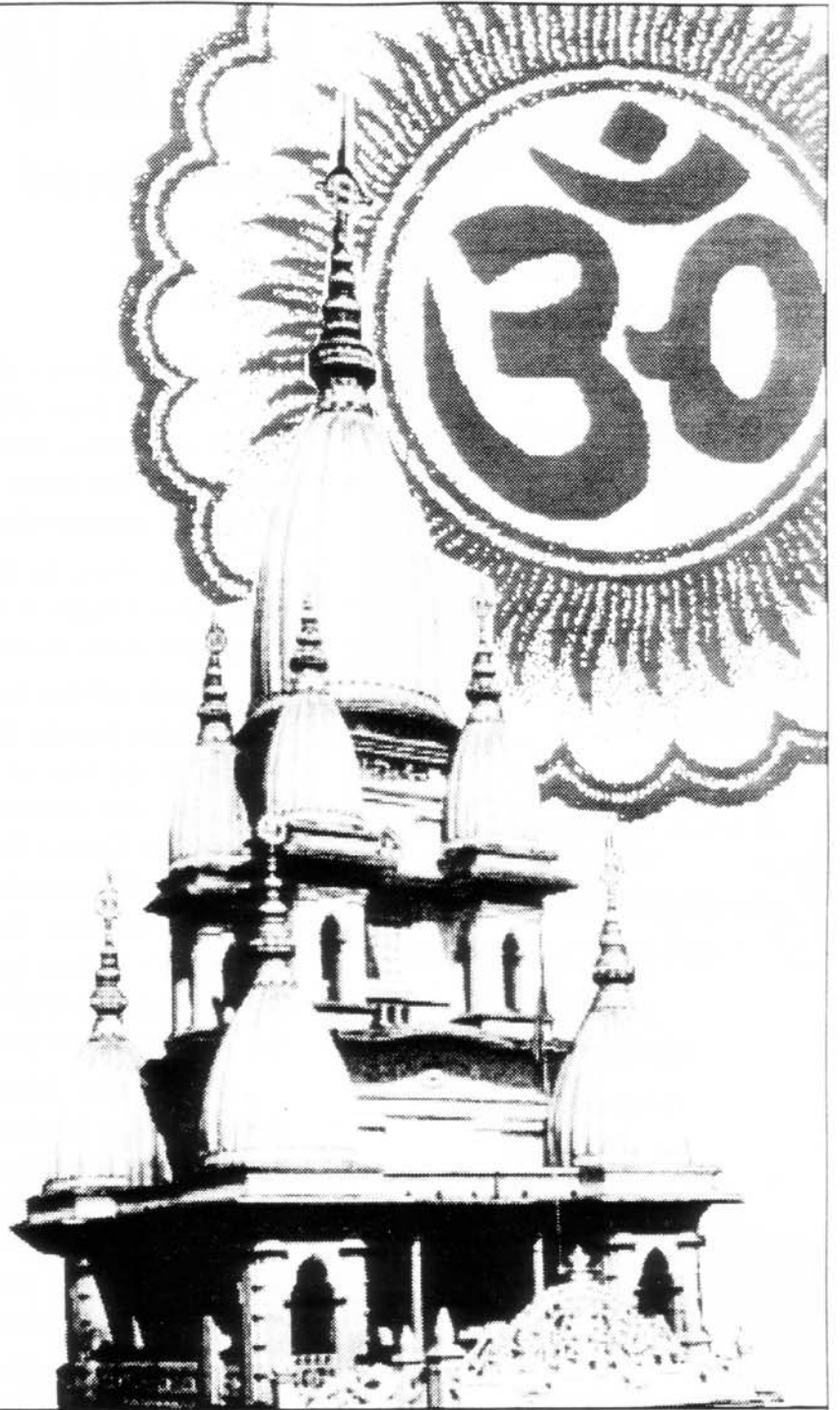


Śrī Vaiṣṇava. Transmission

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This magazine is an offering to Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaja, who is fulfilling the innermost desires of Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaja and Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada by traveling this Earth planet and presenting the conception of Radha Dasyam in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami.

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Gokulananda das

So many things change, yet, so many things remain the same. I have been quite delinquent in my service of producing the *Sri Vaishnava Transmission*. But, by the mercy of my Divine Master and his local representative Sripad Bhakti Kanan Giri Maharaja, another chance to redeem myself has been granted.

Here, then, is the new issue of *Transmission* for your inspection. I hope it meets with the Vaishnava's approval, as it represents many months of off-again/on-again work.

We kick off this issue with a lecture that His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaja delivered during his last tour of the United States. This never before printed lecture was delivered at the Detroit ISKCON center. In this lecture, His Divine Grace details his intimate relationships with Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaja. Srila Govinda Maharaja's stories and realizations about these giants in our spiritual line have always been a source of great inspiration to the Vaishnavas, so here we present them with much satisfaction.

Sripad Giri Maharaja's article "The Great Souls Also Struggle" was semi-scooped by our progenitor publication from Santa Cruz, *Sri Vaisnava Toshnai*, published by the esteemed Sruta Srava Prabhu. However, the entire article has never before been published...until now. Sripad Janardan Maharaja, one of the great stalwart devotees of our line has graced us with an original article for this issue. We present it in its entirety.

Sripad Giri Maharaja and Sripad Ashram Maharaja had a very enlivening exchange of thoughts viz. Sripad Giri Maharaja's article via Email. The contents of those letters are also presented here for your perusal.

Satya Hari Prabhu also has an article here. Beyond being one of the main pillars of our community in New York, Satya Hari Prabhu is a prolific writer and publisher as well. He has produced leaflets, invitations and other printed materials for the Math here in New York. He has been asking me for many *MANY* months, "Where is that article I wrote?" To that I must, somewhat embarrassed, respond, "Uh...it's here, finally, Prabhu...."

Transcendental Reflections

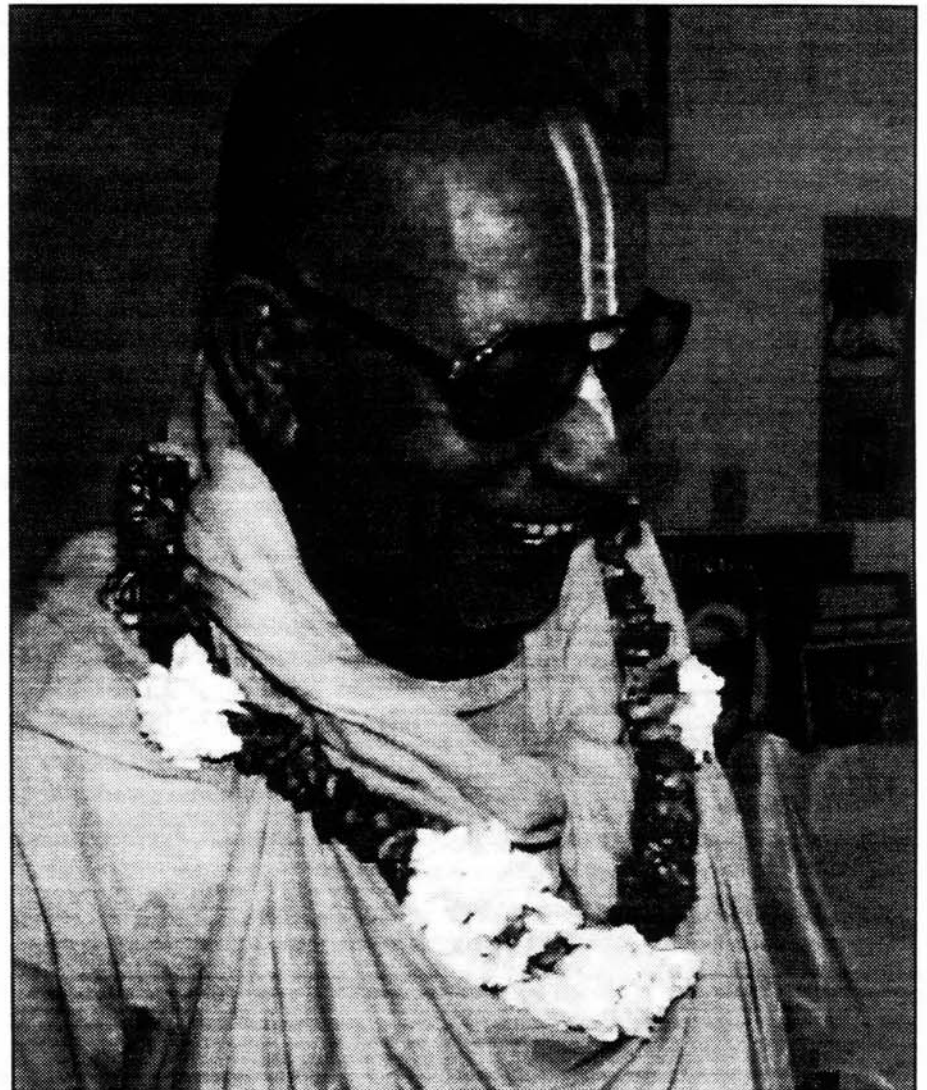
by Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaja

The following lecture was delivered by Srila Govinda Maharaja in August of 1994 at the Detroit ISKCON Temple. It is to be included in a forthcoming book soon to be published by Sriman Cidananda das brahmacari. Transcription was done by Srimati Tilak devi dasi. Sriman Dayalu Dulal researched unknown verses and helped with proofreading.

My dear respectable devotees of Lord Krishna and other honorable ladies and gentlemen. I am feeling so fortunate to have come here to this temple of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in Detroit. By the eagerness of the devotees and the grace of Lord Krishna, Srila Guru Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada, I have come here and I am very happy to meet with all of you.

When I see this beautiful temple I feel great peace in my heart. This place is so far from the birthplace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Mayapur. He is non-different from Radha-Govinda, and He is the Yuga-Avatara, the inaugurator of Hari Nama Sankirtana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu forecast that the chanting of Hare Krishna would be heard all over the world¹.

Today we are seeing the effulgence and beauty of Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurangadeva, so far from Their appearance place of Sridhama, Mayapur. They are being wor-



shipped here by these devotees along with Sri Sri Radha-Govinda and Balabhadra-Subhadra-Jagganatha. I am amazed. I am thinking it is only by the Grace of Nityananda Prabhu whose non-different form is Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. By Their grace, everywhere, all over the world the chanting the Hare Krishna Mahamantra is found. The great Nama Sankirtana of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has flooded the entire world. Even in the communist countries, like Russia, Poland and Hungary people are chanting Hare Krishna Mahamantra.

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami made a channel for us to easily enter the western world. It was very hard to begin to preach Nama Sankirtana in the materialist country of America but Srila Prabhupada chose to come here first. For the first year he underwent great austerities. He didn't even have enough food to eat. After one year Lord Nityananda Prabhu opened the door and people joined in from every section of society. His movement was Sankirtana Yajna. Now everywhere devotees are chanting the Hare Krishna Mahamantra, the glories of Nitai-Caitanyadeva and worshipping Sri Sri Radha-Govinda. I have seen it everywhere. Anyone who has not seen this personally would not believe it, but this is my experience.

This is my fifth world tour in eighteen months and in every country I have visited, we have been received with much honor and respect by many devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, because of our being His followers. But all have come to Mahaprabhu through Srila Prabhupada. He is the first guru who preached Krishna Consciousness all over the world. We must bow down to his lotus feet first and then we can speak something about Krishna Consciousness.

Everyone does not know what Krishna Consciousness is. Why should we worship Krishna instead



Srila Govinda Maharaja and Srila Sridhara Maharaja.

of other incarnations or the demigods? Their abodes are existing, but why should we worship Krishna? This is what Mahaprabhu taught through his followers Rupa, Sanatana, Ragunatha, Bhatta, Ragunatha Das Goswami, Sri Jiva Goswami, Lokanatha Das Goswami, Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami, Narottoma Thakura, Srinivas Acarya, Syamananda Prabhu, Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, and Baladeva Vidyabusana. Through them Mahaprabhu's conception became manifested. They are our Guru Parampara.

