

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakura

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If you look deeply in your life you will see some kind energy around you; energy that gives you protection, energy that gives you intelligence and energy that gives you the potency needed to lead your life. That is Krishna's energy. Krishna is our protector. Krishna is our maintainer. We are not supposed to feel shy to chant His Name in every aspect. But due to the influence of illusiory energy, many people feel shy to chant the Holy Name.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

*In the Service of Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission,
His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja*



A HUMBLE OFFERING TO THE VAISHNAVAS ON THE DAY BEFORE SRI BALARAM PURNIMA

by *Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan
Goswami*

All glories to Sri Guru & Sri Gauranga!



*yahara prasade bhāi e bhāba tariyā yāi
krishna prāpti hai yāhā haite*

Srila Narattom Das Thakur Mahashaya, in one of his famous songs entitled “*sri guru charana padma*,” writes the above verse in his first stanza. The meanings of his words are integral to the followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Nowadays, due to misunderstanding of *Guru-Tattva*, most Gaudiya-Vaishnava followers are not adequately informed about the knowledge of *Guru-Tattva* and therefore an element of confusion exists. As a result of this lack of knowledge, they can feel cheated on their chosen path. The same can be said of pious people in various parts of the world following their respective religious faith. The above-referenced song was written in Bengali language and the quoted lines hold a deep meaning, which I will try to explain word by word and provide a detailed account of their inner meaning:

Yahara (whose); *prasade* (mercy); *bhai* (brother); *e bhāba* (this material world) *tariyā yāi* (able to deliver); *krishna* (Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is

embodiment of bliss and all attractive); *prāpti* (get); *hai* (is); *yāhā* (that) *haite* (from)

According to the direct instruction of Lord Krishna, we understand that without the mercy of Krishna’s eternal consort, Srimati Radharani, no one is eligible to receive His mercy.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam informs us that Lord Krishna gives instructions to one of His most intimate devotee named Uddhava. Uddhava worshipped Lord Krishna since childhood with the mood of friendship (*sakhya-rasa*).

Lord Krishna declares,
“*ācāryam mām vijāniyāt*”. The meaning of the Sanskrit words is as follows:

ācārya (whoever is teaching us to serve Sri Krishna by example); *mām vijāniyāt* (who is representing Me only).

My spiritual master, His Divine Grace Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakura often cited Lord Krishna’s words to Uddhava to explain to us the value of the *Acharya*. He would explain that since an *Acharya* is the Lord’s agent, He is to be understood as non-different from the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Himself, and therefore we should hold the utmost respect for an *Acharya*. In actual fact, the real *Acharya* is Srimati Radharani and She is non-different from Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna is potent (*śaktimān*) and Srimati Radharani is His pleasure potency (*ānanda-dāyini śakti*). Srimati Radharani is serving Sri Krishna non-stop, 24-hours a day, in various ways. It is known to us that She cooks various items for Krishna and will arrange for the cooked items to be sent to Krishna through Her associates (*sakhis*). Not only that, for Krishna’s happiness She is maintaining extreme tolerance by accepting all false blame and accusations thrown at Her by both Her mother-in-law, Jatila and sister-in-law, Kutila. However, we ourselves are not ready to tolerate any blame or criticism at all. Our present opinion is that since we are following a renounced order of



life, we should therefore stay away from our parents, relatives, educational practices, business etc. For the sake of following a “renounced” life, we are even ready to abandon our Spiritual Master and his services too. Srimati Radharani’s renunciation is of a different quality than our present understanding of a renounced life. Whatever criticism of Her chastity and purity Jatila and Kutila complained about, would spread around the neighbourhood. These accusations, however, did nothing to deter Srimati Radharani nor would She even entertain the thought of stopping Her service to Krishna. Thus, She is showing the example of tolerance in rendering service for Krishna.



Presently, where is our tolerance for serving the *Acharya*? In our lineage, the word, *Acharya* is synonymous to the word “*Guru*” or “*Gurudeva*,” the universal teacher. Here, teacher refers to the individual who is teaching us spirituality by example. Srimati Radharani is the original *Acharya* and the source of all *Acharyas*. Also, we know that without Radharani’s mercy, no one can receive Krishna’s mercy. In the same way,

we can say that without *Gurudeva*’s mercy one cannot be delivered from this miserable world. Furthermore, it can also be said that one can only get the opportunity to engage in Krishna’s service by the grace of *Gurudeva*.

