through the ears at the time of dīkṣā. Śrī Gurudeva gives divya-jñāna (transcendental knowledge) through the ears. All our senses help us to enjoy, and our eyes enable us to enjoy beauty. However, darśana of śrī vigraha is not meant to satisfy our sense of vision, but rather to remove to a far distant place our greed to enjoy with the eyes. Instead of thinking ‘I am very blissfully having darśana of the Deities’, we should think ‘The Deities will give me a merciful glance’. It is with this attitude that we will achieve our supreme welfare. Bhagavān and His Deity of Śrī Bhagavān are not objects of sense perception. We cannot accept Them

through any of our senses, because whatever we accept through our senses is all material, and intended for our enjoyment. But Śrī Bhagavān actually is the only enjoyer; we are all meant to be enjoyed by Him. That means that we are not the seer, but rather the one who is seen.”

Śrīla Ācāryadeva then explained this subject in a way which was easier to understand. “Suppose there is a ripe mango in front of us. The eyes can see it, the skin can touch it, the nose can smell it and the tongue can taste it, but the ears have no connection with these four senses. Whatever subject matter the ears comprehend is completely beyond the perception of the remaining four jñānendriyāni (knowledge acquiring senses). In other words, these four senses are helpless with regard to that subject matter and have no connection with it. The ears comprehend words with which the other senses have no connection. That is why the sad-guru gives transcendental śabda-brahman in the ear of the sat-śiṣya. Before giving śabda-brahman, Gurudeva purifies the disciple with hari-kathā. Then he gives śabda-brahman in the form of śrī hari-nāma and the dīkṣā-mantras. You should try to realize this essential truth. This is why, amongst all the senses, the ear is the most beneficial for us.” The whole audience was fascinated to hear Śrīla Gurudeva’s new and unprecedented view, and they un-animously agreed that they had never heard such a beautiful siddhānta before.

Śrī Ācāryadeva stayed at Golokgaṅja Maṭha for three days, and then went to Dhūbaḍī town with his associates, at Śrī Paramānanda Dāsādhikārī’s request. Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu’s wife, Tāriṇī Devī, had expired some time previously. Śrīla Ācāryadeva now supervised her śrāddha saṁskāra according to the sāvata vaiṣṇava-smṛti, Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā. Śrī Sanat Kumār Bhaktiśāstrī Bhāgavatbhūṣaṇa

performed the priestly duties at this śrāddha ceremony, following Śrīla Gurudeva's order. Afterwards everyone was served mahā-prasāda.

The honourable Paramānanda Prabhu (Palāśa Bābū) was very impressed with Śrīla Gurudeva's preaching, and repeatedly requested Śrīla Gurudeva to establish a bhakti preaching centre in Dhūbaḍī. For this purpose he offered his house in the district of Vidyāpāḍā in Dhūbaḍī town, and also gave some money. He formally registered the centre in Śrī Ācāryadeva's name on May 29th, 1959.

After this, Śrīla Ācāryadeva travelled with his associates to Amāyāpura by bus via Rangiyā. There he visited the homes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Govinda Dāsādhikārī, Śrīyuta Prāṇeśvara Dāsādhikārī (Saudāgara Prabhu) and Vāṇeśvara Dāsādhikārī. After preaching śuddha-bhakti there he returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuñchuṛā.

Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha and
installation of the Deities

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva preached śuddha-bhakti extensively for several years in Pichladā and in Assam, and the faithful people in the area repeatedly requested him to establish a Śrī Vedānta Samiti preaching centre there. Moved by their strong insistence, Śrīla Gurudeva agreed to establish a preaching-centre near Pichladā pāda-pīṭha. A short time before snāna-yātrā he sent Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramārthī Mahārāja with a few brahmacārīs to arrange for the installation of the Deities. He himself arrived in Pichladā village with many of his sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs. Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja also reached Pichladā one day before Snāna Pūrṇimā.

Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha was established on Śrī Jagannāthadeva's Snāna Pūrṇimā, June 20th, 1959 and the Deities of Śrī Śrī Guru, Nityānanda-Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī were also installed on that day. On the day of installation, after ūṣā kīrtana (early morning kīrtana) and adhivāsa kīrtana (kīrtana before a ceremony starts) the temple and maṭha premises were decorated with mango leaves, flower garlands, flags, banners and other auspicious items. In accordance with the rules of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 12 banana trees, 12 pipal trees and 12 gūlar (wild fig) trees were placed on the four sides of the temple. 12 water pots marked with svastikas were placed in front of the banana trees, and mango leaves and coconuts were placed on top of the water-pots. Another five water-pots were filled up with sacred water which had been collected from a holy river some distance away with nagar-saṅkīrtana and a band party. These five pots were placed in the snāna-maṇḍapa (bathing chamber) of Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī.

After the arrival of the Deities on the altar of the snāna-maṇḍapa, the priests performed mahā-abhiṣeka of Śrī Śālagrāma Śīla (the pratīnidhi or representative form of Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda) with milk, yogurt, ghee, honey, sugar and 108 pots of fragrant water sanctified by mantras. At the time of abhiṣeka the sound of the kīrtana with mṛdaṅga and karatālas mixed with the sound of conchshells, the jaya-

dhvani and the ladies' hulu-dhvani ululation and resounded everywhere throughout all directions. At the same time, prasthānatraya (i.e. Veda, Upaniṣad, Viṣṇu-sahasranāma, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Gopāl-sahasranāma and Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā) were recited with loud voices on all sides of the temple. After the abhiṣeka, while the atmosphere was resounding with transcendental sounds from saṅkīrtana yajña and the recitation of the Vedas and other śāstras, the Deities were taken to śrī mandira. Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself performed the consecration of the Deities with Vedic mantras. Afterwards the temple doors opened and thousands of assembled faithful people took Their darśana accompanied by loud jaya-dhvani. After pūjā-arcana and bhoga-ārati, supremely delicious mahā-prasada was distributed to about five thousand faithful people.

After evening ārati and tulasī parikramā there was a large religious assembly at which Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Parmārthī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and others spoke. After that, Śrī Ācāryadeva spoke vigorously for two hours. His very substantial lecture was filled with siddhānta concerning śrī vigraha and maṭha and mandiras. He talked about the situation in modern India, about the village of Pichladā and the villagers. He also spoke about śrī vigraha-tattva, explained what a maṭha actually is, and how the maṭha-mandira is factually beyond the guṇas (the three modes of material nature). He went on to discuss sākāra-vāda (personalism) and nirākāra-vāda (impersonalism); Christianity's sākāra-vāda, nirākāra-vāda and karma-vāda; Islam's sākāra and nirākāra-vāda; Buddhist and Jain sākāra-vāda; and Ācārya Śaṅkara's sākāra-nirākāra-vāda. He then made a critical study of different Indian doctrines and sects, including the sākāra-nirākāra-vāda of Haṅkardeva of Assam, and the nirākāra-vāda of Kabīr, Nānak and others. After that he talked about the progressive development of atheistic society in India, the necessity for maṭhas and mandiras, and other subjects.

Śrīla Gurudeva said, "Dharma does not have a supreme place in the present independent India. Adharma is manifest under cover of people's indifference to dharma. As a result, an indescribable tāṇḍava dance (violent dance) of immorality, licentiousness, and bad thoughts is going on everywhere in our country.

"Nowadays, under the guise of communism, we see very forceful efforts to drag elevated people down and make them equal to inferior people. However, nowhere do we see any corresponding effort to elevate inferior people and pull them up so that they are equal to superior people. This trend is clearly visible in all fields, such as politics, social movements, economics and education.

"India is a pure and religious land, which is why Gītā calls the great battlefield dharma-kṣetra (the field of religion). In our country we can see many nirākāra-vādī (impersonalistic) religious societies. In reality nirākāra-vādīs cannot at all abandon the ideology of sākāra (personalism). They want to absorb themselves in an imaginary impersonal meditation while keeping a form (sākāra) in the centre. It is this imaginary, impersonal meditation which has given birth to atheism in our country. The doctrine that the Lord has no form, no character, no quality and no

power is completely false and imaginary. It is also the origin of the Buddhists' śūnya-vāda (voidism) or atheism, which is opposed to the Vedas. This philosophy is completely contradicted by the Vedas and by all other śāstras, which consistently acknowledge the Lord's eternal form or svarūpa. To acknowledge this is theism. Persons who do not accept the eternal form of Bhagavān are atheists." The audience was very impressed by his lecture, which was full of deep siddhānta and logic, supported by proofs from śāstras.

At this ceremony Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmācārī became a special object of mercy because of his efforts in collecting ornaments, clothes, pots and other items in Navadvīpa Dhāma and Calcutta and bringing them to Pichladā, and for his great endeavour in other services for the installation of the Deities. The pious Śrī Prabodhacandra Paṇḍyā Mahāśaya from Kāśimpura district donated the Deities' simhāsana and the Deities of Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī and covered most of the expenses for the festival. He deserves praise for this service and is the special object of the mercy of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. The Samiti is grateful to the honourable Śrī Gajendra-mokṣaṇa Dāsādhikārī for donating the Deity of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and for donating rice and other items for the festival. He provided almost 40 maund (about 1600 kg) of rice every year for the Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa parikramā. His ideal service is praiseworthy in all respects. Above all, Śrī Govinda Dāsādhikārī of Pichladā is an object of mercy for his endeavour with his life, wealth, and intelligence to establish the maṭha. The endeavours and service of Śrī Kokila Rakṣita, Śrī Govinda Dāsa, Nirāpada Māiti and Śrī Murārī Mohana are also specially notable.

A philosophical assembly in Keśavapura

Śrī Ayodhyānātha Dāsādhikārī (from Keśavapura village, in Medinīpura district) is an ekantika Vaiṣṇava, who was initiated by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's founder ācārya and president. Although he took birth in an poor and inferior family, he has firm faith in Śrīman Mahāprabhu's śuddha-bhakti dharma. Although he is a gṛhastha-vaiṣṇava, he regularly performs arcana-pūjāna and sādhana-bhajana. He always abstains from eating meat and fish, from smoking, from illicit association with women and so on.

One year previously, in 1958, some important people in the village were collecting donations for the public worship of Śītalā Mātā which was to take place in his village, and they insisted that Śrī Ayodhyānātha Dāsādhikārī should donate 2 rupees for the pūjā. Śrī Ayodhyānātha, however, very politely replied, "We are initiated in the Gauḍīya vaiṣṇava-dharma proclaimed by Śrīman Mahāprabhu and we are fully under the shelter of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Pure devotees are not allowed to perform demigod worship, which is prohibited in Gītā and other śāstras. For this reason, I am unable to give any donation for this pūjā." The villagers became disturbed when they heard this, and they said, "Demigod worship has been going on since ancient times, and this is proved in śāstras. Let's call an assembly, and when we have heard the arguments on both sides, we will decide whether demigod worship is

proper or not.” It was agreed to call an assembly in the coming month of Srāvaṇa (July-August), but severe floods prevented this from taking place.

During the month of Śrāvaṇa in 1959, a philosophical assembly was arranged in Keśavapura village and eminent smārta paṇḍitas were called to support the villagers’ side. Śrī Ayodhyānātha went to Śrīla Ācārya Kesari’s lotus feet in Chuñchuṛā Maṭha and in a very moving voice repeatedly requested him to take part in the assembly. “If you do not go there and refute the arguments of the opposite side,” he said, “it will be impossible for me to stay in that village. They will simply throw me out.”

Before this occurrence, it had been decided that Śrīla Ācāryadeva would go to Pichladā for the installation of śrī vighraha, which was to take place at the same time as the assembly in Keśavapura. But when Śrīla Gurudeva heard Śrī Ayodhyā-nātha’s distress-filled prayers, he decided to travel to Keśavapura with Śrīpad Trivikrama Mahārāja and other leading sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs.

In the assembly, the smārta paṇḍitas raised this objection on behalf of the villagers: “Demigod worship is described in our Indian śāstras and has been going on since ancient times. We find many proofs of this in the Skanda and Padma Purāṇas. The worship of Kātyāyanī, Yogamāyā, Durgā, Kālī, Śiva and others is even seen in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, so why do Vaiṣṇavas not worship demigods?”

On Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva’s order, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja replied first. He used evidence from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Gītā and other śāstras to show that the results of demigod worship are temporary. Materialistic people worship demigods to fulfill different material desires. However, all the results are of a temporary nature. Indeed, even those who have attained Svarga will fall down again to the material world after enjoying the results of their pious activities. Vaiṣṇavas, however, are exclusively devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa bhajana and do not have any material desires in their hearts.

After this, Śrīla Ācāryadeva explained very clearly that Śrī Ayodhyānātha had not done anything wrong. On the contrary, all śāstras approve of his action. “If the gopis were performing Kātyāyanī pūjā, then why did Śrī Kṛṣṇa have to come personally to give the benediction? The reason is that Kṛṣṇa and His svarūpa śakti Yogamāyā (Kātyāyanī) are non-different: śakti-śaktimator-abedhaḥ. Therefore, in this case, Kātyāyanī pūjā is the same as the pūjā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself put an end to the worship of Indra and other demigods, and He also says in the Gītā, yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛñ yānti pitṛvratā (9.25) and kāmais tais tair hṛtajñānāḥ prapadyante ‘nya devatāḥ (7.20). Evidence that the results of demigod worship are temporary is also found in Padma Purāṇa and elsewhere: yastu nārāyaṇam devam brahmarudrādi daivataiḥ and samatvenaiva vīkṣeta sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam. The demigods cannot relieve us from the vicious circle of birth and death nor can they give us Kṛṣṇa bhakti.

“The second point is that in Padma Purāṇa demigod worship is prohibited for ekāntika Vaiṣṇavas. The performance of demigod worship is considered to be nāmāparādha. Śāstric evidences are even cited in Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā to prohibit

ekāntika Vaiṣṇavas from performing demigod worship.” When the opposite side heard Śrīla Gurudeva’s vigorous lecture, they became speechless.

Next day, another religious assembly was arranged on the village school premises. There Śrīla Ācāryadeva emphasised the importance of leading a religious life, and said that the only duty of human beings is to spend their life in religious activities. Not to lead a religious life is equal to leading an animal life. The main religion in Kali-yuga is kīrtana of Bhagavān’s name. Following vaiṣṇava etiquette, kīrtana of Bhagavān’s name and hearing hari-kathā are the only means to make human life successful.

After preaching śuddha-bhakti in this way, through a comparative study of different subject matters, Śrīla Gurudeva and his party returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s disappearance festival in Chuñchuṛā

July 6th, 1959: The Disappearance Day of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was celebrated in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha with śravaṇa (hearing) and kīrtana. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the best of the followers of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi, and is non-different from Śrī Gaura-śakti Śrī Gadādhara. From early morning on that day prayers were offered to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas; Vaiṣṇavas were glorified; and kīrtana was performed of mahājanas’ padāvalis in a mood of viraha (separation). Later there was a discussion of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s transcendental character, the significance of his appearance in the present time and other subjects. Ārati was performed at noon, after arcana-pūjā of the Deities and offering of rāja-bhoga. After that, wonderful delicious mahā-prasāda was served to the assembled devotees.

In the religious assembly in the evening, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja said in his lecture, “Today is the disappearance day of Gauraśakti Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and of Gauraśakti Gadādhara Paṇḍit Gosvāmī. Both mahā-puruṣas appeared in this world to carry out the mano ’bhīṣṭa sevā of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. After completing this sevā, they entered nitya-līlā on this day. This auspicious day comes every year to shower us with mercy and to demonstrate the supremacy of vipralambha-rasa. Although Śrī Vṛṣabhānandinī is insulted and abused in hundreds and hundreds of ways, She does not abandon Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s vipralambha-sevā. This sacred day auspiciously arrives every year to teach us devotion to the service of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and so that we can reject the association of people who are unfavourable to the happiness enjoyed by Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in Their meeting. Hence, this day is called adhvīsa-tithi of the ratha-yātrā of Śrī Nīlācalanātha, who is non-different from Śrī Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

”Śrī Jagannāthadeva’s dhāma, Nīlācala, is called Mathurā or Dvārakā, and Sundarācala (Guṇḍicā) is known as Vṛndāvana. Nīlācala is full of aiśvarya and Sundarācala is full of mādhurya. Śrī Kṛṣṇa desires to leave Nīlācala and go to Sundarācala (Vṛndāvana) to meet the gopis. When he proceeds to Vṛndāvana, Rukmiṇī and other Lakṣmīs try in many ways to prevent Him from going there.

Seeing this, Kamala Mañjarī, a follower of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, depending on śuddha-audārya and mādhyura-rasa, becomes restless and abandons this manifest līlā. Situated in her nitya-siddha form she enters Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's midday līlā. Saccidānanda Vinoda-vāñī-vaibhava (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) appointed Śrī Rādhā's Nayana Mañi Śuddhā-Sarasvatī (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) as a preacher established in siddhānta, to establish the supremacy of audārya-mādhyura rasa. This is the special mystery of this day.

A huge assembly was arranged at 5 p.m. on the same day. The picture of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was seated on a beautiful simhāsana. Afterwards, there was performance of prayers to Śrī Gurudeva, Śrī Godruma-candra bhajanopadeśa and kīrtana of vaiṣṇava padāvalis in a mood of viraha. The assembly started after the arrival of Paramārādhya-tama Śrīla Ācāryadeva. On his instruction the brahmacārīs, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja and finally Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself gave lectures filled with special siddhānta and deep philosophical tattva. Śrī Śrī Jagannāthadeva's ratha-yātrā

July 6th to July 17th, 1959: Śrī Ratha-yātrā festival was celebrated very gorgeously for 12 days at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrī Jagannāthajī ascended a beautifully decorated chariot and was brought to Guṇḍicā Mandira (Śrī Śyāmasundara Mandira) accompanied by a royal nagar-saṅkīrtana party. Even the stony hearts of the atheists melted when they heard the kīrtana, which was filled with strong affection towards Śrī Jagannāthadeva, and saw the devotees dancing along the road. Many people crowded the street to take darśana of Śrī Jagannāthadeva and to pull the rope of His chariot. Faithful people offered bhoga to Śrī Jagannātha on the street, and the pujārī then distributed it to the crowd. It was wonderful to see how eager the people were to have darśana of Śrī Jagannātha and to take His prasāda. The whole atmosphere resounded with Śrī Jagannātha's jaya-dhvani. Sometimes the ratha stopped for a while, and sometimes it went on slowly, until it finally reached Śrī Śyāmasundar Mandira, where Śrī Jagannāthadeva stayed for nine days' sporting in Vṛndāvana.

On the day of Śrī Guṇḍicā Mārjana and Herā Pañcamī, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja read from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta in Śrī Guṇḍicā (Śrī Śyāmasundara Mandira). Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja read about Ratha-yātrā from Caitanya-caritāmṛta in the maṭha. Śrīmad Bhakti-vedānta Vāmana Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja also gave lectures illustrated with slides on Śrī Gaura līlā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa līlā. Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave many different instructions and directions filled with siddhānta. Beginning on the day of Ratha-yātrā, he explained aspects of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta for four days, and spent another four days giving explanations of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Here is a summary of the essence of his talks.

On Snāna-yātrā day a very festive mahābhiṣeka of Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā Devī is performed according to rules and regulations. Brahmā and all the other demigods participate in this ceremony invisibly. Afterwards, the curtain of

Jagannātha Mandira is closed and there is no darśana for 15 days, because Śrī Jagannāthajī becomes sick from too much bathing. This period is called anavasara, and Lakṣmījī serves Him alone at that time. During that period, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the embodiment of vipralambha-rasa, used to go to Alālanatha, because He was so restless in separation from Jagannāthajī. After anavasara, on the second day of Śukla-pakṣa, Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrājī ascend three different chariots and start Their journey for Sundarācala (Guṇḍicā). But Śrī Jagannāthadeva does not tell His wife Lakṣmījī that He is going to Vṛndāvana. After sporting for nine days in Vṛndāvana (Sundarācala) He returns to Śrī Mandira in Nīlācala. Going to Sundarācala is called Ratha-yātrā, returning from there is called return yātrā, and the fifth day from the day of the yātrā is called Herā Pañcamī. There is a special meaning of Herā Pañcamī. On the day after the yātrā, Śrī Lakṣmījī is eagerly waiting for Śrī Jagannātha to return, and she becomes very anxious when He does not return after four days. In an angry and sulky mood she climbs her beautifully decorated chariot and goes searching for Śrī Jagannāthajī in the night with her maidservants. Somehow she reaches Vṛndāvana, and there she quarrels with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His beloved gopis and makes Him promise that He will return quickly. After that she returns to Nīlācala temple. Herā means to search, and because this līlā takes place on the fifth day it is called Herā Pañcamī.

One day before the Ratha-yātrā the Guṇḍicā Mandira is washed clean so that Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā can reside there happily. The mandira is first swept to remove dust and stones, and then it is washed with water and wiped dry with cloths. Śrīman Mahāprabhu also performed Śrī Guṇḍicā MandiramārjanawithHisassociateswhileperforming hari-saṅkīrtana. The purpose of this līlā is to wash and dust one's heart, and to make it clean like a temple for Bhagavān to reside there. Bhagavān will never live in the heart of a devotee who still has desires for material enjoyment, heavenly happiness and liberation. This is the main feature of the Śrī Ratha-yātrā festival.

Ordinary people cannot easily understand the meaning of the Ratha-yātrā celebration. However, the Śrī Rupānuga Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' understanding of this subject matter is full of excellent siddhānta. They are very dear to Śrī Sacīnandana Gaurahari, who is Himself resplendent with the bhāva and lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The vraja-ramaṇīyas were in deep distress because of separation from Kṛṣṇa after He left for Mathurā. While they were taking their beloved Kṛṣṇa from Kurukṣetra (Dvārakā) to Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana, they thought, sei to parāṇanātha pāinu, jāmhā lāgi madana dahane jhuri genu (Caitanya-caritāmṛta 13.113): "Today we are meeting with our beloved Prāṇanātha, after suffering for a long time in separation from Him." The vraja-ramaṇīyas are doing this only to serve and please Kṛṣṇa, not for their own happiness. Those who have not realized this deep understanding of the Śrī Rupānuga Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are not qualified to participate in this great ceremony. They cannot serve Śrī Jagannātha because they are attached to material enjoyment. Jagat-darśana is called prakṛta-darśana or

darśana of this material world, and there can be no attraction or taste for aprakṛta Jagannātha darśana as long as prakṛta-darśana is strong in the heart. The main object of Ratha-yātrā is to engage the whole world in the service of Śrī Jagannātha. Śrī Gaurahari, who is non-different from Śrī Vrajendra-nandana, instructed the whole world by performing Śrī Guṇḍicā mārjana līlā with His associates. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti organises this festival every year to give everyone a golden opportunity to participate.

Celebration of Śrī Janmāṣṭamī and
Śrī Nandotsava at Śrī Keśavajī
Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā

1959 was a particularly note-worthy year for Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, for Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva arrived there with some disciples a week before Janmāṣṭamī. In that year the residents of the maṭha enthusiastically observed Śrī Janmāṣṭamī by fasting for the whole day, performing saṅkīrtana, reading Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, offering bhoga and so on. At midnight abhiṣeka of the Deities was performed with saṅkīrtana, blowing of conchshells and the jaya-dhvani of thousands of faithful people. At the evening's religious assembly Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a deep philosophical lecture filled with siddhānta from śāstras. He established that Kṛṣṇa is advaya-jñāna para-tattva by quoting the following śloka:

'ete cāmśa kalā puṁsa kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayaṁ' (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.28), 'aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām, yan mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanaṁ' (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.32), 'īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ, anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva kāraṇakāraṇaṁ' (Brahma-saṁhita 5.1), and 'mattaḥ parantaram nānyat kiñcidasti dhanañjaya' (Bhāgavad-gītā 7.7).

Apart from this he also established the distinctive characteristics of Śrī Yaśodā-nandana in relation to Śrī Devakī-nandana.

Observing kārtika-vrata in
Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha

All the maṭhas under the jurisdiction of Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observed kārtika-vrata, dāmodara-vrata, and niyama-sevā from October 16th to November 15th, 1959. This year kārtika-vrata was celebrated in Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha with special festivities and great enthusiasm because of the presence of Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva himself. During the period of kārtika, there were many regular, distinctive aspects of this great vrata, such as śrī maṅgala-ārati, morning kīrtana, reading from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, reading from Brahma-sūtra or Vedānta-sūtra, tulasī parikramā, āhnikā and other duties, discussion on bhakti literature, bhoga-ārati, iṣṭa-goṣṭhī, mahā-prasada sevā, sandhyā-ārati and so forth. During this vrata, devotees established the practices of being moderate in eating and drinking, sleeping on the floor and taking prasāda on leaf plates instead of metal plates.

During śrī dāmodara-vrata, Śrī Chidghanānanda Brahmācārī gave discourses on Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta every morning; in the evenings Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī

Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja explained the Nemi-Navayogendra dialogue in Bhāgavatam. Paramārādhya Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja himself gave elaborate commentaries on Vedānta-darśana and Govinda-bhāṣya in the afternoons, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. During the Dāmodara month he finished explaining up to the first and second pāda of the eleventh sūtra of the first chapter of Govinda-bhāṣya.

During Śrīla Gurudeva's discourse, he summarised eight other authentic commentaries on Vedānta and established that Govinda-bhāṣya stands supreme among all of them. He read regularly from the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara, Bhāskar, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vijñāna Bhikṣu, Vallabha and Nimbārka, as well as from Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya. Śrīla Ācāryadeva also emphasized Mahā-mahopādhāya Śrīyuta Haridāsa 'Siddhānta-vāgīśa' Mahāśaya's Bhāgavat-bhāṣya at many points in the discussion. Besides the sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs from the Samiti, educated, respected and eminent scholars from Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma were also present in the audience during the discourse on Govinda-bhāṣya. Among them, the names of Śrī Kumuda Kamala Nāg (B.A., B.L.), Śrī Mākhana Lāl Sāhā (B.A., assistant headmaster of Navadvīpa Śikṣa Mandira), Paṇḍita Śrīyut Navīncandra Cakravartī (smṛti-vyākaraṇatīrtha) and Śrī Vardākānta Datta are worth mentioning. The respectable Varadā Bābū, a great scholar of Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya's kevalādvaita-vāda, was also present as an opponent, and this gave the audience a rare opportunity to hear a comparative discussion on Govinda-bhāṣya by Śrīla Ācāryadeva.

Even after the completion of śrī dāmodara-vrata, the study of Govinda-bhāṣya continued for another five days, due to the special request of the elderly Varadā Bābū and Śrī Kumuda Kamala Nāg. During these last days there was an elaborate and detailed discussion of sūtras such as 'athāto brahma-jijñāsā,' 'janmādyasya yataḥ' and 'śāstrayonitvāt.' While explaining these sūtras, Śrīla Ācāryadeva specifically established Śrī Bhagavān's nāma, rūpa, guṇa and līlā and at the same time used logic and śāstric evidence to refute Śaṅkarācārya's view that Brahman is nirviśeṣa, niḥśaktik, arūpa and nirguṇa. He also established that bhakti, and not jñāna or mukti, is the subject matter expounded in Vedānta-sūtra. The words jñāna and mukti are not mentioned anywhere in the 550 sūtras of Vedānta-sūtra. Rather, it is only Śrī Vrajendra-nandana Govinda who is established, along with His premamayī bhakti, in Vedānta-sūtra's 'ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt,' 'api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām' and other sūtras. In the end harināma-saṅkīrtana is clearly specified by the sūtra, 'anāvṛtti śabdāt anāṛtti śabdāt,' and this is made clearer still by the confirmation of 'harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam' and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's 'parama vijāyate śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtanam.'

Vedānta-sūtra establishes that advaya-jñāna paratattva Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His śakti Śrīmatī Rādhikā are non-different, and thus clearly indicates the worship of Śrī Yugala. The Upaniṣads show that para-tattva can never be nirviśeṣa, niḥśaktik, arūpa and nirguṇa without transcendental guṇas. Taittirīya Upaniṣad (3.1) states,

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayantyabhisamviśanti, tad vijijñāśasva tad brahma: “Everything emanates from the Absolute Truth (para-tattva), rests upon the Absolute Truth, and after annihilation again re-enters the body of the Absolute Truth.” In this śloka three cases are used, namely the ablative case (apādān), the instrumental case (karaṇa), and the locative case (adhikaraṇa). How, then, can Brahman be niḥśaktik and nirākāra?

Śrīla Gurudeva’s explanation of all these subject matters was ever-fresh and very remarkable. On the last day, Varadā Bābū said, “People would be benefitted if the reading of Govinda-bhāṣya continued for another few days. I have never before heard such a beautiful discussion on Vedānta in my Navadvīpa town”. Śrīla Ācāryadeva jokingly told him, “If you faithfully hear Govinda-bhāṣya for another few days, then you can become liberated from Ācārya Śaṅkara’s advaita philosophy”. Hearing this, Varadā Bābū laughingly agreed.

On the first day of ūrjā-vrata Śrīla Ācāryadeva instructed the audience as follows. “Kārtika-vrata niyama-sevā is a part of cāturmāsya-vrata. Those who only honour ūrjā-vrata and do not observe the full cāturmāsya-vrata cannot gain the full development of bhakti which is the result of cāturmāsya-vrata. In fact, this negligence actually reveals their disrespect towards cāturmāsya-vrata. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates observed cāturmāsya-vrata with great conviction and devotion, and in this way they instructed sādhakas in the whole vaiṣṇava community as to the means of attaining bhakti. Who will abandon cāturmāsya vrata as a whole, and keep faith only in kārtika-vrata? Only those who do not generally accept difficulties in hari-sevā or who are averse to renunciation.

“What to speak of only observing kārtika-vrata, nowadays people in modern apasampradāyas do not even do that much. For such people eating, sleeping, and sexual enjoyment is the purpose of life. The śāstric clause, tapo veśopajīvināḥ refers to those who do not want to follow any rules. They do not respect Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s teaching in Caitanya-caritāmṛta, bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe: ‘Do not eat very palatable food and do not dress very nicely.’ (Antya 6.236) These people are counted amongst inferior and undisciplined sampradāyas, insofar as they also deviate from the glorious statement, mahāprabhura bhakta-gaṇera vairāgya pradhāna: ‘Renunciation is the basic principle of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s devotees’. (Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya 6.220)

“It is not that the observance of cāturmāsya vrata is only meant for Vaiṣṇavas. It should be observed by the followers of every religion, and also by karmīs, jñānīs, tapasvīs and all other classes of people. This vrata is prevalent even in the sampradāyas of Śaṅkara, the smārtas and others. All kinds of sādhakas have observed kārtika-vrata since ancient times, because it is a principal part of the cāturmāsya-vrata. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti instructs and encourages their followers to observe this vrata fully. Those who are following Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti are well versed in this subject matter and will remember this even in the future.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s viraha-utsava

in Chuñchuṛā Maṭha

All the maṭhas under the jurisdiction of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti celebrated Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day (viraha-utsava) lavishly in December, 1959. It was celebrated with great faith in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa, Mathurā, Golokgaṅja and other maṭhas.

Paramārādhyā Śrīla Ācāryadeva was personally present at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā, so the dis-appearance day was celebrated there with special faith. At the persistent request of the president of the maṭha, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, after the lecture and kīrtana that day, the maṭha devotees and Śrī Samiti's initiated devotees first offered puṣpāñjali at Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus feet and then at Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet. After that, āraṭi of Śrīla Prabhupāda was performed with the āraṭi kīrtana composed by Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma. In the religious assembly in the evening Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja read Śrīla Prabhupāda's collection of letters, essays and instructions from Gauḍīya Patrikā.

In his lecture, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave many instructions which are easy to put into practice. "Every year on this special day we have hari-kathā in a particular way. Śrīla Prabhupāda Siddhānta Sarasvatī was hari-kīrtana personified. Those who had his association definitely experienced this. During his discourses the kathā would flow as if from thousands of mouths, instead of from just one. We count 24 hours as one day, but in Śrīla Prabhupāda's hari-kathā one day would be converted into a thousand days. The ānanda experienced by him during bhagavad-kīrtana cannot be described in words. Generally people leave aside all other duties and become enraptured in mundane occupations such as eating and sleeping because that is the only time they feel happy. They do not understand that there are other, superior types of happiness. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave up eating, sleeping and so on and engaged in hari-kathā kīrtana, because that is how he gained the greatest pleasure."

Śrīla Ācāryadeva discussed various topics in specific connection with Prabhupāda's teachings. He talked about ignorance and māyā and about ancient and modern views on nirviśeṣa. He pointed out that history and tattva (truth) are not the same, and discussed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's contribution to the jīvas' welfare. He also talked about the difference between various philosophical views, the oneness of para-tattva and so on. In addition to this he expressed deep thoughts, full of tattva, on the three features of para-tattva—Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. He showed that only theism can control māyā (māyāvaśya īśvaravāda), and also spoke about the inconceivable, all-powerful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, about Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable pastimes, the eternity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's līlā, jīvas' eternity and other subject matters.

62 lectures of Śrī Ācārya Kesari in 66 days

April 19th, 1960: Śrīla Ācārya Kesari started to travel with his preaching party to about 30 villages in Medinīpura and Caubīs Parganā, preaching sanātana-dharma

strongly. During this period he gave brilliant lectures at 62 religious assemblies in 66 days, and his power was like that of a lion. Sanātāna-dharma started to blow like a strong whirlwind in the regions where the religious assemblies took place. In some places as many as fifteen or twenty thousand people came and listened to his speech for two hours without moving or talking. At times the audience asked questions, which Ācārya Kesarī answered on the strength of śāstric evidences and irrefutable logic. This dialogue increased the audience's curiosity and eagerness. Not only those who asked the questions, but also the entire audience, became ecstatic when they heard Śrīla Gurudeva's answers. Everyone was impatient to touch the dust of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lotus feet at the end of the sabhā, and even after he returned to his residence, a crowd of hari-kathā listeners assembled there as well. Nearby villages sent appeals and requests to Ācārya Kesarī to hold religious gatherings in their places also, but it was not possible to go everywhere. Śrīla Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Disappearance Day was on June 24th, 1960, and Śrī Jagannāthadeva's ratha-yātrā would begin the next day. Consequently, Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī was obliged to return to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuñchurā, together with his preaching party.

Below is Ācārya Kesarī's daily preaching schedule during this time.

- 1) April 19th, 1960, in the courtyard of Śrī Yogendra Nātha Sāmanta Dāsa's home at Keśavapura Jalpāi village (Medinīpura): "Who is called a human being?"
- 2) April 20th, in the courtyard of Śrī Ayodhyānātha Dāsa's home in the same village: "Vaiṣṇava etiquette and the symptoms of bhakti."
- 3) April 21st, in the courtyard of Śrī Bhuvanamohana Jānā's home in the village of Āktalā: "Sanātana-dharma."
- 4) April 22nd, at the same place: "The duty of human life."
- 5) April 23rd, in the courtyard of Śrī Aruṇa Candra Dāsa's home in the same village: "The solution to various problems."
- 6) April 24th, in the Durga maṇḍapa near Śrī Jānakīnātha Mandira at Nandīgrāma: "The solution to various problems".
- 7) April 25th, in the ground of Śrī Vrajamohana Tivārī Śikṣā Niketan in the same village: "The necessity of religion".
- 8) April 26th, in the courtyard of Śrī Sitāprakāśa Dāsa Adhikārī's home at Bheṭuriyā village: "The difference between sevā to jīva and sevā to Īśvara."
- 9) April 27th, in the huge courtyard of Kodāmvaḍī High School from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.: "The necessity for religion".
- 10) April 27th, in the courtyard of Śrī Nanīgopāla Dāsa Adhikārī's home in Bheṭuriyā village, from 8.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.: "What makes a human being human?"
- 11) April 28th, at the same place: "Sanātana-dharma."
- 12) April 29th, at the huge ground of Śrī Gagancandra Hājra Higher Secondary School in Sāivāḍī village: "Śrī Caitanyadeva and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya."
- 13) April 30th, at the same place: "The duty of human life."

- 14) May 2nd, in the grounds of Vegunāvāḍī Junior High School in Pūrvacaka village: “The duty of human life.”
- 15) May 3rd, in the courtyard of Śrī Giridhārī Dāsādhikārī’s home in Pūrvacaka village: “The difference between vaiṣṇava philosophy and Śaṅkara’s philosophy.”
- 16) May 4th, in the huge courtyard of the local Śiva temple in Mohāṭī village, at the request of Bhakta Śaśībhūṣaṇa Bhuñā: “The duty of human life.”
- 17) May 5th, in the grounds of the High School in Simuliyā Grāma: “Sanātana-dharma”.
- 18) May 6th, at the same place, at 9 a.m.: “The necessity of religion in student life.”
- 19) May 6th, at the same place at 8 p.m.: “The superiority of vaiṣṇava-dharma.”
- 20) May 7th, in the courtyard of Śrī Harekr̥ṣṇa Dāsādhikārī’s home in Eḍāsāla Grāma: “Śrī Ekādaśī tattva—pure (śuddhā) and mixed (biddhā) with previous tithi.”
- 21) May 8th, at the same place: “Is vaiṣṇavism a caste or a religion?”
- 22) May 9th, in the courtyard of Śrī Jitajñāna Dāsādhikārī’s home in the same village: “What is the jīva’s dharma?”
- 23) May 10th, in the courtyard of Śrī Ṭhākura Mandira in Kulavāḍī Grāma: “What is humanity?”
- 24) May 12th, in the courtyard of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti’s Śrī Pichladā pādapīṭha in Pichladā Grāma: “The purpose of human life.”
- 25) May 13th, at Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha: “Sectarianism and union.”
- 26) May 14th, in the ground of the local Primary School in Nar-Cāknāna Grāma, at the request of Bhakta Hārādhana: “The speciality of Śrī Caitanyadeva’s great contribution.”
- 27) May 15th, at Terpekyā Bāzāra: “The subject established in Vedānta.”
- 28) May 16th, at the same place: “The subject established in Vedānta.”
- 29) May 17th, at the same place: “Interpreting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.”
- 30) May 19th, in the courtyard of Śrī Mandira in Kalyāṅpura village: “The necessity of religious life.”
- 31) May 20th, at the same place: “Solutions to problems of the present time.”
- 32) May 21st, in Śrī Madanmohana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Kalyāṅpura village: “Vaiṣṇava-dharma.”
- 33) May 22nd, in the courtyard of Śrī Revatībhūṣaṇa Pāl’s home in Maluvāsāna village: “Nāma-tattva.”
- 34) May 23rd, in the courtyard of Śrī Harināma Pracāriṇī Sabhā in the city of Tamaluka: “Śrī Nāma-tattva.”
- 35) May 24th, at the same place: “Sanātana-dharma.”
- 36) May 25th, at the same place: “The subject established in Vedānta.”
- 37) May 26th, at the same place: Śrīla Gurudeva read from and commented on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
- 38) May 28th, in the school ground in Cakgādupotā village: “Sanātana-dharma and the worship of demigods and demi-goddesses.”

- 39) May 29th, at the same place: “Pañca rasa-tattva and Bhāgavatam.” On this occasion there were arguments with people from the Ārya Samāja concerning Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, but they became speechless when they heard Śrīla Ācārya Kesari’s irrefutable logic and śāstric evidence.
- 40) May 30th, in the courtyard of Śrī Narendra Paḍuā’s home in the same village: “Proper vaiṣṇava conduct.”
- 41) May 31st, at the same place: “The problems of the present age.” Here someone in the audience asked whether or not Vaiṣṇavas can engage in agriculture. Śrīla Ācārya Kesari gave śāstric evidence that Vaiṣṇavas can do so. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes this as part of varṇāśrama-dharma. During Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s time there were two categories of the gopa community: gopas engaged in cow grazing and gopas engaged in agriculture; both are Vaiṣṇavas. During Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s time, too, there were grhastha Vaiṣṇavas engaged in agriculture. The audience was very satisfied to receive such a good reply.
- 42) June 2nd, in the courtyard of Śailendranātha Ghoṣa’s home in Diamond Harbour (in Caubis Parganā district): Śrīla Ācāryadeva read from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
- 43) June 3rd, in the courtyard of Śrī Viśālākṣmī Mandira in Kākdvīpa: “Sanātana-dharma.”
- 44) June 4th, at the same place: “The duty and dharma of human life.”
- 45) June 6th, at the local Harisabhā: “Sanātana-dharma.”
- 46) June 7th, in Kāśīnagara Bāzāra: “The duty of human life.”
- 47) June 8th, at the same place: “Sanātana-dharma.”
- 48) June 9th, in Gilārchaṭa village: “Vaiṣṇava-dharma.”
- 49) June 10th, at the same place: “Nāma-tattva.”
- 50) June 11th, in Kāśīnagara Bāzāra: “Vaiṣṇava etiquette and eternal dharma.”
- 51) June 12th, on the college ground in Kṛṣṇacandrapura village: “Jīva-tattva and how the jīva can become qualified for bhagavat-sevā.”
- 52) June 13th, in the courtyard of Śrī Dvijottama Dāsa Adhikārī’s home in Sarveḍiyā village: “Adhokṣaja-tattva.”
- 53) June 15th, in the courtyard of the Primary School in Ektārā Grāma: “The duty of human life.”
- 54) June 16th, at the same place: “Sanātana-dharma.”
- 55) June 17th, in the Harisabha Bhavan in Hadugañja Grāma: “The duty of human life and vaiṣṇava-dharma.”
- 56) June 18th, in the courtyard of Śrī Vasanta Kumāra Ghoṣa’s home in Cāndanagara Grāma: “Nāma-tattva.”
- 57) June 19th, in the courtyard of Śrī Nīlamaṇi Ghoṣa’s home in the same village: Śrīla Gurudeva read ‘The conversation between Nimi and the Navayogendras’ from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
- 58) June 20th, in the courtyard of Śrī Kṛṣṇapāda Ghoṣa’s home in the same village: Śrīla Gurudeva read from the same part of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

59) June 20th, in the courtyard of Śrī Rajanikānta Ghoṣa's home in the same village at 8 p.m.: Śrīla Ācāryadeva read from the same part of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam again.

60) June 21st, in the courtyard of the Court in Diamond Harbour: "Sanātana-dharma."

61) June 22nd, at the same place: "Sanātana-dharma."

62) June 23rd, at the same place: Śrīla Gurudeva read from the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva in Murśidābāda region

December 23rd, 1960: Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva arrived with his associates at Howraha Baharampura city, in the district of Murśidābāda, having received a special invitation from the distinguished citizens of that city. Śrīla Gurudeva's childhood friend Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva Mukhopadhyāya and many citizens were anxiously waiting to welcome him at the Baharampura Court Station. When he arrived they greeted him very enthusiastically with garlands, candana and other paraphernalia, and then brought him and his party in a car to Śrī Haripada Sāhā's temple in Howraha city, where he was going to stay.

On the next evening, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very powerful lecture on the duty of human life to a huge congregation in the large courtyard of the temple. On the third day, December 25th, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a profound lecture at the same place. The subject was 'The original nature of vaiṣṇava-dharma', and lawyers, teachers and other educated people of the city were fascinated by his lecture, which was full of Vedantic tattva. On the special request of these people, Śrīla Ācāryadeva extended his stay for three more days and spoke on mukti-tattva and acintya-bhedābheda, analysing some very deep philosophical tattvas. The general public became very attracted when they heard his powerful lectures. At the end of the assembly Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja gave a lecture illustrated with slides on Śrī Gaura-Kṛṣṇa līlā.

After preaching śuddha-bhakti for five days in Howraha Baharampur, Śrīla Ācāryadeva accepted the special invitation of the respected Rāya Bahādura Surendra Nārāyaṇa Singh, a very religious and learned person, and went to Jiyāganja with his preaching party. On the first day, Rāya Bahādura organized a large religious assembly in the extensive courtyard of the local Caṇḍīmaṇḍapa. At his special request Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a philosophical lecture full of deep tattva regarding acintya-bhedābheda.

He said, "Parabrahman Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all Lords, who creates the entire world and all the universes, is advaya-jñāna paratattva. He is the unparalleled tattva. He is not nirākāra, niḥśaktik, nirviśeṣa tattva; rather, He is the inconceivable sarva-śaktimān. Actually, the Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Bhagavān has one śakti, which is called parāśakti or antaraṅga śakti. However, this parāśakti is known by different names because it performs many kinds of functions. Amongst these names three are principal, namely cit-śakti, jīva-śakti and māyā-śakti. The spiritual world manifests from cit-śakti, innumerable jīvas from jīva-śakti or taṭasthā-śakti, and innumerable

material worlds from māyā-śakti or bahiraṅgā-śakti. When we say ‘manifest’ it is to be understood that this means the transformation of the different śaktis, or energies of the Lord.

“The śaktis of para-tattva (the Absolute Truth) are simul-taneously one with and different from the transformations of those same śaktis, but this oneness and difference is beyond the petty reasoning, logic and comprehension of the jīvas. In this sense, it is inconceivable. At the same time, it is conceivable or accessible through the medium of transcendental sound. Therefore this oneness (bheda) and difference (abheda) is called acintya-bhedābheda. Now, what do we mean when we say that it is accessible through the medium of transcendental sound? This should be understood very carefully. When we say ‘transcendental sound’, we mean the words of the scriptures such as the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, Vedānta-sūtra, the Purāṇas, Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which are accepted by the genuine guru-parampāra. This specific relationship of simultaneous bheda and abheda (oneness and difference) can be understood only by the authority of this transcendental sound; otherwise it remains inconceivable. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught this acintya-bhedābheda-tattva to Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, and it has been very thoroughly discussed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in *ṣaṭ-sandharbhās* and by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his *Govinda-bhāṣya*.”

This lecture was so full of very deep philosophical thoughts that even learned and educated people—and what to speak of the general audience—could not understand it easily. They all told Śrī Ācārya Kesarī that, since the lecture had been so difficult to understand, they wanted to hear a simple and easy talk about the duty of human life. Śrīla Gurudeva therefore spoke the following day on ‘Dharma and the duties of human life’. He refuted the views of the modern apasampradāyas and upa-sampradāyas and extensively discussed pure sanātana-dharma, bhagavad-bhakti. Every day after Śrīla Gurudeva’s lectures, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārājaji gave a lecture with the help of slides on Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s śikṣā. Prayers were also offered to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas at the beginning and end of the lecture every day, and kīrtanas of mahājanas and harināma mahāmantra kīrtana were also performed.

Preaching of śuddha-bhakti in Sundarvana region of Bengal

January 24th, 1961: Śrī Ācāryadeva arrived with his associates at Rājanagara near Kākdvīpa, on the special invitation of the Dharma Sammelana. Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, the editor of Śrī Bhagavat Patrikā (which was published in Hindi from Śrīdhāma Mathurā) was also with Ācāryadeva.

In the evening a very large religious conference was organized in the extensive courtyard of Rājanagara High School, and Śrīla Ācāryadeva was unanimously selected as chairman. Speakers from other sampradāyas gave lectures, and then Śrīla Ācāryadeva instructed the chief guests of the assembly, Tridaṇḍipāda Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmācārī to speak in favour of vaiṣṇava-dharma. Finally, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very attractive lecture

on the difference between Bhagavān Kapila and the modern sāṅkhya philosopher Kapila. He asserted that Hindus are the only followers of sākāra-vāda (the truth that Bhagavān has form), whereas all non-Hindus are nirākāra-vādīs (believers in the formless Absolute).

Śrīla Ācāryadeva explained that Kapiladeva Ṛṣi is the original founder of sāṅkhya philosophy. There are two Kapilas, one who appeared in Satya-yuga and the other in Treta-yuga. The first Kapila was born from the womb of Manu's daughter Devahuti as the son of Mahārṣi Kardama. He is an incarnation of Bhagavān and is famous as the original founder of sāṅkhya philosophy. Although he did not write any special scripture called sāṅkhya-darśana, the doctrine of sāṅkhya which he founded is very clearly found in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other scriptures. The second Kapila Muni (who destroyed the dynasty of Sagara) appeared in Treta-yuga and composed sāṅkhya-darśana. Even though this sāṅkhya-darśana is a compilation of the essence of the original Kapiladeva's sāṅkhya-darśana and contains excellent explanations of ātma-tattva (the reality of the soul), it has some specific features which are completely against the conclusion of the śrutis. For instance, Kapila Muni says that that Īśvara is incomplete, and that the non-sentient prakṛti is the original creator of the material world. According to vedānta-śāstra this is against the opinions of śrutis. Vaiṣṇavas apparently have little respect for the sāṅkhya-darśana which is current at present, but in fact they only object to these attached parts which contradict the śrutis.

There is no mention of the word 'Hindu' in the ancient scriptures, yet all the followers of sanātana-dharma are to be understood as Hindus. All Hindus are sākāra-vādīs (they believe in a form of Bhagavān), and they worship the transcendental śrī vighraha of the Lord. Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Jains and followers of religions other than Hinduism are all nirākāra-vādīs (they believe in a formless Absolute). The followers of sanātana-dharma are followers of eternal dharma. All religions other than this sanātana-dharma have a beginning and an end. Even though their followers do formally believe that God has no form, they are forced to accept a form or shape in one aspect or another. Their religious books also contain descriptions of God (for example the shape and form of Khudā). In the Buddhist and Jain temples huge mūrtis are worshipped. If Īśvara has no form, then what is the need of temples, mosques, churches and Buddhist stupas? For whom are they needed? If there is no form, and nobody actually exists, then for whom are the temples and mosques intended?

Ācāryadeva was also elected chairman on the second day of the religious conference. After members of other sampradāyas had spoken, Śrīla Ācāryadeva instructed Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja to lecture on para-tattva (the Absolute Truth), who is the upāśya-vastu (worshipful object), and His worship. Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja established that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is solely advaya-jñāna para-tattva. In support of this, he presented scriptural evidence such as, ete cāmśa kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇastu bhagavān svayam (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.28), īśvaraḥ paramaḥ

kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam (Brahma Saṁhita 5.1), and ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas-tad-dhāma vṛdāvana ... na paraḥ. He also strongly emphasised Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's opinion that the topmost aim for the jīvas is to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa prema and that the vraja-ramaṇīs' worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the topmost.

After that, Śrī Viśvanātha Rāya, Śrī Sudarśana Brahmācārī, and Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmācārī spoke about vaiṣṇava-dharma. In the end they explained very nicely for the whole audience that the vaiṣṇava-dharma that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has established is actually sanātana-dharma.

The organisers of the religious conference, especially the teacher Surendranātha Bhaṭṭācārya (M.A. triple) and Śrī Dvijendranātha Pātra, praised very highly Śrī Ācāryadeva's style, his heartfelt feelings and his way of deliberation. At the end of the conference they discussed dharma with Śrīla Guru Mahārāja.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā celebration in
Chuñchuṛā Maṭha

February 3rd to February 6th, 1961: Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā celebrations were held in all the maṭhas of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti for four days. This was celebrated with particular success in Śrī Uddharaṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha because of Śrī Ācāryadeva's personal presence there.

The appearance day of Śrīla Ācāryadeva was on the third day of Māghī Kṛṣṇā (February 3rd), and prayers and kīrtana glorifying Śrī Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas were performed from brāhma-muhūrta (very early morning). After that, pūjā of guru-pañcaka, ācārya-pañcaka, vyāsa-pañcaka, kṛṣṇa-pañcaka, upāśya-pañcaka, tattva-pañcaka etc. and vaiṣṇava-homa (fire sacrifice) were performed according to Śrī Vyāsa pūjā-paddhati. Śrīla Ācāryadeva very kindly arrived at the place of worship and all his sannyāsī, brahmācārī and gṛhastha followers offered their śraddhā puṣpāñjali at his lotus feet. After the noon offering of bhoga and ārati, wonderful mahā-prasāda was distributed to all the invited and uninvited guests. At the religious assembly in the evening Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Parmārthī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja and others lectured on śrī guru-tattva.

The next day (February 4th) the puṣpāñjalis received from the devotees of different places were read in the evening assembly. Finally, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave special instructions on the need of sad-guru-padaśraya (taking shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide guru) and the duties of the sat-śiṣya.

February 6th was Govinda Pañcamī (Māghī Kṛṣṇā Pañcamī) and the appearance day of Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Prayers and kīrtana were performed continuously from the early morning, and then Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja read Śrīla Prabhupāda's views on Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, from lectures by Prabhupāda. After arcana-pūjana of the Deities at noon, there was an offering of puṣpāñjali and bhoga, ārati was performed and then all the assembled guests were served mahā-prasāda.

A large assembly was organized in the evening at 5 o'clock. First of all there were readings of the bhakti-puṣpāñjalī sent by devotees for Śrīla Ācāryadeva and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Then Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmācārī spoke on Śrīla Prabhupāda's personality and instructions, and after that Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva gave a very instructive and substantial lecture regarding the speciality of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. He said that Śrī Guru-pūjā is also known as Vyāsa-pūjā. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is śikṣā-guru because he gives śikṣā. Gurus are of two kinds: śikṣa-guru and dīkṣa-guru. In the arcana process the rule is to worship and perform arcana of the dīkṣā-guru first. From the viewpoint of tattva, śikṣā-guru and dīkṣā-guru are non-different and all śāstras declare that, since they are non-different, the śikṣā-and dīkṣā-gurus should both be served. Both are manifestations of Kṛṣṇa, the dīkṣa-guru being Kṛṣṇa's rūpa (form) while the śikṣa-guru is Kṛṣṇa's svarūpa (personality). This is stated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta: guru-kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstera pramāṇe guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gaṇe śikṣā guruke ta'jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa antaryāmī, bhakta-śreṣṭha,—ei dui rūpa (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi līlā, 1.45, 47)

“According to śāstra the guru is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. In the form of guru Kṛṣṇa bestows mercy on the bhaktas. One should know the śikṣā-guru to be Kṛṣṇa Himself. In the form of caitya-guru Kṛṣṇa gives encouragement and as the topmost bhakta He gives association and śikṣa.”

In other śāstras, the following are accepted as śikṣā-gurus: the Six Gosvāmīs; Gaurahari endowed with Śrī Rādhā's bhāva and bodily complexion; and Kṛṣṇa wearing a peacock-feather crown. Even then it is the disciple's duty to worship the dīkṣā-guru first. The guru who gives mantras has a very prominent special feature. The śabda-brahman (transcendental sound) which protects us from mano-dharma (mental concoction) is called mantra, and he who protects the disciple from mano-dharma is called the mantra-giving guru. The guru who gives mantras is therefore the topmost, and should be worshipped first. Śrī Vedavyāsa gives all kinds of śikṣa, and since he is śikṣa-guru, his importance or speciality is an unavoidable fact. It is rare to find a sad-guru (a bonafide guru) in this present time. Disputes are often seen among dīkṣā- and śikṣā-gurus because they are actually unqualified. Therefore the actual śikṣā-guru is one who is non-envious, who gives instructions for bhakti-sādhana, and who instructs the disciple to serve dīkṣā-guru. Śāstras say that one should give proper respect to him. One who does not teach the disciple to serve dīkṣā-guru is not a real śikṣā-guru. In fact, a person who cannot honour the dīkṣā-guru is not even a pure Vaiṣṇava. What kind of behaviour does such a preceptor show towards his own dīkṣā-guru? Those who are immersed in non-dual (advaita) thinking disrespect the guru or teach disrespect to guru following Śrī Śāṅkara Ācārya's 'anavagatasyāta (guru does not know theory fully).' They also consider guru to be non-guru or insignificant. If the guru is ignorant or has not realized tattva,

then how can the disciple respect his status? A sat-śiṣya (qualified disciple) does not think, “I shall get all types of benefits by performing guru-sevā. It will enable me to spend my life lazily and comfortably in the name of being bhajanānandi, and I shall be able to lord it over other devotees.” Gurūra sevaka haya mānya āpanāra (Caitanya Bhagavata): “Devotees and disciples who have taken shelter of a sad-guru always give respect to all other devotees. Only one who teaches guru-sevā is śikṣā-guru.”

An extensive religious conference
in Valāgaḍa

February 23rd to February 25th, 1961: Saccidānanda Sevāśrama, a resident of the city of Valāgaḍa in the Hoogly district, organised an extensive religious conference there for 3 days. Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the president-ācārya of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, had a special invitation, and attended this great celebration along with his sannyāsīs and 20 brahmacārīs. The Sevāśrama had made very good arrangements for the lodging and prasāda of the participants.

The large conference started at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Different speakers and guests arrived first, and then Śrīlā Ācārya Kesari was brought to the platform to the echoing of conchshells and saṅkirtana. Śrīlā Ācārya Kesari was very respectfully seated as the chairman by the son of Sir Āśutoṣa Mukhopādhyāya (the first Indian governor of Bengal), and Śrī Vāmā Prasāda Mukherjī (the brother of Śyāmāpada Mukherjī), the retired chief justice of Calcutta High Court. Svāmī Samādhīprakāśa Araṇya and Śrī Jīva (nyāya-tīrtha) were selected as main guests. The speaker Mahāsthavīra Dharmakīrti, Śrīmatīlāla Dāsa (retired district judge), Śrī Sudhīndranātha Mukhopādhyāya, sannyāsīs of the Samiti, brahmacārīs and other distinguished persons took their seats and then the programme started.

After the inaugural music of Śrī Jitendranātha Caudhari, Śrī Tārakagati Mustafī spoke about the aim of the conference on behalf of Svāmī Bhūpānanda Purī Mahārāja, the president of Saccidānanda Sevāśrama. After that, at the request of the chairman Śrīlā Ācārya Kesari, Dr. Motīlāla Dāsa lectured on dharma, giving pramāṇas (evidence) from Vedas and Upaniṣads. Later, Mahāsthavīra from the Mahābodhi Society spoke on religious moral behaviour (dharma-nīti) and the religious preaching of Buddhadeva. Śrī Jīva (nyāyatīrtha) gave a lecture on ‘The necessity of dharma’ and Svāmī Samādhīprakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja followed with a wonderful lecture on ‘The condition of the present religious world.’

Finally, Śrīlā Ācāryadeva gave a very brilliant lecture, which the audience liked most of all. It was full of sentiments regarding the national leaders’ lack of concern for dharma, the opposition to dharma in society, and the degrading influence of modern education on Indian culture. After 8 p.m. the secretary of the convention requested the chairman, Śrīlā Ācāryadeva, to open and announce the exhibition arranged by the conference. However, the enthusiastic audience requested Śrīlā Ācāryadeva again and again to continue his lecture. He did so and gave very impressive instructions on the theme ‘Following dharma is the foremost duty of

human life.' After the conference, the organisers and the audience were lavish in their praise of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's views.

Preaching in Assam, Sundaravana
and other places

April 1st, 1961: By the repeated and insistent request of the devotees of Assam state, Śrīla Ācāryadeva came to preach sanātana-dharma (śuddha vaiṣṇava-dharma) very strongly for one month in Golokagaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha, Caḍaīkholā, Ṭokre Chaḍā, iḍiṅgā, Dhūbaḍī, Śāntinagara and many other different places. A large religious conference took place in the court-yard of the iḍiṅgā village Junior High School. Hindus, Muslims and Christians were all present in great numbers at this conference, and everybody praised Śrīla Ācāryadeva's views, which strongly appealed to the heart.

After returning from Assam, our most worshipable Śrīla Gurudeva travelled with some sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs to the region of Sundaravana on June 16th for preaching. The party preached śuddha-bhakti extensively in Kṛṣṇacandrapura, Kāśīmaḡaḡha, Laxmī Janārdanapura, Āīplaṭa and other places and returned to Chuñchuṛā maṭha on June 24th.

Ratha-yātrā and Jhūlana-yātrā celebrations in
Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha

July 12th, 1961: A special celebration of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day took place at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchuṛā. Śrīla Ācāryadeva was the chairman, and there were many lectures on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's transcendental life and on his teaching and practice of vaiṣṇava-dharma. Speakers included Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīmad Viṣṇudaivata Mahārāja and other principal sannyāsīs, Śrī Hari Brahmacārī, Śrī Bhagavān Dāsa Brahmacārī, Śrī Bhāgavata Dāsa Brahmacārī, Śrī Gajendra-mokṣaṇa Brahmacārī, Śrī Vamśīvadanānanda Brahmacārī, Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmacārī, Śrī Yaduvara Dāsādhikāri (M.A.V.T.), Śrī Jitākṛṣṇa Dāsādhikāri and other Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Ācāryadeva concluded with very educational instructions on the same subject.

The next day saw the beginning of the festive Ratha-yātrā celebrations, which continued for ten days. Śrīmad Bhakti-vedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja's endeavour and services during this celebration were very praiseworthy.

Later on, in the month of Śrāvaṇa, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's Jhūlana-yātrā and the appearance day of Śrī Baladeva (pūrṇimā) were celebrated very splendidly. Our most worshipable Śrīla Gurudeva disclosed some very deep tattva and mysteries on these occasions.

Parikramā under Śrīla Gurudeva's shelter of all the Indian tīrthas

The parikramā of all the sacred places (tīrthas) in India, including three dhāmas and seven purīs, was completed very nicely during kārtika niyama-sevā of 1961, under the shelter of Parivrājakācārya Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and in his direct presence. Altogether there were 118

pilgrims on this pilgrimage, including sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs, vānaprasthīs and gr̥hasthas. The journey started on October 3rd, 1961 from Howraha station with a reserved tourist railway coach, and was completed within two months.

First of all the pilgrims took darśana of Śrī Madana-Mohanajī in Viṣṇupura. Once, when the Muslims had attacked Viṣṇupura, the Deity of the king, the Madan-Mohanajī chased out the enemies Himself by firing a cannon. The pilgrims also took darśana of the cannon. Under Śrīla Gurudeva's guidance, the parikramā party then had darśana of Śrī Jagannāthadeva, Ṭoṭa Gopinātha, Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance place and bhajana-kuṭīra, Gambhīrā, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's samādhi and bhajana-kuṭīra, Guṇḍica Mandira and other places in Jagannātha Purī. On October 8th, they climbed 987 steps up a hill in Simhācalam, and received the good fortune of having darśana of Jiyāda Nṛsimhadeva. On October 10th, they had darśana of Pānā Nṛsimha and the next day they saw Madrās Gauḍīya Maṭha, Pārthasārathi Mandira and other noteworthy places. In Madrās they changed from the Eastern Railway train to a Southern Railway train and the journey continued.

The party reached Pakṣītīrtha on October 13th and had darśana of Veda Girīśvara Mahādeva and Har Pārvatī who had the form of birds. On October 14th the pilgrims took darśana of Śrī Vāsudeva and Śrī Naṭarāja in Cidambaram, and of Pārvatī Devī in the form of a peahen in Māyābharam, and reached Kumbhakoṇam the same night. Next day they had darśana of Mokṣa-kuṇḍa, Kumbheśvaram, Śrī Rāja Gopala Cakrapāṇi and other sacred places in Kumbhakoṇam.

Śrīla Gurudeva narrated a story about Mokṣa-kuṇḍa, which is a very large, deep pond. The Pāṇḍavas came to this place during their exile, and while they were taking bath in this sacred place, Devarṣi Nārada arrived there. Nārada asked Bhīmasena, who was very proud of his strength, "Do you know what this sacred place is and what are its glories?" The very powerful Bhīmasena offered obeisances to Devarṣi Nārada and said, "Oh Devarṣi! We don't know much about this. Please tell us." Nārada said, "First take bath, and then I will tell you." After they had bathed, Nārada explained that the whole pond in which they had taken bath is situated in the skull of Kumbha Karṇa. Śrī Rāmacandra killed that great warrior and, throwing Kumbha Karṇa's skull to this place with his arrows, created this pond. Kumbha Karṇa's skull became purified by the touch of Śrī Rāmacandra's arrows, and anyone who takes bath in this pond attains Śrī Rāmacandra's Dhāma. When Bhīmasena heard this from Devarṣi Nārada, he lost his pride in his strength, and fell down at Devarṣi's feet. This big city received its name Kumbhakarṇam or Kumbhakoṇam from the name of Kumbha Karṇa.

On October 16th the pilgrims took darśana of Śrī Vṛhadeśvara Mahādeva in Tanjore in one of the largest temples of India. On the top of this extensive temple is a round stone weighing 80 tons and carved with fine designs. Modern scientists and archeologists wonder how such a large stone could be placed at such height before the invention of modern cranes.

There is another wonder here too. Śrī Nandījī, the carrier of Śīva, has been carved out of a stone of 25 tons and sits facing Śīva in front of the door of the main temple. The pilgrims were very happy to have darśana of śrī mandira and Śrī Nandī. On October 18th the pilgrims reached Dhanuṣkotī at the extreme southern point of India, where they took bath. They then visited Śrī Rāmeśvara, where they had darśana of the huge Śīva temple which Śrī Rāmacandra established. In a nearby place they also had darśana of the mūrti brought by Hanumān.

On October 20th they visited the temple of Mīnākṣī Devī in Madurā and the next day visited Kanyā Kumārī in Kanyā-kumārī. On October 23th they took darśana of Śrī Raṅganāthajī in Śrī Raṅgam, where Śrīman Mahāprabhu observed cāturmāsya-vrata. This is considered to be the largest temple of India; each wall of the temple accomodates a whole city. Śrī Yamunācārya and Śrī Rāmānujācārya lived in this famous temple of Raṅganāthajī and preached everywhere from there. Raṅganāthajī is present there in His Śeṣaśāyī form with Laxmījī. After having darśana of Viṣṇukāncī and Śivakāncī on October 25th the party reached Anakoṇam Junction, where they changed the Southern Railway tourist coach for an Eastern Railway coach. Travelling from here the pilgrims had darśana of Tirupati Bālājī, which is the richest temple of South India, and is situated on the Tirumalaī Hills.

On October 29th in Nāsika Pañcavaṭī, the pilgrims took darśana of the place where Sūrpanakhā's nose was cut off, the place where Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā stayed on the bank of Godāvārī, and other places. On October 31st they took darśana of Mumbā Devī in Mumbāī. On November 1st in Broca they had darśana of the place where Vāmana Deva begged from Balī Mahārāja. After that the pilgrims travelled to Prabhāsa, Sudāmāpurī, Venta Dvārakā, Gomatī Dvārakā, ākorajī (Raṅachodajī), Ujjayanī, Śrī Nāthadvārā, Puṣkara, and Sāvitrī. In Jaipur they took darśana of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, Śrī Rādhā-Gopinātha, Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara, Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They visited Galtā Gaddī and other places and finally reached Mathurā-dhāma.

Starting from Mathurā on November 17th they had darśana of Gokula, Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Barsānā, Nandagrāma and other places. Then they visited Indraprastha in Delhi, Bhadrakālī in Kurukṣetra, Haridvāra, Ṛṣikeśa and Laxmanjhūlā and after that went to Naimiṣāraṇya, Ayodhyā, Kāśī Viśvanātha in Vārāṇasī and Gadādhara Pādapadma in Gāyā. The parikramā party returned to Calcutta after spending two months having darśana of all these places.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva in Jaipur

January 4th, 1962: Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva came with his associates to the Samiti's branch maṭha in Mathurā. There he preached Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message extensively for a week. He then proceeded to Jaipur, the capital of Rājasthāna, at the repeated request of some distinguished residents of that city. For a week he lectured in Hindi and English in different assemblies, associations and temples, speaking about the spotless vaiṣṇava-dharma and sanātana-dharma that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had taught and practised. He explained very clearly to the

general public that śrī harināma sankīrtana is easy and simple, and is the only way to attain Bhagavān, especially in Kali-yuga.

A huge assembly was organized in the local Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple. Distinguished literary people and educated gentlemen of the city were present and Śrīla Gurudeva gave a very brilliant lecture regarding śrī nāma-tattva. The famous Hindi scholars, Śrī Kamalākara 'Kamala' and Paṇḍita Śrī Kṛṣṇacandrajī (kāvyā-vyākaraṇa tīrtha sāhityācārya) were very impressed by Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lecture. Even though they were both initiated ācāryas in Śrī Vallabhācārya's puṣṭi-mārga, they came to hear vaiṣṇava-tattva from Śrīla Ācāryadeva when he came to Jaipur. Śrīla Gurudeva told them that Śrī Vallabhācārya met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu twice. The first time was in Aḍaila Grāma near Prayāga, and the second time was in Śrī Purī dhāma. Śrī Vallabhācārya's son, Śrī Viṭṭhalādeva, had a close and affectionate friendship with Śrī Rūpa, Raghunātha and the other Gosvāmīs.

Both Śrī Kamalākara 'Kamala' and Śrī Kṛṣṇacandrajī maintained a connection with Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha for their whole life. They kept an affectionate friendship with Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, and their poems and essays were published in Śrī Bhāgavat-patrikā.

After preaching vaiṣṇava-dharma extensively like this for a month in Mathurā and Jaipur, Ācārya Kesari returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuñchuṛā, on February 9th.

Establishing a preaching centre of the Samiti in Orissa

Bhadraka is a famous place within the Bāleśvara district in Orissa. On the bank of the river Sālindī nearby is the sacred village Koranṭa, where the inhabitants are brāhmaṇas from karaṇa-gotra. The majority of the residents there are highly educated and prominent governmental officials. There is a temple of Śrī Gopālajī in this village, whose priest was Śrī Lāl Mohana Mahāpātra. Unable to perform the temple sevā, he offered the temple and its adjoining agricultural land to the Samiti's president Śrīla Ācāryadeva and it was duly registered at the registration office of the Court. Śrīla Ācāryadeva named this new branch Śrī Gopālajī Gauḍīya preaching center.

After some time Śrī Gopālajī was moved from inside the village to the large main road. An extensive śrī mandira, nāṭya-mandira and sevaka-khaṇḍa (servant quarters) were constructed on a large piece of land there, and Śrī Gopālajī is now worshiped in this huge temple.

Koranṭa village is situated 2 1/2 miles further north from Bhadraka town. Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura composed his famous Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā here while he was appointed as sub-divisional officer (S.D.O.) in Bhadraka. He has mentioned in his poetical work 'Vijana Grāma,' kimvā nā rahili kena sālindīra kule yathāya pathikagaṇa aśvatthera mūle kātāya ātapa-tāpa niścinta antare: "On the bank of Sālindī there is a pipal tree, under whose shade travellers take rest." When the preaching-centre was established there, Śrīla Ācāryadeva said, "We will reside in Śrī

Gopālajī Gauḍīya preaching centre and have the good opportunity to remember Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's sacred character and devotional instructions.”

This maṭha is situated only two furlongs from Vāudapura station, the next station after Bhadraka railway station, and the road is also very good for vehicles. The atmosphere is very captivating here. The Samiti offers its hearty thanks to the above mentioned Śrī Mahāpātra Mahāśaya and his family for establishing this preaching centre for śuddha-bhakti.

Preaching of śuddha-bhakti

in Jaipur town

August 29th, 1962: Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja arrived with some brahmacārīs at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā and stayed there for 15 days. Educated people living locally came to listen to Śrīla Ācāryadeva, as did many research scholars from the universities at Alīgarḥa and Āgrā. They were very pleased to hear his philosophical conceptions. These research scholars came to the extensive library which Śrīla Ācāryadeva established in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha to study books favourable for their research, and even from time to time to borrow them. Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave lectures in the nāṭya-mandira of Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, and when the mathurā-vāsīs heard his impressive philosophical conceptions on śuddha-bhakti, they gradually became his followers. Triāṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja was the president of the maṭha and he was very devoted in his care for Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurupādapadma and the brahmacārīs who came with him.

On September 4th, 1962, Śrīla Gurudeva arrived in Jaipura with his group of followers and stayed at the main office of the Jaipura Halvāī-Samiti at the special request of the president, Seṭh Somī Lālji. Paṇḍit Śrī Kṛṣṇa Candra Śāstrī (kavya-tīrtha, sāhityaratna) organised an eminent assembly in the premises of his Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇajī temple on the evening of Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī. Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva gave a Hindi lecture which was full of siddhānta, establishing the usefulness of śabda-brahman (transcendental sound) and uselessness of ordinary sound. The Vedas and all other śāstras establish that śabda-brahman is śrī harināma and that sad-guru is the expert who has realized Bhagavān, and who bestows the transcendental śabda-brahman in the pure ear of the sat-śiṣya. This śabda-brahman is not created by the interactions of air with the throat or palate. Rather,

ataḥ śrī kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam-indriyaiḥ

sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuratyadaḥ

(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva Vibhāga 2.234)

“The human material senses cannot perceive śrī harināma because it is a transcendental sound, but it will appear by itself on the pure senses of the sevonmukha sādḥaka, in whose heart the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa has arisen.”

In Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu the nature of śrī nāma is described like this:

nāmaś cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ

pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma nāmiṇoḥ

(Bhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva Vibhāga 2.233)

“Śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma is cintāmaṇi, a transcendental wish-fulfilling gem, for it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Himself, the personification of rasa. It is complete, beyond illusion and eternally liberated, because kṛṣṇa-nāma (Kṛṣṇa’s name) and nāmī (Kṛṣṇa Himself) are non-different.”

Sac-cid-ānanda rasamaya tattva is non-dual, but this advaya-tattva has appeared in two forms, vigraha and nāma. Only through sevā of śabda-brahma, that is through pure nāma-saṅkīrtana, can the jīva be established in his pure svarūpa and be eternally devoted to Yugala sevā.

Ordinary sound is that which appears by the interactions of air with the throat, palate, teeth etc. without the shelter of sad-guru or the guidance of transcendental literature. This ordinary sound cannot bring about any good fortune for the baddha-jīvas (conditioned souls). The sat-śāstras have abundantly glorified śabda-brahman, and Śrīla Ācāryadeva used vedānta-darśana and other evidence to establish the speciality and superior excellence of śabda-brahman.

After that, the mahantājī of the famous Śrī Govindadeva temple in Jaipur organised a scholarly assembly there and Śrīla Gurudeva gave a brilliant lecture on Śrī Rādhā tattva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tattva and the astonishing nature of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-Yugala līlā. The audience was very attracted when they heard Śrīla Ācāryadeva’s unprecedented śāstric and siddhāntic conceptions. On that day they could understand something of the deep siddhāntic conceptions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the vaiṣṇava ācāryas in His line.

Gradually it became known throughout the whole of Jaipur that a very philosophical scholar and siddhānta-vid Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācārya from Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma was visiting the city. At that time the principal of Jaipur Mahārāja’s Sanskrit College was Mahāmahopādhyāya Śrī Candrasekhara Dvivedī Vyākaraṇa-ācārya (sāṅkhya-yoga-vedānta-tīrtha). (Later on he accepted sannyāsa in the Śāṅkara Sampradāya and was installed as Śāṅkarācārya in Śrī Govardhana Maṭha in Purī). He very respectfully invited Śrīla Ācāryadeva to preside at a huge scholarly assembly which he organised at his college, and which various college professors, students and honourable and faithful citizens also attended. In his scholarly lecture Śrīla Ācāryadeva used pramāṇa (evidence) from the Vedas and other śāstras to establish Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa as akṣara brahman (imperishable Brahman). After that he spoke on ‘The duty of human life.’ He compared modern democracy, where everyone, whether intelligent or foolish, can vote, and also be elected minister, to Gaṇeśa (who is considered foolish because he does not know who his father is). Quoting ‘arūpavadeva hi tat pradhānatvāt’ and other sūtras of Vedānta sūtra, he refuted nirākāra-vāda and established the Lord as sākāra (having form). He also impressed his audience by revealing the conclusion that bhakta and Bhagavān are eternally present, even though they are beyond the limit of time and place.