Mahaprabhu's conception is very simple. He said it isn't necessary to do many things in this Kali Yuga. It is not possible to practice the Vedic rules and regulations and worship the demigods. Mahaprabhu's conception was:

*aradhyo bhagavan vrajesa-
tanayas tad-dhama vrndavanam*

*ramya kacid upasana vraja-
vadhu-vargena va kalpita*

srimad bhagavatam pramanam

amalam prema pumartho mahan

*sri-caitanya mahaprabhor matam
idam tatradarah na parah²*

This sloka was composed by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. He says: aradhyo bhagavan vrajesatanayas. First, why is it necessary to worship Krishna? What should I need to know to decide if I should worship Krishna? Krishna consciousness is the highest conception of God Consciousness. In the Brahma-samhita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Mahabharata, the Upanishads and in all the scriptures we can see Krishna described as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why is He the Supreme Personality? Because He has an infinite form. He showed His original form of a human kind which is existing in the transcendental abode of Vrindavana. He appeared here for distributing His mercy which is love. We need love, we need beauty, we need charm, affection and harmony. We need these not only in this life but for eternity. This life won't exist for

more than one hundred years or so. In the realm of infinite time, Ananta-Kala, this is a very small period..

Our existence is that of a jiva soul. The jiva souls body is a conscious body and it has three qualities, thinking, feeling and willing, which are existing with God. Besides these three qualities, the jiva has fifty other qualities that are with God but are existing in smaller portions. Therefore the jiva souls cannot be happy in this material world. Everything in this material world is passing and changing very rapidly. Janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi dukha-dosanudarsanam³. We cannot avoid birth, death, happiness, sadness, austerity and so many things in this world. Today I may be born in America and my next birth, through my karma, I may be born in England. Sometimes we are American, British, Russian, Indian but that identification is only temporary. The main identification of the jiva soul is completely different. The jiva soul is really of a transcendental nature and has it's own spiritual qualities and qualifications.

Unfortunately we are bound here by Maya or illusion. We are attracted by the negative power of Krishna which is called Maya and we are suffering here life after life. Merciful Krishna is, from time to time, giving us the chance to go to our own abode in the spiritual world which is called Vaikuntha, Paravyoma or Vraja Dhama. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said we have no caste, creed or criteria there. We are gopi-bhartuh pada kamalayor dasa dasanudasah.⁴ Our real identification is that we are the servitor of the servitor of the lotus feet of Vrindavana-candra, Krishna. We need go to the spiritual world because we have a hankering for eternal love, eternal beauty, eternal charm, eternal affection and eternal harmony. In the spiritual world that is existing. Our place is there, not

here. This is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's conception. He said that if you read Srimad Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita you will understand that. All the scriptures: Vedas, Vedanta, Upanishads are giving that, but how? In this age of Kali Yuga, by only chanting the Hari Nama Mahamantra, nothing else being necessary, the Mantra will reveal Himself in your heart to be the non-different form of Krishna, and your whole existence will become transcendental. You will see everything as transcendental. After leaving this world your transcendental form and service in the spiritual world will be revealed to you. This is your real activity and service. You will get all this through the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra because the Hare Krishna Mahamantra has this type of power particularly in the age of Kali Yuga. Other Yugas have their particular Mahamantras.

Each yuga has its own Mahamantra but in the Kali Yuga we cannot properly practice the Vedic

activity. Only the Mahamantra, which is very powerful will help us in this Kali Yuga. The scripture says, "When the Name will reveal Itself in your heart you will get the service of Radha-Krishna."

The Brahma-samhita has given us a description of the abode of Krishna:

sriyah kantah kantah parama-purusah kalpa-taravo

*druma bhumis cintamani-ganamayi toyam amrtam*⁵

and

cintamani-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vrksa-

laksavrtesu surabhir abhipalayantam

laksmi-sahasra-sata-sambhrama-sevyamanam

*govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*⁶

This knowledge has descended from the spiritual world and to us all



Srila Sridhara Maharaja and Srila Govinda Maharaja circa 1960.

through Srila Prabhupada and it is fully representative of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's conception. Mahaprabhu brought the Brahma-samhita and the Krishna-karnamrita from South India. Within Brahma-samhita is our real wealth - full transcendental knowledge. How to get the service of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda is revealed within the Krishna karnamrita. Mahaprabhu didn't compose any books but His dear-most associates Srila Rupa, Sanatana and other Goswamis composed many books about that transcendental abode and Its consciousness. Mahaprabhu simply said that we are unqualified. Although it is difficult to understand, if we try to understand we will get the transcendental knowledge of Krishna Consciousness. The jiva soul won't be satisfied within the material world so he must try and get that transcendental connection and service to that transcendental abode. The jiva won't be satisfied by anything else because his real form is transcendental. His form is covered by this temporary encasement and everyone is thinking

this land is my land, this house is my house and these children are mine, but in a few years everything will be finished and he will take birth somewhere in this material world. He will never be satisfied within this material world. His real existence is as a conscious spiritual form, where real love, beauty and harmony are all existing, so why shouldn't he try for that. Mahaprabhu asked, "If you read all the scriptures what will you get? You will not get this knowledge, so why should you spend all your time like that?"

He said very clearly to Prakasananda Saraswati, "My gurudeva said:

murkha tumi, tomara nahika vedantadhikara

'krishna-mantra' japa sada - ei mantra-sara⁷

Prakasananda asked Sri Caitanyadeva why he was keeping away from the other sannyasis. "You look very beautiful but why aren't you sitting with us and why are You chanting and dancing and mixing with the

general people? Prakasananda said this in a very humble and affectionate way. Then Mahaprabhu said, "My sannyasa is a second class sannyasa so I can't sit with you. You are a first class sannyasi and I am second class."

Then they all said, "No, no, no, please come and sit with us." Later Prakasananda Saraswati said, "Why are you chanting and dancing? You must read the Vedanta Sutras, the Vedas and the Upanishads etc. and you must practice in that line. But You are not practicing anything, you are only chanting and dancing and mixing with the general people. You are a great sannyasi."

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "I am not qualified and I am not willingly chanting and dancing. My gurudeva gave this Mahamantra to me and he said 'When this mantra will reveal itself in your heart, it will make you dance.' At first I was also very fearful. I thought I was going mad or crazy so I went to my gurudeva and asked him what kind of mantra he gave Me.

kiba mantra dila gosani, kiba tara bala

japite japite mantra karila pagala⁸

This mantra is so very powerful that when I am chanting it, everything is happening beyond my control.

Then My gurudeva said:

murkha tumi, tomara nahika vedantadhikara

'krishna-mantra' japa sada-ei mantra-sara⁷

'I gave the supreme mantra of the Kali Yuga to you. We are all unqualified in this Kali Yuga.

No one can pronounce and say the Vedic mantras properly. In the other Yugas they had the type of strength and power to perform big sacrifices and worship properly. In the Kali Yuga no one can do anything



Srila Govinda Maharaja travels the globe in his service to his Divine Masters.

perfectly. All the religious practices are useless for the jiva souls. Only twenty-five percent of religious practices are existing in this Kali Yuga. Seventy five percent of them have been destroyed by the influence of Kali. Maharaja Pariksit stated this in the Srimad Bhagavatam in front of Kali himself. Even if you are a very pious and religious person, you can still only practice twenty five percent of the principles of religion. Still you have a good opportunity and I have given that opportunity to you since you have finished with the material life. This opportunity is the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra and is non-different from Krishna."

nama cintamani krsnas caitanya-rasa-vigraha

*purna suddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvan nama naminoh'*⁹

and also

atah sri-krishna namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih

*sevonmukhe hi jivadau, svayam eva sphuraty adah'*¹⁰

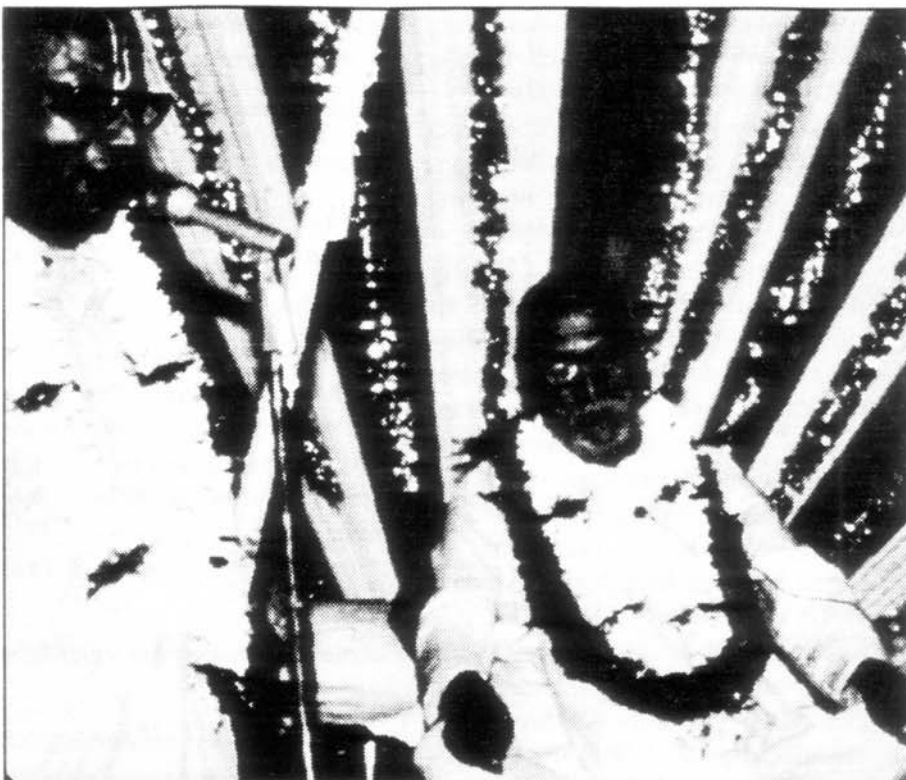
When we chant with a clean heart, Sri Harinama will reveal Himself. He will give inspiration to the jiva soul. He, Himself, is chanting and dancing and He will also make that jiva soul chant and dance.

nama nache jiva nache nache prema dham

Harinama Himself is dancing on our tongue and the jiva soul is also dancing with Him. Krishna-prema is taking His form in His body and Krishna-prema also is dancing there. That is *astasakti-bhava-vicara*, it is revealed in his body.

"nama nache jiva nache nache prema dham"

Through His association people all over the world are chanting. Mayadevi is so shy to see this that she is leaving His vision. This is what Mahaprabhu said to Prakasananda Saraswati. He said "My guru said to chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra



Srila Govinda Maharaja praising his gurudeva on the occasion of his vyasapuja.

and that power will come to you. It is already happening to you, so don't be fearful. This is the nature of Krishna Nama." Hearing this, Prakasananda was very happy and he asked some questions to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu about Mayavada.

Mahaprabhu said, "The form of Krishna is transcendental and you cannot see it. What you are seeing is the effulgence of Krishnaloka. This is called paravyoma. You are saying that it is Brahman, but it is only the effulgence of paravyoma and that is nothing. That is your idea. But the scriptural idea is not like that"

Brahmaloka is existing no doubt, but that is effulgence. Then Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recited this verse from Brahma Samhita.

yasya prabha prabhavato jagad anda koti

kotiv asesa vasudhadi vibhuti binnam

tad brahma niskalam ananta asesa bhutam

*govindam adi purusam tam aham bhajami'*¹¹

"It is the effulgence of paravyoma or Vaikunthaloka. You are trying to go up to that effulgence but why don't you try and go inside of it. The scriptures provide the process to go inside. Why are you stopping your practice there?"

Then He said:

jyotir abhyantare rupam

atulam syamasundaram

"If you proceed inside you will see what is existing there." There are five types of rasas or relationships with the Lord and the Lord Himself is playing with His associates in His transcendental abode, Goloka Vrindavana. He said this to Prakasananda Saraswati.

