

My Śikṣā-guru

MY INSTRUCTING SPIRITUAL MASTER

& Priya-bandhu

& DEAREST FRIEND

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ŚRĪ ŚRĪ GURU-GAURĀNGAU JAYATAḤ

# My Śikṣā-guru

MY INSTRUCTING SPIRITUAL MASTER

# & Prīya-bandhu

& DEAREST FRIEND

Remembrances of

Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda

Compiled from selected interviews,  
lectures, and writings of

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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## My Śikṣā-guru and Priya-bandhu My Instructing Spiritual Master and Dearest Friend

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*nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTIVEDĀNTA NĀRĀYAṆA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA



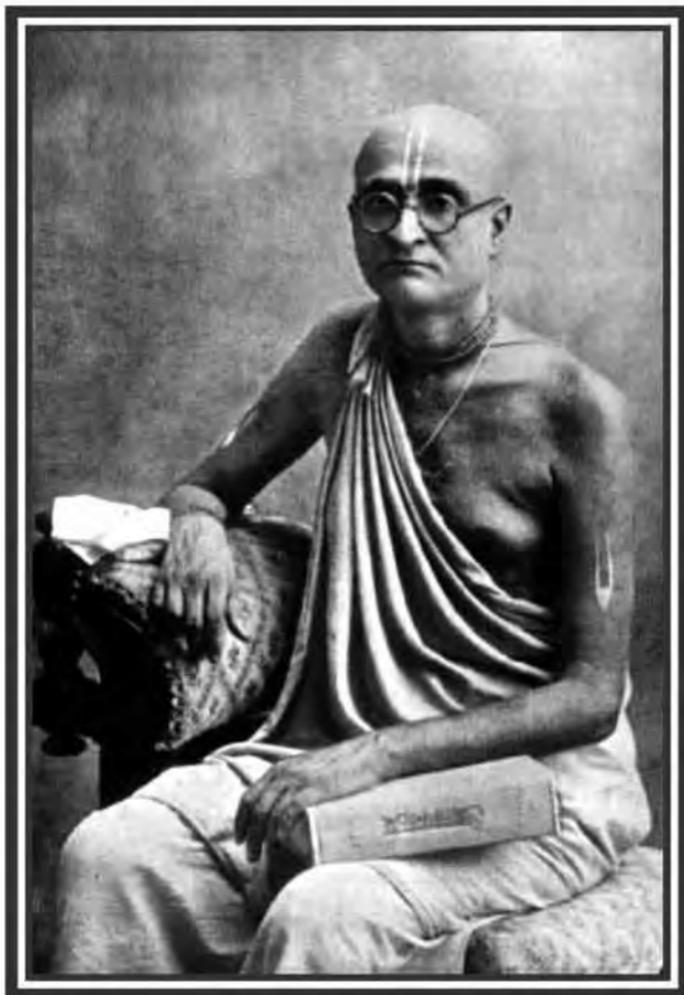
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ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTĪ PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA



*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA SARASVATĪ PRABHUPĀDA

# Introduction

This booklet is a collection of recollections and reflections on His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, our Śrīla Prabhupāda, from one of his earliest *śikṣā* followers and friends, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. The accounts of his association with Śrīla Prabhupāda span over thirty years, since they first met in 1947.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was happy to share his fond memories of this long-standing and affectionate relationship, and excerpts from a variety of his informal interviews and statements have been included here. We have lightly edited his English, because English is not his native tongue. Had he presented these memories and appreciations in Hindi, the details and heartfelt explanations would have been still more eloquent and detailed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *nitya-siddha* devotee. He never had to advance from a conditioned life to pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, it may be noted that the descriptions of Śrīla Prabhupāda given by Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja are in relation to his *nara-līlā* (human-like pastimes) and have nothing to do with this material environment. Such pastimes are only meant to help instruct others how to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Our sincere hope is that in reading this booklet, the worldwide audience of devotees will receive enlivenment by hearing inspirational memories about our *mahā-bhāgavata-guru* from one of his most intimate admirers, another *mahā-bhāgavata-guru*. Where this humble effort is not of the highest quality, or if it fails in any way to properly represent Śrīla Prabhupāda

or Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, we beg the forgiveness of the merciful Vaiṣṇavas. We pray that our most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda will be pleased with our desire to more deeply discover and glorify his transcendental personality, pastimes, and *saṅkīrtana* mission, and the mission of his spiritual successor, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Aspiring servant of Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas,  
Mūla-prakṛti dāsī

Remembrances Of  
Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī  
Prabhupāda

CHAPTER ONE  
Our First Years Together

**His Association with Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava  
Gosvāmī Mahārāja**

My *gurudeva*, *om viṣṇupāda* Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, would often speak to me about his god-brother, *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedānta Prabhu. At that time, before his *sannyāsa*, we affectionately called him Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu, or Prabhu. My *gurudeva* always told me how, from the very beginning, this god-brother was so dear to their Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He explained to me that his Śrīla Prabhupāda had always highly and intimately regarded Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu and had requested him to write articles for the Harmonist magazine and other publications. Their Guru Mahārāja had especially ordered him to preach in the English language, and to distribute widely this knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and His teachings in the Western countries.

According to my *gurudeva*, Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was a very great personality, very *yuktivādī* (good at giving logical arguments), and always *nirvika* (bold). He was a preacher of *satya* (truth), who was not afraid of anyone. I had already heard so many times about him from my *gurudeva* and from others. I had heard how he was such a close friend to Gurudeva, such an excellent writer, and such a sincere and qualified devotee. At that time I had not yet seen him, but seeing by ears is even more powerful than seeing by eyes.

Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was a bosom friend of my *gurudeva* ever since they first met in the association of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1922. During those years, he was a *gr̥hastha* and was said to be very beautiful. In 1940, after the departure of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, there was turmoil in the Gauḍīya Maṭha. One party wanted to arrest some of the senior Vaiṣṇavas, and cases were filed in the Calcutta court. At that time our *gurudeva*, then known as Vinoda-bihārī Brahmācārī, was *akiñcana*, (without material possessions, his only possession being Kṛṣṇa Himself) and he travelled to Prayāga, Allahabad. There he stayed at the Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha for a few days. Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu, who had his family residence and business in Allahabad, invited our *gurudeva* to come and stay in his home as a guest, and they lived together there for the next four or five months. During this extended time, they became very near and dear to each other. They always discussed *Bhagavad-gītā* and many other subjects concerning *guru-sevā* for their Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission. (SEE ENDNOTE 1)

When my *gurudeva* lived with him for those months in Allahabad, Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu organized much preaching for them everywhere in that city. He had cultivated numerous associates from his pharmaceutical business and knew many educated, qualified people. He also arranged for my *gurudeva* to give extensive lectures on Vedānta. Together they defeated the Māyāvāda philosophy, and also several influential Catholics and other Christians. Those persons were favorably impressed by the bona fide arguments and *siddhānta* so expertly presented.

Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu appreciated my *gurudeva*'s preaching so much. He would often tell me, “Your *gurudeva* is so logical, and he is such a great philosopher. That is why I have selected for myself a very best friend like your *gurudeva*.”

## Founding Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti

My *gurudeva* was then called Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmācārī Kṛti-ratna. The name ‘Kṛti-ratna,’ which means “one who is a jewel among managers,” was awarded to him by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda because he managed the Gauḍīya Maṭha so expertly. This was before my *gurudeva* took *sannyāsa*. In his heart there was a desire to show *Vedānta-sūtra* as *bhakti-sūtra*, and he would quote *śloka*s of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to prove this. He would always state, “Wherever there is any sign of Māyāvāda, *bhakti* cannot be preached in full force. So we have to remove Māyāvāda at the root.” Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu also liked this idea very much. “We must kick out Māyāvāda,” he would often say. Both of them had this understanding; they were very united in their preaching.

Gurudeva gave the name “Bhaktivedānta” to those of us who took *sannyāsa* from him, and when they formed an organization they called that Samiti “Gauḍīya Vedānta”, which denotes that Vedānta is synonymous with *bhakti*.

After the divine disappearance of their Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, and after the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution had broken apart, my *gurudeva*, together with Abhaya Caraṅāravinda Prabhu and Narottamānanda Brahmācārī (later called Śrīla Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja), filed the establishment papers for the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. This was done on April 7, 1940, the day of *akṣaya trītiyā*, in a rented house at 33/2 Bosapada Lane, Calcutta. (SEE ENDNOTE 2)

Although they separated from the political upheaval taking place within their Guru Mahārāja’s institution, they did not give up Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda or his mission and *siddhānta*. They wanted to re-establish his bona fide ideas and instructions, and they did not give up his Gauḍīya Maṭha. Therefore, the names of the *maṭhas* established by the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti were Devananda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Uddharana Gauḍīya Maṭha, Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, and so on.

