

Founder Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakura

# BHAGAVATA

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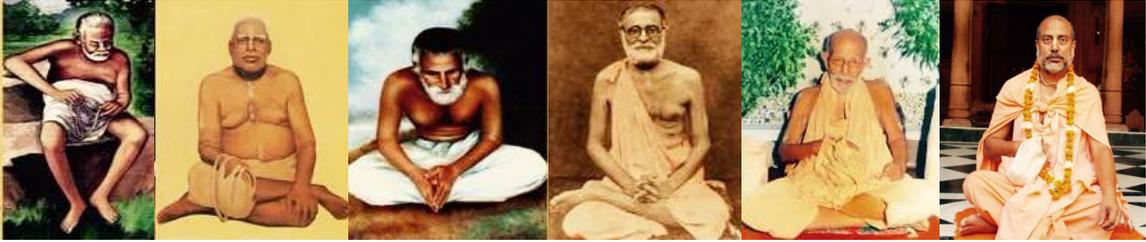
August 2017

# DHARMA

President & Acharaya His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja

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The ultimate goal of human life is to deliver ourselves from miserable material condition. To understand this, we need the association of pure devotees from whom we can learn all the principles of human life. If we have enough accrued *sukṛti* (pious credit), we would receive Lord Baladeva's mercy, by which we can establish connection with a bona fide *guru*, and thus progress in our devotional practice. The main religious principle in the present age of *kali-yuga* is to chant Hare Krishna Mahamantra under the shelter of such a *guru*, who is a representative of Srimati Radharani, the pleasure potency of Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna.

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



## MY HUMBLE OFFERING FOR THE 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

by His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Bibudha  
Bodhayan Goswami Maharaj

On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017, the day before Balaram Purnima, this is my humble offering to our congregational members. It is my request to all of you to pray for me to the Supreme Lord, The Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha Krishna through all the members of our lineage, to allow me to attain my ultimate goal of life—to become an eternal servant of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. I am completely dependent on the blessings of all devotees in order to fulfill this goal.

*śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-  
sadma  
vando mui sāvadhāna mate*

In order for our devotional realization to blossom, we should remember the above verse, which is written by Srila Narottama Das Thakura Mahashaya. The inner meaning of this verse is discussed below.

The words *Śrī Guru* actually represent Srimati Radharani, the pleasure potency of Sri Krishna. Although, we sometimes say that Krishna is our ultimate *guru* or the universal teacher; in reality, the followers of Saraswata Gaudiya Vaishnavas believe, from the bottom of their hearts, that Srimati Radharani is our main *guru*.

The real nature of a *guru* (spiritual master) is someone who teaches universally by example. According to Vaishnava tradition, a *guru* must be appointed by a previous *guru* or teacher who is a member of the recognized lineage. The need for a *guru* to

be connected to the recognized lineage is reiterated in the *Padma Purana*, which states:

*samprāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te viphalā  
matāḥ  
ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti catvāraḥ  
sampradāyinaḥ  
śrī-brahmā-rudra-sanakāḥ vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-  
pāvanāḥ  
catvāras te kalau bhāvya hy utkale  
puruṣottamāt*

“The holy *mantra* that is received from a source outside of the proper disciplic succession, will never bear any fruit. This is why, in this age of Kali, four great souls will emerge and establish the four Vaishnava successions initiated by Sri (Lakshmi Devi), Brahma, Rudra (Lord Shiva) and the four Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanat and Sanandana). The four great leaders will each begin to manifest their authorized disciplic successions from the holy Dham of Puri.”

Originally, Sri Lakshmi Devi had given this sacred knowledge to Ramanujacarya; Lord Brahma to Sri Madhavacarya; Rudra to Visnu Swami; and the Four Kumaras to Nimbarkacarya. Being endowed with spiritual knowledge, they taught their disciples, and so the knowledge was transferred through disciplic successions. After some time, the Divine Couple Themselves combined in the form of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and appeared in this world to illuminate the Madhava sampradaya and to spread the message of eternal love. Sriman Mahaprabhu was followed by numerous divine spiritual masters.

In the Madhava sampradaya, among the various jewel-like stalwart spiritual masters, a crown jewel emerged—Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada’s illustrious contribution to the Vaishnava society is unparalleled. In addition to being initiated by Srila Gaurkisorā Dasa Babaji Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada received special instructions and empowerment from the



Lord Himself and various members of the spiritual lineage.

Once, after the disappearance of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Gaurkisorā Dasa Babaji Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada was grief stricken and feeling deep pangs of separation. He doubted whether he would be able to spread the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. At that time, a wonderful incident took place.

One night, Lord Gaursundara appeared in Srila Prabhupada's vision. With Him were the six Goswamis, Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Gaurkisorā Dasa Babaji, all in their effulgent, transcendental forms. They collectively addressed Srila Prabhupada and asked him to give up all his doubts. They told him to go ahead with spreading the holy name and assured him that they would send suitable persons to support him. Srila Prabhupada Sarawati Thakur was thus appointed as *ācārya* (spiritual master and leader) of the Brahma Madhava Gaudiya sampradaya.

As per their assurance, gradually, many qualified men came and became Srila Prabhupada's disciples. Srila Prabhupada would affectionately say that he is not accepting any disciples; instead he considered everyone like his *guru* in that they have all come to assist him in serving Krishna. In this way, Srila Prabhupada lovingly appointed all of his disciples as being qualified to fulfill the role of a *guru*. Just prior to his departure from this mortal world, he gave some essential instructions to all of his disciples. A number of them thus went on to establish their own preaching missions and initiate their own disciples. In this way the disciplic succession continued.

A bona fide *guru* who is teaching the spiritual path by example and who dedicates his life to the service of the Supreme Lord, is called an *ācārya* (acharya). Thus, Srimati Radharani should be regarded as the main *ācārya* in our lineage, as She is constantly

showing us the most eloquent ways to please Sri Krishna with each of Her activities. The ultimate goal of our spiritual practice is to please the object of our service – the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, with each and every thought and activity of our days. Srimati Radharani is the epitome of this. Lord Sri Krishna Himself certifies that without Her mercy no one can get His mercy. We can therefore conclude that Srimati Radharani is our ultimate *guru* and *ācārya*.

The next two words—*carana padma* refer to the *ācārya's* lotus-feet. *carana* (pronounced cha-ra-na) means feet and *padma* means lotus. What is special about a lotus flower? The lotus is a beautiful, fragrant flower with high-quality, tasty nectar inside the flower. By nature, a lotus flower opens its petals when the first rays of sunshine touch it in the morning, and then gradually closes its petals upon sunset. One can relish the sweet fragrance of lotus when petals are open, but when the petals are closed in a bud form, it is practically impossible to enjoy the fragrance or the nectar. Thus, the analogy indicated by the words *carana padma* is as follows: The grace of the *ācārya* is like the sun's rays that causes the lotus flower in our hearts to open and allows us to taste the nectar of spiritual practice.

When we are able to wholeheartedly carry out our lives according to the instruction of our Spiritual Master, at that point, we will be eligible to obtain his grace. Upon receiving the Spiritual Master's grace, we will gradually feel enthusiasm to follow our spiritual practice sincerely, allowing us to realize the blissful taste of this practice.

Allow me to now explain the inner meaning of the word *carana*, feet of the Spiritual Master. Firstly, as per the explanation above, please note that the spiritual master is a representative of Srimati Radharani; who is the pleasure potency of Lord Krishna and is non-different to Him. In this context, one may infer that the Spiritual Master is non-



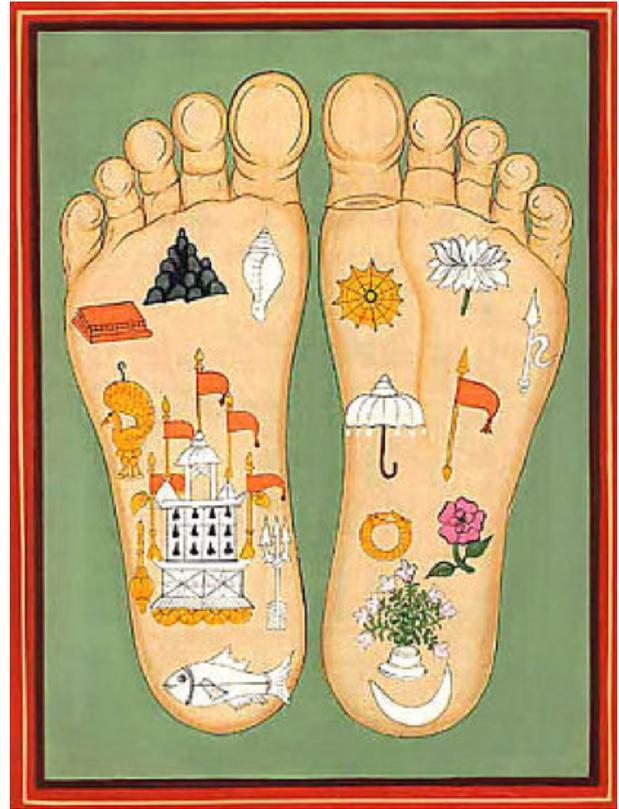
different from Lord Krishna. The word *carana* indicates the need for us to surrender unto Sri Sri Radha Krishna, through a spiritual master as well as the entire disciplic succession.