The honourable principal of the college praised Śrīla Ācāryadeva’s Vedāntic viewpoints very highly and thanked him profusely. He also told the students and

human society to accept Śrīla Ācāryadeva's spiritual instructions. He said that he would like to organize a conference for all sampradāyas, which would facilitate a comparative discussion on the Gauḍīya vedānta commentary along with other commentaries on Vedānta.

The Samiti particularly praises Seṭha Somilālji, Śrī Omprakāśa Vrajavāsī 'Sāhityaratna' and Śrī Jagadīśa Prasādajī Guptā, the director of Lakṣmī Motor Company, for all their different services while Śrīla Ācāryadeva was preaching śuddha-bhakti in Jaipur.

The auspicious desire of Śrīla Ācāryadeva regarding Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī managed by Śrī Samiti

In 1957, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti established a Sanskrit school called Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī, in Bospāḍā Lane, Bāgbāzār, Calcutta. Modern universities do not give proper attention to the Sanskrit language, and students do not receive education in Sanskrit. If such an ignorant attitude towards Sanskrit persists, the bhagavat ideology, which is the life of Indian culture, will undoubtedly disappear. Bengali has been respected as the pre-eminent language in the whole of India because its literature depends exclusively on Sanskrit literature. Nowadays, however, Bengali is unfortunately becoming disconnected from this relationship with Sanskrit. The present atheistic society in Bengal wants to eradicate the Hindu dharma, but they know very well that Hindu dharma cannot be destroyed as long as Bengali is connected to Sanskrit, the language of the Gods. Therefore the managers of the modern universities want to make Bengali a rāvindrīya-karaṇa language, i.e. a language as simple as that used by Rāvindra Tagore, by separating Bengali from Sanskrit literature and grammar. In this way, by removing the combined letters which are difficult to read, a very easy language suitable the uneducated class is created. One should understand that this is disrespect of Sanskrit and ignorance of the Indian Vedas, Upaniṣads, and Purāṇas and other traditional, spiritual teachings. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti reflected for a long time on this wretched situation in Bengal, and indeed in the whole of India. To spread Sanskrit education they established the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī in Chuñchuṛā, from where it was later transferred to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti formed a committee to manage the Catuṣpāthī. The committee members are as follows:

- 1) Chairman: Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahāmsasvāmī Parivrājakācāryavarya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī
- 2) Secretary: Tridaṇḍīsvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja
- 3) Member: Tridaṇḍīsvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja
- 4) Member: Tridaṇḍīsvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja
- 5) Member: Śrīyuta Śacīndra Mohananandī (chairman of Navadvīpa city council)
- 6) Member: Śrīyuta Jitendranātha (pañcatīrtha)
- 7) Member: Paṇḍita Śrī Nimāicaraṇa (vyākaraṇatīrtha)
- 8) Member: Paṇḍita Śrīyuta Sureścandra Rāya (vyākaraṇatīrtha)

9) Member: Paṇḍita Śrī Brajānanda Brajavāsī

In previous years, many Catuṣpāthī students passed the examination of the Baṅgīya Sanskrit Literature Association (Baṅgīya Sanskr̥t Sāhitya Pariṣad) with great distinction. This year, 1963, the honourable Śrī Jitendranātha (pañcatīrtha—kāvya-vyākaraṇa-purāṇa-vedānta-vaiṣṇava darśana) is managing the Catuṣpāthī very earnestly and enthusiastically. In a short time Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī has become glorious throughout Navadvīpa.

This year, a new teacher—Paṇḍita Nimāi Caraṇa (vyākaraṇa-tīrtha)—has been appointed because the number of students has increased. The students read and study kāvya (literature), vyākaraṇa (grammar) and vedānta, and seven of them have taken examinations at primary, medium, and degree level this year. We respectfully offer Sanskrit students an education in Sanskrit from qualified teachers in this exemplary Catuṣpāthī. I am also humbly submitting that this Sanskrit school particularly emphasises education in Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa. Facility for boarding and lodging is also available for students of Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa. Such students may send their application forms together with their credentials to the secretary of the Catuṣpāthī, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja. The opinion of the ṭola²¹ supervisor regarding Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī “The inspection of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī took place today, at which two teachers, the secretary and ten students were present. At present there are twelve students in the Catuṣpāthī, which teaches kāvya, Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa, Vedānta, vaiṣṇava-darśana and other śāstras. The principal is pañcatīrtha and he teaches very diligently. An assistant teacher has been appointed in this school due to the increasing number of students.

“According to the register the Catuṣpāthī has twelve or thirteen resident students; this is something to be happy about and proud of. The managing committee applied for governmental approval a long time ago, but this was not given until today.

“The Catuṣpāthī’s examination result is not lower than the previous year and the records are being kept as accurately as before. I wish this Catuṣpāthī all prosperity and progress.”

Signed—Śrī Nalinikānta (tarkasmṛtitīrtha)

West Bengal ṭola inspector (additional inspector), 19.12.1963

Establishment of Śrī Gauḍīya

Charity Clinic

December 15th, 1962: The Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic was established at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Navadvīpa, to provide homeopathic, biochemic and allopathic treatment. A sub-committee was formed to manage the clinic, which is subordinate to Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. At the inauguration of the Charity Clinic, Paramārādhyaṭama Śrīla Gurudeva was selected chairman. He requested the secretary of the sub-committee, Dr. Śrīyut Vrajānanda Vrajavāsī (L.M.F.) to read the article ‘Gauḍīya Clinic’, after which Śrīla Gurudeva gave an attractive lecture full of deep thoughts about this clinic.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva said, “The Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic is not the same as the clinics of the Rāma-Kṛṣṇa mission and the India Sevāśrama Association. It may look the same from the external point of view of distributing medicine to patients, but there is a tremendous difference in the purpose. If we endeavour to give material help and sympathy to human beings, it will cause their bondage. Contrary to this, if we give help and sympathy to the jīvas for their progress in bhagavat-bhajana, this will remove their material bondage and help them to enter the spiritual realm. We are very happy to point out that this Charity Clinic has quickly become very famous throughout Navadvīpa. Every day many patients come here from far away to be treated by our qualified and skilled doctors.”

The selected members of the committee were as follows:

- 1) Chairman: Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa-svāmī Parivrājakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī
 - 2) Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja
 - 3) Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja
 - 4) Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja
 - 5) Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Harijana Mahārāja
 - 6) Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Viṣṇudaivata Mahārāja
 - 7) Śrīyut Vrajānanda Dāsa Vrajavāsī (L.M.F.)—secretary (Regd. No. 8134 Cal.)
 - 8) Śrīyut Advaita Dāsa Vrajavāsī
 - 9) Śrī Kṛṣṇabandhu Bhaumika (H.M.B.H.T.C.) Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic’s doctor.
- Installation festival of Śrī Vighraha in the newly built śrī mandira during Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava

March, 1963: Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti organized the extensive celebration of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura Janmotsava. The atmosphere of the entire maṭha was filled with unprecedented joy on the third day of the parikramā (March 7th), because of the installation of śrī mandira and śrī vighraha. The nāṭya-mandira and especially the installation altar of the Deities were beautifully decorated with flower garlands, festoons of mango leaves and flowers and the trunks of banana trees. There was no parikramā on that day, and the day’s auspicious ceremony was heralded by mangalārati, saṅkīrtana, various musical instruments in a band party and the sweet sound of the shenai during brāhma-muhūrta.

First the devotees prepared to bring water from the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī for the installation and abhiṣeka. When Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself was ready with a waterpot in his hands, the maṭha sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs and thousands of devoted pilgrims also assembled with their waterpots. The procession made its way to the holy bank of the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī keeping the band party in the front, followed by the saṅkīrtana group of maṭha devotees, then Paramārādhya Śrīla Gurudeva with the waterpot on his head, and finally thousands of devoted pilgrims performing kīrtana with great joy. The devotees performed pūjā of Śrī Jāhnvī Devī with sixteen

articles, and then filled up their waterpots with sacred Gaṅgā water and returned very joyfully to the maṭha premises and the yajña altar.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva requested Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktibhūdeva Śrautī Mahārājaji to perform the priestly duties at this ceremony, with the help of Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja arranged for the Deity installation and Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja looked after the main guests.

The Deities were placed on the bathing platform. First of all They were bathed with milk, yoghurt, ghee, honey, and sugar sanctified by mantras. After that, Their abhiṣeka was performed with 108 waterpots containing fragrant water from all the tīrthas, sarvaṣadhi²², water from various jewels²³ and other kinds of waters. During the abhiṣeka, Vedic scholars were reciting Puruṣa-sūkta. Around the altar, Śrīmad Bhaktijīvana Janārdana Mahārāja and other prominent sannyāsīs melodiously recited different dharma-śāstras, such as Veda-chatuṣṭya (the four Vedas), Upaniṣads, Vedānta-darśana (Govinda-bhāṣya), Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrī Gītā, Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma and Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. As well as this, the sounds of mahā-saṅkīrtana, conch shells, and the ladies' hulu-dhvani resounded everywhere in the sky. Nearby, at the sacrificial altar, amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktipramoda Purī Mahārāja²⁴ and others were offering oblations in the fire. All directions were purified by the fragrant, sacred smoke of the vaiṣṇava-homa and the very impressive sound of the loud saṅkīrtana. No one could count the people who filled up the nāṭya-mandira and the mandira, taking darśana of the mahābhiṣeka with wide-open eyes. After the abhiṣeka the Deities were taken to the altar and Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself completed the installation.

There were kīrtanas, recitals and brilliant lectures in Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, and other languages by the ācāryas, tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs and scholars learned in siddhānta from different maṭhas. Altogether, the occasion was full of trans-cendental potency and life.

At that time Yatirāja Śrīla Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja and other sannyāsīs arrived. They were welcomed with garlands and candana and seated on the well-decorated stage in the nāṭya-mandira. Pūjyapāda Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja gave a significant lecture on Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha's great contribution and the superiority of its philosophical views. Śrīla Ācāryadeva then respectfully escorted them to the entrance of śrī mandira to inaugurate the opening. At that time the assembled multitude vibrated their jaya-dhvani, hari-dhvani and the ladies' hulu-dhvani and this mixed with the auspicious sound of conchshells and the mṛdaṅgas and kartalas from the saṅkīrtana, and filled all directions. Śrīmad Bhaktikisaudha Āśrama Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhaktivikāśa Hṛṣīkeṣa Mahārāja came with their entire parikramā parties at the time of inauguration and in the evening they were joined by Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktidayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja with their parties.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī were installed in the middle prakoṣṭha (chamber). In the prakoṣṭha on Their right is Dhāmeśvara Śrī Koladeva (Varāhadeva) and Lakṣmī-devī, and in the prakoṣṭha on Their left is the arca-vigraha of Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Ācāryadeva had bestowed Their darśana on the whole world.

After the installation, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktideśika Ācārya Mahārāja performed arcana, and offered bhoga and āraṭi to the Deities. After bhoga āraṭi, mahā-prasada was distributed to thousands and thousands of people. The audience was enchanted by the Deities' unprecedented rūpa-mādhurī (the sweetness of Their form), and unanimously declared that they had never before seen such beautiful Deities. Paramārādhyā Śrīla Ācāryadeva declared at the occasion, "Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti has taken a vow to destroy adharmā (irreligiosity), kudharma (bad activities), vidharma (non-conformist religion), apadharmā (heresy), chaladharmā (deceitful religion) and so on. To this end, we have installed Śrī Koladeva (Varāhadeva) who is Dhāmeśvara of Koladvīpa, together with Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī in this huge and prominent śrī mandira in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma. But constructing large temples is not the only purpose of preaching; it is a limb of arcana. The foremost purpose of preaching is kīrtana-sevā under the guidance of Śrī Rūpa. We have not established this prominent śrī mandira and huge nāṭya-mandira in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa only for arcāsevā (Deity worship). Rather, it is the symbol of Bhaktisiddhānta vāṇī, the preaching of kīrtana bhakti, which is the topmost perfection of vedānta. Following the mahājanas in my heart I have established the foundation of this maṭha-mandira to preach Siddhānta vāṇī by the transcendental sound of śrī nāma saṅkīrtana, blended with the nectar flowing from my Śrī Gurudeva's mouth. The construction of śrī mandira, the auspicious task of installing the Deities and other works have been completed through the medium of śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana."

One of the Godbrothers of our most worshipable Śrīla Ācāryadeva was attracted by his qualities and wrote a title essay in Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, which included the following com-mendation. "According to Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentary on yāra mantra sakala mūrtite vaise prāṇa (Caitanya Bhāgavata Ādī līlā 2.305), in the Śrī Gauḍīya sampradāya, śrī vigraha is installed by the chanting of the mahā-mantra prescribed by Śrī Gaurahari. Only nāma-saṅkīrtana can remove the misconception that śrī vigraha is stone. The śloka, 'kṛṣṇa varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam' shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva has prescribed the chanting of the mahā-mantra as the appropriate and affectionate worship of śrī vigraha. Worship and darśana of the Deities are lifeless where Bhagavān is not served by the worshipper's inner love and affection, but by wealth or as a ritual. No matter what system one is following, worship with life is performed with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra as chanted by Śrī Gaurasundara. "Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Koladvīpa has today assumed new splendour, for it is now surrounded by and decorated with a new mandira with nine prominent sky-high domes, a new huge nāṭya-mandira, a new group of quarters for sevakas, a new

building for the printing press, a new school for spiritual education and a new charitable dispensary. The sevakas of this place have dedicated themselves to the service of Śrī Gaura-Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī (the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as explained by Śrī Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda). The disciples of Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, who are expert in bhajana, jointly performed the inauguration ceremony of Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvikā-Vinodabihārījī and Śrī Varāhadeva in the new mandira following Śrī Śrī Rūpānuga-guru-paramparā. This has created a new atmosphere in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma.”

A large religious assembly was arranged in the Śrī Hari-kīrtana nāṭya-mandira on the evening of the third day of Śrīdhāma parikramā. At Śrīla Ācāryadeva’s request, Yatipravara Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārāja accepted the chairman’s seat. Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktibhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja and Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktisaurabha Bhakti-sāra Mahārāja gave lectures. After that, Śrīla Ācāryadeva spoke on the difference between the vaiṣṇava and māyāvada philosophies of śrī vigraha-tattva. He then recited ‘Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī-tattvāṣṭakam’ and explained why the Deity of Śrī Vinodabihārī does not have Kṛṣṇa’s śyāma complexion. He concluded by glorifying the outstanding sevā of the late Śrī Giridhārī Dāsādhikārī in the construction of śrī mandira and the sevā of Śrī Haripada Dāsādhikārī, who covered all the expenses for constructing the nāṭya-mandira. Finally, the chairman of the assembly, Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārājajī, gave an attractive lecture.

Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and
Śrī Gaura-Janmotsava

On the first day of Śrīdhāma parikramā, the pilgrims had taken darśana of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s bhajanasthalī in Godrumadvīpa, of Suvarṇavihār, Nṛsimhapallī, Hariharakṣetra, Haṁsavāhan and other places. On the second day, they had visited Samudragaṇha, Champakhaṭṭa, Vidyānagara and Modadrumadvīpa and then returned to the maṭha. On the fourth day they completed parikramā of Prauḍhamāyā, Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja’s samādhi and Rudradvīpa. That day a special assembly was arranged in the evening. Śrīla Ācāryadeva was selected as chairman, and Paṇḍitpravara (the best of paṇḍits) Śrīyuta Gopendra Bhūṣaṇa (sāṅkhyatīrtha) was selected as chief guest. At Śrīla Gurudeva’s request, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Bhaktideśika Ācārya Mahārāja started by giving an attractive lecture in Sanskrit with śāstric evidences showing that Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Svayaṁ Bhagavān. Paṇḍitpravara Śrīyuta Nityānanda (pañcatīrtha) also spoke in Sanskrit, glorifying the importance of sādhu-saṅga. The honourable chief guest (sāṅkhyatīrtha) said that Śrī Keśava Mahārājajī had in fact fully established Koladvīpa by installing the deity of Śrī Koladeva: “Today, the memory of ancient Koladeva has awakened in my heart.” He then praised and glorified Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

On the parikramā's fifth day, the pilgrims had darśana at Śrī Īsodyāna in Antardvīpa, Śrī Yogapīṭha (Śrī Caitanya Mahā-prabhu's appearance place), Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, the samādhis of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārājajī, Chand Kāzī's samādhi, Sīmantadvīpa (Simuliyā Grāma) and other places. Mahā-prasāda was served at noon-time at Śrī Jayadeva Pāṭa and the parikramā party then returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Bhakti-sarvasva Giri Mahārāja was the chairman of the religious assembly that evening, and Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivicāra Yāyāvar Mahārāja, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktijīvana Janārdana Mahārāja, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivāridhi Purī Mahārāja and Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja gave beautiful lectures in Hindi.

The sixth day of the parikramā was the appearance day of Śrī Gaurasundara. The devotees fasted, there was a reading of the complete Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavat and śravaṇa-kīrtana was performed very joyfully. Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktijīvana Janārdana Mahārāja was chairman of the assembly after Śrī Gaura's appearance in the evening. Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Śuddhādvaitī Mahārāja and other sannyāsīs gave lectures on the distinctive characteristics of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's great contribution.

At noon on the seventh day, yajñā-homa and other rituals were performed for those who had accepted dikṣā, sannyāsa and bābājī veśa. After that, wonderful mahā-prasāda was served to twenty or twenty-five thousand invited and uninvited faithful guests.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva was chairman of the religious assembly that evening. First of all there were lectures by those who had accepted sannyāsa and bābājī-veśa the previous day, namely Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Rāddhvamanthī Mahārāja, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Rāddhānti Mahārāja and Śrīmad Raghunātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. After that, Śrī Rasikamohana Vrajavāsī, Paṇḍita Nimāi Caraṇa (vyākaraṇatīrtha) and Śrī Haridāsa Vrajavāsī gave lectures in Hindi. Finally, the main guest, Śrīla Prabhupāda's expert sannyāsī, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktiprakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja gave an attractive lecture. In this way the sublimely joyful, week-long celebration of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma Parikramā and Śrī Gaura Janmotsava took place smoothly and was concluded successfully.

Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha

Our supremely worshipful Śrī Ācārya Kesarī established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti (Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha) in Kuliya Nagar (present day Navadvīpa town) to nourish the service of the innermost desires of his Gurupādapadma Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Inside the vast boundary wall of the temple grounds there is a divine temple with nine huge domes. Śrīla Gurudeva constructed this maṭha and mandira in an inspired way and on the basis of philosophical siddhānta. Below is a short presentation of the maṭha.

Śrī Narahari Torāṇa

At first we enter the courtyard of the maṭha via the main entrance door, Śrī Narahari Toraṇa. Above this gate on the outside are carved the words 'param vijayate śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtanam' and 'kīrtaniya sadā hariḥ.' Here Śrīla Gurudeva is waving the victory flag of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's ultimate instruction in His Śikṣāṣṭaka, namely to perform śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana. Kīrtana of śrī harināma has been announced to be the life of sādhana-bhajana. In order to enter śrī bhakti-mandira one should first perform the maṅgalācaraṇa of tad-rūpa vaibhava (Guru and Vaiṣṇavas) and of the worshipful Deity. Also on the gate is the jayagāna (glorification) spoken by Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhakura, who is the Vyāsadeva of Śrī Caitanya lilā: jaya navadvīpa-navapradīpa-prabhāvaḥ pāṣaṇḍa-gajaikasimhaḥ. We may mention in this context that one of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's intimate god-brothers, Śrī Bhaktisaraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja, gave him the title 'Pāṣaṇḍa-gajaikasimha (the lion who defeats the elephants of heresy and atheism).'

The name Śrī Narahari Toraṇa which Śrīla Gurudeva has given refers both to the tattva of aśraya or sevā-vigraha (Śrī Narahari Brahmācārī is the personification of sevā), and also to the tattva of viṣaya or sevya-vigraha (Śrī Nṛsimhadeva).

Above this arched gateway on each side are two very powerful lions on the heads of two mad elephants. The mad elephants signify vaiṣṇava-aparādha. Śrī Jagāi and Śrī Madhāi stand on each side below as doorkeepers, and on the inside of the gateway are Śrī Devānanda Paṇḍita and Śrī Vāsudeva Vipra, who proclaim the glory of Kuliya aparādha-bhañjana-pāṭa, the place where offenses are destroyed. Śrī Devānanda Paṇḍita had committed an offense to the lotus feet of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, but later repented by the mercy of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. He begged for forgiveness at Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's lotus feet, whereupon Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also forgave him. By the mercy of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, such extremely offensive persons as Jagāi and Madhāi also became perfect devotees. Vāsudeva Vipra obtained darśana of Śrī Gaurasundara here by the mercy of Śrī Koladeva.

Śrī maṭha consisting of seven sections

Amongst the nine dvīpas (islands) of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma, Śrī Koladvīpa, which is situated on the west bank of Gaṅgā, is very important. According to Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma-parikramā and Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga, the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana are situated in a somewhat transformed order on the nine dvīpas of Śrī Navadvīpa. This Koladvīpa is said to be Girirāja Govardhana himself, and rasika bhaktas take darśana of the sandy banks of the nearby Bhāgīrathī as the arena of rāsa by the Yamunā. Adjacent to this rāsa arena and to the south is Ṛtudvīpa which is non-different from Rādha-kunḍa and Śyāma-kunḍa, and Bahulāvan is situated to the north. Our supremely worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva, the crest jewel of the community of ācāryas, has established this maṭha here only after considering everything written about this place in sāstras. When we enter the courtyard of the maṭha through Śrī Narahari Toraṇa, we have darśana of śrī maṭha enclosed within the vast boundary walls. Śrīla Gurudeva

divided this maṭha into seven khaṇḍas or sections and named them according to philosophical siddhānta.

(1) Paramārtha-khaṇḍa—printing press etc.

In this section the literary incarnation of Bhagavān, bhakti-literature, such as Vedas, Upaniṣads, Gītā and Bhāgavatam is published. Bhagavad-bhakti is preached all over the world through the medium of these books, and for this reason Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī called the printing press the bṛhat-mṛdanga. He also said that the tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī preachers of śuddha-bhakti are the living mṛdanga and they preach Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message of śuddha prema-dharma according to their ability at home and abroad. This is why our Ārādhyadeva Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja has displayed special enthusiasm in preaching and publishing Vaikuṅṭha Vārtāvaha, Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā as well as the original literature of our Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta vāṇī such as Vedānta, Bhāgavatam and the literature of the Gosvāmīs. With this intention he also established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī and Śrī Gauḍīya Charitable Dispensary.

(2) Kīrtana-khaṇḍa

In śrī nāṭya-mandira (the congregational assembly hall) hari saṅkīrtana and kīrtana of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta and other literature etc. is always going on. Great personalities give classes and speeches in the large religious assemblies which also take place here.

(3) Upāśya khaṇḍa

Śrīla Ācāryadeva has given the name navadhā bhakti-mandira to the mandira with its nine distinctive domes. The names of these nine domes are respectively śravaṇam, kīrtanam, smaraṇam, pāda-sevanam, arcanam, vandanam, dāśyam, sakhyam and ātma-nivedanam. The highest dome of śrī mandira is ātma-nivedanam. In the middle of the Sudarśana cakṛa on the top of this dome is a flute which proclaims, 'kīrtaniyaḥ sadā hariḥ' to all the inhabitants of the world. The profound meaning of this is that the inhabitants of the world should assemble in śrī hari kīrtana mandira for śrī nāma saṅkīrtana-yajña, which bestows seven excellent results²⁵. Āgacchantu mahābhāgā nitya kīrtana-mandire: "Welcome, you are very fortunate to come to the kīrtana-mandira."

On every dome is the Śrī Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava tilaka, which attracts the faith of travellers towards pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism even from far away. Inside the four domes of the first floor of śrī mandira are situated the original founders of the four sat-sampradāyas: Śrī Lakṣmī, Śrī Brahmā, Śrī Rudra and Śrī Chatuḥsan. Near them the four ācāryas of those sampradāyas (namely Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhavācārya, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī and Śrī Nimbāditya) are situated and worshipped properly. They instruct people who want sādhana-bhajana that it is absolutely necessary to accept a sāttvata-sampradāya (bonafide sampradāya).

On the four walls of the first floor of the mandira are pictures of the daśāvatāras (the ten āvatāras). These ten incarnations of Bhagavān correspond to the gradual

development of consciousness, and indicate the progressive development of theistic philosophy. In the eastern portion of the first floor of śrī mandira, the vidhi-mārga and rāgamārga, or pāñcarātrika and bhāgavatīya sādhana-mārga, have been exhibited in accordance with the instructions of the Gauḍīya guru-varga. In the eastern area of the second floor of śrī mandira is the surabhī cow, and Indradeva begging for forgiveness at Śrī Govinda's lotus feet. Along with this is the destroyer of all obstacles, Śrī Nṛsimhadeva. His killing Hiraṇyakaśipu announces the victory over people with demonic thoughts and proclaims the glory of aparādha-bhañjana pāṭa, the place which destroys all aparādhas.

Śrīla Gurudeva has exhibited his ideal of ekāntika-niṣṭhā (single pointed unflinching faith) in his guru-sevā by installing Jagadguru Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's mūrti and arranging for his daily worship. He has written, "I have installed my Gurupādapadma Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda in śrī mandira of this maṭha. We see many so-called paramahāṁsas in the world today, but on consideration we find that they are not equal to a fragment of this mahā-puruṣa, or even to those who have obtained only a particle of dust from his lotus feet. Still, these so-called paramahāṁsas are being honoured by worldly people who are devoid of tattva-jñāna. Many people call Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda the crest jewel of the community of paramahāṁsas. I do not object to this, but my personal statement is that he is the svāmī (master) or pati (lord) of the community of paramahāṁsas. He is empowered to give instructions even to paramahāṁsas. For this reason he is called Jagadguru.

"This mahā-puruṣa who is rādhā-pakṣī (partial towards Rādhā) is famous in England, Germany and all other countries as Śrīla Prabhupāda. Here we perform his āratī first of all. There is an absolute necessity in the whole world to perform worship and service to this mahā-puruṣa. If his worship is stopped, bhakti-dharma will disappear from this world, and the whole world will be destroyed and go to Rasātala, the lowest hellish planet. For this reason the people of this world address him as Prabhupāda." In the first prakoṣṭha (chamber) Koladeva is installed. Since Satya-yuga He has been bestowing his mercy on devotees such as His exclusive devotee Śrī Vāsudeva Vipra. His daily worship and sevā in śrī mandira announce the glories of Koladvīpa. The name Kuliyā has originated from the word 'Kola.' Places which today have names such as Kuliyādaha, Kolergaṅja, Koler Āmād, Gada Khālira Kol, Tegharir Kol and Kuliyā town (present Navadvīpa town) are all part of ancient Kuliyā. This place is also called Kuliyā Pahāḍapura, because this land is high like a pahāḍa (a mountain). In Satya-yuga Śrīla Varahadeva gave darśana to His parama-bhakta Śrī Vāsudeva Vipra and said that in the coming Kali-yuga He would accept the bodily luster and internal bhāva of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and in this very place would manifest His greatly munificent pastimes as Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. To attain the mercy of this Koladvīpa, which is named pāda-sevanam and is non-different from Girirāja-Govardhana, it is essential to pray first of all for the mercy of Dhāmeśvara

(Koladeva). Only by His mercy can one achieve the qualification to enter into the audāryamayī-līlā (munificent pastimes) of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

In the second prakoṣṭha of śrī mandira Śrī Gaura Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī are installed. Here the supremely wonderful and mysterious white lustre of Śrī Vinodabihārījī, who is absorbed in thinking of Śrī Rādhā, defeats even the bhajanānandis' bhajana secrets. Even the bhajanānandis cannot understand this highest secret, but Śrīlā Ācāryadeva has personally explained it. Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Himself Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala and Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are worshiped by Śrī Gaura mantra. People may ask why the three Deities in this temple (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāni and Śrī Gaurasundara) are all white in colour. The answer is that They are not white, but rather have the golden lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhājī. By accepting Śrīmatī Rādhikā's bodily lustre, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has taken on a golden (gaura) complexion. The bodily lustre of Śrī Gaurasundara is as fair as pure gold, which is why these three have the same complexion. Here we must understand that the apparently white complexion is actually gaura (golden).

Why did Śrī Kṛṣṇa take on Śrī Rādhā's gaura complexion? Śrīmatī Rādhikā has a natural contrary mood (vāmya-bhāva) towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but only for increasing the ever-fresh variety of Kṛṣṇa-sevā. Once Śrīmatījī became angry with Kṛṣṇa and exhibited māna, and at that time Kṛṣṇa became so absorbed in thinking of Śrīmatījī that His śyāma-complexion changed and became like Hers.

rādhā-cintā-niveśena yasya kāntir-vilopitā

śrī kṛṣṇa-caraṇaṁ vande rādhāliṅgita-vigrahaṁ

We refer to this deep mystery in the first verse of Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī-tattvāṣṭakam. The word rādhā-liṅgita has two meanings; 1) rādhayā liṅgita, and 2) rādhayā āliṅgita.

In the first of these meanings (rādhayā liṅgita), the word liṅgita means 'having the appearance of.' Śrī Kṛṣṇa lost His own complexion and assumed Śrīmatī Rādhikā's due to being very absorbed in thinking of Her in separation. This is the deep meaning of rādhā liṅgita vigraha. It is this śrī vigraha that has been brought to light here. The meaning of this deep tattva has been illuminated by the crest jewel of rasika Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīlā Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his Śrī Svapna-vilāsāmṛta. This tattva has been manifested to the world by my Śrīlā Guru-pādapadma from the core of his heart.

The second meaning of rādhā-liṅgita is rādhayā āliṅgita or 'embraced by Rādhā.' The confidential meaning of this has been spoken by Śrī Rāyā Rāmānandajī to Śrīman Mahāprabhu on the banks of Godāvarī.

pahile dekhiluṅ tomāra sannyāsī-svarūpa

eve tomā dekhi muñi śyāma-goparūpa

tomāra sammukhe dekhi kāñcana-pañcālikā

tānra gaurakāntye tomāra sarva aṅga ḍhākā

tabe hāsi' tānre prabhu dekhāila svarūpa

'rasarāja', 'mahābhāva'—dui eka rūpa

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 8.268, 269, 282)

Rāyā Rāmānandajī asked Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, “I first saw You as a sannyāsī, and now I am seeing You as the gopa Śyāmasundara. At the same time I am seeing a golden-complexioned Deity in front of You, whose golden lustre fully covers Your Kṛṣṇa-lustre.” Upon hearing this Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu laughed and gave darśana of Kṛṣṇa in His distinctive gaura complexion as ‘Rasarāja-Mahābhāva’ combined. Śrī Rāyā Rāmānanda fainted in bliss when he saw this unprecedented sweet form.

So this is another explanation of the deep mystery of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s golden complexion. The śyāma complexion of Kṛṣṇa has been completely covered by Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s embrace, and He is manifesting Her bodily lustre.

Amongst people who serve on the path of the most advanced bhajana with vipralambha bhāva (mood of separation), nearly all perform smaraṇa (remembrance) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s feelings of separation towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa. However, our Śrī Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a sakhī of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and he used to remember the vipralambha-bhāva that Śrī Kṛṣṇa felt towards Śrīmatī Rādhikā. My Gurudeva was partial towards Śrī Rādhā, so he was more favourable to the separation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa than that of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is grief-stricken in separation from Kṛṣṇa—this is the perfection of vipralambha bhāva that ordinary sādhakas are praying for. However, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s viewpoint is completely opposite to this. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was completely engrossed in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He lost His śyāma complexion and manifested as rādhālingita vighraha. In other words He attained the colour of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrīman Mahāprabhu preached about this very vipralambha-rasa and gave instructions on it. The ideal of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is anxious for Śrī Rādhārānī.

(4) Sevaka khaṇḍa

The place where the group of sevakas of Śrī Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī live, perform service, and take rest has been called the sevaka section. This section has also been separated into two parts, (a) the bhajana-kuṭīra of Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma, and (b) the living quarters or bhajana-kuṭīras of Śrīla Gurudeva’s sevakas. Amongst these kuṭīras are the kuṭīras of Śrīla Gurudeva’s sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs.

(5) Bhoga khaṇḍa

The storage room and the kitchen is called the bhoga khaṇḍa or ‘offering section.’ Adjacent to the bhajana-kuṭīra of Śrīla Gurudeva is the storage room and kitchen, which is also divided into two sections; (a) the kitchen for the daily cooking, and (b) the kitchen for Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and special festival days. This large kitchen has permanently fixed stoves, on which huge pots are placed for cooking 16-20 maunds (one maund is about 40 kg) of rice or 40 maunds of sabji at one time. About 20 very strong cooks prepare the bhoga for Ṭhākuraḥ. Between fifteen and twenty thousand pilgrims all sit together in the huge courtyard of the

maṭha to honour prasāda. At that time the system of serving mahā-prasāda is a wonderful sight, which cannot be seen anywhere else in the world.

(6) Govardhana khaṇḍa

The place where the cows live is known as the gośālā or Govardhana khaṇḍa. The cows here are very beautiful. Yogurt, ghee, khīra, paramānna etc. are made from their milk and offered to Ṭhākurajī.

(7) Jñāna-khaṇḍa

The public and residential lavatory is called jñāna-khaṇḍa, the section of knowledge. The principal limb of śaraṇāgati is to give up objects and moods that are unfavourable for bhakti. Nirviśeṣa-jñāna and activities not performed for Bhagavān are opposed to bhakti. For this reason Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.14.43) instructs us to give up such knowledge and activities just as one gives up stool after evacuating.

yo dustajyān dāra-sutān suhṛd-rājyaṁ hṛdi-sprśaḥ
jaho yuvaiva malavaduttamaḥślokalālasaḥ

“Mahārāja Bharata gave up his wife, son, relatives, friends and kingdom, as one gives up stool after evacuating, to enter the forest to perform bhajana.”

In Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrika (8.8) it is also said,

karma-kāṇḍa jñāna-kāṇḍa kevala viṣera bhāṇḍa

“Both karma-kāṇḍa (fruitive activities) and jñāna-kāṇḍa (mental speculations) are like pots of poison. Knowing these two to be opposed to bhakti, devotees of Bhagavān abandon them like stool.”

Also,

asat saṅga tyāga ei vaiṣṇava ācāra
strīsaṅgī eka asādhu, kṛṣṇābhakta āra
(Caitanya-caritāmṛta Mad. 22.87)

“Giving up bad association is a primary aspect of Vaiṣṇava conduct. Bad association is of two types; a) people who have illicit association with women, or persons who associate with such people and their attachment in worldly matters, or b) association of non-devotees who are intent on nirviśeṣa-jñāna. Sādhakas who want to attain bhakti should carefully reject these two types of bad association.”

Of these seven sections of the maṭha, the first six are favourable to bhakti and are to be respected because they are directly the svarūpa of bhakti. The seventh section signifies nirviśeṣa-jñāna and is to be rejected because it is opposed to bhakti. Śrīla Gurupādpadma has divided śrī maṭha into these seven sections and named them in this way from the viewpoint of this bhaktisiddhānta.

Argument in the discussion regarding ‘touched and untouched’ (bhoga) in Śrī Jagannātha Mandira

November 3rd, 1963: An article was published in the Bengali daily newspaper Yugānantara regarding the throwing away of thousands of rupees worth of bhoga in Purī. “Today, November 1st, a person who was not engaged in Deity service touched the bhoga by sight before it was offered to Śrī Jagannāthajī in the evening. This resulted in an uprising amongst the cooks, and the police had to intervene. In

accordance with the procedures of the temple, the outcome was that thousands of rupees worth of bhoga was disposed of into the ground. (V.N.I. 1.11.1963)”

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva commented on this incident as follows. “We are attracting the attention of the public by this incident, which Śrī Jagannāthadeva Himself has arranged. Some people try to disregard the offence of touch in bhagavat-sevā and want to dismiss as insignificant the distinction between ‘touched’ and ‘untouched.’ Such people are hypocrites and are opposed to the path of dharma. We should accept this teaching of Śrī Jagannāthadeva and always remain on the path of distinguishing between ‘touched’ and ‘untouched’ according to śāstric rules. We should also instruct others to stay on this path. This deceitful teaching is atheistic, and we should never let it enter into the worship of Bhagavān, whether it comes from western atheists or native atheists. Even today the conception regarding ‘lawful and unlawful food’ in Śrī Jagannātha Mandira exists in different systems all over India. We consider that those who do not acknowledge the offence of touch (sparśa-doṣa) are untouchables.

“It is not an offence to touch this mahā-prasāda after the bhoga has been offered to Śrī Jagannāthadeva, for the food prepared by the cooks then becomes mahā-prasāda. But no one has the right to touch the bhoga before offering, apart from Śrī Jagannāthadeva’s servants who are qualified to prepare and offer it. No naivedya (offering) that has been touched by an unqualified person can ever be offered to Śrī Jagannāthajī. This is the correct opinion.

“Human beings should only accept Śrī Bhagavān’s remnants, and it is improper to give anyone anything that Śrī Jagannāthajī has not accepted. Śrī Jagannāthajī is using this incident to teach us that Bhagavān does not want to accept any unofferable substances. There is another instruction within this one. Meat, fish, eggs, tobacco, tea, biḍīs, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, alcohol, coffee, onion, garlic and so on cannot be included in the offering to Bhagavān. Therefore all these substances are to be rejected. Those who make use of these unlawful substances in Ṭhākura sevā belong to non-bonafide sampradāyas and are separate from Hindu sanātana-dharma. The śāstras call such people mlecchas, (untouchables or those born in the lowest caste).”

Śrī Jagannāthadeva’s sevakas and virtuous men of Hindu dharma were very pleased with Śrīla Gurudeva’s argument.

Preaching in Siligūḍi and in various places in Bihār

After Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa parikramā and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava in 1963, Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva went preaching for a week with his associates to places in Sundaravana region such as Maīpīṭha-Vinodpura, Damkala and Kāśīnagara. After that, he preached sanātana-dharma (śuddha-bhakti) extensively for almost a month in various places in Siligūḍi, between April 21st to May 18th.

During the same period in the following year, 1964, he preached vaiṣṇava-dharma with sannyaśīs and 16 maṭha residents in Sārasājola, Āsanavanī, Rājvandha, Palāśī,

Bāramāsiyā, Dhādikā, Kumaḍāvāda, Dumkā town and other places in the Dumkā district of Bihar. With Śrīla Gurudeva at that time were Śrīpād Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīpād Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, Śrīpād Kṛṣṇakṛpā Brahmācārī, Śrī Gajendra Mokṣaṇa Brahmācārī, Śrī Rohiṇīnandana Vrajavāsī, Śrī Bhagavāndāsa Brahmācārī, Śrī Vṛndāvanavihārī Brahmācārī, Śrī Cidghanānada Brahmācārī, Śrī Vṛṣabhānu Brahmācārī and other leading sannyāsīs and brahmācārīs.

Sārasājola is a well-known and prosperous village in the Dumkā district. Śrīla Gurudeva stayed in Śrī Madhusūdana Vidyānidhi's home in Sārasājola and preached śuddha-bhakti there for seven days. All the leading villagers there accepted vaiṣṇava-dharma along with their families. Sārasājola became like Kulīnagrāma, whose inhabitants were all great Vaiṣṇava bhaktas during Śrīman Mahāprabhu's time. In those days, there were only Vaiṣṇavas in the village of Kulīnagrāma; even the village dogs were bhaktas who observed ekādaśī and other vratas. Śrīla Gurupādapadma's auspicious arrival in Sārasājola was also very blessed. He lectured for six days there on the following six different subjects:

- 1) 'What is śāstra?'
 - 2) 'The distinction between suras and asuras.'
 - 3) 'Kīrtana is the only beneficial sādhana.'
 - 4) 'To merge with Brahman or to become Brahman is a curse for the jīva.'
 - 5) 'Īśvara is saviśeṣa (with a personal feature) and sākāra (with form), not nirākāra (formless).'
 - 6) 'Nirākāra-vāda is only an atheistic heretical point of view (pākhaṇḍa-vāda).'
- Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, Śrī Cidghanānada Brahmācārī, Śrī Rohiṇīnandana Vrajavāsī and other speakers also gave lectures during this time.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave brilliant lectures in Dumkā town on '±aḍ-darśana and vedānta-vijñāna,' 'The philosophy of nirākāra-vāda is worthless and empty', 'Dharma-sevā is the only perfection of society' and other subject matters. At the chairman's request, Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja and Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja gave lectures on Śrī Gaura līlā and Śrī Rāma līlā. These lectures were full of bhaktisiddhānta and were illustrated with slides. The preaching of śuddha-bhakti in these regions of Dumkā district inspired the people there with unsurpassed faith towards vaiṣṇava-dharma. Whole groups of them rejected alcohol, meat, fish, smoking and so on, and were initiated into śuddha-bhakti. Śrīla Ācāryadeva and his associates returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha after preaching in this way for about a month.

In August, 1964, Śrīla Gurudeva was at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha during the grand and festive celebration of Śrī Śrī Janmāṣṭamī and Śrī Nandotsava. Many educational exhibitions had been organised on the premises of the Samiti on Śrī Janmāṣṭamī that year, but the devotees insisted that Śrīla Gurupādapadma should be freed from the exhibition. Accordingly, in the religious assembly in the nāṭya-

mandira, he gave a lecture on Śrī Janmāṣṭamī which was filled with profound siddhānta.

In this lecture Śrīla Ācāryadeva said that it is a mistake to observe Śrī Janmāṣṭamī and fasting for other vratas according to the views of the smārta Raghunandana. According to Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, when Vaiṣṇavas observe these vratas, they should abandon mixed tithis and observe śuddha vrata. Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not take birth on saptamī-biddhā aṣṭamī (aṣṭamī mixed with saptamī), but rather on navamī-biddhā aṣṭamī (which is also called Umā-Māheśvarī tithi). Navamī combined with aṣṭamī tithi is therefore the tithi to be observed for vrata-upavāsa. Abhijit-muhurta, Rohiṇī nakṣatra and other considerations are of special importance for this vrata-upavāsa. Śrīla Ācāryadeva preaching śuddha-bhakti in Calcutta and Medinīpura

In 1964, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's founder-ācārya observed ūrja vrata-niyama sevā for one month with many sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs in the Kening Street residence of Śrī Sudhīra Kumār Sāhā, the owner of the famous Bhavānī-Paper Concern in Calcutta. At that time his home became Śrī Vaikuṅṭha dhāma for a whole month. Every day maṅgala āraṭi, saṅkīrtana, reading from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other bhakti literature, sandhyā āraṭi and other devotional activities took place regularly. Many educated, respected and prosperous persons from Calcutta participated. Śrīla Gurudeva regularly explained the dialogue between Vasudeva and Nārada in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Teachers, lawyers, educationalists, highly posted officials and many others were very attracted when they heard his Bhāgavatam lectures, which were full of excellent siddhānta. From time to time Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja and Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja also gave lectures on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha and from there preached in different regions of Medinīpura and inaugurated śrī mandira in Kalyāṅpura. He also preached sanātana-dharma in Sābaḍāveḍe Jalpāi and other places. A grand and festive celebration of Śrī Vyāsapūjā was held in his presence in Khāmaṭī Grāma. In the next year, 1965, after Śrīdhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava, Śrīla Ācāryadeva went to Śrī Siddhavāḍī Gauḍīya Maṭha with many sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs and there he laid the foundation stone for śrī mandira. After returning, he preached for a month in various places in Assam, such as Golokagaṅja, Baṅgoi Grāma, Māthābhāṅgā, Śītala Kuci and Siligūḍi, and then returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuñchuṛā.

Preaching śuddha-bhakti in Śrī Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Lukhnow and Kaśī
September and October, 1966: During kārṭika-vrata-niyama-sevā, Śrīla Ācāryadeva performed the 84-kosa Śrī Vrajamaṅḍala parikramā with many pilgrims. First of all, Śrīla Ācāryadeva went to Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, where Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and Śrī Muni Mahārāja offered him garlands and candana at a grand reception. Śrīla Gurupādapadma entrusted the responsibility of the parikramā to Śrīpād Harijana Mahārāja and took rest in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha for a month. Afterwards he went to preach in Lukhnow, Prayāga, Vārāṇasī and Gāyā with

Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and a few brahmacārīs, and then returned to Chuñchuṛā.

While Śrīla Gurupādapadma was staying in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā, many educated people of the city came to hear his hari-kathā. Among them, the principal of Śrī Māthur Caturveda College, Śrī Gayā Prasāda Saksenā (Employment-Exchange Officer), and Śrī Pītāmbara Pantha (S.D.O.M.E.S.) are particularly worth mentioning. In Lukhnow Śrīla Ācāryadeva accepted Śrī Pītāmbara Pantha's special invitation and stayed at his residence with some sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs for three days, and then left for Kāśī. While he was there he collected Vedas (the main scripture of the science of transcendental sound vibrations); some rare scriptures; and a large brass bell weighing two maunds (about 80 kg) for Śrī Navadvīpa Maṭha. After staying in Kāśī for three days, he returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī in Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta

January 26th to February 1st, 1967: There was a large annual festival lasting a week at Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha in Calcutta. During this time, the inauguration of the new mandira and śrī nāṭya-mandira took place with great celebrations. Nityalīlā Praviṣṭa Śrī Śrīla Bhaktidayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja was the president and founder-ācārya of Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha and its branch maṭhas in India. He personally went to invite our worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva and other Gauḍīya ācāryas to participate in this big festival, so many of Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's sannyāsīs took part. Some of the prominent sannyāsīs amongst them are mentioned below:

- 1) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja; 2) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja; 3) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktibhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja;
- 4) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktisarvasva Giri Mahārāja; 5) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktipramoda Purī Mahārāja; 6) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrīmad Bhaktikamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja;
- 7) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Āloka Parama-hamsa Mahārāja; 8) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivikāśa Hṛṣīkeśa Mahārāja; 9) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrīmad Bhaktiprāpana Dāmodara Mahārāja; and
- 10) Parivrājakācārya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktikumuda Santa Mahārāja.

Paramapūjya Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja performed the inauguration of the newly constructed mandira and nāṭya-mandira at this big festival. Pūjyapāda Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktibhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja and Pūjyapād Bhaktipramoda Purī Mahārāja performed the installation of the Deities, the vaiṣṇava homa-yajña and other tasks.

Every evening for three days, there were religious assemblies with learned audiences. Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva gave three lectures filled with tattva-siddhānta on 'The necessity of maṭha and mandira', 'The teaching of the Gītā', and 'Yuga-

dharma'. During these three days the post of chairman was accepted by honourable Śrīyut Dīpanārāyaṇa Simha (Calcutta High Court's main judge), Śrī Śambhunātha Banarjī (Calcutta University's former vice-chancellor) and judge Śrīyuta Pareśānātha Mukharjī respectively.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva said in his lecture, "The leading judge of the High Court of Bengal is present here at this religious conference. The fact that he is present in the maṭha and mandira is a proof of the necessity for the maṭha and mandira. The authors of our smṛti-śāstras say that it is not proper to reside where there are no maṭha-mandiras.

"Nowadays many people question whether one will get food just by calling out to Kṛṣṇa. This country can never be prosperous as long as this materialistic point of view persists. Modern politics are devoid of siddhānta and are irreligious. In ancient times, the country was ruled according to the codes and rules which the ṛṣis presented. Today our country disregards these rules and is imitating western countries. It is very sad that permission is given today to slaughter cows and other animals and to drink alcohol, and that dharma has no place in the constitution of the nation. It is also unfortunate that this constitution makes no provision for religious people. On the contrary, anxiety and inconvenience are being created for religious people without any reason.

"It is easy for anyone to understand that the renunciation of the sādhus is a great help for the country. The government has not yet been able to solve the problem of unemployment. No one can tell how many more lakhs of unemployed people there would be if all the highly educated persons who are presently residing in maṭhas were to be employed in service, business or agriculture. There would also be a lack of agricultural land for their farming. It is difficult to estimate how many more people would be unemployed if the sādhus were to stop living in maṭhas and live in society. "These days the suicidal and self-destructive teaching, 'aham brahmāsmi' is being given in many maṭhas, mandiras, missions and sevāśramas. This is turning the public into atheists who are opposed to dharma."

This fearless speaker of impartial truth expressed his revolutionary views at this conference and the audience listened very eagerly. His brilliant lecture went on for almost one hour, after which other speakers also revealed their views. When the assembly ended all the sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs of Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha came to Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lotus feet, praising his views and asking questions concerning the siddhānta of bhakti.

Inauguration of Śrī Vāsudeva

Gauḍīya Maṭha in Vāsugrāma, Assam

May 21st, 1967: Śrī Pārvatīcaraṇa Rāya, a prominent gentleman from Vāsugrāma in the Gvālapāḍā district, Assam, repeatedly requested Śrī Gurupādapadma to establish a preaching centre of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Vāsugrāma. He also donated some land for this purpose near his residence, in the centre of the bāzār. Śrīla Ācāryadeva went there with Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrī

Mukunda Gopāla Brahmācārī and six other sevakas. A large assembly was organized on the second day, which was Śrī Nīmānanda Sevātīrtha Prabhu's appearance day. Śrīlā Ācāryadeva was the chairman, and at his request Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Urddhavanthī Mahārāja, Śrī Gajendra Mokṣaṇa Brahmācārī and other speakers gave very heartfelt lectures on this mahā-puruṣa's great contribution to Śrī Gaura-Vinoda-Sārasvata preaching. Afterwards Śrīlā Guru Mahārāja gave an attractive lecture full of siddhānta about Sevātīrtha Prabhu.

After preaching śuddha-bhakti for some days in Golokagaṇja, Śrīlā Ācāryadeva came to Vāsugrāma with his followers. There Śrī Vāsudeva Gauḍīya Maṭha was established on the land given by Śrī Pārvatī Bābū by the extraordinary endeavour of Śrī Viśvarūpa Brahmācārī (B.A.), the headmaster of the local high school. After seeing Śrī Viśvarūpa Prabhu's unwearying service endeavours during the establishment of the maṭha, Śrīlā Ācāryadeva appointed him as the maṭha president. Śrīmad Urddhavanthī Mahārāja and Śrī Sārathī Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī stayed in this new maṭha and were engaged in preaching work. Three religious assemblies were organised at this place in three days. Śrīlā Ācāryadeva gave lectures, and so did Śrīmad Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Urddhavanthī Mahārāja and others. After some time, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī were installed here, with Parama Pūjyapāda Śrīlā Śrautī Mahārāja as the presiding priest.

Lecture in the law court library
and district library of Siūḍī

June 21st, 1967: Śrīlā Gurudeva auspiciously arrived in Siūḍī with his associates and stayed for some days at Śrīyut Umāpada Sādhu's (Śrī Urukrama Dāsādhikārī) residence, where Śrīlā Gurudeva preached śuddha-bhakti. One day he lectured at the library of the law court and the next day at the local district library on "The modern situation and sanātana-dharma." On the other days Śrī Urukrama Dāsādhikārī gave brilliant lectures on 'Vaiṣṇava literature and culture' in śrī mandira.

February 17th, 1968: A huge Vyāsa-pūjā festival took place in Rāmanagar Ābādagrāma. On the special request of Śrīmatī Nārāyaṇī Devī, Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja came there with several sannyāsīs and brahmācārīs and observed a great celebration of Vyāsa-pūjā. There were extensive religious assemblies for three days. Pūjyapāda Śrī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, the chairman of these assemblies, gave scholarly lectures on Vyāsa-pūjā and sanātana-dharma.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā was observed with particularly great celebrations in Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa, because Paramārādhyatama Śrīlā Gurudeva was personally present there.

Entering aprakāṣa-līlā

After vyāsa-pūjā, Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa parikramā took place with great celebrations. At that time Paramārādhyatama Śrīlā Gurudeva began his līlā of being somewhat

unhealthy. He stayed for some days at the home of Śrīyuta Rādheśyāma Sāhā and for a few more days with Śrī Kṛṣṇagopāla Vasu Mahodaya in Calcutta to get medical treatment. The service of these two gentlemen during that time was extremely commendable.

On October 3rd, 1968, Śrīla Ācāryadeva was brought back from Calcutta to his bhajana-kuṭīra at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. Finally, on Sunday October 6th, 1968 (19 Āśvina 1375 baṅgābda), the śārādiya rāsa-pūrṇima, at sandhyā-ārati (6.15 p.m.) Paramārādhyaṭama Śrīla Gurupādapadma Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja left us all drowning in an ocean of separation and entered Śrī Yugala-Kiśora's sāyana nityā-līlā. The following passage is from a description which was written by someone suffering pangs of separation from his master. It was published in Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā's 5th issue of the 20th year.

“Ācārya Kesarī Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja is the founder of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. He is also the dear and intimate associate of Śrī Brahma-Mādhva Gauḍīya sampradāya's guardian Ācāryabhāskara Paramahaṁsa Mukuṭmaṇi Nityalīlā-praviṣṭa Jagadguru Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Sunday, October 6th, 1968, was the auspicious day of Śārādiya Pūrṇimā, and the first day of śrī-dāmodara-vrata. On the evening of that day, at the time of candra-grahaṇa (eclipse of the moon) at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa, Ācārya Kesarī Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja was surrounded by his servants who had taken shelter of his lotus feet, his sannyāsi and ācārya Godbrothers, renunciate and householder bhaktas, and gentlemen who had become charmed by his qualities. Leaving them all drowning in an ocean of separation, of his own free will he entered nitya dhāma Śrī Goloka Vṛndāvana and the sāyana-līlā of his abhiṣṭadeva Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī.

“Renunciate and householder bhaktas had assembled from various places of India at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha on that day. From early morning, eminent sannyāsis and sevakas had been tenderly singing kīrtanas like 'jaya rādhe, jaya kṛṣṇa,' 'je ānila premadhana,' 'śrī rūpa mañjarī pada,' and 'rādhe jaya jaya mādhava dayite' by Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and other mahājanas. Sandhyā-ārati was going on in the temple, and here Gurudeva, together with the devotees, was thoroughly absorbed in performing kīrtana with a faint voice. Then he entered nitya-līlā, uttering Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare, and holding the picture of his most worshipful Gurudeva to his breast.

“Just as this happened, an astonishing event occurred. The head pujārī of śrī mandira came there with Śrīmatī Rādhikāji's garland in his hands and tearfully said, “Right at the end of sandhyā-ārati Śrīmatī Rādhikā's garland broke by itself and fell from Her neck. I have never experienced this before.” Everyone present understood this to

mean that Śrīmatī Rādhikājī, out of mercy, had called Her beloved saha-carī (companion and attendant) to sāyana-līlā-vilāsa.

“In a moment the news that Śrīla Gurudeva had entered aprakaṭa-līlā spread to all the Gauḍīya maṭhas situated on both banks of Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī. Thousands of faithful people assembled to offer puṣpāñjali to Paramārādhyatama Śrī Gurudeva’s lotus feet, and the final rites were performed under the guidance of Prapūjyacaraṇa Śrīmad Bhaktiśrīrūpa Siddhāntī Mahārāja, according to the method of Samskāra-dīpikā. As the assembled multitude performed hari-kīrtana, Śrīla Ācāryadeva was given samādhi in front of the sky-kissing śrī mandira of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī.”

Thus ends the Third Part of The Life and Teachings of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī by
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

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Fourth Part

a) A hint of his internal identity
(siddha-svarūpa)

Fresh construction work was in progress on a new and unusually grand steeple above the Śrī Mandira at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. In the Śrī Garbha Mandira an altar was being prepared for the Deities. Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva came into the Śrī Garbha Mandira to decide on the shape of the altar and the number and the colour of its steps. Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja and I were with him. Śrīla Gurudeva surveyed the area, decided on the length, width and height of the altar, and then became immersed in thought. After a while he turned to us and said, “There will be three steps below the altar. The highest step will be blue, the second step yellow and the bottom step will be aruna-varṇa, a dawn-like reddish colour.”

Śrīpāda Muni Mahārāja asked, “Why should it be so?”

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, “The highest step will symbolise the lustre of Vrajendranandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is like that of an indranīla jewel. The second step will symbolise the golden radiance of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the crest-jewel of Kṛṣṇa’s sweet-hearts.” Then he remained silent for a few moments. Assuming an extremely grave countenance, he continued, “The third step will symbolise the colour of a sakhi (mañjari) who creates varieties of delightful fun (vinoda) for Yugala-Kiśora, the divine Youthful Couple. She will be symbolized by aruna-varṇa.” As he was speaking, his voice faltered and his throat became choked. Then he became completely stunned. Seeing his extraordinary bhāva we were both struck with wonder. At that time we could not understand anything, nor could we muster up the courage to ask him. But after his entering the aprakaṭa-līlā, unmanifest pastimes, we realized the meaning of that hint. The lowest step symbolises Śrī Vinoda Mañjari, the eternally playful dāsī of Śrī Yugala-Kiśora. Śrīla Gurudeva had given a hint of his own siddha-deha in a very hidden way.

In those days Śrīla Gurudeva's dear sevaka, Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī inquired from him privately, "Did your Gurudeva reveal the identity of the siddha-deha of any of his own disciples or not?"

Solemnly, he replied, "He has certainly done so. Śrīla Prabhupāda has given the identity of the siddha-deha and śikṣā in bhajana-praṇālī to some of his qualified disciples; otherwise the Śrī Rūpānuga line would come to an end. He also mercifully gave this praṇālī to me."

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Prabhu again asked, "Will you bestow your mercy and reveal the name of your siddha-deha?"

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, "Not just now; it will be disclosed at the appropriate time."

b) The inferiority of direct perception

Once my most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva was returning to Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa from Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha by train. Four or five brahmacārīs, including myself, were all sitting with him in a reserved compartment. When the train pulled out of Mathurā Junction a railway magistrate accompanied by a few soldiers came to check our compartment. Having done so, he sat down in a vacant seat right next to Śrīla Gurudeva, and immediately said to Śrīla Gurudeva, "Mahātmājī! Where are you coming from?"

Gurujī: "We have just come from Mathurā. We have an aśrama called Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha opposite the district hospital."

Magistrate: "And where are you going?"

Gurujī: "We're going to our headquarters in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa."

Magistrate: "What is the aim of your organisation?"

Gurujī: "We preach pure sanātana-dharma throughout the world. Specifically, following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we preach and practise saṅkīrtana and śuddha-bhakti as described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other scriptures. The only aim of our organisation is to attract the living entities to this auspicious path."

Magistrate: "What do you mean by 'bhakti'?"

Gurujī: "The creator and conductor of the universe is the one supremely merciful, all-powerful Truth. This ultimate Truth is known as Īśvara, Paramātmā or Bhagavān. Although we are all His parts and servants, we have forgotten this, and we have been subjected to the threefold miseries in various species of life in this material world since time immemorial. Without the mercy of Bhagavān we cannot be released from the bondage of material existence. Bhakti means to observe the injunctions described in the scriptures for the sake of pleasing Bhagavān."

Magistrate: "You people believe in God, but I don't believe in the existence of any God. I don't put any faith in anything which does not appear before these eyes. Is Bhagavān visible to the eyes?"

Gurujī: "Although you speak like this, you are obliged to accept the existence of many things which you cannot see."

Magistrate: “You may say that. Nevertheless, the fact is that I have no faith in anything other than what I can see directly with my eyes.”

Gurujī: “That is not true. Are your mother and father still alive?”

Magistrate: “Yes! They are still living.”

Gurujī: “Can you say for certain that the person you call ‘Father’ is actually your genuine father? If so, then what evidence is there? Is it visible to your own eyes that he is the man who impregnated your mother when she conceived you?”

When the honourable magistrate heard this question, he became embarrassed and could not answer.

Gurujī: “No! You have not seen this incident which occurred prior to your birth. So you do have faith in the unseen. You accept with confidence that he is your father just on the word of your mother and family members.”

Magistrate: “What you have said is absolutely correct. I have come to know the identity of my father by putting faith in the words of my mother and family members.”

Gurujī: “In the same way all the scriptures are like a mother in the sense that they are authoritative evidence. They include the Vedas, which are not of human origin, and literatures such as the Gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Rāmāyaṇa, which support the Vedic version. They say repeatedly that the creator and director of the Universe is God, or Īśvara. He is referred to by terms such as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.

“If you can put your faith in so many different fault-ridden text-books or in your own defective and limited sense-perception, then why not put faith in the Vedas and other authoritative scriptures which are beyond human origin, which are devoid of all kinds of defects, and which are not subject to faults such as illusion and negligence. The Vedic scriptures are even more reliable and trustworthy than your mother.

“In the Veda it is stated:

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti
yat prayantyaḥ śaṁviśanti tadvijijñāśasva tad brahma
(Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Bhṛgu 1. Anu 3.1.1.)

“ ‘One should inquire about that Brahman from whom all living entities are born, by whom their existence is maintained and into whom they all ultimately enter.’

“Furthermore in Brahma-sūtra it is said, janmādyasya yataḥ: ‘Brahman is He from whom the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe arises.’ In the Gītā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has also said:

ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo, mattaḥ sarvam pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām, budhāḥ bhāvasamanvitāḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 10.8)

“ ‘I am the origin of everything. All are engaged in activities by Me alone. Understanding this, the wise serve Me with spiritual emotion.’

“Veda-śāstra is the unerring illuminator of the Supreme Truth. These literatures are not created by any human being of limited intelligence. From beginningless time Manu and all the greatest ṛṣis headed by Nārada, Vyāsa and Vālmiki have tested and realised the validity of this fact. Highly intelligent people and ācāryas such as Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya and Śrī Madhva Ācārya have also acknowledged the evidence of the Vedic scriptures and accepted the existence of God. Therefore it is quite appropriate and in your own best interest to accept this conclusion.”

Magistrate: “You have opened my eyes. I understand that I have been quite wrong up till now.”

He touched Gurujī’s lotus feet with great faith, and said, “I have to get off here, but in the future I will go to see Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha.”

Other passengers had sat down around us, eager to hear the magistrate’s conversation with Gurujī. They were influenced by the exchange and went on discussing the subject of dharma with Gurujī for the rest of the journey.

c) Discussion with the Communist Samyavādī, Jyoti Bābū.

In 1951 or 1952, Paramārādhyā Gurudeva had gone to the border region of Sundaravana in Bengal before Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa parikramā to preach śuddha-bhakti, to invite faithful people to join the parikramā, and to collect provisions for the parikramā. One day Śrī Gurudeva was taking us with him to the house of a faithful devotee when he encountered Jyoti Bābū and a group of his followers. Jyoti Bābū, at present the chief minister of Bengal, was at that time the main chairman of the Communist party of Bengal. As leader of the opposition party, he had come to investigate the condition of the flooded land in the border region. When he saw Śrī Gurudeva dressed in saffron cloth and carrying his tridaṇḍa, he stopped and asked in a very arrogant way, “From where are you all coming?”

Śrī Gurudeva replied politely, “We are from Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma.”

Jyoti Bābū: “Have you come to inspect the state of the flooded area and show sympathy for the people?”

Gurudeva: “We have come to preach the śuddha vaiṣṇava-dharma for the eternal welfare of the jīvas, and to collect some provisions for Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā.”

Jyoti Bābū: “Can’t you see that the lives of these people have been thrown into turmoil by the terrible flood? Their crops have been ruined, and village after village has been submerged. They are expecting help from others for food and clothing, yet you have come to beg alms from these very same people?”

Gurudeva: “The flood has come! Where has the flood come? So far the cigarette in your hand has not been extinguished, so where is the flood? Dear sir, this flood is not the real flood. We have come here to extinguish the fire of devastation which is afflicting the jīvas birth after birth, and to protect the living beings from the real flood-water which comes at the time of the universal inundation.

“We have come here so that those jīvas who are averse to Kṛṣṇa may attain their natural condition of everlasting happiness. A jīva can never be happy as long as he does not adopt the principles of dharma in his life, and as long as he does not worship Bhagavān. Atheistic life is animal life. You are going to ruin Bengal and India completely by accepting the conception of Western civilisation.”

Jyoti Bābū: “We don’t believe in Veda-śāstra. We believe in hard work. Work (karma) is life, work is God. It is because of people like you that this country has gone to hell. You people should do some work yourselves and then give instructions about work (karma). Begging alms is the occupation of cowards.”

Gurudeva: “It is atheists like you who have caused the devastation of India. India was happier and more civilised than the other countries of the world as long as her politics were governed by dharma and her people were faithful and religious. In ancient times stalwarts like Hiraṇyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa, Duryodhana and Kāṁsa were far greater advocates of karma than you are, but the scriptures recount how they all came to an abominable, sticky end. More recently, we have heard of Alexander the Great and Napoleon and in modern times champions of karma like Hitler, Mussolini and Lenin. Have you not observed their contemptible fate? There is no place in India for atheists like Cārvāka and others. India is the country of sanātana-dharma. No one can vanquish this sanātana-dharma, no matter how influential he may be. A day will come when you will not even have the opportunity to repent.”

When Jyoti Bābū heard Gurudeva’s answer, he was at a loss for words. He promptly departed in a tantrum, accompanied by his followers.

Śrī Gurudeva was a fearless speaker of the impartial truth. Even the most proficient logicians used to bow their heads in defeat before his powerful arguments.

d) Śrī Gurudeva and bhikṣā-dravya (donated commodities)

There was a time around 1951 when Śrī Gurudeva used to stay at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, the headquarters of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, and preach śuddha-bhakti everywhere from there. The sevā and pūjā in the Maṭha, as well as Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā and other activities, used to run on whatever alms came from doing madhukarī. Before Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa parikramā, I went with Parama Pūjyapāda Śrī Śrīmad Narasimha Mahārāja to Śrī Rampura and other towns near Calcutta to preach and beg alms.

After preaching and performing bhikṣā for fifteen days we returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, having collected a total of 250 rupees, which at that time was a large sum of money. As soon as I arrived I offered my praṇāma at Paramārādhyatama Śrī Gurudeva’s lotus feet. After giving his blessings, he asked, “How was the preaching?”

“The preaching went very well”, I replied. “We collected about 250 rupees.” Gurujī was pleased.

Some time later Pūjyapāda Narasimha Mahārāja came before Gurujī, offered his praṇāma and put the donated rupees in Gurujī’s hand. Śrī Gurudeva asked, “How much is it?”

“225 rupees,” replied Pūjyapāda Narasimha Mahārāja.

“Where are the remaining 25 rupees?” asked Śrīla Gurudeva.

“I have kept some rupees for my personal expenses,” replied Mahārāja.

“Bring those donated rupees right now and give them to me,” said Śrī Gurudeva.

Śrīpāda Narasimha Mahārāja was somewhat angry and said, “Can’t we keep even a few rupees for our immediate expenses?”

“Of course,” replied Śrīla Gurudeva, “but first please kindly give them to me.”

Pūjyapāda Mahārāja resentfully went to his bhajana-kuṭīra, brought back the remaining 25 rupees, and threw them down in front of Śrīla Gurudeva. Gurujī picked up the rupees, counted them and then began to return those very same rupees.

“If you are just going to return them, then what was the point in taking them in the first place?” demanded Śrīpāda Narasimha Mahārāja.

Śrī Gurudeva became quite grave and said, “The food and wealth of sensuous people contains poison which ordinary people cannot digest. It has been written in the śāstra that when a sādḥaka eats food from a viṣayī, his heart becomes wicked and it is not possible to remember Bhagavān with such a disturbed mind. Therefore sādḥakas should always be careful. Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is direct proof of this. He did not accept the money sent by his own father, because although his father appeared to be a Vaiṣṇava, he was actually a materialist (vaiṣṇava prāya). Even excellent sādḥakas have been deviated and have fallen from the realm of bhajana through eating the food of sensuous people. That is why I have taken this money from you. It was acquired from sense enjoyers, and therefore it was mixed with poison. Now I have purified it and I am giving it back to you. There is no harm in it any more.

“Disaster is guaranteed if even one paisa which has been collected in the name of Śrī Hari, guru and Vaiṣṇavas is used in one’s own service. I do not use even a single paisa from donations for my own purposes. Who can engage donated wealth in the service of Hari, guru and Vaiṣṇavas? Only a highly qualified Vaiṣṇava who has offered his body, mind, words and everything at the feet of Śrīla Gurudeva and Bhagavān, who is unconditionally surrendered at the lotus feet of Bhagavān, and who is empowered in bhajana. Ordinary maṭha-vāsīs (temple devotees) cannot.”

When Pūjyapāda Narasimha Mahārāja heard this, he became thoroughly ashamed and all misgivings were dispelled from his heart. Bowing his head, he said with complete humility, “Please forgive me! I never took this matter so seriously.

Whatever you are saying is completely correct. I will follow this instruction for the rest of my life.”

The lesson to be learnt from this is that one should never at any time utilise for one’s own enjoyment money or commodities received from worldly people. One should offer them at the divine feet of Gurudeva or of equally elevated Vaiṣṇavas, because such Vaiṣṇavas can engage these commodities in the service of Bhagavān. Otherwise their poison is deadly for the sādḥaka. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said,

viṣayīra anna khāile malina haya mana
malina mana haile, nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 6.278)

“When one eats food offered by sensuous or worldly people, the mind becomes contaminated, and in that state one cannot remember Kṛṣṇa.”

pratigraha kabhu nā karibe rājadhana
viṣayīra anna khāile duṣṭa haya mana
mana duṣṭa haile nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa
kṛṣṇa-smṛti binā haya niṣphala jīvana
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi. 12. 50-51)

“One should never accept alms from royalty or wealthy people because when one eats such food the mind becomes polluted. A polluted mind cannot remember Kṛṣṇa and without remembrance of Kṛṣṇa one’s whole life is a failure.”

e) Śrīla Gurudeva and the
svarūpa of the jīva

In 1955, Kartika vrata-niyama-sevā and the 84-kosa Vraja Maṇḍala parikramā were brought to a successful conclusion under the guidance of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Many highly proficient sannyāsī disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda came from other Gauḍīya Maṭhas after the parikramā and assembled at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā to meet with Śrī Gurudeva. In addition, some of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s finest sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs had already been together with Śrī Gurudeva during the parikramā. Consequently, since so many Godbrothers had come together in one place, a special iṣṭa-goṣṭhi took place, in which many prominent sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs were present, besides Śrī Gurudeva. They included Prapūjyacaraṇa Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Srauti Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvāra Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Mahārāja, Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī (Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja), Śrī Mahānanda Brahmacārī, (Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Āloka Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja), Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Viveka Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Āśram Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prāpaṇa Dāmodara Mahārāja and Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja.

The youngest in that assembly, Śrīpāda Bhakti Vikaśa Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja, was very inquisitive about tattva. Full of humility, he did namaskara and politely said, “For a long time I have had a doubt about the svarūpa of the jīva. I have scrutinised many Gosvāmī granthas, and I have also asked my senior Godbrothers, but so far my doubt has not been dispelled.

“In Sanātana śikṣā in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta it is stated that the jīva is Kṛṣṇa nitya-dāsa, manifested from Kṛṣṇa’s taṭasthā-śakti.

jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa
kṛṣṇera taṭasthā-śakti bheda-bheda prakāśa

From this verse it seems that the quality of being the servant of Kṛṣṇa is eternally latent in the very constitution of the jīva. Consequently his service, his name, his

form and so on must be present in some form or other in his constitutional nature, which is now covered by māyā.

“However, it can also be said that, since the jīva is a transformation of taṭasthā-śakti, his svarūpa should also be taṭasthā —guru-kṛṣṇa prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 19.151). From this point of view it seems that the jīva is constitutionally an infinitesimal particle of consciousness who obtains the bhakti-latā bija by the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa. In that case, the nature of his perfected condition will be in accordance with the nature of the bija he has received. Śrīla Narottama Ṭhakura supports this idea in Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrikā.

sādhane bhāvibe jāhā siddha-dehe pāibe tāhā
rāga pathera ei se upāya

"This verse informs us that perfection will be in accordance with whichever type of sādhana is practiced.

“Superficially, it seems that there are two contradictory points of view. Is it that some specific service tendency is eternally present in the nitya-svarūpa of the jīva, and that perfection is attained accordingly? Or is it that one’s method of devotional practice determines the perfected condition that one finally attains? Please, kindly clear up my confusion about this matter.”

When Prapūjya Caraṇa Yāyāvāra Mahārājaji heard this question, he became overjoyed and humbly requested Pūjyapāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja to give an answer to this question. Prapūjya Caraṇa Śrīdhara Mahārājī was highly knowledgeable in the vaiṣṇava-śāstras and was also a scholar of philosophy. He began to give the answer to this profound question.

“The nature of the jīva is compared to an atomic conscious particle of the spiritual sun, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The jīva has been described in the Gosvāmī granthas as the vibhinnāmśa-tattva of brahma. The meaning of vibhinnāmśa-tattva is that Bhagavān possesses aghaṭana-ghaṭana-paṭiyasī śakti, the potency to make the impossible possible. When Bhagavān is equipped only with His atomic conscious jīva-śakti, then His expansion (amśa) is called a vibhinnāmśa jīva. However, when that same Bhagavān is replete with all of His potencies, then His expansion is called svāmśa. Thus the vibhinnāmśa jīvas are eternal. It is certain that their methods of bhagavat-sevā, their names, forms and so on are inherent. Yet the jīva’s transcendental form and characteristics remain concealed because he is covered by māyā. By the grace of Bhagavān, one’s inherent svarūpa becomes manifest as one performs bhajana in the company of sādhus and becomes freed from māyā. It is also certain that, unless one has sādhu-saṅga, release from māyā and the manifestation of the svarūpa are both quite impossible. For this reason, sādhu-saṅga is obligatory and unavoidable.

“It is inconsistent to suppose that the svarūpa of the jīva manifests according to the type of sādhu-saṅga one has. For example, not even the association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates could change the hearts of Anupama Gosvāmī and Murāri Gupta. Murāri Gupta is considered to be Hanumān, the parikāra of Śrī

Rāmacandrajī. Śrīman Mahāprabhu pointed out to him that Kṛṣṇa is adorned with more sweetness than Śrī Rāmacandra, and furthermore that Kṛṣṇa is also avatārī, the origin of all avatāras. After hearing from Mahāprabhu, Murāri Gupta vowed to leave Śrī Rāmacandrajī aside and to perform Kṛṣṇa bhajana.

“But when he came before Śrī Mahāprabhu the next day he began to cry, saying, ‘I took a vow before You to perform Śrī Kṛṣṇa bhajana, and I could not sleep the whole night. On the one hand, I have offered my head at the feet of Śrī Rāmacandrajī and I cannot give Him up. On the other hand I cannot transgress Your order. Whatever happens, my life will leave me.’ As he spoke he fell down at Śrī Mahāprabhu’s feet. Śrīman Mahāprabhu lifted him up and embraced him, saying, ‘Your life is so fortunate. You are an eternal associate of Śrī Rāmacandra. The way in which you are serving Him is auspicious for you. I have become filled with joy to see your ecstatic sentiments.’