## Our First Meeting

In 1947 I was in Calcutta as the personal servant of my *gurudeva*, and one day there was an inauguration of a new branch of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. There was a large assembly and many Vaiṣṇavas were present. During the lecture given by Gurudeva, a *gr̥hastha* devotee came in at the back door. Upon seeing him,

Gurudeva stopped speaking and asked me to bring him forward. That devotee humbly hesitated to come forward, but my *gurudeva* ordered that he come all the way to the front. Gurudeva showed great respect to him and insisted he sit next to him on the platform. I looked up at Gurudeva, silently questioning, “Who is this devotee?” It was very rare that he had done this with others. Afterwards he told me, “This is Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bābu, my dear god-brother. He is a very special disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. He is very humble and qualified. You should take note of him, you should hear carefully from him, and you should serve him.”

At that time I would cook breakfast, lunch, and any other meal for Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu and many of the other senior Vaiṣṇavas. I would also wash their clothes and clean for them. He would watch me, and he became pleased with me. He was happy to see my service for my *gurudeva* and asked me many questions about myself, like where I was from and where and how I had joined the *maṭha*. We spoke together, and he was satisfied with my replies. I was also very impressed with him, and I was attracted to him. This was when I began my service to him in my heart and in my work.

I am thinking now how very fortunate I was to have met him long ago, and to have served him. We had so much affection for each other that I cannot explain my heart sufficiently. He stated in one of his letters to me that from the first time he saw me, there was affection between us and that we shared a transcendental relationship of spontaneous love. He wrote that, as his Śrīla Prabhupāda had great faith and love for him from the

beginning, he similarly had love and well-wishing for me. (SEE ENDNOTE 3)

He was a powerful speaker, and his lectures were most influential. Discussing translations from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by first giving word-for-word meanings, he would then present thorough explanations; and what he spoke was beautiful. In those days there were many senior disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, such as Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja, Śrīla Śrauti Mahārāja, Śrīla Naimi Mahārāja, Śrīla Yayavar Mahārāja, Śrīla Audalomi Mahārāja, Śrīla Vaikhānas Mahārāja, Śrīla Purī Mahārāja, Śrīla Giri Mahārāja, and Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja. All these disciples were like tigers and thunderbolts, being well-versed in *siddhānta*. They would often come to visit my *gurudeva*, and I was able to serve them. Though Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was then a *grhastha* living outside any *maṭha*, he was considered by all to be extremely qualified. He was very bold and never compromised with anyone regarding the established *siddhānta* – never. He defeated and convinced everyone by his realized preaching.

In those days I often saw him associating with his god-brothers, and he had many deep friendships in all the temples where they assembled – in Calcutta, Navadvīpa, Chinchura, Allahabad, Bombay, and Delhi. He was often meeting with god-brothers, traveling to different *maṭhas* for celebrations and discussions, and he always behaved towards them with affectionate dealings. When his god-brothers gathered, he would show respect to them because he was a *grhastha* at that time. And, even though he was married then, all the *sannyāsīs* and senior *brahmacārīs* highly regarded him

because he was a learned scholar and a potent, brave preacher. He was known by all to be *abhaya*, fearless.

## Editorial Sevā

Our magazines, *Gauḍīya Patrika* and *Bhāgavata Patrika*, were started in 1953. At that time Gurudeva requested Abhaya Caraṅāravinda Prabhu, “I want to establish publications in Bengali and other languages, and I would especially like you to write articles for them.” Earlier he had written articles for the *Harmonist*, and now he continued to write many wonderful essays, *Gītā* purports, etc. He wrote so marvelously that everyone praised him. He challenged all who were opposed to pure *bhakti* at that time, especially the ‘Mūrgī Mission.’ He called the Ramakrishna Mission ‘the Mūrgī Mission’ because the members ate chicken. In fact, they ate flesh, eggs, and many other abominable things.

Vivekananda and his Ramakrishna Mission were very prominent in those days. They were renowned by the public, who thought, “Oh, these are such high-class devotees. In all of India, only they are following the Vedas, and all others are not. The Gauḍīya Mission and others are not Vedantic.” Abhaya Caraṅāravinda Prabhu wrote a two-part article about the Mūrgīs. He began with the first part; and when the second part was also printed, all but the Mūrgīs were astonished and convinced. Many requested him to write more articles like these, which called for the reform of religious institutions.

At that time the president of India was Dr. Radhakrishnan. He was very scholarly and his English was quite erudite, but he was world-famous as a very bold Māyāvādī. He wrote an article in

English saying that the soul in Kṛṣṇa's body was God, but Kṛṣṇa's body was not God. He said that, as with our body and soul, there was also a difference between Kṛṣṇa's body and soul.

Guru Mahārāja was not here then, but Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was, and he wrote a very powerful article in response. He quoted many strong examples from *śāstra* and declared to the President, “Those who speak like this are rascals. In Kṛṣṇa there is no difference between *deha* and *dehī*, the body and its possessor. All His qualities, pastimes, and names are transcendental. If one does not have a very pure and realized *guru*, he cannot understand this idea. You have no *guru*; you are reading *śāstra* yourself. Just as Gautama Buddha became Śūnyavādī, you are also just like that. At some time in South India, you met with the very renowned Śāṅkarācārya's teachings, but you have not read Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī; and you have never read Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. You should try to know what is *acintya-bhedābheda*. Do not be sectarian. You are an authority in India, the President, but you are not an authority in religion. You will have to learn something from us.”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja appointed Śrīpād Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu to be the editor-in-chief of the Bengali *Gauḍīya Patrika*, and I was also on the editorial board for the Hindi *Bhāgavata Patrika*. He usually submitted his articles in Bengali, and sometimes, if he wrote an article in Hindi, I would edit and then submit it. This is because his mother language was not Hindi. Mostly he wrote his articles for our *Gauḍīya Patrika* in Bengali. I then translated these into Hindi and printed them in the *Bhāgavata Patrika*.

This was before the time of tape machines, and Prabhu was expert in the skill of stenography. During lectures of my *gurudeva* and other senior Vaiṣṇavas, he took shorthand perfectly and recorded those talks in his notebooks. His accurate transcriptions were also used for articles in the *Gauḍīya Patrika* magazine. Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu continued writing for our magazines every month for many years, and some of those original editions are still preserved at our *maṭha*.

## Jhansi

I went twice to visit *pūjyapāda* Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu while he was preaching in Jhansi. The first time I traveled on the train with some of the *brahmacārīs*; the second time I went there to see him with my *gurudeva*. We stayed four or five days each time.

He had made some connections earlier, during his frequent travels there for business. Some persons had a building which was suitable for a *maṭha*. Prabhu invited us to consider it for one of our *maṭhas*, but our *gurudeva* was not prepared to settle there. He did not have enough *brahmacārīs*, and he also favored a larger city like Mathurā.

The gentleman who had originally invited Prabhu, Ācārya Prabhakara Miśra, had become his initiated disciple. I don't know whether Prabhu gave *dīkṣā* to him or not, but he said that he had accepted this man. I think he had given him *harināma* only. At that time Prabhu was translating *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. This disciple used to help him to correct his Hindi because it was mixed with Bengali.

During his stay in Jhansi, Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu personally brought a large and very beautiful *mūrti* of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu from Bankura (near Mednapore, West Bengal). This is where many deities are made, especially for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. He had first ordered the Deity and then brought Him to be established in that temple. He had been doing some regular *pūjā* alone there in Jhansi, but the Deity was not yet installed.

Prabhu invited Gurudeva, and we came to visit there for the installation. Although we arrived for the program, the installation did not take place. This was because Guru Mahārāja discussed with Prabhu about the manner in which those sponsors were allowing him to use the *mandira*. When he told us that they could order him to leave at any time, Gurudeva said he thought it might be better if a document was received. There was a discussion between Gurudeva and the sponsors, and he made a condition before all present: “If you give the *mandira* to *pūjyapāda* Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedānta Prabhu, he will be the master of all properties and activities therein. He will do everything according to our *sampradāya*.” The sponsors, on the other hand, were in the mood that the temple should be in their charge, and he would be like a priest. Both Prabhu and Guru Mahārāja rejected their conditions.