The next day when Mahaprabhu was going to bathe in the Ganges, He was being followed by thousands of people. When He danced and chanted the Holy Name of the Lord, they all danced and chanted the Holy Name with Him. Prakasananda Saraswati saw this and thought, "I need this". He thought that what Sri Caitanyadeva has revealed is the

supermost thing and yet, "I am living in this egotist world." He fell down at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Mahaprabhu forgave him as well as all the other sannyasis. This is one type of initiation given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

This is the main goal of life for the conditioned souls in the Kali Yuga: to chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. Then they will get everything. That Mahamantra came into the western world through Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. All religions are indebted to him. In all religions, in Christianity, in Buddhism, in Islam and in all branches of Hinduism, it is a recognized process to chant the Holy Name of their Lord. However in this age of Kali only Krishna Nama can give use relief from the illusory environment and take us to the transcendental abode of Krishna. In Vaikuntha there are many abodes of the incarnations of Krishna, but Krishnaloka, Goloka, exists as the highest plane. There are His boyfriends (gopas) and girlfriends (gopis), Govardhana Hill, the Yamuna River, the natural forest, and the whole environment is giving everyone supreme happiness for the service of Krishna. If a fortunate soul joins in that service in that Abode, he will never come back to this material world.

Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita:

*yanti deva-vrata devan pritrn
yanti pitr vratah*

*bhutani yanti bhutejya yanti mad-
yajino 'pi mam¹²*

Choose your spiritual destination. First realize what your needs are and then proceed in that direction. Always searching in this direction and then another direction is not good. Kanak, kamini & pratistha. In this world you will get temporary wealth, women and fame through the demigods, but that is not essential for your life. What is the difference between the

beast and man?

*ahara nidra haya maithunam ca
samanyam etat pasubhir naranam
dharmo hi tesam adhiko viseco
dharmena hinah pasubhih
samanah*

—Hitopadesa

Animals are also eating, sleeping, fearing and enjoying. This is not the goal of our life. We have the power of thinking, feeling and willing in much greater capacity and strength than the animals.

*nr-deham adyam su-labham
sudurlabham*

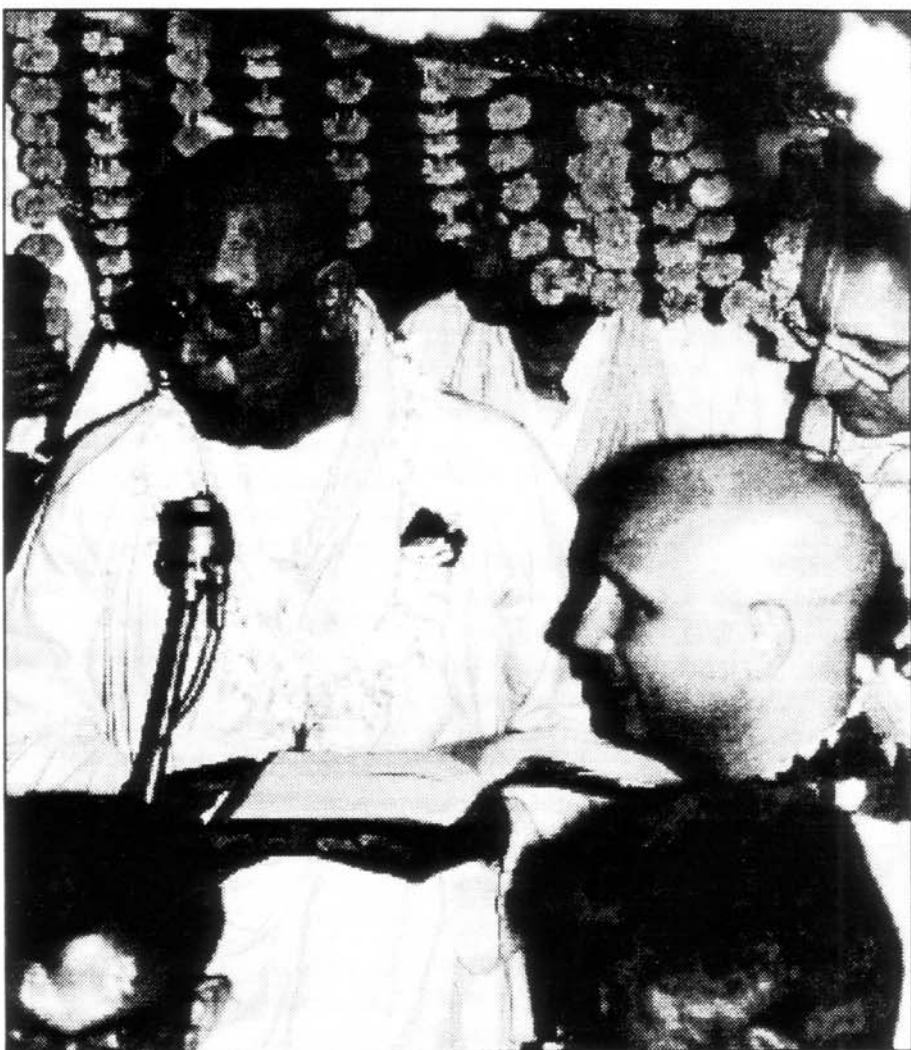
*plavam su-kalpam guru-karnad-
haram*

mayanukulana nabhasvateritam

*puman bhavabdhim na taret sa
atma-ha¹³*

Of the eight million four hundred thousand species of life, only four hundred thousand are of human species. Of the four hundred thousand, very few of them have a good brain and consciousness for understanding and realizing Krishna consciousness. If one has a good brain and he does not use it to go to the transcendental abode, the scriptures say that there is no difference between him and the beast. They are both taking birth and they are also dying. If we get a human birth and we can do something for ourselves, then that is the best thing. We now have that possibility. "Nr-deham adyam su-labham sudurlabham."

It is difficult to get this human



The Divine kirtana of Srila Govinda Maharaja is truly worldwide.

body. We won't get it very easily. Now that we have it we have some hope from the upper level. Krishna has revealed Himself in the form of sastra, guru and sadhu and sometimes He Himself comes or sends His representative. There are many auspicious things we can see in this life. "Plavam su-kalpam guru-karnadharam." If we try with this body we will get more and more spiritual facilities, so why should we ignore that? We must get a body, maybe tree or plant or human, through our karma. If we can use this body to search for Sri Krishna, it will have much value. This is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's advice. Krishna means "Reality the Beautiful." It is not dead matter but living matter so we should use it wisely.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave this knowledge and that knowledge came to America through Srila Prabhupada, who widely preached it here. Everyone must be indebted to Srila Prabhupada because so many jiva souls have gotten their supreme benefit of life through him. Today I am seeing Srila Prabhupada's glories manifest here. Everywhere I am seeing his divine form in photos and Deity form and I am stunned and amazed.

After finishing each of his world tours, every time Srila Prabhupada would meet with Srila Guru Maharaja and give him a report. He would say how he was preaching and how many auspicious people were joining our mission. In this way he would give all the news. Sometimes he would write me. He requested me on three different occasions to come with him. Srila Prabhupada wanted to show me everything so I could give a report to Guru Maharaja. He said that if Srila Guru Maharaja could see through your eyes, he would be so happy. So please come with me.

I couldn't go as Guru Maharaja was sick and I was his doctor. I couldn't go under any circumstances. At that time I was wearing white

cloth (householder) and I told Prabhupada that since he was a sannyasi and I was wearing white cloth, I couldn't go with him. Srila Prabhupada said I shouldn't worry because, "I will make you suited and booted." He said that it didn't matter whether I was wearing white or saffron cloth. Please come. You will be stunned to see the affection with which they are receiving me. He said, "They are receiving me with rose garlands and tears in their eyes. And they are dancing in their hearts." I couldn't go then but now that I have come here I am seeing it in many places. When I landed in Hawaii everyone forgot I was a sannyasi and they all came to embrace me. There was no difference between ladies and gentlemen. They made a big pyramid,

*"When I took
sannyasa I
promised I
would serve his
Deities, his
devotees and
his mission"*

perhaps two hundred devotees minimum, and everyone was embracing someone who was embracing me. Then I remembered that Srila Prabhupada said, "They are embracing me with rose garlands and tears in their hearts." I am seeing this everywhere.

When I went to Ireland, one enthusiastic devotee was playing the mridunga drum in the airport security area and when they asked him to stop and he didn't, they arrested him. The police were very strong. When I asked the devotees about him they said he will come out in two hours.

They would get bail for him. They told me to get in the car and we would go to the temple. I said I should go inside to get him. He was enthusiastically chanting the Hare Krishna Mahamantra and so he was not doing anything wrong. It was wrong for him to be in the security area but he forgot that it was the security area. I said to get him released or I wouldn't enter Ireland. I will go back.

They were very shocked and said, "Maharaja how shall we manage it?" I said, "Wait until my secretary, Mohan, comes back from getting the luggage and then he would talk to the police." When he came, I told him to tell the police that I was waiting outside. He went and told the police that this devotee had only made a small offense and that our Guru was waiting outside and that he wouldn't enter Ireland until that devotee was released. He told the police to release him and to take me into your jail instead. Otherwise, our Guru will stand here, and outside the devotees will create much noise, Sankirtana. So the police thought it would be best to release him!

Many things have happened in many places. This is all because of the glory of Srila Prabhupada. Why has this come here?

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said:

prthivite ache yata nagaradi-gram

*sarvatra pracara haibe mora
nama!*

Today we are seeing this coming true. It is increasing day by day. This time I went to Brazil. Prabhupada didn't go to Brazil but the flow of Krishna Sankirtana is going there also. Many devotees came to take initiation and join in Sankirtana. There are many devotees there and we had a big festival for over ten days. We are participating with that great wave and we are feeling very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in that great wave. We will no doubt get some brokers fee as we are giving

Mahaprabhu's name to others and Krishna will be happy. Sri Gurudeva will be happy and they will give more and more of their mercy to me. I am simply a middle man and this is my feeling.

I am trying heart and soul as I promised my Guru. When I took sannyasa I promised I would serve his Deities, his devotees and his mission. I can't retreat from that promise. I accepted this and I must do this until my death. That is my happy duty ☺.

Footnotes:

¹prithivite ache yata nagaradi - gram savatra pracara haibe mora nama

"In as many towns and villages as there are on the surface of the earth, My holy name will be preached." (Chaitanya Bhagavata)

²The most worshipable Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, appears as the son of the cowherd king, Nanda Maharaja along with His transcendental abode, Sri Vrindavana Dhama. The most pleasing type of loving service is rendered to Him there by the multitudes of spiritual milkmaids (gopis). Srimad Bhagavatam is the spotless authority on all scriptural subjects and pure love of God is the final goal of life for all human beings. These statements, for which we have the highest regard, are the opinion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

³"an objective view of the miserable defects of material life, that is, birth, death, the infirmity of old age, disease, etc. (B.G 13.9)

⁴"I am not a brahmana, I am not a ksatriya, I am not a vaisya or a sudra. Nor am I a brahmacari, a householder, a vanaprastha or a sannyasi. I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Sri Krsna, the maintainer of the gopis. He is like an ocean of nectar, and He is the cause of universal transcendental bliss. He is always existing with brilliance." (C.c. Mad.13.80)

⁵I worship that transcendental seat

known as Svetadvipa, where as loving consorts, the Laksmis, in their unalloyed spiritual essence practice the amorous service of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, as their only lover; where every tree is a transcendental purpose tree; where the soil is of all-conscious cintamani jems; all water is as eternal nectar; every word is in song; every step is in dance; where the Lord's flute is the favorite attendant; where the ever present effulgence is full of transcendental bliss; where every entity is in their supreme spiritual form and thus enjoyable for the Lord's pleasure; where numberless spiritual Surabhi cows always emit transcendental oceans of milk; where there is the eternal existence of transcendental time, who is ever present and without past or future and hence is not subject to the quality of passing away even for the space of half a moment. That realm is known as Goloka only to a very few self-realized souls in this world." Brahma Samhita 5.56

⁶I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, Who is tending the cows, yeilding all desire, in abodes built with spiritual gems, surrounded by millions of purpose trees, always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of laksmis or gopis. Brahma Samhita 5.29