The importance of surrender cannot be sufficiently emphasized. It is the first step in devotional practice in order for us to achieve the main goal of our spiritual practice, i.e. *prema* (divine love) and bliss. Without surrender to the spiritual master, our entire devotional practice is in vain; there is no heart and soul in the practice. The spiritual master represents Radharani's mood of surrender to serve Lord Krishna.

The sole purpose for us being in this material world, in this human form, is to serve Lord Krishna. As per the conversation between Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Sanatana Goswami in Varanasi, all living beings are eternal servants of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna has also confirmed that without Srimati Radharani's mercy, no one eligible to get His mercy. Therefore, sincere surrender unto Srimati Radharani's feet is the only way to obtain the service of Lord Krishna.

Thereafter, Srila Narottam Thakur is using the Bengali three words—*kevala bhakti sadma*. The meaning of these three words is explained as follows: *kevala* means only; *bhakti* means pure-love; and *sadma* means eternal home. In short, we can say that our eternal home is at the feet of Srimati Radharani, embodiment of pure love only.

Let me explain the significant of Srimati Radharani's feet, which are adorned with the following 19 auspicious symbols:



Right Lotus Foot: 8 Most Auspicious Marks

1. Sacrificial Altar
2. Mountain
3. Conch
4. Earring
5. Club
6. Chariot
7. Spear
8. Fish

Left Lotus Foot: 11 Most Auspicious Marks

9. Barleycorn
10. Disc
11. Upcurving Line
12. Lotus
13. Umbrella
14. Elephant Goad
15. Flag
16. Bracelet
17. Flower
18. Creeper
19. Half-moon



**1. Sacrificial Altar (*yajna-vedi*):** This mark proclaims that, for those who meditate upon Her feet, the consequences of their bad *karma* will burn up, as though on the altar of sacrifice. From a different perspective, this symbol also indicates that the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra, whilst one's mind, heart, intelligence and consciousness is fixed on Srimati Radharani's feet, is like performing a *yagna* that stimulates universal nourishment. The universe is the form of Sri Krishna, and the offering is the form of Srimati Radharani. This perfect union is indicated by the mark of the sacrificial altar.

**2. Mountain:** This represents Govardhana hill (Giriraj), the best servant of Lord Hari (Haridasa-Varja). Giriraj always serves the feet of the Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha Krishna. This symbol also declares that Sri Sri Radha Krishna give shelter to all pure devotees under Their lotus feet.

**3. Conch:** The symbol of the conch represents religious principles. Once we are able to observe religious principles from the bottom of our hearts, as prescribed by the scriptures (*Haribhakti Vilas*), then the Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha Krishna, will rescue us from all sorts of distress. Furthermore, the symbol indicates ultimate victory for devotees, since the conch shell mark on Their lotus feet contains the entire ocean of material existence, that may now be easily crossed over.

The mark is also symbolic of *jala-tattva* (the principle of pure water), since it was Sri Krishna's lotus feet that manifested the River Ganga, that is purifying the three worlds. This symbol on Srimati Radharani's foot indicates the water-principle that soothes Her Beloved Krishna, so that He feels no burning pain when He is separated from Her company.

**4. Earring:** The earring indicates how Krishna's ears are always listening to the sweet tune and tinkling sound of Srimati Radharani's charming ankle-bells. Thus, He

lives for the shelter of Her feet, which gives Him all happiness.

**5. Club (*gadā*):** This mark shows that Her feet are capable of chastising the mad elephant of sinful lust.

It further indicates that even the ancestors of one who wholeheartedly takes shelter of Her feet, will share in the benefit received from him practicing the path of devotion. As per scriptural evidence, 7 ancestral generations of a *kanishta* (beginning level) devotee will be delivered; 14 generations of ancestors of a *madhyama* (middle level) devotee will be delivered and 21 generations of an *uttama* (highest level) devotee will be delivered.

**6. Chariot (*ratha*):** The chariot symbolizes the soul's physical form in the universe, with Their Feet being the direction in which all souls are to travel. It further indicates the immense mercy that the Lord has for His devotees, as He Himself becomes their charioteer. The Supreme goal may be easily attained, without impediments, when one travels on this chariot to the eternally blissful abode. Whoever sits on the chariot of Their lotus feet will be completely freed from all types of misery in this material world.

**7. Spear:** The spear (a long metal tipped weapon) indicates that for those who desire to be free from their present miserable conditions and who take shelter of the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha Krishna, Their feet will immediately sever all mundane entanglements and difficulties.

**8. Fish:** The mark of the fish signifies that just as a fish cannot live without water, similarly, surrendered devotees cannot live a moment without direct association with Their lotus feet.

The symbol also indicates that Srimati Radharani is like a fish out of water and cannot live for a moment without Her beloved, Sri Krishna.



Another connotation of this symbol is to do with the mind. The mind is very fickle, just like a fish. As a fish is always moving this way and that, so too, our minds are very restless and disobedient. Only after extensive meditation and fervent endeavor, does the mind gradually reach the feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna.

The fish further indicates that Their lotus feet will descend upon and reside in one's heart only if the heart has been purified by soft loving emotions (*rasa*) [the fish lives in *rasa* or water].

The fish symbol also appears on Sri Krishna's foot. It is the emblem found on the banner of Cupid, just to excite the desires of the *Vraja-gopīs*. This mark on Sri Krishna's foot demonstrates that He has conquered Cupid, and Cupid's flag of surrender is displayed on the soles of His feet. It also serves as a reminder that, during the great universal devastation and flood, Sri Krishna assumed the form of *matsya*, the fish incarnation, and thereby saved His devotees.

**9. Flower (*puṣpa*):** The flower mark is unique on Srimati Radharani's foot. It signifies that the divine fame of Her feet spreads everywhere, just like the fragrance of a sweetly-scented flower. It proclaims that Her Feet are not hard, but instead, are as soft as flower petals.

It is indicative that, just as a fruit grows only after the plant blooms, similarly, all spiritual fruits only come into being after having blossomed at the soles of Her feet.

**10. Barleycorn:** This mark reveals that Their devotees receive all enjoyable opulence and prosperity by serving Their lotus feet. It also demonstrates that once a devotee finds shelter at Their lotus feet, his former journey through millions of births and deaths is actually very tiny and insignificant, just like a single grain of barley. Lastly, it shows that, just as barley grains are the sustenance of life for certain living

beings, similarly, it is widely celebrated that Their glorious lotus feet are the nourishment of all souls.

**11. Disc (*cakra*):** The disc signifies the ability to conquer the special six enemies of our body as lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy. This disc, like *sudarśan cakra*, will dispel our illusionary vision and open our auspicious vision, allowing us to free from the dark consequence of our bad *karma*.

On Srimati Radharani's foot, this symbol also shows that She is the ruler of Her own kingdom formed by the circle of *Vraja-mandala*.

**12. Up curving line:** This mark indicates that the steadfast devotion of a faithful devotee towards the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna, steadily elevates him to the higher realms (Goloka Vrindavan). Indeed, he will never fall down from that realm. The line is showing that the activities of such a devotee are never to be doubted by anyone. He cannot be held captive within a small place- this material universe.

The symbol also indicates that the path to their lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna., being free from external designations, is very direct and that we are Their eternal servants. It further reveals that Their feet can extend down to the lowest, fallen souls and can deliver those who have taken shelter of Them wholeheartedly.