My *gurudeva* and I returned from Jhansi to Mathurā on the train. Prabhu didn’t come with us then, but after some days he arrived with the Caitanya Mahāprabhu *vigraha* and put Him in the care of my *gurudeva*. Gurudeva then installed that very beautiful Caitanya Mahāprabhu here on the altar in our Keśavaji Gauḍīya Maṭha, where He is still being served to this day.

## Residing in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha

My *gurudeva* and I were present on the day Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu came again to the Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1955. We embraced him and he embraced us. Before coming, he had been successful with his pharmaceutical business in Allahabad, called Prayāga Pharmacy, and it was very famous. Many important personalities of India, including the Prime Minister, were customers in his shop. Later on, however, he had to sell it. Then he traveled to all the important cities of North India, such as Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Agra, Jhansi, Mathurā, and other towns to sell the medicines he had made from his own formulas. Kuñja-bihārī Prabhu, a senior disciple in the *maṭha*, was especially devoted to him during this time. He helped to carry his bags and also to bring him *prasādam* while he worked.

After a while this business also came to an end, and Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu gave up his household life and all his possessions in Calcutta. He again came to Mathurā, this time without belongings. He brought a medical formula for treating ringworm, which he distributed to the shopkeepers, store-to-store, but sales were not good. He was living in a room he had rented by the Yamunā, in Hooli Wali Gully near Bengali-ghāta. He had been there three or four days when I went to see him. I told him, “Prabhu, why are you staying here?” He was very humble and didn’t want to impose himself upon us, so I forcibly took his luggage and told him, “I will not let you go anywhere else. We are here. We are your sons. You are our *gurudeva*’s god-brother and are very dear to us. We want to care for you. I

will not allow you to stay here, separate from us.” I brought the *brahmacārīs*, Kuñja-bihārī Prabhu, Śeṣaśāyī Prabhu, and some others, and we took what few utensils he had and brought him to live in our *maṭha*.

I requested him, “Please stay here with us, preaching *Bhagavad-gītā*, writing, and so on. I know that no one is assisting you now. I want to personally serve you. Please live here forever; we never want you to leave.” He became so glad.

I gave him a room adjacent to mine. His room was there [pointing to the room one door from the kitchen], and my room was here. There were only two rooms then, his and mine. At that time there was no *mandira* in our Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. We had very little facility to offer him, because nothing was there in our *maṭha*. There was just one bathroom, but still we were very easily able to live peacefully and accomplish everything we had to accomplish. At that time he also had nothing to show to others that, “This is mine.” He had only his body and *ātmā*, no paisa at all. He only had some copies of his *Back to Godhead* magazine, his *Gītā*, and three or four volumes of a Bengali *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which are now preserved in our library. He had no bedding, and no extra boxes or personal belongings.

We gave him one small room and many large books. Śrīpāda Nṛsiṃha Mahārāja (one of his god-brothers) and I donated some Sanskrit and Bengali books to him. There he began to write many English translations and articles. Day and night he would stay in his room and do this, and he also chanted a great deal of *harināma* and very beautifully sang *bhajanās*. We did not know when he ever took rest. He slept only a short time in the morning,

because all throughout the night he was awake, and throughout the day also. He became so pleased with this arrangement of staying with us, and our Guru Mahārāja also became pleased when he was informed of this.

We continually requested Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu to give *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes. Usually not many devotees attended, because only a few of us lived in the *maṭha* then. We were just beginning the Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha temple, so we had just five or ten persons. But very high-class, learned gentlemen from Mathurā would often come to hear him speak. I was known then as a good *kīrtaniyā* in the Gauḍīya Maṭhas in Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, so I would perform *kīrtana*. Prabhu would lecture, explaining in his discourses the word-by-word meaning of each verse under discussion, and very erudite scholars were attracted by his classes.

During this time he would also give *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* classes in the evenings, to those of us who lived in the *maṭha*. His devotion for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His pastimes was very deep. Later on, after he took *sannyāsa*, he often gave these classes in English, even though almost no one in the *maṭha* could understand English. He would say that he was ‘practicing.’

I would sometimes joke with him, saying, “Oh, you may try to be responsible for your children and your wife, but they are rejecting you.” One of his sons was not very favorable, and another was somewhat favorable but not wanting to serve him. So I would say, “Prabhu, why not take more service from all of us? Please do not go back there. I will beg from door to door and arrange to get you rice and any other items.”

When Prabhu first came to Mathurā to stay with us, he had an ailment which he humbly and silently tolerated. Because he was expert in medicines, he always used Ayurvedic or homeopathic remedies when necessary and avoided allopathic treatment. I was fortunate that he confided in me, saying, “I do not have faith in any doctors. If they demand to operate, I may die.” I told him that he could not die; he had too much important *sevā* to do. He agreed and said that he was very determined to fulfil his *gurudeva’s* order to preach all over the world. I said that I knew of a bona fide doctor here in Mathurā who had cured others. He let me take him there, and I stayed by his side during the entire operation. I hesitate to mention these details, because it may sound as if I was helping him. Actually, I know he was bestowing his mercy by allowing me to perform intimate service.

We would often visit each other’s rooms, and sometimes we would joke together about various topics. He was very fond of joking, and when he would laugh it was very sweet. He joked in an especially delightful way, with a slightly playful smile. We also had many philosophical discussions together, speaking about such topics as *Prablāda-caritra* and Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We read many scriptures together, and he would deeply discuss the matters he wrote about in the *Gauḍīya Patrika*. Sometimes he would have talks with one, two, three, or five disciples of my *gurudeva* in my room. There were also some big officers and other important gentlemen who came to hear him speak, and they would say, “Oh, Abhaya Carāṇa Bābu is such a learned and advanced person!” Everybody would glorify him.

Prabhu was very enthusiastic about cooking, and he often declared that all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas should be expert in cooking for Kṛṣṇa.

During the many months he stayed at Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, the two of us would perform *sundara-ārati* together each evening. He would always play the *mṛdaṅga* very expertly, and I would play the *kartālas* and sing. He liked my singing very much and always requested me to lead the *kīrtana*. Someone asked me, “Why doesn’t Prabhu also sing? He has a beautiful voice as well.” I replied, “Yes, surely he does, but there are times he doesn’t sing because he is experiencing intense devotional feelings and weeping.” I have heard this also on some of his cassette recordings.

## Accepting Sannyāsa

He had been the manager of Bengal Chemicals and was so expert that he had arranged another company himself. But there were problems. He had come to Allahabad and managed a very big medical shop, but after some time that also had difficulty. He then engaged in a little more business, but Kṛṣṇa would not allow it to continue. Then he came here.

As we once talked together in 1959, sitting side-by-side, Prabhu said, “When I first met Śrīla Prabhupāda, and when he gave me initiation, he told me that I should preach in English in Western countries. He also told me this over twenty years ago in Calcutta.” He continued, “That which I feared has come on my head, and now I see that I cannot successfully remain in business.” I replied, “Please do not try for this anymore. You are not a

person to do anything associated with worldly business. Kṛṣṇa and your *gurudeva* want you to preach in Western countries. You have such important work to do, and you are so qualified.” We laughed together about this in a friendly way.

Guru Mahārāja and Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu were bosom friends – they had lived and served together. Both were intellectual giants and very erudite persons from high-class families. So I now encouraged him to accept *sannyāsa* from our *gurudeva* and then go to preach in Western countries. Then, when my *gurudeva* later arrived from Navadvīpa, I told him, “Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu is your friend. He can obey you because you are elder.” Gurudeva was a *sannyāsī* and Prabhu was in *gṛhastha-veśa* (the dress of a householder).

Earlier, when I had written to Gurudeva that *pūjyapāda* Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was staying here with us, he told me, “He is my bosom friend. Show him all respect and give him facilities.” I had known him since 1947, and I realized how highly qualified he was. *Pūjyapāda* Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla Śrauti Mahārāja, and Guru Mahārāja would always give him great respect and hear from him, even though he was a householder. At this time, therefore, I requested my *gurudeva* to apply some pressure so that he would take *sannyāsa*. Gurudeva then called him and said, “Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and all the other boys are encouraging you to take *sannyāsa*. I also support this idea. Do not hesitate to take the renounced order. You are so qualified. Please take *sannyāsa* now. It will be very beneficial.”

Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu thus agreed to accept *sannyāsa*, and the ceremony was held the very next day. That day was the

auspicious Viśvarūpa-mahotsava. Prabhu asked me, “How should I prepare?” I told him, “Don’t worry, I will arrange everything.” I prepared *bāhira-veṣa* (*sannyāsa dhotī*), *uttariya* (*sannyāsa* upper cloth), and a *daṇḍa* with my own hands. I taught him how to wear these, and then I performed the fire *yajña*. Akiñcanā Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja came, and Śeṣaśāyī Brahmācārī, Kuñja-vihārī Brahmācārī, Parijataka Mahārāja and many other persons were also present. Now, most of these devotees have departed.