⁷"You are a fool, he said. You are not qualified to study Vedanta philosophy and therefore you must always chant the holy name of Krishna. This is the essence of all the mantras of the Vedic hymns." C.c. Adi 7.72

⁸"My dear Lord, what kind of mantra have you given Me? I have become mad simply by chanting this maha-mantra!" C.c. Adi 7.81

⁹"The holy name of Krishna is a transcendental wish-fulfilling gem - it bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Krishna Himself, is the personification of divine mellow, the fountainhead of all pleasure. The holy name of Krishna is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Krishna Himself, it is absolutely complete in all

respects. Since Krishna's name is not contaminated by any material qualities, but is transcendently pure, there is no question of its being a product of the illusory energy, maya. The holy name of Krishna is eternally liberated and spiritual. This is because the name of Krishna and Krishna Himself are nondifferent." (Padma Purana & Brs 1.2.233)

¹⁰The the material senses cannot know Krishna's holy name, form, qualities, and pastimes. When a conditioned soul is awakened to Krishna consciousness and renders service by using his tongue to chant the Lord's holy name and taste the remnants of the Lord's food, the tongue is purified, and one gradually comes to understand who Krishna really is. In other words, the holy name of Krishna (Padma Purana & Brs 1.2.234)

¹¹"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, Whose effulgence, is the source of the nondifferentiated Brahman mentioned in the Upanisads, which, being differentiated from the infinity of glories of the mundane universe, appears as the indivisible, infinite, limitless, Truth." (B.S. 5.40)

¹²"Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; and those who worship Me will live with Me." (B.g. 9.25)

¹³"This valuable human form of life is rarely attained and is superior to all other forms of life, for having attained it, one may easily cross over the ocean of material existence. The human form of life may be compared to a boat for crossing the material ocean. The guru is the captain and the mercy of Sri Krsna is the gentle wind that carries the boat safely to its goal. One who fails to make use of the human form of life to cross the ocean of birth and death with the help of guru and Krsna is committing spiritual suicide." (S.B. 11.20.17)

Et Transmission

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EMAILS FROM OUR INBOX

The following is an exchange of emails between Sripad B.K. Ashrama Maharaja, who is the missionary representative in Mexico of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math and Sripad B.K. Giri Maharaja. The topic of discussion is Sripad Giri Maharaja's article "The Great Souls Also Struggle" (which is printed for the first time in its entirety in this issue of *Sri Vaishnava Transmission*)

Dear Sripad Giri Maharaja:

I was reading the last issue of the *Sri Vaishnava Toshani*, and was very happy to see your article. What a beautiful glorification you did about Srila Prabhupada's long standing life of dedication. It was done very thoughtfully, I feel.

It seems by reading the article, that the editor is acquainted with facts of Srila Prabhupada's life as if he (you) were his contemporary. It was so vividly narrated, with life references of Srila Govinda Maharaja, and excerpts from the Shastras, and many other sources - written very consciously. Any reader will say, "the editor of this article, has increased my understanding and acquaintance of Srila Prabhupada's life through his associa-

tion with Srila Guru Maharaja and Srila Govinda Maharaja."

After reading this article a recollection from long ago came to my mind. I remember thinking around the time of Srila Prabhupada's disappearance that I always dreamed of becoming one of Srila Prabhupada's intimate or stalwart associates. Of course, I was not. But I was hoping that in the future I would be. Suddenly, we all know, he departed. And that dream was shattered. Since that time, I often heard many comments, and much advice on how one could feel an intimate connection with Srila Prabhupada. Senior Godbrothers would utter phrases like: "Prabhu, you must believe that you are an intimate devotee of Srila Prabhupada, as I am, because you are serving his mission. You have dedicated yourself. So, there should-

n't be any doubt on your part to understand this." etc., etc.

Honestly, even though their suggestion was attractive and noble, I could never feel my position like that. I never felt myself like an intimate associate of Srila Prabhupada. I also, in truth, did not know how to answer such logic at the time. But I didn't accept the logic. I could not believe I was an intimate and stalwart associate of my Gurudeva. I just accepted that my time had not yet arrived. For me, the best thing to do was to serve his senior disciples faithfully and sincerely, and I did.

So, time passed, and I got the opportunity to meet Srila Guru Maharaja. Then, my dream was not just satisfied but fulfilled more than I ever could have imagined. My satisfaction went beyond my farthest expectations or dreams. The path of grace - how wonderful are His ways.

As time went by I also could see that my relationship with Srila Sridhar Maharaja was very modest. I was happy and surprised that my senior Godbrothers' could relate with him so confidentially. I could never do that. But still, I was satisfied considering that which was granted to me.

Then Guru-Maharaja departed, and I was feeling a little lost and my faith was upset. In spite of feeling so much conditioned by material deficiencies, I tried to recognize the truth of my modest position and mental entanglement. This realization brought me to the feet of Srila Govinda Maharaja.

Today, I'm starting to feel a little more mature (Perhaps this is just a question of age. The years make us more experienced). Now, I can see that the association with Srila Govinda Maharaja, has given me a hundred fold better understanding of Srila Prabhupada: his sentiment; his nature; the dimension of his life; and also what one could feel associating intimately with someone of his stature. Sometimes we can travel with Srila Govinda Maharaja to different countries and places, and participate in grand events. That gives me an idea of what it would be like in the association of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, without any bitterness about having "missed

something." Maharaja, could anyone like myself ever imagine having their dreams fulfilled in this way?

Your article brings me again to consider those years, at the time of my broken dreams. When somebody used to tell me, "No, no, you really are a close associate of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami.. because of this reason, and that other reason, etc." Now, when I recall these facts, something within my consciousness tells me that I made the right choice. I did right to listen to my consciousness which advised me that, "I do not have an intimate relationship with him". Which was the truth. "I have to wait patiently for some future grace". And, "I should not envy those who have got the grace already". I don't know if I have explained this idea properly, Maharaja. But this is how I see it. And I think it is more natural, like life itself. There are adults, younger people, youths, infants, etc. Every one of them will get their chance to be, to evolve, and play their respective roles. Otherwise it will look ridiculous, with somebody trying to force everything in one category: All adults. But we find categories even in the spiritual realm. So, it's better not to be afraid of categories due to enviousness, and not rush ourselves into an offence due to impatience for acquiring a higher position, which would be more than we deserve.

I don't know what would have happened had I listened to those suggestions so long ago. Would I have the same sentiment which I feel today? Generally, this is not possible in one's life - to turn the clock backwards and play your life again. But, I sincerely feel, that with the recent association of, first Srila Sridhar Maharaja, and then, more importantly, Srila Govinda Maharaja, I have come to know better the life Srila Prabhupada lived, why he came to this world and much more detailed information about his activities previous to his campaign in the West. Not just about Srila Prabhupada, but to my surprise, I have come to

know more about Srila Guru Maharaja himself.

It seems to me that if I had disassociated myself from Srila Govinda Maharaja, I could never have had such an

intimate understanding of my other two gurus. So, I feel in this way, that some of my desires have been fulfilled. Constantly finding His own ways to descend, grace will be dispensed irrespectively of any obstacles or limitations from this plane.

So, your article brought this thought again to my attention, and I wanted to communicate this to you. I like your article very much. Keep on writing in this way, Maharaja.

Affectionately,
Swami B.K. Ashram

.....
My Dear Ashram Maharaj,

Please accept my dandavat pranams at your lotus feet.

All glories to Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga.

I am so fortunate to be acquainted with devotees such as yourself. Whenever I think I have reached the limit of my fortune I find it has expanded one step further. It is happening in such a miraculous way by the grace of our Gurudev who is revealing Himself through devotees like your holiness. Everything you

have written is very true. The sentiments you expressed are of such a delicate and fine nature that I feel very privileged to have some touch with them by your grace.

Of course I see you as one of the intimate associates of Srila Prabhupad and Srila Guru Maharaj and I am not alone in that vision. It is an inescapable conclusion voiced by many of our Godbrothers and Srila Govinda Maharaj himself.

I was just reading in the Navadwipa Dhama Mahatmya a question posed by Srila Jiva Goswami to Sri Nityananda prabhu. He asks how it is possible that many non vaishnavas can live in the holy abode of Navadwip. Nityananda prabhu answers that they are apparently living in the dhama but in fact they are not.

The holy dham is covered by a veil of illusion and those persons that have materialistic interests are living outside of this veil which is impenetrable by them. The true devotees live within

the dham protected by this covering. In a similar way I have seen many devotees who suppose themselves to be living within the circle of Srila Prabhupad's and Srila Guru Maharaj's intimate circle and there are many like themselves who support the claim. Yet, in actuality, they cannot penetrate the protective veil of illusion that surrounds these great personalities. Others, like yourself, feel themselves to be always outside that circle when, in fact, they have already entered into it.

As for your reference to the categories such as adult, child, etc., it is true. But there is another point as well. The human child will always grow into a human adult, he will never become a monkey or some other thing. In other words what you have become is what you were all along. You began your life as a vaishnava and still you are a vaishnava, only the outer form has undergone some transformation. You know the other example already. There may be a cloud in the sky blocking the sun but when that cloud is gone then it is impossible to tell where it was, it is as if it were never there at all. We do not see any cloud with you and, therefore, we can not imagine where any could have existed.

Before you left Merida I was asking if you would write something in glorification of His Divine Grace, Srila Prabhupada, and now I have been satisfied beyond expectation. Would you mind if we published your letter in the Vaishnava Transmission? You have expressed many things which I think the devotees would appreciate very much.

Affectionately yours,
Swami BK Giri

.....
Dear Giri Maharaja:

If you like, feel free to publish my letter to you in the Sri Vaishnava Transmission. I would be happy if you also included your reply to me.

Affectionately,
Swami B.K. Ashram ॐ

The Great Souls also *Struggle*

Sripad Bhakti Kanan Giri Maharaja

In the Search for Sri Krishna Srila Sridhara Maharaja referred to the Bengali poet Hemachandra as saying "America is rising forcefully, as if he is coming to swallow the whole world. Sometimes he is shouting as if with a war cry, and the whole world is shivering. His enthusiasm is so intense and great that he wants to snatch the world from the solar system, and give it a new shape, a new molding." He then goes on to say "in the same way, Bhakti Vedanta Swami Maharaja came to give the world a new shape through Krishna consciousness. He once said, 'We must go there and build it in a new way – with Krishna consciousness.'" With supreme faith in the orders of his Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur, Srila Prabhupada began his building of the world "in a new way" by introducing the hari nama sankirtan of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in what he thought to be the most important city in the world, New York City.

In October of 1965 Srila Prabhupada arrived in New York City. He began preaching to the well-to-do in the Upper West Side of Manhattan but was not very satisfied with the

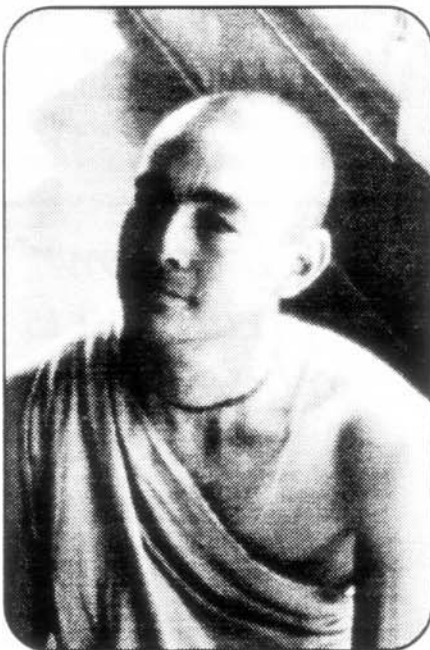


intellectual interest among those attending his classes but they would not dramatically change their lives in pursuit of the absolute truth. It was almost exactly one year after this, that Srila Prabhupada took his first hari nama sankirtan to Washington Square Park and then to Tompkins Square Park on the Lower East Side of Manhattan after securing a store front at 26 Second Avenue in August of the same year. Here he began to meet with great success preaching mostly to young hippies and radical, antiestablishment youths. These young men and women were sincere seekers of the truth and were willing to throw off their old lives and devote themselves to a life of Krishna consciousness. This was like a new beginning for Srila Prabhupada's preaching and it was so well received that within eleven years he opened over a hundred temples all over the world.