**13. Lotus:** This mark symbolizes that just as a beautiful lotus emerges from the water, similarly, the highest benefit is achieved by those whose eyes well up with tears upon holding the Divine Couple's lotus feet to their heart.

Just as a lotus consistently blooms by day and closes its petals by night, so too, those who remain fixed in meditation on Their lotus feet will certainly experience devotion blossoming and unfolding within their hearts, and all obstacles, hypocrisy and the



darkness of ignorance will be completely removed from their path.

**14. Umbrella:** This marking indicates that those who take shelter of Her lotus feet are shielded from the incessant rainfall of material miseries. Her lotus feet also provide relief to Her beloved, Lord Krishna, from the scorching heat He feels in Her separation.

It also refers to Lord Krishna holding up Govardhana hill, like an umbrella, to protect Vraja from the devastating rainfall caused by the anger of Indra.

Lastly, it implies that those who take shelter of and are given refuge at Her lotus feet become exalted like maharajas (kings), who usually have umbrellas held over their heads.

**15. Bracelet:** Those who wholeheartedly take shelter of Srimati Radharani's lotus feet, will hear the sweet sound of Radharani's bracelet. In essence, this means that such persons will receive the rare and coveted opportunity to engage in intimate services and stay close to Srimati Radharani.

The bracelet also symbolizes chastity, those who wear the bracelet have developed full chastity. In this entire universe, Krishna is actually the only male, all others are female. If anyone desires to be a true servant of Sri Krishna with all their activities, they have to take shelter of Srimati Radharani and render services under Her personal guidance.

**16. Elephant Goad:** This mark reveals that meditation on Their lotus feet brings the elephants of Their devotees' minds under control, and keeps them on the right path. It also indicates that those who stay on the path toward Their lotus feet, become superior to others, just as someone riding atop of an elephant is seated above those on foot.

This mark on the foot of Srimati Radharani indicates that, even though Lord Krishna's

elephant-like mind may attempt to behave heroically, Her lotus feet are still powerful enough to easily conquer Him and bring Him under Her control.

**17. Flag:** This mark announces that for the devotees who are meditating on Her lotus feet, Her feet provide them with unprecedented security and protection from all sorts of fear. It further indicates that there will be supreme victory for all the *gopīs* who are aware of the glories of Her lotus feet.

**18. Creeper:** This symbol represents the journey of an ardent devotee, and how the desire-creeper in the devotee's heart grows over time and gradually seeks permanent shelter at Her lotus feet.

It also shows that Her lotus feet are always found in the forests of Vrindavan, that abounds with groves and vine-laden bower-houses. Srimati Radharani Herself is like a creeper that is wrapping itself around the tamala tree that is Lord Krishna. Lastly, an intelligent person grabs hold of Her lotus feet, just as a creeper firmly grasps whatever it is ascending.

**19. Half-moon:** This symbol represents how Her lotus feet truly fulfill the desires of devotees and help them achieve their objectives. Just as the moon showers nectar with its cooling rays, similarly, the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani and Sri Krishna shower nectar upon Their devotees, extinguishing the three-fold material miseries (i.e. miseries caused by body and mind, miseries caused by other living entities and miseries caused by natural calamities).

Just as the half-moon is in the process of growing, so too, the *sukṛti* of one who incessantly glorifies Their lotus feet in a flawless manner, continually increases.

The 19 symbols described above are testament to the fact that Srimati Radharani is the sole, everlasting and blissful refuge for all sincere souls.



Vrindavan is the eternally blissful abode of our Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha Krishna. In Vrindavan, Lord Krishna resides with Srimati Radharani eternally. Srimati Radharani is the embodiment of Krishna's loving services, and is non-different to Him.

From the above explanation, it is evident that a spiritual master should teach his disciple how to establish a relationship with Srimati Radharani. The spiritual master can therefore be seen as a representative of Srimati Radharani.

To teach us the necessity of a spiritual master in order to make spiritual advancement, Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura once said:

*guru kripāy kṛṣṇa mile, kṛṣṇa kripāy guru mile*

“We can obtain a bona fide *guru* by the grace of Krishna; and then by the grace of *guru* we can reach Krishna.”

Nowadays, to our great dismay, the initiation process is often compromised. Instead of sincerely praying to Lord Krishna from the bottom of their hearts to lead them to a bona fide *guru*, most people are selecting their spiritual master through some professional agent of a spiritual society or according to their own intelligence or speculation. As a result, we see that most initiated devotees frequently change their spiritual master, opening themselves up to risk of committing offense to Vaishnava.

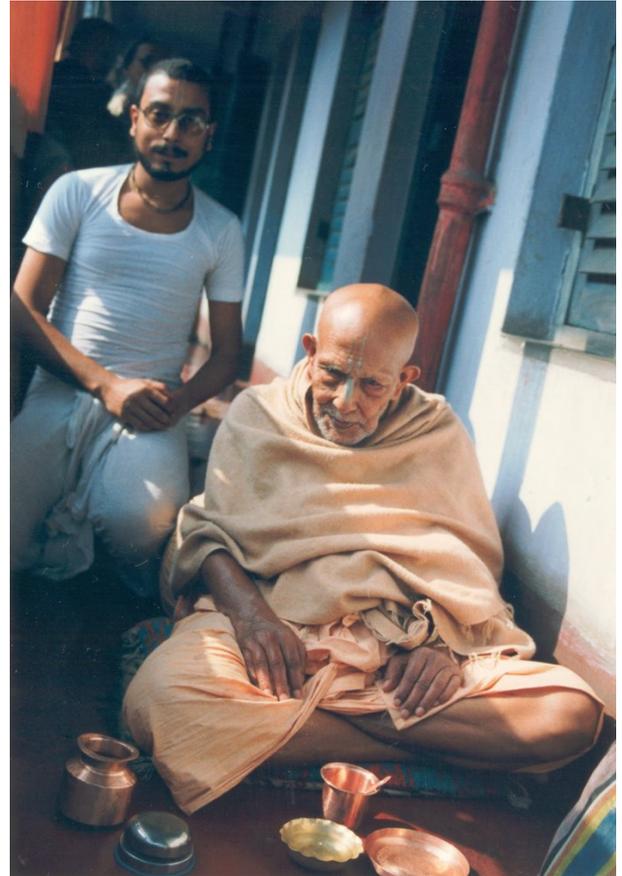
To make us understand the procedure by which we should accept a spiritual master, Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura composed the second line in his song:

*vando mui sāvadhāna mate*

Here *vando* means pray; *mui* means I or we; *sāvadhāna* means carefully and *mate* means proper understanding. The essence of this line is that we should ardently pray to Krishna—from the bottom of our heart; not merely superficially—in order for Him to send

us His perfect representative—a spiritual master, who can teach us by example, how to become an eternal servant of Srimati Radharani. As soon as we are able to develop a resolute determination to become an eternal servant of Srimati Radharani, Lord Krishna Himself will choose a perfect initiating spiritual master and send him to us. Such a spiritual master will have been appointed by a previous *ācārya* in the spiritual lineage, will be properly qualified to carry all the duties of a *guru*, and will be like-minded to support our spiritual journey.

Following the above explanation of how to choose a spiritual master, I am most fortunate to have experienced in my own life how Lord Krishna is most merciful in that my beloved spiritual master possessed all the qualities of an exemplary *ācārya*.



I am continually praying to Lord Krishna to create an environment in the present society by which everyone may have sufficient



strength to pray for, and to receive a suitable and like-minded spiritual master, who can gradually elevate him to become an actual servant of Srimati Radharani.

I am also praying to the Lord to keep the Vaishnava community free from quarrels over matters relating to *guru* and to help us establish the main goal of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's loving mission, through a non-sectarian, non-judgmental mood in our community.

An unworthy servant of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission,

B.B. Bodhayan

### **VYASA PUJA OFFERING 1**

*by Sri Ramdas Das Prabhu*

Dear Srila Bodhayan Maharaja,

Please accept my humble dandabat pranam.

On this auspicious day, the day before Sri Balarama Purnima, the Lord has bestowed upon us all the greatest gift: His own dear servant, Sri Guru, your Divine Grace. As I try to compose a worthy offering to you, I am reminded how unworthy I am to attempt it. Nevertheless, I will try to say a few words to illuminate the importance of this day and to describe the degree of the magnanimous compassion, care, and love you have shown so many of us as you continually and tirelessly maintain and build upon the mission of our *gurudeva*, Om Vishnupada Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Maharaj.