The ultimate goal of human life is to become the eternal servant of Sri Krishna, which is reflected in the last line of the first stanza “*krishna prāpti hay yāhā haite.*” To shed further light on the subject matter of *Guru-Tattva*, I would like to discuss a verse from *Chaitanya Charitamrita*:

*guru krishna rupa han shastrer pramaney
guru-rupe krishna kripa karen bhakta-gane*

According to scriptural information, the condensed mercy of Lord Krishna is appearing before us in the form of *Guru*—Lord Krishna is bestowing His mercy through the form of a *Guru*. In conclusion, it can be stated that *Guru* is the most important aspect of our spiritual practice; eternally keeping in mind that *Guru* is non-different from Lord Krishna. It should also be well noted in our mind that *Guru* is an important *Tattva* (absolute truth) and not necessarily only an individual. As soon as we think that *Guru* is an individual, then we will start to discriminate amongst different *Gurus* in order to promote our own *Guru*. This tendency of promoting one’s individual *Guru* is consequently trapping us in committing offenses. The offense will take us away from developing realization of spiritual practice, leaving only chaos in our life. Our goal of spiritual practice is to first realize and then relish the taste of eternal bliss, peace, happiness, and love.

Due to the present activities of so-called *Gurus*, it has become difficult to define the qualification of a *Guru*. Actually, a *Guru* should be appointed by previous teachers, but nowadays almost all of the *Gurus* are appointed by either their followers or are self-appointed. Most preachers are taking the role of “*Guru*” as per the request of the



audience for and the masses are feeling attracted by the preacher's ability to orate their ideas coherently, perform sweet melodious singing, and by displaying a holy nature. As a result of such a show of charisma, the general public are approaching preachers to give them initiation. Consequently, most of the initiating *Gurus* who are appointed by the public are expanding the loving mission of Mahaprabhu without permission of the previous teachers.

If we look at the ancient history, we can see the procedure to appoint a *Guru*. We know that Lakshmi Devi appointed Srila Ramanuja Acharya. In brief, Lakshmi Devi is also referred to as "Sri." Therefore, whoever gets initiation from Ramanuja Acharya's spiritual descendent, they are known to belong to the "*Sri-samprādyā*." Similarly, Lord Brahma appointed Srila Madhva Acharya and whoever receives initiation from Madhva Acharya's spiritual descendents are known to belong to the "*Brahma-sampradāya*." Furthermore, Lord Shiva appointed Vishnuswami and whoever follows Vishnuswami Acharya's spiritual descendent belongs to the "*Rudra-sampradāya*." Conceived from Brahma's mind, Brahma's four sons Sanak, Sanatan, Sanandan, and Sanat Kumar (abbreviated to "Sanak") also appointed Nimbāditya Brahmin (Nimbarka-Acharya). Those following the Nimbarka-Acharya's spiritual descendent belong to the "*Nimbarka-samprādāya*."

Thus, my grand Spiritual Master (Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada) appointed all of his disciples to be *Guru*. Often he used to say that "I am not accepting any disciples. They are all my friends who are there to protect me from different types of dangers (*vipad-uddharan-bāndhav*) in this material world. Therefore, I appoint all of them as *Guru* to protect people from their material attachment and engage them in spiritual services." After the physical departure of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada's disciples—with the exception of a few appointed Acharyas—a selection of

devotees were appointed by either a voting system amongst society members or selected by people because of their observation of how nicely they are giving discourses, singing with a melodious tune, and the display of holy behaviour.

Hence, we can see all over the world the many so-called '*Gurus*' who are accepting unqualified disciples. During the time of initiation, *Guru* is eligible to plant the loving seeds of the creeper of devotion in the heart of the disciple. Unfortunately, unqualified *Gurus* out of greed for name and fame, accept large numbers of disciples without preparing the heart of those followers to sow the loving seeds of devotion. We know seeds need to be planted on prepared land having properly dug and cleared all weeds from the land; only then can seeds be planted, otherwise the seeds will be unable to sprout and grow step by step. After sprouting, the creeper will give flowers and eventually bear fruits. For healthy growth, the seeds should undergo irrigation from time to time. Here, irrigation refers to the hearing of discourses by the individuals who are practicing the path of devotion. One should chant attentively in order to reach the ultimate spiritual abode and not because of any other mundane motivation. As a result of any secondary tendency of the preacher, the followers are unable to get any benefit. At the end they are feeling cheated and instead of accepting the process of chanting in a loving manner, most followers are rejecting chanting as well as switching from one *Guru* to another.

Usually we see on the day of the *Guru* or Vaishnava's birthday ceremony that disciples and followers prepare a beautiful throne for their *Guru* to perform his worship with their best ability. But during Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur Prabhupada's time, the *Guru-Vaishnava's* birthday ceremony was known by the term *vyasa-puja* day. During that period of time, along with preparing a beautiful throne, disciples and followers used to perform



vyasa-puja as per the direction of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, which is described as follows:

There is a minimum of six *panchakas*, known as 1. *Krishna-panchaka*, 2. *Vyasa-panchaka*, 3. *Acharya-panchaka*, 4. *Sanakadi-panchaka*, 5. *Gaura-panchaka* 6. *Guru-panchaka*.