We often hear devotees speak of Srila Prabhupada's preaching work as if it were an overnight success. As if one day he decided to go to America and then, joined by thousands upon thousands of disciples, opened temples all over the world. This idea is often followed by a subtle or direct implication that this is the sole qualification of an acharya and anyone falling short of performing such a miracle may be a "venerable vaishnava", but is tainted in some way. Both ideas betray a shallow understanding of Krishna consciousness. The first idea would have us think that the real devotees of Krishna, the pure devotees, do not undergo any difficulties. Like the proverbial rich child born with a silver spoon in his mouth who floats through life with no cares or responsibilities. There may be some instance of this, but generally we find the lives of great devotees defined by their unswerving faith and devotion in the face of great adversity. Shall we think of Srila Raghunatha das, Srila Hari das Thakura, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta or our own Srila Prabhupada as men of leisure who walked on flower petals thrown from the sky? Or, shall we see their lives for

what they were, great examples of renunciation, tolerance, sacrifice, and dedication to the service of Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga?

It is true that a wondrous miracle occurred during the eleven years of Srila Prabhupada's preaching from 1966, when he established his first "temple" on 26 Second Avenue in New York City, to his disappearance in 1977 after opening temples in almost every important city in the world. However, Srila Prabhupada's life was not lived in eleven years. He appeared in this world in 1896, first met Srila Bhakti Siddhanta in 1922, took initiation in 1932, started the League of Devotees in 1953, took san-



nyasa in 1959 and left for America in 1965. During Srila Prabhupada's 81 years in this world 69 were spent doing something other than preaching in the West. Sripada Satsvarupa Maharaja in the title to one of his books on Srila Prabhupada's life referred to those years as "A Lifetime in Preparation". Such a description is a far cry from "a life of leisure". Certainly from the time of his initiation, if not before, Srila Prabhupada's life might best be characterized as a struggle.

He struggled to serve the mission of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta while maintaining a precarious business and a dif-

ficult family life. In 1935 he wrote to one of his servants "...I have lost about 10,000 rupees and the good will has also been affected and my enemies have increased. That is why I am fighting, practically staking my whole life. I am staying here all alone in the middle of so many difficulties..." He struggled to publish and translate Back to Godhead, Bhagavad Gita, and Srimad Bhagavatam he struggled to get to America. Even after arriving in America he faced tremendous disappointments. So much so that he would sometimes walk to the docks and wonder if he should book passage on the next ship back to India.

After opening many temples and initiating hundreds of disciples Srila Prabhupada struggled to maintain and expand the society he had created. He had to personally intervene when his disciples, in contradiction to his instructions, jeopardized deposit money meant for purchasing a new building in New York. He had to intervene when some of his Godbrothers tried to steal his disciples. In Bombay one of his most important projects in India was almost lost when the previous owner of the land tried to take it back both by treachery and by force. Srila Prabhupada himself said "preaching means a fight" this was not a theory but a personal experience. To an outsider his preaching life may have looked easy, but that is only because he was so expert that he made it appear that way.

Srila Prabhupada's success in spreading Krishna consciousness was a miracle of faith and devotion, but it would be a mistake to think that such preaching success is the only means of determining a vaishnava's qualification. Srila Prabhupada's preaching success did not become manifest until after the age of 69. When Srila Prabhupada left India it was practically on the heels of failure. He had initiated one disciple, started and abandoned the "League of Devotees", had no temples, and although he had translated and printed some books, practically none of them had been distributed. If we should then con-

clude that he must have been a devotee of lower standard it would not only be wrong, it would be an offense. Vaishnavera kriya mudra, it is very difficult to understand the activities and symptoms of a vaishnava, yanra citte krihsna-prema karaye udaya, tanra vakya, kriya, mudra vijneha na bujhaya "Even the most learned man cannot understand the words, activities and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead." (CcM.23.39)

In the Upadeshamrta Srila Prabhupada writes "One is forbidden to observe the activities of a pure vaishnava from a material point of view. For the neophyte especially, considering a pure devotee from a material point of view is very injurious. One should therefore avoid observing a pure devotee externally, but should try to see the internal features and understand how he is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord." This is the criteria by which we have come to understand the exalted position of such devotees as Srila Haridas Thakura our namacharya, Srila Gaurakishora Das Babaji Maharaja, the guru of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur, and all the great devotees of the Lord. This same criteria should be applied in understanding any pure devotee.

We are cautioned not to look too closely at the previous life of a devotee as we may be misled by our tendency to see it with a mundane view leading us into the minefield of vaishnava aparadha where any step may bring disaster. The pure devotees of the Lord should always be seen as nitya siddha bhaktas, that is they are eternally perfect devotees. Although their external appearance may show something of ordinary character, even of lower character such as being born in a low class family, we should never see a devotee in terms of his birth or other material distinctions.

Srila Haridas Thakur was born in a family of Muhammadans and as such he always considered himself as abominable, so much so that he would not even go near the temple of Lord

Jagganatha, what to speak of entering the temple. As for his preaching we hear very little of it discussed and therefore might conclude it was not very extensive. We do not hear that he established many temples, printed or distributed many books or even made many disciples. Still he was considered a devotee of such exalted qualities and characteristics that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu praised him extensively. Srila Haridas Thakura has given us the definitive treatise on the glories of the holy name, offenses to the holy name and nama bhasa. Referring to Srila Haridas Thakura, Srila Sanatana Goswami said apane acare keha, na kare pracara,

pracara karena keha, na karena acara, "Some behave very well but do not preach the cult of Krishna consciousness, whereas others preach but do not behave properly, acara, 'pracara',—nam era karaha 'dui' karya. You simultan-

"If our own preaching is to be successful we must be particularly careful to avoid offenses to the holy name."

ously perform both duties in relation to the holy name by your personal behavior and by your preaching." And tumi—sarva-guru, tumi jagatera arya "Therefore you are the spiritual master of the entire world, for you are the most advanced devotee in the world."

Srila Haridas Thakura certainly was a great preacher as evidenced by his potency to convert the two women who came to entice him into pure devotees. In another instance while visiting the home of Balarama Acharya in

Chandapura, Haridas Thakura was asked to speak about the glories of the Holy Name in an assembly of learned scholars. There he defeated the learned brahman Gopala Cakravarti who could not accept that just a glimpse of the holy name (nama bhasa) could grant liberation. While these incidents are well known, we have not heard of Haridas Thakura organizing a massive preaching campaign. Yet, Srila Sanatana Goswami referred to him as sarva guru the guru of everyone and jagatera arya "the most advanced devotee within this world" We should therefore try to understand a devotee's position according to his shradha or faith in Krishna.

Furthermore, in looking on the lives of great devotees we should be very careful not to make the mistake of analyzing them as "higher" and "lower". In Chaitanya Charitamrta Srila Krishna das Kaviraj writes caitanya-gosanira yata parishada-caya "Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had many many associates", guru-laghu-bhava tanra na haya nishcaya "But, none of them should be considered as higher or lower. This cannot be ascertained". Even the great devotees in the line of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu could not distinguish between the greater and the lesser, yata yata mahanta kaila tan-sabara ganana keha karibare nare jyeshtha-laghu-krama. Then what to speak of ourselves, we should be extremely cautious about forming opinions or making statements regarding the superiority of one devotee over another, especially if they are amongst the rank of our Gurudeva. Although Srila Prabhupada spoke very critically of many of his own Godbrothers he warned us that we should regard the Godbrothers of the spiritual master almost equally with our own spiritual master.

If our own preaching is to be successful we must be particularly careful to avoid offenses to the holy name. The first and most dangerous is vaishnava ninda or offending the devotees of the Lord. The devotees are the carriers and guardians of the Lord's holy name. If we offend them the holy name will be

displeased and He will not come to us or He may leave us.

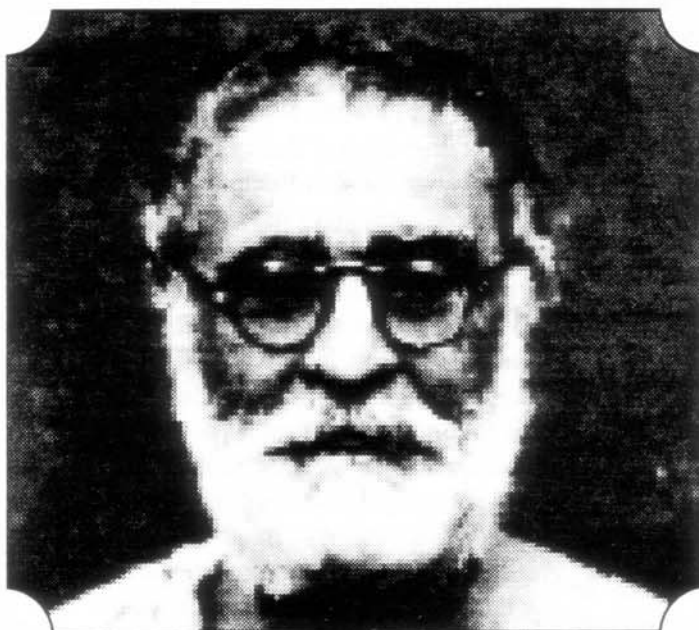
To understand how Srila Prabhupada went about giving "the world a new shape through Krsna consciousness" may not be possible for us. He is a pure devotee of the Lord and, more than that, specially empowered for his preaching role as a shaktya-avesha avatara. He was chosen by Mahaprabhu, or Sri Nityananda Prabhu, for this purpose, as Arjuna was chosen for his role in fighting with the Kurus and inspiring Krishna to speak the Bhagavad Gita. We cannot begin to understand the mind or activities of such a great soul, however, acknowledging our own shortcomings, we can look at his instructions and activities with a view to try and follow them.

If we look at the steps Srila Prabhupada took in creating, establishing and expanding his mission we see that it began the first time he met Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati in 1922. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta then asked Srila Prabhupada "Why don't you preach Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message throughout the whole world." He associated with the disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, especially Shridhara Maharaja, and helped them as much as possible. Around 1933 he moved to Bombay and, after a chance meeting with Srila Sridhara Maharaja and Sripad Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaja, began helping them to establish a Bombay Gaudiya Math. Srila Sridhara Maharaja was in charge of the math and was being assisted by his God brother Goswami Maharaja. Srila Prabhupada would introduce them to his business acquaintances and arrange programs for them. Srila Prabhupada would introduce his Godbrothers to the guests. Srila Sridhara Maharaja would speak and Sripada

Goswami Maharaja who was very expert at collecting funds would canvass the guests.

Celebrating Srila Bhakti Siddhanta's appearance at the Bombay Gaudiya Math in 1935, Srila Prabhupada wrote a poem and delivered a speech in English glorifying his Gurudeva. The poem titled "Shree Vyasa Puja Homage" became his first published work and appeared in the Gaudiya Math's magazine The Harmonist. One stanza of the poem in particular impressed Srila Bhakti Siddhanta.

*Absolute is sentient
Thou hast proved,*



*Impersonal calamity
Thou hast moved.*

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta saw this as evidence that Srila Prabhupada understood his thinking perfectly and was so pleased with it that he began showing it to all of his guests. One of Srila Prabhupada's Godbrothers compared this verse to the verse of Srila Rupa Goswami priyah so yam krishna... that caused Mahaprabhu to express His wonderment that Sri Rupa could know his innermost thoughts. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta was so impressed with Srila Prabhupada's speech that he showed it to

some of his most confidential devotees and instructed the editor of The Harmonist "Whatever he writes, publish it."

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta disappeared in 1937 and turmoil broke out in the Gaudiya Math. Not long afterward, around 1938, Srila Prabhupada returned to Calcutta. At about the same time Srila Sridhara Maharaja went to Navadvipa after living for some time in Vrndavan. At first he lived in a rented house and sometimes stayed with his Godbrothers. By 1942 Srila Sridhara Maharaja, with the Govardhana Shila he brought from Vrndavan, moved into a thatched cottage he had constructed on the property

where the current math is located.