As I am spiritually deaf and dumb, for my purification, and to inspire the devotees, I am quoting below a few portions of a room conversation that our Guru Maharaja gave, which I was fortunate to have taped. Because these excerpts pierce to the heart of the topic of Sri Guru and the importance of taking his shelter with firm faith, I am presenting them here.

I believe what is important is the understanding that in order to be *guru* one has to be a disciple: a perfect disciple, therefore, is a *guru*. In other words, the best leader is the perfect follower. All of this describes the character of your Divine Grace. As I write this, I am constantly reminded of your perfect character and how you have always meticulously and carefully followed ALL of the instructions of our *gurudeva*. Strictly, faithfully, and in your own unique way, you perform many hours of sadhana, chanting, reading, and praying and are always praying to the Lord for all of us for our spiritual benefit.

I am always embarrassed and shy to be with you as I wonder how I became so fortunate to get the association of such a high caliber vaishnava when I am such a lowly person, completely submerged in the world of illusion. Yet, you kindly and gracefully tolerate me and try to engage me in service, not seeing my faults but only fanning the spiritual spark within me. I am eternally grateful to you. I pray that one day I can become a real disciple, that I may follow in your footsteps and do some service to our Guru Maharaja.

Faith is the absence of doubt and fear. To be completely fearless means to be completely Krishna conscious. Similarly and simultaneously, faith in *guru*, or *guru nistha*, is the key ingredient to success on the spiritual path of the disciple:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir  
yathā deve tathā gurau  
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ  
prakāśante mahātmanah*

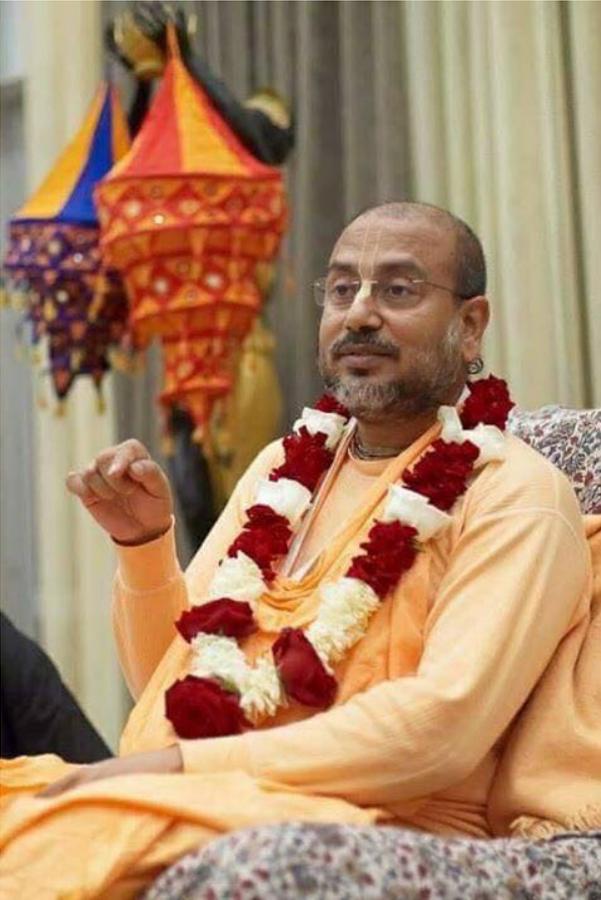
“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, who is his manifestation and not different from him, are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

*tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta*



*jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam  
śābde pare ca niṣṇātam  
brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam*

“Therefore one who is inquisitive about the ultimate good in life should surrender to a spiritual master who has thoroughly understood the purport of the scriptures, who is fixed in divine realization and has attained peace from the sense impulses.”  
(Śrīmād Bhāgavatam 11.3.21, HBV 1.32)



When I think of you Maharaja, I think of how perfectly you have embodied this principle. Time and time again, I have witnessed the divine current of spiritual knowledge and realization come through you as it manifests not from your memory but from a heart full of devotion. When asked about high philosophical topics, our Guru Maharaja would always say that everything, everything is present in Lord Krishna’s Holy Name. All real knowledge and realization of the spiritual world comes from the Holy

Name, which reveals itself in the pure heart of the devotee. How rare it is in this world to find such extraordinary faith and devotion. Conviction is contagious so I hope and pray that I may continue to get your association and that if I serve you, somehow some of it will rub off on me.

Here is a beautiful part of a talk our Guru Maharaja gave on these topics:

### The Devotional Creeper

“In the *Chaitanya Charitāmṛta*, Krishna Das Kaviraj has outlined the steps that one goes through before achieving divine love or prema:

*kona bhāgye kona jīvera śraddhā  
jadi haya  
tabe sei jīva sādhu-saṅga je karaya*

“If by some great good fortune, a certain living entity develops faith in Krishna, he begins to associate with devotees.”  
(*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 2.23.9)

The main thing here is faith. One’s spiritual life begins with faith. Elsewhere, Mahaprabhu said in his teachings to Rupa Goswami:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona  
bhāgyavān jīva  
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-  
latā-bīja*

“After being born and reborn again and again throughout the entire material creation, some fortunate soul may, by the grace of Krishna and the guru, be given the seed of the creeper of devotional service.” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 2.19.151)

The seed of the devotional creeper is faith. Faith is the gift or blessing of the spiritual master. It is Krishna’s mercy also, but Krishna’s mercy passes through the spiritual master. The seed of faith must then be planted and watered by the practices of



devotional service – hearing and chanting the Lord’s names, qualities, and pastimes. Krishna Das describes this as follows:

*mālī hañā kare sei bīja āropaṇa  
śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana  
upajiyā bāre latā brahmāṇḍa bhedi  
jāya  
virajā brahma-loka bhedi  
para-vyoma pāya*

“The devotee takes on the role of a gardener, planting the seed in his heart and regularly watering it with the practice of hearing and chanting. The devotional creeper sprouts and starts to grow until it penetrates the coverings of the universe, crosses the Viraja River, passes through the Brahmaloaka and reaches the spiritual sky.” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 2.19.152-153)

The seed becomes a seedling. The seedling starts to grow, sprouting leaves and branches. It grows as far as the Viraja River, meaning the causal ocean in which Kāraṇodaśāyī Viṣṇu lies. From this point on, Maya can no longer touch the devotee. He is no longer under her domain. Even so, the creeper keeps on growing. After crossing the Viraja, it enters the spiritual sky known as Brahmaloaka, the effulgent realm of the Lord’s bodily glow. However, it does not stop here,

*tabe jāya tad-upari  
goloka-vṛndāvana  
kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-kalpa-vṛkṣe kare  
ārohaṇa*

“From there, it continues to grow until it reaches Goloka Vrindavan where it winds around the desire tree of Krishna’s lotus feet.” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 2.19.154)

It goes beyond the Vaikuntha worlds of the Lord’s imperial forms and arrives in Goloka, Krishna’s sweet abode. This hierarchy of divine abodes is described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

*goloka-nāmnī nija-dhāmni tale ca  
tasya  
devi maheśa-hari-dhāmasu teṣu teṣu  
te te prabhāva-nicayā vihitāś ca  
yena  
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ  
bhajāmi*

“I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, who resides in His personal abode named Goloka, below which are the respective realms of Maya Devi, Lord Shiva and the Lord of Vaikuntha, Narayan. Lord Govinda alone allots each of these abodes and their presiding deities with their particular powers.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.47)  
So the creeper goes all the way to Goloka Vrindavan. Once it arrives there:

*tānhā vistārita hañā phale prema  
phala  
inhā mālī seṅce nitya śravaṇādi  
jala*

“The creeper grows luxuriantly and gives abundant fruits of divine love. Meanwhile, the gardener goes on caring for the creeper by watering it with hearing and chanting about Krishna.” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 2.19.155)

So even after attaining *prema*, the devotee continues his devotional practices. Try to understand these verses clearly. The beginning of this entire process is association with devotees, which means to take shelter of a spiritual master.