Here, *panchaka* means five personifications in each group. The six *panchakas* are laid out as *Krishna-panchaka* in the middle position. On the right side of *Krishna-panchaka* we should keep *Vyasa-panchaka* and *Gaura-panchaka* side by side. On the left side of *Krishna-panchaka* we are to keep *Acharya-panchaka*. On the west side of *Krishna-panchaka* is kept *Sanakadi-panchak* and on the east side of *Krishna-panchaka* is *Guru-panchaka*.

1. The five personification in *Krishna-panchaka*: Krishna in the middle surrounded by His four expansion—at the east side, Vasudeva, at the south side, Sankarshana, at the west side, Pradyumna, and at the north side, Aniruddha.

2. The five personification in *Vyasa-panchaka*: The energy incarnation of Lord Krishna, Vyasadeva, is in the middle and surrounded are his four main disciples. At the east side, Paila Muni, at the south side, Vaishampāyana Muni, at the west side, Jaimini Muni, and at the north side, Sumanta Muni.

3. The five personifications of *Gaura-panchaka*: In the middle is Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. During every day of Brahma's entire life, Vrindavan Krishna appears during the seventh Manu's period, the 28th number Chatur-Yuga's in Dwapara-Yuga, and following this is the appearance of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu in the Kali -Yuga.¹ On east side there is Advaita Prabhu (combination form of Mahavishnu and Lord Shiva), on the south side is Nityananda Prabhu (Balaram in Krishna's pastime), on the west side, Srivas Thakur (Narada), and on the north side, Gadadhara Pandit (incarnation of Srimati Radharani).

4. The five personification of *Acharya-panchak*: In the middle is Srila Sukadeva Goswami (Bhagawata Acharya) surrounded by the four *Acharyas*. On the east side, Srila Ramanuja Acharya, on the south side, Srila Madhva Acharya, on the west side, Vishnu Swami Acharya, and on the north side, Nimbadiya (Nimbarka Acharya).

5. The five personification of *Sanakadi-panchak*: In the middle is Vishaksen, surrounded by the four personalities; East side, Sanak, south side, Sanatan, west side, Sanandan and north side, Sanatkumar.

6. The five personification of *Guru-panchak*: in the middle is our *diksha-guru* and surrounding on the east side are, *param-guru*, on the south side, *paramesthi-guru*, on the west side, *paratpara-guru*, and on the north side, Lord Brahma.

The above procedure is the actual method to conduct a Vyasa-Puja, which was

¹ One day of Lord Brahma: Golden Age (*Satya-Yuga*), Silver Age (*Treta-Yuga*), Copper Age (*Dwapara Yuga*) and Iron Age (*Kali-Yuga*). These four Ages together is called one *Chatur-Yuga*. 71 *Chatur-Yuga* are called one *Manmantar* (Manu's duration of life); 14 *Manmantar* are considered only one day of Brahma. In one day of Brahma, on the 28th number of *Chatur-Yuga*'s and the 7th *Manmantar* in copper Age, Sri Vrindavan Krishna appears and then in the Iron Age (*Kali-Yuga*) that same Vrindavan Krishna appears in the form of Sri

Gauranga Mahaprabhu. All other times of the cyclic appearance of the Lord, Vasudev Krishna (*avatar*) appears in each *Dwapara Yuga* with Kaliki Avatar incarnation taking place in every *Kali Yuga* following on from Vasudev Krishna's descent. It is to be noted that Vrindavan Krishna and Gauranga Maharprabhu are *avatari* (source of all incarnations) whereas all other forms are *avatars* (incarnations) of the Supreme Lord.



established by Satchidānanda Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur. This method of Vyasa-Puja allows us to give due respect to all members of the different Vaishnava *parampara* (lineage).

The Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition was established by Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. He highlighted the qualities of being humble like a blade of grass, being tolerant like a tree, being completely free from name, fame, distinction, and desires, and giving due respect to all living beings and chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. These qualities will gradually appear in us through our relentless chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra, at least 64-rounds a day.

The Vaishnava tradition is not a new tradition. When looking back at the history of this tradition, we can see that the first living entity in the universe, Lord Brahma, was a Vaishnava. His four sons, known as the four Kumaras, Narada and Lord Shiva are Vaishnavas too. Our lineage (*sampradāya*) started from Brahma. Since Brahma is the first authority in this *sampradāya*, we belong to the Brahma *sampradāya*. We know that Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna (Vrindavan Krishna), who is the source of all incarnation (*avatāri* not *avatār*) appeared in the form of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. After accepting the renounced order of life for spreading the devotional practice of chanting the Hare Krishna Mahamantra, His name became Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu showed us by example that without accepting an authentic lineage, our spiritual practice will not bear any fruit. *Sampradāya*, or *parampara* literally means “one after another.” The purpose of the *parampara* system is to preserve spiritual knowledge through successive links, or disciplic succession, that carries down over the years. The knowledge comes down from the Supreme Lord Himself and the bona fide *Guru* will preserve this knowledge by keeping it intact and complete. Not that new ideas and conclusions are manufactured:

one cannot add to it or improve it, rather it is preserved and passed down as it is.