“Later on, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was in Śrī Raṅgam during His tour of South India, He met with Śrī Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Trimalla Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī and Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa’s son Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. Ultimately Śrīman Mahāprabhu convinced them from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other scriptures of the supremacy of the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s form and so on. He proved the pre-eminence of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s loveliness, and consequently all their hearts were changed. They accepted dīkṣa in the Kṛṣṇa mantra and they all became engaged in Kṛṣṇa sevā, following the sentiments of the vraja-vaśīs.

“One noteworthy point here is that, according to our Gosvāmīs, Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī is Tungavidyā Sakhī in Vraja līlā and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī is Śrī Guṇa Mañjari. For pastime purposes, they both appeared in South India and were performing their sādhana-bhajana after accepting dīkṣa in the Śrī Samprādāya, but constitutionally, they were gopīs of Vraja. Although they had been initiated in the Śrī Samprādāya earlier in their lives, they were attracted to the sevā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the influence of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s association.

“Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana similarly told their younger brother Śrī Ballabha (also known as Anupama) about the beauty and sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s svarūpa and the ultimate superiority of His loving dalliance (prema-vilāsa). They also advised him to perform Kṛṣṇa bhajana. Anupama was very much influenced by his brothers’ words and took dīkṣa in the Kṛṣṇa mantra, expressing the desire to do Kṛṣṇa bhajana.

“However, early the next morning he fell crying at their feet and said,

raghunāthera pādapadma chāḍāna na jāya

chāḍivār mana haile prāna phāti jāya

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi līlā 4.42)

“ ‘I have sold my head at the feet of Śrī Raghunāthajī. Please be merciful to me so that I may serve His lotus feet birth after birth. My heart breaks simply at the thought of giving up His lotus feet.’

“Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana were very happy to hear the words of their younger brother. Praising and congratulating him, they took him in their arms and embraced him.

From this it is evident that sādhu-saṅga assists in manifesting the svarūpa of the jīva, but sādhu-saṅga cannot change his svarūpa.”

Having said this, Prapūjyacaraṇa Śrīdhara Mahārājajī requested our Gurupādapadma Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to say something on this subject. Śrīla Gurudeva said, “Whatever we have reflected and deliberated upon, and whatever we have seen in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature definitely supports your conclusion. The jīva has his own siddha-svarūpa; his inherent name, form and so on are all eternal. Each of the innumerable individual jīvas has his own separate svarūpa, but the jīva has forgotten this because of being covered by māyā.

“When by good fortune the jīva attains sādhu-saṅga and the mercy of Guru, gradually māyā begins to go away and his svarūpa begins to be manifest. We can give a material example to illustrate this. If different types of seeds such as a mango seed, jackfruit seed and so on are sown in the same piece of land on the bank of the river, different types of plants or trees will come from the different types of seeds, even though the river gives the same water to each of them, the same wind blows on them, and the same sunlight shines on them all. When they mature, different types of fruits will grow on each of them. This shows that different types of seeds manifest their inherent natures as different types of trees with their own particular fruits and flavors, even when they are all exposed to the same association of the natural elements. These features are not directly manifest in the seed, but still the seedling and the tree with its leaves, branches, fruits, flowers, flavour and all characteristics are present in the seed in an unmanifested or latent form. This is invariably the case. We never see a deviation from this.

“In the very same way, the constitutional name, form, bodily limbs, nature and everything are present in a latent and unmanifest form in the constitution of the jīva. When the essence of hlādinī and saṁvit arises in the heart of the jīvaby the association of sad-guru and Vaiṣṇavas, then whatever constitutional form the jīva has gradually begins to manifest itself.

“We can give another material example. At the time of the stellar constellation known as Svāti nakṣatra, raindrops falling on an oyster produce a pearl; on a banana tree, camphor; on a snake, a precious jewel; on an elephant, the gaja-mukta (elephant pearl); and when they fall on the hoof of a cow, gorocanā is produced. One type of water causes different substances to manifest because of the different receptacles; similarly, when different disciples are influenced by the association of one guru or Vaiṣṇava, they manifest service moods in different rasas and varieties of spiritual perfection.

“In Jaiva-dharma, Śrī Vrajanātha and Vijaya Kumār heard everything from the same guru, Śrīla Raguṇātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Still their respective tastes manifested differently. They both attained perfection, but for Vrajanātha it was in sakhya-rasa and for Vijaya Kumār it was in madhura-rasa.

“According to Śrī Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam, when Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī and Śrī Uddhava saw Gopa Kumāra, they ascertained that he was constitutionally a parikāra

in sakhya-rasa. He had the association of Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, Uddhavajī, Hanumanjī and others, but no-one's influence changed his natural sakhya-bhāva. "If association could change one's inherent service, then why didn't the gopīs' association change Uddhava's svarūpa? Śrīmatī Yaśoda also associated with the gopīs, but her svarūpa did not change. The confidential purport is that in the stage of practice the sādḥaka performs sādḥana-bhajana according to his association, as long as he does not realize his svarūpa. However, when his anarthas have gone away, his inherent mood appears in the form of some particular taste (ruci) and begins to reveal his identity. Śrī Gurudeva notices his natural taste and so on, and merely indicates his relationship and eleven types of bhāva and thereby enables him to make progress in bhajana.

"Sometimes a sādḥaka who is by nature of a higher rasa can engage in service in a lower rasa by the association of devotees in dāsya and sakhya-rasa. However, when he is not satisfied and later comes into higher association, he will give up the previous moods and attain his inherent bhāvas.

"The opinion of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhakura, the Seventh Gosvāmī, is quite clear on this subject. In his explanation of the verse 'ceto darpana mārjanam' (Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam 1) he has written,

ceto darpana mārjanam ityādinā jīvasya svarūpa tatvaṁ vivṛtam. tathā śrīmajjīvavacaraṇāḥ jīvākḥya-samaśaśakti viśiṣṭasya paramatattvasya khalvaṁśa ekojīvaḥ. tathā śrīmad vedānta bhāṣyakāro'pi. —vibhucaitanyamīśvaro'nucaityam jīvaḥ, nityam jñānādiguṇakatvam asmad arthatvaṁ cobhayatra jñānasyāpi jñātṛtvaṁ prakāśasya raveḥ prakāśakatvavadaviruddham. etena jīvasyā ṇutvaṁ cit-svarūpatvaṁ śuddhāhaṅkāra śuddha-citta śuddha-deha-viśiṣṭatvaṁ ca jñāpitam. pareśa vaimukhyāt bahirāṅga-bhāvāviṣṭatvācca śuddhāhaṅkāragata śuddha-cittasyāvidyāmala duṣaṇamapi sūcitam.

"The correct conception of svarūpa-tattva of the jīva has been given by the verse beginning with ceto darpana mārjanam. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's siddhānta on this subject is that when the Supreme Absolute Truth is equipped only with the sum total of the jīva-śakti, his minute expansion is known as a jīva. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who compiled the Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya commentary on Vedānta-sūtra, also has the same opinion: īśvara is the supremely conscious Being, whereas the jīva is a minutely conscious being.

"Īśvara is eternally radiant with all auspicious and unlimited, transcendental qualities. He has a completely pure ahaṅkāra (ego). He is both the knower and the embodiment of knowledge. Similarly, the jīva also has his own pure svarūpa. Most of the qualities of īśvara are also partially present in the jīva. This conception is not opposed to reasoning, for the qualities of the sun are also seen in the atomic particles of sunshine, and similarly the qualities of para-tattva are also observed to be partially present in the jīvas. The jīva also has a pure ahaṅkāra, but when the jīva is averse to parameśvara, his pure svarūpa is concealed by māyā. Conversely, when he becomes

inclined towards parameśvara, the curtain of the covering potency māyā is withdrawn, and thus the jīva's pure svarūpa and qualities are uncovered.

Immediately thereafter he has the direct perception of his own svarūpa.

“From this siddhānta it is evident that the jīva is an infinitesimal atomic particle of consciousness. He has an inherent spiritual identity, cinmaya-svarūpa, in which his pure ahaṅkāra, pure consciousness, pure form and method of service and so on are definitely present.

śravaṇa-kīrtanādi-sādhana-samaye yadā śuddhā-bhaktir udeti tadā svasyā'vidyatvaṁ
parihṛtya vidyayā cidetara vitṛṣṇājananis āpi jīvaśya sthūlilam

gamayasaupādhikadeha-dvayaṁ vidyāśya tasya svarūpa-gata śuddha-cid-deham
adhikāra bhedena madhura-rasāsvādanā yatanam gopikā deham api prakāṣayati

“As the sādhanika jīva goes on hearing and chanting, pure bhakti appears in his heart, and the function of the essence of hlādinī and saṁvit known as bhakti-devī removes all other desires and aspirations except for the service of Bhagavān. After avidyā (ignorance) is dispelled, the jīva's gross and subtle coverings are both destroyed by the vidyā-vṛtti function of the knowledge potency. At once the jīva's pure, constitutional, transcendental body appears. Those who are eligible to taste madhura-rasa attain the purely spiritual body of a gopī..

“Now it is necessary to reconcile two considerations. In Prema Bhakti-candrikā we read, sādhanā bhāvibe jāhā siddha-dehe pāibe tāhā: “Whatever I contemplate during the practice of devotional service will certainly be achieved upon perfection in a spiritual body.” Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya states, yasya yatsaṅgatiḥ puṁso maṇivat syāt sa tad gunaḥ. This does not mean that the svarūpa of the jīva is like spotlessly clear crystal and that his siddha-svarūpa appears according to association. Rather, when the conditioned soul performs the activities of śuddha-bhakti such as hearing and chanting in the association of a pure sad-guru and Vaiṣṇavas, at that time the impurity of avidyā, anarthas and so on is cleared by the influence of that svarūpa-siddha-bhakti, and a semblance (ābhāsa) of the natural characteristics of the soul begins to manifest.

“Only for such a sādhanika has Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī given the instruction, svajātīyāsaya snigdha: “We should associate with Vaiṣṇavas who are affectionately disposed (snigdha) towards us and who are svatīya āsaya, established in the same mood of loving service for which we aspire.” At that time the dikṣā-guru, śravaṇa-guru or śikṣā-guru sees the internal characteristics of the sādhanika and gives ekādaśa-bhāva (the eleven features of the svarūpa) as expounded in śrī rāgānuga-mārga for his advancement on the path of bhajana. In this way the sādhanika performs bhāva-bhajana by this internally conceived siddha-deha to bring about the manifestation of his siddha-svarūpa. The following śloka has been given in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as an example to illustrate this very point.

kiṭaḥ peśaskṛtā ruddhaḥ
kuḍyāyaṁ tamanusmaran
saṁrambha bhaya yogena

vindate tat svarūpatām

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.1.27)

“A type of wasp forcibly confines a caterpillar in his hole in a wall. The caterpillar continuously thinks of the wasp out of fear and anxiety and also becomes a wasp.’

“The same principle also applies in relation to the sādhakas of rāgānuga-bhakti. At the time of sādhana, they go on continuously thinking about serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pastime associates with their internally conceived bodies. Thus they also become totally absorbed. Finally, giving up their gross and subtle material bodies, they take a birth in Vraja which corresponds to their internally conceived siddha-deha, and they attain that very same service that they previously contemplated.

“Thus the constitutional appearance, name and mood of the jīva is present even in the conditioned stage, at which time it remains latent in an unmanifest form. That svarūpa is simply illuminated by the mercy of svarūpa-śakti, and specifically by the action of the essence of hlādinī and saṁvit. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written, nitya siddhasya bhāvasya prākāṣyaṁ hṛdi sādhyatā: 'It is not that sādhana produces something entirely new. Rather, sādhana is performed exclusively to bring about the manifestation of that eternally perfect bhāva which is in the svarūpa of the jīva.’”

The assembled Vaiṣṇavas were extremely delighted to hear such an elaborate presentation. Śrīpāda Bhakti Vikaśa Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja especially expressed his gratitude and said, “I am eternally indebted to you because today you have dispelled a doubt which I have harboured for a long time.”

f) The charm and superiority of the bhāgavata-paramparā

Nowadays, people are concocting newer and newer doubts about śrī guru-paramparā in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. Some people believe that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was initiated in the Madhva Sampradāya and that he was not actually a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. They assert that, although he had the association of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the influence of the Madhva Sampradāya was so strong that in his own writings he stubbornly included Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya as part of the Madhva Sampradāya. They claim that there is no reasonable justification for this, and that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa can therefore not be accepted as an ācārya of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya.

Another group of ignorant people say that Jagadguru Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupādajī created a completely new concept which he called the bhāgavata-paramparā. According to them, he has explained in this supposedly new doctrine of bhāgavata-paramparā that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is a disciple of Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha dasa Bābājī Mahārāja, and that Śrī Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Some sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavas also present the doubt that Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's guru-paramparā cannot be considered bona fide because he accepted the renounced order (sannyāsa) from himself. Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva has shattered all these accusations with powerful logic and solid scriptural evidence, and this article presents his analysis of the subject.

The disciples and grand-disciples of Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda are currently preaching Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's suddha-kṛṣṇa-bhakti and śrī harināma through-out the world. Because they have preached extensively all over the world, the streets and avenues in every prominent city—and even in every town and village—are resounding with the sound of the holy name, and young men and women are very enthusiastically applying themselves to the cultivation of śuddha-bhakti. They are meeting Vaiṣṇavas from India, and performing harināma-saṅkīrtana and preaching śuddha-bhakti together with them. A few ignorant, so-called Vaiṣṇavas of the sahajiyā community are agitated by this, and are trying to mislead common people by presenting fraudulent accusations against the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineage. Śrīla Gurudeva has established the rational and perfect conclusion on this matter in his own essay entitled 'Gauḍīya Vedantācārya Śrī Baladeva'. Here we have presented some extracts from that essay.

i) The guru-paramparā of the commentator

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

The historical truth regarding the guru-paramparā of the commentator, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is as follows. He first acquired specific expertise in the bhakti-śāstra under the guidance of Virakta-Śiromani Pitambara Dāsa. After that, he accepted pañcarātriki-dīkṣā from a Vaiṣṇava called Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Dāsa, who had appeared in a dynasty of brāhmaṇas in Kanyakubja. Rādhā-Dāmodara Dāsa, who was the grand-son of Rasikānanda Murari, accepted dīkṣā from another Kanya-kubjiya brāhmaṇa called Śrī Nayanānandadeva Gosvāmī.

Rasikānanda Prabhu, a disciple of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu, is the fourth guru before the commentator Baladeva Vidyā-bhūṣaṇa in the pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā, and his son was the aforementioned Nayanānandadeva Gosvāmī. The guru of Śrī Śyāmānanda was Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya, whose guru was Gauridāsa Paṇḍita, upon whom Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu bestowed His mercy. Even though Śyāmānanda Prabhu was a disciple of Ācārya Hṛdaya Caitanya, he afterwards accepted discipleship under Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was a disciple of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was a disciple of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī was a follower and associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

ii) The śiṣya-paramparā of

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

We have given an account of the pañcarātrika-paramparā from Śrīman Mahāprabhu down to Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Now we will give an account of his śiṣya-paramparā. Śrī Uddhara Dāsa, referred to in some places as Uddhava Dāsa, was a disciple of the commentator. Some think that these are two different people, but in any case Uddhava Dāsa had a disciple named Śrī Madhusūdana Dāsa. Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī was a disciple of this very Śrī Madhusūdana Dāsa. Previously, as Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma or the prominent leader of the Vaiṣṇava community in Mathurā-maṇḍala, Kṣetra-maṇḍala and Gauḍa-maṇḍala, he became famous by the name of Siddha Jagannātha Dāsa. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted this very

Jagannātha Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja as his bhajana-śikṣā-guru by the system of bhāgavata-paramparā. It was under the direction of Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discovered the birthplace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu at Śrīdhama Māyāpura. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the śikṣā-guru or bhajana-guru of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja. Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja accepted my Gurupādapadma Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda as his own disciple and gave him dikṣā-mantras and so on. Whoever is incompetent in accepting this paramparā is to be counted amongst one of the thirteen types of apasampradāyas mentioned in writing by Śrī Totarama Bābāji Mahārāja. Alternatively, he may be regarded as the creator of a fourteenth apasampradāya. From the aforementioned guru-paramparā we can easily understand that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is a follower of Śrīman Mahāprabhu within the spiritual family lineage (parivāra) of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. Ācārya Śrī Śyāmānanda accepted the guidance of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and because Jīva Gosvāmī is exclusively rūpānuga (a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī), it therefore follows that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is also a rūpānuga Vaiṣṇava. There are those who acknowledge that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is in the line of Śrī Śyāmānanda, and yet deny that he is a rūpānuga Vaiṣṇava or that he is qualified for the topmost service mood of unnata-ujjala-rasa. Such people are certainly only deluded offenders. Although Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was initiated in pañcarātrika-dikṣā by Śrī Rādhā Dāmodara Dāsa, he also accepted śikṣā in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the literatures of the Gosvāmīs.

iii) Pañcarātrika-paramparā is included within the bhāgavata-paramparā

The system of bhāgavata-paramparā is superior to that of pañcarātrika-paramparā, and is founded on the degree of proficiency in bhajana (bhajana-niṣṭha). The charm and superiority of bhāgavata-paramparā is that pañcarātrika-paramparā is included within it. In bhāgavata-paramparā there is no obstruction in regard to time. From the viewpoint of śuddha-bhakti, the doctrines of pañcarātrika and of bhāgavata both explain the same teachings with the same objective. In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta it is said, pañcarātra bhāgavate ei lakṣana kaya: “These symptoms are described in Vedic literatures such as the pañcarātras and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.” (Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 19.169). The prakṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya, while claiming to be followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, accumulate offences to the lotus feet of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Similarly, nowadays the jāti-gosvāmīs and those who accept their remnants—such as several members of the sahajiyā, kartābhajā, kiśorībhajā, and bhajanākhajā sampradāyas—proudly conceive of themselves as followers of Cakravartī Ṭhākura, but cast calumnies against the commentator Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. In this way, they are growing excessively hateful and progressing towards hell. Here is a diagram of the pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā and the bhāgavata-paramparā. This will enable readers to properly appreciate the speciality of śrī bhāgavata-

paramparā, and also understand how pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā is included within the bhāgavata-paramparā. With the help of the diagram below and on the next page we will give an account of the pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā and bhāgavata-paramparā of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and other Vaiṣṇava ācāryas. Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu: In pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's disciple is Gauridāsa Paṇḍita, and his disciple Hṛdaya Caitanya is the dikṣā-guru of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. In bhāgavata-paramparā Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disciple is Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, the disciple of Sanātana is Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Rūpa's disciple is Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu is the śikṣā disciple of this same Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. It is no exaggeration to say that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was superior to Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya in tattva, rasa, bhajana and indeed in all respects. For this reason, Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya personally sent Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī for advanced instruction in the practice of bhajana, and Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu accepted the anugatya (guidance) of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Thus the serious question which deserves our consideration here is this: Which is superior, pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā or bhāgavata-paramparā?

Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura: According to the pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura's guru is Śrī Lokanātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. However, there is no record anywhere of Śrī Lokanātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's pañcarātrika-dikṣā-guru. Texts such as Śrī Gauḍīya vaiṣṇava abhidhana have stated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Śrī Lokanātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's guru, but it is a well-known fact that Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not accept anyone as His disciple according to the pañcarātrika-praṇālī (method). That means that, if Śrīman Mahāprabhu is actually the guru of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, it is only on the basis of bhāgavata-paramparā. In any case, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, besides being the pañcarātrika disciple of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, is also the disciple of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī in bhāgavata-paramparā. It was in the anugatya of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī that Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura became steeped in bhajana-śikṣā.

Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī: In pañcarātrika-paramparā Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is a disciple of Śrī Yadunandana Ācārya, who is situated in the pañcarātrika-sākhā (branch) of Śrī Advaita Ācārya. However, if we consider Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's life history deeply from another viewpoint, we find the very clear and indelible influence of the bhajana-śikṣā of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who are his gurus in bhāgavata-paramparā. Here, too, if we compare pañcarātrika-paramparā with bhāgavata-paramparā, we find that the superiority of bhāgavata-paramparā shines as radiantly as the sun.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa: According to pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is a pañcarātrika disciple of Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara in the paramparā of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. At the same time, in bhāgavata-paramparā he is a disciple of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura with whom he studied Śrīmad-

Bhāgavatam and all the various Gosvāmī literatures, and from whom he received advanced instruction in bhajana. The guidance of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in the life of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is widely known. Only under this guidance did he defeat the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas in the royal court of Galtā and keep intact the service and worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī. It was after attaining the mercy of Śrī Govindadeva, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's worshipful Deity, that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa composed Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya. There is no doubt about Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa being a rūpānuga Vaiṣṇava, because he is under the guidance of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who is himself most assuredly a rūpānuga Vaiṣṇava. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa attained the mercy of Śrī Govindadeva, the treasured life-breath of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and ensured His continuing service. From this perspective, too, since he attained the mercy of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his āradhyadeva Śrī Govindajī, what doubt could possibly remain about his being a rūpānuga Vaiṣṇava?

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: According to the pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā, the dikṣā-guru of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is Śrī Vipina Bihārī Gosvāmī, who is situated in the pañcarātrika-paramparā of Śrī Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākuranī. From our other viewpoint, no one can deny that Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's life is imprinted with the stamp of Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's anugatyā (guidance). Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrī Jagannātha Mahārāja is a disciple of the famous Madhu-sūdana Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja in the paramparā of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. It is not necessary to say that Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is superior to Śrī Vipina Bihārī Gosvāmī in tattva-jñāna, bhajana-śikṣā, etc.

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura: According to pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's dikṣā-guru is Śrī Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja who is a descendant in the pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā from Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākuranī. Śrī Bābājī Mahārāja accepted the attire of a renunciate (veśa) from a disciple of Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja named Śrī Bhāgavata Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Thus by bhāgavata-paramparā, Śrī Gaurakīśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is in the branch of Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. According to this analysis, by pañcarātrika-paramparā Śrī Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is in the paramparā of Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākuranī, and in bhāgavata-paramparā he has been connected with Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

It is clear from Śrī Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's life history that Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's practices, precepts and bhajana-praṇali were his very life and soul, and that he made the fulfilment of the Ṭhākura's aspirations the sole aim and object of his life. Thus his guru in bhāgavata-paramparā was Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose guru was Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Therefore there is not even the slightest justification for raising a finger against the guru-paramparā of Śrī Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the Founder-Acārya of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Several additional facts are worthy of our consideration on the subject of pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā and bhāgavata-paramparā—

(1) The guru of lower rasa

If a pañcarātrika-dīkṣā-guru in his siddha-svarūpa (constitutional spiritual form) is situated in a rasa which lower than that of his disciple, how can he give bhajana-śikṣā pertaining to the more elevated rasa? In this situation, the disciple must go elsewhere and take shelter of a Vaiṣṇava who is qualified to give the appropriate superior guidance. For example, Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya is an associate in sakhya-rasa in Kṛṣṇa lila, whereas his disciple Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu (Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa) is an associate in madhura-rasa. Therefore Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya personally sent Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī to receive higher bhajana-śikṣā pertaining to madhura-rasa.

(2) The less qualified guru

It may happen that guru and disciple in pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā are in the same rasa, but that the guru is not so highly qualified as the disciple. Under such circumstances, the disciple must go and take shelter of an uttama Vaiṣṇava for higher bhajana-śikṣā, and this Vaiṣṇava will be called his guru in bhāgavata-paramparā.

We can see from these two considerations that the pañcarātrika process has some inherent defects, whereas the bhāgavata-paramparā is completely free from these defects, and is flawless in all respects.

(3) Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not pañcarātrika-guru of anyone

All members of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya accept Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as jagad guru, and consider themselves to be His followers. However, on what basis do they maintain this conviction? There is no recorded account anywhere of Śrīman Mahāprabhu giving dīkṣā-mantra to anyone. This means that Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not the guru of anyone else in pañcarātrika-paramparā, although He Himself is a disciple of Śrī Īśvara Purī. Therefore, if the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community accepts the anugatya and discipleship of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it can only be on one basis, and that basis is bhāgavata-paramparā.

(4) All Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are rūpānuga on basis of bhāgavata-paramparā only

Each and every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava is proud to call himself 'rūpānuga'. But let us consider this point: How many disciples did Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī initiate by the pañcarātrika method? The fact is that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī is his one and only dīkṣā disciple, and he himself is not actually a dīkṣā disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So on what basis do members of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community accept Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī as their guru? How is it possible to be a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and at the same time be a follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? Even Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, who is the śikṣā-guru of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, has no second thoughts about calling himself rūpānuga. The basis of all these examples is one—bhāgavata-paramparā. It is only on the basis of bhāgavata-paramparā that Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is

the disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community considers Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī to be their guru.

Who is the pañcarātrika-dīkṣā-guru of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kaviraja Gosvāmī? We cannot say, because he has not mentioned the name of his pañcarātrika-dīkṣā-guru in any of his literatures, but he has named his śikṣā-gurus in Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Adi 1.37:

ei chaya guru, śikṣā-guru ye āmāra
tān-sabāra pāda-padme koṭi namaskāra

“These six gurus (the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana) are my śikṣā-gurus and I offer countless obeisances at their lotus feet.”

At the end of each chapter of Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta he has written:

śrī-rupa-raghunātha-pade yāra āśa
caitanya caritāmṛta kahe kṛṣṇa dāsa

In these statements he has accepted Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī as his main śikṣā-gurus. Thus he has also accepted them as gurus on the basis of bhāgavata-paramparā.

From these facts it becomes thoroughly obvious that bhāgavata-paramparā, which includes pañcarātrika-paramparā, always shines forth brilliantly. What can we say, then, about those who ignore these facts, about those who cast aspersions on the guru-praṇālī of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and about those who doubt that they are rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavas? Such people are certainly staunch opponents of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and secret agents of Kali.

Thus, whatever opinion my most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva has written on the subject of the guru-praṇālī of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and also in regard to pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā and bhāgavata-paramparā, is both logical and fully in agreement with the established conclusions of the scriptures (śāstra-siddhānta).

g) The rasika and bhāvuka bhāgavata

Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva was profoundly grave and sometimes harder than a thunderbolt, but his natural disposition was actually softer than a flower. He was exceedingly rasika² and bhāvuka³. He was harder than a thunderbolt towards those who were opposed to bhakti, such as the kevalādvaita-vādīs⁴ and the followers of apasampradayās such as smārtas, jāti-gosvāmīs, jāti-vaiṣṇavas and prākṛta sahaijyās. Yet to sincere disciples who were steadily engaged in guru-sevā without duplicity, he was much softer than a flower.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda’s entrance into aprakaṣa-līlā, Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Vidyāvinoda were influenced by undesirable bad association and became staunch opponents of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Gurudeva’s brother Śrīmad Bhaktikevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja also followed in their footsteps, but Śrīla Gurudeva vehemently opposed their ideas. Although Śrīmad Auḍulomi Mahārāja was his brother and Godbrother, Śrīla Gurudeva objected to his ideas without compromise and said, “I don’t want to see the face of anyone who is opposed to Śrīla Gurupādapadma.

Auḍulomi Mahārāja is my brother from my previous aśrama and in paramārthika (spiritual) life he is my Godbrother. Even so, from now on I have no relationship or connection with him whatsoever.”

Whenever anyone opposed Jagadguru Śrīla Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda’s conceptions, Śrīla Gurudeva would smash their objections to pieces by the strength of undisputed logic and steadfast scriptural evidence.

Now we will present a few examples of how he was also bhāvuka and rasika.

a) During his manifest presence, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja used to go to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura every year at the time of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma parikramā. He would begin to describe the glories of his most worshipful Gurudeva at his Gurudeva’s Samādhi Pīṭha in the presence of thousands and thousands of faithful pilgrims. On recollecting Śrīla Prabhupāda’s glorious and transcendental qualities, he would become so emotional that his throat would become choked, he would burst into tears, and all the aṣṭa-sattvika bhāvas would be clearly visible on his body. Incapable of speaking any further, he would somehow indicate that we should say something.

b) Once Śrīla Gurudeva was sitting on the verandah of his bhajana-kutir at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuñchurā, chanting hari-nāma. A few maṭha-vāsīs were sitting near him and he was talking to us on the subject of Vraja madhura-bhakti. He explained that only the vraja-ramanīs (gopīs) are actually parikāras of madhura-rasa, and they are all in parakīya-bhāva. Although there are many varieties of vraja-ramanīs defined according to their different moods, still they are all parakīyā nāyikās (paramour heroines) in madhura-rasa. The mahīṣīs (queens) of Dvārakā Purī, Sītājī the wife of Śrī Rāmacandrajī, and Mahālakṣmī of Vaikuṅṭha are not nāyikās in madhura-rasa. They are all servants in the mood of dāsyā-rasa.

In the course of this explanation I posed a question: “Rasa-ācārya Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described three types of nāyikās in Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, namely sādharānī, samañjasā and samarthā. Kubjā of Mathurā is in the category of sādharānī; the queens of Dvārakā such as Rukminī and Satyabhāmā are in the category known as samañjasā; and the Vraja gopīs are in the category called samarthā. Among these nāyikās, the mahīṣīs of Dvārakā have been called parikāras in the svakīya aspect of madhura-rasa, and the vraja-ramanīs have been called parikāras in the parakīya aspect of madhura-rasa. So what harm is there in accepting Śrīmatī Sītājī and the mahīṣīs of Dvārakā to be associates of svakīya madhura-rasa?”

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, “You do not have the capacity to assimilate these profound conceptions at present. This will not be accessible to you now even if I tell you. Only dāsyā-prema predominates wherever there is affection imbued with aiśvarya-bhāva. Pure madhurya-prema is completely bereft of aiśvarya-bhāva, and appears to resemble the love between bosom friends in this world (laukika sambandhuvat). The affection of Lakṣmī, Sītājī and the mahīṣīs of Dvārakā for their respective iṣṭadevas is imbued with the highest aiśvarya-bhāva. They have no pure madhurya-prema and are always in sambhrama-bhāva, a mood of awe and reverence. Thus, although the prīti of the mahīṣīs is somewhat more elevated than that of dāsyā-bhaktas such as

Hanumān, Arjuna and Uddhava, their bhāva cannot be called pure madhurya-bhāva. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhakura have presented a beautiful assessment of this subject in their respective commentaries.

“This is why Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta has emphasised the special importance of gopī-prema. Only when one has performed bhajana for some time under the guidance of pure Vaiṣṇavas can one realize these profound subject matters by their mercy.”

c) Once, during the month of Kartika, Śrīla Gurupāda-padma had brought his noble presence to Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. One day he was sitting in his bhajana-kuṭīra and chanting harinām, absorbed in transcendental emotions. I had sat down close to him and was reading about Śrī Dāmodara bandhana in Śrī Gopāla Campū. Having read it, I became so attracted to Jīva Gosvāmī’s ideas that I could not check myself. Taking the book in my hand, I came right in front of Śrīla Gurudeva and said,

“In his time Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was a great mahā-puruṣa with immense knowledge of all philosophical principles. Yet at the same time he was also an aprākṛta rasika poet. The combination of vast spiritual erudition with poetic artistry is extremely rare in this world. But when we read the episode of Dāmodara bandhana-līlā in Gopāl Campū, we can see how Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī combined these two attributes in an astonishing way.”

Having said this I began to read aloud from Gopāl Campū for Śrīla Gurudeva to hear.

Yaśodā Maiyā ran very quickly after her infant child, who had fled out onto the main road. She caught Him with one hand, took a small stick in the other, and began to scold Him. “I’ll give you such a beating! I know you go from house to house stealing. You are a thief (caura)!”

Kṛṣṇa: “Oh Maiyā! Don’t beat me! No caura has ever appeared in my father’s dynasty. They only appear in your father’s dynasty. I’m not a thief.”

Maiyā smiled and said, “How was the yogurt churning pot broken, then?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Well, that is the punishment given by the Supreme Lord.”

Maiyā: “And who fed the butter to the monkeys?”

Kṛṣṇa: “He who has made the monkeys feeds the monkeys.”

Maiyā (angry, but laughing): “Now tell me the truth. How did the butter pot break?”

Kṛṣṇa (crying): “You jumped up in a hurry to pacify the milk that was boiling over, and you were so flustered that your heavy anklets struck the pot and it broke. So tell Me, how am I to blame for this?”

Maiyā: “Is that the truth? In that case, tell me how You come to have butter on Your face.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Oh Maiyā! Every day a monkey comes and puts his hand in the pot to eat the butter, but today I caught him. He pulled out his hand and began to run away, but the butter on his hand smeared on My face. Tell Me honestly, am I at fault in this? But still you call Me a thief and want to beat Me.”

Maiyā: “Are barabola! Hey cheeky! Bandhar-bandho! Oh, friend of the monkeys! You and the grinding mortar are accomplices in crime. Now I shall punish you both by binding you together.”

After a great deal of endeavour, by the mercy of Bhagavān, she tied Kṛṣṇa to the grinding mortar and went inside to get on with her household duties. Dragging the grinding mortar with his little friends, Bāla-Kṛṣṇa began to crawl through the gap between the two Ārjuna trees which stood before the entrance of the house. At the mere touch of the grinding mortar, both trees came crashing down with the most terrific thundering sound.

Wherever the Vrajavāsīs were, they all heard the sound and came running to that place. Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā Maiyā also arrived there, and when Yaśodā Maiyā saw her son between the two fallen trees, she became speechless. Nanda Bābā was struck with wonder. He approached his son and took Him in his lap. When Kṛṣṇa saw His father He began to weep loudly. Nanda Bābā gently caressed Kṛṣṇa’s head and His limbs with his hands. He began to pat Him, and kissing His face he said, “Lālā! My darling boy! Who bound you like this?” Kṛṣṇa was crying and did not answer. Nanda Bābā asked again and again. Finally, Kṛṣṇa whispered in Bābā’s ear, “Maiyā did it.” Nanda Bābā became very grave. “Maiyā did it! Your mother is so cruel!” After saying this, he fell silent.

Nanda Bābā then took both Kṛṣṇa and Baladāū in his lap and went to take bath in the Yamuna. He employed brāhmaṇas to recite auspicious benedictions, distributed cows in charity, and then quickly returned home. Rohiṇī Maiyā engaged some gopīs in cooking and serving food to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa with Nanda Bābā. After honouring prasāda in silence, Nanda Bābā went with his two sons to take his seat in the council of the community. In the evening, when he came to the gośālā he fed Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva with miśri (white sugar candy) and squirted warm milk into their mouths directly from the udder of a cow until their bellies were full.

When Vrajarāja (Nanda Bābā) had finished taking his evening meal along with his two sons, the elder gopīs of the community all came before him, bringing Rohiṇī with them. The two children were sitting in Bābā’s lap.

Rohiṇī said, “Rājan! Kṛṣṇa’s mother has not taken her meal. She is sitting in a corner as silent as a stone. All the gopīs in the house are so sad. They are also sitting silently without eating or drinking.”

With mixed feelings of sorrow and amusement, Vrajarāja said: “What should I do? She should realize that this is the fruit of anger!”

Tears flowed from the eyes of the elder gopīs as they said, “Hāya! Hāya! Yaśodā is extremely soft, both inside and out. You shouldn’t call her cruel. It’s not right to use a word like that for her.”

Hearing this Vrajarāja became even more emotional; smiling he asked, “Lālā! Will you go to Maiyā?”

“No! No! I will only stay with you,” replied Kṛṣṇa emphatically.

Upananda's wife laughed and said, "You may stay with Bābā, but who will breastfeed you?"

Kṛṣṇa: "Bābā will squirt warm milk into my mouth from the udder of the cows and he will feed me miśri, too."

"Who will you play with?"

"I'll play with Pitājī and Dāū Bhaiyā."

Vrajarāja said, "Why don't you go to Rohiṇī Maiyā?"

Kṛṣṇa sobbed and said angrily, "I was calling out to my elder Maiyā to let me go, but she didn't come, and Rohiṇī Maiyā didn't come either."

Hearing this, Rohiṇī Maiyā said softly with tears flowing down her face, "Lālā! Don't be so cruel-hearted. Your mother is crying for you."

Kṛṣṇa's eyes, too, brimmed with tears when He heard this. He turned around and began to look at the face of His father. At the same time, Rohiṇī Maiyā gestured to Baladeva to bring Kṛṣṇa to His mother. Baladeva caught hold of Kṛṣṇa with both hands and began to drag Him towards Rohiṇī Maiyā, but Kṛṣṇa shook him off with a jerk and wrapped His arms tightly around Nanda Bābā's neck. A shower of tears began to fall from Bābā's eyes, as well. Raising his hands he said, "Lālā! Should I slap your Maiyā?"

Bāla-Kṛṣṇa could not tolerate this, and caught hold of both of his father's hands tightly. At that moment, Bābā re-remembered the anguish within the heart of Yaśodā. Rohiṇī Maiyā said to Kṛṣṇa, "Lālā! What if your Maiyā should . . ." She paused and motioned with her hand meaning that if she should die, "then what will you do?" As soon as He heard this, Kṛṣṇa cried out loudly, "Maiyā! Maiyā! Maiyā!" He stretched out His arms in the direction of His elder mother, and of His own accord He ran to sit on her lap.

Rohiṇī Maiyā was in tears. She picked up Kṛṣṇa who was also crying, and entering the ladies' inner chamber of the house, she put Him down in Yaśodā Maiyā's lap. Yaśodā Maiyā covered Kṛṣṇa with her veil and began to weep like a kurarī bird. All the gopīs who had assembled in the ladies' quarter began to cry as well, and Nanda Bābā was crying in the meeting room.

The whole atmosphere became submerged in vatsalya-rasa.

As soon as Śrīla Gurudeva heard this narration, he also burst out crying. An uninterrupted stream of tears began to flow from his eyes and other bodily transformations (aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāva) were also clearly visible. I have only seen such unprecedented bhāva once or twice in my life.

h) Service to the sampradāya

Some time in 1956, Śrīla Gurudeva came to Mathurā to see Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. At that time followers of the Nimbārka Samprādāya in Vṛndāvana used publish a spiritual journal called Śrī Sudarsana. In one issue they cast aspersions on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, saying that He was a disciple of Keśava Kaśmīrī. In other editions they insolently dared to claim that Gauḍīya Vaisnava ācāryas such as Śrīla

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhakura were in the Nimbārka Samprādaya. When I showed these editions to Śrīla Gurudeva he become extremely angry and immediately had a short essay written for Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā. The headline was ‘Śrī Nimbāditya and Nimbārka are not the same person.’ The purport of his headline is as follows.

“Nowhere in the scriptures is there any mention of a Nimbārka Samprādaya. The Purāṇas mention a vaiṣṇava-ācārya called Śrī Nimbāditya, and the Catuḥsana (the four Kumāras) have accepted this Nimbāditya Ācārya as their samprādaya-ācārya in the age of Kali. However, Nimbārka Svāmī is a completely different person.

Nimbāditya was a disciple of Nāradaḥ at the end of Dvāpara-yuga and the beginning of Kali-yuga, but Nimbārka Ācārya appeared much more recently. Great and eminent authors of scripture such as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī have mentioned the names of the prominent ācāryas of all the other sampradāyas, but they have not mentioned the name of Nimbārka Ācārya anywhere.

“The Nimbārka samprādaya currently uses the Pārijāta-bhāṣya which was written, not by Nimbāditya Ācārya, but rather by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Keśava Kaśmīrī.

These two wrote this scripture and then preached that it had been written by their guru. The scriptures of the Six Gosvāmīs mention the names of ācāryas such as Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī, Śrī Nimbāditya and Śrī Vallabha Ācārya. If the Nimbārka samprādaya had existed even to a slight extent at that time, then they would most certainly have mentioned the name of Nimbārka Ācārya as well. None of the other samprādaya ācāryas, such as Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī and so on have mentioned Nimbārka Ācārya’s name in any of the scriptures that they have written.”

When this essay was published in Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā, the office directors of the Sudarsana journal announced that they were making arrangements to prosecute for slander. Śrīla Gurudeva replied firmly, “We will prove each and every word that we have written on the basis of evidence supported by śāstra.” When the prosecution party heard about Śrīla Gurudeva’s immense scriptural knowledge and his profound personality, they became absolutely silent, and from that day onwards they did not dare to write any more nonsense.

On another occasion, members of the saḥajiyā-sampradāya of Bengal wrote essays full of apasiddhānta, opposing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. Śrīla Gurudeva argued with them in a similar way, using abrasive words. The opposition party actually presented a lawsuit in court against Śrīla Gurudeva and other devotees, including the editor of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā. However, when they were faced with Śrīla Gurudeva’s train of thought, they also had to bow their heads in defeat. They begged him for forgiveness in the court of law and thereafter avoided him. For these reasons, Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisaraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who was Śrīla Gurudeva’s dear Godbrother and a leader of the Gauḍīya community, decorated Śrīla Gurupādapadma with the title ‘Pāṣaṇḍa-Gajaikasimha’, ‘The lion who vanquishes the elephants of heresy’.

(i) The distinction between the smārta and the vaiṣṇava conceptions

(The essence of a letter from Śrī Gurudeva to Nityagaura Prabhu).

In the Canton of Māthābhāṅga in West Bengal's Kūcibihāra District there lived a gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava named Śrī Nityagaura Dāsādhikārī who was a disciple initiated into Kṛṣṇa mantraby Jagadguru Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī. Once, when one of his family members died, he followed vaiṣṇava-sadācāra, the behaviour which is appropriate for Vaiṣṇavas, and did not observe the avaiṣṇava smārta regulations concerning impurity. Instead, he went on reading and teaching the bhakti-granths such as Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, and taking harināma. After twelve days he invited maṭha-vāsī Vaiṣṇavas to his home. At that time, following the injunctions of vaiṣṇava-smṛti-sāstra such as Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa and Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā, he offered the prasāda grain remnants of Viṣṇu to the soul of the deceased relative. He also requested the Vaiṣṇavas to perform the vaiṣṇava-homa ceremony for the sake of the ultimate transcendental auspiciousness of the deceased. Mahāprasāda was then distributed to all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas.

The other members of his community, who were not Vaiṣṇavas, particularly emphasised the performance of śrāddha (a ceremony for the benefit of a deceased relative) according to the smārta conceptions of Raghunandana prevalent in the smārta community of Bengal. They were not at all satisfied with Nityagaura Prabhu's vaiṣṇava śrāddha and boycotted the ceremony altogether. Despite this, Nityagaura Prabhu was so steadfast in vaiṣṇava-sadācāra that he neglected the orders and directives of the village society. The village community then became extremely angry with him. They stopped the barber, the washerman and so on from going to his house; severed all social connections with him in eating, drinking, sitting and standing; and even prohibited him from drawing water from the same well. Nityagaura Prabhu became acutely fearful of this oppressive social harassment, and sent a letter to Gurudeva, informing him about the atrocious tyranny of the community. At that time, Śrīla Gurudeva was at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuchura. As soon as he received the letter, he immediately wrote back, and the condensed essence of his reply is given below.

“I have received your letter informing me of the outrageous transgressions committed by the smārta community. There is no need to be afraid in the slightest. The community in your village is utterly fallen, and they have no knowledge of what is referred to as āsauca (mourning). They do not have any sādhu-saṅga, and consequently they do not have even the slightest understanding of sadācāra given in śāstra. These people are constantly absorbed in nothing but the five ‘m’s’—madya, māṁsa, matsya, mudra and maithuna (wine, meat, fish, money and sex). They eat bad foodstuffs like onions, garlic and eggs and they are always taking tea, tobacco, gāñjā and bhāṅg. This means that they are all low-class people in rajaḥ and tamoguṇa. Such people are in the majority these days; there are very few saintly people established in proper behaviour and tattva-jñāna. Since misbehaved, low-

class people are in the majority, they commit atrocities against the moral minority. I will give a simple example to illustrate what I mean by this.

“In one village, everyone was addicted to gāñjā. There was no one—young, old, man or woman—who did not take it, with the sole exception of a small child in one particular family. This boy had abstained from an early age, and as soon as he smelled the rank fumes of gāñjā, he would go far away. As he grew older, his mother and father, relatives and community members tried in various ways to make him take gāñjā, but he would not take it in any way whatsoever. His mother and father and all the villagers were struck with wonder to see this boy’s nature. In the end, they came to the conclusion that he must be afflicted by some terrible disease, and they called the village doctor to arrange for some compulsory medical treatment.

“This is the deplorable condition of our village societies today. They cannot tolerate anyone performing bhagavad-bhajana and practising saintly behaviour. They inflict inhumane atrocities on those who do, and even expelled them from the village. Such low-class people are in the majority, and that is why they commit various types of grievous offences against the moral minority.”

Srīla Gurudeva continued,

“Nityagaura! Are there no literate, well-behaved, sattvic personalities in your village? If there are, then show them my letter. I am firmly convinced that rajaḥ and tamoguṇa will always be defeated. Victory always belongs to sattva-guṇa, even if it seems slow in coming. Demonic people may appear to be strong in the beginning, but they are defeated in the end. In ancient times, those who adhered to the demonic ideology were always defeated in the struggles between the devas and the asuras, in the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, and in the conflict between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. Hiraṇya-kaśipu was immensely powerful but he could not stand before his five-year-old devotee son Prahlāda, and Bhagavān Nṛsimhadeva annihilated him in a second.

“Take harināma continuously. You are always pure. Bhagavān Nṛsimhadeva will protect you. You should always remember that the Vaiṣṇavas and devotees of Bhagavān are always and forever pure. Impurity never touches them, even during birth and death. What to speak of Vaiṣṇavas, anyone who takes shelter of harināma is relieved of the reactions of all past, present and future sinful activities, even if they have murdered their parents, committed adultery or perpetrated the most grievous sins. It is quite clear in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that when the greatly sinful Ajāmila called out the name ‘Nārāyaṇa’ at the time of death, he was calling his son. Therefore this was nāmābhāsa, not śuddha-nāma. Even so, Ajāmila’s sinful reactions were all dispelled simply by the influence of this nāmābhāsa. His death retreated, and afterwards, when he took harināma in the association of sādhus, he attained his destination, Vaikuṅṭha.

“You are eternally pure, because you have taken shelter of harināma and you are always observing the limbs of bhakti. It is not necessary for you to observe any regulations at all for so-called impurity due to a death in the family. Those who are

not initiated in the viṣṇu-mantra and who do not take the name of Bhagavān are impure throughout their whole lives and observe lifelong āsauca (impurity). They have no right to enter the mandiras of Hari.

“Raghunandana’s preaching of smārta regulations and his Aṣṭāviṃśati-tattva is limited only to Bengal. Throughout the rest of India, people use the vaiṣṇava śmṛtis called Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa and Satkriyāsāra-dīpika. These vaiṣṇava śmṛtis have been prevalent in Bihar, Orīssa, Uttar Pradeśa and elsewhere from approximately five hundred years ago until today. Aṣṭaviṃśati-tattva has only been current for two hundred and fifty years.

“There are many defects in Raghunandana’s śmṛti. For instance, according to this śmṛti, no one, even those who have taken birth in a brāhmaṇa dynasty, can ever be pure throughout their whole life. According to Raghunandana, when anyone appears in a household of brāhmaṇas, seven generations of ancestors in the dynasties of both the mother and the father become untouchable for ten days. Similarly, seven generations of the dynasties of both the father and the mother, whether male or female, become untouchable for ten days when anyone dies. Now, the number of present-day descendants of ancestors from seven previous generations will be very large, and if any birth or death takes place in this vast population, then the complete dynasty is supposed to become untouchable. That means that if just thirty-six births or deaths occur in one year among this huge number of people, then their whole year will be spent in an impure condition.

“According to this doctrine, they can never be pure at any time in their lives and there is no means by which they can become purified again. If it supposed that they become purified by the recitation of mantras at the time of the śrāddha ceremony then how are they supposed to become untouchable again? A brāhmaṇa chants the gāyātrī mantra every day during the three saṅdhyas. Is the gāyātrī-mantra not capable of purifying him? Obviously, they have no faith in the potency of the mantra. Their conceptions are all mistaken and contrary to śāstra.

“It is necessary to say something further on the subject of smārta-brāhmaṇas. One who knows the śmṛti-śāstras is called smārta, as are his followers. There are two types of śmṛti-śāstra: laukika⁶ and pāramārthika⁷. The principal subject matter established by the Vedas, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas is bhagavad-bhakti, and those śmṛti-śāstras which describe the rules and regulations of bhagavad-bhakti are called pāramārthika-śmṛti. Those śmṛti-śāstras which neglect this confidential purport of the Vedas, and instead emphasise the rules and regulations for maintaining the gross social shackles are called laukika śmṛti-śāstra.

“Śmṛti is basically one, but there are divisions of śmṛti because of the differences between ṛṣis who are inclined to the service of Bhagavān and ṛṣis who are averse to serving Bhagavān. The brahmanism of worldly brāhmaṇas who only follow laukika śmṛtis is not perfect. Birth in a brāhmaṇa dynasty is not enough in itself, because one who practises no brahminical activities and has no brahminical qualities is not a brāhmaṇa, even if he happens to have taken birth in a dynasty of brāhmaṇas. It is

one's qualities and activities which determine whether one is considered to be in the social castes of the brāhmaṇas, non-brāhmaṇas or untouchables. This subject is completely clear in authoritative śāstras such as Gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣtam

guṇa-karma vibhāgaśaḥ

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.13)

“The four divisions of human society were created by Me, in terms of their respective qualities and characteristic work.’

yasya yal lakṣaṇam proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam

yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.11.35)

“If one shows the characteristic symptoms of a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, or sūdra, he should be accepted as a member of that varṇa, even if he has taken birth in another.’

“Now suppose someone performs a śrāddha ceremony by engaging a priest who may have taken birth in a dynasty of brāhmaṇas, but is averse to Bhagavān and who has the temperament of a demon. Then this śrāddha ceremony will also be demonic. Can there be any doubt about this? The performance of such a śrāddha can bring no auspiciousness whatsoever to the soul of a deceased person. The atheistic villagers and laukika smārta-brāhmaṇas who are averse to Hari may follow this supposed observance of impurity. However, people who are initiated in Viṣṇu mantra and who are established in vaiṣṇava-sadācāra will never follow it. You, your wife and your children are householders who are established in vaiṣṇava-sadācāra and initiated in Viṣṇu mantra. Therefore you are always pure. You should never associate with fallen people, otherwise you will also become fallen. I never approve of heretical doctrines. The misbehaved village community is not Bhagavān. You should stay on the path of bhakti with very firm resolve and do not be fearful in the slightest.

“There is another matter which should be properly understood. It is forbidden in all respects for pure Vaiṣṇavas to do kuśa-dhāraṇa and nāndīmukha-śrāddha. The meaning of the word ‘śrāddha’ comes from ‘śraddhā’ (faith). The word ‘śrāddha’ can only properly refer to those activities which are performed with śraddhā. But what is the śraddhā in this smārta observance of śrāddha? According to the smārtas, everyone becomes a ghost in his next life, even those who have taken shelter of harināma and have been dedicated to the param-dharma as well. On the basis of this notion, smārta priests make everyone call out the mantra, ete pretatarpaṇakāle bhavanti iha: ‘May the ghost be present here and accept this piṇḍa.’ Here the belief (śraddhā) is that one’s mother or father may have engaged in bhagavad-bhajana throughout their entire lives and may always have adhered to pure behaviour; yet as soon as they died they became ghosts. Then at the time of śrāddha they are offered piṇḍa composed of meat, fish, burnt bananas and rice and they are addressed, ‘O pitṛdeva! You have become a ghost. May you accept this ghost-food and be satisfied.’ Is this a qualified son’s expression of faith (śraddhā) in his qualified father?

“This is why Vaiṣṇavas boycott such ghostly śrāddha ceremonies. Show my letter to the members of your village community and tell them that we are prepared to debate on this subject anywhere in any religious assembly. If they want to engage in debate, then we are always ready to come to your village for a scriptural discussion.”

j) A subtle distinction between the ideas of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

After Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva accepted sannyāsa, he invariably went after every Gaura-purnimā to meet with Pūjyapāda Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, from whom he had received his sannyāsa veśa. When he went to Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1952, he took some of us residents of the Maṭha with him. All the Vaiṣṇavas offered daṇḍavat-praṇāmas to each other when they arrived there, and then they began an iṣṭa-goṣṭhī. Devotees present at that iṣṭa-goṣṭhī, besides our Gurupādapadma, included Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivicāra Yāyāvāra Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Āloka Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja, and Śrīmad Bhaktiviveka Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja.

In this iṣṭa-goṣṭhī someone very politely posed the following question. “There is a slight difference between the commentaries of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on the fifth verse of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s Śrī Upadeśamṛta: kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta

dīkṣāsti cet pranatibhiś ca bhajantamiśam

How may this difference be reconciled?”

Pūjyapāda Śrīmad Bhaktivicāra Yāyāvāra Mahārāja asked, “What seems to be the difference between the two commentaries?” and the enquirer clarified his question. “Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in his commentary that the madhyama-adhikārī who properly understands his responsibility towards kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs will offer them respect from the core of his heart. He can hear Kṛṣṇa nāma from their mouths providing they are free from the faults of association with women and with māyāvādīs, even though such kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs may be of meagre intelligence and bereft of sambandha-jñāna. If such kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs have received dīkṣā-mantra from a sad-guru and are engaged in hari-bhajana, then on hearing Kṛṣṇa nāma from their mouths the madhyama-adhikārī will respect them by offering daṇḍavat-praṇāma.

“However, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, has explained it a little differently, on the basis of the words dīkṣāsti cet, which refers to those who have accepted dīkṣā. He says

that the madhyama-adhikārī who properly understands his responsibility toward the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs will offer respect from the core of his heart to those who are taking the name of Kṛṣṇa, provided they have been initiated in the Kṛṣṇa mantra by a sad-guru, have understood that Kṛṣṇa and His name are not different, and have accepted the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa to be the only sādhana. The madhyama-adhikārī will show respect by physically offering his daṇḍavat-praṇāmas to those

initiated Vaiṣṇavas who continuously chant Kṛṣṇa nāma with great affection, who have attained their own svarūpa by nāma-bhajana, and are established in madhyama-adhikāra; and he will also offer them respect in his mind. Thus it seems that there is some difference between these two commentaries. Which of the two explanations should we accept? Alternatively, how do we reconcile the apparent difference between them? How can they be harmonised?”

On hearing this, all of the Vaiṣṇavas requested Prapūjya-caraṇa Śrīmad Bhaktiraṅgaka Śrīdhara Mahārājajī to solve the apparently problematic question. Pūjyapāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja became very serious and began to give his reply.

“Ordinarily, the commentaries of two members of our guru-varga have the same meaning. Nevertheless the explanation of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is supported by the śāstra. According to the verse, 'no dīkṣāṁ na ca sat-kriyām' from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Padyāvalī, Kṛṣṇa nāma is so powerful that it bestows results even up to the point of liberation, as soon as it touches the tongue of untouchables such as dog-eaters. It does not even wait for pious activities, preparatory rituals and so on. In śāstra there are many statements to substantiate the unprecedented effect of Kṛṣṇa nāma,

- a) yan nāmadheya śravanānukīrtanād...śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
- b) aho bata śvapaco to garīyān yad vartate jihvāgre nāma tubhyaṁ
- c) yan nāma sakṛc chravaṇāt pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt
- d) sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā bhṛguvara naramātram tārayet kṛṣṇa nāma
- e) sāṅketyaṁparihāsyam ... haraṁ viduḥ
- f) yadābhāso 'pyudhan ... mahimānaṁ prabhavati (Rūpa Gosvāmī's Kṛṣṇa-nāma-stotram)
- g) mriyamāni harer nāma...kiṁ punaḥ śraddhayā gṛṇan
- h) patitaḥ skhalito bhajanaḥ ... pumān nārhati yātanāma

“This scriptural evidence supports the conclusion that even an uninitiated dog-eater becomes supremely pure simply by chanting hari-nāma. Whether he has śraddhā or not, Kṛṣṇa nāma delivers him from the endless cycle of birth and death when he chants even once. What to speak of chanting, even one who hears Kṛṣṇa nāma is at once liberated from material existence. Those who take the name of Bhagavān while coming or going, slipping, falling, sneezing or in any other way will not have to taste the dire sufferings of repeated birth and death. So if anyone chants Kṛṣṇa nāma and is free from ungodly qualities opposed to bhakti, it is certainly proper vaiṣṇava behavior to honour him mentally, whether he is initiated or not.”

When Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva heard Pūjyapāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja's opinion, he very politely said, “Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Mahārājajī's explanation of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's commentary on this verse is in accordance with śāstra in all respects, and it is full of good conclusions. There is no doubt about that. However, I have something further to say on this subject. The first point is that Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda has associated with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura since his very birth.

From his childhood he studied vaiṣṇava literatures such as Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, and Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta under Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's tuition, and heard his explanations of Vedānta-sūtra and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He is steeped exclusively in the Bhaktivinoda dhārā (the flowing current of his conceptions). At the same time he is an unparalleled scholar, who is thoroughly versed in Veda, Vedānta and all śāstra. It was he who acquainted us with the gracious Śrīman Mahāprabhu, His associates and especially with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Without a doubt, he knows the moods of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's heart. He must certainly have seen the translation and Pīyūṣavarsinī-vṛtti commentary that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written on this verse. Yet he has still given a distinct explanation in his own translation and Anuvṛtti commentary. He has certainly done this intentionally. Therefore we must understand the commentary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura through the medium of Śrīla Prabhupāda and we should give prominence to Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentary.

“The second point is that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has determined the vaiṣṇava-sadācāra (appropriate conduct) in relation to the general glories of Kṛṣṇa nāma. However, the fruit of Śrī Kṛṣṇa nāma that Śrīman Mahāprabhu practised and propagated is the ultimate prayojana, namely the attainment of Kṛṣṇa prema. Now, one cannot progress even one step in the direction of that ultimate prayojana unless one takes Kṛṣṇa nāma with sambandha-jñāna, and is free from aparādha and so on. In Śrī Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta it has been stated,

kṛṣṇa nāma kare aparādhera vicāra
kṛṣṇa balite aparādhīra na haya vikāra
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 8.24)

“One must consider the effect of offences while chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. It is because of these offences that one does not become ecstatic while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.’

eka kṛṣṇa nāma kare sarva pāpa nāśa
premera kāraṇa bhakti karena prakāśa
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 8.26)

“Chanting Kṛṣṇa's name just once destroys all sinful activities, and pure devotional service, which is the cause of prema, becomes manifest.’

hena kṛṣṇa nāma yadi laya bahu bāra
tabu yadi prema nahe, nahe aśrudhāra
tabe jāni tāhāte aparādha pracura
kṛṣṇa nāma-bīja tāhe na kare aṅkura
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 8.29.30)

“If, one takes harināma again and again, but ecstatic love does not develop and tears do not appear in his eyes, then one may know that it is because of many offences that the seed of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa does not sprout.’

“Keeping in mind the particular consideration mentioned in these verses, Śrīla Prabhupāda has given the instruction to honour in one's mind the person who is

endowed with sambandha-jñāna, that is, one has received dikṣa, who is free from aparādha, who understands that Kṛṣṇa and His name are not different, and who understands that aprākṛta-nāma is the only method of attainment. He also continually

engages in the service of Kṛṣṇa nāma, and strives for the prayojana, Kṛṣṇa prema. It is this type of nāma that Śrīman Mahāprabhu describes in 'ānandāmbudhi vardhanam pratipadam pūrnāmṛtāsvādanam' and 'param vijayate śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtanam' in His Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam.

“Pūjyapāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja has quoted the verse, 'no dikṣam na ca sat-kriyam' which appears in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 15.110). In Śrīla Prabhupāda's Anubhasya on this verse, he himself has said that measures such as puraścaraṇa (preparatory rituals) have been given so that one can achieve perfection in chanting one's mantra. But for śrī nāma mahā-mantra there is no consideration of the regulations of puraścaraṇa, because all the results of puraścaraṇa are obtained automatically simply by uttering Kṛṣṇa nāma once. So for the perfection of śrī mahā-mantra, there is no consideration of pious activities such as puraścaryā and so on. "However, in this verse a confidential meaning of 'kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakam mantro 'yam rasanāsprṅ eva phalati' is given: 'This mantra composed of Kṛṣṇa nāma offers its result simply by touching the tongue'. Specifically, rasanāsprṅ means touching that tongue which is sevonmukha (intent on or inclined to render service). The tongue cannot possibly manifest Kṛṣṇa nāma at any time unless it is sevonmukha. The presence of various anarthas and aparādhas prevent śuddha-nāma from arising on the tongue which is inclined to enjoy inert matter. This has been stated in the sādhana-laharī of Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu:

ataḥ śrī kṛṣṇa nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuratyadaḥ

“Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities and pastimes are all trans-cendental principles. They are not perceptible to the material senses such as the eyes, ears and tongue. Śrī nāma, rūpa, guṇa and lilā manifest on the jīva's tongue when the tendency to render service arises in his heart.’

“In this way as the sādhanaka becomes somewhat elevated by continually taking the name, then by nāma-bhajana he earns the qualification to serve Kṛṣṇa. He then realizes the transcendental nature of the nāma, the dhāma and so on and he becomes established in madhyama-adhikāra. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has stipulated in this verse of Upadeśāmṛta that one should honour such a madhyama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava within one's heart, and at the same time one should also offer daṇḍavat praṇāmas.”

When the assembled Vaiṣṇavas heard Śrīla Gurudeva's thoughts, which were pregnant with substantial siddhānta, they all supported his opinion and applauded him heartily.

k) Śrīla Gurupādapadma's supramundane character and guru niṣṭhā

(Written by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, the present Ācārya and President of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti)

While Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmīpāda was commenting on vairāgya-yukta bhakti-rasa, he explained that vairāgya (renunciation) is the intense feeling of separation from Kṛṣṇa which consists of the desire to please His senses⁸. The knowledge of vairāgya which consists of the desire to give happiness to Kṛṣṇa⁹ is actual vairāgya brahma-jñāna, and it displays contempt, fear and disrespect towards worthless jñāna, sāyujya mukti and other forms of mukti. Generally, sādḥaka jīvas consider that vairāgya means the renunciation of all enjoyment for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. However, the mukta puruṣas accept only dedication to the sevā of Kṛṣṇa as vairāgya. Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī has pointed out that vairāgya-yug bhaktirasa consists of detachment and devotional activities (all activities performed for Kṛṣṇa's sevā). The māyāvāda conception excludes the existence of cid-vilāsa, transcendental pleasure pastimes, but this can never be called vairāgya.

The word vairāgyais used to describe one of the six opulences of Bhagavān. This Bhagavān is Māyādhīśa, the Lord over māyā. Bhakti can never be attained by artificial endeavours to practice vairāgya in nirjana bhajana. People who are not spiritual think that material renunciation is vairāgya, but in the śāstras we find that vairāgya is simply the topmost stage of longing for kṛṣṇa-vilāsa, Kṛṣṇa's pleasure-pastimes. Prākṛta saḥajiyās and those who renounce material enjoyment practise so-called vairāgya to satisfy their desires, but this is merely temporary, deceitful sādḥana. Only through the eyes of bhakti can one see or realize the nitya-siddha vairāgya of the nitya-siddha mahātmās who are intent on Kṛṣṇa's happiness. Detachment and omniscience are naturally evident in the lives of mahā-puruṣas. Residing in the heart of the sādḥaka in the form of antaryāmī, these mahā-puruṣas can easily say who is attached to satisfying his own senses in the name of hari-sevā. They also give favourable opportunities for the sādḥaka to become liberated from the clutch of this kapaṭatā, hypocrisy. Moreover, being very affectionate towards the sevakas, and seeing their service tendency, they bestow on them the enthusiasm to serve Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

Keśarīra svapotānām anyeṣām ugravikramaḥ: "The lion shows her prowess towards her enemy, but is very affectionate towards her offspring." Similarly, for atheistic hypocrites Śrīla Gurupādapadma was the direct personification of Yama¹⁰, but he was full of loving, parental affection towards his disciples and those who had taken shelter of him. He would correct their hundreds of faults and mistakes, give them the chance to do sevā, and engage them in hari-bhajana. If anyone came to his maṭha and mission for hari-bhajana, he would give them shelter and a chance to do hari-bhajana, even if they were old, diseased, or devoid of any worldly qualifications. This is undoubtedly a brilliant example and certainly demonstrates his surrender to Kṛṣṇa, his mercy and magnanimity, his compassionate nature and quality of helping all, and his sorrow to see others suffering.

Adherents to morality say, satyaṁ bruyāt priyaṁ bruyāt, mā bruyāt satyam apriyam: "One should speak true and palatable words, but the truth should not be spoken if it is unpalatable." However, Gurupādapadma would always announce loudly that it is

right to speak the truth even if it is unpalatable. If we do not speak the truth, then many secrets of śāstras will not be preached and displayed in this world. Sādhu, guru and Vaiṣṇavas give real welfare to the people of the world, and even if their heart-touching words are not materially pleasing, they are nonetheless the cause of complete auspiciousness. In this connection, Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva has written, “Nowadays we see the publication of many religious magazines which are gradually deviating from the rules and regulations established and preached by Ācārya Kesarī Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. The main cause for this is the desire for worldly gain, name and fame. We should always remember the teaching of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta: ‘Dharma cannot be protected unless one is detached.’ One should set an ideal example to the whole world by embracing even the toughest adversity, and by maintaining complete detachment.” The sharp words and criticism of sādhu, guru and Vaiṣṇavas cause one’s good fortune and remove the difficulties and obstacles related to bhajana. Their detached morality, and the disciplinary words and unpleasant truths that they administer have the same function as chanting medicinal mantras, and the result is that we obtain a taste for chanting śrī nāma.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāja showed incomparable love and sympathy towards his peer Godbrothers. As soon as a Godbrother affectionately addressed him as ‘Vinod Dā’ or ‘Keśava Mahārāja’, he would understand their situation and help them as much as he could financially and in other ways. But he never expected financial help for himself. In this way he generously and selflessly gave thousands of rupees to help others. This was undoubtedly because of his parental affection towards his Godbrothers.

All sorts of people used to come in great numbers for his darśana: scholars, people who were proud of their so-called devotion, ignorant people, intelligent people, children, young men and elderly men. Everyone would forget their own desires and questions when they heard his grave and authoritative voice, and saw his mild and peaceful figure, his face and his gentle smile. Even when he was defeating māyāvādī logicians, he would always protect their dignity. Many people who had separate motives would come and listen to various kinds of advice, but they could not accept the śakti of this ekāntika sādhu and mahā-puruṣa who was so devoted to Kṛṣṇa. How can ordinary people truly understand the transcendental behaviour of nitya-siddha mahātmās? They do not and cannot understand their mercy and desire. Śrī Gurudeva’s view was, “No one in this world is an object for my attachment (anurāga) or indifference (virāga). All are means for serving guru and Kṛṣṇa.” This is the transcendental viewpoint of the mahā-bhagavatas.

It has already been mentioned that Śrīla Guru Mahārāja’s fresh outlook and unique speciality was evident in every engagement and action that he performed. He used the figures of pāṣaṇḍa-gajaikasimha (the lion-like person who destroys the elephant of hypocrisy) on the wall of Narahari Toraṇa, the main gate of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti’s original preaching centre in

Navadvīpa. Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura glorified Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya-candra as pāṣaṇḍa-gajaikasimha. Śrīla Gurudeva's intimate Godbrother Śrīla Bhaktisāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja also decorated him with this same name, for it was as if he was always holding a sword in his hand to defeat māyāvādīs and others who were opposed to śuddha-bhakti. Knowing such people to be his eternal enemies, he made an unshakeable vow to uproot Śrī Śaṅkara's advaitavāda or māyāvāda from this world. He clearly expressed this determination in his letters, essays, articles, commentaries, explanations, statements, lectures and so on. Parama Puṅgava Śrīla Gosvāmī Mahārāja would say to Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma, "When I see you, the memory of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda comes into my mind. Anyone whose darśana makes the memory of Śrīla Gurudeva appear in the mind is guru-svarūpa, the embodiment of guru, and he is the greatest of all mahā-bhāgavatas."

It is said, "All of Kṛṣṇa's qualities appear in His bhaktas." Śrīla Ācāryadeva had not passed exams in law or engineering, but he would give legal advice to lawyers and barristers, and he would also advise engineers. Many expert engineers were amazed to learn that the tilaka-marked, sky-high śrī mandira of the main maṭha was constructed according to Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's instructions and plan. Jagadguru Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has said, "It is quite essential to protect the sevā of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in order to protect the sampradāya." By this he meant that he aimed to protect Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's sevā by bringing law suits to save maṭhas and mandiras from

the hands of sense-enjoyers and wicked people. Śrīla Guru-pādapaḍma followed the instructions of his Ārādhya-deva Śrīla Prabhupāda, and accepted the responsibility of protecting the mission by legal means. Even Prabhupāda would be amazed by his astonishing talent and power of memory. Once, during an argument with some lawyers, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's Godbrother Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja asked him, "When was it that you studied law so that lawyers who argue with you accept your words?"

Śrīla Guru Mahārāja made an unparalleled contribution in composing vaiṣṇava literature and revealing ever-fresh deep meanings of the principles of bhakti. The speciality of his writings is that he kept an unbroken flow of bhāva, or inner meaning contained in the main tattva-siddhāntas; at the same time, he maintained his own position and point of view, and did not follow the general masses.

"Protecting the sampradāya is the top-most service of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu," he used to think, and only after carefully considering this did he use his powerful pen. His main goal was to establish tattva-siddhāntas directly and indirectly through the medium of debates, and he exhibited a remarkable and transcendental creativity in doing this. His ever-fresh and transcendental talent has been illuminated in his songs such as Śrīla Prabhupāda's āratī, Śrī Tulasī-āratī and Maṅgala-āratī. Following the transcendental poet Śrī Jayadeva's Gīta-govinda, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's Maṅgala-āratī gives an introduction to the supreme and unequalled, sweet trans-

cidental pastimes of Śrī Vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva, the eternally youthful Conjugal Couple of Vraja.

Sometimes an unexpected guest would arrive when Śrīla Gurupādapadma was dictating an article for Śrī Patrikā. At such a time, he would not leave the principal subject matter of the article, but at the same time he would converse with the guest without showing any kind of indifference towards him. There is no doubt that this is also one of his unique and transcendental characteristics.

It was Śrīla Ācāryadeva's undivided niṣṭhā towards his own Śrī Guru Mahārāja which most clearly established his superior position amongst Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples and followers. Śrīla Gurupādapadma gave good advice to his Godbrothers on legal matters and all kinds of other concerns. In so doing, he showed himself to have a generous and moral disposition. The Sārasvata Gauḍīya community accepted him as a lawyer and also as a very learned expert in management and politics. This was because, when complex questions arose concerning spiritual knowledge and pseudo-logic, he would give good answers which were in accordance with the conclusions of śāstras.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva displayed the ideal standards for observing fasting days. On Śrī Janmāṣṭamī, Śrī Ekādaśī, Śrī Gaura Jayantī, Śrī Rāmanavamī, Śrī Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, Śrī Advaita Saptamī, Śrī Nityānanda Trayodaśī and other fast days, he firmly rejected fasting on days which overlapped with the previous day¹¹. He gave the fullest protection to the observance of Cāturmāsya and ūrjā-vrata in Śrī Vedānta Samiti, completely following the rules practised and preached by Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīman Mahā-prabhu. He never supported reluctance to follow the Cāturmāsya vow or laxity in honouring ūrjā-vrata.

Śrīla Gurudeva especially manifested guru-niṣṭhā during a discussion of tattva-siddhānta with Parama Pūjanīya Yatirāja Śrīla Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja. On that occasion, he said, "I don't know or recognize the path of the previous Gosvāmīs. I simply accept Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda's line of thought as unerring truth, and I will try to know and understand the previous Gosvāmīs through Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision. I will first accept the excellence of his explanations and commentaries. Ācāryera jeī mata seī mata sāra: 'The order of the guru is the active principle in spiritual life' (Caitanya-caritāmṛta Adi 12.10) and anya āra jata mata jāuka chārahāra. This is my conception." This single pointed niṣṭhā that he showed towards Śrīla Prabhupāda is certainly unequalled.

Śrīla Gurupādapadma, the dearest associate of Śrī Gaurasundara, has written 'Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī or Vaiṣṇava Vijaya' for the eternal benefit of the conditioned souls. After refuting materialists, bad yogis, and other people with faulty doctrines, he showed them the path of real spiritual knowledge and the ultimate spiritual benefit¹². As an ideal tridaṇḍī gosvāmī, he wanted to bestow true auspiciousness even on opposing hypocrites. We have many times witnessed his fearlessness and steadfastness in protecting the truth. He never ever supported those who said that

spirit and matter are non-different. To expose the enjoying tendencies and selfish opinions of the prākṛta-sahajiyas, he published the book Sahajiyā-dalana, which was based on a compilation of articles written by Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He demonstrated the ideal of a faultless way of life by preaching from this book and by devoting himself to pure behaviour.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva established spiritual hospitals and also a Vedānta college. The central government and various missions were introducing initiatives to try to relieve the sufferings of the perishable body and mind in the name of social service. Śrīla Gurudeva's purpose was to show that these endeavours were practically useless. He was stronger than a thunderbolt in rejecting bad association, and softer than a lotus flower in endeavours which were favourable for the cultivation of bhakti. He never supported the karma-kāṇḍīya principles of the materialistic smārta society, who simply follow ritualistic customs and principles. (These regulations dictate, for example, that a certain number of days after someone's birth or death are impure, and that the leap month of Puruṣottama is an impure month, when no religious activities should take place). Śrīla Gurupādapadma instead gave the pure instructions to follow vows such as Śrī Puruṣottama vrata by engaging in śrī nāma-bhajana only. He spent his life as a surrendered soul who had no possessions and was completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa's will. His attitude was always 'May the desire of Bhagavān be fulfilled' and 'By the will of Bhagavān everything is possible'. His group of disciples would become amazed to see this. Everyone was attracted to his affection towards birds like pigeons and sparrows, his intimate love and affection (mamatā), his practice of non-violence, and his simple and compassionate behaviour towards all, especially children and old people.

Śrīla Gurupādapadma's simple, sweet and profound inner sentiments would never be disturbed, even while he was strongly refuting the degraded, devious and cheating belief that the jīva is Brahman, or when he was challenging people who respect all kinds of gods¹³; worshippers of the five deities Surya, Ganeṣa, Śakti, Śiva and Viṣṇu¹⁴; people who believe that there are many gods¹⁵; voidists; impersonalistic pantheists and others. He never supported laziness in the name of performing solitary bhajana. On the contrary, he instructed everyone to cultivate Kṛṣṇa bhakti in sādhu-saṅga by body, mind and words. He taught by his own exemplary practice that one attains all perfection and absorption in Kṛṣṇa prema only by śrī harināma. To his disciples he demonstrated by his own perfect example that one can conquer hunger, thirst and the inimical tendencies of the senses by performing regulated or unregulated loud kīrtana of the sixteen-syllable Name day and night.

Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī said, "I am lower than a worm in stool" and Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura said, "I will beat the head of such people with a stick," but the purport of these two statements is one and the same. One should understand the real humility in these words, for it is beneficial for the real self. The spiritual instruction in these statements is to take Kṛṣṇa nāma after being initiated into the dharma of offering respects to one and all without expecting any respect in return. The exalted

and profound sentiments of Śrīla Gurudeva's bhajana concerning upāśya-tattva established him as both bhajanānandī and goṣṭhānandī at the same time. His mercy in acting to liberate jīvas from their burden of anarthas was causeless. The doors of his mandiras and maṭhas were always open for the benefit of people trying to perform hari-bhajana. His endeavours to serve his peer Vaiṣṇavas were without limit, and his sevā satisfied them in all respects. The best introduction to his supramundane character is given through the books that he wrote to destroy māyāvāda; through his poems, philosophical articles and so on; and through the profound lectures based on tattva-siddhānta which he gave at various assemblies. He remained immersed in the pleasure of serving Śrī Gaura-Rādhā-Vinodabihārījī. He took full shelter of Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's instructions, was eternally established in the conception of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and always relished the subject matter of the preaching of Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha. He would always try to engage his disciples in harikathā and hari-kīrtana, and he instructed them to keep away from materialistic conversation, which he called 'the urge of speech,' following Upadeśāmṛta.

No one could give Śrīla Gurupādapadma any foodstuffs or clothes, no matter how hard they tried. He very rarely accepted any donations or deeds of properties from his widowed followers, and he would not allow his disciples to accept such charity either. On the other side, he would hardly ever refrain from giving mercy even when it was not asked for. To make people enthusiastic to serve guru and Vaiṣṇavas he sometimes accepted their ordinary things. He was anxious about the condition of people who were attached to their families, and he would always warn his renunciate disciples by describing the prākṛta sahaiyās as 'gharapāgāla (madly attached to home) and gṛhī bāulā (staying at home but making a show of being renunciates).' He used to quote the statement from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 6.278),

viṣayīra anna khāile malina haya mana
malina mana haile naya kṛṣṇera smaraṇa

"If one eats food which is offered by materialists, the mind becomes contaminated, and when the mind is contaminated one cannot remember Kṛṣṇa."

Following this principle, he strictly forbade any exchange or contact with the sampradāyas of those who try to enjoy guru¹⁶ and those who renounce guru¹⁷. By his own example he taught his disciples to practice renunciation of enjoyment for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. During śrī ūrjā-vrata, Śrī Puruṣottama vrata and so on he would instruct his disciples to practise renunciation by sleeping on the ground, by abandoning the greed for food, and by eating simply from leaf-plates. As regards accepting what is favourable for sevā, he instructed the devotees going for bhikṣa to properly consider the verse by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, tomāra sevāya duḥkha haya jata seo to parama sukha: "Troubles encountered in Your sevā shall be the cause of great happiness." He told them that they should not live a comfortable life, but should tolerate difficulties for the sevā of Śrī Hari, guru and Vaiṣṇavas. Some people living in the maṭha had large enough bank balances to maintain themselves for the

rest of their lives. He called those so-called disciples ‘hypocrites disguised as Vaiṣṇavas,’ ‘sense-enjoyers devoid of faith in Bhagavān,’ and ‘atheists.’

Śrīla Gurupādapadma was an ideal guru, and was expert in kṛṣṇa-tattva. He forbade followers with anarthas to remember aṣṭakaliya līlā and imagine their siddha-deha (spiritual form). He particularly attracted the attention of everyone by quoting Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructive words: “Smarāṇa will take place by the influence of kīrtana, and then it is possible to perform nirjana bhajana.” He pointed out that the improper imitation of śrī guru and Vaiṣṇavas is not sevā or bhajana, but rather hypocrisy. He asked his disciples to write the following verse by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura on the main door of his Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāthī:

jaḍavidyā jata māyāra vaibhava tomāra bhajane bādhā
moha janamiyā anitya saṁsāre jīvake karaye gādhā

“The knowledge of this material world is knowledge born of Your illusory energy (māyā). It creates obstacles in devotional service and makes an ass of the eternal jīva by increasing his infatuation with this temporary world.”

The goal of studying the śāstras, grammar and so forth is not to collect money, beautiful women and prestige. “Everyone will appreciate that knowledge which, in discussion, causes Kṛṣṇa rati to manifest in the heart. You must sincerely kick out whatever knowledge causes obstacles in bhakti. Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, is dear to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa bhakti resides in her heart. This knowledge in devotion is the sanctifying grace.” Śrīla Gurudeva always liked to explain these statements and moods of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Gurupādapadma never tolerated those who imitated bhakti, or those who were duplicitous while pretending to offer service. Once he established a maṭha which one of his gr̥hastha disciples had donated to him. Later on, when this disciple tried to make guru and Vaiṣṇavas his servants, Śrīla Gurudeva called back the maṭha residents and showed indifference towards his so-called disciple. He would be strict in instructing his personal servants or so-called disciples to abandon duplicity. He was particular to protect the honour of the guru’s senior servants so that they could co-operate and live together on good terms. He condemned the behaviour of people who falsely pretended to maintain their lives by begging madhukarī (alms) in the vicinity of Vraja-maṇḍala or other similar areas. He would also remind us that people who are attached to sense gratification have to accept birth in Vraja as monkeys, turtles and so on. He would say that no one is qualified to beg for nirguṇa madhukarī until their heart has achieved the state of nirguṇa, that is until it is free from material qualities.

On one occasion, one of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja’s God-brothers wrote in his magazine, “Those who are outside Māyāpura are deprived of service to Śrīla Prabhupāda.” Śrīla Ācāryadeva objected to this and announced in a deep voice like a thunderbolt, “Those who are guru-bhogis or guru-tyāgis are situated millions of miles away from Prabhupāda. Such people may apparently have lived in Māyāpura for ten or twelve years, but actually they have deserted Māyāpura and have been living in the

kingdom of Kali the whole time. Outwardly they pretended to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Dhāma, but they were not really serving them at all. Śrī Gurupādapadma, who is non-different from Nityānanda Prabhu, always deceives those people who are duplicitous about wealth. However, those servants who have niṣṭhā in guru-sevā and whose life is surrendered to guru can always remain absorbed in the service of Śrī Gurudeva's innermost desires, regardless of where they are staying." Śrīla Guru-pādapadma tried from the core of his heart to serve any person related to Śrīla Prabhupāda. In this respect he was equal to all, whether they were renunciate residents of the maṭha, gṛhasthas, or ordinary people who came close to him. This is the special transcendental quality of a disciple who has offered his ātmā, his very self, to Śrī Gurudeva.

Śrī Gurupādapadma was many times seen to be very particular about the way he kept even five and ten rupee notes in his purse. This sometimes caused doubts about his detachment from money. When he was asked about this, he would reply in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words, āsaktirahit sambandhasahit viṣayasamūha sakali mādḥava: "We should be detached from material things and at the same time see them in relation to Kṛṣṇa. The prema-sukha in the devotee's heart arises when he satisfies Kṛṣṇa's senses. This is the transcendental attitude to serving Caitanya Mahāprabhu." Those who try to imitate Śrīla Gurupādapadma's divine character will inevitably fall down from bhajana. However, accepting the instructions which he gives out of love to benefit the soul will bring auspiciousness. He said that śrī guru becomes unhappy at seeing the misery of others, but even though śrī guru's heart is distressed when he sees duplicitous people, this still does not bring them auspiciousness.

One day a devotee was studying the commentaries on rāsa-līlā, bhramara-gīta and so on, and Śrīla Gurudeva said, "The qualification to hear topics such as rāsa-līlā will come when śrī nāma-kīrtana has freed the heart from anarthas, and śuddha-sattva has appeared there. Otherwise the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda will appear to be the activities of a worldly hero and heroine, and will only give rise to false ideas. The conception of rasa is only possible in the siddha deha, the perfect state. It is impossible to perceive sṅgāra-rasa in a material body. Only a person who is free from the lower types of enjoyment and is in the stage of bhāva is qualified to discuss sambhoga rasa."

It is essential to have the mercy and inspiration of Bhagavān to know and understand śrī guru and Vaiṣṇavas in truth. Sometimes Vaiṣṇavas give honour to an impious person in order to stay away from bad association. Moreover, they sometimes hide their svarūpa, their real form, out of fear of association with the public.

Sometimes they appear to accept disciples, and falsely maintain a disguise by acting as if they were accepting service and advice from their disciples. Nevertheless, in all respects they protect their dependence and independence. This is the speciality of their inconceivable, divine character.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva always led his life in such a way as to protect Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire. He would constantly be engaged in establishing daiva-varnāśrama-

dharma, in preaching the conclusions of bhakti which he himself fully practised, in establishing Śrī Dhāma parikramā, in setting up printing presses, in publishing bhakti literature, in preaching of śrī nāma haṭṭa and in other such services. Some months before Śrīla Paramārādhyadeva entered aprakaṭa-lilā, he acted as if he were accepting medical treatment in the big city of Calcutta, the capital of Kali. At that time, he was staying in a house of a very faithful bhakta in Ṭyāṅrā. Many people may doubt why he left Śrī Dhāma to stay in the capital of Kali. Yathāya vaiṣṇava-gaṇa seī sthāna vṛndāvana, seī sthāne ānanda aśeṣa: “Wherever mahā-bhāgavata śrī gurus go, they make transcendental Goloka Vṛndāvana appear, and they are themselves absorbed in the aṣṭa-kālīya sevā of Vraja-ṇava-yuva-dvandva, the divine Youthful Couple of Vraja.”

The eternally liberated, topmost mahā-puruṣas relish the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda’s transcendental pastimes and the magnanimity of Śrī Gaurasundara, who came to bestow the ultimate goal (prajohana), which is kṛṣṇa-prema. Ordinary people who yearn to perform hari-bhajana, and especially the servants of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, are exceptionally fortunate and excessively blessed to attain the shelter of the lotus feet of such mahā-bhāgavatas. The Śrī Rūpānuga Sārasvata Vaiṣṇavas are and will always remain indebted in all respect to this transcendental maha-puruṣa. There is no doubt in this regard.

Thus ends the Fourth Part of The Life and Teachings of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī by
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

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Fifth Part

The siddhānta proclaimed by
Śrīla Gurudeva

In every age, Bhagavān and His dear associates appear on earth, bringing with them gifts of universal auspiciousness. Each time they come, the gifts they bring have their own unique and original nature. Bhagavān is an ocean of compassion, and He and His dear associates do not come to cheat the inhabitants of this material universe by giving away any perishable wealth or commodity. They appear to give in charity something for the eternal welfare of the ātmā. Their gifts or contributions cannot be seen in a gross form as mundane objects of sense gratification. If anyone tries to view their immortal charity as gross sense enjoyment, then he must be bereft of the immense mercy of this gift.

Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, having accepted the ecstatic emotions and lustre of Śrī Rādhā, appeared in this world in the form of Śrī Gaurasundara. He is parama karuṇa (supremely merciful) and rasika śekhara (the supreme enjoyer of rasa).

Therefore He has distributed a distinctive type of prema-bhakti in this world through the medium of śrī harināma.

Each of the various gifts given by the supremely kind Bhagavān and His associates is unique and special. Still, nothing can compare with the prema-bhakti distributed by

Śrī Gaura-sundara, for it includes the original nature and specialities of all the immortal contributions of all previous avatāras and ācāryas.

By the inspiration and mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī initiated the river of bhakti-rasa in his books such as Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu and Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi. This is the fundamental asset of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhu-pāda and all rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavas have preached and propagated this very same śuddha- or prema-bhakti.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this world with His associates and preached harināma-saṅkīrtaṇa and śuddha-bhakti throughout India in a very few days. Similarly, Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda descended to the earth with his associates roughly 125 years ago and preached śrī nāma-saṅkīrtaṇa and śuddha-bhakti throughout the world in a very short time. My Gurupādapadma Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja was prominent among Śrīla Prabhupāda's confidential associates. When Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda entered nitya-līlā, a dark age arrived for the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. The stream of śuddha-bhakti which Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda had initiated began to diminish. Their daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly magazines and journals in different languages were stopped. The sannyāsīs and brahmacārīs in the preaching centres which Śrīla Prabhupāda had established lost their enthusiasm. Giving up the principal maṭha, they began to establish their separate, independent maṭhas. Many of those who had previously lived in the āśrama began to return to household life, and in this way the current of preaching began to dry up.

Śrīla Gurupādapadma has written in his brief autobiography, "After the entrance of our Śrī Śrī Gurudeva into the unmanifest pastimes on January 1st, 1937, various kinds of disturbances began in the Gauḍīya mission. I left Śrī Caitanya Maṭha under these difficult circumstances in June 1939 and in 1940, on the day of Akṣaya Tṛtīyā in the month of Vaiśākha, I founded Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in a rented building at 33/2 Bospāḍā Lane, Bāgbāzār, Calcutta. After that, in September 1941 on the Pūrṇimā day of Bhādrapada, in Kaṭvā, where Śrīman Mahāprabhu previously took sannyāsa, I accepted tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa from Pūjyapāda Śrīmad Bhaktirakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, who had accepted the renounced order from Śrīla Prabhupāda. I then returned to my maṭha in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa, and began to preach from there in various other places."

The main subject of the preaching of Ācārya Kesarī Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja was firstly establishing the śuddha-bhakti practised and preached by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, and secondly breaking apart the ill-conceived doctrines opposed to bhakti, such as māyāvāda, smārta and sahajiyā. We are giving an account herein of the

nature of the śuddha-bhakti that he preached. In his own preaching he always used to quote two particular ślokas as evidence to establish bhakti. One of these is the Daśamula-tattva written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, which we shall consider in some detail a little later in this Fifth Part. The other śloka is by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa tanayas tad dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid upāsanā vraja-vadhū vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pumārtho mahān
śrī caitanya mahāprabhor matam idaṁ tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ

“Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my only wor-shipful object. In the same way that He is worshipful, so is His transcendental abode, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma. The mood in which the young brides of Vraja have worshipped Him is the most excellent of all. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam alone is the immaculate śabda-pramāṇa (scriptural evidence) and prema is the supreme objective of life. This is the conception of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and there is nothing beyond it.”

Here Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained in a highly condensed form the conceptions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In this verse, sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana-tattva have been described in an exceedingly beautiful way according to the siddhānta accepted by Śrī Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs.

Vadanti tat tattva vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam. In this śloka of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.11) three types of realisation of the non-dual, Supreme Absolute Truth (advaya-jñāna para-tattva) have been mentioned. These are Brahman realisation, Paramātmā realisation and Bhagavān realisation. The supreme realisation is that of Bhagavān, who is the cause of all causes and the controller of all controllers. He is full in six opulences, and is the origin of the universe, although He Himself has no origin. The imperfect vision of only the cit feature of bhagavat-tattva has been called Brahman realisation. In the Upaniṣads this has been called nirviśeṣa-brahman, and it is the bodily lustre of Bhagavān. In yoga-śāstra, the partial realisation of the sat and cit features of the omnipotent bhagavat-tattva has been called Paramātmā realisation. Paramātmā realisation is to know that Viṣṇu who measures the size of the thumb and who is situated splendidly within the heart of every jīva as the witness or regulator of the fruits of action.

There are also two types of bhagavat-tattva, namely aiśvarya-pradhāna and mādhyura-pradhāna. Aiśvarya-pradhāna, the bhagavat-tattva who is complete in six opulences, reigns over Vaikuṅṭha in the spiritual sky in the form of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, eternally served by His associates headed by Lakṣmī. Mādhyura-pradhāna is Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is radiantly present in Vraja where He is served by gopas and gopīs. He is especially endowed with the four types of mādhyurī (sweetness) namely His venu-mādhyurī, rūpa-mādhyurī, guṇa-mādhyurī and līlā-mādhyurī (His incomparably sweet flute, beauty, qualities and pastimes). Therefore in the above verse, only Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara who resides in Vraja has been described as the most worshipful of all. Although Brahman, Paramātmā and the

whole multitude of avatāras are essentially one in tattva, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the ultimate aspect of para-tattva because of His speciality in regard to śakti and the display of rasa. The specific meaning of the phrase ‘tad dhāma vṛndāvanam’ is that the sweet pastimes of Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, who is the nectarean ocean of all mellows of love and affection, cannot possibly take place in Vaikuṅṭha, Ayodhya, Dvārakā, Māthurā or anywhere else other than in Vṛndāvana. Therefore Vraja Dhāma, being non-different from Kṛṣṇa, has been described as an equally worshipful tattva. Vrajendra-nandana Śyāma-sundara is served in Vraja by His associates in dāsya, sakhya and vatsalya-rasa, but the sweet service of the Vraja ramaṇīs (gopīs) is filled with the highest mellows of paramour love, and is supermost. Among these gopīs in paramour love, Śrīmatī Rādhikājī, the embodiment of mahābhāva and the crest-jewel of Kṛṣṇa’s beloveds is the best of all. Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted Her sentiments and bodily complexion, and appeared in this world as Śrī Gaurasundara to taste His own mādhurī and to distribute nāma-prema throughout the universe. The conceptions of this very Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu have been described in a condensed form in the above śloka. Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, an associate of Śrī Gaura, has extracted the essence of the conceptions of the Śrī Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs and ācāryas, and has given the teaching of daśamūla-tattva. As if putting the ocean in a jar, he has filled this daśamūla-tattva with the concentrated essence of the cream of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Vedānta-sūtra, Gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the literature of the Gosvāmīs. Our most worshipful Śrīla Gurupādapadma used to proclaim Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's daśamūla-tattva everywhere he went. We are therefore giving a summary of daśamūla-tattva here.

āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim iha paramaṁ sarva-śaktiṁ rasābdiṁ
 tad bhinnamśaṁśca jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān tad vimuktāmś ca bhāvād
 bhedābheda-prakāśaṁ sakalamapi hareḥ sādhanam śuddha-bhaktiṁ
 sādhyam tat prītim evetyupa diśati jānān gauracandraḥ svayaṁ saḥ

“The message of the Vedas received through guru-paramparā is called āmnāya. The Vedas and smṛti-śāstra (such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam) which follow the Vedic version have been accepted as authoritative proof, as have different types of evidence such as direct perception, inasmuch as they confirm the Vedic version. From these sources of evidence, the following essential truths are established.

- (1) Hari is the Supreme Truth.
- (2) He is sarva-śaktimān, possessed of all potencies.
- (3) He is akhila rasāmṛta-sindhu, the ocean of all nectarean transcendental mellows.
- (4) Two kinds of jīvas, namely mukta and baddha (liberated and conditioned) are His separated expansions (vibhinnāmśa-tattva).
- (5) The conditioned souls are under the control of māyā.
- (6) The mukta-jīvas are liberated from the influence of māyā.

(7) Everything in existence, whether conscious or un-conscious, is a manifestation of Śrī Hari and is simultaneously and inconceivably one with Him and different from Him.

(8) Bhakti is the only sādhana (means to attain the goal).

(9) Love for Kṛṣṇa (prema) is the only objective (sādhya).”

Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given instructions on ten types of tattva to the faithful jīvas. Of these, the first is the principle of evidence (pramāṇa-tattva), and the remaining nine are prameya-tattva, the subject which is established by pramāṇa-tattva. The ten fundamental principles in the above śloka have been analysed as follows.

a) Pramāṇa-tattva

When the śrutis (Vedas) which are called brahma-vidyā are received through the medium of hearing from the guru-paramparā coming from Brahmā, the creator of the universe, who is the dear servant of Śrī Bhagavān, that knowledge is called ‘āmnāya’. The four Vedas, the itihāsas, the Purāṇas, the Upaniṣads, ślokas, sūtras and anuvyākhyā—these are all included in āmnāya. Here we should understand ‘itihāsas’ to mean Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata. The eighteen mahā-purāṇas headed by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are indicated by the word ‘Purāṇa.’ ‘Upaniṣad’ refers to the principal body of Upaniṣads such as Īśa, Kena, Kaṭha and so on. ‘Śloka’ means the books written in metres such as anuṣṭupa² by the ṛṣis, and ‘sūtra’ means the sūtras expressing the purpose of the Veda written by the prominent tattva-ācāryas.

Superior to the sūtra literatures are vyākhyā or commentaries and the other works written by those ācāryas. All these are identified by the term ‘āmnāya’. The principal meaning of the word ‘āmnāya’ is—Veda. The same idea has been expressed in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.

svataḥ pramāṇa veda pramāṇa śiromaṇi

lakṣaṇā karile svataḥ pramāṇatā hāni

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līla 7.132)

”The self-evident Vedic literatures are the highest evidence of all, but if these literatures are interpreted, their self-evident nature is lost.”

b) The self-evident Veda is the crest-jewel of evidence

The evidence of the Vedic literature (veda-pramāṇa) is also known as śruti-pramāṇa or śabda-pramāṇa (the evidence of transcendental sound). Thus the Vedas, the Purāṇas, Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, the Upaniṣads, Vedānta-sūtra and literature such as the commentaries written by vaiṣṇava-ācāryas are called āpta-vākya or āmnāya-vākya. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī established beyond doubt the authority of āpta-vākya or śabda-pramāṇa, and went on to prove the authority of the Purāṇas as well. Ultimately he has established that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the crest-jewel of all sources of evidence. Using the same criteria by which he showed that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the most authentic of all sources of evidences, he has also authenticated the authoritative śāstra revealed by Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Śukadeva

and after them in sequence tattva-guru Śrīman Madhva Ācārya, Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇya Tīrtha, Vyāsātīrtha and so on.

From this it is clearly evident that the Brahmā sampradāya is the guru-praṇālī (the paramparā or spiritual hierarchy) of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Kavikarṇapura Gosvāmī has established this very opinion in his Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī has described this guru-paramparā in his Saṁskāra-dīpikā. Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhūṣaṇa, the com-mentator on Vedānta-sūtra, has also accepted the same spiritual hierarchy. Our revered Gurupādapadma Śrī Ācārya Kesarī has supported this opinion with various logical arguments and scriptural evidence in all of his literatures, articles and especially in his essay entitled 'Acintyabhedābheda-tattva'. Śrī Gurupādapadma's role in protecting his sampradāya is very important at this present time.

Ordinarily, the defects of bhrama, pramāda, vipralipsā and karaṇāpāṭava³ are present in the opinions of human beings. These four defects are certainly found in the conditioned soul. Even great paṇḍitas are unable to give up these four defects when they reflect upon the Reality which is transcendental or beyond the jurisdiction of the senses, so their opinions are not flawless or reliable evidence. This means that the statements of the Vedas are the only authentic evidence regarding subject matter which is beyond the jurisdiction of material sense perception, because their origin is divine (apauruṣeya), and not human. Direct perception, hypothesis, comparison, history and other types of proof are useful when they are subordinate to śabda-pramāṇa (the Vedic statements). Then and then only can they help to a limited degree and be accepted as evidence; otherwise they cannot be accepted as evidence at all. However, the fully independent and omnipotent Bhagavān Himself appears in the pure hearts of perfected sages and vaiṣṇava ācāryas who are situated in the state of complete trance, and He manifests perfect knowledge in the form of Veda. Thus the authenticity of the self-evident Veda, which is the embodiment of knowledge, is always spotless and reliable in all respects.

c) Only Kṛṣṇa is parama-tattva

Kṛṣṇa alone is Svayaṁ Bhagavān and He is the shelter of all. Kṛṣṇa alone has been called the pūrṇa tattva or parama tattva throughout the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, Gītā, the Purāṇas headed by the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, and the Āgamas. He is also sarveśvareśvara, the Lord and controller of all other controlling agents. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Kṛṣṇa has been established as Svayaṁ Bhagavān and advaya-jñāna para-tattva in the verses 'kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam' and 'vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam.' Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the advaya-jñāna para-tattva, has three svarūpas, or natural appearances. These are Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān. His bodily lustre, the light emanating from his limbs, is called nirviśeṣa-brahman, the homogeneous spirit. Paramātmā is Bhagavān's partial expansion, who dwells within all jīvas in the form of the sākṣī (witness). Pure devotees of Bhagavān, who have taken shelter of bhakti-yoga and attained the darśana of Bhagavān, see His sac-cid-ānanda śrī vigraha.

premāñjana cchurita bhaktivilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
(Brahma Saṁhitā 5.38)

”His pure devotees, whose eyes are smeared with the salve of love, always see Him in their hearts.”

Jñānis see the para-tattva in the form of nirviśeṣa-brahman. Their eyes cannot see Bhagavān’s śrī vigraha because they are blinded by the dazzling effulgence of His limbs. Those who worship the para-tattva by taking shelter of the path of yoga realise Him in the form of Paramātmā. However the devotees of Bhagavān see His sac-cid-ānanda śrī vigraha by the influence of bhakti. Vision of Bhagavān is the complete and perfect vision, whereas the vision of Brahman and Paramātmā is partial. The Vedas, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas prove that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Hari:

a) apaśyam gopāmanipadyamānamā
ca purā ca pathibhiścantam
sa sadhrīciḥ
sa viṣucīrvasāna āvarīvartti-bhuvaneśvantaḥ
(Ṛg Veda 1.12.164.31)

“I saw a boy who appeared in the dynasty of cowherds and who is never annihilated. He wanders on many paths, sometimes close by and sometimes far away. Sometimes He is adorned with varieties of garments and sometimes He is covered by different garments of the same colour. In this way He repeatedly exhibits His manifest and unmanifest pastimes.”

b) śyāmāc chabalaṁ prapadye
śabalāc chayāmaṁ prapadye
(Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.13.1)

“The transcendental cid-ānanda-maya dhāma (abode), which is full of wonderful pleasure pastimes, is attained by Kṛṣṇa sevā, and Kṛṣṇa is attained from that transcendental world which is full of varied curiosities.”

The word ‘śyāma’ means ‘by Kṛṣṇa.’ The purport is that saying ‘Kṛṣṇa’ (black) conveys the conception of the para-tattva in its nirguṇa aspect, when it is without material qualities and can thus be represented as colourless. Conversely, the word ‘śabal’ means ‘gaura,’ which signifies that it is equipped with a myriad of colours or the aggregate of all colours. In other words, the name of the para-tattva equipped with all transcendental qualities is ‘Gaura.’ Therefore the confidential meaning of the above mantra is that Gaura is attained by Kṛṣṇa bhajana, and Kṛṣṇa is attained by Gaura bhajana.

c) ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.28)

“All avatāras beginning with Rāma and Nṛsimha are the parts, and parts of the parts, of the Supreme Person Bhagavān. However, only Kṛṣṇa is the original Svayaṁ Bhagavān.”

d) mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya
(Bhagavad-gītā 7.7)

“O Arjuna! There is nothing superior to Me.”

e) ekovaśī sarvagaḥ kṛṣṇa īḍya

eko’pi san

bahudhā yo’vabhāti

(Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad, Pūrva)

“The one controller of all, the all-pervading, unparalleled Para-brahman Śrī Kṛṣṇa is worshipful for the devas, humans and all living beings. Although He is One, He is manifest in many forms by the influence of His own inconceivable potency, and performs various types of revelry.”

f) vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah

(Bhagavad-gītā 15.15)

“I am the only subject to be known in all the Vedas.”

Some people harbour the doubt that Kṛṣṇa’s name is not to be found anywhere in the Vedas, but this idea is not correct. It is only Kṛṣṇa who has been represented in the Vedas, in some places by the mukhya (primary) or dictionary usage, in others by gauṇa (secondary) or the figurative sense, and in others again by anvaya or direct interpretation. We have already shown this by the śruti mantras such as ‘apaśyam gopāmani padyamānamā’ and ‘śyāmāc chabalam.’ In the Ṛg mantras, the līlā of Bhagavān have been described in this way:

tā vām vāstūnyuśmasigamadhyai yatra

gāvo bhūriśṛṅgā ayāsaḥ

atrāha tadurugāyasya kṛṣṇaḥ paramam

padamavabhāti bhūri

“I desire to attain Your (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) abodes, wherein the acclaimed kāmadhenu (wish fulfilling cows) have excellent horns and are capable of bestowing my heart’s desired wealth. This supreme abode of Kṛṣṇa, the fulfiller of the desires of His devotees, is illuminated to the fullest extent.”

This Vedic mantra describes the charm and beauty of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and of His beloved cows. There are numerous places in the Vedas in which descriptions such as this are mukhya i.e. according to standard dictionary usage. Elsewhere, Kṛṣṇa has been described taking the secondary sense, gauna-vṛtti.

ayam ātmā sarveṣām bhūtānām

madhu ayamātmā sarveṣām

bhūtānām adhipatiḥ sarveṣām

bhūtānām rājā ity ādi

(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.5.14-15)

This mantra alludes to Kṛṣṇa by gauṇa (secondary) usage, saying that He is the honey, the master and the king of all states of existence. Here Kṛṣṇa is indicated by the word ātmā. This has also been stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

kṛṣṇam enamavehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.55)

“O King! Know that Kṛṣṇa is the ātmā of all ātmās.”

Kṛṣṇa is Para-brahman, paramānanda, pūrṇa-brahma and Svayaṁ Bhagavān. This has been proclaimed clearly in the verses of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam such as ‘gūḍhaṁ parama-brahma manuṣya-lingam’, ‘yan mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam’ and ‘kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayaṁ.’ Viṣṇu Purāṇa has also determined that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Para-brahman by conclusive statements such as ‘yatrāvātīrṇaṁ kṛṣṇākhyam para-brahma narākṛtiṁ.’ Similarly, in Gītā we find, ‘brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham.’ Our Gosvāmīs have given evidence from the śāstras supporting the siddhānta that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate aspect of para-tattva. He is the source of all avatāras and expansions such as Rāma and Nṛsimha, and He is also the basis of Paramātmā and Brahman.

d) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sarva-śaktimān (the possessor of all potencies)

The descriptions of the potencies of para-tattva are found throughout the Vedas and other śāstras of divine origin. Great liberated personalities who accept the essence of the śāstra have supported the conclusion that śakti (potency) is one tattva (principle) and śaktimān (the possessor and master of potency) is another tattva. These two tattvas are distinct, and yet they are also eternally and in all respects inseparable. Mortal men cannot realise the confidential relationship between śakti and śaktimān, because their thoughts are always limited. Actually, although the factual substance and the potential energy of the substance are different, they are also indivisible, meaning that they are non-different. This difference and non-difference is established at one and the same time. Therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His followers, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, have accepted the relationship of acintya-bhedābheda (inconceivable oneness and difference) between the factual substance and the potential energy of the substance. In his Sandarbhas, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has used scriptural evidence and incontrovertible reasoning to prove the acintya-bhedābheda relationship between the potent and the potency. In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta it has been said that Śrīmatī Rādhikājī is the complete energy and Kṛṣṇa is the complete energetic source, yet there is no difference between them. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are inherently non-different, in just the same way that musk and its fragrance, or fire and its heat, cannot be separated from each other. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are manifest in two forms just to taste the rasa of Their pastimes.

rādhā—pūrṇa-śakti, kṛṣṇa—pūrṇa-śaktimān

duī vastu bheda nāhi, śāstra-paramāṇa

mṛgamada, tāra gandha—yaiche aviccheda

agni, jvālāte—yaiche kabhu nāhi bheda

rādhā-kṛṣṇa aiche sadā eka-i svarūpa

līlā-rāsa āsvādite dhare dui-rūpa

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 4.96-98)

“Śrī Rādhā is the full potency and Śrī Kṛṣṇa possesses that potency in full. All the revealed scriptures prove that these two are not different. They are indeed the same,

just as musk and its scent are inseparable, or as fire and its heat are non-different. Thus Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are One, yet They have taken two forms to enjoy the mellows of pastimes.”

This siddhānta has also been established in Vedānta-sūtra: śakti saktimator-abhedaḥ. From the consideration of vastu-tattva (the principle of factual substance), there is no substance other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is why He is called the advaya-tattva (non-dual Reality) in the śāstra. The same advaya-tattva is seen in three ways by candidates of different qualifications according to their various degrees of worship. Those who only cultivate jñāna imagine Brahman to be a state of being which is opposite to the inert material existence; in other words, they can conceive of Brahman as a homogeneous, formless, impotent and inactive spirit. However, this does not make clear what are the characteristics of the substance. Those who search for the advaya-tattva through buddhi-yoga (the meditational process) see Paramātmā, as the witness of the ātmā, a realisation which is not contrary to the individual nature of the ātmā. Finally, those who see the factual substance through pure undesignated bhakti-yoga directly attain that advaya-tattva and see Svayaṁ Bhagavān in the form of the Supreme Reality, endowed with complete opulence, sweetness and potency.

The realisations of Brahman and Paramātmā are materially designated. In other words, Brahman realisation comes from a negative conception of the illusory designations and Paramātmā realisation is in relation to the illusory designations. However, the vision of the spiritual form of Bhagavān is attained only by undesignated spiritual eyes. The factual substance is the svarūpa of Bhagavān and bhakti-śakti is the śakti-tattva.

The vision of Bhagavān without śakti is only nirviśeṣa-brahman. Some believe that brahma-darśana is the ultimate realisation, but this opinion reflects their own preconceived inclination; darśana of Brahman which is homogeneous and without potency can only be a partial vision or experience, because in śāstras such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam we see the use of words such as Parabrahman. Brahman and Parabrahman do not have the same meaning. In Gītā and other śāstras, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been called the basis of the Brahman, so Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the intrinsic reality and Brahman is only His non-differential manifestation or the radiance of His form. Paramātmā is also a partial expansion of Bhagavān. In other words, it can be said that Brahman realisation is the dry and impotent experience of advaya-jñāna-tattva-vastu. Clear knowledge of the Supreme Being who has entered within inert matter in a subtle form is Paramātmā realisation, and the complete experience of the advaya-jñāna with all distinct characteristics is Bhagavān realisation.

Realisation of Bhagavān is also of two types—aiśvarya- pradhāna (realisation in which reverence inspired by knowledge of His opulence is prominent) and mādhyaya- pradhāna (a realisation in which sweetness is prominent). The aiśvarya-

pradhāna feature is realised as Śrīpati Nārāyaṇa and the mādhyama-pradhāna feature is realised as Rādhānātha Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the one and only advaya-tattva-vastu. He includes the aspects of Brahman and Paramātmā; He also covers the complete opulence of Śrī Nārāyaṇa by His own sweetness; and He is equipped with His transcendental energy. This has been described in Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.8):

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyāte
na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

“The activities (kriyā) of that Parabrahman, Paramātmā are not prākṛta (material) because His karaṇa (active senses) such as hands and feet are not material. Since He is without material senses, His activities are aprākṛta-līlā, transcendental pastimes. He is radiantly present in all places and at all times by His aprākṛta body. Therefore, it is seen that no other is even equal to Him, what to speak of being greater than Him. It is heard that parameśvara has a variety of divine potencies of which three are prominent, namely His jñāna-śakti, bala-śakti and kriyā-śakti. These three potencies are known as cit-śakti or samvit-śakti; sat-śakti or sandhinī-śakti; and ānanda-śakti or hlādinī-śakti respectively.”

This parā-śakti of Bhagavān is also manifested in three ways, namely as cit-śakti, jīva-śakti and māyā-śakti. Cit-śakti, which is also called the svarūpa-śakti or antaraṅgā-śakti, manifests the dhāmas such as Vaikuṅṭha, Goloka and Vraja. Māyā-śakti is called bahiraṅgā-śakti. All the mundane worlds or inert material creations have been manifested from this potency. Its expanded majesty is exhibited as unlimited universes. Jīva-śakti is also called taṭasthā-śakti, from which the aggregate of unlimited jīvas has been manifested. The shelter or abode of these three śaktis is Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa has one naturally inherent potency called parā-śakti. This is composed of variegated pleasure pastimes and ever increasing varieties of bliss. Although this śakti has unlimited spheres of influence, among them only cit-śakti, jīva-śakti and māyā-śakti are perceived by the jīvas.

The descriptions of the three aspects of this parā-śakti are available in many places in the Veda.

parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

In Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is also found.

viṣṇu śaktiḥ parā proktā
kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā karma samjñānyā
tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate

“The potency of Viṣṇu is of three types—parā, kṣetrajña and avidyā. The name of Viṣṇu’s parā-śakti is cit-śakti, kṣetrajña is jñāna-śakti and avidyā-śakti is called māyā-śakti.”

Also in Gītā:

apareyam itas tvanyām prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtām mahābāho yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat
(Bhagavad-gītā 7.5)

“However, this inanimate material nature which has eight divisions (earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego) is an inferior nature. Know that I have another superior energy in the form of the jīvas, who have accepted this material world for enjoyment by means of their fruitive actions.”

Kṛṣṇa’s svarūpa or constitutional form is composed of sat, cit and ānanda. Therefore His svarūpa-śakti is manifest in three forms. From the ānanda portion comes hlādinī-śakti, from sat comes sandhinī and from cit comes saṁvit-śakti. Saṁvit-śakti is also called jñāna-śakti. Hlādinī-śakti makes Kṛṣṇa joyful (āhlādit), which is why its name is hlādinī. By this śakti Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of bliss, tastes pleasure, and the bhaktas are also enabled to taste transcendental happiness. The essence of this hlādinī is prema. Prema is a phenomenon entirely composed of transcendental rasa, and is the embodiment of ānanda. The concentrated essence of prema is called mahā-bhāva. The embodiment of this mahā-bhāva is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This is a summary introduction to the identity of śakti.

e) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu (the ocean of all ambrosial mellows)

Para-tattva, the embodiment of non-dual knowledge, is simply rasa (transcendental mellow). Those who have had no experience of rasa-tattva cannot realise the advaya-jñāna-svarūpa para-tattva even in the slightest. In Taittirīya Upaniṣad it has been said,

raso vai saḥ
rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati
ko hy evānyat kaḥ prāṇāyati
yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt
eṣa hy evānandayati
(Taittirīya Upaniṣad, 2.7.1)

“Para-tattva is simply rasa. On attaining that rasa the jīva attains ānanda. If that undivided Reality were not the embodiment of ānanda in the form of rasa then who could remain alive and who would endeavour to live? He alone gives pleasure to all.” Prior to Svayaṁ-Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, different vaiṣṇava-ācāryas had established, preached and propagated bhakti-tattva. However only Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, being empowered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, further developed that bhakti-tattva into bhakti-rasa. He has described this subject elaborately in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu and Ujjvala-nīlamanī. He has said that the bhakti-lātā-bīja in the form of kṛṣṇa-sevā-vāsanā (the tendency or inclination to serve Kṛṣṇa) develops sequentially from śraddhā to niṣṭhā, ruci, and āśakti. When it comes to the

stage of rati, it is called sthāyī-bhāva. When the four bhāvas, namely vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika and vyābhicārī meet together in a combined form in this sthāyī-bhāva, then rati in the form of sthāyī-bhāva is transformed into a relishable and supremely astonishing condition called bhakti-rasa.

The regulations governing both mundane rasa and pure spiritual rasa are the same. Where the application of the sthāyī-bhāva is in relation to Bhagavān there is pure spiritual bhakti-rasa, whereas when sthāyī-bhāva is in relation to material sense enjoyment, there is the insignificant, mundane rasa. Where the sthāyī-bhāva is applied in relation to non-differentiated knowledge there is nirviśeṣa-brahma-rasa and where the sthāyī-bhāva is applied in relation to yoga, there is paramātmā-rasa. Before śraddhā attains the condition of rati, when there is the endeavour for rasa from the combination of the constituent bhāvas such as vibhāva, then incomplete fragmented rasa arises. The mundane rasa is thoroughly rejectable and insignificant. Herein only the pāramārthika (spiritual) rasa is being evaluated.

Rati in the form of sthāyī-bhāva is the foundation of rasa. Rasa comes from the union of its four constituent ingredients, namely vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika and vyābhicārī. Vibhāva is of two types, namely ālambana and uddīpana. Ālambana is also divided into two types: āśraya and viṣaya. In pāramārthika-rasa Kṛṣṇa is the only viṣaya (object) of rasa and the worshipper is the āśraya (abode) of rasa. The qualities of the worshipful object and objects in relation to Him are called uddīpana. Dancing, singing, yawning, hiccups and so on are expressions of the bhāva within the heart, and are therefore called anubhāvas. The bodily transformations such as becoming stunned, perspiration and horripilation are called sāttvika-bhāvas because they are manifested from sattva. There are thirty-three types of vyābhicārī-bhāva such as self-disparagement, despondency and humility. This collection of bhāvas move in the direction of the ocean of the sthāyī-bhāva and increases it. Therefore they are called vyābhicārī-bhāva (vi = intensification, abhi = towards, cārī = going). Rasa is of two types, namely mukhya (primary) and gauṇa (secondary). The five mukhya-rasas are śānta (passive adoration), dāsya (servitude), sakhya (friendship), vātsalya (parental) and madhurya (conjugal). The seven gauṇa-rasas are hasya (comedy), adbhuta (wonder), raudra (anger), vīra (chivalry), karuṇa (pathos), bhayānaka (horror) and vībhatsa (disgust).

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given a brand-new and comprehensive definition of bhakti.

anyābhilāṣitā śūnyaṁ jñāna-kārmādy anāvṛtam

ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā

(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva-vibhāga 1.1.11)

“The cultivation of activities which are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or in other words, the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed through all endeavours of the body, mind and speech, and through the expressions of various spiritual sentiments (bhāvas), which is not covered by jñāna (knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation) and karma (reward-seeking activity), and which is

devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called uttamā-bhakti, pure devotional service.”

By performing sādhana of the above-mentioned bhakti, rati is awakened. When rati is more condensed it is called prema. As that prema becomes mature and more condensed it is known as sneha, māna, praṇaya, rāga, anurāga, bhāva and mahā-bhāva. Kṛṣṇa rati is also of five types arising from five divisions of devotees: śānta, dāsyā, sakhyā, vatsalya and madhura rati. Among these, madhura rati is the best. Kṛṣṇa prema is also of two types—aiśvarya-miśrita and kevala or śuddha prema. The prema by which one considers Kṛṣṇa to be Bhagavān endowed with six opulences and oneself to be destitute, low and insignificant is called aiśvarya-miśrita (mixed with knowledge of Kṛṣṇa’s opulences). The prema that we see in the material world is mainly this mixed prema, which does not control Bhagavān. Kevala or śuddha prema is that pure affection through which one considers Kṛṣṇa to be one’s son, friend or sweetheart, exactly as in an intimate worldly relationship.

Kṛṣṇa is only controlled by this kevala prema. Yaśoda Maiya scolds Kṛṣṇa and binds Him by this śuddha vatsalya bhāva. In their pure sakhyā-bhāva Kṛṣṇa’s friends climb on His shoulders. The charming gopis of Vraja consider Kṛṣṇa their most dear one, and when they rebuke Him, their words of reproach are even more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than the veda-stuti, the reverent Vedic hymns. If Vrajendra-nandana Śyāma-sundara had not descended to this world, then the subjects of these three elevated levels of rasa, namely sakhyā, vātsalya and madhurya, would not be found and the material world would remain deprived of these bhāvas. Specifically, if Śrī Kṛṣṇa had not mercifully manifested His cowherd-boy pastimes, which madden the world with love, then no one would even be able to realise that parameśvara is the object of madhurya-rasa.

Among Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, Vraja līlā is the best of all, because in this very līlā the highest benefit of all the jīvas is seen in regard to the subject of rasa. Logicians and worldly moralists cannot touch the glories of Kṛṣṇa līlā. Vraja līlā is composed entirely of rasa, and those who can reconcile this līlā in their hearts are very fortunate. Only those fortunate bhaktas who have tasted the sweetness of Vraja līlā can know its sweetness. It is impossible to enter this subject by thoughts of logic, morality, knowledge, yoga, religion or irreligion.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of rasa, is Parabrahman. At the same time He is supremely rasika (expert in relishing the mellows of love). Therefore, although He is one, in order to taste rasa, He is eternally situated in four natural forms by the influence of His own inconceivable potency. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has described these four natural forms in his Bhagavat-sandarbhā, Anuccheda 16.16.

ekam eva paramaṁ tattvaṁ svābhāvika-acintya śaktyā
sarvadaiva svarūpa-tad rūpa-vaibhava-jīva-pradhānarūpeṇa
caturddhāvatiṣṭhate, sūryāntara-maṇḍalasthita-teja īva
maṇḍala tad vahirgata tad raśmi-tat praticchavi-rūpeṇa

“The parama-tattva is one. He is equipped with His inconceivable natural potency. With the assistance of that potency He is eternally manifest in four forms: His original form (svarūpa); His personal splendour, which includes His abode, eternal associates and expansions such as Lord Nārāyaṇa (tad-rūpa-vaibhava); the living entities (jīvas) and the unmanifest state of the three modes of material nature (pradhāna). There are some simple examples which illustrate this point to a certain extent. The four features may be compared to the effulgence situated in the interior of the sun planet; the sun globe; the rays of the sun emanating out from the globe; and a remotely situated reflection respectively.”

In the śāstras which describe the essential purports of the Vedas such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mahājanas have researched the pure rasa within Kṛṣṇa. Great ṛṣis such as the Catuḥsana headed by Sanaka Kumāra, Śiva, Vyāsa and Nārada have described the rasa within Kṛṣṇa’s supernatural pastimes in their own respective scriptures as they have realised it in their states of trance. Still, only Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has manifested this nectarean Śrī Kṛṣṇa rasa on the surface of the earth. Before Him and until today no one has been able to do this. Therefore Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has stated quite appropriately:

premanāmādbhutārthaḥ śravaṇapathagataḥ kasya nāmnām mahimnaḥ
ko vettā kasya vṛndāvanavipinamahā mādhuriṣu praveśaḥ
ko vā jānāti rādhām paramarasa camatkāramādhuryasīmām
ekaś caitanya candraḥ parama karuṇayā sarvamāviścakāra
(Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta 130)

“O brother, who had even heard of the name of parama-puruṣārtha, the ultimate goal of life, called prema? Who knew the glories of śrī harināma? Who had entered into the wonderful sweetness of Śrī Vṛndāvana? And indeed who knew the parā-śakti, (transcendental potency) as the pinnacle of the supremely astonishing mādhyura-rasa, Śrīmatī Rādhikā? Only the most merciful Śrī Caitanyacandra has uncovered all these truths out of compassion for the jīvas.”

f) Jīva is the vibhinnāmśa-tattva
of Śrī Hari

In the Vedic scriptures the jīvātmā has been called the vibhinnāmśa (separated part) of Bhagavān. Therefore the jīva is constitutionally a servant of Kṛṣṇa. We have already mentioned that the one parā-śakti or svarūpa-śakti is manifested in three forms, cit-śakti, jīva-śakti and māyā-śakti. When sac-cid-ānanda para-tattva Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is complete in six opulences, is equipped only with His jīva-śakti, then His expansion is called vibhinnāmśa-jīva. Alternatively, when sac-cid-ānanda Bhagavān is equipped with all potencies such as His svarūpa-śakti, then His expansion is called svāmśa. There is no difference in principle between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His svāmśa such as Śrī Baladeva, Paravyomapati (the lord of the spiritual sky) Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Rāma, Nṛsimhadeva and the other avatāras. Only when we consider the degree of manifestation of śakti and rasa can we understand that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the last limit of the Supreme Truth, the summit of aiśvarya and

mādhurya, and avatāri or amśī⁴. His avatāras such as Śrī Rāma, Nṛsimha, Baladeva, and Paravyomapati Nārāyaṇa are called His vaibhava prakāśa. These are all bhāgavat-tattva and the masters of māyā. However this cannot be said in relation to jīvātmā. The jīva is a transformation of Bhagavān's jīva-śakti or taṭasthā-śakti. In the śāstra Bhagavān has been described as akhaṇḍa (undivided), avikāri (immutable), and pariṇāmarahita (without transformation). If the jīvas were direct expansions of Bhagavān then Bhagavān would have to be transformable or mutable. However Parabrahman cannot be mutable or divided. In śāstra the jīva has been accepted as the transformation of the śakti of Parabrahman. On account of the non-difference of Brahman and His śakti the jīva has been called the amśa of Brahman, as it has been stated in the Gītā, mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūta sanātanaḥ (Bhagavad-Gītā 15.7). However, after evaluating various scriptural evidence, the vaiṣṇava-ācārya followers of Śrīman Mahāprabhu have announced that the jīva is a transformation of śakti.

It is sometimes seen that a special jewel or a person accomplished in chanting a special mantra can manifest many other substances, although the jewel or the person who knows the mantra themselves remain untransformed. This is because the substances are manifested by their potency. In the same way the cit-śakti of Parabrahman Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests the trans-cendental abodes such as the unlimited Vaikuṅṭha planets, Goloka Vṛṇḍāvana and all their spiritual para-phernalia; the jīva or taṭasthā-śakti manifests unlimited jīvas; and māyā-śakti manifests unlimited mundane universes. Still, Brahman remains immutable, undivided and pure. The jīva is an amśa (partial expansion) of the śakti of Brahman, and not a direct partial expansion of Brahman. That is why he is called vibhinnāmśa (separated expansion). It has been stated in Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra, yattaṭasthaṁ tu cidrūpaṁ svasaṁvedyādvinirgatam: "Being a particle of consciousness and an emanation from the cit-śakti, the jīva is taṭasthā (marginal)."

Further clarifying taṭasthā-śakti, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says:
 taṭasthatvañca māyāśaktyatītatvāt asyāvidyā parābhavādirūpeṇa doṣeṇa
 paramātmāno lepābhāvācca ubhayakoṭāvapraviṣṭestasya tac chaktitve satyapi
 paramātmanas tal lepābhāvaś ca yathā kvacidekadeśasthe raśmau chāyayā
 tiraskṛte'pi sūryasyātiraskārastadvat
 (Paramātmā-sandarbhā 37 saṅkhyā)

The purport is that jīva-śakti, which is called taṭasthā, is different from the māyā-śakti; therefore it does not come in the category of māyā. However, the jīva is controlled by avidyā (ignorance) so he cannot be on the same level as Paramātmā who remains ever uncontaminated by ignorance. Although the smear of ignorance is the śakti of Paramātmā, it does not touch Paramātmā, just as the sun itself is not covered when a cloud obscures its rays in one region. It has also been stated as such in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.3.9).

tasya vā etasya puruṣasya dve eva sthāne
 bhavata idam ca paralokasthānañca sandhyam

tṛtīyaṁ svapnasthānam tasmin sandhye sthāne tiṣṭhannete ubhe
sthāne paśyatīdañca paralokasthānañca

“That jīva-puruṣa has two positions, namely the inanimate material world and the spiritual world about which he should enquire. The jīva is situated in a third position, which is svapnasthāna (taṭasthā) and is the juncture between these two. Being situated on the place where the two worlds meet, he sees both the jaḍa-viśva (inert world) and the cid-viśva (spiritual world).”

The aggregate of jīvas is manifest from the taṭasthā-śakti. Although they have arisen from parameśvara, they are still separately existing individual entities. The jīva is compared to an atomic particle of the sun’s rays or to a spark of a fire. This has been stated clearly in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.

yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphulingā vyuccaranti
evamevāsmādātmānaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti
(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.20)

“As sparks emanate from a fire, similarly the aggregate of jīvas is manifested from sarvātmā Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

From this it is clear that the jīvas, being atomic conscious particles and vibhinnamṣa-tattva, are subordinate to the original ātmā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They are eligible for the māyā-jagat or the cit-jagat because of their taṭasthā (marginal) nature. Being situated on the marginal line between the cit-jagat and jaḍa-jagat, if they look in the direction of the cit-jagat, the śakti of yogamāyā empowers them and they become engaged in the service of Bhagavān in the cit-jagat. However, if they look in the direction of the māyika (illusory) jagat, the desire to enjoy the māyika-jagat arises in them. Then, turning away from the spiritual sun, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they become attracted by māyā. Māyā, who is very close by, immediately gives them a gross body with which to strive for enjoyment, and casts them into the current of birth and death in material existence.

The jīvas' condition of being averse to Kṛṣṇa is anādi, without beginning. Kṛṣṇa is supremely compassionate, and He is not at fault for this undesirable condition of the jīvas, because, being exceedingly sportive, He has given the jīvas a divine jewel in the form of independence, and He never interferes with their independence. The cause of the jīvas' undesirable condition is their own misbehaviour in regard to misuse of their God-given independence.

In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has stated,

jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’
kṛṣṇera ‘taṭasthā-śakti’ ‘bhedābheda prakāśa’
sūryāṁśu-kiraṇa, jaiche agni jālā ca ya
svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tina prakāra ‘śakti’ haya
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.108-109)

“Kṛṣṇa’s natural potency is of three types. The jīva is Kṛṣṇa’s taṭasthā-śakti. The jīva is related with Kṛṣṇa as a manifestation simultaneously different and non-different

from Him. If Kṛṣṇa is compared to the sun then the jīva is like an amśa, an atomic particle in His rays.”

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it has also been stated:

bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīnuveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo' smṛtiḥ
tan māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru devatātmā
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.37)

“The jīva who is averse to Bhagavān forgets his own constitutional nature because of being controlled by māyā. Due to this forgetfulness, he becomes absorbed in the material body and all things related to the body, and a sort of mistaken and inverted identification arises in which he develops the conception that he is the material body: ‘I am a devatā, I am a human being’. In this state of bodily identification, there are many things to be feared, such as old age, disease and death. Therefore people who know the truth should consider that their own guru is īśvara (their master), that he is not different from Bhagavān, and that he is very dear to Him. They should then perform single-pointed bhajana of īśvara (their guru) by ananya-bhakti, unalloyed devotional service.”

Kevalādvaita-vādīs (monists) say, ”Jīvātmā and Paramātmā are abhinna; there is no difference at all between them. In the conditioned state, when Brahman is covered by avidyā (ignorance) it is called jīva. Jīva and the world have no factual existence, brahma satyaṁ jaganmithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ.” However, this conclusion of the advaita-vādī is completely imaginary, opposed to śāstra and false in all respects, because in the śrutis Parabrahman has been described as complete, flawless, undivided and composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss whereas the jīva has been described as the minute, conscious expanded part of Parabrahman or Bhagavān who is sarva-śaktimān, omnipotent. Parabrahman is one, but the jīvas are innumerable.

bālāgra śata bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate
(Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 5.9)

“Though the jīva is situated in an inert material body, he is a subtle transcendental principle (tattva). If one divides the tip of a hair into one hundred parts and again divides one of those parts into one hundred parts, then however subtle one of those parts may be, the jīva is even more subtle than that. Although he is so subtle, the jīva is a spiritual substance (aprākṛta vastu) and he is suitable for ānantya dharma.” (Ant means ‘to be free from death’, and ānantya means mokṣa, liberation).

aṅurhyeṣa ātmāyaṁ vā ete sinītaḥ puṅyaṁ cāpuṅyañca
(Gaupavan śruti-vākya quoted in Madhva bhāṣya
on Vedānta-sūtra 2.3.18)

“The ātmā is atomic (minute) in size. Sun, piety and so on can take shelter of him.” It has also been stated in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, eṣo' ṅurātmā setasā veditavyo: “This ātmā is atomic in size (minute).”

It has been stated in Bhagavad-gītā (7.5),

apareyam itas tvanyām prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām

jīva bhūtām mahābāho yayedam dhāryate jagat

“He Māhabāho! (O mighty armed one!) The māyā-śakti is my aparā or inferior potency. Apart from this I have jīva-bhūtā, my parā or superior potency, in the form of jīva-śakti by which, you should know, this entire creation is being maintained.”

Kṛṣṇa naturally refers to himself by the title ‘I’ (aham), and says that constitution of the jīvas, which have come forth from the inconceivable potency of Paramātmā, is purely spiritual. Since the jīva has manifested from the taṭasthā-śakti, his dharma is also always taṭasthā. At the same time, because of being minute, he is naturally susceptible to being controlled by māyā. Therefore he is neither completely different nor completely non-different from Paramātmā. The jīva is controlled by māyā whereas īśvara is the master of māyā. It is clear from the statements of āmnāya that jīva is an eternal principle distinct from īśvara. Therefore the jīva’s simultaneous difference and

non-difference from īśvara are both established by śruti. Kevalādvaita-vāda is avidika (non-Vedic).

The jīva is anu-caitanya (minutely conscious) and endowed with the quality of knowledge. He has the self-reference of ‘I’, and he is an enjoyer, a thinker and an intelligent entity. The jīva’s eternal svarūpa is one. This eternal svarūpa is extremely subtle. Just as a beautiful form appears when the limbs of the gross body such as the hands, legs, nose and eyes are each consigned to their own places, similarly, in the body composed of the particle of spiritual energy (cit-kaṇa) there is also a very beautiful, minute, spiritual svarūpa composed of all the minute spiritual limbs and bodily parts. This svarūpa is the jīva’s eternal constitutional form.

When the jīva is conditioned by māyā, its eternal body is covered by the gross and subtle material bodies. It is not māyāvāda to say that the jīva is controlled by māyā (māyāvaśa). According to the māyāvādīs, the jīva is a temporary principle enveloped or reflected by māyā. However when we say that the jīva is ‘controlled by māyā,’ it is clear that the conscious particle jīva is prone to be defeated by māyā because of his minute nature. Māyā is the aparā-śakti (inferior potency) and the jīva is parā-śakti (superior potency). The false identification (ahaṅkara) with inert matter is the function of māyā. The jīva is a transcendental substance beyond this māyā. Even when the jīva is free from māyā, his quality of being an individual living entity is not destroyed.

Māyāvāda is a mistake. According to this philosophy, Brahman is non-dual, pure, undivided and uncontaminated. If we accept this siddhānta for the sake of argument, then what is it that becomes covered or reflected? How is it possible for Brahman to be reflected or covered? Who is the seer of this? What is the place of reflection? When is there any other substance apart from Brahman? When we examine the māyāvāda conception in this way we see that it is ridiculous to the fullest extent. The evidence of the śruti-mantras becomes useless when philosophers

stretch their meaning to concoct an interpretation in support of their own opinion and sectarian doctrine.

The consistent opinion of the Veda is that the inherent principle of simultaneous and inconceivable difference and non-difference is true, eternal and meaningful. The jīva, being in a separate category from īśvara, is vibhinnāmśa-tattva and he is manifest from Kṛṣṇa's taṭasthā-śakti. The jīva is a pure substance and by nature engaged in his dharma (constitutional activities) in accordance with Kṛṣṇa. This is the factual understanding of the living entities' intrinsic characteristics.

g) Deliberation on the jīva who is under the influence of māyā in the conditioned stage on account of his marginal nature

The jīva is constitutionally the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, but when he misuses his own natural independence because of his marginal nature (taṭasthā-dharma), he becomes averse to Kṛṣṇa. At that time his pure constitutional form becomes covered by the gross and subtle body given by māyā and he identifies himself with these gross and subtle material bodies. Then he tastes happiness and distress in the cycle of material existence, taking his birth in various species of life, sometimes in the heavenly planets and sometimes in the hellish regions. He is burnt continually by the three-fold miseries: ādhyātmika (miseries arising from the body and mind), ādhidaivika (those arising from other living beings) and ādhibhautika (those arising from the natural environment). In this way, he goes on wandering throughout the material world. If by good fortune he attains the company of a pure Vaiṣṇava who is accomplished in tattva-jñāna then by his instructions the jīvas' ignorance is dispelled. Attaining Kṛṣṇa bhakti, he becomes qualified to render service to Kṛṣṇa.

'nitya-baddha'—kṛṣṇa haite nitya-bahirmukha

'nitya-samsāra', bhuñje narakādi duḥkha

sei doṣe māyā-piśācī daṇḍa kare tāre

ādhyātmikādi tāpa-traya tāre jāri' māre

kāma-krodhera dāsa hañā tāra lāthi khāya

bhramite bhramite yadi sādhu-vaidya pāya

tāra upadeśa-mantre piśācī palāya

kṛṣṇa-bhakti pāya, tabe kṛṣṇa-nikaṭe jāya

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 22.12-15)

"The jīva is constitutionally the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, but when he misuses his natural independence because of his marginal nature, then he becomes averse to Kṛṣṇa, and he tastes happiness and distress from heaven to hell in this material existence. Because of jīva's fault of being averse to Kṛṣṇa, the witch māyā binds him in the covering of the gross and subtle bodies and inflicts punishment upon him by burning him with the three-fold miseries of ādhyātmika, ādhidaivika and ādhibhautika. Controlled by the six enemies of lust, anger and so on, the jīva is continually beaten by the witch māyā; this is the jīva's disease. As he goes on wandering high and low in material existence, he may by good fortune find a doctor in the form of a sādhu. Then, by the influence of the sādhu's instructions, Māyādevī

abandons the jīva and runs away. This is just like a witch giving up her influence over a man, and fleeing from the mantras of an exorcist. Only a jīva who is free from māyā attains Kṛṣṇa bhakti and is qualified to approach Kṛṣṇa.”

The jīva bound by māyā is controlled by the saṁskāra (impressions) of his own fruitive actions, by the guṇas and by self-identification with the body expressed through conceptions such as “I” and “mine.” Thus he accepts birth in various species of life. While wandering on and on in this way, he may get saintly association, and by that influence develop śraddhā. When he comes to know Kṛṣṇa through his inclination to render service, he attains release forever from all the bindings of māyā. In Goloka Vṛndāvana, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu manifests unlimited jīvas who serve Vṛndāvana Bihārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa as nitya-pārśada (eternal associates). In Paravyoma Vaikuṅṭha, Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa manifests unlimited nitya-pārśada jīvas to serve Vaikuṅṭhādhipati Nārāyaṇa. Situated in their own constitutional forms for eternal time, they always remain attentive to the service of their worshipful Deity. They are always inclined towards the object of their worship and they are always strong, having attained the strength of the cit-śakti. They have no relationship with jaḍa-māyā, and do not even know that there is a śakti called māyā. Prema alone is their life. They are unaware of even the slightest semblance of birth, death, fear and lamentation.

Kāraṇābdhiśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu is situated in the Virajā, which lies between the cit-jagat and the māyika-jagat. By His glance towards māyā the minute conscious jīvas are manifest in the form of the rays of His glance. Because they are situated close to māyā, these jīvas notice the wonderful nature of māyā. All the characteristics of the ordinary jīvas which were previously mentioned are found in them. Because of their being extremely minute or insignificant by nature, and because of their marginal disposition, they sometimes gaze in the direction of the cit-jagat and sometimes in the direction of the māyika-jagat. The jīvas are extremely weak in the marginal condition, because at that time they have not yet attained cid-bala (spiritual strength) by the mercy of the sevya-vastu, (the object of service). Among these unlimited jīvas, those who are infatuated by sense gratification and want to enjoy māyā become bound by māyā. Conversely, those jīvas who ponder over the sevya-vastu attain the strength of cit-śakti by the mercy of the sevya vastu, and go to the transcendental abode.

Māyā is Kṛṣṇa’s śakti by which He creates the mundane universe. He then engages the māyā-śakti in purifying the jīvas who are averse to bhakti. Māyā has two functions, namely avidyā and pradhāna. The function of avidyā is related to the jīva and the function of pradhāna is characterized by jaḍa, inanimate matter. The jīva’s desire to perform reward-producing activities is born from avidyā, and the whole inert universe has arisen from pradhāna. Vidyā and avidyā are two further dimensions of māyā which are both related to the jīva. The bondage of the jīva comes from the function of avidyā and his liberation comes from the function of vidyā. When an offensive jīva becomes inclined towards Kṛṣṇa the actions of the

vidyā function begin in his heart. However, when he becomes averse, the action of the avidyā function begins.

h) The jīva is free from māyā
in the liberated state

The intrinsic constitutional nature of the jīva to be the servant of Kṛṣṇa is not destroyed even though he has remained bound since time without beginning in the fetters of desires for fruitive work. Somehow or other it certainly continues to exist and when it finds just a small opportunity, it becomes manifest again and begins to reveal its own identity. This opportunity is nothing but sādhu-saṅga.

yasya deve parābhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ
(Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23)

“The actual purport of the Vedas becomes manifest within the hearts of those mahātmās who have parābhakti for Kṛṣṇa, that is to say, those who have become eligible for śuddha bhakti through śraddhā in Kṛṣṇa, and who also have the same śraddhā in guru and sādhus.”

It has also been stated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,
saṁsāra brahmite kona bhāgye keha tare
nadīra pravāhe yena kāṣṭha lāge tīre
kona bhāgye kāro saṁsāra kṣayonmukha haya
sādhu-saṅge kare kṛṣṇe rati upajaya
'sādhu-saṅga', 'sādhu-saṅga' — sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhu-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya
'kṛṣṇa, tomāra haṅa' yadi bale eka-bāra
māyā-bandha haite kṛṣṇa tāre kare pāra
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22-43.45.54.33)

“When the jīva becomes averse to Kṛṣṇa, he is swept away in the current of birth and death in material existence. He wanders aimlessly throughout 8,400,000 species of life, being burnt by the three-fold miseries. It is extremely difficult to attain deliverance from this current. However, just as a piece of wood floating in the forceful current of a river may by good fortune be washed up on the bank, similarly, a jīva may by extremely good fortune attain the shelter of sādhu-saṅga, gain release from the current of material existence, and again become established in his own constitutional position as the servant of Kṛṣṇa.

"There is a sign that a person will by good fortune soon be released from material existence. This is that he keeps the company of sādhus, and as a result awakens his loving attachment to the lotus-feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That is why the descriptions of the glories of sādhu-saṅga are found in abundance in all the śāstras. The śāstras state that it is not at all easy to attain a moment's association with a sādhu. If any jīva, feeling extreme anguish, prays to Kṛṣṇa from the core of his heart and even once calls out, 'O Kṛṣṇa! I am Yours,' then Kṛṣṇa gives him sādhu-saṅga and makes him cross beyond the bondage of māyā."

When, by exceedingly good fortune, someone's material existence is about to come to an end then he associates with sādhus. What is this good fortune (bhāgya)? We should understand this very well. The jīva's fortune is only the fruit of his previous activities (karma). There are two types of karma: ārthika (for material gain) and paramārthika (for spiritual gain). Ārthika fortune arises from ārthika karma, and paramārthika fortune arises from paramārthika karma. Activities such as serving sādhus, Bhagavān and His name, which are performed for the sake of acquiring spiritual wealth (paramārtha), are collectively paramārthika. No matter what a jīva may do, if he performs paramārthika activities, these collective activities create within his heart a type of saṁskāra (impression) in the form of the desire for bhakti. When this impression becomes well nourished it is called good fortune (saubhāgya), and by the influence of this good fortune the jīvas' materialistic desires gradually begin to weaken. When desires pertaining to material existence are very much diminished and the saṁskāra of good fortune has been nourished to a great extent, then śraddhā in sādhu-saṅga arises. This same śraddhā easily causes sādhu-saṅga to occur repeatedly, and that is the cause of attaining complete perfection.

Thus the siddhānta is that bhāgya is the fruit of sukṛti accumulated in birth after birth, and on the awakening of this bhāgya one develops an affection for sādhu-saṅga. Then again, after the gradual sequential development of śraddhā in the form of bhajana-kriyā, anartha-nivṛtti, niṣṭhā, ruci and āsakti, Kṛṣṇa rati appears. The life in which one's bhāgya arises is the life characterized by śraddhā. Therefore śraddhā and sādhu-saṅga are called the root of all auspiciousness. This is confirmed in the Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa.

bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta saṅgena parijāyate
sat-saṅga prāpyate pumbhiḥ sukṛtaiḥ pūrva sañcitaiḥ
(Bṛhan-Nāradiya Purāṇa 4.33)

“Bhakti becomes manifest by the association of the pure devotees of Bhagavān. Such sādhu-saṅga is attained by the accumulation of sukṛti in previous lives.”

It has also been said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,
bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavejjanasya tarhyacyuta satsamāgamaḥ
satsaṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sadgatau parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.51.53)

“He Acyuta! O Infallible one! The jīvas are wandering in samsāra, the cycle of repeated birth and death, from beginningless time. When the time for their release from that cycle is approaching, then they attain the association of sādhus. At the very moment that the jīva acquires sat-saṅga, his intelligence becomes firmly attached to You, the supreme shelter and controller of all causes and activities.”

satam prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj joṣaṇādaśvapavarga vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25)

“In the association of saintly persons My kathā (topics spoken by Me or about Me) are the cause of genuine knowledge of My valiant deeds, and they are dearly pleasing to the heart and to the ears. By serving this kathā the fruit of release from ignorance occurs very quickly, first of all in the form of śraddhā, then rati, and in the end the awakening of prema-bhakti.”

When one is freed from material existence, it is very necessary to cultivate bhakti to attain Bhagavān. It has been said in the śāstra such as Upaniṣads that it is only unalloyed bhagavad-bhakti that carries the jīvas close to Bhagavān, and brings about an audience with Him, and eternal engagement in His sevā. Bhagavān is only controlled by bhakti.

bhaktir evainam̐ nayati bhaktir evainam̐ darśayati
bhakti vaśaḥ puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasī
(Māthara śruti vacan quoted in Mādhva-bhāṣya
on Vedānta-sūtra 3.3.53)

Bhakti āham̐ ekayā grāhyaṁ (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.23). Such statements are evidence of this. However this bhakti is also not attainable without sat-saṅga. When one cultivates bhakti in the association of devotees, first sādhana-bhakti is awakened, then bhāva-bhakti and in the end prema-bhakti. When the jīva attains prema-bhakti his life becomes successful. After being completely released from māyā, he attains pañcama puruṣārtha (the fifth objective of human life) in the form of Kṛṣṇa prema.

There are two types of jīvas who are liberated from māyā. Nitya-mukta (eternally liberated) jīvas are those who have never been in the bondage of māyā. Baddha-mukta jīvas are those who were first bound in māyā and who then became liberated by sādhana and bhajana. There are also two types of nitya-mukta jīvas: aiśvarya-gata-nitya-mukta jīva and mādhyurya-gata nitya-mukta jīva. The aiśvarya-gata nitya-mukta jīvas such as Garuḍa are the associates of Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha and they are the particles of the effulgent rays emanating from the Mūla-Saṅkarṣaṇa situated in Paravyoma. Madhyurya-gata nitya-mukta jīvas are the associates of Goloka Vṛndāvananātha Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and they are manifest from Baladeva in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

There are three types of baddha-mukta jīvas, namely brahmajyoti-gata, aiśvarya-gata and mādhyurya-gata. Those jīvas who perform sādhana with the objective of attaining the oneness of jīva and Brahman attain complete destruction in brahma-sāyujya (entering into the brahma-jyoti). Those whose sādhana is based on fondness for opulence attain sālōkya (residence on the same planet) with the parikāras of Vaikuṅṭha. And those whose sādhana is imbued with the love of sweetness, after being released from māyā taste the rasa of happiness derived from prema-sevā in dhāmas such as Nitya-Vṛndāvana.

It is necessary to know one special siddhānta, and that is that mādhyurya-rasa has two aspects, namely mādhyurya and audārya. Where mādhyurya predominates, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is gorgeously manifest. Where audārya predominates, the form of Śrī

Gaurāṅga reigns with splendour, radiant with the sentiments and bodily lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. In Mūla Vṛndāvana there are two compartments: Kṛṣṇa-pīṭha and Gaura-pīṭha. In Kṛṣṇa-pīṭha, Kṛṣṇa's gaṇa (attendants) are nitya-siddha and nitya-mukta parśadas who have attained audārya-bhāva predominated by mādhyurya. In Gaura-pīṭha the nitya-siddha and nitya-mukta parikāras experience mādhyurya predominated by audārya.

Some associates are, by the disposition of their svarūpa, present in both pīṭhas simultaneously. Others are present in one svarūpa in one pīṭha, but not present in the other. Those who worship Gaura exclusively at the time of sādhana, render service only in Gaura-pīṭha at the time of perfection. Those who worship Kṛṣṇa exclusively at the time of sādhana render service in Kṛṣṇa pīṭha at the time of perfection. And those who worship both svarūpas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Gaura at the time of sādhana, accept two bodies at the time of perfection and are present in both pīṭhas simultaneously. This is the supreme mystery of the acintya-bhedābheda (inconceivable difference and non-difference) of Gaura and Kṛṣṇa.

i) The ideology of inconceivable difference and non-difference

Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva is the inconceivable relationship of simultaneous difference and non-difference existing between (a) the inconceivable and unlimitedly powerful para-tattva, (b) His energy and (c) the aggregate of substances which are transformations of the energy of the para-tattva. This principle has been called acintya (inconceivable) because it is accessible only by apauruṣeya śabda (transcendental sound). It is inaccessible to logic, arguments and the jīva's insignificant thinking capacity, although we can know it if we accept the statements of the śāstra through guru-paramparā. The human intellect and power of comprehension cannot conceive of the condition of being simultaneously and equally both different and non-different. Nevertheless, we certainly have to accept this tattva as factual and eternal because śāstra has described it in that way. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu expounded this teaching of acintya-bhedābheda-tattva to Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya in Śrī Purī Dhāma, to the kevalādvaita-vādī Śrī Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, and especially when he instructed Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī in Kāśī.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has also established this acintya-bhedābheda-tattva in his Bṛhad-bhāgavatamṛta (2.2.186) and Vaiṣṇava-toṣanī, and so have Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in Laghu-bhāgavatamṛta, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in ±aṭ-sandarbhā and Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in Govinda-bhāṣya and Bhāṣya-pīṭhaka. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has specifically established acintya-bhedābheda-tattva in his treatise Sarva-saṁvādinī, on the foundation of evidence from Vedānta-sūtra, the Upaniṣads and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. On the basis of the verse vadanti tat tattva vidadḥ in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.11), he has proved that the advaya-jñāna para-tattva is devoid of three types of differences: svagat-bheda, differences within itself; sajātīya-bheda, differences from others in the same category; and vijātīya bheda, differences from others in different categories. In this regard he has written,

ekam eva paramam tattvam svābhāvīkācintyaśaktiyā sarvadaiva-svarūpa-tadrūpa-vaibhava-jīva-pradhāna-rūpeṇa caturddhāvatiṣṭhate, sūryāntara maṇḍalasthita teja iva, maṇḍala, tad vahirgata tad rasmi, tat praticchavirūpeṇa

“Parama-tattva is one. He is adorned with his natural, inconceivable energy by which He eternally exists in full splendour in four aspects, namely (1) svarūpa; (2) tad-rūpa-vaibhava; (3) jīva; and (4) pradhāna. To some degree we can use the following four examples to illustrate these four aspects of para-tattva: the effulgence situated in the interior of the sun planet, the sun globe itself, the rays emanating from the sun, and its remote reflected image.”

The svarūpa of the para-tattva is only His sac-cid-ānanda vighraha. His tad-rūpa-vaibhava is His transcendental dhāma, nāma, associates, and collective paraphernalia in His dealings. There are innumerable jīvas, who are classified as nitya-mukta or nitya-baddha. The word ‘pradhāna’ refers to the unmanifest material nature and the whole gross and subtle inert creation arising from it. Now that the oneness of the eternal parama-tattva in four manifestations has been established, a question can be raised. How can the parama-tattva accommodate activities which are eternally opposed to each? The answer is that the intelligence of the jīva is distinctly limited; thus it is impossible for him to understand bhagavat-tattva—except of by the mercy of the acintya-śakti of parameśvara.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has not classified jīva and prakṛti as tattva. Rather, by establishing them as śakti, he has established the non-duality of the para-tattva. He has accepted the para-tattva endowed with potency as Parabrahman. If one considers the para-tattva to be devoid of potency or attributes, the pūrṇatā or completeness of the para-tattva who is complete in six opulences and omnipotent is lost. Brahman is the Supreme Truth in whom lies the integral potency to be great and also to make others great. Since the sac-cid-ānanda para-tattva is one without a second, his śakti is also (a) aghaṭana-ghaṭana-pañiyasī, capable of making the impossible possible; (b) composed of sac-cid-ānanda; and (c) one without a second. This one para-śakti is manifest in three forms—samvit, sandhinī and hlādinī. On account of the activities of this śakti, Brahman is eternally established as saviśeṣa, possessed of form and attributes. The śakti of Brahman exists in two ways. When the potencies of Bhagavān are situated within the vighraha of Śrī Bhagavān and as one with it, then they are manifest as potency alone without shape. When they are manifest in the form of the adhiṣṭātrī or presiding deity of the śakti, they appear as the parikāras of Bhagavān, and render all of their varieties of service; then they are called personified.