*sādhu-saṅga haite haya  
śravaṇa-kīrtana  
sādhana-bhaktye haya  
sarvānārtha-nivartana  
anārtha-nivṛtti haile bhaktye niṣṭhā  
haya  
niṣṭhā haite śravaṇādye ruci  
upajaya  
ruci haite bhaktye haya āsakti  
pracura  
āsakti haite citte janme kṛṣṇe  
prīty-aṅkura*



*sei bhāva gāḍha haile dhare  
prema-nāma  
sei premā prayojana  
sarvānanda-dhāma*

“As a result of associating with advanced devotees, the neophyte takes up practical devotional service beginning with hearing and chanting. Such practical devotional service frees him from all unwanted material contamination and that leads to constancy, or nishtha. When one has nishtha or firmness in one’s practice, then a taste for hearing and chanting and other practices arises. The next step is the awakening of a deep attachment for these practices and from that attachment the first manifestations of love finally appear in the heart. These first ecstatic manifestations are called bhava, which intensify to become love of Godhead or prema, the ultimate goal of life and the reservoir of all pleasure”. (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 2.23.9-13)

This is the step-by-step process. One begins by taking shelter of the spiritual master and from him one learns the practices of devotional service like hearing and chanting. By diligently engaging in these practices, one removes the various kinds of undesirable traits or *anarthas* that interfere with our spiritual advancement. These *anarthas* have been described in some detail by Bhaktivinoda Thakur in his *Bhajana Rahasya*. There are four categories of *anartha*: erroneous understanding, thirst for impermanent things, offenses, and weakness of heart. Each of these is further subdivided into four. Erroneous understanding is of four kinds: misunderstanding one’s own true identity, that of the Supreme, confusion about the means and end of spiritual life, and of what things are a danger for spiritual advancement, in other words, Maya. We have to know the true identity of the soul and we have to know the object of the soul’s adoration.

## **The worshipable object of the soul and Srimati Radharani’s method of worship**

The worshipable object of the soul is Krishna, according to Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu:

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas  
tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam  
ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-  
vargeṇa yā kalpitā  
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam  
amalam premān pum-artho mahān  
śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam  
idaṁ tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

“Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu holds (1) that the supreme object of worship is Krishna, the son of the king of the cowherds; (2) His eternal abode is Vrindavan; (3) that no method of worshiping the Lord is as agreeable to Him as that which was conceived by the wives of the cowherd community; (4) the most reliable testament to these truths is the spotless scripture, the Srimad Bhagavatam; and (5) divine love for Krishna is the highest goal of human life. As these points of doctrine were taught by Mahaprabhu, we too hold them in the highest honor.”

This is the doctrine taught by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Of the wives of the cowherd community, the *Vraja-vadhū*, no one is equal to the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Srimati Radharani. What is the method of worship that she has demonstrated? Very simply, she desires for nothing other than pleasing Krishna’s senses, that is all.

*nā gaṇi āpana duḥkha sabe  
vāñchi tāra sukha  
tānra sukha mama sukha varya*

“I don’t care for my own discomfort. All I seek is His pleasure. The greatest joy for me is to see Krishna happy.” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 3.20.52)

This is the very basis of all our spiritual activity. When Krishna was in Dwaraka, someone told Radharani that they would go



there to bring Him back. Her answer was, “If He doesn’t come, I will cry, it is true. But if He is happy, I don’t want to disturb His pleasure for my own happiness. I would never do that.”

There is a story of a leper *brahmana*’s wife that is given as an example of this kind of commitment.

*kuṣṭhī-viprera ramaṇī pativrata-  
śiromaṇī  
pati lāgi’ kailā veśyāra sevā  
stambhīla sūryera gati jīyāila mṛta  
pati  
tuṣṭa kaila mukhya tina-devā*

“The wife of a *brahmana* suffering from leprosy proved to be the most chaste women of all when she served a prostitute in order to please her husband. She was thus able to stop the movement of the sun, brought her dead husband back to life and satisfied the three principal gods (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva).” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 3.20.57)

One day, the chaste woman was bringing her husband back from the prostitute’s dwelling when he accidentally touched Mandavya Muni, a powerful ascetic. Being a leper, his touch was considered to be highly contaminating and the ascetic exploded with rage and cursed him to die before the sun rose the next day. She, on the other hand, proclaimed that if she had truly been chaste, the sun would not rise. And indeed, such was the spiritual power inherent in her selfless sacrifice and devotion to her husband that the sun did not rise. When the three most powerful divinities in this universe saw that she was preventing the sun from rising, they came there and awarded her husband his life.

Now our worshipable object is not Krishna as the Lord of Mathura or Dwaraka, but the son of the king of Vraja, Vrajendranandan. Others may be content to see Krishna in Mathura or Dwaraka, but Radharani’s mind is fixed in Vrindavan. It would be so easy for

her to go to Mathura, which is just a short distance away, so why does She not go there to see Him?

*anyera hṛdaya man, mora mana  
vrndāvan,  
mane vane eka kari jāni  
tāhāñ tomār pada-dvay, karāha  
yadi uday,  
tabe tomār pūrṇa kṛpā māni*

“For others, the mind is at the heart of their being, but my mind is Vrindavan. I consider both my mind and Vrindavan to be one. Were you to place your lotus feet there in my Vrindavan–mind, I would deem it the fullest expression of Your mercy.” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 2.13.137)

“Not so long ago You sent us Uddhava to instruct us in *yoga*. Have You now come to personally insult us in the same way? We are *gopīs*, not great yogis – *nahe gopī yogeśvara*.” And with that Radharani started to cry and shed tears. “If You really want to show us some kindness, then stop all Your word games and simply change back into Your cowherd’s clothes and return with me to the banks of the Yamuna, to the shade of the Keli Kadamba tree where we knew so many pastimes. Strike once more that three-fold bending posture, with me standing to Your side. I would consider this to be the fullest expression of Your mercy. So just stop all this tomfoolery.”

Radharani then even began to chastise Krishna a little: “I am not thinking of myself; You have no consideration. Have You no thought of Your mother and father? And what about all Your friends?”

At this point she simply starts to cry. She can say nothing more. Krishna too became incapable of maintaining His composure, “You are feeling separation?” Radharani turns her face away in loving anger. This is called *māna*, but such loving anger is very pleasing to Krishna. Indeed, He says,



*priyā yadi māna kari' karaye  
bhartsana  
veda-stuti haite hare sei mora mana*

“If one of My mistresses should rebuke Me in a reproachful mood, I find that her rebukes are more attractive to Me than all the reverent praises dedicated to Me in the Vedic hymns.” (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* 1.4.26)

Krishna feels so much pain that He can no longer hide His feelings. He says, “Do you really think that I have forgotten about you? I do nothing but think of you. By the power invested in Me by Narayan, I come daily to see you here in secret. You think that you are hallucinating when you see Me, however, but when I disappear, you start to cry again. But I will soon come back to Vrindavan to stay here for good. I only have a few more demons to take care of. After that I will come back. Krishna spoke the following verse:

*mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām  
amṛtatvāya kalpate  
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho  
bhavatīnām mad-āpanaḥ*

“Whoever engages in my devotional service attains immortality. You are especially blessed on account of the deep love you have for Me, by which you will surely attain Me. That is most auspicious. Your love forcefully attracts Me and makes Me come quickly to your side.” (*Śrīmād Bhāgavatam* 10.82.41)

When Radharani heard these words, she felt some respite from her pain. The spontaneous love she felt for Krishna has never been equaled. What is the love that we see in this material world? If we are ever separated from our loved ones in this world, we lament our loss for a little while and then we get on with our lives. Before long we are again immersed in the sense objects. The love of the *gopīs* for Krishna is nothing like that. It goes on burning without ever being extinguished. The *gopīs* did not cry for a few days after Krishna left and then go back to

their lives as they were before. Their suffering in separation never stopped, but kept on going and growing.” — Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Thakur

Please accept this humble offering at your lotus feet.

Your servant,

Ramdas Das

## VYASA PUJA OFFERING 2

*by Sri Lakshman Das Prabhu*

Dearest Srila Gurudev, Srila Bhakti Bibidha Bodhayan Goswami Maharaja,

Jai Sri Caitanya Jai Nityananda, Jai Srila Bhaktivindoda Thakur, Jai Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, Jai Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaja, Jai Sri Sri Gaudiya Guru Varga!