For further understanding, let’s deliberate on this fact, that, although Gauranga Mahaprabhu is *avatāri*, He nonetheless accepted the Brahma *sampradāya* lineage and established the worship of the Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha Krishna in Goloka Vrindavan. Goloka Vrindavan is topmost abode of Supreme Lord where the sweetness mellow (*mādhurya rasa*, the condensed form of all types of mellows) is relished. We are trying to follow in the footsteps of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and His associates.



I have heard from my Spiritual Master that my grand Spiritual Master, His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakura Prabhupad is a spiritual descendent of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu in that he came directly from the spiritual abode. In that spiritual abode his eternal form is Vimala Nayanamani Manjari. I also heard from our *Guru-Varga* that all the disciples of Srila Prabhupad are associates of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu as well. My previous teachers, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Vinode



Thakur, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakura, Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, and all my *Guru-vargas*, the essence of all their teachings is that one should nourish the soul through devotional practice and chanting of the Holy Name, which will gradually free one from all material attachment. Material attachment is constantly pulling us to remain in the cycle of bondage where endless suffering exists. Suffering comes to living entities in many forms, from taking the body of an aquatic, reptile, tree, plant, birds, animal, and human.

Although I am unworthy to be the servant of our previous teachers, my Spiritual Master, out of his causeless mercy has allowed me to be his servant and taught me how to follow in the footsteps of all members in this lineage. Today, my humble request to all the Vaishnavas is to please excuse all my previous offensive attitude and bestow your mercy on me so that I can qualify to be a real servant of the servants of our *Guru-varga* and that I may gradually be allowed to enter the spiritual abode to become a servant of Ananga Manjari, Rupa Manjari, and Lalita Shakhi.

An insignificant aspiring servant of our *Guru-varga*,

B.B. Bodhayan

SRI GURU

by an aspiring servant of Sri Guru

It is stated in the *Caitanya Caritamrta*, (Madhya Lila 19.151)

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavan
jīva,
uuru-kṛṣṇa prasāde paya bhakti-lata bīja.*

All living entities (*jiva*) are wandering throughout this universe in different types of bodies according to their karma, moving from planet to planet. In the course of their wandering, out of millions of *jiva*, one who is extremely fortunate will get an

opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master. By the causeless mercy of *Guru* and Krishna, such a person will receive the seed of the creeper of devotional service.

In the *Skanda Purana*, it is stated that ‘*gu*’ refers to darkness and ‘*ru*’ means that which dispels the darkness. Since time immemorial, living entities have been tottering in this material ocean, living in complete ignorance called *maya*. Through ignorance borne out of illusory energy, the living entity perceives itself as a bundle of flesh and bones, which at best is a nest of troubles. Out of this ignorance, the living entity relates all temporary matter in this material world as ‘I’ and ‘mine’. So long as the living entity is covered in this thick blanket of ignorance, he is unable to make any spiritual advancement.

According to the law of *karma*, all conditioned souls are destined to suffer or enjoy according to a certain material standard. The material enjoyment is only temporary and fades just as quickly as it comes, but the mercy of Krishna is so powerful that it manifests in the form of a bona fide *Guru* whose grace rids the heart and consciousness clouded with darkness and ignorance to knowledge of self-realisation. As a result, the *jiva* is given the opportunity to enter the path of devotional service and achieve peace and eternal happiness.

What darkness and ignorance pervades in the hearts of the living entities? Self-realisation is having the understanding that all living beings are eternally a servitor of the Lord, but instead of thinking oneself in that position, the living entity recognises itself as master and controller of this material world. It becomes entangled in a never-ending network of self-enjoyment and sense-gratification, and coming out of this web is only possible through the grace of Sri *Guru*.



Submission at the lotus feet of Sri *Guru* and carefully executing his orders gradually cleanses the consciousness of the living entity and elevates one to a platform where one can recognise his true identity, where his final destination lies and how to progress towards this destination. Loving devotional service at the lotus feet of Sri *Guru* removes all illusory attachment in the *jiva* and makes him eligible to attain supreme spiritual bliss. The *jiva* by the causeless mercy of Sri *Guru* is able to revive knowledge of the self and its true identity which was otherwise lost.

Another verse, similar to the above:

*krsna krpate guru mile
guru krpate krsna mile*

“One gets a bona-fide Spiritual Master by the grace of Krishna and by the grace of *Guru* one gets Krishna.