In Gauḍīya philosophy, śakti and śaktimān together are accepted as the one undivided, non-dual para-tattva. Only in Gauḍīya philosophy is the word ‘acintya’ used to define the truth or the divinity of His śakti, which is beyond our material sense perception. We do not see this mentioned anywhere else. Ācārya Śaṅkara has referred to Parabrahman as acintya in his explanation of ‘Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma’, and Śrīdhara Svāmī has also used the word acintya in his commentary on Śrī Viṣṇu-

purāṇa. However, there is some speciality in Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's consideration of the word 'acintya'. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has pointed out that the word acintya means 'śabda mūlaka śrutārthāpatti jñāna gocara', that which can be known through the statements of śāstra received in guru-paramparā. We have explained this previously. It is impossible for śakti and śaktimān to be either absolutely different or absolutely non-different from each other. In the Vedas we find śruti-mantras indicating difference and others indicating non-difference; both types of mantra are evident. It is the acintya-śakti of the one para-tattva which achieves the compatibility of the simultaneous difference and non-difference. This is also impossible to understand by human intelligence, without taking shelter of the evidence of śāstra as it is received in paramparā. Therefore Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has accepted this acintya-bhedābheda-tattva, difference and non-difference which can only be comprehended with the help of śāstra, and would remain inconceivable without it.

Others, such as Paurāṇikas, Śaivas and Bhāskarācārya, have also accepted bheda-bheda, but their bheda-bheda is based on logic, and is therefore refutable and inconsistent. There is also some bheda practically and theoretically in the kevalādvaita-vāda of the māyāvādīs. However, the testing stone of scriptural evidence shows that it is false to accept the non-existence of māyā on the pretext of the indescribable real-and-unreal advaita-vāda logic. Therefore kevalādvaita-vāda is imaginary and contrary to śāstra. Bheda-vāda is also accepted in the doctrines of Gautama, Kanāda, Jaiminī, Kapila and Pātañjalī, but it is not in agreement with Vedānta.

Natural bheda-bheda or dvaitādvaita is accepted in the doctrine of Nimbārka, but it is also incomplete. Śrī Rāmānuja's viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda accepts the difference between śakti and śaktimān, so Śrī Rāmānuja can be called another type of dvaita-vādī. In the dvaita-vāda of Madhvācārya, because of the acceptance of extreme bheda there is an eternal difference between the dependent tattvas and the independent tattva, īśvara. In this philosophy, five types of bheda are eternal, real and beginningless; namely the bheda between (1) jīva and īśvara; (2) jīva and jīva; (3) īśvara and jaḍa (inert matter); (4) jīva and jaḍa; and (5) jaḍa and jaḍa. Although this is the case, the sac-cid-ānanda eternal vigraha (Nartaka Gopāla) is accepted in the doctrine of Madhva Ācārya. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has accepted the Madhva Sampradāya because the sac-cid-ānanda vigraha is the fundamental foundation stone of this acintya-bheda-bheda.

There are some technical differences between the philosophical opinions expounded by previous vaiṣṇava ācāryas because of some incompleteness in them. The sampradāyas are different simply because of these technical philosophical differences. By the power of His omniscience Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is directly the para-tattva, has compensated for the deficiencies in all these doctrines and thus completed them. He has bestowed His mercy on the world by giving the thoroughly pure, scientific and realised conception of acintya bheda-bheda, correcting and completing Śrī Madhva's ideology of sac-cid-ānanda vigraha, Śrī

Rāmānuja Ācārya's śakti-siddhānta, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī's śuddhādvaita siddhānta and tadīya sarvasvatra, and the dvaitādvaita siddhānta of Nimbārka.

When we assess the statements from all limbs of the Vedas, we find that one eternal Truth is to be known. This sanātana-tattva is that the world is real; it is not a false substance imagined out of ignorance. It has arisen from the unimpeded will of parameśvara. It is not manufactured by the jīva. To attribute reality to something false is called 'vivarta', illusion. Although the world is perishable, it is real. It has arisen from the glance (meaning simply by the will) of īśvara, the possessor of inconceivable potency. There is no place for 'vivarta' in this. Parameśvara's māyā called aparā-śakti, the inferior potency, has created the inert material world full of moving and stationary entities in accordance with the will of parameśvara. The principle of acintya-bhedābheda is applicable to the whole universe. Although the universe is real, it is not an eternal reality. This very fact is proved by the śruti-mantra, 'nityo nityānām' (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.23, Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad 6.10). Exclusive bheda, exclusive abheda-vāda, śuddhādvaita and viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda are all localized or contextual perspectives found in some areas of the śruti-śāstra, which are simultaneously opposed to the perspectives found in other areas. But the doctrine of acintya-bhedābheda is the most perfect and complete conclusion of all limbs of the Vedas. This very opinion is the abode of the self-evident faith of the jīva and it is also consonant with the reasoning of śāstra. The jīva's eternal relationship is not with this inert world. The creation is not a transformation of vastu, the Parabrahman Himself; it is a transformation of the śakti of Parabrahman. This gross and subtle universe is merely for the jīva's endeavor to enjoy sense gratification.

j) Deliberation on śuddha-bhakti

We have already mentioned that, according to the śāstras, bhakti is the only means of attaining Bhagavān. Only bhakti can bring the jīvas into the presence of Bhagavān. Only bhakti can cause the jīvas to have darśana of Bhagavān. Only bhakti can control Bhagavān, the parama puruṣa. We shall now make a critical assessment of the intrinsic nature of bhakti.

In determining the definition of bhakti, Maharṣi Śāṅḍilya has stated, sā parānuraktir īśvare

“Transcendental attachment to īśvara is bhakti.” (Śāṅḍilya-sūtra 1.2)

In Nārada-pañcarātra,

sarvopādhi vinirmuktaṁ tat paratvena nirmalam

hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate

(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva-vibhāga 1.10, Nārada-pañcarātra)

“Bhakti is service rendered by aprākṛta (transcendental) senses to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the aprākṛta senses. Such bhakti in which all endeavours are undertaken for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa is free from obstructions arising from the nature of the body and mind. It is also pure; that is, it is not covered by the creepers of karma, reward-seeking activity, or jñāna, knowledge in pursuit of impersonal liberation.”

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam the definition of bhakti has been given in this way:

mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau
lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.11-12)

“I am the Supreme Enjoyer, the Lord who dwells within the hearts of all. When there is unmotivated and unimpeded natural affection for Me, and when simply on hearing My qualities the progress of the mind flows towards Me, like an unbroken stream of oil, just as the Ganges flows without interruption towards the ocean, that is called nirguṇa bhakti-yoga, transcendental devotional service.”

Although such definitions of bhakti have been given in the śāstras, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s dear associate Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has combined all previous definitions of bhakti, and has given in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu a beautiful, new definition which is the life and treasured aspiration of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanaṁ bhaktir uttamā
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva-vibhāga 1.9)

“Uttamā-bhakti is that anuśīlana (cultivation)—service to Kṛṣṇa—which is performed by all endeavours of the body, mind and words and also by bhāva (moods) exclusively for Kṛṣṇa, which is uninterrupted like a flow of oil, which is free from all types of desires other than the desire to please Kṛṣṇa, and which is not covered by karma and jñāna etc.”

In this sūtra both the svarūpa (intrinsic) and taṭasthā (marginal) characteristics of bhakti have been lucidly evaluated. The purport of the words ‘uttamā-bhakti’ is śuddha-bhakti (pure bhakti). Karma-miśra-bhakti and jñāna-miśra-bhakti are not pure. The goal of karma-miśra-bhakti is material enjoyment and the goal of jñāna-miśra-bhakti is liberation. Only bhakti which is devoid of the desires for material enjoyment and liberation is called uttamā-bhakti, and this bhakti is the means to attain prema for Bhagavān.

What is this bhakti? We shall describe its intrinsic characteristic (svarūpa-lakṣaṇa) and its marginal characteristics (taṭasthā-lakṣaṇa). Its intrinsic characteristic (svarūpa-lakṣaṇa) is the full endeavour by body, mind and speech for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and the cultivation of loving sentiments (bhāva). Endeavours and bhāvas—these two always remain active for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. The svarūpa-lakṣaṇa, the intrinsic nature of bhakti, arises when the special function of Bhagavān’s svarūpa-śakti (the function of the essence of hlādinī and saṁvit) appears in the svarūpa of the jīva by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His bhakta.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described two taṭasthā-lakṣaṇa (marginal characteristics) of bhakti. The first is that it is completely devoid of all desires other than the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa. All types of desire other than the desire to advance one’s devotion are opposed to bhakti, and they are included within anyābhilāṣitā. The second marginal

characteristic is that it is not covered by jñāna, karma and so on. Knowledge of the oneness of jīva and Brahman; the smārta's daily and occasional performances of prescribed duties for the sake of material self interest; and activities filled with indifference to Bhagavān such as prāyāścitta, knowledge of atheistic sāṅkhya philosophy, dry renunciation and so—these are all opposed to bhakti. Only when the cultivation of activities for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa is free from these two types of opposing marginal characteristics is it called śuddha-bhakti.

Sādhana-bhakti is the practice of śuddha-bhakti which is performed under the guidance of śuddha-bhaktas after one has received initiation and instructions from a sad-guru. In Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described six special characteristics of bhakti:

kleśaghnī śubhadā mokṣa-laghutākṛt sudurlabhā

sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā

(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva-vibhāga 1.12)

”Śuddha-bhakti has six characteristics: (1) kleśaghnī, it destroys all types of distress; (2) śubhadā, it bestows complete auspiciousness; (3) mokṣa-laghutākṛtā, it makes the attainment of liberation insignificant; (4) sudurlabhā, it is extremely rare; (5) sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā, it is the embodiment of condensed bliss; (6) śrī kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī, it attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

In the very beginning of sādhanā-bhakti, the first two symptoms, kleśaghnī and śubhadā, become visible. Mokṣa-laghutākṛtā and sudurlabhā are also present in the stage of bhāva, and in the stage of sādhyā (prema), sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā and śrī kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī are observed in addition to the previously mentioned four symptoms. There are different types of kleśa (suffering), such as sin, the desire to sin, the seed of sin (pāpa-bīja), pious activity, the desire to perform pious activity and the seed of pious activity (puṇya-bīja). The first symptom of bhakti is the destruction of all these. The second symptom of bhakti, called śubhadā, includes the following four qualities: bhakti makes one pleasing to all, affectionate towards all living entities and the abode of all good qualities; and it also bestows pure happiness. These first two symptoms are both observed at the time of sādhanā-bhakti.

The third characteristic is that bhakti renders even the attainment of liberation insignificant or worthless. The quality of sudurlabhā, being extremely rarely attained, is the fourth characteristic of śuddha-bhakti; although one may be detached from sense gratification and may have practised the limbs of bhakti for a long time, still one may not attain bhakti. These second two characteristics are the symptoms of bhāva-bhakti.

The fifth characteristic is that bhakti is the embodiment of condensed blissfulness, and the sixth is that it attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These last two characteristics are the symptoms of sādhyā or prema-bhakti. The first four symptoms are also observed in the stage of sādhyā-bhakti. The first stage of sādhyā-bhakti is called bhāva-bhakti and its highest stage is called prema.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described the definition of sādhanā-bhakti in this way.

kṛti-sādhyā bhavet sādhyā-bhāvā sā sādhanābhidhā
nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya prākṛtyaṁ hṛdi sādhyatā
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva-vibhāga 2.2)

“Sādhana-bhakti is the performance by the present senses of that śuddha-bhakti by which bhāva is achieved. The final goal of sādhyā-bhāva is nitya-siddha. That is to say, it is an eternally established phenomenon, but sādhanā is the means by which it is manifested within the heart.”

This sādhanā-bhakti is of two types, vaidhī and rāgānugā. In vaidhī-bhakti, śravaṇa, kīrtana and the limbs of bhakti are not undertaken out of a natural affection and inclination; rather they are performed only because of the discipline of the śāstra, out of fear of scriptural laws. In the śāstras the duties which have been prescribed for the jīva are called vidhi. When the jīva’s engagement in bhakti is out of fear of this scriptural discipline it is called vaidhī-bhakti.

yatra rāgānavāptatvāt pravṛttir upajāyate
śāsanenaiva śāstrasya sā vaidhī bhaktir ucyate
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.6)

“That bhakti in which the cause of engagement is not lobha (greed), but rather the command of scriptures, is called vaidhī-bhakti.”

There are many aṅgas of sādhanā-bhakti, but in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu sixty-four aṅgas have been described in particular, beginning with guru-padāśraya, accepting dīkṣā-śikṣā, guru-sevā and so on. Those sixty-four aṅgas are naturally included within the nine prominent aṅgas mentioned in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. These nine aṅgas known as navadhā-bhakti are as follows:

śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23)

Some attain perfection even by practising just one aṅga from among these nine processes. Some also practise many aṅgas at once. In fact the chief result of all the aṅgas of sādhanā-bhakti is one—rati for the transcendental Reality.

The second type of sādhanā-bhakti is rāgānugā-bhakti. This is the method of bhakti performed by sādhakas who practise the aṅgas of bhakti such as śravaṇa and kīrtana out of greed to attain the service of their desired Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rāga is the quality of natural, excessive absorption in the object of one’s devotion and attachment to it. That kṛṣṇa-bhakti which is endowed with such rāga is called rāgātmikā-bhakti and that bhakti which follows in the wake of such rāgātmikā-bhakti is called rāgānugā-bhakti.

In conclusion, vaidhī-bhakti is that type of bhakti which is subordinate to the regulative principles and disciplines of śāstra, and rāgānugā-bhakti is that bhakti which follows in the wake of rāgātmikā-bhakti. Neither of these two are sādhyā-bhakti; they are both only sādhanā-bhakti. Rāgātmikā-bhakti, the bhakti of the residents of Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā, is sādhyā-bhakti. The bhakti of these nitya-parikāras is rāgātmikā-bhakti. When one reads or hears about their devotion,

and lobha (greed) arises in the heart to attain such a type of bhakti, one becomes an eligible candidate for rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti. Eligibility for vaidhī-bhakti comes from śāstrīya-śraddhā (faith in scriptures); eligibility for rāgānugā-bhakti is attained by lobha for the loving sentiments of the rāgātmika bhaktas.

tat-tad bhāvādi-mādhurye śrute dhīryadapekṣate
nātra śāstraṁ na yuktiṁ ca tal lobhotpatti lakṣaṇam
kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāśya preṣṭhaṁ nija samīhitam
tat tat kathā-rataś cāśau kuryād vāśam vraje sadā
sevā sādha-ka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad bhāva lipsunā kāryā vraja lokānusārataḥ
(Bhakti rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva-vibhāga,
sādhana bhakti, 292, 294, 295)

“The cause of rāgānugā-bhakti is lobha (greed) for the bhāvas of the rāgātmika devotees. This greed is not aroused by the arguments of śāstra. Rather, pure greed (viśuddha lobha) is the aspiration to be immersed in the moods of the rāgātmika devotees, and it arises on hearing about the sweetness of their various bhāvas. Those who have developed a greed to attain the bhāvas of the dear associates of Kṛṣṇa of their own choice will always reside in Vraja in their sādha-ka forms, and by their siddha forms they will render service following Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s most dear Vraja associates and those who are under their guidance. Thus they will hear, chant and remember the narrations of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. This is the method of practice (sādhana-praṇālī) for rāgānugā-bhakti in connection with Vraja.”

Rāgānugā-bhakti is of two types, namely kāmānugā and sambandhānugā. Kāmānugā is also of two types—sambhoga-icchāmayī and tat-tad-bhāva-icchāmayī. Sambhoga-icchāmayī-bhakti refers to keli, the amorous meeting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with His lovers. Tat-tad-bhāva-icchāmayī-bhakti is only the desire for the sweetness of the moods of the gopis of Vraja.

At this point we must understand that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has bestowed on the jīvas of this world that specific bhakti which arouses the desire to be rāgānugā. Only bhajana through rāga-mārga is approved by Him. If, by extreme good fortune, the jīvas attain the association of the dear associates of Śrī Gaurasundara, then lobha for the mood of the residents of Vraja must certainly be evoked. However, the sādha-ka should take shelter of vaidhī-bhakti until such association is available. One will certainly enter into rāga-mārga by taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The duty of those very fortunate sādha-kas who have attained lobha for the bhāvas of the residents of Vraja is to perform the sādhana of rāgānugā-bhakti. When such greed is evoked there no longer remains any taste for subjects other than Bhagavān. The release from pāpa, puṇya, karma, akarma, vikarma, dry knowledge and renunciation is acquired and ruci (taste) in the practice of bhakti arises. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has written in relation to the gradual development of bhakti:
ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo ’tha bhajana-kriyā

tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ preṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva, 4.25,26)

This verse describes advancement on the vaidhī-mārga, in which there is first śraddhā (faith), then the association of sādhus and then the eradication of anarthas (unwanted desires) through engagement in bhajana. Immediately after that comes niṣṭhā, ruci, āsakti and bhāva. In this process, bhāva remains the sādhya (final goal) for a very long time.

With the appearance of lobha, however, anarthas are vanquished very easily, because of a lack of greed for other subjects; even bhāva arises simultaneously along with this lobha. In rāga-mārga it is only necessary to drive away pretentiousness and duplicity. If these are not driven far away, then a dire agitation of the mind will occur and anarthas will grow. In such a condition, debased attachment will be mistaken for viśuddha-rāga, and in the end the association of sense objects becomes very strong and that attachment becomes the cause of the jīva's downfall.

The sādhakas who are under the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu take shelter of rāgānugā-bhakti by the medium of śuddha-lobha. After taking shelter of the lotus feet of a sad-guru in vaidhī-bhakti, such sādhakas serve śrī-vigraha (the Deity). Then, associating with Vaiṣṇavas, showing respect to the bhakti-śāstras, residing in the places of the līlā of Bhagavān and continually chanting Śrī Bhagavān nāma, they render service to Kṛṣṇa by the path of bhāva, completely following the moods of the residents of Vraja from the core of their heart in siddha-deha. From among them, sādhakas who are extremely fortunate, who have remained in the association of sādhus, and who have taken shelter of hari-nāma which is the best of the aṅgas of bhakti, are appointed to the service of Bhagavān. When taking shelter of hari-nāma, there is no consideration of regulations such as dīkṣā and puraścaryā. Remaining far from nāmābhāsa and nāmāparādha, gradually they come to the point of continuous chanting. While chanting incessantly and meditating on the merciful glance of śrī vigraha, they constantly consider the śrī nāma and rūpa. Gradually they begin to review the aggregate of the qualities of śrī vigraha, His form and nāma all at once. Immediately thereafter they begin to reflect on the guṇa, rūpa and nāma with meditation on the līlā in connection with the svarūpa. Slowly, slowly rasa also appears. The appearance of rasa is the ultimate attainment. One special point worthy of attention is that the appearance of rasa occurs within a very short time if from the very beginning of the cultivation of nāma the sādhaka anxiously longs for rasa while awaiting it intently.

k) Love for Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate objective of the jīva

The parama-puruṣārtha (supreme goal of life) is prema. This is the tattva for which Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, and Mahādeva Śiva, the god of gods, are searching. It is also the most sought-after object for the liberated jīvas. It is the one

and only object of attainment of all sādhanā, and it is the ultimate necessity delineated by the entire body of śāstra. In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, in the section known as Śrī-Rūpa-śikṣā, Jagadguru Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says,

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja
mālī haiya kare sei bīja āropana
śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana
prema phala pāki paḍe mālī āsvādaya
latā avalambi mālī kalpavṛkṣa pāya
tāhān sei kalpavṛkṣera karaye secana
sukhe premaphala-rasa kare āsvādana
ei ta parama phala-parama puruṣārtha
jānra āge tṛṇatulya cāri puruṣārtha
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 19)

“While wandering on and on in this material existence some fortunate jīva, by the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa, attains the bhakti-latā-bīja, the seed of the creeper of devotion, in the form of Kṛṣṇa sevā-vāsanā (the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa). He waters that seed with the water of śravaṇa and kīrtana. At first it begins to sprout, and then it becomes a creeper. It pierces the coverings of the universe, and one after another traverses the virajā, Brahmāloka and the paravyoma. Finally, it climbs up to the desire-tree of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet in Goloka Vṛndāvana. There it bears fruits in the form of prema. When the fruit becomes ripe, it falls here in this world, and the gardener tastes it. Taking support from that bhakti-latā he takes shelter of the desire-tree of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet and always tastes the rasa of the prema fruit. This very prema is the crest-jewel of all achievements for the jīva.” If prema is compared to the sun, then bhāva is likened to a ray of that prema. In describing the definition of bhāva, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says,

śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā prema-suryāṁśa sāmyabhāk
rucibhiś cittamāṣṛṇya kṛdāsau bhāva ucyate
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Pūrva vibhāga 3.1)

“That bhakti which is the embodiment of śuddha-sattva, which is compared to a ray of the sun of prema, and which melts the heart by various tastes is called bhāva.” When śuddha-sattva in the form of bhāva becomes mature, it evokes very thick mamatā (feelings of possessiveness) for the object of one’s service and makes the heart extremely soft (snigdha). Such bhāva, imbued with very thick mamatā, is called prema.

samyak maṣṇitasvānto mamatvātiśayāṅkitah
bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā budhaiḥ premā nigadyate
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Prema-lahari 1)

This can be expressed as follows. The saṁvit function of the self-manifesting svarūpa-śakti is called śuddha-sattva. Bhāva imbued with very thick mamatā for Kṛṣṇa is the special function of the hlādinī aspect of cit-śakti. That supremely

astonishing bhāva which arises when these two mix together in the heart of the pure jīva is called viśuddha-prema.

When bhāva or rati, which is the sprout (aṅkura) of prema, arises in the heart of the sādḥaka, its intrinsic nature produces the following collection of anubhāvas (subsequent conditions): kṣanti, tolerance; avyārtha kālatva, the habit of never wasting even a single moment of time; virakti, detachment from worldly enjoyment; māna-sunyatā, absence of pride; āśā-bandha, the hope that Kṛṣṇa will bestow his mercy; samutkaṅṭhā, intense longing to attain one's goal; nāma gane sadā ruci, continuous taste in nāma-kīrtana; tad-guṇākhyāna-āsakti, attachment for the narrations of Kṛṣṇa's līlā; and tad-vasati-sthale-prīti, affection for the places of His pastimes.

This rati is the first stage of prema. The highly intensified stage of rati is called prema. This rati is evoked in two ways: (1) by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His bhaktas; and (2) by absorption in sādḥana. In this world rati is generally born of absorption in sādḥana. The appearance of rati born purely from mercy is rarely seen.

The rati arising from absorption in sādḥana is also of two types: (1) rati arising from vaidhī-bhakti sādḥana; and (2) rati arising from rāgānugā-bhakti sādḥana. The rati arising from vaidhī-sādḥana-bhakti is full of reverence for the opulence of Bhagavān and leads to Vaikuṅṭha. In contrast, the rati arising from rāgānugā-sādḥana-bhakti is full of the love of Vraja and bestows the service of Kṛṣṇa.

Rāgātmikā-bhakti exists splendidly and forever in the associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. The devotion which follows in the wake of this bhakti is called rāgānugā. Rāgānugā-bhakti has two types of sādḥana: external and internal. External sādḥana consists of practices such as hearing and chanting which the sādḥaka performs by the body in which he is presently situated. The service performed throughout the eight periods of the day to the Divine Couple Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala in Vraja is called internal manasī-sevā.

Prīti is merely joyful in the first stage when it has not yet blossomed. At that time it is called rati. This kind of rati is attained in śānta-rasa. When rati arises, everything except for Kṛṣṇa sevā seems to be insignificant. When excessive mamatā appears in such joyful rati, then it is called prema, and this prema is realised in dāsyā-rasa. That love in which there is a higher sense of faith and confidence, and which becomes even thicker despite the presence of causes for its destruction is called praṇaya. This praṇaya is observed in sakhya-rasa. When this praṇaya assumes a surprising and unusual state, it is called māna. That intense prema which makes the heart extremely molten is called sneha.

When sneha is imbued with intense longing it is known as rāga. With the appearance of rāga, even a moment of separation is intolerable, and at that time even distress seems to be happiness. When rāga always experiences its object (the most beloved Kṛṣṇa) in ever-fresh ways then it is called anurāga. In this stage there is visphūrṭi (the condition of being bereft of external knowledge) at the time of separation. When that anurāga becomes more condensed and an incomparably

astonishing condition like madness (unmāda) is attained, then it is called mahābhāva. When mahābhāva arises, during the time of meeting even the blinking of one's eyelids produces intolerable separation, and even a kalpa (4,320,000,000 years) passes away like a moment. In anurāga and mahābhāva the combination of all transformations such as sāttvika and vyabhicārī is observed in a highly blazing (mahādīpta) condition.

This very mahābhāva is the intrinsic nature of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Each and every limb and part of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is made of mahābhāva. This is the teaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and it has been described by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in a condensed form.

ārādhya bhagavān vrajeśa tanayas tad dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid upāsana vrajavadhū vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pumārtho mahān
śrī caitanya mahāprabhor matam idam tatrādarō na paraḥ

“Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my only worship-ful object. In the same way that He is worshipful, so is His transcendental abode Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma. The mood in which the young brides of Vraja have worshipped Him is the most excellent of all. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam alone is the immaculate śabda-pramāṇa, (scriptural evidence) and prema is the supreme objective of life. This is the conception of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and there is nothing beyond it.”

Thus ends the Fifth Part of The Life and Teachings of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī by
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

n

Sixth Part

Protecting the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya
Jagadguru Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
Gosvāmī Ṭhākura preached extensively and spread Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's
śuddha-bhakti or prema-bhakti throughout the world in a very short time. It is by his
great endeavour that the sound of the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is
resonating in every part of the world today. After his entrance into nitya-līlā, the
current of the preaching of śuddha-bhakti became very much diminished. At that
time the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and especially the Sārasvata
Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, were being attacked from all sides. Some so-called Sārasvata
Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas were playing their own tambourines and singing in their own
different tunes. In this dire situation, our Śrīla Gurudeva Aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad
Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who was Jagadguru Śrīla Sarasvatī
Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's internal associate, accepted sannyāsa by Śrīla
Prabhupāda's inspiration and tirelessly endeavoured until the end of his life to
preach and spread his Gurudeva's innerheart's desire. We are presenting herein a

thorough survey of how he made the current of bhakti flow once again throughout the world and how he protected the sampradāya.

Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma was a profoundly philosophical ācārya, adorned with immense genius and knowledge of tattva. He preached śuddha-bhakti in two ways. Firstly, he used scriptural evidence to establish the ideas practised and preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Secondly, he refuted apasiddhāntic opinions such as the anti-devotional kevalādvaita-vāda or māyāvāda (which is a hidden form of Buddhism), sahajiyā, smārta and jāti Vaiṣṇavism, all of which are opposed to śuddha-bhakti. It was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the Seventh Gosvāmī, who reinitiated the flow of bhakti when it had dwindled and almost disappeared. He preached essential aspects of vaiṣṇava philosophy such as bhagavat-tattva, śakti-tattva, bhakti-tattva, māyā-tattva and acintya-bhedābheda-tattva in the modern world. Śrīla Gurudeva often declared that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Daśa-mūla-tattva is the singular essence of all the literatures of the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya, including those of the Six Gosvāmīs. He accepted Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the immaculate scriptural evidence and the natural commentary on Brahma-sūtra. Furthermore, he said that the nāma-prema dharma practised and propagated by Śrīman Mahāprabhu is the actual subject matter of Vedānta. In order to establish these three points he expressed the desire to publish a commentary indicating the glories of śrī harināma, based on the word explanations of Vedānta-sūtra. He also wanted to publish a commentary based on the bhaktivedānta (devotional conclusions) of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He collected various written information and began to prepare an outline of these two compositions, but he could not complete it because of his sudden entrance into nitya-līlā. Sometimes it was also seen that he had an acute desire to publish commentaries on all the prominent Upaniṣads according to the viewpoints of his sampradāya.

a) Refutation of kevalādvaita-vāda

Śrīla Gurudeva was clearly of the opinion that śuddha-bhakti cannot possibly be propagated as long as the covered Buddhist doctrine of māyāvāda is current in the world. He refuted māyāvāda philosophy with powerful scriptural evidence and incontrovertible arguments, which we shall now summarise.

i) The kevalādvaita-vāda propounded by Śaṅkara Ācārya is not Vedic. According to the doctrine of kevalādvaita-vāda, Brahman, the Supreme Truth, is nirviśeṣa (devoid of attributes), nirguṇa (without qualities) and niḥśakti (powerless or having no potencies); and it is only illusion which causes the appearance of jīva (the individual living entity) and jagat (the world of inert matter) in Brahman. However the question arises, "To whom does this illusion belong?" Some māyāvādīs say that this is the illusion of the jīva in the grip of ignorance; others that the illusion of jīva and jagat arises when Brahman is afflicted by ignorance.

Śrīla Gurudeva would say that both of these opinions are mistaken and are against the Vedas. To consider that Brahman is afflicted by ignorance is thoroughly illogical and opposed to śāstra. According to the Upaniṣads, brahma satyaṁ jñānam

anantaṁ brahma: “Brahman is truth, Brahman is knowledge and Brahman is without end.” Ekam eva dvitīyam: “There is no substance other than Brahman.” Brahman is described as the embodiment of knowledge, bliss and truth in all three phases of time; it is also unlimited and one without a second. How, then, can Brahman be afflicted by ignorance? From where did this second substance called ignorance come? That ignorance is false, for it is neither real or unreal. So how can it touch Brahman? It is impossible.

One may assert that it is the jīva which is illusioned, but that is also quite illogical. What is the origin of this independent jīva-tattva which is separate from Brahman? If the answer is that Brahman was afflicted by ignorance and became jīva, then it is Brahman, and not the jīva, which was the original shelter of avidyā.

ii) Some māyāvādīs say, “Brahman is not covered by māyā. Rather, īśvara is the reflection of Brahman in avidyā and jīva is the semblance of Brahman in avidyā. Both the reflection (īśvara) and the semblance (jīva) are false because they have no tran-scendental existence. We can give the example of mistaking a rope for a snake or an oyster shell for silver. The rope’s apparent condition of being a snake is false, but people make such a mistake because a rope and a snake are somewhat similar in appearance. Similarly, the illusion of jīva and jagat can arise in Brahman, but it is quite false.”

Śrīla Gurudeva pointed out that this māyāvāda doctrine is also opposed to śāstra and logic. The māyāvādīs say that avidyā is not real. It is neither existent nor non-existent, and it is indescribable. (This is actually equivalent to saying that avidyā is false, because it has no spiritual or worldly existence). Now, it is totally impossible for avidyā of this nature to cover Brahman. Furthermore, if (as they say) Brahman as undivided, formless, unlimited and without attributes, how can it be reflected in that avidyā? Then Brahman would have to be divided, defined, possessed of attributes and limited, and avidyā would have to be a separate, individual and real substance. There is another objection. In the example of mistaking a rope for a snake there are three separate and real substances, namely the snake, the rope and the observer. Now, what is this example supposed to tell us about Brahman, jīva and avidyā (māyā)? Does the example imply that they are also real and distinct from each other? If the māyāvādīs accept such a proposal, the golden palace of māyāvāda collapses through self-destruction.

Another point is that throughout the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and Vedānta-sūtra, it is stated that Brahman is the Creator of the universe, omniscient, omnipotent, and the unequalled and unsurpassed Supreme Truth. For example:

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti
yat prayanty abīśamviśanti, tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma
(Taittirīya Upaniṣad, bhṛgu 1 anu)

janmādyasya yataḥ
(Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.2)

om̐ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ

divīva cakṣurātataṃ

(Ṛg Veda)

sa aikṣata

(Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.1.1)

If the māyāvādīs' opinion were to be accepted, then these statements of śruti would become false, incoherent ravings.

iii) Some māyāvādīs put forward the following theory: "Avidyā is composed of the three guṇas, namely sattva, raja, and tama; and that avidyā is dependent on Brahman. In other words, avidyā has accepted shelter of Brahman. This avidyā is known as māyā and has the characteristics of the throwing potency (vikṣepa-śakti), which throws the living into illusion, and the covering potency (āvarnana-śakti), which covers over the living entity's knowledge. Jīva is then the reflection of the conscious Brahman in the āvarnana-śakti and īśvara is the reflection of the conscious Brahman in the vikṣepa-śakti."

However, the testing stone of scriptural consideration and reasoning shows that this doctrine is not genuine. The concept that avidyā exists within the pure and self-manifest brahma-vastu is completely contradictory, for then avidyā would be perpetually self-supporting and would continually afflict Brahman with designations, because there is no one there to destroy it. This is thoroughly absurd. In the following mantras of the Upaniṣads, Brahman has been accepted as asamorddhva-para-tattva (the unequalled and unsurpassed Supreme Truth), the witness of the jīvas, the regulator of the results of karma, and the inconceivable, omnipotent entity by whose mercy one can easily be released from māyā. How, then, can Brahman be subject to the attack of māyā?

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṃ vṛkṣaṃ pariṣaṣvajāte

tayoranyaḥ pippalaṃ svadvatyan aśnānnanyo bhīcākaśīti

(Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 4.6, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.1,

Ṛg Veda 1.164.21)

"Paramātmā and the jīvātmā reside like two birds on the branch of a pīpal tree which represents the gross and subtle body. The jīva is tasting the pīpal fruits according to his fruitive activities whereas Paramātmā does not taste the fruit. He is situated as a witness."

This shows that jīvātmā and Paramātmā are not one.

māyādhyakṣena prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.10)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "My prakṛti (māyā-śakti) is the creator of this world of moving and non-moving entities." Thus the world is also real and true; but it is by nature mutable and de-structible. This statement establishes that Kṛṣṇa is śaktimān (possessed of potency).

na tasya kāryaṃ karanaṅca vidyate na tat samaś cābhyadikaś ca dṛśyate

parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

(Śvetāsvatāra Upaniṣad 6.8)

“Parabrahman Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the unequalled and unsurpassed truth (asamorddhva-tattva). None of His senses such as hands and feet are material in nature. Since He has no material senses, He performs all activities by transcendental senses. It has been heard that parameśvara has various types of divine potency, among which three—namely jñāna-śakti, bala-śakti and kriya-śakti—are prominent. These three are also known as cit-śakti, sandhinī-śakti and hlādinī-śakti respectively.”

yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas tasyaiṣātmā vivṛṇute tanu svām
(Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.23)

nityo nityānaṁ cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmām

(Kaṭha Upaniṣad 5.13 and Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad 6.13)

“He is the one eternal Being amongst all other eternal Beings, and the one conscious Being amongst all the other conscious beings. One amongst the many, He fulfills the desires of all.”

Māyāvādīs say that Brahman is exclusively jñāna and is neither the knower (jñānī) nor one who possesses knowledge (jñānavān). This being the case, one cannot possibly imagine any relationship of avidyā in Brahman. Ignorance may be seen for some time in a knower or in one who possesses knowledge, but ajñāna (nescience) is never evident in a substance constituted exclusively of knowledge (jñāna). This is completely impossible because jñāna and ajñāna have mutually contradictory characteristics.

iv) Some māyāvādīs say, “Avidyā exists from time without beginning, and does not need the support of a second substance. It is due to this avidyā that the dualities of existence such as jīva and so on are imagined to exist in Brahman.” But then, who is imagining this out of ignorance? If no second entity is imagining this, then the natural dharma of the avidyā must be to imagine dualities such as the jīva and so on. However, the svabhāvika-dharma (natural intrinsic nature), such as the power of fire to burn, is inherent and can never be given up. This means that the natural dharma of avidyā exists eternally and there is no possibility of becoming free from illusion. This is against the doctrine of kevalādvaita-vāda and therefore invalidates it.

v) We have already discussed the māyāvādīs’ theory of reflection in Section (ii) above. They say that īśvara is the reflection of Brahman in avidyā and that the reflection is false, because it has no transcendental existence. This example is contrary to śāstra and to reason. We see the reflection of the sun in water only because the reflection, the sun and the water all have their own specific characteristics. However, the māyāvādīs say that the invisible Brahman, which is formless and without limbs or attributes, is reflected in a shapeless avidyā to produce a reflection which is not real, nor is it unreal, nor is it both real and unreal at the same time. This is impossible.

Here is another objection to the māyāvādīs’ imaginative theory of reflection. The reflection of an observer’s face in a mirror is separate from the observer himself.

However, if the forms of jīva and īśvara are supposed to be reflections, then which separate observer will observe this reflection? Furthermore, if Brahman and jīva are seen as reflections, then they must be inanimate (jaḍa) like the visible materials of the universe. (Philosophers generally maintain that all the visible materials of the universe are inert.) Therefore this idea is also completely illogical.

vi) The substance of a reflection is inert, and it has no capacity either to imagine its designation or to destroy it. According to the theory of reflection, then, the reflected jīva is also unable to destroy the avidyā of its false designation by genuine knowledge, the realisation of “I am Brahman.” Now, according to the māyāvādīs, mokṣa (liberation) is the destruction of the nescience which has taken shelter of the pure Brahman. But if the jīva cannot even destroy its own avidyā, how can it possibly destroy the avidyā of Brahman? It is impossible.

vii) Māyāvādīs say that the jīva is a reflection of Brahman, but when we consider the essential differences between an object of vision and its reflection, we see that this theory is quite inconsistent. We have different direct perceptions because the resting places of an object of vision and its reflection are separate and individual. The sun and the sun’s reflection each have their own separate and individual resting places. The sun resides in the sky, while its reflection resides in water. This enables us to have different direct perceptions. An object of vision and a reflection can never be one under any circumstances, because they are fundamentally different from each other. For instance, the reflection is inverted and the limbs appear on the “wrong” side. Besides, a reflection is invariably unconscious, even if that which is reflected is conscious. Since the māyāvādīs say that Brahman is like the original and jīva is the reflection, the theory of reflection actually teaches us that jīva and Brahman can never be one.

viii) According to the above doctrine, jīva is consciousness reflected in the covering potency (āvaraṇa-śakti) of avidyā, while īśvara is consciousness reflected in the throwing potency (vikṣepa-śakti). In other words, the jīva and īśvara are situated in their separate individual designations. This opposes the statement of Bṛhad-aranyaka Upaniṣad (3.7) that īśvara is present in the hearts of all living beings. Suppose we accept that īśvara is consciousness reflected in māyā, that māyā is not the śakti of Brahman, and that īśvara is without potencies (in other words, impotent). Then all the opulences of īśvara mentioned in śāstra would be invalidated. Everywhere in śāstra such as the Upaniṣads and Vedānta, īśvara has been described as the repository of six opulences.

aiśvaryasya samagrasya vīryasya yaśasaḥ śrīyaḥ
jñāna vairāgyayoś caiva ṣaṅṅām bhaga itiṅganā
(Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.74)

“One who is complete in the six opulences of wealth, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation is known as Bhagavān.”

This mantra must be invalid if the māyāvāda doctrine is accepted.

ix) Māyāvādīs say, “Brahman is exclusively composed of jñāna, and its relationship with avidyā is simply false conjecture.” If it is so, then the above-mentioned doctrine can never be consistent. This is because jīva and īśvara are supposed to arise by reflection of Brahman in avidyā. But they say that avidyā has no reality whatever. In that case, it cannot reflect jīva and īśvara, any more than a real function can be achieved by the imaginary water of a mirage. Therefore the reflection in the form of jīva and īśvara can never arise by the imaginary connection of avidyā with Brahman.

x) Śrī Śaṅkara Ācāryaji states, brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ: “Brahman is true, the phenomenal world is false and the jīva is Brahman.” To support this opinion, he has accepted four contextual statements from the Vedas, and has very cunningly tried to describe them as the chief statements (mahāvākya) of the Vedas. Actually, it is omkāra which has been stated to be the mahāvākya throughout the Vedas; these four statements are never described as such anywhere. Besides, their meaning completely opposes Śaṅkara Ācāryaji’s conclusions, so he has crushed his own doctrine to powder by introducing them.

The four contextual statements are as follows: ahaṁ brahmā ‘smi, prajñānaṁ brahma, sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma and tat tvam asi śvetaketo. The real purport of these four statements is that the relationship between the jīva and Brahman is that of the servant and the served, and is of the nature of prema. In ‘tat tvam asi śvetaketo’ it has been distinctly stated, śvetaketo! tvaṁ tasya asi: “Śvetaketo! You are His.” In sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma, the word ‘idaṁ’ shows that this world is Brahman in the sense that it is manifested by the potency of Brahman which at once makes all His wishes come true (satyaśaṅkalpa-śakti). This is because śakti and śaktimān have been considered non-different in literatures such as the Brahma-sūtra.

Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya quotes the statement, sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma, and at the same time tries to establish that the world is false. But if everything of this world is Brahman, then how did the whole universe become false like a dream? In that case, the Vedas, Upaniṣads, and other śāstras which Śaṅkara Ācārya quotes must all be false because they have manifested in this world. By the same logic, Śaṅkara Ācārya and his whole guru-paramparā must also be false. In any case, what was the necessity for Śaṅkara Ācārya to instruct the false people of a false world? Thus the whole conclusion of the māyāvādīs is an imaginative concoction opposed to scripture.

xi) Followers of Śaṅkara have described the world as mithyā (false). However, if they are asked “Is your ‘universal falseness’ true or false?” they can neither reply, “Falseness is true,” nor, “Falseness is false.” If they say that falseness is true, then the truth of ‘the falsehood of the world’ presents itself as another truth which exists in the presence of the reality or truth of Brahman. However, this invalidates advaita-vāda, because Brahman is the only truth without a second. Besides, if there is another truth, then the Vedic mantra, ekam eva advitīyaṁ brahma is lost.

Conversely, if Śaṅkara’s followers accept that the falsehood of the world is false, then they affirm the truth of the world, and so directly oppose the teaching, brahma

satyam jagat mithyā. It is quite clear that the māyāvādīs' conclusion that jagat is mithyā is neither Vedic nor logical.

b) The protection of his sampradāya

The followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accept the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya as the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya on the strength of the guru paramparā. This is mentioned by the prominent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Kavi-karṇapūra and Gauḍīya Vedānta Ācārya Śrīla Baladeva Vidyabhūṣaṇa. Thus Gauḍīyas consider themselves to be a branch of the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya. Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas such as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrīla Viṣṇanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Jagadguru Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī have also accepted this opinion. However these days some people are trying to establish their own concocted opinion that the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya is an independent sampradāya of which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the original founder.

Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda (who became opposed to his own guru Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva) has tried, together with some other personalities, to prove that the sampradāya of Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not included in the Śrī Brahma-Madhva Sampradāya. They state instead that it is included in the impersonalist advaita-vādi sampradāya. Originally, Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Mahodaya accepted in his Ācārya Śrī Madhva that Mahāprabhu's sampradāya is included in the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya. However, afterwards he considered that his own previous evidence was not authentic. In his later book Acintya-bhedābheda, he tried unsuccessfully to prove that the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya is an independent sampradāya. All the arguments of the contending party are evident in his book.

Paramārādhyā Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārājajī, who is like a lion for the elephant-like heretics, wrote his own essay entitled Acintya-bhedābheda, in which he uses scriptural evidence and incontrovertible reasoning to refute all the arguments in Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda's book. This essay has been published in several issues of the Bengali Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā and the Hindi Śrī Bhagavata Patrikā. We shall now briefly mention some of those arguments and evidence.

i) The Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya is in the line of Śrī Madhva

First we shall mention two currently prominent arguments which Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda has put forward.

Objection 1: "According to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta and Śrī Caitanya-candroḍaya-nāṭaka, Śrī Caitanyadeva accepted sannyāsa veśa from a kevalādvaita-vāda sannyāsī, Śrī Keśava Bhārati, and He has referred to himself as a māyāvāda sannyāsī. In addition to this, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who was the guru of the māyāvāda sannyāsīs of Kāśī, also described him as a sannyāsī of the māyāvādī sampradāya. keśava bhāratīra śiṣya tahe tumi dhanya

sāmpradāyī sannyāsī tumi raha ei grāme

“Sarvabhauma Bhatta Ācārya has also accepted this:

bhāratī sampradāya ei hayena madhyama

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 6.72)”

Refutation: This argument of the opposing party is totally unfounded, for the following reasons.

After a jīva has realised that material existence in the chain of birth and death is useless and distressful, he can recognise that the attainment of service to the lotus feet of Bhagavān is the supreme auspiciousness. Therefore one who is extremely fortunate accepts dīkṣā and śikṣā from a person who is thoroughly versed in śabda-brahma, who is adorned with realisation of Bhagavān and who has no attachment for sense gratification. That jīva then enters into paramārtha, the acquisition of his highest spiritual objective. In Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s nara-līlā (human-like pastimes), He went to Gayā Dhāma on the pretext of making offerings (pitṛ-śrāddha) for the benefit of his deceased father. There He offered Himself fully at the lotus feet of Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda, who was the bud of the desire-tree of prema. He was also a supremely rasika and bhāvuka disciple of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, the root of that desire-tree of prema.

prabhu bale gayā yātrā saphala āmāra

yatra kṣane dekhilān caraṇa tomāra

(Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata, Ādi 17.50)

saṁsāra-samudra haite uddhāraha more

eī āmi deha samarpilān tomāre

kṛṣṇa-pāda-padmera amṛta-rasa pāna

āmāre karāo tumi ei cāhi dāna

āra dine nibhṛte īśvara purī sthāne

mantra dīkṣā cāhilena madhura-vacane

(Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata, Ādi 17.54)

tabe tāna sthāne śikṣā-guru nārāyaṇa

karilena daśākṣara mantrera grahaṇa

(Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata, Ādi 17.107)

According to this section of Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata, Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita performed the pastime of surrendering his heart at the feet of Śrī Īśvara Purī. He prayed to him for the dīkṣā-mantra in order to get release from material existence and to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa prema, and Śrī Purīpāda very affectionately gave him dīkṣā by the ten-syllable mantra.

Sometime afterwards, Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita accepted sannyāsa veśa in Kaṭva from the advaita-vāda sannyāsī Śrī Keśava Bhārati. After accepting sannyāsa he set off for Vṛndāvana, saturated in the madness of prema. When he arrived in Rāḍha-deśa, absorbed in prema, he chanted a verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

etām sa āsthāya parātmaniṣṭhām

adhyāsītām pūrvatamair mahārṣibhiḥ

ahaṁ tariṣyāmi durantapāraṁ
tamo mukundāṅghri niṣevayaiva
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.23.57)

“I shall easily cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by rendering service to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This was approved by the great ṛṣis of ancient times, who were fixed in firm devotion to Mukunda.”

prabhu kahe sādhu ei bhikṣuka-vacana
mukunda sevanavrata kaila nirdhāraṇa
parātmāniṣṭhāmātra veśa-dhāraṇa
mukunda-sevāya haya saṁsāra-tāraṇa
seī veśa kaila ebe vṛndāvana giyā
kṛṣṇa-niṣevana kari' nibhṛte vasiyā
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 3.7.9)

After accepting sannyāsa, Mahāprabhu said, “This promise of the tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu is supremely true because the vow to serve the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is fixed by accepting this veśa. Having renounced dedication to material sense objects, the purpose of accepting this veśa is parātmā-niṣṭha, single-pointed devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I have accepted this veśa, so now I will go to Vṛndavana and serve the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.”

In the above verse, the phrase ‘parātmāniṣṭhāmātra veśa-dhāraṇa’ is particularly worthy of consideration. It indicates that Mahāprabhu only accepted veśa from Śrī Keśava Bhārati because it was favourable for the cultivation of bhagavad-bhakti. He did not accept any mantra or any doctrines of advaita-vāda. On the contrary, throughout His life He refuted kevalādvaita-vāda and the conclusions of māyāvāda. It is clear that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted only Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda as his genuine guru, because it is Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda’s śuddha-bhakti that He accepted, preached and propagated throughout His life. Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda and Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda are included within the Madhva Sampradāya, so Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his followers, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, are also included in the Madhva Sampradāya. Moreover, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s con-temporary pastime associates Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Brahmānanda Purī and others are also followers of the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya because they are all in the line of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu always respected the disciples of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī as his gurus, and He treated the disciples of Śrī Īśvara Purī as Godbrothers. Guru ājñā haya avicāranīya: “One should not deliberate on the validity of the order of the guru.” According to this conclusion, he accepted Govinda as his servant. It is proved by this that Īśvara Purī was actually his Guru.

Another point is as follows. Śrī Madhva Ācārya accepted sannyāsa from Acyutaprekṣa, who was also a kevalādvaita-vādī. Suppose we accept the opinion of the opposing party, just for the sake of argument. In that case, if Mahāprabhu is a kevalādvaita-vādī sannyāsī, then by the same logic so is Madhva Ācārya as well.

Where, then, is the obstacle to Śrīman Mahāprabhuji's being in the Madhva Sampradāya, if both of them accepted the advaita-vādī Śankara's sampradāya? There is a second point here. Śrī Madhva Ācārya accepted eka-daṇḍa (a single staff of renunciation) according to the customs and regulations of the Śankara sampradāya. It would be logically consistent to say that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu followed his ideal example, and also accepted eka-daṇḍa sannyāsa from a sannyāsī of the Śankara sampradāya, namely Śrī Keśava Bhārati. From this it seems clear that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the line of Śrī Madhva Ācārya.

Objection 2: "Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Ācārya Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has not mentioned any sort of relationship between the Gauḍīya Sampradāya and the Madhva Sampradāya any-where in his literatures such as Tattva-sandarbhā or Sarva-saṁvādinī. This idea has been introduced by Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who was initiated into the Madhva Sampradāya in the early part of his life and only later entered the Gauḍīya Sampradāya. For this reason he had a natural inclination toward the Madhva Sampradāya. Therefore Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has forced the issue out of prejudice, and has mentioned the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya in his commentary on Tattva-sandarbhā. In his Prameya Ratnāvalī he delineated a guru-paramparā which includes Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His sampradāya within the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya."

Refutation: These accusations are completely groundless and imaginative fabrications. Actually Jīva Gosvāmī acknowledged the tattva-vāda of Śrī Madhva Ācārya, who is the guru of tattva-vāda, and took support from it when he compiled his Tattva-sandarbhā, Bhagavata-sandarbhā and so on. Not only this, but he also cited in his literatures the fundamental pramāṇa or substantiating verses of tattva-vāda such as, 'vādanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam' (S.B. 1.2.11).

Of the four vaiṣṇava sampradāya-ācāryas, only Madhva Ācārya is celebrated by the name of tattva-vādī. Since Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has personally established tattva-vāda, the Vaiṣṇavas of the Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya are therefore tattva-vādīs. In the third śloka of the maṅgalācaraṇa (auspicious invocation) of Tattva-sandarbhā, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī glorifies his guru Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his paramguru Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī as 'tattvajñāpakau' (the ācāryas who proclaim tattva). Similarly, the crown of the dynasty of vaiṣṇava ācāryas, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, has also designated Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana as 'tattvavid-uttamau' (the highest of all knowers of tattva) in his commentary on this same śloka.

It is clear from this that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has offered respect to Śrī Madhva Ācārya, and that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has followed Jīva Gosvāmī in honouring Madhva Ācārya. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, has not shown any prejudice towards Madhva Ācārya. On the contrary, if we compare Jīva Gosvāmī with Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, we find that Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has glorified the two Gosvāmīs Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana more than Jīva Gosvāmī has. There is no doubt whatever that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is situated in the āmnāya-dhārā (the transcendental current of conclusive evidence) or the paramaparā of Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda Prabhus and of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda who immediately follows them.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is in the ninth generation from Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu according to bhāgavat-paramparā, and in the eighth generation according to pañcarātrika-paramparā. Historians have accepted his pañcarātrika-paramparā as follows: Śrī Nityānanda, Śrī Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, Hṛdaya Caitanya, Syāmānanda Prabhu, Rasikānanda Prabhu, Nayanānanda Prabhu and Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara. Śrī Baladeva Prabhu is the initiated disciple of this Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara and is also the most prominent śikṣā disciple of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī.

Historians have declared that in no branch of the Madhva guru-paramparā were there any brilliant scholars of such widespread fame as Baladeva. In fact, at that time no one in any sampradāya anywhere in India could equal Śrī Baladeva's knowledge in logic, in Vedānta and in śāstra such as the Purāṇas and itihāsas. It is true that he stayed for some days in the most prominent maṭha established by Śrī Madhva Ācārya in Uḍḍipī, and that he studied the Śrī Madhva commentary on Vedānta; however, the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya was more of an influence upon him than was the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya.

It is natural for scholarly personalities, who are worshipful throughout the worlds and who are the preceptors of great precepts, to follow in the lotus-footsteps of the vaiṣṇava ācāryas of the very influential Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya. Śrī Baladeva thoroughly studied the commentary of Madhva, and also made a meticulous study of the commentaries of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Bhāskara Ācārya, Nimbārka, Vallabha and others. It is illogical to say that he is included in each one of those sampradāyas because he had studied those groups of philosophers.

Śrī Baladeva Prabhu has described historical events and quoted the conclusions of the previous Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas in many literatures, such as his Govinda-bhāṣya, Siddhānta-ratnam, Prameya-ratnāvalī and his commentary on Tattva-sandharba. He has enabled all the philosophers of the world to understand that the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya is included within the Madhva Sampradāya. In this regard all the scholars of the world, eastern and western, ancient and modern, have bowed their heads in reverence, and have unanimously accepted the siddhānta and opinions of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was sent by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī to protect the honour of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya in the Galatā Gaddī in Jaipura. There he defeated the objecting paṇḍitas of the Śrī sampradāya in scriptural debate. There are no second opinions about this. Does this not show that Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura personally inspired his śikṣā disciple Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa to prove that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the line of Madhva Ācārya? Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura sent his dīkṣā disciple Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva Sarvabhauma with Śrī Baladeva to help him. If Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura had not been so aged and weak at that time, he certainly would have gone to Jaipur in person to take part in this debate about the sampradāya. He would also have established the very same conclusion as Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. There is no sound evidence to prove that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was first an ācārya or disciple in the Madhva

Sampradāya. There may be hearsay and imaginative rumours, but no one has given any substantial proof.

The opposition party has alleged that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has not mentioned anywhere in his literature that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the line of the Madhva Sampradāya. This accusation is born of ignorance and is absurd in the extreme. In numerous places in Tattva-sandarbha, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī mentions his being in the line of Madhva. Moreover, while composing \pm aṭ-sandarbha, he accepted the guidance of ācāryas in the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya such as Vijayadhvaḥ, Śrī Brahmaṇyatīrtha and Vyāsātīrtha, and collected many scriptural proofs from their literatures. It is true that he has also quoted the statements of Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya and Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda in many places, but he has not considered these ācāryas to be previous ācāryas of the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has even accepted the statements of sages of different philosophical schools such as Kapila and Pātañjali when they are favourable to bhakti. Nonetheless, that does not mean that he is within those sampradāyas. One may establish a specific point of siddhānta which supports the views of an ācārya of a particular sampradāya. That does not mean that one is then a member of that sampradāya. Only when the siddhānta is established by taking all the opinions of the ācārya's disciple and grand-disciple is the person establishing that conclusion considered to be in that sampradāya, otherwise not.

A part of the writings of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in regard to this topic is quoted here:
atra ca sva-darśitārtha-viśeṣa-prāmāṇyāyaiva. na tu śrīmad-bhāgavata-vākya-
prāmāṇyāya pramāṇāni śruti-purāṇādi vacanām yathā dṛṣṭam evodāharaṇī yāni.
kvacit svayamadrṣṭākarāṇi ca tattva-vāda-gurunāmādhunikānām śrīmac
chaṅkarācārya śiṣyatām labhvā'pi śrī bhagavatapakṣapatena tato vicchidya, pracura-
pracārīta vaiṣṇavatama- viśeṣānām dakṣiṇādi-deśavikhyāta-'śiṣyopaśiṣya-bhūta'-
'vijayadhvaḥ'- 'jayatīrtha'- 'brahmaṇyatīrtha'-vyāsātīrthādi-veda-vedārtha
vidvadvarānām 'śrī-madhvācārya-caraṇām' bhāgavata tātparya-bhārata-tātparya,
brahma-sūtra-bhāṣyādibhyaḥ saṅgrhītāni. taiścairamuktaṁ bhārata tātparye (2.1.8)
śāstrāntarāṇi sañjānan vedāntasya prasādāt
deśe deśe tathā granthān dṛṣṭvā caiva pṛthag vidhān
yathā sa bhagavān vyāsaḥ sākṣān nārāyaṇaḥ prabhuḥ
jagāda bhāratādyeṣu tathā vakṣye tadikṣayā iti
(Tattva-sandarbha 97-98)

tatra taduddhatā śrutiś catur veda śikhādīyā, purāṇāṇi ca gāruḍādīnām samprati
sarvatrā-pracaradrūpamāṁśādīkām; samhitā ca mahāsam hitādīkā; taṅtraṅca taṅtra
bhāgavataṁ brahma tarkadīkamiti jñeyam.

“I (Jīva Gosvāmī) have quoted various authentic scriptural statements as evidence in the \pm aṭ-sandarbha literature. This is to establish the authenticity of my own interpretation or opinion which I have expressed in this literature; it is not to try to prove that the statements or conclusions of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are authentic. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, like the Vedas, is self-evident (svataḥ-pramāṇa) and therefore

does not depend upon any second evidence. In this literature I have quoted various statements of evidence from the original texts of śruti-smṛti, the Purāṇas and so on, exactly as I have personally seen them in those literatures. Besides that, my predecessor ācāryas from among the guru-varga of tattva-vāda have cited evidence which I, the author of Tattva-sandarbha (tattva-vādī), have also quoted although there are several of the original texts which I have not seen personally. These tattva-vādī predecessor gurus, such as Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, have accepted the śiṣyatva of Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya by accepting sannyāsa from ācāryas in the Śaṅkara sampradāya. Nonetheless, because of their strong inclination to Bhagavān, they remained completely aloof from the doctrines of Śaṅkara. They broadly promulgated vaiṣṇava doctrines of ācāryas which contain various specialities from the conclusions of the ācāryas. The disciples and grand-disciples of the renowned Ānanda-tīrtha, Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇyatīrtha and Vyāsātīrtha have collected evidence from literatures such as Bhāgavata-tātparya, Bhārata-tātparya and Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya composed by Śrīman Madhva Ācārya, the best of those who know the Vedas and their inner purport.

“In his Bhārata-tātparya, Śrīman Madhva Ācārya has also written, ‘By the grace of Vedānta and the Upaniṣads, I will establish the siddhānta, since I know the confidential mystery of various other śāstras, I have investigated varieties of literature from different countries and I have honour for the conclusions expressed in texts such as the Mahābhārata written by the direct manifestation of Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa.’

“I (Jīva Gosvāmī) am composing Tattva-sandarbha following the above statements of Śrīman Madhva Ācārya. I am accepting statements quoted by him and those in his line, without having personally seen the originals of many of the texts. This includes tantra such as saṁhitā and mahāsaṁhitā, tantra-bhāgavata and brahmatarka.”

This evidence clearly proves that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has accepted only Śrīman Madhva Ācārya as the predecessor ācārya of the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya. Nowhere does Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī such a clear statement in regard to Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya or Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda. Specifically he has not accepted all the conclusions of the disciples and grand-disciples of any sampradāya ācārya other than Madhva. Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya had many disciples and grand-disciples, and Śrīdhara Svami also had many disciples, but Jīva Gosvāmī has not written down their names anywhere. What to speak of mentioning Nimbārka Ācārya’s name, we cannot find even a scent of his existence anywhere in Jīva Gosvāmī’s literature.

Objection 3: “Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has described the glories of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in a verse in the maṅgalācaraṇa of his Sarva-saṁvādinī. Praying to Mahāprabhu, he has described Him as ‘sva-sampradāya-sahasrādhidaiva’ (the eternal presiding Deity of thousands upon thousands of sampradāyas founded by Him). How, then, can He be included within any other sampradāya? He is personally the founder of the independent Gauḍīya Sampradāya.”

Refutation: This objection is quite ridiculous. The complete verse from the maṅgalācaraṇa of Sarva-saṁvādinī reads as follows:

durlabha-prema-pīyūṣagaṅgā-pravāha-sahasraṁ sva-sampradāya-sahasrādhidaivam
śrī kṛṣṇa caitanyadeva nāmānaṁ śrī bhagavāntam

Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda and other antagonists have interpreted 'sva-sampradāya-sahasrādhidaivam' in this verse to mean 'the presiding Deity of thousands of sampradāyas which Śrīman Mahāprabhu has personally inaugurated.' The salient point here is that Śrīman Mahāprabhu has not founded thousands of sampradāyas; He has established only one sampradāya, which is called the Śrī Madhva-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. Therefore their interpretation is completely mistaken.

Śrī Rasikamohana Vidyābhūṣaṇa Mahodaya has interpreted 'svasampradāya-sahasrādhidaiva' in another way as 'the supreme presiding Deity of his own sampradāya.' This meaning is quite appropriate, and all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have accepted it. One may say, "Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Svayaṁ Bhagavān, and is directly Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra. Is it necessary for Svayaṁ Bhagavān Gauracandra to consider any other personality as His guru, and to accept dīkṣā and śikṣā from him?" The answer is, "Yes, it is necessary, when Śrī Bhagavān performs his nara-lilā (human-like pastimes)." Śrī Rāmacandra has exhibited the pastime of accepting dīkṣā and śikṣā from Vaśiṣṭha Muni, Śrī Kṛṣṇa from Sāndīpani Muni, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu from Īśvara Purīpāda. These activities do not effect their bhagavattā (Godhood) even in the slightest way. Svayaṁ Bhagavān performs such pastimes in order to give instructions to the world.

There is no question of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's tattva being lost if He is included in any sampradāya. It is not the personal duty of Bhagavān to found a sampradāya; His devotees do that. History shows that in all cases only Viṣṇu śakti or the servants of Viṣṇu have ever founded a sampradāya. Granted, Śrī Bhagavān is the original, eternal personality of sanātana-dharma which He Himself establishes, as is evident in scriptural statements such as 'dharman tu sākṣāt bhagavat pranītam' (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.3.19) and 'dharmo jagannāthaḥ sākṣāt nārāyaṇāḥ' (Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva 348.54). Still the statement 'akartā caiva kartā ca karyam kāraṇam eva ca' (Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva 348.7) shows that Bhagavān has no direct agency in the business of establishing a sampradāya. Rather, He accomplishes this task through his empowered representatives. If it were not so, then instead of the Brahma, Rudra, Sanaka and Śrī Sampradāyas, there would be the Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa and Nārāyaṇa Sampradāyas.

Objection 4: "While touring in South India, Śrīman Mahāprabhu went to Uḍḍipī. There he had a discussion with a tattva-vādī ācārya, who was in Śrī Madhva Ācārya's sampradāya. Mahāprabhu refuted the views of the tattva-vādīs, so He can never be included in that sampradāya."

Refutation: Śrīman Mahāprabhujī did not directly refute Madhva Ācārya's ideas about śuddha-bhakti. Rather, He refuted the distorted opinions of the tattva-vādīs

which had entered into the Madhva Sampradāya in the course of time. Readers can understand this simply by looking in this section of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 9. 276.277)

prabhu kahe — karmī, jñānī, dui bhaktihīna
tomara sampradāye dekhi sei dui cihna
sabe eka guṇa dekhi tomāra sampradāye
satya-vigraha īśvare karaha niścaye

“Karmīs and jñānīs are devoid of devotion, and it is seen that both of these are respected in your sampradāya. Still, in your sampradāya there is one very great quality—the form of Bhagavān or śrī vigraha has been accepted. Not only this, but śrī vigraha has also been accepted as Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is worshipped in your sampradāya in the form of Nṛtya-Gopāla.”

This proves that Śrīman Mahāprabhu refuted distortions which later entered the Madhva Sampradāya in the course of time. He did not refute Madhva Ācārya’s opinions on śuddha-bhakti or the fundamental conclusions that he expressed in his commentaries. On the contrary, we have already shown that literatures such as Tattva-sandarbha and Sarva-saṁvādinī have been based on the conclusions of Śrī Madhva and his disciples and grand-disciples. In this connection we should point out that a difference of sampradāya does not generally arise from some minor difference of opinion. Rather, the difference between sampradāya comes from the differences of theory about the principal object of worship.

Objection 5: “Madhva Ācārya’s doctrine includes the following specific points: (a) liberation is only attained by brāhmaṇas who have taken birth in a brāhmaṇa dynasty; (b) among devotees, the devas are prominent; (c) only Brahma merges with Viṣṇu; (d) Lakṣmījī is in the category of jīva; and (e) the gopīs are in the category of the āpsarās of Svarga. However, in the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas in his line these conceptions of Madhva are contradictory to the conclusions of śuddha-bhakti. Under such circumstances, why would Śrī Caitanyadeva accept the Madhva Sampradāya? That being the case, how can the ācāryas following in his Gauḍīya Sampradāya be included within the Madhva Sampradāya?”

Refutation: When Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was in Galtā Gaddī in Jaipur, he used śastric evidence and incontrovertible logic to break to pieces all these arguments of the opposition party. He quoted the conclusions of Madhva Ācārya as well as those of his disciples and grand-disciples such as Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇyatīrtha and Vyāsātīrtha. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has refuted all such accusations in his literary compositions such as his commentary on Tattva-sandarbha, his Govinda-bhāṣya, Siddhānta-ratnam and Prameya-ratnāvalī, and he has proved that the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya is included within the Madhva Sampradāya.

In the Galtā Gaddī assembly, Baladeva proved that Madhva considered Lakṣmījī to be the dear consort of Viṣṇu. Madhva taught that her spiritual body is composed of knowledge and pleasure and, like Viṣṇu, she is also completely free from defects,

such as the misery of being confined in the womb prior to birth. She is all-pervading, and she also enjoys in unlimited forms along with the unlimited forms of Viṣṇu. When the avatāra of Viṣṇu descends, Lakṣmījī also descends and remains splendidly present in the form of that avatara's dear beloved consort.

Like Viṣṇu, Lakṣmiji also has various names and forms (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Bhāṣya 3.5, written by Śrī Madhva). Further-more, Lakṣmīdevī is Viṣṇu's subservient embodiment of all knowledge. She is also superior to and more qualified than Caturmukha Brahmā. She exists radiantly on the limbs of Bhagavān in the form of various types of ornaments, and it is she who manifests all facilities for the pleasure of Viṣṇu, such as his bed, seat, throne, ornaments and so on. (This is from Śrī Madhva Ācārya's explanation of Brahma-sūtra 4.2.1, supported by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.13) Nowhere has Śrī Madhva described Śrī Lakṣmījī to be in the category of jīva.

Similarly, the ideas that only brāhmaṇas attain liberation, that the devas are the prominent devotees, that only Brahmā merges with Viṣṇu and so on, are all foreign to the Madhva Sampradāya. On this subject Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained in his The Teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has accepted the Madhva Sampradāya.

“Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, having determined the authenticity of one whose speech is true, has also ascertained the authenticity of the Purāṇas. Ultimately he has proved that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the crest jewel of all evidence. He has shown that the same characteristic qualities which qualify Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the topmost evidence also apply to the scriptures certified by Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Sukadeva and after them in sequence Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇyatīrtha, Vyāsātīrtha, and their tattva-guru Śrīman Madhva Ācārya. These scriptures, then, are also in the category of authentic literatures.

“It is clearly evident from this that the Brahma-Madhva Sampradāya is the guru-praṇālī (system) of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Kavikarṇapura confirmed this same idea in his delineation of the guru-paramparā in his Gaura-ganoddeśa-dīpikā. The commentator of Vedānta-sūtra Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has also accepted this same succession. There is no doubt at all that those who do not accept this succession are prominent enemies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who are following in His footsteps.

“The doctrine of bhedābheda or dvaitādvaita which Nimbārka propounded is incomplete. It is in accepting the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that the vaiṣṇava world has attained the complete perfection of the doctrine of bhedābheda. The principal foundation-stone of acintya-bhedābheda is sac-cid-ānanda vigraha, and it is because Śrī Madhva Ācārya has accepted the sac-cid-ānanda vigraha that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has accepted the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya.

“There is a technical difference between the philosophical ideas which the previous Vaiṣṇava ācāryas have propagated because there some slight incompleteness in those

philosophical ideas. The difference in sampradāya is due to this technical difference. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is directly para-tattva, has shown compassion on the world and given His own thoroughly pure and realised doctrine of acintya-bhedābheda. By the power of His omniscience, He has completed and made flawless all those opinions which were suffering from some deficiency, for example, Madhva's sac-cid-ananda nitya-vigraha, Rāmānuja Ācārya's śakti-siddhānta, Viṣṇu-svamī's śuddhādvaita siddhānta and tadīya sarvasvatva and Nimbarka's nitya dvaitādvaita siddhānta." (The Teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, p. 110).

Another reason for Śrīman Mahāprabhu's acceptance of Madhva's opinion is that Madhva's doctrine distinctly refutes māyāvāda or kevalādvaita-vāda, which is opposed to bhakti-tattva in all respects. A third point is that Śrī Madhva Ācārya manifested and worshipped Nanda-nandana Nartaka-Gopāla in Uḍupī. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had darśana of the Deity, He became overwhelmed in ecstatic love and began to dance. He had not seen such a Deity anywhere else during his tour of South India. This is also powerful evidence for His being in Madhva's line.

In his Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vijaya, Śrī Guṇarāja Khān wrote the line, Nanda-nandana kṛṣṇa—mora prāṇanātha: "Nanda-nandana Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of my life" (quoted in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 15.100), and for this utterance Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sold Himself forever into the hands of Śrī Guṇaraja Khān's descendants.

Why, then, would He not sell Himself to the paramparā of those disciples and grand-disciples for whom Nanda-nandana Nartaka-Gopāla is their most worshipful Lord?

This is also specific evidence that the Gauḍīya Sampradāya is in the line of Madhva. Although there is some slight difference of opinion between Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and Śrī Madhva in regard to Brahman, jīva and jagat, this simple difference of opinion is not the cause of a difference of sampradāya. The difference between Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas has been created on the basis of a difference in upāśya-tattva (the object of worship) or on the basis of gradations of excellence between aspects of para-tattva. Even if there is some slight difference in regard to sādhya, sādhana and sādha-tattva, this is rarely considered to be the cause of a difference of sampradāya. Actually, it is the difference in realisation of para-tattva or upāśya-tattva (the worshipful Supreme Truth) which is the main cause of distinct sampradāyas. This was why Śrīman Mahāprabhu overlooked the philosophical differences with the tattva-vādīs and, focusing on the worship of para-tattva Nartaka-Gopāla, accepted Śrī Madhva Ācārya as the prominent sampradāya ācārya. Objection 6: Some persons who are ignorant of sampradāya-tattva say, "Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and Īśvara Purī cannot be sannyāsīs of the Madhva Sampradāya because they have the designation 'Purī', whereas sannyāsīs in the Madhva Sampradāya are called 'Tīrtha.' If Śrī Mādhavendra Purī is not included within the Madhva Sampradāya, then there are no grounds for claiming that Śrīman Mahāprabhu has accepted the Madhva Sampradāya."

Refutation: Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda's title 'Purī' is his sannyāsaname. Actually, he was the initiated disciple of Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, who was in the Śrī Madhva

Sampradāya. Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda later accepted sannyāsa from a sannyāsī bearing the name 'Purī,' just as Śrīman Mahāprabhu first accepted dikṣā from Śrī Īśvara Purī and later manifested the pastime of accepting sannyāsa from Śrī Keśava Bhārati. There is no rule that the dikṣā-guru and sannyāsa-guru have to be the same person. In some cases they may be, and in others not. Śrī Madhva Ācārya himself was first initiated in a Vaiṣṇava sampradāya by the Viṣṇu mantra and after that accepted sannyāsa-veśa from an advaita-vādī, Acyutaprekṣa. After some days, Śrī Madhva Ācārya influenced Acyutaprekṣa and brought him into the Vaiṣṇava conception. Even after taking sannyāsa from an advaita-vādī, Śrī Madhva Ācārya did not accept advaita-vāda. On the contrary, he powerfully refuted all the ideas of advaita-vāda and, having established tattva-vāda, he preached and spread it everywhere. The same is also seen in the life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is true that sannyāsīs in the Madhva Sampradāya are called 'Tīrtha', but 'Tīrtha' is not the title of gṛhastha-vaiṣṇavas or brahmacārīs in that sampradāya. Since Śrī Mādhavendra Purī did not have the title 'Tīrtha' before taking sannyāsa, when he accepted veśa from a sannyāsī in the advaita-sampradāya, his title had to be 'Purī.' This is not illogical.

Objection 7: Some say, "The sādhya (goal) and sādhana (practice) of the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya differ from that of the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya. Therefore the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya cannot be considered to be within the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya."

Refutation: This objection is thoroughly false, and rooted in ignorance. Madhva's doctrine acknowledges bhagavat-bhakti as the sādhana in all respects. As with Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the initial sādhana prescribed for kaniṣṭha-adhikārī sādhakas (neophyte practitioners) is offering the results of ones' fruitive activities to Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-karmārpanam). However, bhagavat-parama-prasāda sādhana (i.e śuddha-bhakti) has been established as the principal practice.

Śrī Madhva Ācārya has established bhakti as we see from his Sūtra-bhāṣya (3.3.53): bhaktir evainam nayati bhaktir evainam darśayati bhaktivaśaḥ puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasi iti maṭharaśrutaḥ. In sūtra 3.3.45 he writes, varāhe ca guru-prasādo balavānna tasmād valavattaram/ tathāpi śravanādiś ca karttavayo mokṣa-siddhaye: "The mercy of Śrī Gurudeva is more powerful than anything else for attaining the perfection of liberation in the form of service to Viṣṇu's lotus feet. Yet it is still more necessary in engagement in the limbs of sādhana-bhakti such as śravaṇa and kīrtana." In his text Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya (Defining the Purport of Mahābhārata) the position of bhakti is seen throughout: sneho bhaktir iti proktastayā muktir na cānyathā (1.105) and bhaktyaiva tuṣyati hariḥ pravanatvam eva (2.59). We have not given more evidence simply because of lack of space. In the Madhva Sampradāya, love of Bhagavān is the only sādhya. Although Śrīman Madhva Ācārya has accepted mokṣa as the goal in some places, his definition of mokṣa is, viṣṇav-āṅghri lābhaḥ mukti: "Liberation is the attainment of service to the lotus feet of Viṣṇu." Thus, the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya accepts the definition of

mukti spoken by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, muktir hitvānyathā rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ: “The jīva carries the conception of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ arising from the gross and subtle designations which are accomplished by the action of māyā. Mukti means to be released from this false identity and to be established in rendering loving service to Bhagavān in one’s pure constitutional form.” Madhva Ācārya’s mukti is not the sāyujya (merging with Brahman) spoken of by Śaṅkara. Rather, it is based on love of Bhagavān. Nowhere has he accepted sāyujya in the form of the oneness of Brahman and jīva. On the contrary, he has refuted it in every way. Madhva is well known as a bheda-vādī because he accepts the jīva and Brahman as being different both in the stage of bondage and of liberation—abhedaḥ sarva-rūpeṣu jīvabhedaḥ sadaiva hi.