All glories to Sri Sri Radha Krishna, the ultimate goal of life for all living beings. Jai Sri Vrindavana Dhama the ultimate abode of all living beings. All glories to Srimati Vrishabhanu-nandini and Sriman Balaram Prabhu the first and foremost of all *gurus*, Who excels to the utmost in devotion to the Lord, and who expels all the variegated forms of ignorance that oppose the principles of *bhakti*.

All glories to the crores of Devatas who serve the Lord's purpose in His creation, maintenance and annihilation of this material world. Especially I bow to the foremost Vaishnava Lord Shiva and His consort Parvati Devi, who, ever bestow good fortune upon the heads of those who seek freedom from the clutches of *māya*.

I offer my prostrated obeisances to all the devotees of the Lord. They are the manifestation of the Lord's *līla* in this world and from Their lips constantly flow Their beautiful realisations of the path of *bhakti*.



Their presence is the very form of auspiciousness and those who relish such association I consider to be fortunate and truly none other. In Their association *māya* retreats, one learns the clear path of devotion, this material world and its pleasures are seen as insignificant, and ultimately one will attain the divine abode where the Lord's pastimes are enacted eternally.

Last but not least I bow unto your lotus feet, Srila Gurudev. Whatever auspicious invocations as already stated above shall remain incomplete without bowing unto the lotus feet of Sri Guru. In fact they will become but hollow words. By bowing to your feet all the above truths can be understood and practiced. Although I am most unqualified and unworthy I know you as the expansion of the Lord's potency, to be precise you are the manifestation of the Lord's mercy. As the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* teaches us the *ācārya* should be afforded the same respect and reverence that is shown to Bhagavān Himself:

*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān  
nāvanmanyeta karhicit  
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta  
sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

“One should know the *ācārya* as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods.” (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27)

In such a mood I pray that you will not overlook me, but instead bestow your mercy upon me.

These past few years have been quite tough for me spiritually. I have wavered back and forth in my devotion, my experience I guess should be termed *anistha* (unsteady). Due to my previous *karma* I have been given a particular form and am forced to suffer and enjoy the fruits of my previous *karmas*. I am an abode of unlimited *anarthas* (metaphoric

weeds that oppose and smother the creeper of devotion which is growing in the heart), and know very intimately *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (illusion) and *matsarya* (envy). These five aspects personified have assumed the role of my very close friends and confidants whom I associate with constantly within my own mind. Through their influence they sow the seeds of their malefic influence in my life.

Even though internally I suffer and my heart burns due to my unlimited desires and material affections there is one force that never leaves me. A presence which is purity personified. That force is you Srila Gurudev. Remembrance of your good character and example is my shelter. In this world full of hypocrisy, self-interest and cheating on all sides your lotus feet are resplendent and have the power to dispel the clouds of darkness. You are not of this world. You represent a world of selfless service, of dedication, of divine love and compassion. These are all manifestations of your *kṛṣṇa-prema* (divine love). In the eternal abode that divine love manifests as eternal service to the divine couple, Sri Sri Radha Krishna; in this world that love transforms into compassion for the materially afflicted living entities. It is not mundane compassion but is the type of compassion that delivers the said people from the cycle of birth and death, while simultaneously transporting them to that eternal plane of selfless dedication. There can clearly be no greater compassion than this, just as there can be no greater abode than Sri Vrindavan and no greater love than Sri Sri Radha Krishna *prema*.

You are situated in your eternal identity as Krishna Das and your words and deeds reflect only that truth. As a disciple, you are an exemplar, who can match your dedication to your *guru*. As a *sannyāsi ācārya* you live the strict precepts of your order and therefore teach the whole world the spiritual path. As a manifestation of Sri Guru, you guide with the utmost care. As the manifestation of the Lord's mercy potency



you are ever concerned with the eternal welfare of the materially condition souls of this world. As a Vaishnava You exhibit respect for all living entities and exhibit the qualities of being "as humble as a blade of grass and as tolerant as a tree". As *jagat-guru*, you traverse the globe expanding the family of the Lord's devotees. As a chanter of the Holy Names, you exhibit steadfast dedication. As a teacher of Sri Nama, you are a mine of the deepest realisations.

Due to my previous *sukṛti*, I have some respect and taste for the path of *bhakti*, topics associated with the Lord, chanting of Sri Nama and the association of the Lord's devotees. But due to my previous misdeeds I am also possessed of many qualities that pose an obstacle to the path of devotion. My respect for you and the path of *bhakti* are incongruent with my current abilities, meaning I am grossly inadequate to practice the path of *bhakti*. This is the cause of my great lament. In this mood I bow my head at your feet, and with the utmost humility I pray to you and to the Lord that I can somehow overcome all the obstacles in my life and can surrender more and more to you. I have no other hope.

Srila Gurudev, you are a veritable mine of devotion. Just as the milk ocean was churned and so many valuable items were acquired, similarly I 'mine' the unfathomable depths of your divine personality. From that mine the effulgent gold represents your divine disposition and conduct that ever glows unblemished. There is also an assortment of precious metals which represent your various practices of *bhakti* which are eternally effulgent in your strict and disciplined *sādhana* that includes the various limbs of *bhakti*. There are countless varieties of gems, crystals, and diamonds. These represent, in no particular order, your respect for Sri Guru Parampara, your beautiful dealings with the devotees, they represent the twenty-six qualities of a Vaishnava which surely adhere in you, like being equal to all, not keeping enmity with

anyone, gravity, truthfulness, magnanimity, friendliness and being compassionate and merciful, to name a few. Your scriptural knowledge and exegesis are a delight to behold, and you share such gems freely for the whole world to enjoy and benefit by. This list goes on and on. Lastly from that mine I see you are in possession of the *kaustubha* gem. Of course this king of gems is solely the possession of Sri Krishna but is it not true that you are in fact in possession of Sri Krishna - by proxy then I am right to say that you also possess the *kaustubha* gem too. All the scriptures and saints sing this truth:

*tomāra hṛdoye sadā govinda-viśrām  
govinda kohena-mora vaiṣṇava parāṇ*

"Your heart is always the resting place of Lord Govinda. Lord Govinda says, "The Vaishnavas are in My heart."

These are the words of great Narotthama Dasa Thakura, but if one requires the authority of a more ancient Vaishnava then let me quote Srila Vyasadev Himself:

*sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ  
sādhūnām hṛdayaṁ tv aham  
mad-anyat te na jānanti  
nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api*

"The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them." (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 9.4.68)

Of course this argument that you possess the *kaustubha* gem may not endure scrutiny but please allow me my poetic license.

So I present this meditation unto your feet. Currently I am working to 'mine' all these good traits of yours and study them, mysterious as they are to one like me. As I slowly comprehend their significance, just as an expert jeweller must understand the various properties and grades of metals and



precious stones, I hope to become expert in all these amazing qualities of yours. Then just as a jeweller fashions beautiful articles for one to display, I similarly hope to fashion beautiful ornaments, but not ornaments to adorn my body but to adorn my lips. In this way I hope to become expert in singing the glories of the saints - of which you are foremost in my mind. By this action - external as it may be - I hope that I will also be able to internalize some of these traits - as this is my actual goal through this whole endeavour. So this process moves from external appreciation to glorification and finally evolves into internalization. Then I am confident that my great lament will cease and I will know real happiness. The gulf between Your and Krishna's teachings and my own self will be no more and I just like your self will be able to enter into the eternal pastimes of the Lord and be happy.

This is no mean feat and therefore I require your mercy. This is the subtlest and highest goal and the skilled benefactor is definitely required. As Sri Krishna says:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena  
paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ  
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.”

For so long I cried to the Lord to send me His representative and He so kindly sent you to me. Now I cry out to you to be merciful unto me so that I can attain Sri Sri Radha Krishna. Please be favourably disposed to me so that I may achieve success.

Yours in service,

Lakshman Das as well as Malini Dasi and little Janaki.

## GLORIES OF LORD BALARAM

*by Srila Bhaktisidhanta Saraswati Thakur  
Prabhupada*

The glories of Sri Balarama, who is also known as Sankarsana, and is worshipable by all living entities, are described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (Tenth Canto, Chapters 34 and 65, Fifth Canto, Chapters 17 and 25, and Sixth Canto, Chapter 16). Those who are indifferent to these descriptions can never make advancement on the path of devotional service. In spite of their material intelligence and mundane knowledge, which is a product of their own mental speculation, such people are unable to appreciate the topics of Sri Baladeva, or Sankarsana, who is the source of all *viṣṇu-tattvas*.