In brief, the *jiva*'s constitutional function is service of the Divine Couple, Radha and Krishna. One must first receive the seed of the creeper of devotional service ‘*bhakti-lata-bija*’ in order to develop the desire to serve Krishna. This is a deep subject matter and much can be discussed, but in short, Krishna, out of His causeless mercy, will arrange for the *jiva* to associate with a genuine Spiritual Master. Then, through the *Guru*'s mercy, the spiritual aspirant can receive the seed of devotion in his heart. When the *Guru* recognises sincere endeavour from the *jiva* to progress in the devotional path, he will inspire the individual to accept the seed of devotion. The spiritual aspirant can then create ideal conditions for the seed of devotion to germinate and grow by hearing *Hari-katha* and service towards *Guru* and the Vaishnavas. All devotional activities related to *Guru* and Krishna will gradually remove all mundane desires and develop the greed to serve Krishna.

Since *Guru* is non-different from Krishna, the power of *Guru*'s mercy is unlimited and without measure.

In the following verse, Srila Sridhar Swami touches on the vast transformation that can take place within the *jiva* by the grace of Sri *Guru*.

*mukam karoti vachalam
pangum langhayate girim
yat-kripa tam aham vande
sri-gurum dina-taranam*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto my Spiritual Master, the deliverer of the fallen souls. His mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.”

mukam, dumb is referring to a man's inability to speak. Mercy of Sri *Guru* enables a dumb man to speak eloquently and *pangum langhayate girim*, one who is lame can cross over the mountains. How is this possibly materially? By the mercy of Krishna or His representative – Sri *Guru*, what may appear to me impossible, becomes possible.

Viewed slightly deeply, it can be said that *mukam* is referring to the *jiva*'s inability to chant the divine name, pastimes and qualities of Lord Krishna. One who cannot glorify the Lord and or His activities is considered to be dumb. The dumb man is able to not only speak by the grace of Sri *Guru*, but he is able to become a great lecturer on the pastimes of the Lord. Those living entities that have no taste to hear and speak about the Lord are transformed into being great scholars simply by the strength of Sri *Guru*'s merciful glance. Lame in this context is referring to not utilising the body to travel to temples and holy places or not having the desire to do so. But Sri *Guru*'s merciful mood towards the fallen soul is so powerful, that it develops the desire within the heart of the ‘lame’ man to take to pilgrimage. Such transformations can take

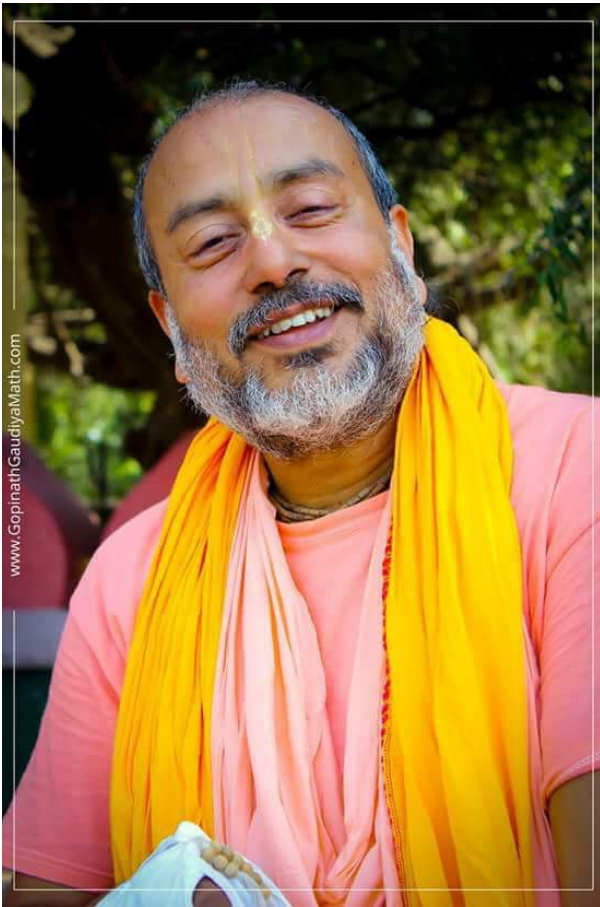


place by the loving mercy of *Gurudeva*, which would otherwise be impossible to manifest within the hearts of the *jiva*.

The glories of Sri *Guru* are vast, deep and unlimited. An ordinary *jiva* has neither the capacity nor the intelligence to pay homage to the glories of Sri *Guru* through words alone. In closing this short passage which is only an attempt to glorify the nature of *Guru*, it did not suffice to even touch the tip of the subject matter. Srila Sridhar Swami cries: SB 10.87.33

*yadā parānanda-guro bhavat-pade
padam mano me bhagaval labheta
tadā nirastākhila-sādhana-śramah
śrayeya saukhyam bhavataḥ kṛpātaḥ*

“O transcendently blissful *Guru*, when my mind finally achieves a place at your lotus feet, all the tiresome labour of my spiritual practices will be finished, and by your mercy I will experience the greatest happiness.”



The aspiring servant begs for the moment, when, but a minute taste of attachment towards the lotus feet of Sri *Guru* will develop within the ailing heart.