Although Śrīman Madhva emphasises bheda (difference), he does not at all disregard śrutis which indicate abheda (non-difference); instead he has accepted their compatibility. In other words, we find a hint of the acceptance of acintya-bhedābheda, as Śrīla Jīva Goswami has suggested in his Sandharbha literature. According to Vedānta-sūtra, śakti śaktimator abhedaḥ: “The potency and the potent are not different.” An indication of acintya-bhedābheda is found in a statement of Brahma-tarka which Śrī Madhva supported.

viśeṣasya viśiṣṭasyāpy abhedas tadvad eva tu
sarvam ca cintya-śaktitvād yujyate parameśvare
tac chaktyaiva tu jīveṣu cid-rūpa-prakṛtāvāpi
bhedābhedaḥ tad-anyatra hy ubhayor api darśanāt
(Brahma-tarka)

Thus there is no particular difference between Madhva Ācārya and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu regarding sādhya and sādhana. Whatever slight difference is evident is only mutual vaiśiṣṭya (specific distinction).

There is a very specific similarity between the Madhva and Gauḍīya Sampradāyas. The sannyāsīs presiding over the eight maṭhas of the tattva-vādīs in Uḍḍipī perform bhajana in the mood of the gopīs under the guidance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eight beloved nāyikās (heroines) in Vraja. On this subject, Śrī Padmanābhacārī, the author of Śrī Madhva Ācārya’s biography, has written, “The monks who take charge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in rotation are so many gopīs of Vṛndāvana who moved with and loved Śrī Kṛṣṇa with an indescribable intensity of feeling, and are taking rebirths now for the privilege of worshipping Him” (Life and Teachings of Śrī Madhva Ācārya by C.M. Padmanābhacārī, Chapter XII, page 145).

Even today, the service of Yasodānandana Nṛtya-Gopāla is seen in the prominent maṭha in Uḍḍipī. Śrīla Madhva Ācārya has praised his iṣṭadeva Nartaka Gopala Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this way in the fifth verse, chapter six of his Dvādasa stotram.

devakinandana nanda-kumāra
vṛndāvanāñjana gokulacandra
kandaphalāśana sundara-rūpa
nanditagokula vanditapāda

Similarly, in the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of the gopis has been ascertained as the sādhyā in the writings of Śrīla Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and others.

In this way, by evaluating the opinions of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas from first to last, one can conclude that the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya is included within the Śrī Madhva Sampradāya and that this is consistent with reason in all respects.

Objection 8: “The Madhva Sampradāya is bheda-vādi, whereas the Gauḍīya Sampradāya is acintya-bhedābheda-vādi. Therefore there is a vast difference of opinion between them.”

Refutation: We have said previously that, although the Madhva Sampradāya accepts five kinds of bheda between Brahman, jīva and jagat, still there is a hint of acintya-bhedābheda-vāda in their teachings. The Vedic scriptures give evidence both for bheda and abheda in relation to Brahman, jīva and jagat. However, although there is both bheda and abheda, we only have experience of bheda, not of abheda. In the field of bhakti, the difference (bheda) between upāsya (the object of worship) and upāsaka (the worshipper) is the back-bone of worship, and this bheda is proved both in the stage of sādhana and siddha. Otherwise, if there were no difference between the worshipper and the object of worship, then worship would not be possible. Thus, although there may be some mutual difference between the Śrī Gauḍīya and Madhva Sampradāyas, this cannot be the cause of a difference in sampradāya. The object of worship is Bhagavān, the method of worship is bhakti and the objective is mokṣa in the form of bhagavat-sevā. Vaiṣṇavas of the four Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas hold slightly different opinions in regard to these tattvas, but we cannot say that they are fundamentally different. They are all adherents to the same religious principles.

The difference between Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas has been created only on the basis of difference in upāsya-tattva (worshipful Deity) or a difference of excellence in regard to para-tattva. Though there may even exist a difference in sādhyā, sādhana and sādha-tattva, this is rarely considered the cause of a difference between sampradāyas. Actually the difference in realisation of para-tattva and upāsya-tattva is the principal cause of differences between sampradāyas. The upāsya-tattva has been considered superior in proportion to the degree of excellence exhibited.

Śrī Murāri Gupta is one of Mahāprabhu’s internal associates and he is described in the Gauḍīya Sampradāya as an avatāra of Hanuman. Although Śrīman Mahāprabhu informed him that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa has more mādhyā (sweetness) than Bhagavān Śrī Ramacandra, Murāri Gupta was not attracted to Kṛṣṇa bhajana. His worshipful Deity was Rāma, and he went on worshipping Śrī Rāma until the very end. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very pleased to see his dedication to his worshipful Lord. Śrīvasa Paṇḍita is also one of the principal associates of Mahāprabhu. His worshipful Deity is Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, and Śrī Karnapūra has considered him to be an avatāra of Śrī Nārada. It is well known that he personally preferred the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa to Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s unnata-ujjala rasa.

Some ignorant and misguided persons say that there is a difference of opinion between Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Jīva Gosvāmī because Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has rejected Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's explanation of the parakīya-rasa of the Vraja gopīs, and has instead supported svakīya-rasa. Actually this accusation is completely unfounded and incorrect. The truth is that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī supported svakīya-vāda for the benefit of some of his followers who had taste for svakīya-rasa. His internal consideration was that unqualified persons entering into the transcendently wonderful parakīya vraja-rasa should not fall into any adulterous behaviour. It is offensive to consider him an opponent of the transcendental vraja-rasa, and he is not considered to be outside the Gauḍīya Sampradāya on account of this simple divergence of views.

We also see differences of opinion among the ācāryas of the māyāvādī or kevalādvaita-vādī sampradāya; the māyāvādīs themselves accept this point. However, they are all within the advaita-vādī Śāṅkara Sampradāya. Some believe in vivarta-vāda, some believe in bimba-pratibimba-vāda, some have accepted avicchinnā-vāda, some admit ābhāsa-vāda, and they have refuted each others' opinions. Even so, they are included within the same sampradāya. Similarly, although there are some slight mutual differences of opinion between the Śrī Madhva and the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya, it is thoroughly appropriate to accept that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya follows Madhva Ācārya.

c) Refutation of the doctrines of the smārta opponents of bhakti

Ācārya Kesari Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī refuted the doctrines of the smārtas, who are bereft of devotion, while he was preaching śuddha-bhakti in vast religious assemblies in West Bengal's Medinīpura, Caubīs Paraganā, Varddhmān, Kūcbihar, Māthābhāṅgā and also in Assām. I am presenting herein whatever ideas I recorded from those speeches and collected in my notebook.

Smārtas are those who know and follow the smṛti-śāstras, or scriptures of prescribed regulations manifested by Caturmukha Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Manu, Yājñavalkya and others for executing the practical duties of life. There are two kinds of smṛti-śāstra: laukika (worldly) and pāramārthika (transcendental). Pāramārthika-smṛti are those smṛti-śāstra which support the regulations of the principal subject namely bhagavad-bhakti, which is established in śāstra such as the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Mahābhārata and Rāmāyāna. Laukika smṛti-śāstra neglect the confidential purport of śāstra and only prescribe regulations for protecting the gross social shackles. Fundamentally, smṛti is one; this division of smṛti came about later because of the distinction between ṛṣis and munis who were attentive to Bhagavān (bhagavat-unmukha) and those who were averse to Bhagavān (bhagavat-vimukha). Those very rare people who have regard for the statements of pāramārthika smṛti are called śuddha-smārtas or Vaiṣṇavas. The majority of people in this world are averse to Hari, and maintain the conception that the gross body is the self. Those who honour the statements of laukika smṛti, which favour the affairs of the body and mind, are generally celebrated by the name smārta.

Smārtas mistake the jīva for Bhagavān, and perform various types of activities only for their own enjoyment, with the understanding, “I (the ātmā) am the gross and subtle body.” Various kinds of laws have been given in the smṛti in order to instruct those jīvas who are not under the guidance of bhagavad-bhaktas, and who are busily engaged in endeavours related only to their bodies. Such people are always engaged in materialistic activities, and in order to fulfil their selfish interests, they are absorbed in inappropriate behaviour such as telling lies, cheating others, stealing and violence. To curb their base pursuits, the smṛti-śāstra has given many strict orders, which are only circumstantial, and not eternal. That is to say, such regulations have been presented in relation to some particular circumstance.

In contrast, all activities in relation to Bhagavān are eternal, because Bhagavān is the enjoyer of the fruit of all activities. All such activities are done with the aim and object of pleasing Bhagavān, and will continue to be so in the future and throughout eternal time. The laukika smṛti-śāstra mentions duties such as dāyabhāga (sharing inheritance), saṃskāra (rites of passage and purification), śuddhikirṇāyā (endorsing purification by penance and atonement), prāyaścitta (purificatory activities) and śrāddha (making offerings to the ancestors). These are only relevant for the duration of the lives of men; and it is man, not Bhagavān, who is the enjoyer of their results. These laukika smṛti-śāstras do not mention any regulations for the spiritual welfare of the jīvas. Their festivals for Durgā, and their determination of the times and procedures for vows such as ekādaśī, śrāddha, saṃskāra and so on are all for material enjoyment and liberation, and are therefore occasional.

Unlike the smārtas, Vaiṣṇavas are surrendered to Bhagavān. The purpose of all their activities is bhagavat-sevā and therefore they are non-envious and unwavering. They give respect to all jīvas, because they understand that the living entity is the servant of Bhagavān. There is not the slightest desire in their hearts to become great personalities in this world, to make others insignificant, or to acquire prestige in this life and Svarga in the next by performing yāga-yajña (sacrifice), dhyāna (meditation), japa, tapasya, śrāddha, tarpana, pilgrimages to holy places and giving offerings in the worship of devas and devīs. They do not even have the expectation of attaining deliverance from the cycle of birth and death and becoming liberated. If the service of their worshipful Deity may be attained by taking millions of births, and even by taking up residence in hell, then that is the object of their prayers. Their pleasure lies only in the pleasure of Bhagavān. Even great ṛṣis and munis do not know the glories of śuddha-bhaktas and śuddha-bhakti.

In the Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam we hear of a debate which took place in ancient times between Vaiṣṇavas (the associates of Viṣṇu) and smārtas (the yamadūtas) concerning Ajāmila. In this section Yamarāja told the smārtas (yamadūtas), “What to speak of others, even Jaiminī, Manu and other prominent ṛṣis and munis of karma-kāṇḍa do not realise the glories of bhagavat-bhaktas within their hearts because their intelligence is enchanted by the sweet, flowery statements

of the three Vedas. Their power of discrimination is bewildered by daivī-māyā. Therefore they praise the ostentations and costly activities mentioned in smṛti.” Kāmukāḥ paśyanti kāmīnī-māyām jagat: “Sensual persons see the world as being full of amorous women.” In accordance with this logic, and coupled with their conception of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in relation to the material body, smārtas even attribute various types of defects to the devotional endeavours of śuddha-bhaktas. They consider the foot-bathing water of Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas to be ordinary water. They think that Śrī Nārāyaṇa (Śrī Śālagrāma) can be contaminated by the touch of a śudra, and can then be purified and made suitable for worship by the performance of saṁskāras with pañca-gavya (five pure products from a cow). In other words, they have the base conception that even in the direct form of Bhagavān, a defect can arise as a result of being touched, and that Bhagavān can be made pure by cow dung and so on.

In addition to this, smārtas consider Vaiṣṇavas to belong to a mundane caste or creed. They consider bhagavat-prasāda to be ordinary lentils and rice which can become contaminated. They think that even the caste of guru and Bhagavān is destroyed by accepting or offering to Bhagavān grains which have been cooked by a non-brāhmaṇa disciple. They consider bhagavat-bhakti to consist of activities such as accepting only rice from uncooked paddy, taking bath three times a day, and wearing a silk dhoti. Furthermore, they consider Vaiṣṇavas to be jīvas bound by the results of their fruitive activities; they perform the worship of various devatās and their consorts; they think that dharma is subservient to society; and they have great respect for a society which is opposed to Bhagavān. This is their misfortune.

In the Garuḍa Purāṇa the glories of Viṣṇu bhakti have been described in this way: brāhmaṇānām sahasrebhyaḥ satrayājī viśiṣyate
satrayājī-sahasrebhyaḥ sarva-vedānta pāragah
sarva-vedāntavit-koṭyā viṣṇu-bhakto viśiṣyate
vaiṣṇavānām sahasrebhyaḥ ekāntyeko viśiṣyate

“One sacrificial priest is superior to one thousand brāhmaṇas, one scholar of all Vedānta is better than one thousand sacrificial priests, one Viṣṇu bhakta is superior to millions of Vedāntic scholars and one aikāntika (unalloyed) bhakta is superior to thousands of Vaiṣṇavas.”

aho bata śvapaco’ to garīyān
yaj jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmān ūcur nāma gṛnanti ye te
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.33.7)

“Aho! What more can I say about the superiority of those persons who take the holy name? Those on whose tongues Your name is manifest are the best of all, even though they may have appeared in a family of cāṇḍālas. Their brahminical qualifications have already been perfected in many past births, because those

topmost persons who utter your name have already observed all the brahminical activities, such as tapa, havan, bathing in the holy places and studying the Vedas.”

na me bhaktaś catur-vedī mad bhaktaḥ śvapacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ sa ca pūjyo yathā hy aham
(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 10.91)

“The catur-vedī brāhmaṇa who is bereft of bhakti is not dear to Me, but My devotee is extremely dear to Me, although he may have accepted birth in a family of cāṇḍālas. He is a worthy recipient of charity and his mercy should be accepted. He is certainly as worshipful as I am.”

bhagavad-bhakti-hīnasya jātiḥ śāstraṁ japas tapaḥ
aprānasyaiva dehasya maṇḍanaṁ loka-rañjanam
suciḥ sad-bhakti-dīptāgni-dagdha-durjāti-kalmaṣaḥ
śvapāko’pi budhaiḥ ślāghyo na vedajño’pi nāstikaḥ
(Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 3.11.12)

“Those who are of good character and whose sins have already been destroyed by the blazing fire of genuine bhakti are to be honoured by highly learned paṇḍitas, though they may be cāṇḍālās by birth. However, although an atheistic person may be a scholar of the Vedas, he is not respectable. The high birth, scriptural learning, uttering of mantras and austerities of a person who is devoid of bhakti are like the decoration of a dead body; they are of no use. Such external practices are only for the sake of delighting the minds of common people.”

viṣṇu-bhakti vihīnā ye cāṇḍālāḥ parikīrttitāḥ
cāṇḍālā api te śreṣṭhā hari-bhakti parāyanāḥ
(Bhakti-sandarbha, Anuccheda 100, Bṛhan-nārādiya-purāṇa)

“Persons devoid of viṣṇu-bhakti are cāṇḍālas. In contrast, those who are dedicated to bhagavat-bhakti are the greatest personalities, even though they may have appeared in cāṇḍāla families.”

śvapaco’pi mahīpāla viṣṇu-bhakto dvijādhikaḥ
viṣṇu-bhakti vihīno yo yatiś ca śvapacādhikaḥ
(Bhakti-sandarbha, Anuccheda 100, Nārada Purāṇa)

“O King! Even a cāṇḍāla who is a devotee of Viṣṇu is superior to a brāhmaṇa who is devoid of bhakti. Moreover, a sannyāsī who is devoid of Viṣṇu bhakti is even more wretched than a cāṇḍāla.”

The authentic scriptures have established daiva-varnāśrama (theistic social order), not adaiva-varnāśrama (secular social order). In the adaiva-varnāśrama system, only the son of a brāhmaṇa is a brāhmaṇa, whether he has the proper brahminical qualities or not. However in daiva-varnāśrama, one’s brahminical status is determined by one’s qualities and activities. Brāhmaṇas are considered to have appeared from the mouth of Brahmājī, the first preacher of the Vedic jñāna. One who does not study the Vedas can never be a brāhmaṇa, although he may have taken his birth in a dynasty of brāhmaṇas. The only genuine brāhmaṇa is a person who follows the righteous conduct of Brahmājī, that is a person who acts in Brahman,

who knows brahma-tattva, or who is searching for brahma-tattva. In Śrī Gītā the divisions of varṇa have been accepted according to the qualities and behaviour of the individual.

catur-varṇyaṁ māyā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma vibhāgaśaḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 4.13)

It has also been stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,
yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.11.35)

“If a person has all the qualities which have been described, characterising a particular caste in human society, then that person should be understood to be of the caste for which he is qualified, even if he took birth in another caste.” (In other words, varṇa must not be determined by birth alone. A person’s caste is determined by his qualities, and not by the caste in which he happened to take birth).

sthito brāhmaṇa-dharmena brāhmaṇāmupajīvati
kṣatriyo vā'tha vaiśyo vā brahmabhūyaḥ sa gacchati
(Mahābhārata anuḥ Śalyaparva 143.8)

“Nīlakaṇṭha speaks thus: ‘Kṣatriyas or vaiśyas who are situated in brahminical behaviour and who spend their days living in accordance with Brahman can achieve the stage of being brāhmaṇas.’”

This same subject is established by the narration of Satyakāma Jāvāla and Gautama described in the śruti.

taṁ hovāca kiṁ gotro nu saumyasīti. sa hovāca. nāham etad veda bho yad gotro' haṁ
asmi. aprcchaṁ mataram. sā mā pratyabravīdvahvahaṁ carantī paricāriṇī yauvane
tvāṁ alabhe. sāham etat na veda yad gotros tvam asi. javālā tu nāmā aham asmi.
satyakāmo nāma tvamasīti. so'haṁ satyakāmo jāvālo'smi bho iti. taṁ hovāca—etat
brāhmaṇo vivaktumarhati samidhaṁ saumya āhara. upa tvā neṣye satyādra iti
(Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.4.4)

Gautama said to Satyakāma, “ O saumya (brāhmaṇa)! From which gotra (genealogical caste) are you?”

He replied “I don’t know what my gotra is. When I asked my mother, she told me, ‘In the days of my youth while I was serving many men as a maidervant, I got you as my son. I do not know to which gotra you belong. My name is Jāvālā and your name is Satyakāma.’ Thus I am Satyakāma Jāvālā.”

Gautama exclaimed, “Dear child! One who is not a brāhmaṇa cannot speak the truth as you have spoken. Thus you are a brāhmaṇa. O saumya (dviija)! Bring wood for the performance of yajña, and I will perform your upanāyana saṁskāra (sacred thread ceremony) Do not ever deviate from the truth.”

Śrī Rṣabhadeva, who was an avatāra of Bhagavān, had one hundred sons of whom eighty-one were brāhmaṇas accomplished in knowledge of Veda, nine (the nava-yogendras) were mahā-bhagavatas, and the remainder were kṣatriyas. Among the sons who were kṣatriyas, Bhārataji, who was decorated with all desirable qualities,

was the emperor after whom India was named Bhārata-varṣa. Here also we see that the divisions of varṇa are determined according to the qualities and activities present in the many sons of one father.

d) Eligibility for serving Śrī Śālagrāma

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has a full understanding of vaiṣṇava-smṛti, and he has refuted the imaginative considerations of certain hateful, envious smārtas. He has written in his Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa that certain smārtas who are engrossed in the bodily concept of life believe that only persons who have taken birth in a brāhṃaṇa dynasty are eligible to worship Śālagrāma. They think that women are not eligible to worship Śālagrāma under any circumstances, because they are sūdras, even if they are born brāhṃaṇas. However these points are opposed to śāstra in all respects. Males or females who are initiated into viṣṇu-mantra by a sad-guru are eligible to perform arcana regardless of birth. In his Digdarśinī Tika, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has quoted many scriptural references as evidence to support his point of view. He has quoted the words of Bhagavān Kapiladeva from the Kapila-Devahuti saṁvāda of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

yannāmadheya śravanānukīrtanād
yatprahvaṇād yat smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavān nu darśanāt
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.33.6)

“He Bhagavān! Even a person born in a family of untouchable dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform soma-yajña (a celestial Vedic sacrifice) if he hears Your name and afterwards performs kīrtana, offers obeisances to You and remembers You. What more can I say about one who has actually attained Your audience?”

Furthermore, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has clarified this point with an example from the life-history of Pṛthu Mahārāja. Although Śrī Pṛthu Mahārāja was the exclusive ruler of the earth planet consisting of seven islands, he never enforced discipline or punishment upon brāhṃaṇas born in the dynasty of ṛṣis or upon Vaiṣṇavas (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4. 21. 12). Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has also given evidence from Purañjana Upākhyāna that King Purañjana also never ordained punishment for brāhṃaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore, women as well as sūdras are eligible to perform arcana of Śrī Śālagrāma once they are initiated into the viṣṇu-mantra by a sad-guru, because they also become equal to brāhṃaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas. Food offerings cooked by them can certainly be offered to Śrī Bhagavān and sad-guru. It would be an offence to disregard this conclusion.

e) Śrīla Gurupādapadma and
śrī vighraha-tattva

(A compilation of instructions in relation to śrī vighraha-tattva collected from the speeches delivered by Śrīla Ācārya Kesari on the occasion of the vighraha pratiṣṭhā (Deity installation) at the Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta

Samiti in the year 1959 and the vigraha pratiṣṭhā at Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma in 1962.)

Throughout the authentic scriptures such as the Vedas, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas, there are descriptions of the sac-cid-ānanda vigraha of Bhagavān along with the method of worship. Some people consider the para-tattva vastu (the Supreme Truth) to be formless, devoid of attributes, devoid of śakti and unchangeable. In their opinion the fact. The false and imaginary impersonal conceptions such as the śunyavāda (voidism) of the Buddhists or the anti-Vedic theory of atheism are material.

Furthermore, it will not be entirely inappropriate to say that the modern theory of formlessness is, to a great extent, the contribution of Christianity. It will not be a mistake to say that whatever theory of formlessness is current in our country today is a symbol of the Christian religion. The karma-vāda of institutions such as the Bhārata Sevāśrama Saṅgha, the Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Mission and Arvācīna Āryasamāj is completely the remnant of Christian dharma because the ancient karma-vāda of our country is in all respects based on the Vedic injunctions. Therefore in literatures such as Gītā or other smṛti and saṁhitā, there is no mention of karmas other than Vedic karmas. These people have done a great deal of harm to the world by the preaching of non-Vedic ideologies.

If the Christian conception of formlessness is indeed true, then what is the meaning of constructing places of worship and establishing the sign of the cross inside huge churches and on the tops of their steeples? Why do they not perform worship while looking at the sky in an open field? The most authoritative Christian literature is the Bible, and there it is written, "God created man after His own image." That is, īśvara has made man resembling His own form. Why do they not give more emphasis to this statement from the Bible, in which the human-like form of Bhagavān has been accepted?

Similarly, in the Koran sharif of the Muslim propounders of formlessness there is one āyatta (authoritative statement) of the Hadiz which also resembles the statement from the Bible, and which I am quoting as far as I remember, innālāhā khālākā men sūrātahi. 'Sūrāt' means shape or form. "God has made man corresponding to His own form." Thus the human-like form of parameśvara is supported by both the Koran and the Bible. Under such circumstances why do those supporters of the formless who have taken shelter of Muslim dharma bother to construct mosques? Why do they not also meditate on the formless Absolute in the open sky or within the ocean?

The Buddhists and Jains are also nirākāra-vādīs, proponents of formlessness. But the Buddhists and Jains have huge mūrtis (deity figures) in their temples in places such as Buddhagayā, Kāśī, Sāranātha, Ajantā, and Elorā. Mount Ābu, Paṇḍharapūra, and Calcutta's Pareśanātha Mandira are examples of the mūrti worship performed by the Jains. According to the ancient history of Purī, the Buddhists attacked the śrī mandira of Purī and brought it under their control. At that time they used to give honour to Jagannāthadeva considering Him to be Buddhadeva, Subhadrā to be kirti

(fame), Balarāma to be dharma (religion) and Sudarśana to be saṅgha (community). After driving the Buddhists out from there, Ācārya Śaṅkara again established Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadrā.

In Indian literature, the indisputable truth is that parameśvara is the cause of which the visible universe is the effect. According to the theory of cause and effect, there is an inseparable relationship between cause and effect. Whatever is seen in the effect must exist in a subtle form within the cause. It is impossible in all respects for something which is not present in the cause to be present in the effect. Some philosophers maintain that a substance may be present in the effect, even if it does not exist in the cause. The defect in this viewpoint is that, if one accepts an effect without a cause, then anything and everything could manifest from each substance. For instance, oil could be obtained from dust, ghee from water, and a mango could be obtained from an acacia tree. However, this is not so. The factual reality is that whatever potential substance is in a seed (the cause), that very substance will come out as the effect, just as oil comes from mustard and sesame seeds, ghee comes from milk and mangoes come from mango trees.

Thus, as many forms as are visible in the effect must all necessarily exist in the cause, Brahman. If it were not so, and if Brahman were formless, then this visible universe full of innumerable forms could not have arisen from it. Thus the śrī vigraha of Bhagavān and the existence of the potential for the universe's innumerable forms within Him is proved by the theory of cause and effect.

To accept that the universe has originated from a formless Brahman which is devoid of attributes is tantamount to accepting that something or everything is born from nothing. However we do not see this happening. Rather, parameśvara has been accepted in the Vedic scriptures as the pūrṇa-tattva (complete truth): pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam. The Gītā also proclaims the very same conclusion. Nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ: "There is no permanent existence of the asat, and no cessation of the sat." Thus the śrī vigraha of Bhagavān, the Personality of complete existence, is established beyond a doubt. Here and there in the śruti, Brahman has been called nirākāra (formless), nirguṇa (without qualities), arūpa (without features) and nirviśeṣa (devoid of attributes). However, this does not mean that Brahman is fundamentally nirviśeṣa, nirākāra and śunya (void). The words nirguṇa, nirākāra, arūpa and nirviśeṣa are not prominent. It is ākāra, rūpa, guṇa and viśeṣa which are the prominent words. Words such as nirākāra, arūpa, nirguṇa and nirviśeṣa signify the prohibitive sense, and are derived from the words ākāra, rūpa, guṇa, and viśeṣa. Therefore the para-tattva with vigraha, rūpa and guṇa is saviśeṣa tattva, possessed of attributes. Then why has He been called arūpa and so on in the śruti? The śāstras have given the answer to this.

acintyaḥ khalu ye bhāvā na taṁs tarkeṇa yojayet
prakṛtibhyaḥ paraṁ yacca tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam
(Mahābhārata, Bhīma Parva 5.12)

“It is not proper to apply logic and argument to that existence which is acintya, inconceivable. That which is acintya is beyond material nature.”

yā yā śrutir jalpati nirviśeṣam sā sābhidhatte saviśeṣameva
vicārayoge sati hanta tāsām prāyo valīyaḥ saviśeṣameva
(Hayaśīra pañcarātra)

“Wherever śrutis have initially described the tattva-vastu as nirviśeṣa (devoid of attributes), they have in the end established the saviśeṣa-tattva (truth with attributes), not the nirviśeṣa-tattva. Nirviśeṣa and saviśeṣa are both eternal qualities of Bhagavān. Nevertheless, after seriously de-liberating on the matter, it is the saviśeṣa-tattva which turns out to be prominent because in this world there is experience of only the saviśeṣa-tattva. There is no experience of the nirviśeṣa-tattva.”

The purport is that the para-tattva has been called acintya, arūpa, nirākāra and so on because of His being beyond māyā. Actually Bhagavān has an aprākṛta (transcendental) form. He is the foundation of all aprākṛta qualities, and is possessed of all transcendental features and attributes. There is not even the slightest hint of prakṛti (material nature) or māyā in His sac-cid-ānanda form. The words such as nirākāra have been stated in particular places in the śāstras only to make us understand this fact.

Some people consider the universe and all of the forms within it to be false. But if this world is false, then the people who say such things are also false and illusory. Furthermore, the statements of such illusory people are also illusory. This establishes the reality of the world.

Some people assert that a form cannot be all-pervading. However, this charge is also incorrect. As well as being all pervading, parameśvara is also the possessor of all potencies (sarvaśaktimān). One of His potencies is His aghaṭana-ghaṭana paṭīyasī śakti, by which the impossible is made possible. So why can He not have a form? Besides, why can that form not be all-pervading by the influence of that śakti? If He cannot have form and also be all-pervading, then where is His omnipotence? This type of mistake is due to a lack of tattva-jñāna. That parameśvara, being unborn and without origin is also the eternal son of Śrī Yaśodā by the power of His acintya-śakti. It is impossible to worship a formless substance. Some philosophers have given a method of worshipping nirākāra Brahman. They say, “Any substance which has a shape is illusory and should be rejected. Therefore the best sādhana is just to worship the formless.” However, this opinion is incorrect. Out of the five gross material elements, air and ether are formless, but no-one accepts them as aprākṛta or sac-cid-ānanda. Therefore we cannot say that the Brahman of the propounders of formlessness is worshipful just because it is formless or void like ether. In the śrutis it has been said that mukta-puruṣa (liberated personalities) always worship and have the darśana of the para-tattva by nirguṇa (transcendental) bhakti,
om̐ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā
paśyanti surayaḥ divīva cakṣur ātatam

(Ṛg Veda)

“The divine and learned Vaiṣṇavas always have the darśana of the supreme abode of Viṣṇu by their aprākṛta (spiritual) eyes.”

The form of the para-tattva is clearly established by this śruti-mantra.

Some people say that śrī vigraha or śrī mūrti is not mentioned anywhere in the Vedas and that Deity worship is therefore not Vedic. This charge is also erroneous and entirely unfounded, because accounts of śrī mūrti are found throughout the Vedas. For example:

sahasrasya pratimā asi

(Yajuh 25.65)

“O parameśvara, You have thousands of mūrtis.”

arcata prārcata priyamedhāso arcata

(Ṛg 6.5.58.8)

“O intelligent men! thoroughly perform worship of the śrī vigraha of parameśvara.”

Further, in the Gītā those who disregard the śrī mūrti of Bhagavān have been called mūḍha (foolish) and narādhama (the lowest of mankind).

avajānanti maṁ mūḍhā

mānuṣīm tanum āśritam

paraṁ bhāvam ajānanto

mama bhūta maheśvaram

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.11)

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayanty abhisam viśanti tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma

(Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.1)

“Know that Brahman as that by whom the universe is created (the ablative case), by whom the universe is protected and maintained (the instrumental case) and into whom the universe enters at the time of devastation (the locative case).“

That Brahman in whom there are these three cases cannot be nirākāra. We see fruit falling from a tree, but if we do not accept the existence of the tree, how can fruit fall from it? The falling of fruit is possible only if we accept the existence of the tree. Similarly, the appearance of the universe, which is full of form, is only possible if its source, Brahman, also has form.

Māyāvādīs say that the form of Bhagavān has been denied in the Vedānta-sūtra in the sūtras, 'arūpavadeva hi tatpradhānātvāt'(3.2.14) and 'na pratīkena hi saḥ' (4.1.4). However, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has established the śrī mūrti of Brahman by these very same sūtras. The meaning of 'arūpavadeva' is not that Brahman has no śrī vigraha. Rather, this sūtra is clear evidence that Brahman has form but it seems to those who are unqualified as if the meaning is arūpa (formless). In the word 'arūpavat,' the suffix 'vatup' has been used. In Sanskrit grammar the suffix 'vatup' is used in the sense of 'tulya' (similar). Thus 'arūpavat' conveys na-rūpavat, 'appearing as if not having a form.' Rather His own form, vigraha, is predominant. There is no difference between Brahman Himself and His vigraha. Similarly, in the next sūtra,

‘na-pratikena’ means “śrī vigraha is not a symbol of Brahman,” and saḥ means “this vigraha is Brahman Himself.” At the time of taking darśana of Śrī Jagannatha, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, pratimā nahe tumi sākṣāt vrajendra-nandana: “You are not a statue; You are directly Kṛṣṇa, the son of the king of Vraja” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 5.96).

The following mantra from Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad first denies that the form of Brahman is material, and then establishes His transcendental sac-cid-ānanda form.

apāṇipādo javano grahitā
paśyaty acakṣuḥ sa śṛṇoty akarṇaḥ
sa veti vedyam na ca tasyāsti vettā
tamāhuragryam puruṣam mahantam
(Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3/19)

“Although Parabrahman is devoid of material hands He accepts all things. Although devoid of material feet, He comes and goes everywhere at great speed. Although devoid of material eyes He sees everything.”

The purport is that His form is not material, but aprākṛta (transcendental) and sac-cid-ānanda (composed of eternal existence, cognizance and pleasure).

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇa sac-cid-ānanda vigraha
(Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā)

The crest-jewel of all evidence, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also proclaims that Śrī Nandanandana is the complete, supremely blissful, eternal Brahman:

yan mitraṁ paramānandaṁ purnaṁ brahma sanātanam
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.32)

The suffix ‘vatup’ is never used to convey the meaning of a substance which does not exist. The existence of a class of completely non-existent substances is not accepted. We cannot make statements such as “There is a substance which does not exist.” We have already established this earlier in relation to the evidence of the Gītā, ‘nāsato vidyate bhāvaḥ.’ The compiler of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Vedavyāsa, is indeed the compiler of Vedānta-sūtra and so his opinions can never be contradictory. Thus it is thoroughly improper to interpret the sūtras as indicating the formless, when they are illuminated by śloka such as ‘kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam’, ‘nandagopa vrajaukasām yan mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrnam brahma sanātanam’, and ‘brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham’. In addition to this, the śrī vigraha of Brahman is also established by the aphorisms of Brahma-sūtra such as, ‘api samrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām’ (3.2.24), ‘prakāśaś ca karmaṇyabhyāsāt’ (3.2.25); and ‘prakāśavaccāvaiśeṣyāt’ (3.2.25). The purport of ‘arūpavad eva hi tat pradhānātvāt’ is that Brahman does not have a particular shape or form. He is Himself vigraha. That is why it has been said arūpavat—na rūpavat. The suffix ‘eva’ indicates the hopelessness of opposing arguments. Brahmarūpa is predominant. There is no bheda (division) in His svayam-rūpa or śrī vigraha. If you ask, “Can we accept that an omnipresent Being has a human-like form?” then the answer is, “Yes, He can.” ‘Api samrādhane pratyakṣānumānāmyām’ (3.2.24): “Although He is omnipresent and unmanifest, His darśan can

be obtained by the process of worship.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.21) also confirms this. Bhakty āham ekayā grāhyaḥ: “I am perceived only by bhakti.”

This conclusion has been made even clearer in the next sūtra, na pratīkena hi saḥ. We cannot attain perfection or Bhagavān by worshipping a symbol or an idol, nor is it correct to impose the presence of Bhagavān on the idol. In this regard, Ācārya Śaṅkara states that the forms of the formless Brahman have been imagined for the welfare of the sādhakas. His idea is that the consciousness is purified by worshipping these imaginary forms, and that when the consciousness is purified, then the sādhana to attain the formless Brahman becomes easy. However, it is not correct to worship Bhagavān by imagining forms or idols. The sac-cid-ānanda-mūrti is svayaṁ-rūpa, directly Parabrahman Himself. His worship should be performed. This has been said in the above-mentioned aphorism of Vedānta-sūtra. The consideration here is this: “Can we establish the worship of some imaginary form of Bhagavān?” In reply to this the sūtra states emphatically, na hi: “NO!” “Then how will worship be performed?” ‘Saḥ’, by performing worship of the spiritual form of Bhagavān Himself, that is śrī vigraha, one will meet with Bhagavān. Therefore it has been stated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:

īśvarera śrī-vigraha sac-cid-ānandākāra
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 6.166)

“The transcendental form of Bhagavān is complete in eternity, cognisance and bliss.”

cid-ānanda kṛṣṇa vigraha ‘māyika’ kari’ mani
ei baḍa ‘pāpa’ — satya caitanyera vāṇī
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 25.35)

“The māyāvādīs do not recognise the personal form of Bhagavān as spiritual and full of bliss. This is a great sin. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s statements are factual.”

pratimā nahe tumi sākṣāt Vrajendra-nandana
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 5.96)

“You are not a statue; You are directly Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa Himself.”

Therefore the śrī vigraha of Bhagavān is the form of eternal existence, cognisance and pleasure. However one should bear in mind that only the śrī vigraha established by mahā-puruṣa, great liberated personalities, are sac-cid-ānanda forms. The mūrti established by conditioned souls is called pratimā, a statue, and the worship of such statues is prohibited in the scriptures. In the same way that a certified copy of a certified copy is no evidence, even a duplicate statue of a śrī vigraha established by a mahā-puruṣa is not a sac-cid-ānanda śrī vigraha. Throughout the śāstras it has been mentioned that there is endless auspiciousness for the jīvas by rendering service to śrī vigraha.

f) Refutation of ‘yata mata tata patha’

Paramārādhyā Ācārya Kesarī Śrī Śrīla Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja made a storm-like preaching tour in many villages in the district of Medinīpura, West Bengal, in the year 1950. At that time, within thirty days he preached

extensively in about forty different religious assemblies on the subject of śrī sanātana-dharma, the dharma of śuddha-bhakti, as practised and expounded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There was one large village of Medinīpura called Gehūnkhalī, in which a vast religious assembly took place. Śrī Śrīla Gurupādapadma had come there on the request of his own Godbrother Param Pūjyapada Nityalīlāpraviṣṭa Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti-bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja. The huge assembly had been arranged in the courtyard of a high school managed by the Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Mission, and the head master of the school, other teachers, local students and various other personalities were present.

In very poetic language, Śrīla Gurupādapadma established the siddhānta of the śuddha-bhakti practised and expounded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu before an audience of about twenty-five thousand people. He explained that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the last limit of the para-tattva. He is the ultimate worshippable truth for all jīvas, who are his separated parts, vibhinnaṁśa-tattva. By constitution the living entities are the servants of Bhagavān. The wretched condition of the jīva is due to forgetfulness of his service attitude towards Bhagavān.

Śrīla Gurudeva was establishing these conclusions by scriptural evidence and incontrovertible reasoning, when right in the middle of the lecture, some people asked, “We have read and heard that the jīva is Śiva. Śiva, Durgā, Kālī, Gaṇeśa— these are all different names and forms of the same one Bhagavān. Bhagavān is attained whichever viewpoint you take, and whichever devatā you worship. When one goes up into the sky, all things are seen equally. Although letters are posted in different post-offices, they all arrive at the same place. One can reach Delhi on foot, by car, by train or by any conveyance. Similarly when the sādḥaka is situated in an elevated position of spirituality, he sees all as one and the same. The one Bhagavān is attained by worshipping anyone, yet you accept that Kṛṣṇa alone is the exclusive object of worship and that bhakti to Him is the best of all means of spiritual attainment.”

Having heard this question, the entire audience was enchanted by Śrīla Gurudeva's brilliant reply. Those who had posed the question were completely unable to respond. I shall now present some parts of the speech which Śrīla Guru-pādapadma delivered in that assembly.

With profound gravity, Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī said that the viewpoint thrown up by the opposing party was the remnant of Christian doctrine; it is non-Vedic and it is against the verdict of śāstra. “The slogan, 'yata mata tata patha' means that all philosophical systems are different paths to attain the same Bhagavān. First of all, let us deliberate upon this. This opinion is misleading and against scripture in all respects. If we accept it, then we will have to regard the conceptions of everyone to be equal, whether they are thieves, plunderers, prostitutes, sādḥus or materialists. No thoughtful person can accept that those who take shelter of sattvic, rājasic or tāmasic methods of accomplishment will all attain the same result. The destination of violent people who eat meat, fish and eggs is not the same as that of righteous

people who harbour a pure sattvic conception and are devoted to sattvic and nirguṇa matters. No intelligent person can accept any view to the contrary. Śāstras such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Gītā have not described all religions or paths as equal. On the contrary, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam states that the only supreme dharma for all living entities is bhakti to Adhoksaja Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which should be unmotivated and uninterrupted like a stream of oil.

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihata yayātmā samprasīdati

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.6)

dharmāḥ projjhita kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām sataṁ

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.2)

“Apart from bhakti to Bhagavān, all opinions that go by the name of dharma are useless and hypocritical.”

Paths other than pure bhakti cannot enable one to meet with Kṛṣṇa. Bhagavān can be pleased only by the devotion described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Gītā also states that those who worship the devatās attain the planets of the devatās; those who worship the forefathers go to Pitṛloka; and those who worship ghosts attain the planets of the ghosts. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not attained by these mundane worldly methods of worship. Service to Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇaloka can be attained only by śuddha-bhakti. If all methods of worship were the same, then Kṛṣṇa would not say in Gītā,

yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad yājino 'pi mām
(Bhagavad-gītā 9.25)

“Those who worship the devas attain the planets of the devas, those who worship the forefathers attain the planet of the forefathers and those who worship ghosts attain the ghostly worlds. But those who worship Me attain Me.”

kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā
(Bhagavad-gītā 7.20)

“Those whose knowledge has been stolen by desires to drive away distress and so on take shelter of appropriate regulations and perform worship of the devatās, being impelled by their own natures.”

antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api
(Bhagavad-gītā 7.23)

“However, the result of the worship performed by those people of meagre intelligence is perishable. The worshippers of the devatās attain the devatās and My devotees attain Me.”

Giving up Kṛṣṇa to worship various other devatās has been called unlawful.

ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam
(Bhagavad-gītā 9.23)

”Whatever a man may sacrifice to the devatās, O son of Kuntī, is really meant for Me alone, but it is offered without true understanding.”

Some people say, “Viṣṇu, Ganeśa, Durgā, Kālī and Śiva are all one and the same. There is no fundamental or intrinsic difference between them; they are different in name only, and the result of worshipping all of them is the same.” However this account is not in agreement with śāstra.

om̐ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā
paśyanti sūrayaḥ divīva cakṣur ātatam
tad viprāso vipranyavo jāgrvāmśaḥ
samiṇdhate visnor yat paramaṁ padam
(Ṛg Veda 1.22.20)

“As eyes are capable of seeing the sun in the sky without impediment, similarly liberated mahā-puruṣas always see the supreme abode of the parameśvara Viṣṇu. The sādhus, who are devoted to Bhagavān, and who are free from defects such as the tendency to be mistaken or deluded, preach everywhere about the supreme abode of Viṣṇu.”

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala kriyā ca
(Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 6.8)

“The activities of that Parabrahman Paramātmā are not material because His senses such as His hands and feet are not material. He is splendidly present in all places at the same time by His spiritual body. Therefore, far from being greater than Him, no others are seen even to be equal to Him. It is heard that parameśvara has various types of divine potency, amongst which jñāna-śakti, bala-śakti and kriyā-śakti are prominent. These three potencies are called cit-śakti (saṁvit-śakti), sat-śakti (sandhinī-śakti) and ānanda-śakti (hlādinī-śakti) respectively.”

In Gītā it has been said,

mattaḥ parataraṁ naṅyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya
(Bhagavad-gītā 7.7)

“O Dhanañjaya, there is no truth superior to me.”

And also,

vedaīś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham
(Bhagavad-gītā 15.15)

“By all the Vedas I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas.”

It is established by all the authentic evidence that viṣṇu-tattva is the supreme para-tattva. It has not been said anywhere in the śāstra that devatās such as Ganeśa, Kālī, Durgā and Sūrya are equal to Viṣṇu tattva. On the contrary, those who consider these devatās to be equal to Nārāyaṇa are offenders.

yas tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ brahmārudrādi daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vikṣeta sa pāṣaṇḍi bhaved dhruvam
(Vaiṣṇava-tantra)

“One who considers Śrī Nārāyaṇa to be in the same category as devatās such as
Brahmā and Rudra is a pāṣaṇḍi (a faithless non-believer).”

Moreover in Gītā it has been said,
tapasvibhyo’ dhiko yogī jñānibhyo’ pi mato’ dhikaḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna
yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 6. 46-47)

“Among fruitive workers who have material desires, tapasvīs (those engaged in the
performance of austerities) and jñānīs (those engaged in the cultivation of
knowledge) the yogī is the best of all. Therefore, O Arjuna! Be a yogī. However, even
among these yogīs, those who do bhajana (transcendental service) to Me, Vāsudeva,
being devoted to Me with complete faith, are the best of all; this is My opinion.
Therefore become a yogī like this.”

Bhagavān cannot be easily attained by any means other than bhakti. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has
personally said,

na sādhyati mām yogo na sāṅkhyāṁ dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyastapastyāgo yathā bhaktirmamorjitā
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.20)

“Yoga-sādhana, jñāna-vijñāna, religious ceremonies, japa, austerities, studying and
renunciation are not sufficient to attain Me. I can only be attained by devotional
service composed of unalloyed prema.”

This same conclusion has also been expressed in śruti:

bhaktir evainaṁ nayati bhaktir evainaṁ darśayati bhaktivaśaḥ puruṣo bhatir eva
bhūyasī

(Māthara śruti-vācan quoted in Mādhva-bhāṣya on Vedānta-sūtra (3.3.53).

For this reason, the instruction has been given in Śrīmad Bhāgavad-gītā, sarva
dharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja: “Surrender to Me, giving up all
temporary dharmas related to the body and mind.” Nowhere in the authentic śāstras
has it been stated that all opinions, paths or worldly dharmas are the same. People
who preach this misleading idea of ‘yata mata tata patha’ are ignorant of tattva.
When one goes up to a great height in an aeroplane, the trees and plants and the
high and low places down below all appear to be the same, but this simply indicates
the observer’s lack of seeing power. His eyes do not find remote objects for want of
the appropriate type of observation. Similarly, because of a lack of tattva-jñāna,
ignorant people, who see everything from their own limited material viewpoint,
consider all good and bad opinions to be equal. This simply reveals their ignorance.
It is not that everyone is one, nor do they become one if someone whose vision is full
of ignorance sees them as one. Those who perform forbidden activities are not the

same as those who perform pious activities, or those who perform prescribed duties without attachment, or jñāna-yogīs, or bhakti-yogīs. Their activities are different; the results of their activities are different; and their destinations are different. If it were not so, this opinion would not have been refuted in the Gītā and other scriptures.

Only ignorant and foolish people can say, “One can reach the same destination by bullock-cart, horse-drawn carriage, train or car. The same destination can be attained by all roads.” Countries and islands such as England, Australia or Hawaii are situated in the middle of the ocean; they cannot be reached bullock-cart, horse-drawn carriage or car. Everyone acknowledges this fact. Even passengers on the same train cannot arrive at the same destination if they have tickets for different places. Similarly those who adopt various methods of attainment to realise various goals such as material sense gratification, liberation, or love of God cannot all attain the same loving service to Bhagavān. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has explained this nicely in the śloka, ye yathā māṁ prapadyante: “As they surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly (Bhagavad-gītā 4.11).”

Some people also say, “All letters reach the same destination even if you post them in different post-offices. Similarly, all worshippers attain the same parameśvara, no matter what devatā they worship.” However, this argument is also utterly imaginary; it is born of ignorance. It is true that if the address written on different letters is the same, then they will all arrive at the same place, even if they are posted in different post-offices. This is correct. But if letters have different addresses written on them, then they will reach different destinations. Similarly, if all worshippers perform the same exclusive worship of Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa which culminates in bhakti, then they become purified and can attain Bhagavān. This sequence has been shown in a beautiful way in the Bhagavad-gītā.

Nowadays we hear many slogans which are opposed to the conclusions of scripture. The authentic śāstras do not at all support ideas such as ‘service to daridra-nārāyaṇa’ (God in the form of poverty-stricken people), ‘janatā-janārdana’ (the common people are God) and ‘jīva hi śiva’ (the soul is Śiva). If poverty-stricken people are Nārāyaṇa, then what about wealthy and respectable people who have performed pious activities in their previous births? What about righteous, learned and honourable people? Why is it that they cannot be Nārāyaṇa? Those who accept the notion of daridra-nārāyaṇa are all atheists impelled by base saṁskāras (impressions from previous births). They have no relation whatsoever with the pure ātmā-dharma.

People talk about daridra-nārāyaṇa, but to this day no jīva ever succeeded in becoming Bhagavān. The ātmā and paramātmā have separate individual natures by their very constitution. The jīvātmā is minute, subject to the control of māyā and helpless in regard to tasting the results of his own activities. In contrast, Paramātmā is the creator, master and maintainer of the entire universe and He is the Lord of

māyā. How can these two be called one? Those who maintain such a conception propound a vicious brand of folly. They are mistaken in all respects.

Those who say that the jīva becomes Śīva after attaining jñāna and becoming liberated are atheists. At this stage, they call Mahādeva Śaṅkara (Śīva) 'Father' and they address Bhavānī as 'Mother', but when they are liberated and they have become Śīva, they will see Bhavānī as their wife. Therefore Bhavānī in the form of Durgā cuts the throats of such miscreants and wears a garland of their heads. Evidence of this can be found in many places in śāstra.

After hearing this brilliant speech of Śrīlā Ācārya Kesarī some of the teachers who were present there placed a proposal before Śrī Gurudeva. They offered to bring the main svāmījī of the Rāma Kṛṣṇa Mission Maṭha located in Velūra, and to investigate this subject by means of a scriptural debate in a special assembly. "We will call him tomorrow," they said. Ācārya Kesarī replied, "He will never come, once he hears my name." Śrīlā Gurudeva waited for three or four days for the sannyāsīs of the Rāma Kṛṣṇa Mission, but it became known that they were not prepared for a scriptural debate at any cost.

g) Refutation of the sahaiyā doctrine

Prākṛta-sahaiyās are those who understand the aprākṛta (spiritual) līlā of the aprākṛta Bhagavān to be prākṛta (mundane) like the affairs of ordinary men and women, and who think that the aprākṛta-tattva is attained by a material sādhana. Contrary to the teachings of the aprākṛta rasācārya Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, they imagine themselves to be gopīs. They decorate the inert, gross, material male body with the dress of a woman and they act out the role of performing bhajana with this imaginary gopi-bhāva. Those who do this are called prākṛta-sahaiyā. While maintaining a mood of male within their hearts, these people outwardly hide their male bodies by keeping long hair like women, and wearing rings in their noses, long veils, sārīs or voluminous skirts, bodices, bangles on their wrists, girdles on their waists, ankle-bells on their feet, golden ornaments and so on. They introduce themselves with names like Lalitā or Viśākhā. On the pretext of parakīyā-bhajana they keep young women in their āśramas as maidservants and maintain improper relationships with them. Such is their anti-scriptural conduct.

Others do not adorn their male bodies in the dress of women, but they support the opinion of those who do. With flirtatious gestures, they sing about the confidential loving play of Rāī-Kānū (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) in the presence of all kinds of ordinary people anywhere in the market-place without considering the eligibility of their audience. They give pretentious lectures on rāsa-līlā and they also imitate rāsa-līlā. Thus debauchees come to mistake the aprākṛta-rasa for the jaḍa (material) rasa. They believe that it is absolutely necessary to keep the company of another's wife as an illegal paramour in order to realise the aprākṛta-rasa. Conversely, they think that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīlā Narottama Ṭhākura can not possibly be rasika, because Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was a brahmacārī from boyhood and Śrīlā Narottama Ṭhākura

never entered household life. Such people also come in the category of prākṛta-sahajiyā.

Externally Śrīman Mahāprabhu was male, but internally He used to nurture the mood of a gopī in the service of Kṛṣṇa. These people completely contradict this. They nurture the male mood within their hearts but externally they hide it by trying to cover their outer limbs with the attire of a gopī. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained that gopī-bhāva is the dharma of the ātmā, but the prākṛta-sahajiyās think that gopī-bhāva is the dharma of the body.

antare niṣṭhā kara bāhye loka-vyavahāra

acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 16.239)

mane nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana

rātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.152)

Here Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhuji is saying that in the beginning one should keep niṣṭhā (very firm faith) in the core of one's heart, and at the same time behave like ordinary people in order to sustain one's life. Slowly, slowly, when one's faith has become mature, one's worldly activities will also come to correspond with one's bhajana; that is they will become favourable to bhajana. In such a condition, one should meditate on one's internally conceived siddha-deha which is suitable for the service of the Divine Couple, and in the core of one's heart one should engage in the aprākṛta mānasī-sevā to Kṛṣṇa. By following this procedure, at first one attains svarūpa-siddhi (realisation of one's eternal spiritual body). Ultimately, at the stage of vastu-siddhi in prakāṣa Vraja, after giving up the material body, one gets the body of a gopī corresponding to one's internally conceived siddha-deha.

On the topic of rāgānugā bhakti-sādhana Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has said,

kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsyā preṣṭhaṁ nija samīhitam

tat tat kathā rataś cāsau kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā

sevā sādha-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi

tad bhāva lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ

śravaṇotkīrtanādīni vaidhī-bhakty uditāni tu

yānyaṅgāni ca tānyatra vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ

“One should always continuously reside in Vraja, remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa and those dear associates of His whom one aspires to follow, and one should remain engrossed in their līlā-kathā. If one is unable to reside in Vraja directly then one should reside in Vraja by mind. On the path of rāgānugā, one should follow Kṛṣṇa's intimate beloved associates and their followers, always remaining absorbed in their service.

This should be done by the sādha-rūpa (the external material body of one's present condition) and also in siddha-rūpa (by the internally conceived body suitable for rendering the type of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa for which one's heart is eager).

One should eagerly desire the bhāva, that is the special loving mood of those associates of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja whom one aspires to follow. Learned scholars who know

bhakti-tattva point out that in vaidhī-bhakti one is instructed to observe the limbs of bhakti such as śravaṇa and kīrtana according to one's adhikāra (eligibility). These same instructions also apply in rāgānugā-bhakti.”

Neither Śrī Śrīman Mahāprabhu nor Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who fulfilled Mahāprabhu's heart's desire, have given instructions anywhere that male sādhakas should hide their male forms; keep a braid; wear a veil, a skirt, a blouse and ornaments suitable for women; and then perform rāgānugā bhajana with others' wives. Rather, in all cases they have said that these activities are abominable and are opposed to śāstra. Śrīman Mahāprabhu rejected Choṭa Haridāsa to establish a high ideal for practitioners of bhakti. The same immaculate ideal has also been set by the Six Gosvāmīs. In Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's literatures such as Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu and Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī, he has given the instruction to perform sādhanabhajana following in the cooling footprints of the śrutis (personified Vedas) and the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and others are shining examples of such bhajana. How pure their lives are! It is proper for śuddha-bhaktas to follow such great spiritual personalities.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written as follows in his essay entitled 'The Depravity of the Sahajiyā Doctrine.'

“A loathsome ideology is spreading insidiously in several places in Bengal. All the activities and conduct prescribed by this sahajiyā doctrine are extremely corrupt and contemptible. The jīva is cinmaya (spiritual), and its only natural dharma is cinmaya service to Kṛṣṇa. The word 'sahaja' means saha-ja, i.e. that which arises along with the ātmā. Transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa is sahana (natural) for the pure ātmā, because it occurs along with the jīvātmā and thus it is naturally inherent. However, it is not natural in the stage of bondage to inanimate matter. Sahajiyās cheat others and are themselves cheated or deprived of their pure and natural love for Kṛṣṇa by transforming the union of man and woman into a mundane, supposedly natural dharma. In actuality, the union of man and woman is not a natural dharma. On the contrary, in the natural dharma of the ātmā, the union of the dull male and female bodies is extremely loathsome, depraved and inappropriate conduct. What is called sahajiyā-dharma nowadays is totally immoral, contrary to saintly behaviour and opposed to śāstra. Śuddha Vaiṣṇavas should be extremely careful in regard to this. That dharma in which the custom is to accept mantra in the left ear is in all respects a deviation.

“ We never find anywhere in the scriptures instructions such as, 'One should associate with a woman in order to attain Vrajendra-nandana'. On entering into madhurya-rasa the minute conscious jīva attains his own natural condition. Then there is no necessity whatsoever for associating with the inanimate material nature. Choṭa Haridāsa, himself being prakṛti (female), was rejected by Mahāprabhu for committing the offence of conversing in puruṣa-bhāva (male mood) with another

prakṛti. Licentious people create the path of their own sense gratification (see Antya-līlā 2.117), but śuddha Vaiṣṇavas neglect them. The association of a married woman is not part of bhajana even for householders, therefore this association of woman has been accepted in a regulated way free from sin for conducting household life. It is the opinion of pure Vaiṣṇavas that male sādhakas should perform bhajana and remain separate from female sādhakas. A female sādhaka should not invite any male person to her bhajana party. Bhajana is a completely spiritual activity. When even the slightest mundane sentiment is allowed to enter it becomes ruined.”

h) Bheka-praṇālī and siddha-praṇālī

In recent times in Bengal and in places such as Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Vṛndāvana in Vraja the custom called bheka-dhāraṇa and siddha-praṇālī has perverted the intrinsic nature of the śuddha-bhakti established by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Six Gosvāmīs. Without consideration of qualification or disqualification these people give siddha-praṇālī and bābājī veśa to adulterous fellows, debauchees and ordinary people who are ignorant of śāstra and siddhānta. Having adopted this base practice, those people fall to even greater depths of corruption and depravity.

i) Bheka-dhāraṇa (the system of bābājī-veśa)

From when was the custom of bheka-dhāraṇa² in use? On making an investigation we see that this custom was not current at the time of the Six Gosvāmīs, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī and so on because these personalities were instinctively paramahaṁsas. Naturally Śrī Sanātāna Gosvāmī, taking an old dhotī from Tapana Misra, tore it up and wore it as bahir-vāsa and ḍor-kaupīna (loin cloth worn by a paramahaṁsa). There is no mention at all of giving siddha-praṇālī³ in this connection. This dress of a renunciate was adopted simply to indicate a firm dedication to bhajana. Similarly, one should understand the case to be the same in regard to the other Gosvāmīs. In one way, this is included in category of the bhikṣuka (mendicant) āśrama or sannyāsa because paramahaṁsa mahātmās do not have any definite or fixed dress. They are beyond rules, regulations and the distinguishing marks of the āśramas such as sannyāsa. Since they are always carried away in bhagavat-prema, the regulations and prohibitions of scriptures such as the Vedas are no impetus for such paramahaṁsas. However those people who are not in the paramahaṁsa stage accept vaiṣṇava sannyāsa according to sāttvata vaiṣṇava-smṛti such as Satkriyāsāra-dīpika or according to the same regulations they wear a white outer cloth and ḍor-kaupīna. This is for firm dedication to sādhana-bhajana, and is called bheka-dhāraṇa. The word ‘bheka’ is a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word ‘bheṣa.’ Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in his essay entitled ‘Bheka-Dhāraṇa (reprinted in Gauḍīya Patrikā Year 6, No. 2):

“The word ‘bheka’ is properly understood to mean the āśrama of bhikṣuka (mendicants). The name of the sannyāsa āśrama is bhikṣu-āśrama. Sannyāsīs can never associate with women in this life. They will sustain their lives by the occupation of begging.

“Here a question arises. In which āśrama are those Vaiṣṇavas who have accepted bheka situated? Our studies of śāstra and the instructions of Mahāprabhu establish that detached Vaiṣṇavas are situated in the bhikṣu-āśrama. When the association of women is completely forbidden for them then they are situated in the sannyāsa āśrama. The sign of sannyāsa is kaupīna (loin cloth). When they have accepted ḍor-kaupīna or bahirvāsa (outer-garment) then they are definitely included in the sannyāsa āśrama.

“Sannyāsa is of two kinds, ordinary sannyāsa and vaiṣṇava sannyāsa. There is a vast difference between these two. In ordinary sannyāsa there is peacefulness, self-control, tolerance, renunciation, knowledge of the eternal and the temporary and the ambition to attain Brahman. When these dharmas have arisen in an individual, then sannyāsa has been accepted. However, the presence of these qualities does not by itself provide eligibility for vaiṣṇava-sannyāsa.

The process for developing rati for Bhagavān begins first of all with faith in subjects related to Bhagavān. After that one proceeds to sādhu-saṅga, bhajana-kriyā, anartha-nivṛtti and so on. At the stage when rati for Bhagavān arises in the heart, a dharma called virakti (detachment) takes shelter of the Vaiṣṇava. At that stage the vaiṣṇava-sādhaka becomes completely detached from the gṛhastha-āśrama. He then wears kaupīna to minimize his personal necessities, and maintains his life by begging. This is called vaiṣṇava-bheka. Those who are simple and free from duplicity and who accept bheka for the purpose of doing bhagavat-bhajana are worthy to receive the prayers of the whole world. This type of acceptance of bheka is of two kinds. Some sādhakas, after achieving detachment born of bhāva, accept bheka from a worthy guru; and some have put on ḍor-kaupīna and bahirvāsa themselves. In the sampradāya of Śrīman Mahāprabhu this custom of bheka is extremely pure. Bowing my head with great faith, I repeatedly offer my obeisances to such a tradition.

“However, it is very unfortunate that these days the bheka-āśrama is becoming extremely corrupted. The consideration of eligibility has completely disappeared. Some people, who want to wear bheka although they are unqualified, have their heads shaven, put on ḍor-kaupīna and accept bheka whimsically.

“In the present time some perversions have come in the system of sannyāsa. What are they?

(1) Some householder Vaiṣṇavas become bābājīs, having shaven their heads and put on a kaupīna. What can be more injurious than this? Their action is opposed to śāstra and to the interests of society. If they are actually detached from material life then they may accept bheka in genuine renunciation. Otherwise they will disgrace vaiṣṇava-dharma and in the next life they will also have to taste the fruit of doing so.

(2) There is a terrible and disastrous custom among bābājīs of keeping maidservants in their āśramas. In some āśramas a bābājī may even keep his own wife from his previous āśrama in the form of a maidservant. These people associate with women on the pretext of service to God and service to sādhus.

(3) Bābājīs who are actually renounced completely reject the greed for women, wealth, eatables and so on. Nowadays, common people are losing faith in Vaiṣṇavism, because they see that these defects are spreading among supposedly renounced people. The essence of the matter is that those who accept the symbols of renunciation without having developed the genuine detachment which arises from rati (love of Bhagavān) are a disturbance in society and a disgrace to vaiṣṇava-dharma. Their own downfall and the defamation of vaiṣṇava-dharma are both guaranteed when they accept bheka before they are qualified to do so.”

After Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a dark age began in Śrīman Mahā-prabhu’s Gauḍīya Sampradāya, during which the current of śrī rūpānugā-bhakti became somewhat impaired. Various kinds of speculative malpractices and opinions opposed to śuddha-bhakti became mixed in with the true conception. At that time the situation was so dire that the educated and cultured section of society began to hate even the name of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, having witnessed the misbehaviour of its followers. In this way the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya became distanced from the intelligentsia and respected society.

At that time the Seventh Gosvāmī Saccidānanda Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appeared. These two personalities brought about a revolutionary transformation in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya and restored its lost dignity. To these two mahā-puruṣas and their followers goes the entire credit for whatever diffusion of Śrīman Mahā-prabhu’s nāma-saṅkīrtana and śuddha-bhakti has taken place among the learned and respectable sector of society, not only in India but also throughout the world. They have established the Gauḍīya Maṭha preaching centres of śuddha-bhakti everywhere; they have published the literatures of śuddha-bhakti along with magazines and journals in all of the major languages of the world; and thus in a very short time they have revolutionized the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society. After the disappearance of Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda these improper practices began to appear openly in all the prominent places of Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala. These groups of bābājīs began to make allegations against Śrīla Prabhupāda and the śuddha-vaiṣṇavas under his shelter. They said that Vaiṣṇavas of the Gauḍīya Maṭha are simple jñānīs who are ignorant of rasa-tattva, and that their acceptance of reddish cloth and sannyāsa is not properly established procedure. Paramārādhya-tama Śrīla Gurudeva has refuted these accusations with scriptural evidence and powerful arguments and has preached śuddha-bhakti everywhere. For this purpose he had the essays previously written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Jagadguru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda published again in his Śrī Gauḍīya-Patrikā and Bhāgavat-Patrikā. He published a literature entitled ‘Sahajiyā-dalana’ (destroying the sahajiyā theory) and also argued these points in huge assemblies in many places in Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala. As a result of this the opposition party made a case to prosecute him for loss of reputation in a court of law. However in the end they had to beg forgiveness in the same courtroom.

ii) Siddha-praṇālī

Siddha-praṇālī is very much misused nowadays in certain places in Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala. Some people are abused and even driven from their homes when their wives pass away. Although they are bereft of tattva-jñāna and unaware of vaidhī-bhakti-sādhana, they have their heads shaved in the middle of the night, put on kaupīna and quickly take siddha-praṇālī. These days siddha-praṇālī can be obtained very easily by giving half a rupee. Just before giving mantra a financial contract takes place. These people think, “There can be no auspiciousness for sādhakas until they acquire siddha-praṇālī. There is no necessity for vaidhī-bhakti sādhana, tattva-jñāna or anartha-nivṛtti. The rāgānugā-bhakta should obtain siddha-praṇālī before he goes through anartha-nivṛtti. In that way he can avoid getting caught in the inconvenience of vaidhī-bhakti.” These people’s conception is exactly like thinking that a fruit will grow from a leaf before the appearance of a flower.

About fifty-five years ago, we were performing Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā with Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva. Approximately four hundred pilgrims attending the parikramā were staying in a large dharma-sālā in Mathurā. Gurudeva had made a big feast there, to which all the local sādhus, saints and Vaiṣṇavas had been invited. Bābājīs who had accepted bheka also assembled there in very large numbers. When they came to meet with Śrīla Gurudeva, he became very curious and asked them, “What is the aim and object of your Kṛṣṇa bhajana?” They were taken aback when they heard this question, but after thinking about it they said, “By performing Kṛṣṇa bhajana we will attain mukti and merge into Kṛṣṇa.” When Gurujī heard their answer, he became very sad. On questioning them further, he found that women were also staying in their āśramas as maidservants. From that day on, he vowed to reform these malpractices which had spread in the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava society. I have indicated this before. In spite of being busy in preaching śuddha-bhakti throughout his life, he never forgot this matter. A great deal of credit for the improvement and reform of this situation goes to this mahā-puruṣa. Here I am presenting whatever views I have heard from him on this subject.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has defined the following sequence which we have to follow in order to enter into the realm of bhakti.

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅga ‘tha bhajana-kriyā
tato ‘nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sadhakānām ayaṁ premnaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

Bhakti flees very far away when the sādhaka transgresses this sequence. Therefore it is extremely necessary to execute the first aṅga of sādhana-bhakti, namely vaidhī-bhakti or regulative devotional service, in order to enter the realm of prema. Vaidhī-bhakti is not directly the cause of the attainment of Kṛṣṇa prema. Still, it is necessary to observe the appropriate limbs of vaidhī-bhakti in order to enter into rāga-mārga. Vaidhī-bhakti is established on the steadfast foundation of scriptural

evidence and it is endowed with powerful codes of correct behaviour. Moreover, there is no particular difference between the observance of the limbs of rāgānugā sādhana-bhakti and vaidhī-bhakti. The difference is only in devotion to the observance. Thus the aṅgas of vaidhī-bhakti sādhana cannot be neglected entirely. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī on the subject of the prayojana-tattva, which is Kṛṣṇa prema, he said,

kona bhagye kona jīvera 'sraddhā' yadi haya
tabe sei jīva 'sādhu-sanga' ye karaya
sadhhu-sanga haite haya 'sravana-kirtana'
sadhana-bhaktye haya 'sarvānārtha-nivartana'
anārtha-nivṛtti haile bhaktye 'niṣṭha' haya
niṣṭha haite śravaṇādye 'ruci' upajaya
ruci haite bhaktye haya 'āsakti pracura
āsakti haite citte janme kṛṣṇe prity-aṅkura
sei 'bhava' gadha haile dhare 'prema'-nāma
sei prema— 'prayojana' sarvānanda-dhāma
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 23.9-13)

“If by good fortune a jīva develops śraddhā, he begins to associate with sādhus, and in that company he engages in hearing and chanting. By following sādhana-bhakti he becomes free from all anarthas and advances with firm faith (niṣṭhā) whereby ruci (taste) awakens for sravaṇa, kīrtana and so on. After ruci, then āsakti (deep attachment) arises, and from abundant āsakti the seed of prīti (affection) is born in the heart. When that emotion intensifies, it is called prema. This prema is life's ultimate goal and the abode of all joy.”

It is quite impossible for one who transgresses this sequence to enter the realm of bhakti. Thus, those who want to enter this domain while neglecting the limbs of vaidhī sādhana-bhakti are in all respects unrestrained and outside the conclusions of śāstra. They have no relation at all with śuddha-bhakti.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also expressed the same opinion.

vidhi-mārga rata jane svādhīnatā ratna-dāne
rāga-mārga karāna praveśa

By considering the gradations of sādhya-vastu (objectives) we find that the prema of Śrīmatī Rādhājī for Kṛṣṇa is the crest-jewel. Furthermore, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained that the sādhya for the living entities is Rādhā dāsyā, service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā imbued with pārakīya-bhāva. In order to obtain that sādhya-vastu, sādhana is necessary.

sādhya-vastu sādhana vinā keha nāhi pāya
kṛpā kari kaha rāya pābāra upāya
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.197)

“The goal of life (sādhya-vastu) cannot be achieved unless one accepts the appropriate process (sādhana). Now, being merciful upon Me, please explain that means by which this goal can be attained.”

In reply to this Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda says,
rādhā-kṛṣṇera līlā ei ati gūḍhatara
dāsyā-vātsalyādi-bhāve nā haya gocara
sabe eka sakhī-ganera ihān ādhikāra
sakhī haite haya ei līlāra vistāra
sakhī vinā ei līlā puṣṭa nāhi haya
sakhī līlā vistāriyā, sakhī āsvādaya
sakhī vinā ei līlāya anyera nāhi gati
sakhī-bhāve ye tāñre kare anugati
rādhā-kṛṣṇa kuñja-sevā-sādhya sei pāya
sei sādhyā pāite āra nāhika upāya
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8. 201-205)

“The pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are very confidential and cannot be understood through the mellows of servitude, fraternity or paternal affection. Actually, only the gopis have the right to appreciate these transcendental pastimes, and only from them can these pastimes be expanded. Without the gopis, these pastimes between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa cannot be nourished. Only by their cooperation are such pastimes broadcast. It is their business to taste the mellows. One cannot enter into these pastimes without the help of the gopis. Only one who does bhajana in the ecstasy of the gopis, following in their footsteps, can engage in the service of Sri Sri Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the groves of Vṛndāvana. Only then can one understand the conjugal love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. There is no other procedure for understanding.”

ataeva gopī-bhāva kari angikara
ratri-dina cinte rādhā-kṛṣṇera vihara
siddha-dehe cinti' kare tahanni sevana
sakhī-bhāve paya rādhā-kṛṣṇera caraṇa
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8. 228-229)

“Therefore one should accept the mood of the gopis in their service. In such a transcendental mood, one should always think of the pastimes of Sri Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. After meditating on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa for a long time in the internally conceived spiritual body, one attains the opportunity to serve the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as one of the Vraja devīs.”

Essentially the gist of the matter is that the love-laden līlā of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is so confidential and so full of mysteries that it is imperceptible, even for those in moods such as dāsyā and vātsalya. Only the sakhīs are eligible for this. Therefore, no one can attain the service of Śrīmatī Rādhikā or the kuñja-sevā of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala by sādhana without anugatya of the sakhīs, that is being under their guidance. Thus the only means of attaining this supreme sādhyā is meditation on the līlās of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa throughout the day and night by the internally conceived siddha-deha and in the mood of the sakhīs. For this reason, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given this instruction in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu in the section on the sādhana of śrī rāgānugā-bhakti:

kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janañ cāsyā preṣṭhaṁ nija samīhitam
tat-tat kathā rataś cāsau kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā
sevā sādha-ka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad bhāva lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ
śravaṇotkīrttanādīni vaidhī bhakty uditāni tu
yānyaṅgāni ca tānyatra vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ

Here Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned two types of sādhana in rāgānugā bhakti-sevā:

sevā sādha-ka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad bhāva lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ

When there is lobha, greed for rāgātmikā bhakti, rāgānugā bhakti is executed in two ways: in the sādha-ka-rūpa, the external body in which one is presently situated, and in the siddha-rūpa. Eagerly desiring to attain rati for Kṛṣṇa or the bhāva (ecstatic sentiments) of one's chosen associates of Kṛṣṇa, one must follow the associates of Vrajaloka such as Lalitā, Viśākhā, Rūpa Mañjarī and their followers such as Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī. One must render bodily service with the sādha-ka-rūpa following the great authorities residing in Vraja such as Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana. And with the siddha-rūpa one must render mānasī-sevā following the vrajavāsīs such as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and others. The meaning of the above verse has been given in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta in this way.

bāhya, antara — ihāra dui ta' sādhana
'bāhye' sādha-ka-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana
'mane' nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana
(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya, 22.156-157)

“This rāgānuga bhakti is performed in two ways: externally and internally.

Externally, in the sādha-ka body, the devotee engages in hearing and chanting. In his mind, in his internally conceived, perfected, spiritual body he serves Kṛṣṇa in Vraja day and night.”

Thus rāgānugā-bhakti sādhas should in all respects practise bhāva-sambandhi sādhana such as śravaṇa, kīrtana, service to tulasī, wearing tilaka, observing vows beginning with Śrī Ekādaśī and Janmāṣṭamī and so on, for all these activities nourish one's own desired bhāva. Simultaneously one must also render service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, meditating on one's siddha-deha in the heart. The body of a gopī which is suitable for rendering service to Rādhā-Govinda is called siddha-deha.

When the bhajana is complete, the jīva gives up the inert material body, and attains the body of a gopī corresponding to its eternal intrinsic form.

Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura has said,
sādhane bhābiba jāhā siddha-dehe pāba tāhā
rāga pathera ei se upāya
(Śrī Prema Bhakti-candrika 5.8)

“Whatever subject is constantly meditated upon at the time of performing sādhana, that same subject is the prominent meditation at the time of death and it engrosses the citta (heart).”

One’s destination at the time of death will exactly correspond to the subject one remembers at that time. Rājarsi Bhārata attained the body of a deer at the time of death, so what doubt is there about attaining the body suitable for rendering to the Divine Couple the service on which one constantly reflected in one’s internally conceived siddha-deha?