Sanātana Prabhu took *sannyāsa* with him, after which he became Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja. He was ninety years old and had said to him, “If you agree to take *sannyāsa*, then so shall I.” He is also no longer here, having joined the eternal service of Kṛṣṇa.

I recited the *yajña-mantras* and performed the ceremony. Akiñcanā Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Prabhu’s intimate god-brother and friend, chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa continuously from 8:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M., in a most sweet and deep manner. My *gurudeva* then gave Prabhu the *sannyāsa-mantra*. The *sannyāsa* name he gave him was ‘Svāmī.’ This is one of the bona fide *sannyāsa* names; it means ‘controller’ and ‘master.’ The title ‘Bhaktivedānta’ had already been awarded in Calcutta by some of his god-brothers, and ‘Mahārāja’ is a formal ending for those in the renounced order.

This name ‘Svāmī’ was just fitting because Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja became the controller of many, many *jīvas*’ hearts, due to his being strong and faithful to his *gurudeva*. This is why we affectionately call him ‘Svāmījī,’ not in any common way but showing the greatest respect. (SEE ENDNOTE 4)

After the ceremony, Gurudeva requested Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja to speak. He spoke in English, although almost everyone present could not understand that language. He explained that just at this time he remembered his *gurudeva's* specific orders to preach in the English language. He said, “I feel fortunate to accept *sannyāsa* from my god-brother, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. I have known him for a long time and he is my close friend. He is a very bona fide disciple of our *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He has kindly given me this *sannyāsa* order, and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and Śrīla Muni Mahārāja have also given me inspiration to do this. The order of *sannyāsa* means to preach the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the mission of the *guru* everywhere. My *gurudeva* instructed me to preach in English, in Western countries, and that is why I am writing English articles and books. I pray to Kṛṣṇa, Gurudeva, and all the Vaiṣṇavas that they give me the power to preach this mission all over the world.”

Excerpts from his speech and a description of the ceremony were printed in a news article in our *Bhāgavata Patrika*. The well-known photograph of our *gurudeva* sitting between Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja was taken on that day. Kuñja-bihārī Brahmācārī was formerly a wealthy devotee and had previously helped build our *maṭha* financially; so now he gladly donated the five paisa he had saved for a photographer's snapshot. Thus, today, we can all honor this *sannyāsa* portrait.

It was a special privilege for us to participate in assisting Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja in accepting *sannyāsa*. For the

next three days after the ceremony, Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja stayed together with him in his room. They were especially close and confidential with each other. After this, Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja went to Agra to preach at a program he had arranged. He was always coming and going, engaged in *guru-sevā*. We kept his room open for him for the next five years, and during that time he wrote some of his books, like *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, here. His three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were not printed yet, so he continued writing and editing them here. The manuscripts were then given to the press in Delhi and gradually published. He was also writing *Back to Godhead* and other publications. He had done some translating before, in Calcutta and Allahabad, but here he was easily able to concentrate and thus he accomplished so much.

Some persons don't consider the taking of *sannyāsa* to be very valuable or of much importance, but it is actually so important. I think that if Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja had not taken *sannyāsa*, perhaps he would not have done what he did in Western countries. Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja himself explains in his books that it is favorable to accept the renounced order for preaching. In India, everyone has honor for *sannyāsīs*. In *sannyāsa*, one gives up something but gains everything. As explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: mukunda sevana-vrata*. A *sannyāsī* thinks, "I only love Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. I don't know anything else."

The *sannyāsa-mantra* is very helpful in attaining the type of *kṛṣṇa-prema* which Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, and all the other Gosvāmīs are trying to give us, and this is superior to all attainments. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

came to give this type of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and therefore the taking of *sannyāsa* is very important. Don't think it is a minor point.

### At Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja and I are god-brothers in regard to *sannyāsa*. I had taken *sannyāsa* before him, in 1954, and he took *sannyāsa* in 1959. However, I always considered him my superior and behaved towards him as my *śikṣā-guru*, but Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja never treated me as a disciple. Rather, he always accepted me as a bosom friend. He had me sit on the same seat with him while we were chanting *jaṇa*, performing *kīrtana*, and also sometimes making *capātīs* together. He would roll the *capātīs* and I would put them on the fire, and then we would offer them.

We would also sit on the same bed together. One time I came to visit and gave him my *cādara*, because he had no *cādara* to put on his bed. He had only one torn quilt there. The walls were crumbling, but he was too absorbed in his *bhajana* and *sevā* to care for that. He performed intense *tāpasya* and *sādhana* in that *kuṭīra*, in that most sacred *tīrtha*. I feel fortunate to have received his association there.

During those years at Rādhā-Dāmodara, he was consumed in the writing of his translations and purports of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Whenever I visited him, I would try to offer him assistance. In those days I was editing the *Patrika*, which left me very little time. Still, we would often associate together there in his small *bhajana-kuṭīra*. Sometimes we took *prasādam* with the Rādhā-Dāmodara Gosvāmīs. He and I also performed *parikramā*

of Rādhā-Dāmodara, walking together and paying respects at the *samādhis* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and especially Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

## Preparation and Departure for America

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja spent considerable time in Delhi before he went to America, because this is where he was printing and distributing his books. He published three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there. I went there several times to be with him, and we stayed together in his rooms at the Chippiwada Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple.

He preached vigorously in Delhi; wherever he went, he preached to the public. He spoke about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission to everyone he met, and he also engaged me beside him. Then, when he was in America, he wrote and encouraged me to continue preaching to the people he had cultivated there. (SEE ENDNOTE 5)

When Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was leaving to go to America, he described everything to me about his travel plans. He told me how, in Bombay, he had been given a ticket to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to Boston by freighter, and he described his route and his arrival there. He had great faith and a careful preaching strategy. His goal was to set up Vaiṣṇava institutes and dormitories there. Showing great confidence in the holy name, he said that even if at first the new students felt that they must take meat or wine, he would do what was necessary to begin

their *bhakti*. He asked me to accompany him, and I begged him, “I cannot go without the permission of my *gurudeva*, who has ordered me to manage the *maṭha* in Mathurā.”

One day he announced to me, “Now the time has come and I am going.” He was leaving for the Port of Calcutta and was to visit Māyāpura also. I came and said good-bye, and I took his foot-dust and put it on my head. Before he left he requested me to keep a regular correspondence with him, which I did, and we wrote many letters to each other in those next years. A few of these letters are printed in the pamphlet *Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Letters from America*. Unfortunately, most of his other letters to me were loaned [to those in charge of publishing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s biography on behalf of ISKCON] and were not returned.

Later he wrote to me to send him his books from his room in Mathurā, where many of his thick volumes were stored in his cabinet. His books were very dusty, and I cleaned and packed many boxes of them for an entire day. I then shipped those books by boat to New York. When we visited his rooms at the Los Angeles Temple in 1996, I was touched to see several of those same books still there in his bookshelves. I tried faithfully to perform all the services he requested.

## Return to India

When he returned to India in 1967, I met him and his disciple, Kīrtanānanda dāsa, at the airport in Delhi. He had instructed me to do this in his telegram. When we met, he told me many wonderful accounts and details about his preaching in America,

and how miraculous the results were. Humbly, he felt that all this was only the mercy of his *gurudeva*, and the desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates. One special thing he told me was how he first chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* in Tompkins Square Park in New York City. Chanting for several hours, he had kept his eyes closed, deeply hearing and depending completely on that mercy.

We stayed together in Delhi for seven days at the Chippiwada Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple. Because Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was sometimes feeling ill, he would send me along with Kīrtanānanda dāsa to represent him in his preaching programs. He always encouraged us to preach very strongly. He wanted everyone to see his Western Vaiṣṇava, and so he took us to chant and preach to people he knew in Delhi.

After a few weeks, another of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's disciples, Acyutānanda dāsa, came to stay in Vṛndāvana. Because these two were Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's disciples, I sat together with them and honored the *mahā-prasādam* they had prepared. All the caste Gosvāmīs, and almost all of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's god-brothers, would never take any *prasādam* or even the water that Kīrtanānanda dāsa and Acyutānanda dāsa offered them. The reason they refused was that those disciples were Westerners and had previously eaten flesh. I spoke out against this policy and encouraged others to accept Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's disciples as bona fide. I explained how Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's preaching to foreigners was completely authorized and directly in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and our *guru-varga*. I think that most of the Indian Vaiṣṇavas have now accepted this.