This was the beginning of Sri Chaitanya Saraswata Math and it was around this time that he composed the verse *srimac-caitanya-sarasvata-mathavara...* "On the banks of the Ganges in Koladwipa, Navadvipa, Sri Chaitanya Saraswata Math stands resplendent. The flag flies high, singing its glories around the world. There the residents chant the glories of Lord Gauranga and aspire to serve Sri Sri Radha Govinda in the line of Sri Rupa." Soon after this Srila Govinda Maharaja, at that

time Sri Gaurendu Brahmachari, joined Srila Sridhara Maharaja.

Srila Prabhupada had two buildings next to each other in Calcutta, one that he used for his family house and office, and the other for his chemical factory. Srila Sridhara Maharaja wanted to preach in Calcutta and, after hearing that Srila Prabhupada was there it was arranged that he would use the rooms above the chemical factory as an ashram. Srila Sridhara Maharaja used this ashram as a base for his preaching in Calcutta for many years and even hung a sign out front: Devananda Saraswati Math. Srila Prabhupada continued to help Srila



Srila Govinda Maharaja presents the realities of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhar Maharaja.

Sridhara Maharaja by arranging for meetings and programs as he had done in Bombay. At times when Srila Sridhara Maharaja was ill Srila Prabhupada would lead the programs.

In 1944 Srila Prabhupada began publishing Back to Godhead magazine in English and would go out himself to distribute it but, due to lack of funds, there were many times he would not be able to print an issue. Srila Govinda Maharaja best describes the times when Srila Prabhupada was living at 6 Sita Kanta Bannerjee Lane in Calcutta:

"He was always trying to preach to others in order to break their egoistic mentalities and bring them to Krishna consciousness. At that time I was surprised that a householder with little money was doing what the sannyasis and brahmacaris were not...Whenever he would write something, a letter, a pamphlet, a book, he would show it to Srila Guru Maharaja and myself. In 1944 he published a magazine called Back to Godhead but there was no one there to distribute it. So all the copies

remained in his office. At that time, Srila Guru Maharaja and I were living in the same house with him. I had just joined the movement, so he asked me, 'Gaurendu, can you distribute these magazines?'. And I replied, 'Yes, I can distribute them.'

Srila Guru Maharaja gave me the order that I should learn Srimad Bhagavad Gita in the mornings from Srila Swami Maharaja. So I studied Bhagavad Gita with Srila Swami Maharaja. At that time I was only distributing three books. One was Srila Guru Maharaja's Sri Prappana Jivanamrtam. But when I got the Back to Godheads, which were published in English, I felt very proud that I, an illiterate village boy, should get the opportunity to distribute an English magazine. When I went door to door, if anyone would give me four paisa, then I would give them a Back to Godhead. In this way, the first Back to Godhead distribution program started....

I have gotten the inspiration to preach from Srila Swami Maharaja. His enthusiasm and dedication in the preaching field I have seen. Nobody could understand that when he was a householder his future was to be a grand guru of the whole world. Only Srila Guru Maharaja was encouraging him in this way....

[for his business] He invented and marketed many different medicines. But when the customers came, he would preach Krishna consciousness instead of doing business. Many of the customers left thinking, 'What business does he really want to do?' He was always preaching Krishna consciousness. His nature was very strong and he was very fearless. People like Gandhi and Nehru were at the very top of society in India but he did not care. He is teaching them. They are not accepting his teaching, but he doesn't care. Again and again he is pushing Krishna consciousness, hammering Krishna consciousness into them. Thus, he became a failure in every way in his business life. Seeing this, his sister, Pishima, told him, 'Brother, it is not your life, this

business life. You go and preach Krishna consciousness. That is your life...."

When Srila Guru Maharaja and I were living in Srila Swami Maharaja's house in Calcutta, I remember them staying up every night until 2:00 in the morning. Srila Swami Maharaja always wanted to discuss the wrongness of mayavada and sahajiyavada. The talks between Srila Swami Maharaja and Srila Guru Maharaja were very high and always many scriptural references were cited. For the 12 years we lived with Srila Swami Maharaja these discussions occurred every day. He would leave his business, he would leave his family, he would leave everything just to sit with Srila Guru Maharaja from 9:00 in the evening until the wee hours of the morning."

"Srila Sridhara Maharaja once said, 'We did not join for the grandeur of the math but for the ideal.'"

As time and money allowed Srila Prabhupada continued to publish Back to Godhead and translated Bhagavad Gita into English. He was always preaching even in defiance of his wife's wishes and the interest of his business. In 1954 he left his family giving him full opportunity to carry out his ambition for preaching. He did a great deal of writing even though much of it would not be published. In 1959 he accepted sannyasa and in 1962 began working on his English translation of Srimad Bhagavatam. By 1965 he managed to translate and print the first three volumes of Srimad Bhagavatam and, after securing passage on the cargo ship Jaladuta, was ready to leave for America.

After visiting the samadhi mandir of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur he made his departure.

After arriving in America Srila Prabhupada tried to establish a temple but could not acquire the funds to obtain a building. While making this attempt he preached to whomever he met and gave classes and led kirtan at programs he conducted from the apartments where he lived. Finally when there was enough support, he moved to 26 Second Avenue where he had his own apartment and a storefront that could be devoted solely to his preaching programs. Now he had a real base from which to operate, he had initiated disciples, and he incorporated the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Now his mission, although still somewhat tenuous, was established in the West. It was from here that he began taking his kirtan parties out to the public.

Sometimes we hear a type of criticism from some gentlemen who seem to think that we may not be a proper preaching mission or, that they cannot be enthusiastic to serve our mission because we do not have a proper temple, large Deities, many books, or many devotees. I hope that the histories presented here may help them to understand how a preaching mission begins. Srila Sridhara Maharaja's mission began with him and perhaps one other devotee in a one room thatched cottage worshipping Govardhana Shila. Srila Prabhupada began alone in a one room office with no bathroom or kitchen, only a trunk and three volumes of his Srimad Bhagavatam. Anyone so shortsighted as to maintain the above criticisms would have been unable to join the early missions of Srila Prabhupada or Srila Sridhara Maharaja seeing their supposed shortcomings. It is ironic, however that these same persons think themselves to be devout followers of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhara Maharaja. Srila Sridhara Maharaja once said "we did not join for the grandeur of the math but for the ideal." We should always remember these words.

Of course we cannot deny that we have our shortcomings but they are different from those pointed out above by the erroneous fault finding arrogant egotism of certain gentleman. We may be lacking as individuals in our dedication, or our genuineness, but it should always be remembered that we are operating with the "full faith and credit" of our divine guardians who are the ultimate proprietors and guides of our mission. It is they whom we are serving and those that choose not to serve commit the



grave error that Srila Sridhara Maharaja once described as "suspicion leading to suspension". In other words Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math is itself an arm of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's preaching mission. Any doubt or suspicion that hinders our service to this mission will certainly interrupt our spiritual progress. This matter may be best explained by the Bhagavatam verse *tad vag visargo janatagha viplavo...* We may have many shortcomings in our presentation of the Absolute Truth yet those who are honest and pure of heart cannot help but appreciate our attempt.

In reviewing Srila Prabhupada's preaching activities I am encouraged, seeing that our attempts bear some likeness to his. We have begun in a very

small and humble way, as he did, but gradually we are introducing all the same elements and in more or less the same order. By the mercy of many devotees we have books and magazines for broadcasting the message of our mission. By the goodwill of our members we are holding programs regularly in New York City. By the grace of Sri Sri Guru Gauranga we have our own Math, although small, as a shelter for the devotees and regular worship of our Deities Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharvika Giridhariju.

Now almost exactly thirty years after Srila Prabhupada's first kirtan sorties to Thompkins Square Park, we have added a weekly program of hari nama sankirtan to our other preaching activities in New York. This simple program inaugurated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is known as the yuga dharma or the religious practice specified for this age of kali yuga. We are told in Srimad Bhagavatam "krishna-varnam tvishakrishnam, sangopangastra-parshadam, yajnaih sankirtana-prayair, yajanti hi su-medhasa". This is a famous verse and all of us know its meaning "In this age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of the Lord who constantly sings the names of Krishna. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Krishna Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions." We are accustomed to following this injunction by having regular sankirtan in our temples and at our preaching programs and this is no doubt pleasing the Lord and his devotees. Usually we think of sankirtan simply as congregational chanting, but Srila Sridhara Maharaja has given us a more extensive explanation of the derivation of sankirtan as samyak and kirtan. Samyak means full and kirtan of course means to chant, but samyak means full in both quality and quantity. In this instance we should not just be concerned with increasing the quality of our chanting, pure glorification free from nama aparadha and

nama bhasa, but also the quantity of those who chant. In other words we should not just think of congregational chanting like the members of a church joining together in song, but full congregational chanting, meaning everyone chanting, the whole world chanting.

This is the real goal of our preaching effort, and what is preaching? It is the second component of sankirtan. Srila Sridhara Maharaja told us "kirtan means preaching, shravanam, kirtanam. Kirtan does not simply mean loudly chanting, but preaching. And preaching means there must be a fight with the opposition party. Kirtan means a fight. Kirtan creates the divine vibration which will fight with all the ordinary vibrations that are floating in this world in subtle and gross waves." later he stressed the point even further "So, preaching (sankirtan), and not counting beads (japa), is the real service of Krishna." And what should be the core principle underlying our preaching effort? That is given in Srimad Bhagavatam, dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsaranam satam... Completely rejecting all dharma (religion) which is tainted with some selfish interest, we must present only the parama dharma, the highest spiritual truth. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta characterized this preaching spirit in this way "Gaudiya Math has declared totalitarian war against maya, illusion, and even all other existing conceptions of religion." So, our preaching must be with full faith that nothing short of the absolute truth will bring relief from material life.

The third component of sankirtan is book distribution. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur stressed the publication and distribution of vaishnava literature so much that he named it brhad mrdanga, the greater mrdanga. When this mrdanga is beaten it may be heard not just for a few feet or so, but it's sound may be heard around the world. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta established his own press to print books, magazines, and newspapers, and encouraged all his disciples to contribute to this effort. We know how much Srila Prabhupada stressed book distribution. We

have also seen how joyous Srila Sridhara Maharaja was to see his own books printed and distributed. Srila Govinda Maharaja is also pushing us to print and distribute books and other literature as one of the most important elements of our relief work. When a book is given to someone it may then go to another person, and another. It may be given to someone in one city and carried to another city, even state to state, and country to country thereby increasing our preaching capacity many fold. We often receive phone calls, letters, and visits from people who have received a book



and, after reading it, become inquisitive about devotional life. We feel excitement and joy seeing their hearts awakened to Krishna consciousness. This, in turn, enlivens us to print and distribute more books and the cycle continues.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta's idea for spreading Krishna consciousness was that it should be so thorough and complete that there should be nowhere where maya should be allowed to stand. Srila Sridhara Maharaja expressed the idea, "This worldwide grand mission that will thrive like anything. It will touch the heaven and cover the world and other planets also." And, on another occasion he spoke, "the numbers of soldiers should be increased. Just as

now they are doing. The military expenses are increasing day after day, year after year. They are increasing the military expense to fight with the opposition. So the need of spiritual soldiers are wanted, so that from village to village everyone, in every place should be hunted and approached. 'Take the name of Krishna! And come under the flag of Mahaprabhu and Swami Maharaja!' So let us go to every man in every village and approach them. This is life and this will show the vitality of the mission." This is our understanding of the meaning of sankirtan.

Srila Prabhupada gave a new shape to the earth and new hope to the conditioned souls by spreading the sankirtan movement of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. At first by his own preaching, then enlisting his disciples to preach and take his sankirtan party to the public, and finally by distributing books and magazines on a scale never before seen. It began in New York City and then enveloped the globe. Change occurred, but the transformation is far from complete. Now our Gurudeva is looking to us. It is the duty, right, and privilege of each of us to continue the work which has already begun. In a letter to the devotees of Santa Cruz Sripad Janardan Maharaja expressed the point in an extraordinary way:

"Our mission is vital and necessary for everyone. It is especially my personal vision that Srila Prabhupada himself is looking towards this mission, because it is our personal realization that both Srila Prabhupada's preaching, as well as the line of Srila Guru Maharaja, find their living presence in the missionary work of Srila Govinda Maharaja. That is not to say that nobody else is preaching. But we look towards the mission of Srila Govinda Maharaja with singular hope, and want to dedicate our life force there with the feeling that it is a small and necessary contribution on our part."