In relation to the siddha-deha it has been said in the Sanat-Kumāra Saṁhitā,
ātmanaṁ cintayet tatra tāsāṁ madhye manoramāṁ

rūpayauvanasampannāṁ kiśorīm premodāakṛtim

rādhikānuñcarī nityaṁ tat sevana parāyaṇāṁ

kṛṣṇād apy adhikaṁ prema rādhikāyāṁ prakurvati

Sadāśiva is giving instruction to Nāradaḥ on the subject of siddha-deha suitable for rendering service to the Divine Couple. “O Nārada! Meditate in this way upon your own svarūpa among Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved associates who take pride in being His paramours in the aprākṛta Vṛndāvana Dhāma. ‘I am an extremely lovely and supremely blissful kiśorī (adolescent girl), endowed with youthful beauty. I am an eternal maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Having arranged for Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dearest mistress Śrīmatī Rādhikā to meet with Him, I will always make them both happy. Therefore I am the maidservant of Rādhikā, the most beloved of Kṛṣṇa. Remaining always and forever engaged in the service of the Divine Couple, may I maintain more love for Śrīmatī than for Kṛṣṇa.’”

Now we should note that the descriptions of siddha-deha that śāstra and the mahājanas have given are for sādhakas of a particular level. Wherever siddha-deha has been mentioned it has been shown in the context of rāgānugā-bhakti.

Specifically such instructions are intended for those very fortunate sādhakas in whose hearts lobha, a genuine greed to attain rāgātmikā-bhakti, has already arisen due to saṁskāras (impressions) from this life and previous lives.

Here is a further matter which is worthy of consideration. It is one thing to understand the excellence of some particular rasa by the discrimination given in śāstra. It is another thing altogether to have lobha for that rasa. When someone has lobha in a particular rasa, then the symptoms of lobha will also be evident in that sādhaka. When lobha arises, rāgānugā-bhakti sādhana begins from the stage of ruci. It will be understood from this that the nāmāparādha, sevāparādha and various other anarthas of a sādhaka have, for the most part, already gone far away. He has already controlled the six urges mentioned by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in Śrī Upadeśāmṛta (Verse 1); he is virtually free from the six faults (Verse 2); he is endowed with the six qualities beginning with utsāhān niścayāt (enthusiasm and confidence) (Verse 3); having recognized the three types of Vaiṣṇavas, he is expert in behaving appropriately with them (Verse 5); and he has also become established in the purport

of the verse beginning tan nāma rūpa caritādi (Verse 8). In other words he conducts himself according to this verse.

In this stage the sādḥaka goes on performing bhajana, and when he crosses the stage of ruci and enters the stage of āsakti then a semblance of the symptoms related by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in the verse kṣāntir-avyartha-kālatvaṁ will be observed in him. In the stage of āsakti, a semblance (ābhāsa) of the rati which arises in the stage of bhāva will appear, and in order to make that rati manifest fully, the sādḥaka will perform bhajana meditating on his siddha-deha. When this ratyābhāsa transforms into rati by the practice of bhajana, then the sādḥaka attains factual experience of his own svarūpa. This is called meditation on siddha-deha, or the acceptance of vaiṣṇava-bheka. One who is endowed with simplicity and who has lobha for this is worshipful for the whole world.

There are two types of acceptance of bheka. A sādḥaka may receive bheka from some suitable guru; alternatively, when genuine vairāgya arises as mentioned previously, he may accept bheka from himself. Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the Six Gosvāmīs, Lokanātha Gosvāmī and others are examples of the practice of accepting bheka from oneself. This is also the way that Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted sannyāsa veśa after the disappearance of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī from whom he had received dikṣā-mantra. We see from these examples that acceptance of bheka in this way is fully in agreement with śāstra. Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya also accepted tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa from himself after the disappearance of his guru Śrīla Yamuna Ācārya.

In any case, the meditation on one's siddha-deha depends on the mercy of one's guru. The guru or śikṣā-guru who is established in rasa-vicāra and who is a svarūpa-siddha will indicate the details of the sādḥaka's perfected form. Otherwise, if the sādḥaka changes the order of the sequence described above, he cannot attain perfection. On the contrary, his bhakti may become completely ruined and the conceptions of the sampradāya will also become corrupted. We see this going everywhere nowadays.

Some ignorant people say that there is no siddha-praṇālī in the Gauḍīya Maṭha. This vicious propaganda is erroneous in all respects. In the authentic literature written by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī entitled Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā and Saṁskāra-dīpikā, which is a supplement to Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, there is an account of the tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa saṁskāra. The original manuscript handwritten by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī is protected even today in the Royal Library of Jaipur. An old copy of this same literature is also kept to this day by the Gosvāmīs of Śrī Rādhā-Ramana. Therefore this literature is authoritative evidence. According to Saṁskāra-dīpikā, tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa veśa is given among Gauḍīyas. In this sannyāsa saṁskāra, ḍor-kaupīna, bahir-vāsa and the sannyāsa-mantra for taking shelter of gopī-bhāva are also given. The eka-daśa-bhāva (eleven aspects of gopī-bhāva), namely sambandha, vayaḥ, nāma, rūpa, yūtha, veśa, ājñā, vāsa, sevā, parākāṣṭhā-śvāsa and pālya-dāsi-bhāva, are contained within this gopī-bhāva. The identity of the siddha-deha is

determined by the instructions of Śrī Guru in accordance with the ruci of the sādḥaka. One's own nāma, rūpa, vayasa, veśa, sambandha, yūtha, ājñā, vāsa, parākāṣṭhā-śvāsa and pālya-dāsī bhāva given by guru is called siddha-praṇālī. As the sādḥaka goes on performing this type of sādḥana, the perfection of his svarūpa takes place along with the attainment of śuddha-rati in his heart.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has described his siddha-svarūpa in this way.

varaṇe taḍit vāsa tārāvalī
kamala mañjarī nāma
sāḍe bāra varṣa vayasa satata
svānanda sukhada dhāma
karpūra sevā lalitāra gaṇa
rādhā yūtheśvarī hana
mameśvarī-nātha śrī Nanda-nandana
āmāra parāṇa dhana
śrī rūpa mañjarī prabhṛtira sama
yugala sevāya āśa
avaśya se-rūpa sevā pāba āmi
parākāṣṭhā suviśvāsa
kabe bā e dāsī saṁsiddhi labhibe
rādhā-kuṇḍe vāsa kari'
rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevā satata karibe
pūrva smṛti parihari'

“My complexion is like a flash of lightning and my dress is bedecked with twinkling stars. My name is Kamala Mañjarī and I am eternally twelve-and-a-half years old. My abode is Svānanda Sukhada Kuñja. My service is to supply camphor to Śrī Yugala. I serve in the gaṇa of Lalitā and Śrī Rādhā is my yūtheśvarī. The Beloved of my Svāminī, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, is the treasure of my life. I aspire to serve Śrī Yugala like Rūpa Mañjarī and others, and I am confident that I will surely attain this service. This is my highest aspiration. Oh, when will this maidservant attain complete perfection and, residing at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, serve Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in complete forgetfulness of my past?”

In conclusion, whatever custom of accepting bhēka is seen among bābājīs is not a fifth āśrama, rather it is a second form of the fourth āśrama, namely the sannyāsa āśrama.

Thus end the Sixth Part of The Life and Teachings of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī by
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

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Seventh Part

Śrīla Gurudeva and vaiṣṇava literature

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva had the opulence of being exceptionally brilliant in all spheres. No one could equal him in organising an ideal society, and at the same

time he was also uniquely attached to transcendental knowledge. He was a mature and profound scholar of philosophy, and a rasika poet as well. It is very rare to find a person who is so extremely talented in such diverse fields. He had the gift of astonishing everyone with his ever-fresh thoughts and feelings, and it was a natural part of his life to compose Vaiṣṇava literatures expressing new siddhānta and realizations. He enriched the treasure-house of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature, not only by publishing the authentic compositions of previous ācāryas, but also by personally composing new books, articles, essays, prayers and poems which were full of siddhānta and rasa. Here is an appreciation of a few of his prayers, essays and sweet poems.

‘The life history of māyāvāda’ or

‘The victory of vaiṣṇavism’

Paramārādhyā Śrīla Ācārya Kesari considered that śuddha-bhakti cannot be propagated completely as long as the conception of māyāvāda exists in the world. It is therefore very essential to uproot māyāvāda and for this reason he composed a book entitled The Life History of Māyāvāda or The Victory of Vaiṣṇavism. Here is a brief account of the essence of this book.

a) What is māyāvāda?

The word māyā generally indicates jaḍā-śakti (the potency of inert matter) or avidyā-śakti (the potency of nescience), which is the shadow of the svarūpa-śakti (internal potency) of para-tattva. She is the presiding deity of the material world. It is this very potency which leads a living entity in material bondage to identify himself with the physical body, to consider the objects connected with the body to be his own, and to accept the shelter of māyāvāda.

The māyāvāda doctrine is that Brahman is an undifferentiated or homogeneous spirit, which is devoid of any potency or attributes. From this point of view, then, there can be no existence of a distinct māyā potency with the characteristic function of creating illusion. However, māyāvādīs also assert that the jīva is actually Brahman, and that the apparent existence of the living entity separate from Brahman is simply an illusion, which is created by the influence of māyā or avidyā. As long as māyā exists, the jīva will remain. In this respect, māyāvādīs consider that the māyā potency does exist. According to the māyāvāda doctrine, then, māyā (ignorance or illusion) has the specific, distinguishing characteristic of being both sat (existing) and asat (non-existing), and is therefore inexpressible. People who hold this deceptive opinion are māyāvādīs, or impersonalists. According to the māyāvāda conception, īśvara, like the jīva, is also in the clutches of māyā. However, the difference between īśvara and the living entity is that jīvas are forced to accept the fruits of their actions, whereas īśvara covered by māyā does not have to accept the fruits of action. Vaiṣṇava ācāryas have pointed out that this idea is contrary both to sāstra and to logic.

The author of Vedānta-sūtra, the omniscient Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, who divided the Vedas, has declared in his own composition, PadmaPurāṇa, that māyāvāda is false and against the Vedas.

māyāvādam asac-chāstram
pracchannaṁ bauddham ucyate
(Padma Purāṇa, Uttara khaṇḍa 25.7)

and furthermore:

vedārthan mahā-śāstram māyāvādam aavidikam
māyāiva vihitam devī jagatām nāśa-kāraṇāt
svāgamaiḥ kalpitais tvaṁ ca janān mad-vimukhān kuru
mām ca gopaya yena syāt sṛṣṭir eṣottarottarā
(Padma Purāṇa, Uttara khaṇḍa 62.31)

Vaiṣṇava ācāryas such as Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya, Śrī Madhva Ācārya, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Vallabha Ācārya, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Śrī Baladeva Vidhyābhūṣaṇa have pointed out that Śāṅkara Ācārya is a hidden Buddhist and that his doctrine is covered Buddhism. Some scholars of the Śāṅkara Sampradāya think that Vaiṣṇavas only say this out of envy, but in this they are mistaken. Many scholars who are not Vaiṣṇavas have also accepted Śāṅkara as the one who nurtured the flow of the Buddhist conception. These scholars include Vijñāna-bhikṣu, who was a prominent scholar of sāṅkhya philosophy; learned yogīs of the Patañjali doctrine; and even Buddhist scholars. Now we will show the similarities between the views of Ācārya Śāṅkara and Buddha.

b) Is this world false?

Buddha stated that the world is śūnya-tattva (void or non-existent) in all the three phrases of time. Everything of the world is śūnya, non-existent, in the beginning, middle and end.

Ācārya Śāṅkara also taught that the cause of the world is a principle called avidyā (ignorance), which is devoid of past, present and future. This principle of ignorance is inexpressible due to its special characteristic of being neither existent nor non-existent. Brahma satyaṁ jagat mithyā: “Brahman is real and the world is false.”

nidrāmohāt svapnavat tan na satyam śuddhaḥ pūrṇo nitya ekaḥ śivo ‘ham
(Ātma-pañcaka 3)

It is clear that Buddha’s śūnya and Ācārya Śāṅkara’s dream-like mithyā (falsehood) are both one and the same. Only the words are different. There is no difference between Buddha’s trikāla-śūnyatva (voidism in the three phases of time) and Ācārya Śāṅkara’s inexpressible principle of existence and non-existence.

c) The means of liberation

Many scriptures of the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism have said that the only means of achieving liberation is prajñā-pāramitā which is the same as tattva-jñāna or knowledge of Reality. Buddhism teaches that one should understand that this whole world is a source of grief and is full of sorrows. To attain complete relief from this suffering, one should try to obtain knowledge of reality (tattva-jñāna).

Ācārya Śaṅkara also says that, although the world is false, it is still the source of suffering, and is filled with intense misery. The condition of complete freedom from the grief of this distressful world is called mokṣa (liberation). The cause of this liberation from material existence is knowledge of the oneness of Brahman and jīva, and of Brahman and this illusory existence. This knowledge is tattva-jñāna, and without it one cannot attain the perfection of oneness. Tattva-jñāna (knowledge of Reality) or brahma-jñāna (knowledge of Brahman) is the only cause of the complete annihilation of avidyā.

When we examine both opinions, we see that Buddha's prajñā and Ācārya Śaṅkara's brahma-jñāna are identical; there is no real difference between them at all. We can verify this with the observation that Ācārya Śaṅkara, having quoted the mantra 'prajñānam brahma' from Taittirīya Upaniṣad, has consistently supported the opinion of the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism with regard to prajñā-pāramitā. In this way Ācārya Śaṅkara has propagated tattva-jñāna (the theory that Brahman and jīva are one) by following in the footsteps of Buddha's doctrine, prajñā or prajñā-pāramitā.

There is no difference between Buddha's śūnya and Śaṅkara's Brahman. In the nineteenth verse of the Buddhists' Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra, in relation to supreme liberation in the form of śūnya-tattva, it has been written:

śaktaḥ kṣtvāmihastotum nirṇimittam nirañjanam
sarvavāg viṣayātītām yā tvam kvacidaniśritā

It is clear from the above verse that śūnya-tattva is untainted, causeless, unborn, non-existent, without any support and is inexpressible through speech. It is unimpeded, imperishable and also immeasurable. These are the specific symptoms of śūnya-tattva. Śaṅkara, for his part, states that Brahman is spotless and formless, and without variety, potency and distinct qualities. It is clear, then, that there is no difference between Śaṅkara's brahma-tattva and Buddha's śūnya-tattva. Śaṅkara Ācārya himself has actually referred to Brahman as śūnya.

draṣṭṛdarśana-dṛśyādibhāva śūnyaika vastuni
nirvikāre nirākāre nirviśeṣe bhidā kutaḥ
nityo 'ham nirvado 'ham nirākāro 'ham akśaraḥ
paramānanda rupo 'ham aham evāham avyayaḥ

In the Amara-koṣa, Buddha has been called an advaya-vādī (non-dualist). The followers of Śaṅkara Ācārya also introduce themselves as kevalādvaita-vādīs (pure non-dualists), so there is agreement between the two at this point as well. Readers can judge for themselves whether or not there is any difference of opinion between Śaṅkara and Buddha.

Although there is no specific difference between advaya-vāda and advaita-vāda, Ācārya Śaṅkara still named his doctrine advaita-vāda and not advaya-vāda (Buddhism). Why did he conceal this truth when he was fully aware in the core of his heart that he was a Buddhist? The reason for this was not a philosophical difference. The real cause was the order of his worshipful Lord, Śrī Bhagavān.

Śaṅkaraḥ śaṅkaraḥ sākṣāt: Ācārya Śaṅkara is the direct incarnation of Śaṅkara, or Lord Siva, who is the most exalted Vaiṣṇava and dear devotee of the Lord. Indeed, Lord Siva is regarded as the guru of Vaiṣṇavas.

At the time when Ācārya Śaṅkara made his appearance in India, the general mass of ordinary people were deviating from the principles of varṇāśrama because of the influence of the Buddhist doctrine of śūnya-vāda. Even the brahminical class of men were also rejecting Vedic dharma in favour of Buddhism. At that time Lord Śaṅkara incarnated as Śaṅkara Ācārya, who was endowed with extraordinary powers. He then transformed śūnya-vāda into brahma-vāda and re-established the honour and authority of the Vedas. India will remain eternally indebted to Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya for accomplishing this extraordinary task. Establishing the false doctrine of brahma-vāda on the foundation of Vedic authority was only a temporary achievement. However, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya, Śrī Madhva and other vaiṣṇava ācāryas later erected the palace of Vaiṣṇavism on the foundation that Śaṅkara Ācārya made. We have already mentioned the orders of Bhagavān to Śrī Śaṅkara. Śrī Viṣṇu said to Śrī Rudra (Padma Purāṇa),

mām ca gopaya yena syāt sṛṣṭireṣottarottarā

“Cover Me in such a way that people will take more interest in advancing material civilization just to propagate a population bereft of spiritual knowledge.”

d) The history of māyāvāda

Śrīla Ācārya Kesari conducted research into the history of impersonalism from Satya-yuga to¹ the present age of Kali, and has given us a bird's-eye view of māyāvāda. Scholars of philosophy have concluded that Ācārya Śaṅkara's nirviśeṣa kevalādvaita-vāda (non-variegated exclusive monism) is not the same as the advaita-vāda which was current prior to his time. On the contrary, the advaita-vāda prior to Ācārya Śaṅkara is Vedic, for we find it described in the Vedas and Upaniṣads. The Vedic literatures state that the aupaniṣadika Brahman (the Supreme Truth as defined by the Upaniṣads) is neither without potency nor devoid of transcendental attributes. They also state that the world is perishable but not false. Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the four Kumāras led by Sanaka and Sanatana were fixed in meditation on this nirguṇa (without qualities) Brahman. However, this Brahman was not an inexpressible principle with the special characteristic of being both existent and non-existent. Later by the mercy of pure Vaiṣṇavas they were established in śuddha-bhakti.

The jñāna-yoga of the four Kumāras was somewhat unfavourable to śuddha-bhakti, so their father Brahmā pleaded with Śrī Bhagavān, who advented in the form of a swan and instructed them in the process of bhakti-yoga. This narration is found in the Seventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, an adherent of the unqualified Supreme Truth, entered into the realm of śuddha-bhakti by the mercy of Śrī Vedavyāsa, a śaktyāveśāvātara (empowered incarnation) of Bhagavān. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has himself accepted this fact in the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

e) Advaita-vāda in Satya-yuga

In Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya's commentary on Brahma-sūtra 3.2.17, he has accepted as evidence the dialogue between Bādhva and Vāskali. Bādhva was the guru of Vāskali, who was a famous advaita-vādī during Satya-yuga. Now Vāskali was the son of Anuhlāda, who was in turn a son of Hiraṇyakaśipu; Vāskali, like Hiraṇyakaśipu, was by nature a ferocious demon. There are many such examples in the history of impersonalism in different yugas. All the great demons were either advaita-vādīs or māyāvādīs. This proves that the impersonal conception is especially honoured in the dynasty of demons. Impartial and soft-hearted sages who took to advaita-vāda were saved from the devouring mouth of māyāvāda and their hearts were purified by the mercy received from the incarnations of Bhagavān. But stone-hearted demons, who had fanatical, blind faith in opinions which are opposed to the śāstras, could not receive bhakti-tattva. Therefore incarnations of Bhagavān destroyed these demons to safeguard the dignity of bhakti-tattva. Śrī Vāmanadeva appeared in the evil sacrifice of Vāskali or Vāskala and delivered him.

f) The evolution of nirviśeṣa advaita-vāda in Treta-yuga

Vaśiṣṭha

Śrī Vaśiṣṭha Muni was the main ācārya of advaita-vāda in Treta-yuga. He was the family priest of the kings belonging to the surya-vaṁśa (sun-dynasty), and he was also a brahma-jñānī. No one disputes this fact, and his Yogavāśiṣṭha Rāmāyana is irrefutable evidence.

The brahma-vādī Vaśiṣṭha Muni used to impart the knowledge of the undivided Brahman to his disciples. Bhagavān Śrī Ramacandrajī felt great pain on seeing His family priest wandering in the forest of brahma-vāda, so He mercifully rescued him and Vaśiṣṭha Muni offered himself in the service of Śrī Rāmacandra.

Rāvaṇa

Rāvaṇa was the chief of the rākṣasa dynasty, and was the son of Viśravā Ṛṣi, who was in turn the son of Pulastya Ṛṣi. Viśravā Ṛṣi left his place of residence in Brahmavarta and stayed for five days in Laṅka, where he married the daughter of a rākṣasa. Rāvaṇa took birth from the womb of this demon's daughter, and was thus half ṛṣi and half rākṣasa. He can be called an advaita-vādī, for prominent philosophers in Ācārya Śaṅkara's line accept him as the first commentator on monistic advaita-siddhānta. The Buddhist sampradāya's Lankāvatāra-sūtra also states that Rāvaṇa was a well-known advaita-vādī and śūnya-vādī ṛṣi. This shows the similarity between advaita-vāda and śūnya-vāda.

The māyāvādīs want to take away the potency of Brahman in order to establish that the Supreme Truth is powerless. Rāvaṇa tried to steal away Sītādevī, the eternal potency of Parabrahma Śrī Rāmacandra. For this offence, the great devotee Hanumān dealt a powerful punch of bhakti-siddhānta to Rāvaṇa's heart. This vanquished his advaita-jñāna and he fainted and fell flat on the ground. Śrī Rāmacandra then used the unerring arrow of veda-dhvani (the sound of the Vedas)

to cut off Rāvaṇa's ten heads, which signify the ten principles of nirvāṇa. That is the significance of the deliverance of Rāvaṇa.

g) Advaita-vāda and its transformations in Dvāpara-yuga

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī was the son of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa and Viṭikā-devī, the daughter of Javāli Ṛṣi. Śukadeva stayed in his mother's womb for twelve years until, on the request of his father, he relieved his mother's pain and came out as a liberated soul. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa have narrated the story of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī's birth in detail. From birth he was fixed in nirguṇa Brahman. However, by the mercy of the śaktyaveśa avatāra Śrīla Vedavyāsa, he became a great rasika and bhāvuka bhakta. He narrated Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to Mahārāja Parikṣit, who had been cursed to die after seven days. Although Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a brahma-jñānī, by the mercy of Śrīla Vyāsadeva he realized the superiority of the sweet pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān, who is extolled in choice poetry, and he became attracted to follow the path of śuddha-bhakti. He imparted the teachings of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the faithful King Parikṣit, because he understood that the ultimate benefit for the jīvas lies only in hearing and chanting the topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which are saturated with the sweet and rasika pastimes of Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He did not instruct brahma-jñāna to Mahārāja Parikṣit, because it is impossible for the jīvas to achieve complete auspiciousness through brahma-jñāna. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī himself states this in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.9:

pariniṣṭhito 'pi nairguṇye uttamaḥ-śloka-līlayā

gr̥hīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānaṁ yad adhītavān

“O saintly King, I was certainly situated perfectly in Transcendence, yet I was still attracted by the delineation of the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is described by enlightened verses.”

Kaṁsa

Kaṁsa was born from the womb of Mahārāja Ugrasena's wife Padmā by the semen of the daitya (demon) Drumila. His nature was like the demonic nature of the rākṣasa King Drumila, and not like that of Mahārāja Ugrasena, who was endowed with godly qualities. Kaṁsa imprisoned Mahārāja Ugrasena and declared himself to be king. His paternal cousin Devakī married Vasudeva, and at the time of the wedding, a divine voice from the sky declared that the eighth child born from Devakī's womb would kill Kaṁsa. The atheist Kaṁsa wanted to kill Devakī in order to counter the prophecy and prove it false. However, after deliberating carefully, he arrested Devakī and Vasudeva and kept them in prison, thinking, “As soon as Bhagavān accepts a form and takes birth from the eighth pregnancy of Devakī, I will destroy Him.”

Māyāvādīs are opposed to the form of Bhagavān, for they do not accept that Brahman has a form. Their doctrine is that to accept a body is the action of māyā and to destroy the dharma of nescience is moksa. Kaṁsa was also of this same

opinion: “Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇacandra) is going to take birth by accepting a material body, so it will be very easy for me to kill him.” He did not know that the transcendental substance is beyond the jurisdiction of material substances, such as the material senses. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed him and also his followers such as Pūtanā, Agha, Baka, Tṛṇāvarta and Pralamba, and in this way established the special characteristics of His personal, transcendental form.

The fourth chapter of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda’s Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā refers to Kāmsa and Pralambāsura as covered Buddhists and māyāvādīs. Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva destroyed them and thus saved the jīvas from the devouring mouth of atheistic māyāvāda.

devakīm agrhīt kām̐sa nāstikya-bhaginīm satīm
pralambho jīvacaurastu śuddhena śauriṇā hataḥ
kām̐sena prerito duṣṭaḥ pracchanna bauddharūpadhṛk
(Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā)

”Vasudeva married the sister of the embodiment of atheism, Kāmsa. Śrī Baladeva killed jīva-caura, the vicious Pralambāsura, who was sent by Kāmsa and who signifies māyāvāda, or covered Buddhism.”

In this verse, the word jīva-caura is especially significant. Buddhists, like the māyāvādīs, also believe that Brahman becomes jīva through the effect of ignorance; in other words Brahman is perceived as jīva when it is covered with ignorance. This attempt to abduct form itself is caura or stealing. It is the nature of demons to destroy the individual form and to rob the jīva of his very existence. That is why these māyāvādīs and atheists are called jīva-caura. Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva re-established vaiṣṇava-dharma by destroying advaita-vāda in Dvāpara-yuga.

h) Advaita-vāda or māyāvāda in
Kali-yuga

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Liṅga Purāṇa, Bhaviṣya Purāṇa and Varāha Purāṇa describe Buddha as the ninth of the daśavatāra (ten incarnations). In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.40.22, obeisances have been offered to Viṣṇu Buddha: namo buddhāya śuddhāya daitya-dānava-mohine. This Viṣṇu Buddha was born in the beginning period of Kali-yuga (about 3,500 years ago, or 1,500 B.C.) in Gayā as the son of Añjana or Ajina. ‘Kālu prāpte yathā buddhau bhagavān nārāyaṇaḥ prabhu.’ About 500 B.C., another Buddha was born. This was Śākya-simha Gautama Buddha, who took birth as the son of Śuddhodhana and Māyādevī in Kapilavastu. Indian philosophers have acknowledged this Buddha as an atheist, because he rejected the Vedas and īśvara and instead propagated the philosophy of śūnya-vāda. His doctrines are known as bauddha-vāda or Buddhism.

It is important to understand that there are two Buddhas. They are both described in famous, authentic Buddhist scriptures such as Amara-koṣa, Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra and Lalitavistāra, which verify that Viṣṇu Buddha is not Gautama Buddha the son of Śuddhodhana. For more detailed information please refer to The History of Impersonalism.

Viṣṇu Buddha opposed the jīva-himsā (violence) mentioned in the Vedas, but He was not an atheist. Gautama Buddha was born 1,000 years after Viṣṇu Buddha, and was enlightened with tattva-jñāna in Bodhisattva (Gayā), Viṣṇu Buddha's birthplace. They are two different people. Gautama Buddha denied both the Vedas and īśvara and was thus a complete atheist. As we have already seen, Buddhists say that this world is śūnya (void). Śaṅkara Ācārya very cleverly used word jugglery to propagate Gautama Buddha's conception under the name of māyāvāda.

Ācārya Śaṅkara

Ācārya Śaṅkara's guru is Govindapāda and Govindapāda's guru is Gauḍapāda. We do not find any scripture written by Govindapāda, and it may be said that it is Gauḍapāda who is actually Śaṅkara Ācārya's guru. Gauḍapāda was a famous śūnya-vādī and his name is of great importance in the history of māyāvāda. His two texts Māṇḍukya-kārika (on which Ācārya Śaṅkara has written a commentary) and Sāṅkhya-kārika are the life and soul of māyāvāda. Thus Śaṅkara Ācārya actually followed Gauḍapāda and propagated his śūnya-vāda doctrine. Śaṅkara Ācārya defeated many smārta, śaiva, śākta and kāpālīka scholars in scriptural debate and made them his disciples. However, he never defeated any vaiṣṇava ācārya or scholar. There is no historical record anywhere of any Vaiṣṇava being defeated by Śaṅkara Ācārya, or giving up Vaiṣṇavism to accept advaita-vāda.

Śrī Śivanātha-śiromani's Śabdārtha-mañjarī sheds light on Śaṅkara Ācārya's life history. There we read that Śaṅkara Ācārya was eventually defeated in scriptural debate by a Tibetan Buddhist lāmā, who was at that time famous as a jagad-guru among the Buddhists. Before commencing the debate they vowed that the loser would give up his life by falling into a vessel filled with boiling oil. Ācārya Śaṅkara finally admitted defeat, and actually gave up his life as they had agreed. In this way, Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya, an effulgent flame in this world, departed in 812 A.D.

After Śaṅkara Ācārya's time, many prominent ācāryas of kevaladvaita-vāda or māyāvāda were defeated by vaiṣṇava ācāryas in scriptural debates. Others were influenced so much that they accepted Viṣṇu as the Supreme Absolute Truth, acknowledged the superiority of bhakti over jñāna, gave up kevaladvaita-vāda and accepted initiation into bhakti-dharma. We may cite as examples Yādavaprakāśa, Śrīdhara Svāmī, Śrī Bilvamaṅgala, Trivikrama Ācārya, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma and Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

i) Liberation is a false concept

We have briefly described the history of māyāvāda and critically analysed its doctrines in the light of historical evidence. We have seen that māyāvāda philosophy is based on extremely feeble logic. Consequently, from Satya-yuga until the present, māyāvādīs have constantly accepted defeat at the hands of their opponents on the battle-field of debate. People may still aspire to follow the path of māyāvāda and attain nirvāṇa, just because this doctrine existed in ancient times. To these people we want to say that the nirvāṇa-mukti of māyāvāda is completely and totally false. In reality the jīva can never attain any such state as nirvāṇa, because

the supposed condition of nirvāṇa-mukti is simply imaginary. We can use historical evidence to prove without any doubt that there is not even a single instance of any advaita-vādī attaining this condition. When we analyse the life histories of great māyāvādīs like Gauḍapāda, Govindapāda, Ācārya Śaṅkara and Mādhava, we see clearly that none of them achieved the nirvāṇa-mukti which they themselves supported.

According to Śaṅkara Ācārya's biography, after his grand-guru Gauḍapāda left his material body, he came into Śaṅkara Ācārya's trance when Śaṅkara Ācārya was absorbed in his meditation one day, and said, "Śaṅkara! I have heard your praises from your Gurudeva, Ācārya Govindapāda. I have also heard that you have composed a beautiful commentary on my Māṇḍukya-kārikā. I want to see it." Ācārya Śaṅkara immediately showed Gauḍapāda the commentary. Gauḍapāda felt very happy to see it and, after giving his approval, he left.

From the above incident it is evident that Gauḍapāda and Govindapāda did not become liberated from their material bodies and achieve nirvāṇa-mukti. In the first place, how could Gauḍapāda hear about Śaṅkara from the mouth of Govindapāda, if both Gauḍapāda and Govindapāda had achieved nirvāṇa-mukti? Secondly, how could Ācārya Śaṅkara show his commentary on Māṇḍukya-kārikā to Gauḍapāda, if Gauḍapāda was a nirvāṇa-mukta? If they had actually attained nirvāṇa-mukti, neither incident could possibly have taken place. If we accept these incidents as real, then the nirvāṇa-mukti, or nirviśeṣa-mukti, of the māyāvādīs must be false.

Conversely, if we accept nirvāṇa-mukti or nirviśeṣa-mukti as real, then the above mentioned incidents are either false or imaginary. Even if we accept that the incident is partly true, still, the liberation of both the māyāvādī ācāryas is false, according to the māyāvādīs' description of the symptoms of nirvāṇa-mukti.

Putting this incident aside, the biography of Śaṅkara states that he personally reincarnated as Mādhava Ācārya; that is, he appeared in the form of Vidyāraṇya. Now, how is this consistent with the conception of nirvāṇa-mukti? Māyāvāda doctrine says that after nirvāṇa-mukti, the jīvas have no existence separate from Brahman, which is formless, changeless, inactive and without any attributes. However, we see that Gauḍapāda, Govindapāda and Śaṅkara Ācārya all had their respective separate existence. How can we logically accept, then, that they had actually attained nirvāṇa-mukti? The nirvāṇa-mukti which the māyāvāda ācāryas propagate has no aspect or principle which allows any reciprocal dialogue, and what to speak of reincarnation, after the attainment of nirvāṇa. This consideration very clearly shows that nirvāṇa-mukti is simply a false and deceptive expression, or a trap to collect followers. If the chief preachers of nirvāṇa-mukti—those whom we can regard as the founders of the doctrine—could not attain such mukti themselves, then how can anyone else expect to?

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī tattvāṣṭakam

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārīji are the presiding Deities in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Matha. When They were installed, some Vaiṣṇavas were curious to know why both

the Deities have the same colour, and they respectfully asked Śrīla Ācārya Kesari, “In our Gauḍīya Sampradāya and elsewhere, Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s vigraha is made of white marble and Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s vigraha is made of black marble. How is it that both the vighras which you have manifested are of white marble?” Śrīla Ācāryadeva answered this question in a beautiful and unprecedented way by composing Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī-tattvāṣṭakam. In the pitcher of this tattvāṣṭakam, Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva has wonderfully manifested the fathomless ocean of Śrī Rādhā tattva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tattva, prema-tattva, rasa-tattva and the topmost rupānuga current of thought. We will try to reveal something of his bhāvas (moods) in the following explanation, using śākhā-candra nyāya, the logic of the branch and the moon².

Verse 1

rādhā-cintā-niveśena yasya kāntirvilopitā
śrī kṛṣṇa caraṇam vande rādhālingita-vigraham

“We pray at the lotus feet of that form of Rādhālingita-Rādhācīhṇita Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is embraced and marked by Śrī Rādhikā. When Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the personification of mahābhāva, displayed māna (Her mood of jealous anger), and He became thoroughly immersed in separation from Her, His own dark complexion vanished and He assumed Her bright, golden lustre.”

Or, “We pray at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is beautified by Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s golden lustre when She embraces Him, after Her māna has broken.”

Tattva prakāśikā-vṛtti (the commentary which illuminates the philosophical principles)

In this verse the word ‘rādhālingita’ has two meanings. The first is ‘rādhā-lingita’: ‘marked by Śrī Rādhā.’ The second meaning is ‘rādhayā-ālingita’: ‘embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā.’ When Śrīmatī Rādhikā exhibits māna, and dhīra-lalita nāyaka Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes completely absorbed in feelings of separation from Her, His natural, bluish radiant lustre disappears and He helplessly accepts Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s golden lustre. In other words, His own lustre becomes golden. He does not have to perform even the slightest endeavour for this; it happens automatically. It is like the strong bhṛṅgī insect forcefully arresting the weak telacaṭṭā insect and confining it in its cave. When the weak insect hears the strange sound made by the bhṛṅgī, it becomes afraid. Contemplating the form of the bhṛṅgī, out of fear it assumes a bodily form exactly like that of the bhṛṅgī insect.

We can also give the example of Mahārāja Bhāratajī, who was thinking of a fawn at the time of his death and so accepted the body of a deer in his next life. In the same way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes on Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s golden lustre as He becomes more and more absorbed in thoughts of Her.

One such incident is described in a conversation between Varāha-deva and Dharanī in Varāha-saṁhitā. Śrī Varāha-deva told Dharanī, “In Vṛndāvana there is a very big banyan tree on the bank of Yamunā, and its branches and sub-branches spread far and wide in all directions. Many different types of birds are always chirping on its

branches. Surrounding the root of this tree is a beautiful raised platform on which Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa enjoy delightful pastimes. Once, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was relishing His rāsa-līlā pastimes with His sakhīs on the bank of the Yamunā. Crores of gopīs were dancing with Him and, He began to dance with the gopīs one after another, absorbed in ecstatic love, sometimes embracing one and sometimes another. Kṛṣṇa enjoyed loving pastimes in many different ways, sometimes with Śrīmatī Rādhikā and sometimes with others.

“At this time, Śrīmatī Rādhikā observed that Kṛṣṇa was dancing with other gopīs as He was with Her, and embracing them in the same way that He embraced Her. Not seeing any recognition of Her superiority over the other gopīs, She became angry with Kṛṣṇa. She immediately left the rāsa-sthalī and hid Herself in a nearby kuñja. After a short time, Kṛṣṇa noticed Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s absence and became restless. ‘She for whom I perform this rāsa-vilāsa, who is dearer to Me than My very life, has left Me,’ He thought. ‘Where did She go?’

“Dancing and dallying with millions and millions of gopīs could not capture Kṛṣṇa’s heart even for a moment. Afflicted with separation from Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He left the dancing group at once and began to search in one kuñja after another, calling out, ‘He Rādhē! Where are you?’ As He searched and searched for Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the crown jewel of all His beloved sakhīs, He arrived at the bank of Kālindī. By now He had already become tired and hopeless from repeatedly searching for Her, so there on the bank of Kālindī, under the shade of a tamarind tree in a charming kuñja, He began chanting the mantra of rādhā-nāma in deep anxiety. Sometimes he would call out in a melancholy way, ‘Praneśvarī! Alas! O Queen of My heart! You have left Me aside. Where have You gone?’

rādhā viśleṣataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ hyekadā premāvihvalaḥ
rādhāmantraṁ japan dhyāyan rādhā sarvatra paśyati
(Vārāha-saṁhitā)

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa went on madly chanting rādhā-mantra in deep separation from Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and meditating on Her. Gradually Rādhikā began to manifest Herself to Him everywhere. As He started to feel Her presence inwardly and outwardly, He became like Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and His bodily lustre also became like that of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.”

This is the first meaning of the word rādhā-liṅgita.

Remembering this pastime, Śrī Gaurasundara used to go to Imlitālā, the place of that particular tamarind tree. Overwhelmed with excessive emotions, He used to chant nāma-saṅkīrtana, weeping bitterly. In the afternoon He would go to beg alms in a village near Akrūra-ghāṭa. It seems that Śrī Gaurasundara came to Vraja-dhāma from Nīlācala only to attain and strengthen His Rādhā bhāva, because without Rādhā bhāva He would never fulfil His three desires.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the crest-jewel of the dynasty of rasika Vaiṣṇavas, wrote the verse ‘hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti kadamba sandīpitaḥ.’ Here he indicates the form of Hari which is effulgent with the radiance of gold, meaning the form of Kṛṣṇa

which is radiant with Rādhā's golden splendour when He is deeply absorbed in thoughts of Her. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, who is an intimate associate of Śrī Gaurasundara and is also the rasa-śāstra guru, has indicated the same mood in his kaḍacā (notebook), rādhā-bhāva dyuti suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa svarūpam: "I offer my obeisances again and again to that Kṛṣṇa who is resplendent with the lustre and intrinsic mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā."

Now we will discuss the second meaning of the word rādhā-liṅgita. Here the poet offers prayers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa when He is embraced by His beloved Śrī Rādhikā, who has assumed the mood of svādhīna-bhartṛkā-nāyikā (happily controlling Her lover) after Her māna has broken. Seeing Kṛṣṇa bewildered in separation from Her, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's heart also became aggrieved. Her impatience and sulkiness immediately disappeared and She bound Kṛṣṇa in the ropes of Her embrace. Kṛṣṇa then became content and all His grief and sorrows went far away. Śrī Rāyā Rāmānanda refers to this in his dialogue with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:

nā so ramaṇa, nā hāma ramaṇī
duñhū-mana manobhava peṣala jāni'
e sakhī, se-saba prema-kāhinī
kānu-ṭhāme kahabi vichurala jāni
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.194)

In the madness of love in separation, virahinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā says, "Our prema attained its ultimate climax in just the briefest blink of an eye. We have met each other in such a way that We have become one; I have even forgotten that I am the beloved and You are My lover. Now I am separated from You, and this loving vilāsa has become like a mere story. Is this the path that virtuous men follow in their pursuit of love?"

This poem has disclosed the ultimate stage of milana (meeting), in which Kṛṣṇa is completely embraced by Rādhikā. Soon after this Rāyā Rāmānanda said to Śrī Gaurasundara,

pahile dekhiluṅ tomāra sannyāsī-svarūpa
ebe tomā dekhi muṅi śyāma-gopa-rūpa
tomāra sammukhe dekhi kāñcana-pañcālikā
tāñra gaura-kāntye tomāra sarva aṅga ḍhākā
tāhāte prakṛta dekhon sa-vaṁśī vadana
nānā bhāve cañcala tāhe kamala-nayana
ei-mata tomā dekhi' haya camatkāra
akapaṭe kaha, prabhu, kāraṇa ihāra
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.268 - 271)

A doubt arose in Rāyā Rāmānanda Prabhu's heart and he enquired from Śrīman Mahāprabhu, "Earlier I saw You in the dress of a sannyasī, but now I see You in the form of a bluish cowherd boy. At the same time I am witnessing another most uncommon phenomenon. It is as if a wonderful and beautiful doll (the mūrti of a gopī) is standing in front of You, covering all the limbs of Your body with Her

golden lustre. I am directly perceiving that in that form You are holding a flute to Your lips, and Your lotus eyes are dancing here and there, displaying a mood of deep hankering. Please be merciful to me and tell me without duplicity what is the reason for Your manifesting such a form.”

The deep and confidential purport of these four verses is that Kṛṣṇa’s radiant bluish lustre is covered by Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s radiant golden lustre, because each limb of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s body is embraced by each limb of Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s body. The body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who carries the flute remains unchanged; only His lustre becomes golden. It is this very form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā, which is worshipped in all the temples of our Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

This profoundly philosophical prayer, which is endowed with the most exalted sentiment, very clearly indicates its author’s exclusive allegiance to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s conceptions. To imbibe this elusive mood of the damsels of Vraja in our heart, we must first understand the principles of bhakti-tattva. Generally the practice (sādhana) and perfection (siddhi) of bhakti are divided into three categories: sādhana-bhakti, bhāva-bhakti and prema-bhakti. When sādhana-bhakti matures, the sādhanaka is endowed with bhāva-bhakti, and fully matured bhāva-bhakti is known as prema-bhakti.

Sādhana-bhakti, which is performed during the sādhanaka’s stage of practice, has two divisions: vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti and rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti. When the practice of bhakti bears the fruit of prema, there is still a corresponding subtle difference between prema arising from vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti and prema arising from rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti. Prema which has developed from the performance of vaidhī-bhakti is imbued with reverence for Śrī Bhagavān’s opulence and is known as vaikuṅṭhīya-prema. Prema which is obtained through the cultivation of rāgānuga-bhakti is completely free from even a scent of reverence and is known as pure sweet Vraja prema; the mood of the gopīs is the most elevated stage of Vraja prema. In order to comprehend rāgānuga-bhakti properly, it is essential that one first understands rāgātmika-bhāva. Rāga is the unquenchable loving thirst arising from intense absorption in the object of one’s affection, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The deep and intense loving attachment which this rāga produces is called rāgātmika prema.

The distinctive and unique prīti of the eternal inhabitants of Vraja—including cows, deer, parrots, animals, and birds—is called rāgātmika-prīti. This rāgātmika-prīti is of two types: sambandha-rūpā and kāma-rūpā. The term 'kāma-rūpā' refers only to the affection of Kṛṣṇa’s beloved sweethearts, and the longing which follows in the wake of this kāma-rūpā rati is called kāmānugā-bhakti. Kāma-rūpā rāgātmika prema is also of two kinds: sambhoga-icchāmayī and tat-tad-bhāva-icchāmayī. The rati of nāyikā’s such as Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Candravali, and Śyamalā, who desire to meet Kṛṣṇa for His pleasure, is called sambhoga-icchāmayī. Sakhīs who have the rati which is called tat-tad-bhāva-icchātmikā do not desire to meet Kṛṣṇa independently, but are keen to relish Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s sweet mood when She meets with Kṛṣṇa.

There are five types of sakhīs, known respectively as sakhī, nitya-sakhī, prāṇa-sakhī, priya-sakhī, and priyanarma-sakhī. Sakhīs who have equal sneha for Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are known as sama-snehā, whereas those who display more sneha towards one or other of Them are called visama-snehā. Vṛndā and Dhanisthā are examples of sakhīs; they are visama-snehā, having more affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The nitya-sakhīs, for example Kastūrī Mañjarī and Maṇi Mañjarī, are also visama-sneha, but they have more affection for Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The chief sakhīs in this group are called prāṇa-sakhīs, of whom Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is the foremost. Gopīs such as Mālatī are priya-sakhīs. They have sama-sneha (equal affection) for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but still show somewhat more favour towards Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Among these priya-sakhīs, the most dear and prominent such as Lalitā and Viśakhā are called priya-narma sakhīs or parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs. These nayikās are adorned with all good qualities, yet they feel more satisfied and content in arranging the meeting of the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Sakhīs such as Rūpa, Rati and Lavaṅga, who are the chief among the nitya-sakhīs and prāṇa-sakhīs, are devoted to the uninterrupted and unhesitating service of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in secluded nikuñjas. These sakhīs do not have any desire to meet with Kṛṣṇa separately, and feel completely satisfied when they relish the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in Her meeting with Him.

All the inhabitants of Vraja—including the gopas, gopīs, cows, calves, animals and birds—are rāgātmika. Sādhakas who follow the moods of these inhabitants of Vraja in order to attain their bhāva are called rāgānugā. Amongst these rāgānuga sādhakas, only those who specifically follow the internal mood of Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī are rūpānuga. Thus, every rūpānuga sādhaka is also a rāgānuga-sādhaka, but rāgānuga sādhakas are not necessarily rūpānuga. Rūpānuga sādhakas are those who with the external body follow the process of bhajana as shown by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and simultaneously with their internally conceived spiritual body (siddha-deha) follow the moods of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī as she eternally serves Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Only that sort of rāgānuga sādhaka is called a rūpānuga Vaiṣṇava. Rūpānuga-vara Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī prays in his Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali:

tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi na jīvāmi tvayā vinā

iti vijñāya devī tvaṁ naya mām caraṇāntike

“He Devī Śrī Rādhike! I am yours! I am yours! I cannot live without You. Knowing this, please give me a place at Your lotus feet.”

pādābjayoḥ tava vinā vara dāsyam eva

nānyat kadāpi samaye kila devī yāce

sākhyāya te mama namo ‘stu namo ‘stu nityaṁ

dāsyāya te mama raso ‘stu raso ‘stu satyam

“He Devī Rādhike! I never desire anything but the best loving service unto Your lotus feet. If You want to give me the position of a sakhī, then I offer my obeisances again and again to that position from a distance, but I do not actually want it.

Taking a vow, I am begging only to have steadfast anurāga (loving attachment) in Your service.”

We also see the desire of Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura for rūpānugatya in the following prayer:

śrī rūpa mañjarī-pāda, sei mora sampada,
sei mora bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa,
sei mora jīvanera jīvana
sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vāñchā-siddhi,
sei mora vedera dharama

Śrī Rūpānuga Ācārya Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura submits the following plea in his lālasamayī prārthanā (prayers of intense yearning):

śrī rūpa mañjarī saṅge yābo kabe
rasa-sevā-śikṣā-tare
tad anugā ha'ye rādhā-kuṇḍa-taṭe
rahiba harṣitāntare

“When will Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī teach me how to perform service unto the transcendental mellows? Following her moods and instructions on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, I will feel the greatest delight within my heart.”

śrī rādhāra sukhe kṛṣṇera ye sukha
jāniba manete āmi
rādhā-pāda chāḍi śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅgame
kabhu nā haiba kāmī
rādhā pakṣa chāḍi je jana se jana
je bhāve se bhāve thāke
āmi ta' rādhikā, pakṣa pātī sadā
kabhu nāhi heri tā 'ke

”I will know that Rādhā's pleasure is Kṛṣṇa's only source of joy. Therefore I will never desire to abandon Her lotus feet to meet Him. I am always in Rādhikā's party and I never even glance at those who have left Her group.”

These moods are the life and soul of rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavas. My most revered Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma is a prominent rūpānuga-ācārya and his heartfelt sentiments are quite clearly manifest in this first verse of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī-tattvāṣṭakam. His bhāva is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa should be immersed in the remembrance of Rādhājī, that He should search for Śrīmatījī, and that He should feel distressed in separation from Śrīmatījī. This verse expresses partiality towards Śrīmatī Rādhikā and rūpānugatva in the stages of both separation and union.

Verse 2

sevya-sevaka-sambhoge dvayor-bedaḥ kuto bhavet
vipralambhe tu sarvasya bhedaḥ sadā vivarddhate

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sevya (He who always takes service from the sevaka) and bhoktā (He who is always enjoying). Śrīmatī Rādhikā is sevaka (She who always performs sevā for sevya) and bhogya (She who is enjoyed). When They meet together and enjoy each other, how can there be any distinction between Them? At that time, bheda

(distinction) vanishes and abheda (non-difference) is apparent. However, in the stage of vipralambha (separation), bheda perpetually becomes more intense.”

Tattva-prakāśika-vṛtti

At the time of union, no difference exists between sevya (one who is served) and sevaka (one who serves). Śrī Nanda-nandana, who is the embodiment of śṛṅgāra-rasa (the mellow of amorous love), is the ultimate limit of sevya or bhoktā-tattva and Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the ultimate limit of sevaka-tattva or āśraya-tattva. Their anurāga is known as sthāyī-bhāva. When this anurāga reaches its last limit it is known as yāvadāśrayavṛtti. In that stage, Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s unprecedented anurāga for Kṛṣṇa attains the level of svasamvedya-daśā, when the aṣṭa-sattvika bhāvas (eight types of bodily transformations arising from śuddha-sattva) manifest in the sudīpta (blazing) condition. Only Śrī Rādhā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s special preyasī (beloved), attains this stage. In this special situation, the sevya and sevaka both completely forget Their own identities. They also forget the distinctions, “He is the lover” and “I am the beloved.” Their hearts melt and become one. In this stage it is not possible to conceive of or imagine any distinction between Them. However, in the stage of separation, They are both seen searching for each other in great distress. The dialogue between Rāya Rāmānanda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on the banks of the sacred river Godāvarī gives us insight into this glorious and unprecedented rasarāja-mahābhāva.

nā so ramaṇa, nā hāma ramaṇī

duñhū-mana manobhava peṣala jāni’

e sakhī, se-saba prema-kāhinī

kānu-ṭhāme kahabi vichurala jāni’

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.194)

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara has also envisioned this profound and confidential bhāva in his kaḍacā:

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād

ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedam gatau tau

caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptam

rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi 1.5)

“Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa’s hlādinī-śaktī (pleasure-giving potency) and the embodiment of the transformation of His praṇaya (intimate love). Since They are ekātmā-svarūpa (one soul), She is intrinsically non-different from Kṛṣṇa and is one in identity with Him. However, to enjoy the transcendental pleasure of Their loving pastimes, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have eternally manifested Themselves in these two apparently separate forms. Now these two transcendental identities, sevya and sevaka, viṣaya-tattva and āśraya-tattva, have manifested in one svarūpa as Śrī Caitanya tattva. I repeatedly bow down to Śacīnandana, who is the svarūpa of Kṛṣṇa and who is adorned with the bhāva and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.”

In this verse, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodarājī has used the word ekātmā to establish that Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, sevaka-tattva and sevya-tattva, are not different from each

other. Then he says, deha bhedaṁ gatau tau to indicate the difference between the two tattvas. Param-rasika tattva ācārya Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma has indicated these same profound and confidential sentiments in the second verse of his composition. Verse 3

cil-līlā-mithunaṁ tattvaṁ bhedaḥbhedaṁ acintyakam
śakti-śaktimātoraikyaṁ yugapadvarttate sadā

“The eternal divine couple are the embodiments of the combined form of śakti and śaktimān. To fulfil Their transcendental, pleasure-giving pastimes, They both become one in the stage of sambhoga (union) and yet simultaneously and inconceivably exist as different and non-different from each other. This means that para-tattva is never without śakti. Śakti and śaktimān are eternally united together in that para-tattva. He is puruṣottama endowed with completely transcendental pastimes, the original Self in the conjugal form, the combined form of śakti and śaktimān. That conjugal form is Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as Gaura tattva. By the influence of acintya-śakti (inconceivable potency), the contrary principles of difference and non-difference simultaneously reside in Him eternally.”

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the non-dual Absolute Truth advaya-jñāna para-tattva. He is the embodiment of the nectar of all rasa and He possesses all potencies (sarva-śaktimān). His natural internal potency is also one and is known as svarūpa-śakti. By the desire of śaktimān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, this singular potency manifests in various forms to accomplish different tasks. It expands itself in the form of cit-śakti to manifest cit-jagat (the spiritual world), as jīva-śakti to manifest all the jīvas, and as māyā-śakti to manifest the entire material creation. This potency also fulfils Kṛṣṇa’s various desires in the form of saṁvit, sandhinī and hlādinī. Prema is the essence of hlādinī, mahā-bhāva is the essence of prema, and Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the embodiment of this mahā-bhāva. That parā-śakti, which is the essence of the essence of prema in the form of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, eternally fulfils all the desires of Kṛṣṇa who is the personification of śṛṅgāra-rasa. At the time of sambhoga (union), Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are mithuna-tattva or yugala-tattva. That is to say, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, desiring to relish a particular type of rasa, has accepted the external bodily lustre and the internal mahā-bhāva of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and is eternally present in the form of Gaurasundara, who is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa combined. Thus Śrī Gaurasundara is also mithuna-tattva. Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, have accepted Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s simultaneous and inconceivable difference and non-difference. This tattva has been established in the first verse.

Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya has accepted the unqualified, formless and powerless Brahman as para-tattva. This Brahman is without svagata-bheda (differences within itself), sajātīya-bheda (differences from others of the same kind or category) and vijātīya-bheda (differences from others of different kinds or categories). Many ācāryas have used irrefutable logic and strong śāstric evidence to cut down Śrī Śaṅkara’s doctrine

of nirviśeṣa kevalādvaita. These ācāryas include Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, who is the author of Vedānta-sūtra; Parāśara; Auḍulaumi and other ācāryas of ancient times who had realized knowledge of the Absolute Truth; vaiṣṇava-ācāryas such as Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī and Śrī Nimbāditya; Śaivite ācāryas such as Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha; as well as ācāryas such as Śrī Bhāskara Ācārya and others who came in a later period.

Vaiṣṇava ācāryas have accepted Parabrahman and His śakti, as well as the extremely beautiful sac-cid-ānanda śrī vigraha of Parabrahman who possesses all attributes (saviśeṣa). Ācāryas from the different vaiṣṇava sampradāyas have propagated śuddha-bhakti in the world. Amongst them, Śrī Rāmānuja's viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda, Śrī Madhvācārya's dvaitavāda, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī's śuddhādvaita-vāda and Śrī Nimbāditya's svābhāvika dvaitādvaita (bhedābheda) vāda are all famous. According to Śrī Rāmānuja, para-tattva is the saviśeṣa Brahman who possesses cit and acit śaktis. According to Śrī Madhva Ācārya five types of differences are eternal. These are the differences between 1) Brahman and jīva, 2) jīva and jīva, 3) jīva and jaḍa (inert matter), 4) jaḍa and jaḍa and 5) jaḍa and Brahman. Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī has accepted that the eternal vigraha of Parabrahman, His associates, His pastimes, His abode and so on all exist in the plane of pure existence beyond the jurisdiction of māyā. Similarly Śrī Nimbāditya has accepted the natural difference and non-difference between saviśeṣa Brahman, jīva and jagat.

Svāyam Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has completed the opinions of the vaiṣṇava ācāryas wherever they were lacking. He has embraced the universal doctrines of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, and has established the relationship of eternal oneness and difference between Parabrahman, śakti, and also jīva and jagat, which are transformations of śakti. This bheda and abheda is acintya, because it is beyond the conception of human intelligence, and can be understood only by following śāstra-buddhi (scriptural wisdom). The vaiṣṇava ācāryas following in the footsteps of Śrīman Mahāprabhu have accepted this bhedābheda-tattva.

No scriptures have ever referred to para-tattva as being without distinctions, without potency, formless or devoid of transcendental qualities. In Śrīla Vedavyāsa's Brahma-sūtra we find sūtras such as 'janmādyasya yataḥ', 'arūpavadeva hi tat pradhānatvāt', 'api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām', 'ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt' and 'śakti śaktimator abhedat'. Thus, Śrīla Vyāsadeva has openly accepted the sac-cid-ānanda vigraha, śakti, name, form, qualities, pastimes and abode of the Parabrahman. Various mantras in the Upaniṣads also firmly establish the śakti of Parabrahman, His sac-cid-ānanda vigraha and the doctrine of bheda and abheda. For example, we read,

yato vā imāni bhutāni jāyante
yena jātāni jīvanti
yat prayanty abhisam viśanti
tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma
and

nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
and

parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate.

We find descriptions of the transcendental form, name, qualities, pastimes and associates of Parabrahman, as well as acintya bhedābheda-tattva, throughout Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the crown jewel of all authentic evidence and proof. All these conclusions have been specifically supported by verses such as aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam nandagopa-vrajaukasām/ yan mitraṁ paramānandam pūrṇa brahma sanātanam, gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣyaliṅgam and kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam. All these doctrines are specifically and distinctly described in the catuḥ-śloki of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.33 - 36. We will not give an elaborate description here for want of sufficient space.

Verse 4

tattvam ekaṁ paraṁ vidyāllilayā tadvidhā-sthitam
gaurah kṛṣṇah svayaṁ hy etad ubhāvubhayam āpnutaḥ

“The non-dual Absolute Truth advaya-jñāna-para-tattva is one. That Absolute Truth is eternally manifested in two forms for the sake of conducting pastimes. One form is that of Śrī Gaurasundara and the other is that of Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara. Both are absolute para-tattva and are non-different from each other. By tattva, Śrī Gaurasundara is Kṛṣṇa Himself and Śrī Kṛṣṇa-sundara is Śrī Gaurasundara. Both manifest both forms; that is to say, Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara has become Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Gaurasundara has become Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara.”

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, who is the chief internal associate of Śrī Gaurasundara, has elaborately explained the confidential siddhānta of Śrī Gaura-Kṛṣṇa tattva in his notebook.

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedam gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptaṁ
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.5)

The purport is that Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are one identity. Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the embodiment of mahābhāva, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of all rasa, assume one form to enjoy pleasurable pastimes in the stage of sambhoga (union). At that time They forget even the bhāva of being lover and beloved, and thus it is impossible even to imagine any difference between the two. Still, in separation Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa manifest two separate forms and relish vipralambhā-bhāva through various loving pastimes. Again, in order to enjoy some special bhāvas, these two tattvas unite and manifest Themselves in the form of Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari. Actually Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the transformation of Kṛṣṇa’s praṇaya (intimate love), and She is also His svarūpa-śakti. She gives pleasure to Kṛṣṇa by fulfilling all His desires and that is why She is also called hlādinī-śakti.

In Tattva-sandarbha, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has quoted verses from the saṁhitās which reveal that Śrī Gaurasundara is the combined form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā.

antaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ bahirgaura-darśitāṅgādi vaibhavam
kalau saṅkīrtanādyaiḥ smaḥ kṛṣṇa caitanyam āśritāḥ
(Tattva-sandarbha, Verse2)

“I take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Kali-yuga through the sacrifice of saṅkīrtana. Internally He is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, and externally He appears in His Gaura svarūpa. He has manifested Himself along with His majestic influence in the form of His aṅga (limbs) and upāṅga (subsidiary limbs), namely Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Gadādhara and His devotees headed by Śrīvāsa.”

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has also offered obeisances to the most munificent Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who distributes Kṛṣṇa prema and who is non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ

This siddhānta has been supported in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa:

golokaṁ ca parityajya lokānāṁ trāṇakāraṇāt
kalau gauraṅga rūpena līlā lāvaṇyavigrahaḥ

In many other scriptures, and especially in the books of the Gosvāmīs, there is plenty of evidence which proves that Śrī Gaurasundara is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Śrī Gaura-sundara. In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta it is stated,

sei kṛṣṇa avatārī vrajendra-kumāra
āpane caitanya-rūpe kaila avatāra

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 2.109)

Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura has also written,

vrajendra nandana jei śacīsūta haila sei
balarāma haila nitāi

Verse 5

sarve varṇāḥ yatrāviṣṭāḥ gaura-kāntir vikāśate
sarve varṇena hīnastu kṛṣṇa-varṇaḥ prakāśate

“When all the colours are mixed with each other, a golden hue is manifest. For instance, the sun is golden because all the colours are present in it. On the other hand, where all the colours are absent, a blackness beyond mundane colours is manifested.”

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura are both the ultimate limit of para-tattva and are identical abhinna-tattva (non-different from each other). The bodily lustre of Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has the distinctive hue of fresh, dark, bluish rain clouds or the effulgence of a sapphire. The bodily lustre of Śrī Gaurasundara defeats the splendour of lightning and molten gold. Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Gaurasundara are both transcendental Absolute Truth. They are completely beyond the qualities and actions of material nature and thus They cannot be compared to

anything in this mundane world. Still, some comparisons have been given, following the logic of the moon and the branch, so that conditioned souls may easily come to some understanding. However, these examples only refer to the particular aspect of the transcendental bhagavata-svarūpa which they illustrate. They cannot be used to explain the complete form of the Absolute Truth.

At night a small child may want to see the moon, and the parent may show it to him by indicating its position above the branch of a nearby tree. The moon appears to be just above the branch of the tree, but it is really thousands and thousands of miles away. In the same way, bhagavat-tattva is in reality completely beyond all mundane qualities. Still, it is essential in the primary stage to use examples of mundane objects to describe the Absolute, so that materially conditioned people, who are completely ignorant about the transcendental truth, can at least develop some idea of Transcendence. Both the colours black and white are mundane, yet the example of these colours has been given here to convey an idea of the bodily lustre of Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara and Śrī Gaurasundara.

The theories of mundane scientists also support the siddhānta expressed in this verse. Scientists say that black is not a colour, so the example of the colour black points to the truth that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His bodily lustre (which resembles the colour black) is nirguṇa, i.e. completely beyond the material qualities. Even when Śrī Kṛṣṇa adverts in this material world, He and His bodily lustre are nirguṇa in all respects. Moreover, all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental attributes are also nirguṇa, including His gravity, courtesy, His lack of pride, His respectfulness, cleverness, ever-youthfulness, His incomparable beauty, His expertise in relishing rasa, His virtues, His self-control and His extreme mercy.

Conversely, Śrī Gaurasundara, His bodily lustre and all of His qualities are aprakṛta (transcendental). That is why He is saguṇa-tattva, the Absolute Truth possessed of all qualities. Still, His qualities are also nirguṇa. Again, following the logic of the moon and the branch, a comparison is given here to illustrate saguṇa-tattva. Just as the sun is endowed with the combination of all the colours, so Śrī Gaurasundara, who is endowed with a distinctive golden lustre, embodies all transcendental qualities. Thus, He is worshipful. When all the colours are mixed together a golden hue is manifest, in which the colours are not visible separately. For instance, the rays of the sun appear white, but sometimes in the rainy season we see a rainbow opposite the sun, and we can then see the component colours separately. In English the acronym ROYGBIV is used to denote the following seven colours: R—red, O—orange, Y—yellow, G—green, B—blue, I—indigo, V—violet. Following this same logic, Śrī Gaurasundara's bodily lustre resembles molten gold because He embodies the combination of all transcendental qualities.

One day, when our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva was telling us some hari-kathā, he related an incident which occurred when he went to Prayāga (Allahābāda) after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance. He stayed there for a few days at the house of his dear friend and Godbrother Śrī Abhaya-caraṇāravinda Prabhu, who introduced him

to a well-known High Court advocate. This advocate was sharp-witted and a good logician, and he was deeply impressed on hearing the thoughts of Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu, who was a profound scholar of philosophy and an instructor of instructors. One day the advocate arrived at the house with a church bishop, who was a famous philosopher and preacher of Christianity. The advocate introduced the bishop to Kṛtiratna Prabhu, and to have some fun initiated a dialogue which led to an interesting argument employing logic and counter-logic. As the discussion began, the Bishop turned to Kṛtiratna Prabhu and asked, “Why do you worship Kṛṣṇa who is coloured black?”

Showing his presence of mind, Śrīla Gurudeva immediately answered, “Black is not a colour. It is beyond all colours, which means that Kṛṣṇa is beyond all mundane qualities. We don’t worship any worldly object or colour. Nirguṇa-tattva is not subject to the stages of birth, growth, decay and destruction. It is beyond the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance, and it is eternally existing. We worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the ultimate limit of the nirguṇa-para-tattva.”

The Bishop was an expert and sportive opponent, and at once enquired, “Then why do you worship the fair-complexioned Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu?”

Śrīla Gurudeva answered so quickly that it seemed that he was waiting for the question with his answer already prepared. “All the qualities of the material nature are abominable and distressful. Beyond this, in the spiritual world, there is a treasure of transcendental virtuous qualities. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the unlimited treasure-house of all those transcendental qualities, and the mixture of those spiritual qualities is His bodily lustre. The combination of all the colours in sunlight appears white, but in fact it is a mixture of seven colours: red, orange, yellow, blue, green, indigo, and violet. We see this in the rainy season, when the sun’s light is refracted to make a rainbow in which all the seven colours are easily visible. Similarly, our worshipful Śrī Gaurasundara embodies unlimited transcendental qualities.”

When the honourable Bishop heard this irrefutable, scientific argument, he was struck dumb and became a little morose. Trying to conceal his discomfiture, he smiled and said, “You people worship a cowherd boy. I cannot understand this.”

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, “Perhaps you don’t understand because you worship a shepherd. If a shepherd can be worshipped, then why is it strange to worship the caretaker of cows, who nourish the whole world like mothers?”

On hearing this, both the advocate and the bishop extolled Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu’s eloquent speech and took their leave.

Thus, the transcendental saṅgṇa and nirguṇa are an identical tattva. There is no difference between the two. There is no doubt at all that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurasundara are simultaneously saṅgṇa and nirguṇa-tattva.

Verse 6

saguṇaṁ nirguṇaṁ tattvam ekam evādvitīyakam
sarva-nitya-guṇairgaurāḥ kṛṣṇau rasastu nirguṇaiḥ

“Constitutionally both the saḡuṇa and nirguṇa tattvas are non-different from each other and are one without a second. Śrī Gaurasundara is saḡuṇa-tattva, the embodiment of unlimited, eternal, transcendental qualities. The omnipotent Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is devoid of all kinds of mundane modes and is beyond them, and who is the embodiment of all rasas, is nirguṇa-tattva. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described everywhere in the scriptures as rasa-svarūpa (the form of rasa) and rasika-śekhara (the foremost relisher of rasa). Rasa-tattva is nirguṇa or transcendental. It can never come under the influence of the mundane modes.”

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura are one and the same worshipful tattva. This has been concluded here by comparing the word varṇa from the previous verse with the word guṇa in this verse. Intrinsically, nirguṇa Śrī Kṛṣṇa and saḡuṇa Śrī Gaurasundara are equally worshipful para-tattva and cannot be distinguished from each other. They are both simultaneously saḡuṇa and nirguṇa tattva.

Māyāvādīs, who are ignorant of the Absolute Truth, consider saḡuṇa and nirguṇa to be two separate tattvas. They further conclude that these two are completely opposite to each other; that saḡuṇa-tattva is under the influence of the material modes, and thus undesirable; and that nirguṇa-tattva is therefore superior to saḡuṇa-tattva. According to these people, nirguṇa-tattva means that formless Brahman which is beyond the material world, which is devoid of attributes, unalloyed, without potency and formless. They say that this world is false and that the jīva is Brahman. According to them, saḡuṇa-tattva is the stage in which nirguṇa-tattva manifests itself in the material world, endowed with a material name, a material form and material qualities. They consider Svayaṁ Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rāmacandra to be that saḡuṇa-tattva, whose appearance, disappearance and body are material and influenced by illusion.

The Gītā and other authorised scriptures state that this māyāvāda doctrine is very offensive.

avajānanti mām mūḡhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram
moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo mogha-jñānā vicetasah
rākṣasīm āsurīm caiva prakṛtiṁ mohinīm śritāḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 9.11-12)

“Fools deride Me, the Supreme Īśvara of all living entities. They fail to understand the supreme nature of My svarūpa by their human intelligence, which is covered with māyā. All the hopes, actions and knowledge of such fools go in vain. Their minds become agitated and, deviating from the spiritual path, they take shelter of the demoniac nature, which destroys intelligence, and they head towards the hellish planets.”

The conclusion is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the root of all avatāras and is the Supreme Absolute Truth. In the form of Kṛṣṇa He is the īśvara of all īśvaras, of all living beings and of the entire cosmic manifestation. His determination is infallible. That

is, whatever He wills must take place. He is omniscient, omnipotent and supremely compassionate. Wicked King Veṅa and other such fools used to disrespect Kṛṣṇa when they saw Him. These fools used to abuse Śrī Vasudeva-nandana or Śrī Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, considering Him a worldly man who is subject to death. These fools imagine that Paramātmā is a separate ātmā in Kṛṣṇa's body. This belief has been condemned everywhere in the scriptures, which establish that Kṛṣṇa's form is sac-cid-ānanda. Śāstra has established that the distinction between deha (the body) and dehī (the possessor of the body) is also false in the case of the sac-cid-ānanda śrī vigraha of Bhagavān.

a) om̐ sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya kṛṣṇāya (Gopāla-Tāpani Upaniṣad 1.1)

b) tam ekaṁ govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ

c) dvibhujam̐ mauna-mudrāḍhyaṁ vanamālinam̐śvaram

d) īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ saccidānanda vigrahaḥ (Brahmā-saṁhita 5.1)

e) apaśyaṁ gopamanipadyamānamā (Ṛg Veda 1.22.166.31)

f) gūḍham̐ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam̐ (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.10.48)

g) yatrāvātīrṇo bhagavān paramātmā narākṛtiḥ (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.23.20)

h) deha-dehi-bhidā nāsti īśvare vidyate kvacid

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is unborn, yet by dint of His inconceivable potency, He is the eternal son of Śrī Nanda-Yaśodā. He is nirguṇa, yet He is ever youthful, the best of dancers, and He is dressed as a cowherd boy, carrying a flute. He is equally disposed to all, and yet He is partial to His devotees who take exclusive shelter of Him.

Viruddha dharmam̐ tasmin na citram: "All apparently contradictory and mutually exclusive qualities co-exist within Him simultaneously." Four-headed Brahmā and other demigods have referred to Him as being simultaneously saguṇa and nirguṇa.

Rāvaṇa thought that Śrī Rāmacandra was an ordinary human being, so he kidnapped Sitadevī, His svarūpa-śakti. Śrī Rāmacandra later killed Rāvaṇa as well as all his demon followers and rescued Sitadevī. Kaṁsa, Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla and other foolish kings thought that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is an ordinary human being. By His causeless mercy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa destroyed them, either personally with His disk or through His devotees, and established His divine position as nirguṇa. Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇahas said in the Gītā, dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ tam̐ yena mām̐ upayānti te: "I give them the intelligence, the divine vision, by which they can come to Me." One cannot realize bhagavat-tattva, the Absolute Truth, without the mercy of Bhagavān or His devotees. Hence, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra and Śrī Gaurasundara are both equally worshipful as one and the same unparalleled and supreme tattva.

Verse 7

śrī kṛṣṇam̐ mithunam̐ brahma tyaktā tu nirguṇam̐ hi tat

upāsate mṛṣā vijñāḥ yathā tuṣāvaghātinaḥ

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura are both the same supreme Brahman. Those who abandon Their service to worship the formless Brahman never attain factual liberation, and are precisely like those who try to extract rice by beating empty husks. All they obtain is their own fruitless, hard labour. Similarly all seekers of empirical

knowledge, who give up the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to worship the nirviśeṣa nirguṇa Brahman, simply perform fruitless hard labor. All their efforts go in vain.”

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

The Vedas, Upaniṣads and especially Vedānta-sūtra describe only bhakti. The topic established by all these scriptures is Bhagavān and His bhakti. The word jñāna has not been mentioned even once throughout the 550 aphorisms of Vedānta-sūtra. The sūtra ‘janmādyasya yataḥ’ clearly states that Bhagavān is the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of this cosmic manifestation. This proves the divine existence of His form, śakti and transcendental qualities. The sūtra ‘arūpavad eva tat prādhānatvāt’ describes the transcendental śrī vigraha of Parabrahman. The sūtra ‘ānandamayo ‘bhyāsyāt’ confirms the pleasurable pastimes and ‘anāvṛtti śabdād anāvṛtti śabdāt’ states that the only process to attain the supreme truth is nāma-saṅkīrtana. In the prayers of Śrī Brahmā in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the cultivation of nirviśeṣa-jñāna has been forbidden.

śreyah-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.4)

“O Prabhu! You are the ultimate auspiciousness, and bhakti is the best and only way to obtain You. The four types of desirable goals such as mokṣa are easily attained by performing bhakti, just as water continuously flows from a reservoir. When one performs bhakti, one is automatically situated in knowledge, so one need not endeavour to obtain jñāna separately. Those who abandon the path of bhakti and engage in distressing endeavours to achieve jñāna obtain only suffering and nothing else, just as those who beat empty husks have no reward but their own fruitless hard labour. They do not obtain any rice.”

Furthermore:

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ
patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.32)

“O lotus eyed one! Those who are not your devotees may consider themselves to be liberated by their performance of sense-control and severe sādhana, but their intelligence is not pure because they are devoid of the sentiments of unalloyed devotion towards You. As a result of neglecting Your lotus feet, which are the only shelter, they again fall down to a degraded condition.”

The four Kumāras and Śrī Śukadeva previously worshipped the nirguṇa nirākāra Brahman. However, by the mercy of Pitāmaha (grandfather of the world) Brahmā and Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, they became attracted to the worship of the mithuna-brahma Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. The special qualities and sweetness of this

conjugal Brahman are so attractive that even brahma-jñānīs (seekers of empiric knowledge) give up their previous condition of being ātmārāma (absorbed in the pleasure of the ātmā) and become blissfully engaged in the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa mithuna-tattva.

ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.10)

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has personally testified in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam “I was firmly situated in the worship of nirguṇa Brahman, but by the mercy of Śrīla Vyāsadeva I was inspired to engage in the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala, which is full of rasa.”

pariniṣṭhito 'pi nairguṇye uttama-śloka-līlayā
grhīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānam yad adhītavān
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.9)

The result of worshiping nirguṇa Brahman is mukti. An aikāntika bhakta never accepts such mukti, even if it is offered by Bhagavān. He desires to be incessantly engaged in the loving devotional service of Bhagavān forever. Great brahma-jñānīs occasionally attain mukti by their hard austerities and severe sādhana, yet that same mukti is attained very easily by outright demons when they are killed by Bhagavān Himself. So who but a fool would vainly endeavour to achieve such a condemned and low class of mukti? Wise devotees never accept such undesirable mukti even if Bhagavān Himself offers it to them.

Verse 8

śrī vinoda-bihārī yo rādhayāḥ milito yadā
tadāham vandanam kuryyam sarasvatī-prasādataḥ

“By the causeless grace of my Gurudeva Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, I pray to Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa, when, upon meeting with Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He becomes one with Her.”