During this first trip back to India in 1967, *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja came to visit my *gurudeva*, his *sannyāsa guru*. At that time, my *gurudeva* was in weak health and was confined to his bed in Calcutta. They had a confidential visit then, and this was their last time together in this world. My *gurudeva* was overjoyed at Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's devotional service to their Śrīla Prabhupāda. He expressed his appreciation and glorified his extensive preaching, and he pledged to cooperate in that preaching work. They also discussed my *gurudeva's* helping to arrange a donation of land for Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's future Māyāpura temple. Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja were also present on that occasion.

After Śrīla Gurudeva departed from this world in 1968, Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja, along with his disciples, sent us a telegram of condolence. He also sent a long letter to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja in Navadvīpa. He also delivered a lecture about Śrīla Gurudeva in Seattle, Washington, and there he described the history of his awarding him *sannyāsa*. He spoke about the great appreciation and affection he had for him, and how he had now entered Kṛṣṇa's abode. We heard later from some of his disciples that he shed tears when he received the telegram telling of our *gurudeva's* entering *nityā-līlā*.

In his letter to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja asked him to send a photo of Gurudeva, because he wanted to place it on his temple altars in the West. He also wrote and asked me to send a picture to him. I remember that in one letter he requested me, "Please send me a picture of your *gurudeva* so

I can have a portrait painted for displaying with our disciplic succession in all of our temples.” (SEE ENDNOTE 6) Somehow we were never able to arrange that, but I know that if we had been able to, he would have used it.

## Preaching in India

In 1969, Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja came again to Navadvīpa, and stayed for a week or two with a large group of disciples at our Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. Nikuñja Brahmācārī and others helped give everyone accommodations, special *prasādam*, and mosquito nets, and made all other arrangements.

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was looking for land in Māyāpura, desiring to make an *āśrama* and *mandira* there, but the inhabitants of Navadvīpa told him that he should do it in Navadvīpa Town. They said that the birthplace of Mahāprabhu was there in Prācīna Māyāpura, and they tried to convince him to make his temple there. But he decided, “No, I will not do that. I will establish it on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s side.” This is where Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had established Māyāpura and Yogapīṭha, on the eastern bank of the Gaṅgā, across from Navadvīpa town. At that time it was the rainy season and the land was flooded everywhere, but even so, Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja traveled to the other side of the Gaṅgā to arrange for purchasing his land.

On one occasion, some of his god-brothers in Māyāpura suggested to him that he not allow himself to be called “Śrīla Prabhupāda.” They also feared that he was not preaching the purest devotional standards but was, rather, altering the strict

Gauḍīya Maṭha process too much, out of deference to the Westerners. I defended him, saying, “I don’t believe this. He has not given anything new. Far and wide, in the English language, he is preaching our same mission ‘in a new bottle.’ Nothing is new, and I don’t see anything wrong. He has wonderfully preached this mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura everywhere. If his disciples truly follow *guru-bhaktā* (*guru* and *Vaiṣṇavas*), they will continue his line. I don’t believe that just because he is doing some revolutionary preaching it is a problem. He is marvelously executing his *gurudeva*’s orders.”

I also explained, “They may call their *gurudeva* ‘Prabhupāda’ or ‘*om viṣṇupāda*.’ I think in the future age, more disciples in the line of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda might also call another qualified spiritual master ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda,’ because it has been allowed in *sāstra*. Disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda who had agreed that they would not take this name out of deference to him can keep that agreement; but because of his high *bhakti* and world preaching, and because of their devotion for him, if Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja’s disciples call him ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda’ there is no harm. If you want to reject him for this reason, I don’t agree.” Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, myself, and a few others explained this to the other devotees, especially in private.

On a few occasions, some of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja’s god-brothers in Māyāpura directly asked him why he accepted the name ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda,’ and we once heard the explanation he gave to them. He humbly told them, “When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta

Sarasvatī Thākura left this world, some of the god-brothers took everything of his mission, including his names like ‘*om visnuṣpāda*’ and ‘*paramahaṁsa*.’ All that remained for me was my ‘Prabhupāda’ himself. He is my Prabhu, my master, and I am always at his *padā*, his feet. His feet are my only possession and shelter. So when my young disciples began to call me that, I considered it to be true. If anyone calls me ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda,’ I only remember my *gurudeva*’s lotus feet and how I am situated there. If others think that I am an offender or proud, I request them to please accept my understanding.”

During the following years, 1970–1977, I was constantly traveling and preaching throughout India. Because our *gurudeva* had departed from this world, I was very busy with management affairs in our *maṭhas*. Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was also very busy during those years, continually travelling around the world, so he and I were not able to meet together often. Unfortunately, I was not there for the opening of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, which was established in 1975, near the time of Gaura Pūrṇimā. He invited me, but I was not in Mathurā at that time, because we were so busy in Navadvīpa. During most of those years I was not regularly present in Mathurā, so he did not come back to visit our *maṭha*. If I had been present when he was in Vṛndāvana, I would have invited him and he would have come.

In the earlier days of his preaching in the West, many of us wanted to directly help him, but the time was not ripe. There were only a few of us living in the *maṭha* then, and we were all busy preaching in India. We were not doing as much preaching as he was, but we were busy, and my *gurudeva* had ordered me

to render certain services. Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was busy on a big scale and we were busy on a little scale, but both of us were busy serving *guru* and Gaurāṅga. Another difficulty was that in those early days most devotees knew very little English, especially in the matter of speaking. Therefore, although there were some who were very strong in *bhakti*, they were not able to meet and communicate with the Westerners.

At that time there were some high-class devotees who did not externally manifest themselves as being qualified. I knew of about ten or more Indian devotees, including some of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's god-brothers and others who were initiated by them, who came to serve with him in India when ISKCON was newly established there. Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Dīna-bandhu Bābājī Mahārāja, Govardhana Prabhu, Ananda Prabhu from Orissa, and several others came. But they did not know English and they appeared to be insignificant, so hardly any of the Westerners understood their qualities. Now almost everyone can speak English, but not then. Although we could not personally join Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja, many of us were very proud and overjoyed that he was preaching so gloriously.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Śrīla Prabhupāda's Disappearance Līlā

### Śrīla Prabhupāda's Desire to go to Govardhana

(Excerpts from a Mathurā Class, 1993)

In his last days, Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja requested his disciples, “Take me to Govardhana. I want to go there just now. I don’t want to go by car. I will go by bullock cart, like Nanda Bābā, Yasoda-maiya, all the *gopīs*, and all the Vrajavāsīs.” He wished for this opportunity, but he could not go; I knew this fact. Actually he went there with his soul, his transcendental body. He is always there among Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, by *tad-anurāgi janānugāmī* (following those eternal residents of Vṛndāvana who possess inherent spontaneous attachment for Śrī Kṛṣṇa – see *Nectar of Instruction*, Verse 8).

His desire was to go to Govardhana, and he also expressed his real intention in the matter of this desire: “Govardhana, please give me residence near you.” In all of Vraja-maṇḍala, Gokula is the best place, because Gokula is where Kṛṣṇa was born from the womb of Yaśodā and where He performed His childhood pastimes. In Gokula there is a multitude of cows, *gopīs*, and *gopas*, and the main *gopa* is Kṛṣṇa. He resides in Gokula, which includes Nandagrāma, Varṣāṇā, Kāmyavana, and Vṛndāvana. In all of Gokula, Vṛndāvana is the best place, and in Vṛndāvana, Govardhana is best. In all of Govardhana, his two eyes, Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa, are the best. The sweetest and most

attractive pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa take place there. *Parama-pujyapāda* Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja therefore wanted to go to that place, because the best of all Their pastimes is performed there. There, *rasa-līlā* takes place in a special way. So much attractive *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is enacted at Girirāja Govardhana, and therefore devotees pray, “O Girirāja, please fulfill my desire to witness these pastimes.” Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja wanted to go to Govardhana with the same idea in mind.