In the *Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, Chapter 5, appropriate conclusions on this topic are given as follows: “Sri Balarama is the counter-form of Lord Govinda. Balarama’s own expansion is called Mahā-Sankarsana. The marginal potency of the Lord is known as the *jīva*. Mahā-Sankarsana is the shelter of all *jīvas*. His fragment, the *puruṣa*, is counted as a *kalā*, or a part of a plenary portion. The first *puruṣa* casts His glance at *māyā* from a distance, and thus He impregnates her with the seed of life in the form of the living entities. A part of a part of a whole is called a *kalā*. I say that this *kalā* is Mahā-Visnu. He is the *Mahā-puruṣa*, who is the source of the other *puruṣas* and who is all-pervading. Garbhodaśāyī and



Kṣīrodaśāyī are both called *puruṣas*. They are plenary portions of Kāraṇodaśāyī Viṣṇu, the first *puruṣa*, who is the abode of all the universes. That *puruṣa* (Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu) is the performer of creation, maintenance and destruction. He manifests Himself in many incarnations, for He is the maintainer of the world.

In his description of the *līlā-avatāras* in the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Pūrva 87-88) Srila Rupa Goswami writes: “He who is the second expansion of the *catur-vyūha* in Goloka is known as Sankarsana. He merges with Seṣa, who supports all universes, and then appears as Lord Balarama, a *līlā-avatāra*. Seṣa has two forms—one supports all universes, and one serves as the bed for the Viṣṇu incarnations. The former Seṣa is the empowered incarnation of Sankarsana and is therefore also known as Sankarsana.” In the description on the *prābhava* and *vaibhava* features of the Lord in the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Pūrva 62) it is stated: “Lord Ananta, the plenary portion of Sri Baladeva who holds the universes on His hoods, resides in Pātālaloka. This Sankarsana recited *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, club, and trident in His hands.” Again, in the description on the *catur-vyūha* expansions of the Lord in the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Pūrva 167), it is stated: “As the second expansion of the *catur-vyūha*, Sri Sankarsana is the *vilāsa-vigraha* of Vasudeva, the first expansion of the *catur-vyūha*. Since He is the reservoir of all living entities, He is also known as *jīva*.”

*From Sri Caitanya Bhagavata, Adi khanda, Chapter 1, texts 20 & 37, commentary by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, translated in English by Sri Bhumipati Das*

## GOKUL DANCING IN BLISS

*by Srila Gour Govinda Goswami Maharaja*

When Yasoda-mata gave birth to Krishna, all were asleep. Everyone somehow slept through the whole night. Then in the morning when Lord Hari started crying, “*Kwaaa! Kwaaa! Kwaa!*” everyone woke up. Yasomati also woke up and saw beside her a nice son.

Seeing her wonderful, very beautiful son, mother Yasoda completely drowned in an ocean of bliss and couldn't think what to do. She was shedding tears of both joy and love. From her breast, milk was flowing. The newborn baby there in her lap. Mother Yasoda looked very blissfully at Him.

Yasoda-mata's voice was faltering in joy. She could not speak at all and was shedding profuse tears of love. Up until that day, she had only looked at the sons of others, but today she was looking at her own son. Tears poured from her eyes and milk flowed from her breasts. Her whole sari became completely soaked. Again and again Yasoda-mata looked at the beautiful, lotus-like, moon-like face of her son. All the nurses, *gopās*, and *gopīs* awoke, hearing the crying of the new-born child. Everyone came and said, “O, it is not a daughter, it is a son! Yasoda has given birth to a son!”

Everyone was very happy and blissful. It was as if all of Gokul, Vrajabhumi, had drowned in an ocean of bliss. All the *gopās* and *gopīs* came running to Nanda Maharaja's quarters to see Yasoda's newly born son. The gods and goddesses were dancing in the heavenly planets, beating drums and singing, “*hariharihari-bolo! hari-bolo! hari-bolo!*” The words ‘*hari-bolo*’ resounded throughout the fourteen planetary systems.

In the heavenly planets, the *deva-narīs*, the wives of demigods, were showering flowers. All of the *gopās* and *gopīs* were dancing blissfully. Embracing one another with love



and affection, they were all drowning in an ocean of happiness.

Nanda Maharaja immediately took ceremonial bath according to Vedic rites. Then he performed the *jāta-karma-saṁskāra*—purificatory ceremony for childbirth. *Brāhmaṇās* came and uttered *svasti- vācana*, prayers for auspiciousness. Many musicians came playing varieties of musical instruments. The sound of drums, kettledrums, and other musical instruments resounded throughout all of the three planetary systems.

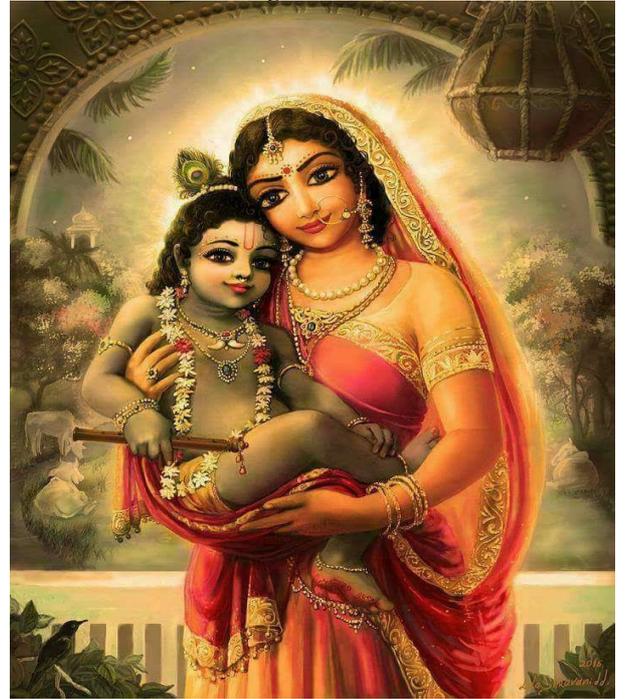
The three planetary systems were completely filled with supreme happiness, *mahā-ānanda*. Prithvi-devi, Mother Earth had been very busy, very distressed, over-burned by *asurās*, demons. Now, the demons were to be killed and Prithvi-devi would be relieved of her heavy burden. All of the *sādhus*, *vaiṣṇavas*, and *dvijas*, *brāhmaṇās* were joyous.

When Nanda Maharaja came, all the *gopās* and *gopīs* said, “Nanda come, come and see your beautiful son. *taba grhe udaya haiyāche kata śāṣi*—It is as if innumerable moons have arisen in your house. O Nanda Maharaja, *eteka dibase janma haila saphala, manera ānande dekha badana kamala*—you have achieved perfection in this birth after a long time. After waiting many long years now come and see the beautiful lotus-like face of your son.”

The news spread throughout Gokul, Vrajabhumi. All of the cowherd men, and cowherd women came running to Nanda’s quarters –*nandera mandire gayālā āila dhāiya, hate bāḍi kaṁdhe bhāra*— all the cowherd men had sticks in their hands and on their shoulders they were carrying *kaṁdhe bhāra*, a pole with sacks on both ends. As they were coming they were dancing incessantly. Everyone was saying, “O Nanda, such excellent good fortune you have. Ah! Today there is an ocean of bliss in your house.”

Seeing the beautiful lotus-like face of his son, Nanda Maharaja was blissfully dancing. In the four directions all of the cowherd men and inhabitants of Gokul were also clapping their hands and blissfully dancing. In the heavenly planets the gods and goddesses were dancing. In the nether planet, Pātala, the snakes were dancing. In the inner quarters, Yasodarani was dancing. Siva was dancing, brahma was dancing, and Indra was dancing. Everyone was dancing and full of bliss.

All of the cowherd men came bringing presentations of yoghurt, turmeric, and *gorocana*, a kind of auspicious yellow pigment. Nandarani, the wife of Nanda Maharaja, has acquired all good fortune and auspiciousness, for today she has obtained Nilamani, the blue gem Krishna, as her child.