All glories to Sri *Guru*! All glories to the splendid lotus feet of Sri Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja! Effulgent, like a thousand glorious suns, all glories to His Divine Lotus feet, who is my Spiritual Master.

By an aspiring servant of Sri Guru

GLORIES OF LORD BALARAMA

*by His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta
Saraswati Goswami Thakura*

From the scriptures, it is understood that by offering prayers or glorifying the names and qualities of Lord Nityananda Rama (Balarama), who is the personification of Vaishnava scriptures, a living entity's material designations and bondage, which are born out of nescience, are destroyed. The purified living entity then accepts Lord Nityananda Rama as his spiritual master, and with a purified tongue he glorifies the worshipable Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya under Nityananda Prabhu's guidance. Lord Baladeva is always fixed in increasing the happiness of Lord Krishna. Those pure hearted souls who genuinely desire to serve Lord Krishna under the guidance of Baladeva Prabhu may speak about that service. Their words are understood to be directed by *śuddhā* (transcendental) *Sarasvatī*. The words that are devoid of connection with Krishna's service spoken by those who desire to satisfy their senses and ignore the guidance of Baladeva Prabhu are called *asati* or *duṣṭā* (unchaste or wicked) *Sarasvatī*.

While describing the *prābhava* and *vaibhava* features of the Lord in his *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (*Pūrva* 62), Srila Rupa Goswami writes: “Lord Ananta, the plenary



portion of Sri Baladeva who holds the universes on His hoods, resides in Pātālaloka. This Sankarshana recites *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to the *brāhmaṇas* and sages headed by the four Kumaras. His neck is beautified with a forest flower garland, His hoods are decorated with brightly shining jewels, He is dressed in blue garments, and He holds a plow, a club, and a trident in His hands.”



In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.25.8) it is stated: “It is recommended that persons who are very serious about being liberated from material life hear the glories of Anantadeva from the mouth of a spiritual master in the chain of disciplic succession., Subsequently if they always meditate upon that Sankarshana, the Lord enters the cores of their hearts, vanquishes all the dirty contamination of the material modes of nature. Thus He cuts to pieces the hard knot within the heart, which takes the form of the desire to dominate material nature through fruitive activities and which has been tied tightly there since time immemorial. Narada Muni, , always glorifies Lord Anantadeva in the assembly of his father Lord Brahmā. There he sings blissful verses of his own composition, accompanied by his stringed instrument, called tamburu.”

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (6.16.34, 44) Citraketu prays to Lord Sankarshana as follows: “O unconquerable Lord, although You undefeatable for everyone, You are actually conquered by those devotees who have perfect control of the mind and senses. Their control of You is solely because You are causelessly merciful to Your devotees who have no desire for deriving any material benefit from Your service. In fact O Lord, You give Yourself to such devotees, and thus by their feeling indebtedness You also have full control over them. My Lord, since nothing is impossible for You, a person is immediately freed from all material contamination simply by seeing You. What to speak of seeing You personally, by the mere hearing the Your holy name but once, even *caṇḍālas*, of the lowest class, are freed from all material contamination. Given Your inestimable prowess, who can deny that a person will be freed from all material contamination simply by seeing You?”

The topics concerning Lord Balarama, the original Sankarshana, that are found in the Fifth Canto of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* are glorified by all Vaishnavas. Those who accept Vishnu as the Supreme Lord are called Vaishnavas; and Mula-Sankarshana, or Balarama, is the source of all Vishnu-tattvas. Therefore it is the duty of all Vaishnavas to glorify Mula-Sankarshana, who is non-different from Lord Balarama.

Adapted from Sri Chaitanya Bhāgavata, Adī Khanda, 1:14-20, Gauḍīya-bhāṣya Purport by His Divine Grace Srīla Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Translated by Sri Bhumipati Dāsa

A FRIEND OF THE FALLEN

*By Srīla Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva
Goswami Maharaja*

By the grace of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, we develop our attraction for Sri Gauranga. Sri Nityananda Prabhu helps us solidify the foundation from which we can progress



further. His mercy sometimes exceeds the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Nityananda Prabhu won't allow even those who want to avoid Krishna consciousness to avoid His mercy. If someone says, "I don't want it," Nityananda Prabhu won't allow it. He will say, "No! You must want it. I request you earnestly—take it! Use it and you will be able to feel the value of Krishna consciousness." He used to roam in all directions, rolling in the dust with tears in His eyes and implore everyone saying, "Take the name of Gauranga and I will be sold to you."



By His mercy, even the most fallen souls can attain the supreme goal. He is the most generous-hearted aspect of *guru-tattva*, so

we must bow down our head to Him, accept His holy feet, and surrender to Him.