His life’s ideal and principal desire was to give *vraja-prema* to the world, but first he had to spend a long time preaching *vaidhī-bhakti*, cutting away the jungle of atheism and Māyāvāda. He desired to translate the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in full, and especially to describe elaborately the pastimes narrated in the Tenth Canto. But Bhagavān called him back to His *nityā-līlā*. Perhaps Kṛṣṇa did not want him to remain in separation from Him any longer, and therefore Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja’s desire to go to Girirāja Govardhana was fulfilled by Bhagavān’s calling him back to Girirāja Govardhana in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

Girirāja Govardhana is our primary shelter because *prema-bhāva*, the mood of pure ecstatic love, is the highest there. Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja wanted to relish this pinnacle of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and to distribute it to the residents of this world. Therefore, like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, and my own worshipful *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja also wanted residence near Govardhana. Govardhana is the best place in Vraja for both *sādhakas* and *siddhas*. If a *sādhaka* who does not

have *prema* performs *bhajana* there, he will get *prema*; and if a perfected devotee goes there, he will relish Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *nityā-līlā*. He will also receive *darśana* of the *mahābhāva* which is most dear to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Those who are most intelligent want to serve the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja explains this in his *Nectar of Instruction*. Such devotees want to be there; and if they cannot be there in their body, they can live there by mind and heart. Devotees like Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhatta Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, all have permanent seats there. Have you gone there? If you go there with any high-class, advanced devotee, you may see something, for everything is there.

The Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī are also there, performing *ārādhana* (worship) of the *gopīs*. Those who are always present there in their transcendental bodies, under the guidance of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī, are the topmost devotees. We want to follow them. This is the mood of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, and also the mood of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja.

This is actually the highest glorification of Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja. If one does not understand this glory, he is unfortunate because he is not actually touching his glory. Such a person cannot glorify him properly. Devotees must appreciate him for his most elevated qualities, especially describing his highest love and affection for Śrīmatī Rādhikā. I know that he wanted to

be there in Govardhana forever, and he is forever serving there. He actually realized the above-mentioned prayer written by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

### Visiting Him in His Last Days

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was becoming very ill, and our Sukhānanda Prabhu was offering him naturopathic massages with Ganges water. Before he went abroad to England, Sukhānanda Prabhu came to Vṛndāvana for two hours every morning and evening for fourteen days to massage him, and these massages helped him. We also sometimes visited and spoke with him then. Once we came at a time when he had hardly eaten or even taken water for many days. Still, he affectionately greeted us and, as he had always done with all, he lovingly offered us the opulent *mahā-prasādam* that had been prepared and offered by his disciples. He exclaimed how nicely his young students were trying to serve their *gurudeva* and Kṛṣṇa. Even though he himself had eaten nothing at all for so long, he made sure, in such a careful and affectionate way, that each of us took *prasādam* to our full satisfaction.

Some god-brothers and associates were paying visits to him in his room around this time. Akiñcana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bon Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Vaibhava Purī Mahārāja, Indupati Prabhu (from Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja's temple), Ānanda Prabhu, and many more devotees came to see him. We also came several times to be with him, along with our *brahmacārīs* like Śeṣaśāyī Prabhu, Śubhānanda Prabhu, Premānanda Prabhu, and sometimes others. There are

tape recordings of some of these conversations, but most of them were in Bengali or Hindi.

Just before Kārtika month in early October, when our annual Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* was about to begin, *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja sent for me. He requested his senior *sannyāsīs* and many others, “I want to meet with Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.” A few of them then came by car and requested me, “Śrīla Prabhupāda wants you, so please come now.” I was in the midst of giving evening discourse to our *parikramā* party, but I came immediately. When I arrived in his room at Kṛṣṇa-Balarama Mandira, he was quite silent. Some boys were singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and some *sannyāsīs* and other disciples were silent.

After some time he opened his eyes and indicated with his eyes for me to come close. He was so enthusiastic before his death – not his death, no – his entering *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. He was not speaking, but when he saw me, he showed his happiness. The devotees were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa very softly in Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja’s special tune, and all could see that he was not speaking now. I offered *praṇāma* to him, *śāntyā praṇāma* (standing and silent), because I saw that there were many persons present and no space for me to offer full *praṇāma*.

When he saw me he at once said, “Oh, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has come.” He wanted me to take a seat on his bed. He tried to sit up, but I put my hands on him and said, “Please lie down, and I will sit over here.” He then motioned for me to come nearer to his bed and said, “I want to speak to you.” He wanted me to sit closer to his ear, so he told some disciples, “Bring a chair,” and I sat on it near to his ear. First he began to weep; his heart

was melted. From the core of his heart he told me, “Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, can you excuse me? I feel that there is cause for you to forgive me. For the sake of preaching I have told my disciples some things which perhaps I should not have said. Also I spoke very strongly about my god-brothers in one letter, which was then sent to everyone. I said that we are preaching and others are not, that they are *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* who don’t preach but are idle. I said that none of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas helped me, that they only take *mahā-prasādam* and sleep.”

At this time, many of his *sannyāsī* disciples were watching. His words and mood implied to me many things about how he had wanted to encourage his young students. As we are careful with babies, so he had sometimes instructed some of them not to mix with his god-brothers and the other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. To save his newcomers from becoming disturbed or confused, he sometimes told them not to visit anywhere else. One reason was that a few of his god-brothers had done some wrong things. Also, his disciples did not understand the Indian ways of indirect, subtle meanings. Also, he did not want them to lose heart due to criticism from any Indian Vaiṣṇavas who may not have understood their sensitivities and his style of training them.

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja had been a member of the Gauḍīya Maṭha for a very long time and he knew the regulations and *siddhānta*, but he could not teach all his disciples everything in just a few years. He had been cultivating many Vaiṣṇava Westerners from different countries, but they still lacked our Vedic culture and *sadācāra* (devotional habits). He had given his young disciples instructions to avoid other Vaiṣṇavas just to protect them from

becoming discouraged. He would say, “Although they are not fully trained, their devotional attitude is so nice. I am praying to Guru Mahārāja and the *rūpānuga-guruvarga* to bless them all. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu will surely give them Their mercy.”

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was remembering all these things, and he now requested me, “Kindly tell the other Vaiṣṇavas that I have made this offense, and to please excuse me. I have so much sorrow for this.” I told him, “You are my *śikṣā-guru* and a pure Vaiṣṇava. I know that you cannot do anything that is not in the line of *bhakti*. You have done these things only for the purpose of serving your *gurudeva* and Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and we also do this. All of us are indebted to you; there is no question. We know the prediction: *prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma*. You have performed a miracle; you have spread His glories everywhere. We don’t think that you have done anything wrong, so I have nothing for which to excuse you. But I will relay your request to the senior Vaiṣṇavas. You are my *śikṣā-guru*; whatever instructions you give me, I will follow with absolute sincerity.”

Tears were very sweetly falling from his eyes. He was acting in such a humble way, as if he was not a good Vaiṣṇava, but actually he was like Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He continued, “Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda ordered all of us to preach in Europe and America. That was his strong desire. His other desire was that we all work together to preach. I didn’t waste a single moment. I tried my best, and to some extent it has been successful.” His voice was choked with emotion as he continued to speak: “If we

can work conjointly, then, as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu declared, this *saṅkīrtana* movement has great possibilities.”

Then he told me, “I want you to help take care of my disciples. I want them to be good and qualified devotees. If they come to you, please care for them.” Many of his disciples were nearby, so he softly whispered in Bengali, “When I went to the West, I caught so many monkeys in my net. Really, they are very expert in quarreling among themselves like that. They are still very young and untrained. So I request you that after my departure you will help them in every respect.”

Considering the implications of this order from my *śikṣā-guru*, I hesitated. Then he grasped both of my hands in his own, looked deeply into my eyes and asked me to promise to help. Therefore I agreed, saying, “I promise that according to my ability and my *bhakti-siddhānta-tattva* (understanding of the conclusive statements of *bhakti*), I will always be ready to help them as you request.”

Then I told him, “I want to say something to them.” He at once became inspired and called to them, “Oh, all of you, come near and hear Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. Please take into your hearts what he is speaking.” Then I told them all, “Don’t think that Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja is leaving this world. Gurudeva is eternal. You are fortunate to have such a bona fide *guru* and Vaiṣṇava. You should try to preach his mission more and more enthusiastically. If you are after material things, you will find yourselves quarreling over name, fame, and worldly gain. You will not be following his teachings. You will not be following his mission; you’ll be doing wrong. So don’t pursue your own self-

interest. Give up all these things. To serve Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja, and to preach his mission, you should be united with all the devotees. Don't quarrel with others over a small point. Don't expel anyone from this mission by finding small faults. Try to behave like friends, with brotherhood, and then you can preach. If you have difficulty with any of these things, then, as Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja has requested me, you can come to me and I will try to help you from the core of my heart." They all listened to me then, and this was recorded on a cassette tape.