*śrī-kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī tithi mahā-  
mahotsava ki jaya!*

*bhādra kṛṣṇāṣṭamī tithi ki jaya!*

*bhagavān kṛṣṇa āvirbhāva tithi ki jaya!  
vrajendra-nandana kṛṣṇa āvirbhāva tithi  
ki jaya!*

*śrī nanda-nandana yaśodā-nandana  
kṛṣṇa ki jaya!*

*From Mathura Meets Vrindavan by Srila Gour  
Govinda Goswami Maharaja*



## SRILA SANATANA GOSWAMI'S MERCY ON SRILA RUPA AND JIVA GOSWAMI

by *Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami*  
*Thakur*

Srila Narahari Chakravarti has shown how Rupa Goswami instructed Jiva Goswami, punished him and then blessed him. This is told in the fifth wave of *Bhakti-ratnākara*:

One hot summer's day, while Rupa was writing *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and Jiva was fanning his perspiring body, Vallabha Bhatta came by to see Rupa Goswami. After reading some of Rupa's introductory verses, he offered to make a few corrections. When Vallabha went to the Yamuna to take a bath, Jiva followed him on the pretext of going to fetch water. In fact, he was angry because he considered Vallabha's proposal to be arrogant. He asked him what fault he had found in Rupa's verse. Vallabha told him and Jiva immediately showed him the flaws in his argument. A debate ensued in which Jiva countered every one of Vallabha's objections. When he came back to Rupa's hut, Vallabha told him how impressed he was with Jiva's scholarship, recounting the entire episode. Rupa gently rebuked Jiva, telling him to return to Bengal and to come back to Vrindavan only when he had calmed down.

Thus banished from his presence, Jiva left Rupa Goswami's dwelling, but rather than going back to the family home as he had been told, he went to Nanda Ghat, a nearby village. Hoping to regain his guru's favour, he began to practice rigorous austerities, worshipping Krishna intensely while fasting or eating only a bare minimum. As a result of such severe practices, his body became weak and sickly.

One day, Sanatana Goswami came to know of Jiva's condition. Some say he was informed by the *Vraja-vāsīs* that one boy was on the edge of Vrindavana just crying

and crying. Sanatan Goswami went to Nanda Ghat and discovered him in this condition. He said "Take bath now. End your fast. I will resolve this." Then he went to Sri Rupa and asked "What are the 26 qualities of a Vaishnava as per your text *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that you are currently working on?" Sri Rupa said, "You know this well, I am sure. But since you are asking I will tell." He then went on to speak out the qualities one by one. When he came to *jiva-dāya*, Sanatana Goswami stopped him, and said, "Then why are you not doing this?" Rupa Goswami understood his intention and requested someone to bring back Jiva Goswami back. Thus by the mercy of Sanatana Goswami, Rupa and Jiva Goswami is (*guru* and *śiṣya*) were again united.

*Adapted from Associates of Chaitanyaby Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Thakur, and Bhaktiratnakara by Sri Narahari Chakravarti*

## QUALITIES OF SRIMATI RADHIKA

by *Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur*

Vijaya: Now please describe Sri Radha's *svarūpa*.

Goswami: In all respects, Srimati Rādhā is the most beautiful of all Sri Krishna's beloved consorts (*sus̥ṭhu-kāntā-svarūpa*). She is adorned with the sixteen *srngara* (decorations) and twelve *ābharana* (ornaments).

Vijaya: What do you mean by the word *sus̥ṭhu-kāntā-svarūpa*?

Goswami: Sri Radha's *svarūpa* is so beautiful that there is no necessity of decorative embellishments. Her unparalleled loveliness is expanded by Her hair, which is a mass of elegant curls, by Her lotus face, by Her large, restless eyes, and by Her beautiful breasts. The extraordinary beauty of Her *svarūpa* is increased many times over by Her slender waist, by Her two exquisite shoulders that are slightly lowered, and by Her flower-bud hands, which are embellished by the jewels



of Her fingernails. There is no comparison to Her beauty in all the three worlds.



Vijaya: What are the sixteen *śrīngāras*?

Goswami: The sixteen *śrīngāras* are Her bath, the radiance of the jewel decorating the tip of Her nose, Her blue garments, the belt around Her waist, Her braid, Her earrings, the sandalwood paste smeared on Her limbs, the arrangement of flowers in Her hair, Her garland, the *līlā-kamala* (play-lotus) in Her hand, the *tāmbūla* in Her mouth, the dot of *kasturī* on Her chin, the *kājala* around Her eyes, the pictures drawn in *mṛgamada* (musk) on Her rosy cheeks, the red *lac* on Her feet, and the *tilaka* on Her forehead. Srimati Radhika is always beautified by these types of decoration.

Vijaya: What are the twelve *ābharanas*?

Goswami: The twelve *ābharanas* that decorate Sri Radha's limbs are the exceptionally brilliant jeweled tiara upon Her head, Her golden earrings, the golden belt upon Her hips, the golden necklace, the *vallī* and golden *śalākā* on Her ears, the bracelets on Her wrists, the ornament on Her neck, the rings on Her fingers, Her pearl necklace, Her armlets, the jeweled ankle-bells on Her feet, and the rings on Her toes.

Vijaya: Please show compassion on me by describing Sri Radha's prominent qualities.

Goswami: Like Sri Krishna's, Srimati Radha also has innumerable qualities, among which twenty-five are prominent.

1. She is very sweet (*madhura*), that is, She is incomparably beautiful in appearance.
2. She is an ever-fresh youth.
3. Her eyes are restless and inclined to give sidelong glances.
4. She has a radiant, gentle and sweet smile.
5. She has beautiful lines, indicating auspiciousness.
6. She maddens Krishna with the fragrance of Her bodily limbs.
7. She is expert in musical arts.
8. She speaks sweetly.
9. She is expert in making jokes.
10. She is very polite and modest.
11. She is merciful.
12. She is cunning.
13. She is expert in all duties.
14. She is shy.
15. She is always steadfast on the path of righteous conduct.
16. She is patient.
17. She is grave, so that it is very difficult to understand the import of Her mind.
18. She is fond of enjoying pastimes.
19. She is acutely eager to manifest the super-most excellence of *mahābhāva*.
20. When the residents of Gokula see Her, their hearts immediately overflow with *prema*.
21. Her fame pervades the entire universe.
22. She is the object of affection for Her superiors (*guru-jana*).
23. She is controlled by the intense love (*praṇaya*) of Her *sakhīs*.
24. She is the prominent among all Krishna's *sakhīs*.
25. Keśava always remains submissive to Her orders.

*From Jaiva-Dharma by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, published in English by Srila Bhakti Vedanta Narayana Goswami Maharaja*



**VAISHNAVA FESTIVALS: AUGUST 2017**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Festival</b>
3 Aug	Pavitropana Ekadasi; Sri Sri Radha Govinda Jhulana Yatra begins
4 Aug	Disappearance Day of Srila Rupa Goswami; Disappearance Day of Sri Gauridas Pandita
6 Aug	Appearance Day of Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bidhayan Goswami
7 Aug	Appearance Day of Lord Balaram (Balaram Purnima); Julana Yatra ends
15 Aug	Appearance Day of Lord Sri Krishna (Sri Krishna Janmashtami)
16 Aug	Appearance Day of Srila AC Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada
18 Aug	Annada Ekadasi
26 Aug	Appearance Day of Srimati Sita Devi, consort of Sri Advaita Prabhu
28 Aug	Appearance Day of Sri Lalita Devi (Lalita Saptami)
29 August	Appearance Day of Srimati Radhika (Radhshtami)

**AUGUST- TRAVEL & SATSANG WITH SRILA BODHAYAN GOSVAMI MAHARAJA**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Satsang Location</b>	<b>Details &amp; Contact</b>
28 July – 4 August	Geneva, Switzerland	
5 – 13 August	Montreal, Canada	
6 Aug	Revati Devi's residence	Srila Gurudev's Vyasa Puja Celebration
7 Aug	Revati Devi's residence	Balaram Purnima Celebration
8 Aug	Prema Loka	Ekanath Das Prbahu or Sati Devi
9 Aug	Mangalmayi Devi's residence	
10 Aug	Saraswati Devi's Rooftop Temple,	
11 Aug	Vers la Source	Public program
12 Aug	The Hindu Temple, Montreal	Public program

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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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