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

This verse reveals yet another of its author’s confidential moods. The purport of ‘when Śrī Vinodabihārī is in union with Śrīmatī Rādhikā’ has been thoroughly explained in the first verse. When Kṛṣṇa is deeply absorbed in remembering Śrīmatī Rādhikā, His splendour is endowed with a golden hue. Alternatively, the poet is bowing down again and again to the form of Kṛṣṇa whose bluish effulgence has been covered by the golden lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā when She embraces Him in union after separation. The underlying meaning is to pray exclusively to mithuna-brahma Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinodabihārī the śrī vighraḥ of rasarāja-mahābhāva. Sarasvatī prasādataḥ means ‘by the causeless mercy of my Gurudeva.’ The name of his Gurudeva is Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The word ‘Sarasvatī’ has two meanings: (1) the presiding deity of aparā vidyā (worldly knowledge); (2) the presiding deity of parāvidyā (transcendental knowledge).

Śrī Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is non-different from the presiding deity of parāvidyā. Thus, without his mercy it is impossible to worship Śrī Rādhāliṅgita vigraha.

Another confidential meaning is tadāhaṁ śrī vinoda-bihārī vandanam kuryat: “I worship Śrī Vinodabihārī Rādhāliṅgita śrī vigraha.” The name Śrī Vinodabihārī has been given to the poet by his Gurudeva. In addition to this, the name of his eternal spiritual form is Śrī Vinoda Mañjarī. This is evident from his pranāma-mantra:

gaurāśraya-vigrahāya kṛṣṇa kāmaika-cāriṇe
rūpānuga-pravarāya vinodeti svarūpiṇe

Thus, in this prayer the poet aspires to be eternally engaged in his siddha-svarūpa in the permanent sevā of that Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

The realization of such a rarely fulfilled aspiration is impossible without the mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva, the condensed embodiment of mercy and compassion.

śrī-guru-caraṇe rati ei se uttamā-gati

je prasāde pūre sarva āsā

Verse 9

iti tattvāṣṭakam nityam yaḥ pathet śraddhayānvitaḥ

kṛṣṇa-tattvamabhijñāya gaurapade bhavenmatih

“Whoever daily recites this tattvāṣṭakam with great faith will fully comprehend Śrī Kṛṣṇa tattva, and become immersed in affectionate meditation upon the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurasundara.”

Śrī Maṅgala-ārati

We stated earlier that our most revered Śrīla Guru-pādapadma was a rasika poet as well as a self-realised philosopher. We shall now present some of his verses of maṅgala-ārati, from which we can easily understand how rasika a poet he really was. In this maṅgala-ārati he has described Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s niśānta-lilā in a confidential way. Ordinary sādhakas cannot imbibe these profound emotions into their heart; only some rāgānuga Vaiṣṇavas can understand these meanings.

The eternal pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa have been divided into eight periods (aṣṭakāliya-lilā) so that rāgānuga sādhakas can remember and contemplate them: 1) niśānta (the end of the night); 2) prātaḥ (dawn); 3) pūrvahna (morning); 4) madhyāhna (midday); 5) aparahna (early afternoon); 6) sāyam (evening); 7) pradoṣa (first part of the night); 8) madhya-rātri-lilā (pastimes in the middle of night).

Maṅgala-ārati is connected with niśānta-lilā, the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala which take place in the last part of night before dawn. The description of niśānta-lilā has been given in Śrī Sanat-Kumāra Samhita, in Padma Purāṇa (pātāla khaṇḍa) and in the books of the Gosvāmīs. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described these eightfold pastimes in a condensed (sūtra) form, while Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has described them in detail in his Śrī Govinda-lilāmṛta, as has Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta. Here, we shall give a very brief overview of niśānta-lilā.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala are tired after Their midnight pastimes, and are sleeping in a charming kuñja (forest bower). Some special sakhīs, carrying in their hands the

articles and ingredients required for their service at that time, are waiting for Śrī Yugala-Kiśora to wake up. The cool and gentle early morning breeze, kissing each and every flower, has become intoxicated with the fragrance and is now moving unsteadily. Buzzing bumblebees also wake up quickly, and kiss the flowers in turn, leaving them for new flowers. The whole atmosphere of Vṛndāvana is becoming enchanted by the aroma of these blossoming flowers.

Śrī Vṛndā-devī becomes worried when sees Yugala Kiśora-Kiśori still sleeping. “Aho! The sun is just about to rise now, and this Couple is still sleeping, happily bound to each other in Their tight embrace.” Seeing this, she becomes worried and tells the birds of Vṛndāvana such as the parrot, the she-parrot, the cuckoos, peacocks and papihās, “Wake Them up with your sweet songs, otherwise They will be put to shame when everyone else wakes up.” As soon as the birds hear Śrī Vṛndā-devī’s orders, they all sing in their sweet voices about the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala and begin to wake Them up.

Meanwhile, some of the prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhīs become enchanted while peering through a small opening in the bushes of the kuñja. In their jubilation on seeing the incomparable, lustrous beauty of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, they begin to perform āraṭi with their eyes. Although the Couple have been awakened by the sweet chirping of the birds, They do not want to get up from Their bed, for fear of losing the happiness of Their deep embrace. At last, on the request of the śuka (parrots) and sārī (female parrots), They get up and sit on the bed. At that time svādhīna-bhartṛka Śrīmatī Rādhikā requests Her dearest Śrī Kṛṣṇa to rearrange Her śṛṅgāra (ornaments and garments), and dhīra-lalita Kṛṣṇa complies with Her request.

At that time the sakhīs also come into the kuñja. Melodiously describing the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala, they approach the Divine Couple and start performing their respective services. Suddenly, the female monkey named Kakkhaṭī loudly calls out the name ‘Jatilā’. Upon hearing this, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa become anxious due to the mellow of transcendental fear and longing. They return to Their respective homes, and sleep for a while. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s sūtra śloka is as follows.

rātryante trastavṛnderitabahubhiravairbodhitau kīraśārī
padyairhṛdyairahṛdyairapi sukhaśayanādutthitau tau sakhībhiḥ
dṛṣṭau hr̥ṣṭau tadātvoditaratilalitau kakkhaṭīgīḥsaśaṅkau
rādhākṛṣṇau satṛṣṇāvapi nijanijadhānyāptatālpau smarāmi

Many different vaiṣṇava ācāryas in the Śrī Gauḍīya Sampradāya have written maṅgala-āratis of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. However, my Paramārādhya Śrīla Gurudeva’s maṅgala-ārati has its own unprecedented and unique speciality. By singing this maṅgala-ārati one is infused with the bhāvas of the niśānta-līlā of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in a way which can not be found anywhere else. The whole maṅgala-ārati is as follows:

maṅgala śrī guru-gaura maṅgala mūrati
maṅgala śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇa yugala pīriti (1)
maṅgala niśānta līlā maṅgala udaye

maṅgala āraṭi jāge bhakata hṛdaye (2)
tomāra nidrāya jīva nidrita dharāya
tava jāgaraṇe viśva jāgarita haya (3)
śubha dṛṣṭi kara ebe jagatera prati
jāguka hṛdaye mora sumaṅgalā rati (4)
mayūra śukādi sārī kata pikarāja
maṅgala jāgara hetu kariche virāja (5)
sumadhura dhvani kare jata śākhī-gaṇa
maṅgala śravaṇe bāje madhura kūjana (6)
kusumita sarovare kamala-hillola
maṅgala saurabha bahe pavana kallola (7)
jhāñjhara kānsara ghaṇṭā śaṅkha karatāla
maṅgala mṛdaṅga bāje parama rasāla (8)
maṅgala āraṭi kare bhakatera gaṇa
abhāgā keśava kare nāma-saṅkīrtana (9)

“Glories to the auspicious forms of Śrī Guru and Gaura and all glories to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s auspicious amorous love.

“All glories to Their auspicious niśānta-līlā which heralds the end of night and to Their auspicious awakening, which brings auspiciousness to all! Glories to maṅgala-āraṭi which awakens the devotees’ hearts.

“While You sleep, the jīvas lie sleeping deep in their ignorance, but upon Your rising, the whole world awakens. (If you manifest in their hearts, then all tattva and all siddhānta will be revealed to them).

“Please bestow Your kind glance upon the world and awaken in my heart that most auspicious rati.

“The peacocks, parrots, śuka, sārī and cuckoos all exist solely to sing for Your auspicious awakening.

“Sitting in the branches of the trees, all the birds sing their supremely sweet morning melodies which resound throughout the forest. Those sweet, soft, auspicious sounds grace everyone.

“Varieties of flowers, with lotuses in the centre, fill the pond and sway with the waves. Breezes carry auspicious aromas of pure delight and joy everywhere.

“Large cymbals, gongs, bells, conches, karatālas and auspicious mṛdaṅgas play the supreme rasa.

“Performing maṅgala āraṭi in the company of devotees, Śrī Keśava dāsa sings nāma-saṅkīrtana.”

The jīva is constitutionally a servant of Bhagavān. Unfortunately, the jīva who has fallen into this illusory world, being averse to Bhagavān since time immemorial, is burnt by the three-fold miseries in the cycle of repeated birth and death. Only by great fortune does the jīva take shelter at the lotus feet of a sad-guru and follow the path of śuddha-bhakti. At that time he realizes that Śrī Gurudeva, Śrī Gaurasundara, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala are the embodiment of auspiciousness for the whole

world. The ultimate goal of the jīva is to attain prema for the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The life of that person in whose heart prema for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa has arisen is actually significant, meaningful and profitable. This condition is the ultimate good fortune of all jīvas.

By the mercy of the all-auspicious Bhagavān and His devotee, when a practitioner of bhakti goes on practising uttama-bhakti, he gradually crosses the successive stages of śraddhā, niṣṭhā, ruci and āsakti. At that time śuddha-sattva, which is the combined essence of the hlādinī and samvit aspects of the svarūpa-śakti, becomes self-manifest in the heart. Then that fortunate sādḥaka's pure intrinsic spiritual form, name, mood and other aspects also become manifest in his heart. By the association of tattva-jñā and rasika bhaktas, he is naturally attracted to perform nāma-kīrtana with bhāva and to remember the aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā (eight-fold pastimes). Only in the heart of a jīva who has received such good fortune is maṅgala niśānta-līlā manifested. The same love-laden maṅgala-ārati which the priya-narma-sakhīs perform in the transcendental abode of Vṛndāvana during Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala's niśānta-līlā is specifically bestowed in the heart of such a sādḥaka.

This auspicious rati does not manifest without the mercy of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or Their associates, and until this auspicious rati is manifested, the transcendental maṅgala-ārati will also not manifest itself. Therefore the bhakti-sādḥaka prays piteously in great distress to receive such good fortune (verses 1-4).

This prayer causes the auspicious ārati of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Yugala to manifest in the heart of the rāgānuga-sādḥaka. Losing external consciousness of his body and this world, he sees with his eternal form 'mayūra śukādi sārī kata pīkarāja maṅgala jāgara hetu kariche virāja' (verse 5).

The time of dawn is quickly approaching. In some pleasure grove such as Saṅketa, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala are still asleep, bound by each others' embrace. Afraid that everyone will soon wake up, Vṛndā-devī inspires the birds such as peacocks, male and female parrots, cuckoos, and papihā to awaken Śrī Yugala. At that time, all the birds in the water and on land start calling in their sweet voices. The description of this pastime in Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta touches the heart:

drākṣāsu sāryyaḥ karakeṣu kīrāḥ jaguḥ pikībhiśca pikā rasāle
pilau kapotāḥ priyake mayūrāḥ latāsu bhṛṅgāḥ bhuvi tāmra cūḍā

“Female parrots sitting on the grape-vines, parrots on the pomegranate trees, cuckoos on the branches of the mango trees, male and female pigeons on the pīlu trees, male and female peacocks on the kadamba trees, male and female bumblebees on the creepers and roosters on the ground—all are producing their sweet sounds.”

The male and female peacock start crying their sweet Ke! Ka! The male peacocks call out Ke! — “The patience, shyness and chastity of Śrīmatī Rādhikājī, who is the personification of mahābhāva, are like a tall mountain. Who can crush that mountain to powder? Only Kṛṣṇa!” Then the peahens reply Ka! — “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like a mad elephant, sporting with His beloved in the waves of prema. Who can control

that maddened elephant with the aṅkuśa (goad) of Her love? Only Śrīmatī Rādhikā!”

Swarms of bumblebees blow Cupid’s conchas they buzz from one flower to another. Parrots like Dakṣa and Vicakṣaṇa, and female parrots such as Śubhā and Mañjubhāṣiṇī awaken Śrī Yugala by heralding the auspicious dawn. Although Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are awakened by the sweet calling of these birds, They still keep themselves bound in Their embrace with Their eyes closed, fearing that the pleasure of that embrace may vanish.

Here the line ‘maṅgala śravaṇe bāje madhura kūjana’ (verse 6) can have many profound purports. The first meaning is that the sweet calls of the birds on the branches of different trees enters the auspicious ears of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as a sweet but indistinct sound. The second meaning is that the sweet sound of the birds enters the ears of the priya-narma-sakhīs, who are waiting for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to wake up. There is another very confidential meaning of the word kūjana. At the time of the rati-vilāsa (amorous pastimes) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, They converse together and exchange sweet joking words. When this kūjana enters the ears of priya-narma-sakhīs, it enchants them with love.

Intoxicated bumblebees are humming everywhere in Vṛndāvana, which is full of many different types of flowers such as belī, camelī, jūhī, yuthikā, mallikā, mālatī, jāti and kunda. The clear ponds of fresh, sweet water are full of lotuses over which swarms of bumblebees are humming. These lotuses sway at the touch of the cool, gentle breezes, and they dance in overwhelming jubilation when waves arise in the pond.

In the midst of all this, everyone hears the word ‘Jaṭilā!’ Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala and Their sakhīs, full of suspense and eagerness, immediately get ready to leave the kuñja to go to Their respective palaces.

At this very moment, the internal absorption of the sādḥaka breaks and he regains his external consciousness. He becomes overwhelmed with grief, but just then the bell starts ringing in the temple room for the āratī of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. The doors open and the devotees start performing the āratī of Śrī Śrī Yugala Kisora very affectionately. As the devotees dance and sing maṅgala-āratī, their melodious voices combine with the sweet sounds of jhāñjhara, kāṅsara, ghaṅṭā, śaṅkha, karatāla, and mṛdaṅga. Inspired by his previous absorption in niśānta-lilā, the author of this poem also starts to perform nāma-saṅkīrtana with the other devotees. As he sings each verse of the kīrtana, the bhāvas of niśānta-lilā appear in his heart, soothing his grief.

I have tried to reveal some of the heart-felt moods of Paramārādhya Śrīla Gurudeva, following the śākhā-candra-nyāya (logic of the moon and the branch), and but I know that I am incapable of collecting even one drop from his fathomless, endless ocean of rasa. May Śrīla Gurupādapadma bestow his causeless grace upon this useless servant, so that I one day may become qualified for this.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s āratī

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva has composed an exquisite ārati in honour of his worshipful Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. When it was published in Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, all the disciples and grand-disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda became delighted and ecstatic to read it. Everyone started giving thanks, either in person or indirectly. Some of the ācāryas of the Śrī Gauḍīya Matha could not curb their greed to publish it in their respective magazines, omitting Śrīla Gurudeva's name. From then onwards, all the Gauḍīya Matha devotees began to sing Śrīla Gurudeva's ārati-kīrtana at the time of Śrīla Prabhupāda's ārati.

jaya jaya prabhupādera ārati nehārī
yoga māyāpura-nitya sevā-dānakārī (1)
sarvatra pracāra-dhūpa saurabha manohara
baddha mukta alikūla mugdha carācara (2)
bhakati-siddhānta-dīpa jāliyā jagate
pañca-rasa-sevā-śikhā pradīpta tāhāte (3)
pañca mahādīpa yathā pañca mahājyotiḥ
triloka-timira-nāśe avidyā durmati (4)
bhakati vinoda-dhārā jala śaṅkha-dhāra
niravadhi bahe tāhā rodha nāhi āra (5)
sarva-vādyā-mayī ghaṅṭā bāje sarva-kāla
bṛhat-mṛdaṅga vādhyā parama rasāla (6)
viśāla lalāṭe śobhe tilaka ujjvala
gala deśe tulasī mālā kare jhālamala (7)
ājānu-lambita bāhū dīrgha kalevara
tapta kāñcana-baraṇa parama sundara (8)
lalita-lāvaṇya mukhe sneha-bharā hāsī
aṅga kānti śobhe jaiche nitya pūrṇa śaśī (9)
yati dharme paridhāne aruṇā vasana
mukta kaila medhāvṛta gauḍīya gagana (10)
bhakati-kusume kata kuñja viracita
saundarye-saurabhe tāra viśva āmodita (11)
sevādarśe narahari cāmara dhūlāya
keśava ati ānande nirājana gāya (12)

“All glories, all glories to the ārati ceremony of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, which bestows eternal service at the Yoga-pīṭha in Māyāpura on those who observe it. (1)

“Like the enchanting fragrance of incense, his preaching has spread everywhere, astonishing all devotees, both liberated and conditioned, and all living entities, both moving and non-moving. (2)

“He lit up the entire world with the lamp of the perfect conclusions of pure devotion. This lamp is composed of five brilliantly glowing flames which represent service in the five primary rasas. (3)

“The five flames of the ārati lamp are like five radiant lights which represent the five rasas, and which destroy the darkness of ignorance and crooked intelligence throughout the three worlds. (4)

“The water in the conch shell is the conception of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhakura, which flows continually and which cannot be checked by anyone. (5)

“Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana, which is accompanied by karatālas, bells and other instruments, resounds for all time, but really it is the printing press, known as the bṛhat-mṛdaṅga, which distributes the supreme rasa. (6)

“Resplendent tilaka adorns his broad forehead, and around his neck shines a necklace of tulasī beads. (7)

“His long arms extend to his knees and his golden complexion is supremely beautiful. (8)

“His charming, lovely face displays a smile which is full of affection, and his bodily complexion is like a perpetually full moon. (9)

“Attired in daybreak-coloured cloth, which signifies the religious principles of sannyāsa, he nullifies the misconceptions which were like clouds covering the clear Gauḍīya sky, and establishes the doctrine of pure bhakti. (10)

“The different stages of bhakti (bhāva, prema, sneha, etc.) are like very fragrant flowers which comprise a splendid kuñja, and the beauty and fragrance of this kuñja delights the entire universe. (11)

“As Narahari Prabhu, the ideal servant, fans Śrīla Prabhu-pāda with a cāmara, Keśava dāsa sings this ārati song with great delight. (12)”

Among the tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs who took shelter of Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda, Pūjyapāda Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja, was very prominent. He was expert in scriptures such as the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Gītā, and he was deeply respected in the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. When he read this ārati-kīrtana, he immediately came to Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa from his maṭha in Jhāḍagrāma Medinīpura and congratulated Śrīla Gurudeva: “Mahārāja! It is very surprising that we could not recognize you until now, although we have been living closely together in guru-gṛha (Śrīla Gurudeva’s āśrama) for such a long time. Your heart is so full of pure bhakti and such guru-niṣṭhā (profound and unflinching faith for Śrīla Gurudeva) but we could not catch even the slightest scent of it. We thought that you were only expert in managing and other worldly tasks, but all our conceptions about you have been proved to be mistaken. Today, by great fortune, it seems that Śrīla Prabhupāda is adoring your incomparable guru-niṣṭhā and the unmatched quality of your bhakti. I think that he is personally sitting in your heart and manifesting through you these wonderful moods of pure bhakti, which are full of beautiful siddhāntas. You are glorious. We hope that you will continue to bestow limitless benefit on the world by composing more unprecedented poems, prayers, essays, and articles in the future.” We will now explain some of the deep moods contained in the stanzas of this ārati.

Verse 1. Yoga māvāpura-nitya sevā-dānakārī. The topmost part of Goloka is called Vraja, Vṛndāvana or Gokula and next to this is Svetadvīpa or Navadvīpa. In the heart of this Navadvīpa-dhāma is Śrīdhāma Māvāpura. Here Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the form of Śrī Śācīnandana Gaurahari relishes various types of bhāvas with His eternal associates, having accepted the bodily lustre and intrinsic moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. It is very rare for jīvas to attain the great fortune of entering the most munificent Śrī Gaura līlā. Nayaṇa Mañjarī of Śrī Kṛṣṇa līlā is Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura in Śrī Gaura līlā. His eternal form is described in his praṇāma-mantra.

śrī-vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayitāya kṛpābdhaye

kṛṣṇa-sambandha-vijñāna-dāyine prabhava namaḥ

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as Śrī Nayaṇa Mañjarī is the most dear sakhī of Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the embodiment of unnatojjvala-madhura-rasa. To those who take shelter of him, he awards the rare gift of eternal service to the ocean of compassion, Śrī Śācīnandana Gaurahari. Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is the best among the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, also mercifully bestows the rarely obtained service of Śrī Gaurahari on those who perform or even witness this āratī. This āratī is extraordinary and transcendental, and has unique and distinctive features which cannot be seen in other āratīs.

Verse 2. Śrīla Prabhupāda propagated śuddha-bhakti and established preaching centres all over the world by sending his brahmacārīs, sannyasīs, disciples and grand-disciples to the nine islands of Navadvīpa, and then to all the important cities, and even to mountains and forests, all over India and around the globe. By the aroma of his nectarean preaching, all kinds of conditioned and liberated jīvas were and are attracted to follow śuddha-bhakti. In ordinary arcana, incense is offered first to śrī vigraha. The fragrance of that incense is confined to the temple, whereas the aroma of the preaching of śuddha-bhakti delights and attracts the whole world. This is the transcendental distinction of the incense of preaching śuddha-bhakti.

If Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda had not propagated śuddha-bhakti everywhere, then the whole world would have been completely deprived of the benefit of śuddha-bhakti, and thus would have remained inauspicious. People from West Bengal and other parts of India would also have been completely deprived of śuddha-bhakti, that is rāgānuga-bhakti and especially rupānuga-bhakti. His means of preaching, which was to publish and distribute bhakti literature, is unprecedented; it was never heard of or seen before. In this way, he created a new wave of the bhakti revolution throughout the world. Far from India, in large and small countries of the western and eastern world, small children, young boys and girls, men, women and old people can be seen completely immersed in the Vedic culture. One can see them everywhere in these countries, holding japa-malain their hands, and wearing tilaka and śikhās. Jumping and dancing to the beat of mṛdaṅga and karatālas they perform nāma-sankīrtana in their homes, in their temples and on the streets. Huge temples of

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda, Śrī Jagannatha-Baladeva-Subhadra and other śrī-vigraha have been established in these places. All this is the contribution of the mahā-puruṣa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

Verse 3. In arcana of śrī-vigraha, the dīpa (ghee lamp) is offered after the incense. In this unique arcana, the wicks of the lamp are the siddhāntas of bhakti. The bhakti doctrines are ten in number (daśa-mūla-tattva):

- i) Scriptures such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam which have been accepted by guru-parampara are the best pramāṇa (authentic evidence).
- ii) Vrajendranandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth.
- iii) He is sarva-śaktimān, the possessor and master of all potencies.
- iv) He is the reservoir of all the rasas.
- v) Both the conditioned and liberated souls are His vibhinnāmśa-tattva, His separated parts and parcels.
- vi) Conditioned souls are controlled by māyā.
- vii) Liberated souls are free from māyā.
- viii) The spiritual and material worlds are manifestations of Śrī Hari, and are inconceivably and simultaneously one with Him and different from Him.
- ix) Bhakti is the only means of sādhana.
- x) Love of Kṛṣṇa is the only goal.

These ten doctrines of bhakti are like roots and medicinal herbs and the essential juice of these roots and herbs is the ghee which burns in the wicks of this ghee lamp. The five great wicks are the five types of sthayī-bhāva, and the five types of rasa—śānta, dāsyā, sakhyā, vātsalyā and madhura—are the five flames.

Verse 4. The rays of these effulgent flames are the constituents of bhakti-rasa, namely vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika and vyabhicārī. The darkness of ignorance of the three worlds is destroyed forever by the powerful effulgence of this ghee lamp, characterized by the five transcendental tongues of flame. When the conditioned souls see this effulgence, the darkness of their wicked intelligence and aversion to Kṛṣṇa is dispelled. Thus the effect of this extraordinary lamp completely destroys darkness or avidyā. Who lit this lamp in the present age? The lamp of the siddhānta of bhakti was ignited by Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Verse 5. After incense and the ghee lamp, water is offered in a conchshell. Here, the conchshell is bhakti-vinodana, the transcendental delight (vinodana) of bhakti. (In other words, the conch shell is Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura). The water in the conchshell is the pure and fragrant flow of śrī rūpānuga-bhakti released by Bhakti-Bhagīratha Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The current flows from this conchshell eternally and uninterruptedly, like an unbroken stream of oil, and will continue to flow in the future as well; this current of bhakti will never be interrupted. The stream of water from this conch shell will continue to shower fortunate souls in this world, so that they drown in bhagavat-rasa.

Verse 6. The bell is very important in the arcana of śrī vigraha. It is essential to ring the bell, which is sarva-vādyā-mayī (the sum total of all musical sounds), while

offering incense, lamp and other ingredients. The role of the bell which keeps ringing eternally in this extraordinary āraṭi is also quite unique. This transcendental bell is powerful hari-kathā. The whole life of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was permeated with hari-kathā; in fact he is the embodiment of hari-kathā. His hari-kathā would never stop, even for a moment. It would automatically start to flow, even when he saw innocent children or plants and bees. His hari-kathā was so potent and effective that anyone who heard it would immediately become inspired with bhakti.

Kīrtana is also essential during the performance of arcana. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his Bhakti-sandarbhā, yadyapy anyā bhakti kalau kartavyā tadā kīrtanākhyā bhakti saṁyogenaiva: “If anyone executes other limbs of bhakti, he should perform harināma saṅkīrtana at the same time. In Kali-yuga, performing any sādhana independent of saṅkīrtana will not bear any fruits.” Thus it is essential to perform kīrtana while doing arcana. Saṅkīrtana is divided into different types such as nāma-kīrtana, rūpa-kīrtana, guṇa-kīrtana and līlā-kīrtana. Amongst these, nāma-kīrtana is the best of all: tāra madhye sarva śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana.

The mṛdaṅga is another essential part of saṅkīrtana. The contribution of the bṛhad-mṛdaṅga—that is, the printing press—is of the utmost importance in the āraṭi propagated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. The sound of an ordinary mṛdaṅga is very limited, but the bhakti literatures published by the bṛhad-mṛdaṅga reach every corner of the world. They enter the hearts of sādhanā bhaktas, and make them dance in the ecstasy of harināma-saṅkīrtana. The sound of this bṛhad-mṛdaṅga never stops. It eternally arises in the hearts of the devotees, and keeps inspiring them. All glories and victory to the āraṭi of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who has established this bṛhad-mṛdaṅga!

Verses 7 and 8. Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva has described the divine beauty of Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda’s transcendental body, in this āraṭi-kīrtana. “My most worshipful Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda is most dear to Śrīmatī Rādhikā as Śrī Nayana Mañjarī. However, out of humility, he has manifested his name in this world as Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, covering his previous name, form and so on. Thus he has shown the ideal of tṛṇād-apisunīca, becoming more humble than a blade of grass.

“His broad forehead is beautified by urddhva puṇḍra tilaka. Three strands of tulasi beads shine brilliantly around his neck. His long arms reach down to his knees, his stature is tall, he has beautiful and well-built limbs, and his bodily complexion defeats the lustre of pure gold. All these symptoms of a mahā-purusa announce in unison that he is a great personality.

Verses 9-12. “An affectionate smile is always playing on his charming and lustrous lips. He has adopted saffron-coloured garments such as dora-kaupīna, bahirvāsa and uttarīya according to sannyāsa-dharma. The illuminating light from these garments has destroyed the dense darkness of the clouds which covered the Gauḍīya sky after the disappearance of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Baladeva

Vidyābhuṣaṇa Prabhu. He has established preaching centres of śuddha-bhakti all over India and abroad. These preaching centres are like the vilāsa-kuñjas (pleasure groves) of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Fashioned from the flowers of the bhakti-latā, their beauty and fragrance delights the whole world.

This ārati of Śrīla Prabhupāda is eternally present in Māyāpura Dhāma. His dearest Śrī Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu is fanning Śrīla Prabhupāda with a cāmara. In this way, Śrī Keśava is blissfully performing the ārati-kīrtana”.

Today, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas everywhere affectionately sing this beautiful ārati-kīrtana which Śrīla Gurudeva composed.

Śrī Tulasī parikramā and ārati

For some time the Śrī Gauḍīya Sārasvata Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya had no kīrtana to sing at the time of Śrī Tulasī parikramā and ārati. Some devotees used to sing Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa’s ‘tulasī kṛṣṇa preyasī namo namaḥ/ vilāsa-kuñja diyo vāsa.’ This is appropriate for highly elevated rāgānuga-sādhakas, but not for vaidhī-bhakti-sādhakas, who do not possess the greed to reside in vilāsa-kuñja.

Others used to sing Candrasekhara’s ‘namo re namo re maiya namo nārāyaṇi.’ This is appropriate for Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī Rāmānuja Sampradāya, because in this song Tulasī-devī is addressed as the queen of Śrī Nārāyaṇa (or Śrī Śālagrāma) who resides in Vaikuṅṭha. Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship Śrī Vṛndā-devī as the most dear sakhī of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. She is the adhiṣṭhātrī-devī (presiding Deity) of Vṛndāvana Dhāma, the topmost section of Goloka, and she is expert in arranging for the līla-vilāsa of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa there. She gave her beautiful land of Vṛndāvana to her most dear sakhī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The intimate meetings of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their other pastimes in the kuñjas become successful only by the help of Śrī Vṛndā-devī. Tulasī, who is dear to Śrī Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha, is the vaibhava-prakāśa expansion of Vṛndā-devī. The original Vṛndā-devī can never be the queen of Śrī Nārāyaṇa or of Śrī Śālagrāma. Thus, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship her in the form of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beloved sakhī in Vṛndāvana.

For all these reasons, Paramārādhyā Śrīla Gurudeva felt the need for an appropriate prayer which ordinary sādhakas of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya could offer at the time of Tulasī parikramā and ārati. Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas accept Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala and Śrī Gaurahari as one non-dual para-tattva, and Śrīla Gurudeva has included this siddhānta in the beautiful prayer which he composed. The whole of the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya has accepted this prayer, which is complete in all respects, and is brimming with philosophical conclusions. The prayer is as follows:

namo namaḥ tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ)

rādhā-kṛṣṇa nitya-sevā — 'ei abhilāṣī' (1)

je tomāra śaraṇa loya, sei kṛṣṇa sevā pāya,

kṛpā kori koro tāre 'vṛndāvana-vāsī'

tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ) (2)

tomāra caraṇe dhari, more anugata kari,
 gaurahari-sevā-magna rākha divā niśi
 tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ) (3)
 dīnera ei abhilāṣa, māyāpure/navadvīpe dio vāsa,
 aṅgete mākhība sadā dhāma dhūli rāśi
 tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ) (4)
 tomāra ārati lāgi, dhūpa, dīpa, puṣpa māṅgi,
 mahimā bākhāni ebe hau more khuśi
 tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ) (5)
 jagatera jata phūla, kabhu nahe samatula,
 sarvatyaji kṛṣṇa tava patra mañjarī vilāsi
 tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ) (6)
 ogo vṛnde mahārānī!
 tomāra pādapa tale, deva ṛṣi kutūhale,
 sarvatīrtha loye tāñrā hana adhvāsī
 tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ) (7)
 śrī-keśava ati dīna, sādhana-bhajana-hīna,
 tomāra āśraye sadā nāmānande bhāsi
 tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī (namo namaḥ) (8)

Verse 1. First of all, obeisances are offered to Śrī Tulasī or Vṛndā-devī as the beloved of Kṛṣṇa. She has been described as a very compassionate sakhī who bestows the eternal service of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala.

Verse 2. “To those who take shelter of you, you kindly award Kṛṣṇa sevā and the fortune of eternal residence in Vṛndāvana.”

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has glorified Śrīmatī Vṛndā-devī in his Śrī Vṛndādevyāṣṭakam:

samasta-vaikuṅṭha-śiromanau śrī
 kṛṣṇasya vṛndāvana-dhanya-dhāmni
 dattādhikare vṛṣabhānu-putryā
 vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam
 tvad-ājñayā pallava-puṣpa-bhṛṅga-
 mṛgādibhir mādhava-keli-kuñjāḥ
 madhv-ādibhir bhānti vibhūṣyamānā
 vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam
 tvadīya-dutyena nikuñja-yūnor
 atyutkayoḥ keli-vilāsa-siddhiḥ
 tvat-saubhagaṁ kena nirucyatām tad
 vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam
 rāsābhilāṣo vasatiś ca vṛndā-
 vane tvad-īśāṅghri-saroja-sevā
 labhyā ca puṁsām kṛpayā tavaiva
 vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam

tvam kīrtyase sātva-tantra-vidbhir
līlābhīdhānā kila kṛṣṇa-śaktiḥ
tavaiva mūrtis tulasī nṛ-loke
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam
bhaktyā vihinā aparādhra-lakṣaiḥ
kṣiptaś ca kāmādi-taraṅga-madhye
kṛpāmayi! tvām śaranam prapannā
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam

“Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-rāja-nandinī Śrī Rādhikā has given you authority over the most sacred abode of Kṛṣṇa, Vṛndāvana, which is fully endowed with unlimited qualities and is the crown jewel of all the Vaikuṅṭha planets. On your order the loveliness of the spring season eternally maintains the supreme beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Vṛndāvana pleasure groves, which are decorated with different types of leaves and fragrant flowers, and are full of bumblebees, deer, peacocks, male and female parrots, and other birds and animals.

“The pleasure pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are always eager to relish such loving exchanges, are only made successful by your assistance as an extremely skilled envoy. In other words, you become a duti (a female messenger) just to arrange Their union, which would otherwise be very difficult. You assist in many different ways to bring about the success of Their līlā-vilāsa. Who in this world can describe the limit of your fortune? I repeatedly offer my praṇāmas at your lotus feet.

“He Vṛnde! By your mercy the greed to have darśana of śrī rasa-līlā arises in the heart of Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. By your mercy they obtain residence in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, and receive service to the lotus feet of their Praṇa-vallabha Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madhava. I repeatedly offer obeisances at your lotus feet.

“He Vṛnde! In the tantra literature composed by devotees such as Śrī Nārada, expert and learned scholars have described you as the līlā-śakti (pastime potency) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You expand yourself in this world as the renowned Śrī Tulasī-devī. I offer my obeisances unto you again and again.

“O compassionate Devī! I am devoid of bhakti, and I am full of hundreds of offences, and because of this I am sinking in the waves of lust, anger and all base qualities in this ocean of material existence. I surrender at your lotus feet because I have no other alternative. Please be merciful and deliver me from the impassable material ocean. I offer my obeisances at your lotus feet again and again. O Vṛnde! Beloved of Kṛṣṇa! Please be merciful to this surrendered soul and give me residence in Vṛndāvana.”

Verse 3. Śrīla Gurudeva continues in his āraṭi-kīrtana, “O Vṛnde! We pray at your lotus feet again and again. Please give us your anugatya (guidance) and bestow upon us the service of Śrī Gaurahari, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, endowed with the internal mood and effulgent lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, so that we may be immersed day and night in that service.”

Someone may raise the question, “Śrīmatī Tulasī is the beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and she can bestow Kṛṣṇa sevā. How, then, can she give the service of Śrī Śācīnandana Gaurahari?” The answer is, “Śrī Śācīnandana Gaurahari and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are abhinna-para-tattva (non-different Absolute Truth). Līlā-puruṣottama Śrī Kṛṣṇa is rasika-śekhara and parama-karuṇa. He adopts the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and appears in the form of Śrī Śācīnandana Gaurahari to distribute rāgamarga-bhakti and to fulfil his own three internal desires. These are: (1) to know the greatness of Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s love; (2) to know the sweetness of His form, qualities, flute and pastimes, which Śrīmatī Rādhikā relishes through Her love; and (3) to know the happiness that Śrīmatī Rādhikā derives on tasting His sweetness. Therefore Śrī Tulasī-devī is also very dear to Śrī Gaurahari and can certainly give service to Him and love for Him”.

Almost all the associates of Kṛṣṇa appeared with Śrī Gaurahari in male forms; very few appeared in female forms. In Kali-yuga, Śrī Vṛndā-devī has also appeared in the form of the tulasī tree to make Kṛṣṇa bhakti more easily attainable. Śrīla Advaita Ācārya, who is the avatāra of Mahāviṣṇu, adopted the easiest and most effective process to entreat Śrī Kṛṣṇa to advent in this world. The method of worship was to offer some tulasī leaves with Ganges water to Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and with great eagerness to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa loudly. Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in this world by the influential and infallible worship of Śrī Advaita Ācārya. Thus, Śrī Tulasī Mahārāṇī can give the service of Śrī Gaurahari.

Verse 4. “O Vṛnde! O beloved of Kṛṣṇa! I repeatedly offer obeisances unto your lotus feet. Please be merciful to this insignificant and destitute soul who has surrendered unto you, and allow me to have some place to reside in Śrī Vṛndāvana, Śrī Māyāpura or Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma. Then I will be able to smear the dust of these transcendental dhāmas profusely on my body and, maddened with prema, I may perform kīrtana of the names of Śrī Gaurahari or Kṛṣṇa.

Verse 5. “O Tulasī-devī! Beloved of Kṛṣṇa! I have collected sixteen items of worship such as incense, a lamp, flowers and naivedya (offerings of edibles) to perform your āratī, and I am affectionately performing your āratī with these items. At the same time, I am glorifying you with saṅkīrtana. You are the līlā-śakti (pastime potency) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and you are most dear to Him. You are capable of giving prema-bhakti for Śrī Gaurahari and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. May you be pleased with me. This is my repeated prayer at your lotus feet.

Verse 6. “O Tulasī-devī! Beloved of Kṛṣṇa! There are varieties of beautiful flowers in the world, such as belī, camelī, jūhī, kevaḍa and kamala, but they are insignificant compared with you. Śrī Kṛṣṇa rejects all these different flowers and accepts only your leaves and mañjarīs. Kṛṣṇa enjoys pastimes with His beloved Śrīmatī Rādhikā in your Vṛndā kuñja. According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the four Kumāras became enchanted by the aroma of the honey of the tulasī leaves which were offered at the Lord’s lotus feet, and that is why they came to Vaikuṅṭha to have His darśana. All

other flowers lack this wonderful power. The makaranda (honey) and aroma of Śrī Tulasī attracts even Kṛṣṇa Himself.”

Once, Śrī Kṛṣṇa visited Kurukṣetra at the time of the solar eclipse with His 16,108 queens and all the Dvārakā vasīs. After taking bath for the last time at the end of the eclipse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dear Satyabhāmā wanted to weigh Kṛṣṇa on a scale against a heap of gold and then give that gold to Śrī Nārada in charity. Śrī Kṛṣṇa sat on one pan of the scale and Satyabhāmā put all her gold ornaments on the other pan. After that, His other queens put all their ornaments on the pan, and then more and more golden pots were added, but the pan with the gold was still far too light. The queens did not know what to do, but by Śrī Nārada’s inspiration they surrendered to Vṛndāvanēśvari Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrīmatī Rādhikā removed the pile of gold from the pan and replaced it with one tulasī leaf dipped in Her tears. No sooner had She done that than Kṛṣṇa’s pan lifted and the pan with the tulasī leaf sank down and touched the ground. Everyone was struck with wonder to see the glories of this one tulasī leaf. In this way we see that the leaves and mañjarīs of tulasī are superior to all other leaves and flowers. There is no doubt of this conclusion.

Verse 7. Śrīla Gurudeva goes on: “O Tulasī! Beloved of Kṛṣṇa! All the devatās and ṛṣis, along with all the places of pilgrimage, eagerly reside under your purifying shade just to attain your mercy. You can fulfil all their desires. I am very insignificant and quite worthless. I simply surrender unto you and offer you my praṇāmas again and again.”

There are many authentic statements in śāstra to prove that all the devatās and sages worship tulasī to attain bhagavad-bhakti and that all the pilgrimage places reside under the shade of the divine tulasī tree. Śrī Tulasī-devī is served in various ways.

dr̥ṣṭā spr̥ṣṭā tathā dhyātā kīrtitā namitā stutā
ropitā sevītā nityam pūjitā tulasī śubhā
navadhā tulasīm devīm ye bhajanti dine dine
yugakoṭi sahastrāni te vasanti harer gr̥he

“Śrī Tulasī is very auspicious and she bestows unlimited good fortune upon those who take her darśana, touch her, meditate upon her, sing her glories, offer praṇāmas to her, hear her glories, plant, serve or worship her. Those who serve Tulasī in these nine ways reside in Śrī Hari’s abode for thousands of yugas (i.e. eternally).”

Hence this tulasī parikramā and ārati kīrtana which our most revered Śrīla Gurudeva has composed is of great benefit to all kinds of bhakti-sādhakas.

Śrī Caitanya Pañjikā (Śrī Māyāpura Pañjikā)

(Paramārādhya Śrīla Gurudeva’s opinion about Śrī Caitanya Pañjikā)

Jagadguru Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhu-pāda is the founder of Śrī Caitanya Pañjikā (calendar), which protects Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s line. This pañjikā expounds the proper concepts and conduct according to the pure siddhānta of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, following exclusively in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. This is why, in short, we have called this pañjikā ‘Śrī Caitanya Pañjikā.’

Another name for this is ‘Śrī Māyāpura Pañjikā’, because Śrī Māyāpura is the place

of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance. Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhu-pāda has written that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is actually the great person who initiated the tradition of 'Śrī Caitanyābda.'

Today there are many pañjikās which have been popular for many years. However, they cannot be called complete pañcāṅga in all respects, for they have many deficiencies. They do not even mention any appropriate vaiṣṇava titles for the time periods. Not only that, but the ascertainment of time in connection with vratassuch as fast days, the consideration of śuddha (pure) and biddha (mixed) periods, and the system for ascertaining auspicious times for travelling cause impediments. We clearly see the absence of the pure guidance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda in these pañjikās, and there is certainly a dire need for an authentic vaiṣṇava pañjikā, exactly following in their pure line. Śrī Caitanya Pañjikā has appeared to fulfil this purpose. For the information of the people in general, we are presenting the titles of the different divisions of time, which are found in the Viṣṇu-dharmottara and Hayaśirṣa Pañcarātra. We are providing a list of these titles for the devotees of Viṣṇu.

(A) The two Movements of the Sun

- (i) Northern, uttarāyaṇa—Balabhadra
- (ii) Southern, dakṣiṇāyaṇa—Kṛṣṇa

(B) The Six Seasons

- (i) summer—Puṇḍarikākṣa
- (ii) rainy season—Bhogaśāyī
- (iii) autumn—Padmanābha
- (iv) hemanta—Hṛṣīkeśa
- (v) winter—Devatrivikrama
- (vi) spring—Mādhava

(C) The Two Phases and Additional Month (malamāsa)

- (i) kṣaya or malamāsa—Puruṣottama
- (ii) dark fortnight (kṛṣṇa-pakṣa)—Pradyumna, Kṛṣṇa
- (iii) light fortnight (śukla-pakṣa)—Aniruddha, Gaura

(D) The Twelve Months

- (i) Vaiśākha—Madhusūdana
- (ii) Jyeṣṭha—Trivikrama
- (iii) Āṣāḍha—Vāmana
- (iv) Śrāvana—Śrīdhara
- (v) Bhādra—Hṛṣīkeśa
- (vi) Āśvina—Padmanābha
- (vii) Kārtika—Dāmodara
- (viii) Agrahāyaṇa—Keśava
- (ix) Pauṣa—Nārāyaṇa
- (x) Māgha—Mādhava
- (xi) Phālguna—Govinda

(xii) Caitra—Viṣṇu

(E) Days of the Week

- (i) Sunday—Sarva—Vāsudeva
- (ii) Monday—Sarvaśiva—Sāṅkarṣaṇa
- (iii) Tuesday—Sthānu—Pradyumna
- (iv) Wednesday—Bhūta—Aniruddha
- (v) Thursday—Ādikāraṇodaśāyī
- (vi) Friday—Nidhi—Garbhodaśāyī
- (vii) Saturday—Avyaya—Kṣīrodaśāyī

(F) The Sixteen tithis

- (i) First day of the lunar cycle—pratipadā—Brahmā
- (ii) Second day of the lunar cycle—dvitīyā—Śrīpati
- (iii) Third day of the lunar cycle—tritīyā—Viṣṇu
- (iv) Fourth day of the lunar cycle—caturthī—Kāpila
- (v) Fifth day of the lunar cycle—pañcamī—Śrīdhara
- (vi) Sixth day of the lunar cycle—ṣaṣṭhī—Prabhu
- (vii) Seventh day of the lunar cycle—saptamī—Dāmodara
- (viii) Eighth day of the lunar cycle—āṣṭamī—Hṛṣikeśa
- (ix) Ninth day of the lunar cycle—navamī—Govinda
- (x) Tenth day of the lunar cycle—daśamī—Madhusūdana
- (xi) Eleventh day of the lunar cycle—ekādaśī—Bhūdhara
- (xii) Twelve day of the lunar cycle—dvādaśī—Gadī
- (xiii) Thirteenth day of the lunar cycle—trayodaśī—Śaṅkhī
- (xiv) Fourteenth day of the lunar cycle—caturdaśī—Padmī
- (xv) Full moon day and dark moon day—purnimā and amāvasyā—Cakrī

(G) Twenty-seven Constellations (nakṣatra)

- (i) aśvinī—dhātā
- (ii) bharaṇī—kṛṣṇa
- (iii) kṛttikā—viśva
- (iv) rohiṇī—viṣṇu
- (v) mṛgaśīrā—vaṣaṭkāra
- (vi) ārdrā—bhūtabhavyabhavat prabhu
- (vii) punarvasu—bhūtabhṛt
- (viii) puṣyā—bhūtakṛt
- (ix) aśleṣā—bhāva
- (x) maghā—bhūtātmā
- (xi) purvaphālgunī—bhūtabhāvāna
- (xii) uttara phālgunī—avyakta
- (xiii) hastā—puṇḍarikākṣa
- (xiv) citrā—viśvakarmā
- (xv) svāti—śuciśravā

- (xvi) viśākhā—sadbhāva
- (xvii) anurādhā—bhāvana
- (xviii) jyeṣṭhā—bharttā
- (xix) mūlā—prabhava
- (xx) pūrvāśādhā—prabhu
- (xxi) uttarāśādhā—īśvara
- (xxii) śravaṇā—aprameya
- (xxiii) dhaṇiṣṭhā—hr̥ṣīkeśa
- (xxiv) śatabhiṣā—padmanābha
- (xxv) purvabhādrapada—amaraprabhu
- (xxvi) uttarabhādrapada—agrāhya
- (xxvii) revatī—śāśvata

Statement about Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā

The nature of Śrī Patrikā

(An article by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja from the first edition of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā, 14th March, 1949)

Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā⁴ is the journal of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is wholly and solely dedicated to the service of the Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, which was founded by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and of the Śrī Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabhā which Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī founded. Since the Samiti is the foremost and very dear servant of both these assemblies (sabhās) it is their non-different personification. Hence we should understand that the journal of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is the journal of both assemblies.

The form of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā is non-different from Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, the journal of the Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, and from Sāptāhika-gauḍīya, the journal of the Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabhā. Therefore the mood, language, and line of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā is non-different from the mood, language, and line of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In short, Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā exclusively promotes the message of Śrīla Rūpa and Raghunātha.

The circulation period of Sajjana-toṣaṇī and Gauḍīya

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī was first published approximately about 67 years ago, under the editorial guidance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He continued it for about seventeen years, after which Śrīla Prabhupāda became the editor for seven years, so the publication of Sajjana-toṣaṇī went on for about twenty-four years.

Later, in 1922, the current director of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā⁵ began to publish a weekly magazine called Gauḍīya as the non-different form of the monthly Sajjana-toṣaṇī magazine. This journal also maintained its publication for about 24 years, disappearing in about the year 1946.

The cause of the appearance of Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā

After the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, his staunch and intimate servants preached pure hari-kathā, following his internal moods. However, owing to various types of divine and demonic incidents, they were unable to continue the real service

of the weekly Gauḍīya and, while feigning dependence on guru, they actually became independent. From then on, the principles on which Gauḍīya was based were changed without any check or opposition. It simply supported the policy, ūñcī dukāna phikī pakarāṇ: “The shop is great but the food is tasteless.” In other words, a third class product was distributed on the strength of the Gauḍīya’s good name. Many people tried to save the skeletal body of the Gauḍīya with poisonous and foul-smelling oil, but their hearts were completely devoid of the real essence, and the Gauḍīya gradually wasted away. The real food of the Gauḍīya is the siddhānta of bhakti following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and dedicated to the service to Śrī Hari, guru and Vaiṣṇavas. It is impossible for the Gauḍīya to stay alive in the absence of this food. There were countless preparations of inedible and improper foodstuffs, but since they were imbued with siddhāntic misconceptions and were rooted in disloyalty to śrī guru, they were useless and failed to save the life of the Gauḍīya.

After surviving somehow or other for twenty-four years of its publication, the Gauḍīya disappeared because of offences committed by its so-called managers. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world was then deprived of the fortune of plunging into the stream of pure rūpānuga-bhaktivinoda, as practised and propagated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Now Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā has appeared to bestow this fortune once again.

The purpose of Śrī Patrikā

Nowadays, there are many different journals in the world of religion, but Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā is completely different from all of them. This journal will never make compromises in the fearless and impartial propagation of the truth. We have found many journals and books which imitate the pure bhakti-dharma, but which are filled with misconceptions. Their points of view are opposed to the transcendental conception of pure śrī rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavism, as we will show in each respective case. Some invent the principle of observing festivals by mixing transcendental smṛti-śāstra with the mundane smṛti-śāstra. They do not know that the transcendental substance is never accessible to the mundane senses. Many other journals discuss illusory conceptions on the pretext of hari-kathā, and thus actually deal only with mundane subject matter. These periodicals can give no pleasure to the hearts of the followers of Śrī Gaurahari. In some places they cause quarrels and alliances by relating stories which are opposed to bhakti, and elsewhere they are filled with self-praise. In this way they go miles away from pure hari-kathā, and can bring no happiness to the hearts of devotees.

Some think that they can make the path of bhakti more advanced or modern by following the conception of materialistic people, and trying to hide śuddha-bhakti. Others destroy the beauty of śuddha-bhakti by making concessions to a particular mundane sampradāya. Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā will stay far away from such journals. When sentiments which are actually opposed to śuddha-bhakti are unknowingly allowed in bhakti-kathā, they can prevent service from being revealed in the hearts

of the devotees. With this apprehension, the Patrikā will always try to caution its readers away from mundane topics. Those whose hearts are full of masses of non-devotional conceptions cannot perceive the happiness of bhakti because of their diseased condition. Śrī Patrikā will not be able to bring any delight to the hearts of such readers.

The connection of various ethics with Śrī Gauḍīya

Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā will always engage in critical analysis of the current of Indian thoughts and in assessing the extent to which it is connected with the world of dharma. This Patrikā will have no connection with political, social, economic and educational behaviour and activities. At the same time, it will not silently allow inauspiciousness to appear in the world, when these ethics create an impediment in the behaviour and ideas which originate in the ethics of the eternal sanātana-dhāma.

When we assess the history of India before independence, we find that the ethics of dharma are the root and foundation of all ethics. Our indifference towards that dharma is the main cause of our fall down, but when we adhere to it, we can attain sovereignty of this world. Śrī Patrikā will warn all Indians by explaining and giving examples of this indifferent attitude in every aspect. Dharma is the speciality of India, and it is also the life of India. Only because of dharma has India commanded a place at the head of the world. The key mantra which unfolds independent India's victory flag at the head of the entire world is the best verse of Śrī Mahāprabhu's Śikṣāṣṭakā:

trṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtaniyaḥ sadā hariḥ

Śrī Patrikā will always perform kīrtana boldly to teach the people of the whole world the purport of this verse.

Dharma is India's prestige and
the bestower of peace

It is India's honour to be a nation governed by dharma. Dharma has guided India since immemorial time. The word 'dharma' does not indicate any sort of narrowness, deficiency or uselessness. Dharma is not the same as the semblance of dharma. It is not proper to be disrespectful towards dharma, after seeing the false and narrow activities of the supposed flag carriers of dharma. Mortal conceptions degrade human beings and immerse them in the ocean of grief. Mere arrangements of food, lodging and clothing, however luxurious, cannot give eternal peace. Even those who have reached the ultimate limit of sense enjoyment are also immersed in the deepest anxiety. There is no need to explain this to everyone. Peace is a separate principle. The things of this world can never bring about peace.

The language of Śrī Patrikā

Articles in every regional language will be published in this patrikā, so that it will receive honour in all parts of India. Those in languages such as Bengali, Sanskrit, Hindi, Āsāmī, Oriya and English will get first preference. This patrikā presents itself

before the people of the world with a heavy weight of responsibility and its success depends on the internal sympathy and well-wishing of the residents of India.

Statements about Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā, June 5th, 1955

History

Jagadguru Om Viṣṇupāda 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Yatirāja (the king of the sannyasīs) is the crown-jewel of the dynasty of divine swans. On 9th November, 1931 (Gaurābda 445, Vikram Samvat 1988), at Śrī Paramahansa Maṭha at Naimiṣāraṇya, he started the publication of a fortnightly journal named Bhāgavata, in order to initiate the flowing stream of the topmost dharma teachings in the Hindi language. The day on which he started publication was the day of Kṛṣṇa, the new moon of Kartika month and thereafter this fortnightly journal was published on the day of each full moon and each new moon. Publication of this patrikā continued regularly for a few years and then stopped. Following in Jagadguru Śrīla Prabhupāda's footsteps, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti vowed to serve this patrikā, and at Śrī Keśavaji Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā published Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā in Hindi every month from June 1955 (Gaurābda 469, Vikram Samvat 2012) to May 1974 (Gaurābda 488, Vikram Samvat 2031). Then it disappeared again by the desire of providence. Fortunately, however, it has manifested itself once again to promote the flow of dharma as practised and propagated by the most merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who advented to purify the age of Kali. We humbly request intelligent readers to make their lives successful by bathing in this Gaṅga of prema.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja has presented the following thoughts regarding the purpose of the patrikā—

Eternality

'Bhāgavata' is an eternal truth. There is no obstruction to its eternality whether it appears fortnightly, monthly, yearly or even daily, hourly or anupalika (at every blink of an eye). These are just divisions of endless time. For those who do not have a conception of ananta (endlessness) and pūrṇatā (completeness), a part brings them towards the whole. Still an aṁśa (part) is forever a part and pūrṇa (whole) is eternally the complete whole. An aṁśa never becomes the whole or attains equality with it. Those who cannot comprehend the eternal truth perceive it as appearing and disappearing, and as being subject to birth and death, but this perception is simply false and imaginary. Vṛndāvana and Mathura Dhāma, for instance, are eternal, but they seem to appear and disappear. Only the Gauḍīyas, the followers of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, can understand the truth of the appearance and disappearance of the eternal abode. Vaiṣṇavas who belong to other sampradāyas, or to no sampradāya at all, cannot understand these subject matters. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the only source of evidence for this, and the fortnightly or monthly appearance of the eternal Bhāgavata is the spreading of the unlimited and eternal beauty of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

For this reason, the crown jewel of the Gauḍīya dynasty, Jagadguru Yatirāja Samrāta Śrīla Prabhupāda, published Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā in the Gaura-pakṣa (waxing phase of the moon) and the Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa (dark phase of the moon). The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is explained, discussed, practised, honoured and supported in both the light and the dark phases of the moon. In other words, Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā is particularly essential to convey the purport of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the sampradāyas who lack faith and conviction in the topmost viṣṇu-tattva i.e. bhāgavat-tattva in the form of Śrī Gaurahari.

‘Śrī’ and ‘Patrikā’

The use of the word ‘Śrī’ before the word ‘Bhāgavata’ implies the eternality of Bhāgavata. Thus eternality is Śrī of Bhāgavata. The word ‘Patrikā’ means ‘the carrier of the message or the discussion’, so the use of the word ‘Patrikā’ after the word ‘Bhāgavata’ means that this patrikā is the bearer of the conduct, conceptions and discussion based on the doctrines of Bhāgavata. Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā therefore presents itself to the readers as the carrier of the eternal message of Bhāgavata. Temporary, perishable, changing and false conceptions or articles will not be published in it. There will never be a place in Śrī Patrikā for any subject matter which gives rise to absurd and useless talk about eating, sleeping, mating, defending and so on. Compositions, philosophy, poems and articles which assist or enhance the happiness derived from sense enjoyment cannot be given the title of ‘Śrī Patrikā.’ Thus viśrī (that which is without śrī) is not worthy of respect. Śrī alone is a transcendental reality. We will distribute the transcendental message which is endowed with the śrī of the Vaikuṅṭha world and we will oppose the material conceptions of the present world which are devoid of śrī. This patrikā has adopted the national language Hindi as the vehicle for the distribution of the eternal message.

National language

Language is the expression of our sentiments, which are the distinctive tendency of the heart. Hence, since its quality determines the quality of the expression; the expression of sentiment is not completely achieved if the vehicle is weak. The thoughts of the heart will be perceived clearly, and will influence society, only to the degree that the language is pure, exalted and advanced. We propose to express the sentiments of Vaikuṅṭha in the national language, in the hope that the present national language will prosper and fully express the sentiments of all the jīvas.

The Hindi language

The majority of ancient Indian languages are derived from the Vedic Sanskrit language, which is our first language. Distorted forms of Sanskrit are found in various languages according to differences of time, place and people. The native people of Hindustan use the language called Hindi to exchange the sentiments of their hearts. The words ‘Hindu’ or ‘Hindi’ are not original Vedic words, nor are they found in the Sanskrit language. The word ‘Hindu’ was used by the residents of Phārasa region to address the people who lived near the banks of river Sindhu.

Although everyone accepts that the Vedic or ancient scriptural Sanskrit language is our root language, still we have adopted Hindi in its current form as our national language.

The discipline of language

Since language expresses sentiments, the sentiments of a people will influence the language in which they express them. Previously the only language used in our country was the Vedic language, and the manifestations of viṣṇu-tattva were the only worshipful objects for every living entity. The Sanskrit language was used to exchange sentiments as recently as the medieval period. Today, in the same country, Hindi has been established as the vehicle with which to conduct the system of administration. In any case, whatever system is presently manifest, and whatever becomes manifest in the course of time and the ceaseless flow of change, we will adopt it if it is favourable for the service of the Bhāgavata.

laukikī vaidikī vāpi yā kriyā kriyate mune

hari-sevānukūlaiva sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā

“Any activity, whether it is Vedic (spiritual) or laukikā (mundane) must be performed in a manner which is favourable to bhakti.”

This is the proper perspective on the transformations of matter in time, and it is only found in the Vedic system of thought. No situation past, present, or future can possibly exist beyond the scope of the Vedas or śāstras. Therefore, we consider all stages to be transformations of the Vedic stage, and in a favourable mood we propose to discuss the eternal vaikuṅṭha-tattva in the Hindi language.

Jurisdiction of the national language

Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā will publish a message which will free from māyā the jīvas of that section of the world which is governed by the Hindi-speaking nation. Which part of the world is ruled over by a nation? Only a small part of the body and mind are ruled to some extent. But Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā will not even glance upon issues which are maintained, administered or protected by the body and mind. This whole world will pass in time, and nations will pass with it. Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā goes beyond the activities of the perishable and ceaselessly changing body and mind, and will publish in the present national language Hindi descriptions of the culture and constitution of the Vaikuṅṭha world. This is why Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā is heralded as the exclusive carrier of the transcendental message of Vaikuṅṭha.

Request

We humbly submit a request at the lotus feet of our readers, that they should benefit themselves by eagerly studying the subject matter of this Patrikā. The language and conceptions of the Vaikuṅṭha world differ from the ordinary language born from the stream of worldly consciousness, and are far more profound. Consequently, some parts of the Patrikā may not be easily understood at first. Still, it will become sweeter and sweeter upon repeated reading, just as the tongue afflicted by jaundice gradually tastes the sweetness of sugar candy. Your sympathy with our bona fide endeavour, and your assistance in our undertaking, will make us feel successful. To achieve this

great purpose, we will publish in this Patrikā the writings of previous mahājanas (spiritual authorities) and living mahā-purūṣas (great souls). We will always beware of the writings of modern conditioned souls, which are full of various faults such as error and negligence. This is the unique speciality and pride of Śrī Bhāgavata Patrikā. What need is there to say more?

Literature on śuddha-bhakti compiled, published, written and edited by Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

1) Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Prabandhāvalī; 2. Śaraṇāgati (Yāmunabhāvāvalīsaḥa); 3. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu His Life & Precepts; 4. Prema-pradīpa (transcendental novel); 5. Śrī Navadvīpa-bhāvatarāṅga; 6. Jaiva Dharma; 7. Sahajiyā-dalana; 8. Sahajiyā-dalana (Hindī); 9. Śrī Caitanya-pañjikā; 10. Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā (Bengali, monthly journal); 11. Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā (Hindī, monthly journal); 12. Śrī Gauḍīya-gīti-guccha; 13. Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam; 14. Śrī Rūpānuga-bhajana-samapat; 15. Śrī Mahāprabhu kī Śikṣā; 16. Sāṅkhyā-vāṇī; 17. Śrī Navadvīpa-śatakam; 18. Śrī Navadvīpa dhāma parikramā; 19. Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī or Vaiṣṇava Vijaya; 20. Jaiva Dharma (Hindī); 21. Śrī Navadvīpa dhāma mātmyam (pramāṇa khaṇḍa); 22. Vijanagrāma and Sannyāsī (ancient poetry).

Thus ends the Seventh Part of The Life and Teachings of

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī by

Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

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Eighth Part

The disciples of Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to whom he bestowed tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa and bābājī-veṣa

Tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa

- 1) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja (Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmācārī), Tuesday, 11.3.1952
- 2) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja (Śrī Rādhānātha Dāsādhikārī), Tuesday, 11.3.1952
- 3) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa Bhaktabāndhava), Tuesday, 11.3.1952
- 4) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Viṣṇu Mahārāja (Śrī Ānanda-gopāla Dāsādhikārī), Saturday, 28.2.1953
- 5) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramārthī Mahārāja (Śrī Pūrṇānanda Dāsādhikārī), Saturday, 28.2.1953
- 6) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Śānta Mahārāja (Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara Brahmācārī), Saturday, 28.2.1953
- 7) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Parivrājaka Mahārāja (Śrī Paramadharmeśvara Brahmācārī), Friday, 19.3.1954
- 8) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Śuddhādvaitī Mahārāja (Śrī Jayādvaita Brahmācārī), Friday, 19.3.1954

- 9) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja (Śrī Abhaya-caraṇāravindam Bhaktivedānta), Wednesday, 19.9.1959
 - 10) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja (Śrī Sanātana Dāsādhikāri), Wednesday, 19.9.1959
 - 11) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Rāddhānti Mahārāja (Śrī Bhāgavataprasāda Vrajavāsī), Monday, 19.3.1963
 - 12) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Harijana Mahārāja (Śrī Prabuddhakṛṣṇa Brahmācārī)
 - 13) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Urddhvamanthi Mahārāja (Dr. Vrajānanda Vrajavāsī), Monday, 11.3.1963
 - 14) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paryāṭaka Mahārāja (Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmācārī), Friday, 19.3.1965
 - 15) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Tridaṇḍi Mahārāja (Śrī Rasika-mohana Vrajavāsī), Friday, 19.3.1965
 - 16) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Daṇḍi Mahārāja (Śrī Guruśaraṇa Dāsa), Friday, 19.3.1965
 - 17) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Bhikṣu Mahārāja (Śrī Haridāsa Vrajavāsī), Friday, 19.3.1965
 - 18) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramādvaitī Mahārāja (Śrī Rohiṇinandana Vrajavāsī), Friday, 19.3.1965
 - 19) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nyāsī Mahārāja (Śrī Hari Brahmācārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
 - 20) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Viṣṇudāivata Mahārāja (Śrīvāsa Dāsādhikāri), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
 - 21) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Sajjana Mahārāja (Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmācārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
- Bābājī-veṣa—
- 1) Śrīmat Trigunātītadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Trigunātīta Brahmācārī), Friday, 11.5.1951
 - 2) Śrīmat Puruṣottamadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Pūrṇa-prajña Vrajavāsī), Thursday, 8.9.1966
 - 3) Śrīman Navīnakṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Nitāidāsa Brahmācārī), Thursday, 8.9.1966
 - 4) Śrīmad Vamśīvadanānandadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Govindadāsa Brahmācārī), Thursday, 8.9.1966
 - 5) Śrīmad Govindadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Govindadāsa Brahmācārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
 - 6) Śrīmad Advaitadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Dr. Advaitadāsa Brahmācārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
 - 7) Śrīmad Gorācāndadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Gorā-cāndadāsa Brahmācārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
 - 8) Śrīman Mṛtyuñjayadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Madana-mohana Dāsādhikāri), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
 - 9) Śrīmad Raghunāthadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Vrajavāsī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967

Parikramās organised by Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī

Parikramā	year
Navadvīpa Dhāma	yearly
Vrajamaṇḍala	1944
Kṣetramaṇḍala	1945
Dvārakā	1948
Rāmeśvaram (South India)	1950
Vrajamaṇḍala	1951
Kedāranātha, Badrinātha	1952
Avantikā and Nāsika	1953
Entire India	1961

Preaching centres of śuddha-bhakti established by Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī

- 1) Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha (original maṭha and main preaching centre), Tegharipāḍā, P.O. Navadvīpa (Nadiyā)
- 2) Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Caumāthā, P.O. Chuchura (Hoogli)
- 3) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, 33/2 Bospāḍā Lane, Calcutta-3
- 4) Śrī Siddhavāḍī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Sidhāvāḍī, P.O. Rūpa-nārāyaṇapura (Varddhamāna)
- 5) Śrī Pichladā Pādapīṭha, Pichladā, P.O. Īśvarapura (Medinī-pura)
- 6) Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Kaṁsaṭīlā, Mathurā (U.P.)
- 7) Śrī Golokagaṅja Gauḍīya Maṭha, P.O. Golokagaṅja (Goyāla-pāḍā), Assam
- 8) Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya Gauḍīya Āśrama, Harikhāli Bāzāra, P.O. Iṭānagarā (Medinīpura)
- 9) Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha, Pichladā, P.O. Āśutiyāvāḍa, Dist. Medinīpura (West Bengal)
- 10) Śrī Narottama Gauḍīya Āśrama, Caḍāikholā, P.O. Vicanadai, Dist. Goyālapāḍā, Assam
- 11) Śrī Yāvaṭa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Jāvaṭa, P.O. Kālnā, Dist. Varddhamāna (West Bengal)
- 12) Śrī Gopālajī Gauḍīya Preaching Centre, Koranṭa, P.O. Rāndiyāhāṭa, Dist. Bāleśvara (Orissa)
- 13) Śrī Gauḍīya Sevāśrama, Purānā Kāchārī Road, P.O. Māthābhāṅg, Dist. Kucabihāra (West Bengal)
- 14) Śrī Jagannātha Gauḍīya Āśrama, Guḍadaha, P.O. Śyāma-nagara, Dist. Caubīs Paraganā (West Bengal)
- 15) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuspāṭhī, Tegharipāḍā, P.O. Navadvīpa, Dist. Nadiyā (West Bengal)
- 16) Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic, Tegharipāḍā, P.O. Navadvīpa, Dist. Nadiyā (West Bengal)
- 17) Śrī Vāsudeva Gauḍīya Maṭha, P.O. Vāsugāon, Dist. Goyālapāḍā (Assam)
- 18) Śrī Rājarājeśvapura Gauḍīya Maṭha, P.O. Viśvanāthapura, Dist. Caubīs Paraganā (West Bengal)

19) Śrī Trigunātīta Samādhi Āśrama, Gadakhāli, P.O. Navadvīpa, Dist. Nadiyā (West Bengal)

Maṭhas established by the Governing Committee

20) Śrī Keśava Gosvāmī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śaktigaḍha, P.O. Śilīguḍī (Darjeeling)

21) Śrī Nīlacala Gauḍīya Maṭha, Gauravāṭasāhī, Svargadvāra (Purī) Orissa

22) Śrī Meghālaya Gauḍīya Maṭha, P.O. Turā (Gārohils) Meghālaya

23) Śrī Vinodabihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 28 Haldara Bāgāna Lane (Calcutta-4)

24) Śrī Narottama Gauḍīya Maṭha. Aravinda Lane, Kucavīhāra (West Bengal)

25) Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha, Dāngalī, Vṛndāvana (Uttar Pradesh)

26) Śrī Gopinātha Gauḍīya Maṭha, Rānāpati Ghāṭa, Vṛndāvana (Uttar Pradesh)

27) Śrī Bhaktivedānta Gauḍīya Maṭha, Sannyāsa Road, Kankhala, Haridvāra (Uttar Pradesh)

28) Śrī Kṛtiratna Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Caitanya Avenue, Durgāpura, Varddhavāna (West Bengal)

29) Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Raṅgapura, Śīlacara-2 (Kāchāḍa)

30) Śrī Nīmānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Gāḍīkhāna Road, Vidhāpāḍā, Dhubaḍī (Assam)

31) Śrī Mādhavjī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 1 Kālītalā Lane, Vaidyavāṭī (Hooglī)

32) Śrī Madana Mohana Gauḍīya Maṭha, Māthābhāngā, Kocavīhāra

33) Śrī Kṣīracorā Gauḍīya Maṭha, Bāleśvara, Orissa

34) Śrī Durvāsā Ṛṣi Gauḍīya Āśrama, Īśāpura, Mathurā (Uttar Pradesh)

35) Śrī Gour Govinda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Birmingham, England

36) Śrī Vinod Bihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Houston

37) Badger

38) Perth

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's Upadeśāvalī

1) Our very life is the service of Kṛṣṇa, which is performed for His pleasure with a favourable attitude, which is devoid of all other desires, which is not covered by jñāna and karma, and which is performed by the body, mind, words, and all of the senses.

2) Bhagavat-bhakti is attained by viśrambha-seva (intimate service) to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru.

3) Actual guru-sevā is honest service to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

4) The aṅga of bhakti known as kīrtana is the best and most complete limb of bhakti.

5) Only through the medium of kīrtana are the other limbs of bhakti accomplished.

6) Actual solitude is the renunciation of bad association, and the actual meaning of solitary bhajana is performing bhajana in the company of sādhus and vaiṣṇavas.

7) Real hari-kīrtana is preaching hari-kathā always and everywhere.

8) Real silence is to speak hari-kathā always and everywhere, or to be absorbed in speaking about services related to Śrī Hari.

- 9) Līla-smaraṇa is not different from offenceless nāma-bhajana or loud kīrtana of pure nāma, whether keeping count of a fixed number of rounds or not.
- 10) The actual vipralambha-bhajana of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the performance of Gaura bhajana in the mood of rūpānuga.
- 11) By the word 'Vāsudeva' we understand Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. Vāsudeva appeared; He was not born. The birth saṁskāras such as the cutting of the umbilical cord were not performed for Vāsudeva. However, Kṛṣṇa took birth from the womb of mother Yaśodā. Only rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavas can comprehend the subtle difference between birth and appearance. Therefore we pray to all the bhaktas of Kṛṣṇa to bless us so that we can become rūpānuga.
- 12) Śrī Vighraha should not be seen for the satisfaction of the eyes: "I will be pleased beholding Śrī Vighraha." Rather, the attitude, "Śrī Vighraha will be pleased by seeing me" is supremely beneficial. Bhagavān cannot be perceived by mundane senses.
- 13) The idea that Īśvara has no shape, no form, no qualities and no śakti is all deceptive imagination. The voidist philosophy of the Buddhists and the atheism which is against the Vedas is a part of this concoction. To accept the eternal form (svarūpa) of Īśvara, however, is theism. Those who do not accept His eternal form are certainly atheists.
- 14) The forceful influence of jaḍa-śakti (māyā) obstructs our propensity for service to Śrī Jagannātha. As long as we have a mundane conception, we cannot develop inclination for the transcendental conception of Jagannātha. The sole purpose of the Rathayātrā festival is to engage the whole world in the service of Jagannātha.
- 15) Only those who use every part of their existence to follow the instructions and teachings of Śrī Gurudeva are actually disciples. Those who disregard his instructions are opposed to guru-paramparā, have deviated from the path, and are pretentious gurus.
- 16) Śrī Gurupādapadma is not a mortal being. His entity is established equally in both the prakāṣa (manifest) and aprakāṣa (unmanifest) states. His appearance and dis-appearance have the same purpose. Therefore separation caused by his memories during his appearance and the jubilation of union in his disappearance are both possible at the same time.
- 17) It is imperative to worship dikṣā-guru at the first place. When we deliberate deeply, we see that the guru who bestows mantras is indeed the most prominent. Only those who give the instruction to serve dikṣā-guru are actually śikṣā-gurus. Those who are averse to giving instruction regarding service to dikṣā-guru can never be called śikṣā-gurus. In fact, they are not even Vaiṣṇavas, for they forsake their responsibility to instruct others to give due respect to dikṣā-guru.
- 18) Bengali literature is celebrated as the foremost throughout India, because it exclusively follows the Sanskrit literature. It is a matter of great regret that the Bengali language is now being dissociated from following the Sanskrit language. The root causes for this are a lack of faith in the Sanskrit language, and disrespect for the age-old Indian conception described in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas etc.

19) All problems can be solved by adopting ṛṣi-nīti, the moral principles set forth by ṛṣis (sages), in the fields of politics, social science, economics etc. To adopt the ṛṣi-nīti we have to study and discuss the ancient Sanskrit literatures. In this regard, it is essential to do away with the indifferent attitude of the education department towards the Sanskrit language.

20) In order to attain knowledge about any entity, it is first of all necessary to take the assistance of śruti or the hearing process (śravaṇa). Therefore, in the Vaiṣṇava sampradāya the śabda which is accessible through śravaṇa (the hearing process) is accepted as the fundamental and foremost evidence.

21) Those who only observe ūrjā-vrata and neglect the rest of cāturmāsya-vrata cannot attain the full devotional fruit of cāturmāsya. Rather, by such an attitude they only express disrespect to cāturmāsya.

22) It is essential for baddha-jīvas to perform bhajana under the guidance of a society of pure Vaiṣṇavas. Neither goṣṭhānandīs nor bhajanānandīs actually perform nirjana-bhajana. Those who are bhajanānandīs assist goṣṭhānandīs in their preaching of śrī nāma prema by nourishing a favourable mood.

23) Every one's house is an āśrama. One must live there for the sole purpose of cultivating his Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The house whose occupants live there only for eating, sleeping and so on is like a door to hell. When the jīva accepts tamasic foodstuffs, his thoughts and attention becomes mostly averse to Bhagavān. Therefore such foodstuffs are completely forbidden.

24) We are sannyāsīs, and as part of our service we have accepted the reformation of society, which is a necessary part of the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (dharma-saṁskāra). We have a right to correct the educated society with regard to their unmindful activities. Preaching of the absolute truth may cause pain in someone's heart.

Thus ends the Eighth Part of The Life and Teachings of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī by
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

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