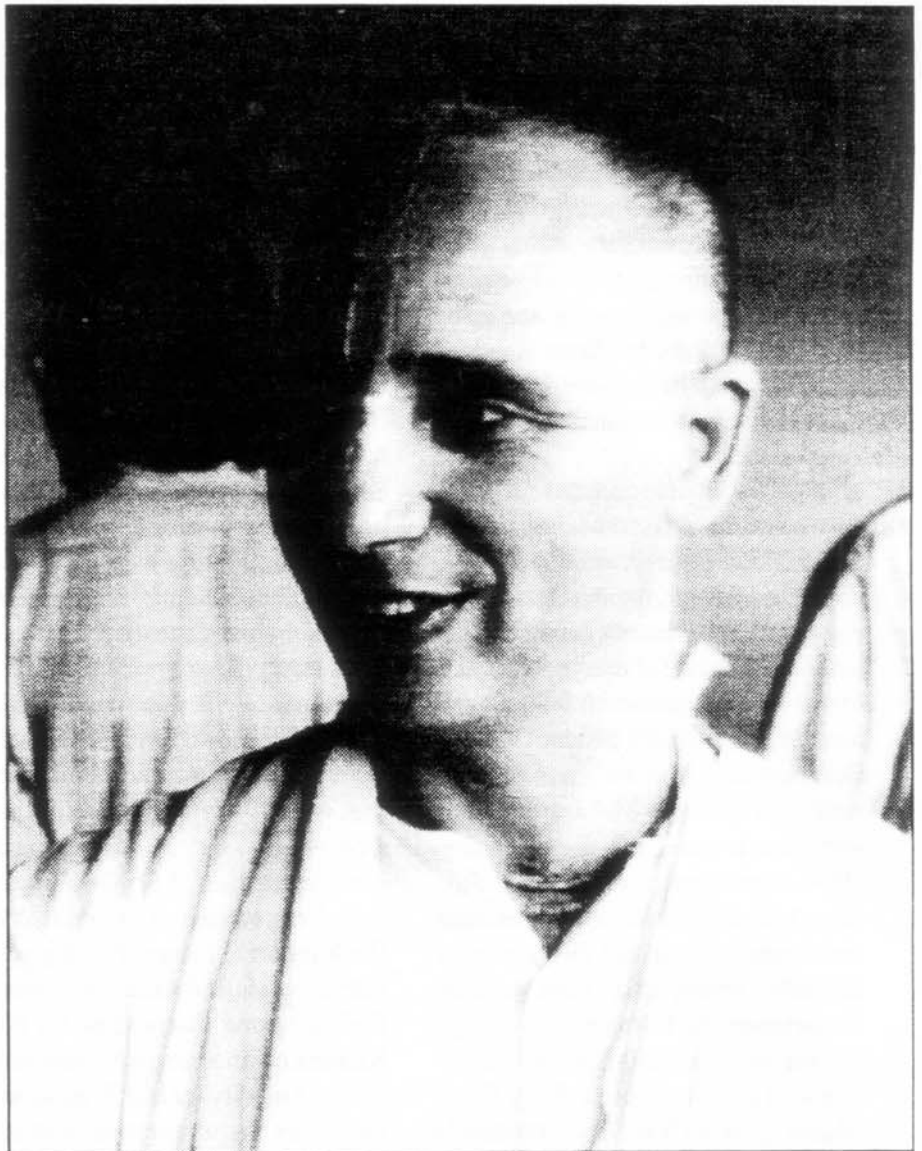
Following in the footsteps of our great guru varga let us pray that we may assist them in their mission to build the world in a new way. To give it a new shape in the form of Krishna bhakti. ॐ

Divine Conjunctions

Sripad Bhakti Pavana Janardan Maharaja

Srila Guru Maharaj, the illustrious Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj, appeared on the Krishna Navami day of the month of Damodar in the year 1895. This is the day of the appearance of the son of Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Virachandra Prabhu. Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad appeared in this world, also on the Krishna Navami day of the Vaishnav month of Hrishikesh, a day known as Sri Nandotsav, because it is the day after Sri Krishna Janmastami that Nanda Maharaj had a grand festival to celebrate the appearance of his Divine Son. Srila Prabhupad appeared on that date in 1896.

When two or more planets appear in the sky at the same time, it is referred to as a conjunction in astrology. So we can say that there is certainly a Divine Conjunction of these great Acharyas in the Gaudiya Vaishnava line of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, who are ever combining their endeavors to save the conditioned, fallen souls of this world. They may be seen as coming together, as did Sri Gauranga and Sri Nityananda, to so kindly distribute the highest conceptions of Mahaprabhu's teachings, known only





Srila Govinda Maharaja and Srilata Bhakti Pavana Janardana Maharaja.

to his true devotees who follow in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami. Whoever has had contact with these two great personalities, through their divine presence and teachings, must be known as most fortunate, and his future is indeed bright, his path back to home, back to Godhead being illuminated by these great souls.

We have often referred to the occasion when Srila Guru Maharaj commented that Srila Prabhupad was a shaktavesh avatar, a great personality empowered to directly represent the Lord. At that time, of course Srila Guru Maharaj's most prominent follower and disciple, Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaj, was present. And Srila Govinda Maharaj immediately astutely asked Srila Guru Maharaj, "He is whose shaktavesh avatar?" Srila Guru Maharaj had not openly declared that because he did not like to always directly reveal his conclusions. Sometimes he humbly left things unsaid, or even hid his deep realizations. But when asked, Srila Guru Maharaj said, "Of Sri Nityananda

Prabhu."

When we see how much Srila Prabhupad did to spread Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's mission all over the world, so liberally giving out His divine mercy as if it were water for the souls of this world who are dying of thirst in the desert of Kali yuga, we are immediately reminded of the unlimited mercy that Sri Nityananda Prabhu had when he roamed throughout Bengal, entreating everyone to take Mahaprabhu's Name and mercy. And we can also see the tendency, that desire to glorify the presence of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, that Srila Prabhupad showed as he installed Sri Sri Nitai Gauranga deities throughout the world. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur had generally installed deities of Sri Gauranga and Sri Sri Radha Govinda. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad primarily installed Gour Nityananda Prabhu on one altar, and Sri Sri Radha Krishna on another, in his temples.

As Sri Nityananda Prabhu asked everyone to chant the Names of

Gauranga, Srila Prabhupad went alone to the West, aboard the freighter *Jaladuta*, with virtually no money, to spread the mission of Sri Gauranga. On board that ship he wrote in Bengali poetry:

"Dear Krishna, You will attain the great fortune (of helping Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur), and when You obtain this fortune, Radharani will be pleased with You. I emphatically say this to You.

"Sri Siddhanta Saraswati is very dear to Sri Saci Suta (Mahaprabhu, the son of mother Saci) and his service to Krishna is without comparison. He is a great mahanta-guru, the most powerful in the world. He is the giver of Krishna-bhakti to people of many different countries.

"He has a very strong will that in all the places of the Western world Lord Gauranga's Name will be chanted. In all the towns and villages of the world, from all the oceans and rivers, everyone should chant the Name of Krishna.

That will give us great joy and there will be a great victory all over the world by the Supreme mercy of Sri Chaitanya. All the people of the world who are now miserable being contaminated by maya (or the illusory energy) will become happy and the desire of the Vaishnavas will be fulfilled.

"You have given me this order to perform this duty but I have no qualification and I am extremely fallen and insignificant. That is why the desire for Your mercy has awakened in my heart. Today, You are the most important person in my life.

"If I can get this power from You then I will obtain this service to my gurudev and my life will be fulfilled. By attaining this service I will be happy and perhaps I will also get a connection with You which is a rare fortune."

Srila Guru Maharaj deeply appreciated the mission that Srila Prabhupad was empowered to spread. He himself always glorified Srila Prabhupad's endeavor, and through Srila Guru Maharaj's strong influence and lead-

ership, helped the Gaudiya Vaishnavas in India, especially the followers of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, to recognize and appreciate the work done by Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad on behalf of his spiritual master.

Srila Guru Maharaj himself had a divine communion with Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Once when he was in Ekachakra, the place where Sri Nityananda Prabhu appeared in this world, he prayed for Sri Nityananda Prabhu's mercy. At that time, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur had left this world, and Srila Guru Maharaj was living in separation of his divine master, absorbed in his own bhajan, the solitary absorption in the internal worship of the Lord. He was living in Nabadwip, and he was reluctant to accept disciples, feeling himself to be unworthy of that responsibility. But when he prayed to Lord Nityananda Prabhu, he felt the direct presence of the Lord. And the Lord communicated, "You have so much of my mercy, and yet you want more. You must distribute that mercy to others." From that time on, there was a change in Srila Guru Maharaj. He began to take a more middle course. Although he still showed the reluctance of a humble Vaishnav to put himself in a prominent position, he gave his association to those who were attracted to his fine theistic conclusions and also began accepting disciples.

Srila Guru Maharaj himself is a great mine of Vaishnav conclusions, and is most dear to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, who appreciated him as a fit person to properly present his divine teachings and the deep realizations of the line of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the great acharyas, or teachers. He openly expressed that on many occasions, and when departing from this world, Srila Saraswati Thakur showed his appreciation for Srila Guru Maharaj by directly empowering him with the responsibility of caring for and protecting the

line of Srila Rupa Goswami. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur did this when he asked to hear Sri Rupa Manjari Pada from Srila Sridhar Maharaj's own mouth. Many of the true followers of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur witnessed this delegation of responsibility, and felt that he chose Srila Guru Maharaj to embody the true conclusions of Srila Rupa Goswami; from that time on, they themselves sought the shelter of Srila Guru Maharaj.

“Srila Guru Maharaj often remarked that without the mercy of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, it is not possible to have the mercy of Gauranga.”

Previously, I mentioned that the mercy of Srila Prabhupad and that of Srila Guru Maharaj is like that of Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Gaurangadev. Srila Govinda Maharaj himself showed that sentiment when he declared that he had the association of Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Gauranga in the persons of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj and Srila Guru Maharaj, Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami. We see in the persons of Srila Prabhupad and Srila Guru Maharaj the presence of these two most merciful Lords, who are ever blessing this land. And we aspire to follow in their footsteps as their disciples.

Srila Guru Maharaj often remarked that without the mercy of Sri

Nityananda Prabhu, it is not possible to have the mercy of Sri Gauranga. He said that for one who aspires to enter into the service of Sri Sri Radha Govinda, it is only possible if one receives Sri Nityananda Prabhu's blessings. As Srila Narottam das Thakur declares, nitaiyer koruna habe, braje radha krishna pabe: "Only when one obtains the mercy of Lord Nityananda can one approach Radha and Krishna in Vrindaban." In the Sanskrit poetry of his Sri Sriman Nityananda-dvadashakam, Srila Guru Maharaj himself concludes, "Lord Gauranga personally embodies the madhura rasa of Sri Sri Radha Krishna and is always relishing that mood. But, O Nityananda Prabhu, if one does not worship Your lotus feet, then all devotion and prayers meant for that highest worship become false and illusory. I worship Sri Nityananda Chandra, who kindly bestows mercy to the most fallen souls by giving them the shelter of Sri Gaurangadev."