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja turned his head slowly, looking over the devotees as they gathered in closely. Then he slowly lifted his hand, as if to call them to attention, and said, "Listen to Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. Don't fight amongst yourselves. I have given all direction in my books." Then he lowered his hand.

After this Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja told me, "I pray to you that you will put me into my *samādhi* with your own hand. I don't want to take *samādhi* from anyone else's hands. I think you are the proper person. After my *samādhi*, arrange to celebrate my *viraha-mahotsava* (separation festival). You should give some amount of money to all the seven temples in Vṛndāvana and to all the Gauḍīya Maṭhas. It depends upon you how much – 201 rupees, 1001 rupees – according to your discretion, whatever you recommend. They should all hear these instructions and arrange to pay. Also arrange a *mahotsava* (festival) in Mathurā, and invite all the senior Vaiṣṇavas to the feast. Invite all the Vaiṣṇavas in Vṛndāvana. Do this for me, and again I am telling you that you should always help my devotees."

[EDITORS' NOTE: For special insight into the historical record, we have chosen to include here excerpts from the transcription of an original taped recording. These memories and personal insights were spoken in a temple class shortly after Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure by one of his senior disciples, Bhāgavata dāsa, who had been present at this same occasion described by Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja above. We pray that the assembled Vaiṣṇavas will treat this information with sensitive care, as such topics are generally not for public discussion.]

“While Śrīla Prabhupāda was lying there, he assumed a certain pose. But we couldn't understand it. We just thought he was lying on the bed. He had his hands in a certain way, his head was in a certain way, his legs were in a certain way, and he arched his body in a certain manner. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja said, ‘Oh, he is in such and such *mudrā*. It's a type of *mudrā*.’ He said, ‘This is exhibited by someone in the last period before he passes away. It indicates that he is dancing with Kṛṣṇa. When he exhibits this form in the bed, it means that he is dancing with Kṛṣṇa; it is a dancing pose.’ Some people may try to understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, but this indicated a specific pastime.

“Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja then brought in his *brahmacārīs*. He has a little choir there in Mathurā. He and the *brahmacārīs* began to sing *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada*. He has a beautiful voice, a very baritone voice: *śrī rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada*. He sang very, very slowly. Everyone was crying. The whole room was in tears, and everyone was very, very shook up. Then, as the night continued, the *kīrtana* continued on and on.”

*[This second account is a continuation of the previous tape recorded class, describing recollections of November 14th, during Śrīla Prabhupāda's final five hours.]*

“... Śrīla Prabhupāda started exhibiting extraordinary activities. He started to roll back and forth on the bed, back and forth, and he would flail his arms in the air and then suddenly stop as if he was stunned. He wasn't speaking at all, and then he would groan. Then suddenly he would belch very, very loudly, then he would shed tears and tremble, and then he would roll again. In this way he would continue on and on in so many different postures.

“At first everyone was horrified. Then Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja came, and he was the last one with whom Śrīla Prabhupāda communicated. I don't know what Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja said to him because I never asked him. Someone should ask him that. He entered the room and Śrīla Prabhupāda was shaking about, flailing his arms. Then he went right up to Śrīla Prabhupāda's ear and whispered something. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped, and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja whispered something. Śrīla Prabhupāda put up his hand and shook it like he had given benediction. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja understood what he meant, and then he put his hand down.”

## **His Divine Departure**

When we arrived in those final hours on November 14th, he was not speaking. I felt at that time, by seeing his face, that he was fully remembering the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. I think this was great mercy coming from Kṛṣṇa, because he had served Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for his entire lifetime. For that special

person, Kṛṣṇa absorption is there. Entranced in this way, his eyes were closed and he was exhibiting special symptoms. It was a very touching scene. He had no pain, no distraction. At that time his mouth was so beautiful. It was like a blossomed rose, like a lotus.

These are the signs of a very great personality. Otherwise, another person may cry, “I am dying, I am dying,” and the face will be so ugly. But he was never like that. He was like a beautiful lotus flower. I knew what he was doing. I have seen others also, including my *gurudeva*, entering *aprakāṣa-līlā* (Kṛṣṇa’s eternal pastimes). I have seen *pūjyapāda* Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī, Śrīla Jagannātha Bābājī Mahārāja (a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda), Śrīla Narasimha Mahārāja, and Srila Padmanābha Mahārāja. I have seen many devotees when they departed, so I could judge what was transpiring. They would call out, “Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa” and “Rādhe Rādhe.” There are particular signs at that moment, which show that someone is remembering Kṛṣṇa, and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja was exhibiting all those signs.

He was very beautiful and very exalted. There was no sign of pain and no attachment to the body or anything else. He was no longer anxious for his young disciples, nor for any of the outward things he had established in his Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Now there was nothing else – only remembering Kṛṣṇa.

Our *brahmacārīs* were softly singing some *bhajanās*. At that time, I saw that he was fully satisfied, and thus I was also fully satisfied. I knew then that he would surely go soon, but there was no sign when he would go; whether he would leave now, or in a short time. He had previously talked with me, when he was in his external consciousness, but he did not request me to stay.

I was not in a hurry, but I was thinking that just after my leaving for Mathurā he would enter into *nitya-līlā*. We left to return to Mathurā, and we were informed that he departed a few hours later.

Shortly after that time, we returned to the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira and made all arrangements for his *mahotsava*. According to his wishes, we took him on procession to most of the important Deities of Vṛndāvana. There were so many of his disciples and other persons chanting in that procession, and all of the Vrajavāsīs came out into the streets to honor him. After this, I prepared his body. I wrote the special *mantras* on his chest and forehead with *tilaka*. I used salt for his body, and then, following all of the proper Vaiṣṇava procedures, I put his transcendental body into *samādhi* with my own hand.

### **In Mādhurya-rasa**

*Prema* cannot be contained within the material body. One with a material body can attain up to the stage of *svarūpa-siddhi*. Yet, we see that *rasika-bhaktas* (those who are already internally situated in their exchanges with Kṛṣṇa in His *līlā*) have *prema* and also appear in a body. We should understand, therefore, that their body is not a worldly material body. However, this material body cannot bear to hold *prema*. In such a mood of separation, it would burst into pieces.

To understand this, we must perform *sādhana-bhajana* and become qualified. Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was always in that mood, but he did not externally manifest it. He kept it hidden within himself. He had to suppress all his actual moods for his preaching

purposes. His *prema* was displaying itself inside, but it was not fully manifest externally. Otherwise, all would have been madness and the preaching would have stopped. The *uddīpana* (stimulus) was always there, but inside. When he went to the West there was *uddīpana* for preaching. He preached, “You are not your body,” and he preached *Gītā*, Jagannātha worship, etc. At the end he came back to Vṛndāvana-dhāma, relishing all his internal moods, and he was always deeply hearing and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. He told us, “My home is in Vṛndāvana.” ‘Home’ means his loving home, his real home.

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja was surely in *mādhurya-rasa*. Some may say, why not *sakhya-rasa*? I am not denying this, because everything is present in *mādhurya-rasa*. All other *rasas*, like *vātsalya-rasa*, *sakhya-rasa*, and so on, are included in *mādhurya-rasa*. So it may be said that all *rasas* were in him; he was not deprived of *sākhyā-rasa*. He had written some statements in his poems, and he had special affection for Gaura-Nitai and Kṛṣṇa-Balarama. But he was certainly in *mādhurya-rasa*, because his *sannyāsa-guru*, my *gurudeva*, gave him the *sannyāsa-mantra*, the *gopī-bhāva-mantra*, in our *rūpānuga* line. Just as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and his *gurudeva* were in this *rasa*, and just as he wrote in his realizations, in the purports of his books, he was surely in *mādhurya-rasa*.

## CHAPTER THREE

# My Message Is One with His

Sometimes it sounds to some that I am speaking certain things that Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja has never said. When a seed is planted, it will naturally grow into a tree with branches. Are these branches not included in the original seed? Are they coming from somewhere else? Because it is a tree, all its parts will naturally manifest; they are all hidden within the seed. Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja has written everything in his books. I am not saying anything new. Everything that I speak is coming directly and exclusively from the authentic literatures of our *ācāryas*. I also try to give examples from Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's own purports, in his own words.

His tree will certainly grow. New leaves will come and that same tree will give more and more shade. As we water that tree, so many beautiful flowers and fruits will come; that is sure. That watering process is hearing, chanting, and remembering *hari-kathā*.

*Parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja has planted many seeds of *bhakti*. Some seeds are sprouting, some are growing, and some have leaves – two leaves, four leaves, six leaves, and more. But there are also many seeds that are drying up. Many devotees have lost their strength and their faith. Some *sannyāsīs* are leaving *sannyāsa*, and many sincere devotees are feeling disconnected and disheartened. These creepers which Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja has planted need water to be sprinkled upon them.

One Vaiṣṇava can never be exactly the same as another. All details of expression cannot be identically the same; there must be some difference. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Caitanya

Mahāprabhu are not exactly the same. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī are in the same line but are not completely the same. The leaves of any tree, like a mango tree, are not all the same; there must be some difference. So we are in the family of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and therefore we are included in the same tree. It cannot be said that there is any real difference between us, since we are in the same bona fide disciplic tree.

I was never interested in collecting many followers, and I didn't want to initiate many disciples. For a long time I have been active as a *śikṣā-guru* for the devotees in the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Similarly, I want to offer *śikṣā* to anyone who is interested. Now I have accepted Western *dīkṣā* disciples, but my original intention was to help everyone become strong by *śikṣā*. I want the devotees to benefit from the *śikṣā* of all bona fide Vaiṣṇavas. I want them to advance more and more in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to have love and affection for each other and for all other Vaiṣṇavas. I want to see Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's movement become healthy and strong.

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja tried to help in this same way, because he was also requested by Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja. He never called the devotees or tried to cause any disturbance. Many were attracted and came and wanted to hear *hari-kathā*, and he was distributing *hari-kathā*. Other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are also doing this. We are speaking *hari-kathā* here, and so many devotees are thirsty to receive this. The concept and *siddhānta* of *śikṣā-guru* and *guru-tattva* is not yet widely understood and accepted. The *śikṣā-guru* does not compete with the *dīkṣā-guru*. He assists the devotees in strengthening their relationship with their *dīkṣā-guru*, and in understanding and carrying out their

*dīkṣā-guru's* conclusions. I am bound to serve Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja in these ways, because he is not only my *śikṣā-guru*, he is also my bosom friend.

Śrīla Svāmī Mahārāja's order to me was that I help his devotees. If I am obeying him, then I may be disobeying others. In any case, even if the whole world is on one side opposing me, I will be on the other side, trying to obey him. I only want to teach what is pure *bhakti* in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and all our *ācāryas* down to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. I want to be welcome in his temples, where he performed his pastimes. I want to take his foot-dust, pay my respects, and especially worship at his place of *samādhi*, which was performed with my own hands. I have an open heart and open arms; my door is always open to anyone. My intention is to help everyone who comes to me, to establish a beautiful temple in their heart where Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can be served.

I am praying at the lotus feet of my *dīkṣā-gurudeva*, and at the lotus feet of my *śikṣā-guru* and *priya-bandhu*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. May they bestow their mercy on all of you and also on me. If after first giving mercy to all of you there is some left, then may they give it to me as well. From my heart, I care for all of his followers who try to carry out his orders and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am begging all of the Vaiṣṇavas to be sympathetic to my attempt to serve the lotus feet and mission of our beloved Srila Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. He has kindly given me the opportunity to serve him, and I am offering my heartfelt *puṣpāñjali* at his lotus feet.



# ENDNOTES

1 Excerpt from *Rays of the Harmonist*. Vol. 2 No. 1. “The Mission of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja.” Translation from the Hindi article in *Bhagavāta Patrika* of February 1998, by Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (pg. 26–27):

During this unfavorable situation, around 1938–40, Śrī Kṛtī-ratna Prabhu (one of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja’s *brahmacārī* names) had spent a few days in Prayaga, at Śrī Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha. There he met Śrīmad Abhaya Caraṇa Bhaktivedānta. These two god-brothers had been intimate friends since 1922. Śrī Abhaya Caraṇa’s business in Prayaga was in an unstable condition. In spite of this he still remained enthusiastic to preach the message of *bhagavad-bhakti*, and in fact both god-brothers were very enthusiastically preaching the message of *śuddha-bhakti* in Prayaga and Allahabad...

During this same period, in 1940, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī came from Māyāpura to the town of Navadvīpa along with Pūjyapāda Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Narahari Brahmacārī Sevā-vigraha, Śrīpāda Biraçandra Prabhu, and some other god-brothers. In Navadvīpa he founded Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in a rented house in the locality of Tegharīpāḍā, and from there started the preaching of *śuddha-bhakti*.

On April 7, 1940, the day of *aṁṣaya-trtīya*, *pūjyapāda* Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtī-ratna founded Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti at 33/2 Bosapada Lane, Calcutta, in a rented house. At that time *pūjyapāda* Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedānta, Śrī Nṛsimhānanda Brahmacārī, Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa-kāruṇya Brahmacārī,

Śrīpāda Sajjana-sevaka Brahmācārī (Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja) and many other Vaiṣṇavas were present.”

2 Excerpt from *Their Lasting Relation*. “Letter of Condolence” from Śrīla Prabhupāda to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja. Seattle, October 22, 1968:

I have a very close connection with Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Yourself, and particularly Śrīpāda Vamana Mahārāja, are well aware of the fact that I am one of the three persons who founded Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. We had conceived of the idea of the formation of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti at Bosapada Lane, Calcutta, even before Śrīla [Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava] Mahārāja accepted *sannyāsa*.

3 Excerpt from *Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Letters from America to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja*. Return address c/o Gopal Agarwal from Butler, Pennsylvania, September 28, 1966:

I received your letter dated September 20, 1966, on time. Our relationship is certainly based on spontaneous love. That is why there is no chance of us forgetting one another. By the mercy of Guru and Gaurāṅga, may everything be auspicious for you. This is my constant prayer. From the first time I saw you I have been your constant well-wisher. At his first sight of me, Śrīla Prabhupāda also saw me with such love. It was in my very first *darśana* of Śrīla Prabhupāda that I learned how to love. It is his boundless mercy that he has engaged an unworthy person like me in fulfilling some of his desires. It is his causeless mercy to engage me in preaching the message of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha.

#### 4 A Note on the Word ‘Svāmījī’:

His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda was addressed by many names throughout his life. His parents gave him the birth name, Abhaya Caraṇa De. At his initiation by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he became Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu. Later, in 1939, he was honored by an assembly of his god-brothers with the title Śrī Bhaktivedānta. During his *grhastha* years, many of his friends affectionately called him Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu, Abhaya Babu Prabhu, or Prabhu. These references are shown in the *Līlāmṛta*, and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja also recalls them. In 1959, during his *sannyāsa* ceremony, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja awarded him the formal name ‘Svāmī’; and he became known as Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. ‘Svāmī’ with ‘jī’ (Svāmījī) is actually a designation of special respect and intimacy. At first, Prabhupāda’s disciples addressed him as Svāmījī but, as this is not proper for ordinary *dikṣā* disciples, his disciples and followers later addressed him as ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda’ (representative of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa). Because the devotees in the Gauḍīya Maṭha have, for over a century, been accustomed to addressing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda’, to avoid confusion, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja generally refers to him by his *sannyāsa* name, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, or Svāmījī. Because of his extremely intimate relationship with our Prabhupāda, this is proper.

Many Western devotees will hear Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja uttering the name ‘Svāmījī’ with reference to our Śrīla Prabhupāda. Although Śrīla Mahārāja always sees Śrīla

Prabhupāda as his *śikṣā-guru*, because they were also intimate friends, he often uses this affectionate name. Some devotees misunderstand, thinking he is showing insufficient respect by not always saying ‘Prabhupāda’, but actually he sees him in the most glorious light. When others, those who are not on his level, his own disciples and also Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples, imitate him by using the word ‘Svāmiji’ and not uttering the traditional proper honorific titles, Śrīla Mahārāja corrects them.

5 Excerpt from *Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Letters from America to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja*. Return address c/o Gopal Agarwal from Butler, Pennsylvania, September 28, 1966:

My room is locked in Delhi. If you or any of your faithful preachers want to preach in Delhi, let me know. If you want to work in Delhi, you can use that room and preach. If you continue going to Delhi, then my publication work can be taken care of under your observation. You wrote to me, “You can engage me in any preaching work in India, and according to my ability I shall always be ready to do so.” So I can preach whole-heartedly by your good wishes.

6 Excerpt from *Their Lasting Relation*. “Letter of Condolence”: from Śrīla Prabhupāda to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja. Seattle, October 22, 1968:

P.S. If you have any nice photograph of Śrīla [Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī] Mahārāja, then kindly send it to me. I will get a life size oil painting made of it, and, along with a picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I will place it in my prominent centers, particularly New York, Hollywood, London, and so forth.

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