Sri Nityananda Prabhu's mercy sometimes exceeds the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Because it may create a bad precedent, Mahaprabhu sometimes cannot accept certain fallen souls—He has to consider their status as well as other things. Sri Nityananda Prabhu's mercy, however, does not care for any unfavorable circumstances; His mercy is very lavish and almost blind. He does not discriminate between different degrees of sinners. His mercy is all-embracing. And Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu cannot dismiss His recommendation. Even those who Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu rejected, Sri Nityananda Prabhu sheltered, and gradually Mahaprabhu had to accept them. So the grace of Sri Nityananda is the greatest both in magnitude and circumference, and that is our solace, for by His mercy even the most fallen souls can attain the supreme goal.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu once told His followers, "Even if Nityananda Prabhu is found with a fallen girl of the lowest kind, drinking wine in a wine shop, still you should know that He is above all these things. Although you may find Him apparently engaged in lower activities, He is never implicated. He may appear connected with so many fallen activities, but you should know that He is always revered by the creator of the universe, Lord Brahma, and other exalted devotees. Nityananda Prabhu's mercy is so powerful that if one simply takes a piece of His loin cloth and wears it respectfully on his body, he will be saved from all the disturbances of the mundane senses." Therefore we pray, "May my mind always stick to His holy feet; I offer my obeisances to Sri Nityananda Prabhu."

From Golden Volcano by His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja



GLORIES OF HARI-NĀMA-SAṅKĪRTANA

by Sri Sanatana Goswami

The *Vaikuntha-vāsis* explained to Gopa Kumar:

Whatever devotional practice a *sādhaka* with true spiritual taste feels satisfaction and complete joy in, that is the method saintly authorities deem most excellent and effective for him. It is not only the best practice for him but the very aim of his endeavors. This is because when a devotee feels eager attraction to any of the nine kinds of service, that devotional practice becomes the means for him to quickly fulfill all his desires. Moreover, that practice will gradually evolve into *prema*, which is the final goal of devotional life.

By performing *saṅkīrtana* the joy of meditation grows; and by meditation the sweet joy of *saṅkīrtana* increases. It is our personal experience that the two methods mutually enhance one another and are therefore they are actually one. Both meditation and *saṅkīrtana* are advantageous. The two methods support one another, and because one or the other may be more suitable in regard to time, place, and circumstances, their mutual dependence should not be a cause for confusion. Either one may be done separately, but in the end neither is complete without the other. Regardless which one serves as the cause and which the effect, the two are essentially non-different.



One can successfully perform meditation alone in a secluded place but *saṅkīrtana* can be performed either in seclusion or in the company of others. Of the many ways to chant Krishna's glories, glorifying His holy names (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*) is the best. It is declared topmost because it can at once evoke the treasure of pure love for Krishna. Besides *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, chanting of the Lord's names, there are various other ways of performing *kīrtana*, such as reciting the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*, speaking one's own narrations of the Lord's pastimes, singing devotional songs, and offering prayers. *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*, however, is the best of them all, because it can independently awaken love of God in the heart at once.

When lovingly relished in countless ways through service constantly rendered by the tongue, the nectar of Sri Krishna's name delights the heart. Who can describe the unequalled excellence of the nectar of Sri Krishna's Holy Name?

Though all names of the Lord are equally great, a devotee most quickly and most easily achieves his goals by chanting the name that he holds most dear. Since all the Supreme Lord's names are all infinite in their glories, one name cannot be considered greater than another. Wish fulfilling *cintāmaṇi* stones may appear in different forms, but they all have the same power in that any *cintāmaṇi* can produce whatever a person wants. Nonetheless, if a devotee is especially attracted to a particular name of the Lord, that name will most quickly and easily carry him to perfection.

Since people have different preferences, each name of the Lord is dear to one person or another. All the names of the Lord are therefore dear. A doubt may arise: Are only some of the Lord's names to be worshiped and others neglected. The answer is that in fact, every name of the Lord has its devotees. Some Vaishnavas prefer a particular name of



the Personality of Godhead, and others are attracted to two, three, or several names of the Lord.

When the nectar of the Lord's name appears in just one of the senses, all the senses are flooded with their own sweet tastes. In this way, every enjoyment possible is derived from *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Appearing mainly in the sense of speech, the Lord's name gives pleasure to the chanter and to others. So even greater than meditation on the Lord is His *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

The *saṅkīrtana* of Lord Krishna's holy names is praised as the greatest and most powerful means to attain the treasure of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. It is like a potent mantra that can draw toward one precious objects located at a distance. Thus, if one wants the ultimate success in spiritual life, one must take shelter of *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Because *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* invariably leads one to the treasure of pure love for the Lord, true connoisseurs of devotional service consider *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* to be the very fruit of bhakti. According to many pure devotees, *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* is not only the best means of devotional service but it is itself the final perfection. Of course, *kṛṣṇa-prema* is the ultimate goal of bhakti, but *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* so quickly and infallibly leads to that *prema* that the two are considered non-different. Wherever *prema* is seen to have developed, one can rightfully presume that *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* must have been performed. *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* is the necessary and complete cause of *prema*.