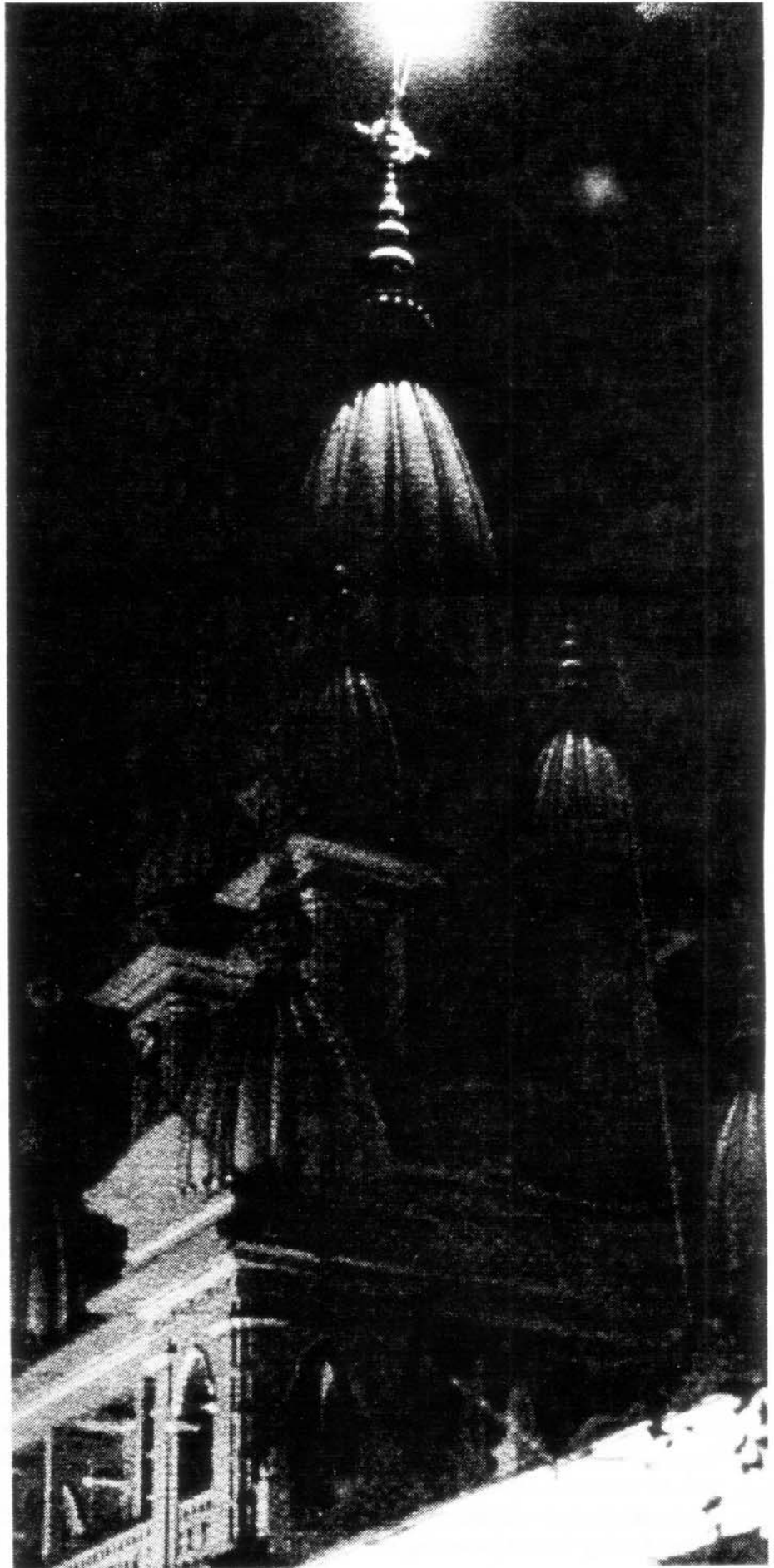
Sri Raghunath das Goswami showed us the proper path. Many times he had tried to escape from the bondage of his family life, and join Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannath Puri, but he was always unsuccessful and forcefully constrained by his parents. They even employed many guards to watch over him and see that he did not run off to join Lord Gauranga. But when he worshipped Nityananda Prabhu's lotus feet at Panihati, and also served his followers, then Raghunath Das was granted Nityananda Prabhu's blessings and was able to join Mahaprabhu and be granted the association of Sri Swarup Damodar by Mahaprabhu Himself.

It is our mood that Srila Prabhupad, in guiding his disciples to the lotus feet of Srila Guru Maharaj, gives them the entrance into the deep mood and worship of Sri Gaurangadev that is expressed in Sri Sriman Nityananda-dvadashakam by Srila Guru Maharaj. That deep feeling and absorption in the mood of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

is embodied in the beautiful expressions and conclusions presented by Srila Guru Maharaj. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad himself appreciated that quality of Srila Guru Maharaj, and kindly gave his fortunate followers further entrance into his most worshipable ideals, and blessed them with the continuation of their development under the guidance of Srila Guru Maharaj.

Now that Srila Guru Maharaj has left this world, as has Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, we are reminded of how fortunate we are to have come under the shelter of Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaj, who is so dear to both of them. He himself is like a son of both Srila Guru Maharaj and Srila Prabhupad. Naturally, he is the son of Srila Guru Maharaj, being his personally chosen successor and the very embodiment of his high realizations and conclusions. But also, like Sri Virachandra Prabhu, the son of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Srila Govinda Maharaj is like the son of Srila Prabhupad. Srila Prabhupad himself publicly declared Srila Govinda Maharaj to be his son.

Sri Virachandra Prabhu was so merciful that it is said that he exceeded his Divine Father in liberally distributing mercy to everyone, whether they were qualified or not. We also see that Srila Govinda Maharaj cannot restrain himself. Whatever the cost, even to the detriment of his own health or well-being, he must spend every amount of energy he has to spread the conclusions of Srila Guru Maharaj to every corner of the world. In that sense, he is like Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, and it is perhaps this similarity, along with the loving relationship that they had, that made Srila Prabhupad see Srila Govinda Maharaj as his son. And because he always presents so clearly the line of Srila Rupa Goswami, he is the true successor of Srila Guru Maharaj. ☪



The Highest Pilgrimage

Satya Hari das Adhikari

It's truly amazing how a place as vile and fallen as the New York Area can be so blessed by Lord Nityananda as to have experienced the darshan and touch of the lotus feet of the two great Vaishnava acharyas: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and now, Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj. Although it was not my good fortune to have had the darshan of Srila Prabhupada, it has been my greatest blessing to have felt the second wave of transcendental bliss in the presence of Srila Govinda Maharaj.

Weeks before the arrival of Srila Govinda Maharaj the devotee grapevine in New York was buzzing with transcendental anticipation. This was to be a spiritual event that could not be ignored by authentic Vaishnavas. The materialists do not think such a visit to be absolutely wonderful but the Shastras (scriptures) leave no doubt.

*Manusyanam Sahasresu Kascid yatati
Siddhaye Yatatam Api Siddhanam Kascin
Mam Vitti Tattvatah.*

[The Supreme Lord said] Out of many thousands of men, one may desire perfection. Out of thousands of those who attain perfection, one may know me in truth.[BG73]

When I first glimpsed His Divine Grace Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj,

I could see that the very sidewalks and streets had changed. New York began to shine, all the locations that bore the lotus feet of Govinda Maharaj radiated and smiled. Wherever he went was the spiritual world.

"The pure devotees, who are always absorbed in the thoughts of the transcendental lotus feet of Krsna and who

are always engaged in devotional service in full Krsna consciousness, are never to be considered as being in the material world." [Krsna Book I pg. 35]

All around Srila Govinda Maharaja was transformed. The mundane became the transcendental, the ordinary the mystical. All things spiritual and material were drawn into the service of



Krsna Himself.

Krsnera Samata Haite Bada Bhakta-pada Atma Haite Krsnera Bhaktahaya Premaspada.

"The position of being a devotee is higher, for the devotees are dearer to the Lord Krsna than his own self." [Chaitanya Caritamarita Adi-lila p100]

The obvious transcendental effect that Maharaj had on those who came for his holy darsan was breathtaking. All the audiences who came to his programs looked in awe, silence and bliss at this self-effulgent Vaisnava as he delivered nectarean words of Krsna and the highest abode. The words he spoke were full of mystic potency and purified those who heard them.

*"The halls
were silent as
we hung on his
every word."*

Sadhunam Samaci Hanam Sutaram Mat Krtatmanam Darsanan No Bhaved-bandah Pumso Kshoh Savittur Yatha.

"When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one's eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a Sadhu who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of the Godhead, Sri Krsna, one will no longer be subject to material bondage." [SB. 0.0.4]

The halls were silent as we hung on his every word. He spoke of his many years of studying Bhagavad Gita with his siksa guru A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, which he did on his guru's order. He spoke of his association with Srila Prabhupada with complete happiness, as well as telling us what they studied. These insights into Vaisnava siddhanta brought us to new heights of mystic understanding. We all knew that Srila Govinda Maharaja did not make this trip for any mundane reasons. He did it on the order of his guru, Srila



Srila Govinda Maharaja: the summit of all pilgrimages

Sridhar Maharaja. He has no business here except transcendental business.

Mahawta-Svabhava Ei Tarite Pamara Nija-Kaya Naitabu-yan Tara Ghara.

"It is the general practice of saintly persons to deliver the fallen. Therefore they go to people's houses, although they have no personal business there." [C.C. Madhya 83D]

This visit was, for those who experienced it, truly amazing. In the West, due to being over exposed to movies, newspapers, magazines, etc., we find it hard to be impressed, but Srila Govinda Maharaja must be seen by these doubting Thomases. To have taken a step toward this pure devotee was to have received the benefit of having visited countless places of pilgrimage. The Shastras tell us that such a saint is indeed the highest pilgrimage.

Bhavad-Vidha Bhagavata Tirthi Bhutah Suayam Prabho-tirthi Kuruanti Svantah Stena Gadabhrtya.

"Devotees are themselves the high-

est places of pilgrimage, capable of giving benediction to all, for they carry the Supreme Lord Krsna within their hearts. Thus they purify the Holy places of pilgrimage as well as those who visit such places." [S.B. 1.13.10]

The highest point of every gathering was when Srila Govinda Maharaj led us all in Kirtan. The sound of his voice is sweet beyond remembrance. This cry of the pure devotee caused all to break out in spontaneous chanting and dancing. Even the most reticent rose to their feet with arms up, joyously intoning the transcendental vibration.

Yanhara-darasane Muke Aise Krsna Nama Tanhare Janiha Tami Vaisnava Pradhana.

"The top most Vaishnava is He whose very presence makes others chant the name of Krsna. He is superior to all others." [C.C. Madhya 16.74]

This chanting with the pure devotee even once changes forever one's place in the material world. We could not believe

the power of this chanting if Shastra did not fully reveal to us what a treasure house Srila Govinda Maharaja has brought us.

*Prabhu Kahe, Yanra Mukhe-suni Eka
Bara Krsna Nama, Puya Sei Sresthat Sava
Kara.*

Sri Chaitanya said, "Whoever chants the Holy name of Krsna just once may be considered a Vaishnava. Such a person is worshipping and the top most human being. [C.C. Madhya 15./06]

The meeting of this great Vaishnava was all too short for us. We all felt this was the highest blessing. As a result of this transcendental encounter of the highest kind many were enlivened and many took shelter at his lotus feet. This vision of the pure devotee is the highest perfection.

*Aksnott Phalam Tuadrsa Dansanam Hi
Tanoh Phalam Tuadrsa-gatrasangah Jihva
Phalam Tuadrsa-kirtanam Hi Sudurlabha
Bhagavata Hi Loke*

[Hari Bhakti-Sudhodaya 13.2]

"O Vaishnava! To see you is the perfection of the eyes. To touch your holy feet is the perfection of the body. To vibrate your holy qualities is the perfection of the tongue, for it is very rare to find a pure devotee within the world."

This also is the conclusion of the most eminent Vaishnava acaryars in recent years.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada spoke of His Divine Grace Srila Sridhar Maharaj in the most glowing terms; calling Sridhar Maharaj his siksa guru. This same Sridhar Maharaj appointed His Divine Grace Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj as his sole successor. So who cannot accept this great Acarya? Who can reject this pure devotee when acaryas, shastra and sanga speak so highly of him?

Let us pray that all spiritualists, mystics and transcendentalists will have the loving association and instruction of Srila Govinda Maharaj. In this way their lives will be perfect.

Jai Gurudeva! ॐ



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