According to some knowers of *rasa*, the real sign of a person in whom *prema* is manifest is that as he performs *saṅkīrtana* of his worshipable the name, the full force of spiritual ecstasy erupts in him by the force of his pure love. Other expert Vaishnavas consider *saṅkīrtana* and *prema* to be exactly

the same as the two are mutual causes of one another and are therefore non-different.

Adapted from Sri Brhad Bhāgavatāmrtam by Sri Sanatana Gosvami Part 2, 3:152– 167, translation by Gopiparanadana Das

MAY CHILD HARI PROTECT YOU!

by Sri Rupa Gosvami

“I offer my respectful obeisance to Nanda Maharaja. His garments are as red as a *bandhūka* flower, his beard is handsome, his chubby form is the golden color of sandalwood paste, and his eyes are enchanted by the sight of Lord Mukunda” – *Sri Rupa Goswami*

“Mother Yasoda holds her lotus-navelled son (Pankaianabha) on her lap. Her garments are wonderfully beautiful. Her complexion is the colour of a fresh rain cloud. She delights the entire world. I repeatedly offer my respectful obeisance unto her” – *Sri Rupa Goswami*

“Lying on His back, His hands and feet charmingly reddish, and His forehead gracefully decorated with yellow *gorocana tilaka* markings, Lord Murari violently kicked and overturned the cart under which He had been placed to rest. I offer my respectful obeisances to Him” - *author unknown*

“His eyes half-opened, Lord Vishnu drinks the milk of His mother's breast. Finishing one breast, with His hand He rubs the other, from which the milk has already begun to flow. His mother fondles Him with her fingers and He smiles. May the white splendor of Lord Vishnu's teeth, which are anointed with drops of milk, protect you all” – *Sri Mangala*

“His restless eyes defiantly ignoring the face of the queen of the *gopās*, and His lips anointed with the sweet nectar of a mischievous smile, an infant crawls on the



ground with His knees. I worship that infant whose complexion is the dark color of a tamala leaf” – *Sri Raghunatha Das*

“His hair falling in His eyes, and His bells, bracelets, necklaces, and anklets all tinkling due to His rapid movement, the restless five-year-old son of Maharaja Nanda runs in the courtyard of His house. All of you please bow down to offer respect to Him” – *Sri Agama*

“Seeing a pot of butter in the distance, baby Kesava quickly crawled to it, anxiously turning His head out of fear of His mother. I worship these childhood pastimes of the Lord” – *author unknown*



“As child Hari was stealing butter, He noticed His own reflection in a jeweled column beside Him. Thinking this reflection to be another boy, He became frightened and begged: “You are my friend. I will share this butter with you. Please don’t tell on Me! Please don’t tell on Me!” May child Hari protect you all!” – *author unknown*

“Awakened at daybreak by the sounds of yoghurt being churned, on child Krishna stealthily entered the *gopī*’s homes, blew out the lamps with His lotus breath, and stole a handful of butter. I pray that child Krishna protect me” – *author unknown*

From From Padyavali, texts 128 -143, by Sri Rupa Goswami



VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2018

| Date | Festival |
|--------------------|--|
| 2 August | Disappearance Day of Sri Gopal Bhatta Goswami |
| 5 August | Disappearance Day of Sri Lokanath Goswami |
| 7 August | Disappearance Day of Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara deva Goswami |
| 15 August | Disappearance Day of Sri Rghunandan Thakura and Vamsidasa Babaji |
| 17 August | Appearance Day of Srila Bhakti Vijay Trivikram Maharaj |
| 20 August | Disappearance Day of Srila Bhakti Prasun Bodhyan Maharaj |
| 23 August | Disappearance Day of Srila Rupa Goswami and Gauridasa Pandit |
| 25 August | Appearance Day of Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj |
| 26 August | Sri Blaram Purnima |
| 31 August | Disappearance Day of Srila Vilas Tapasvi Maharaj |
| 3 September | Sri Krishna Janmashtami |
| 4 September | Nandostava, |
| 3 September | Appearance Day of Srila AC Bhaktivendanta Goswami |
| 6 September | Krishna (or Annada) Ekadasi |
| 14 September | Appearance Day of Sri Sita Devi, consort of Sri Advaita Prabhu |
| 16 September | Sri Latitasaptami |
| 17 September | Sri Radhashtami |
| 21 September | Appearance Day of Sri Jiva Goswami |
| 22 September | Appearance Day of Srila Sachidananda Bhakti Vinode Thakur |
| 23 September | Disappearance Day of Srila Haridas Thakur |
| 27 September | Disappearance Day of Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj |

Bhagavata Dharma

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Dedicated to:

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur, Founder Acharya of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math, and
His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanata Saraswati Goswami Thakur PRABHUPADA.

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