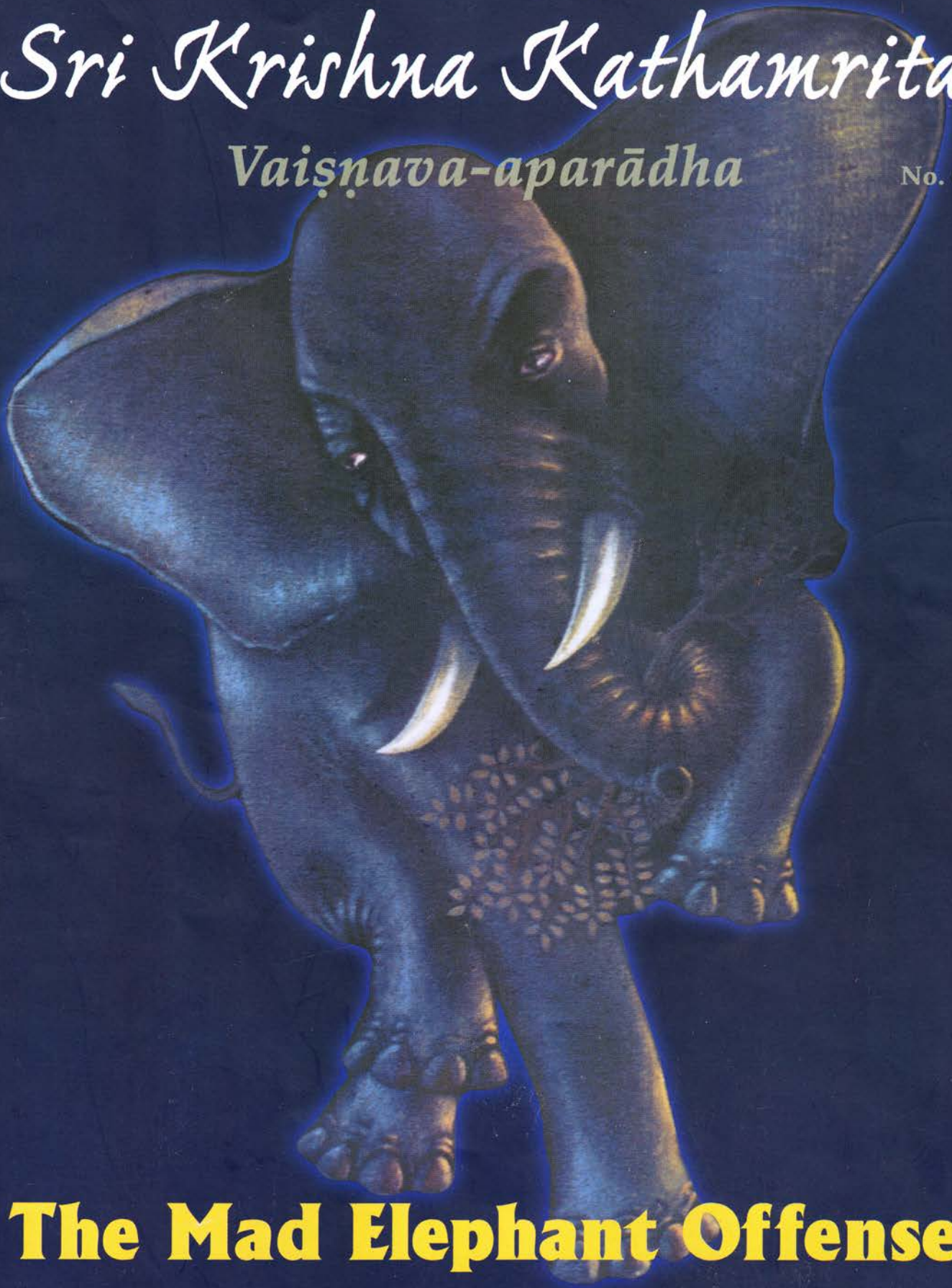


*tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam*

# *Sri Krishna Kathamrita*

*Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*

No. 6



**The Mad Elephant Offense**

# Sri Krishna Kathamrita

Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Gopīnātha Jayati

## The Mad Elephant Offense

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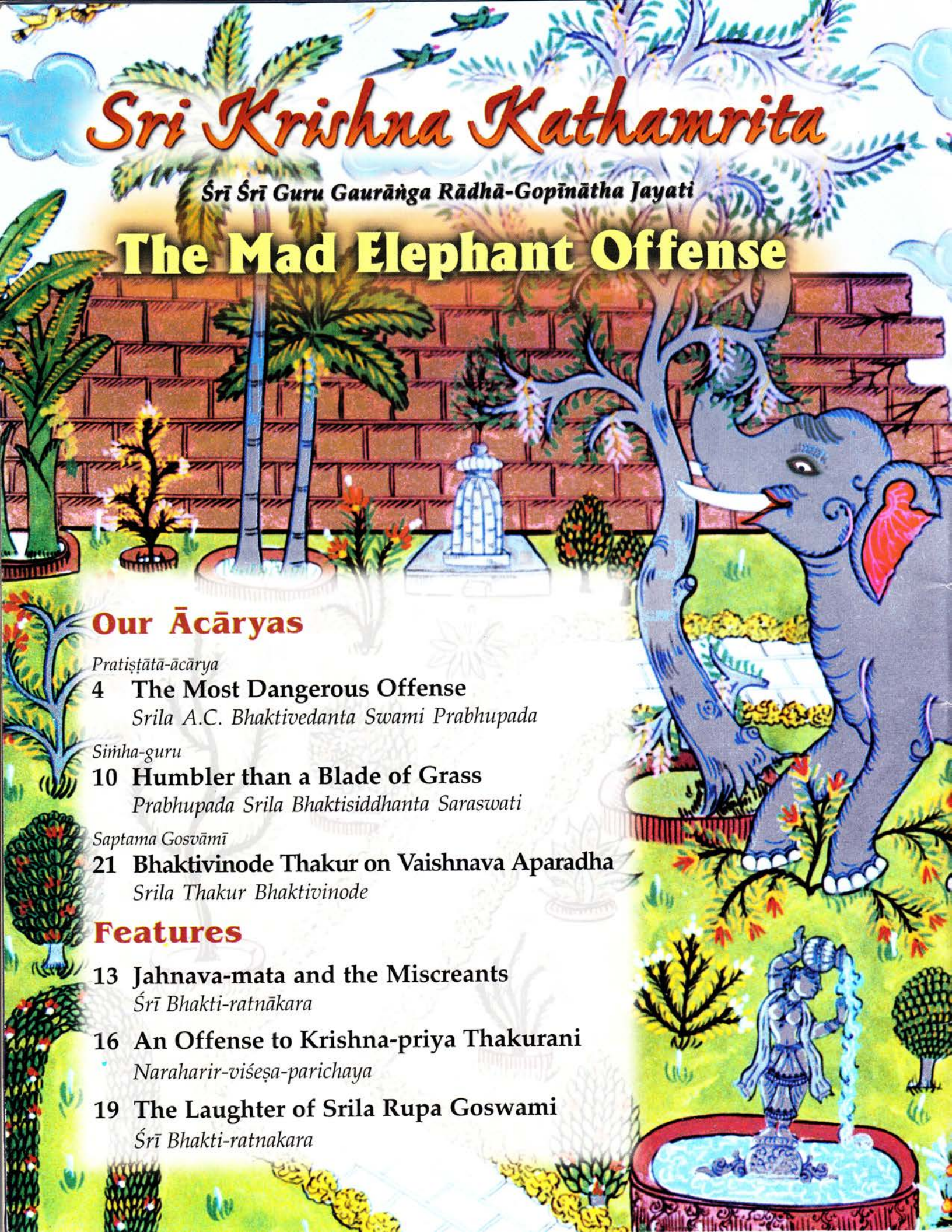
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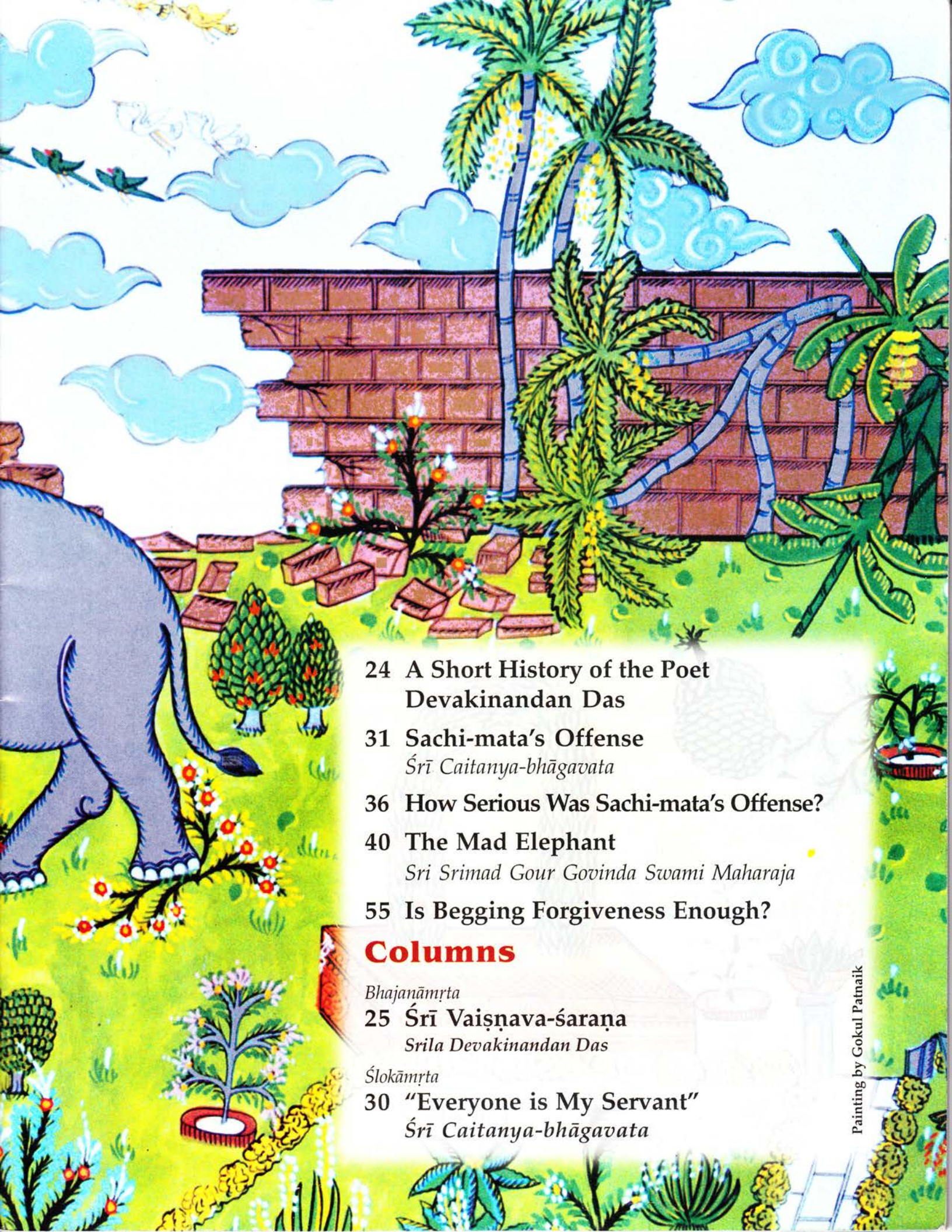
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Dedicated to His Divine  
Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta  
Swami Prabhupada  
Founder Acharya of the  
International Society for  
Krishna Consciousness

### Statement of Purposes

As stated by Srila Prabhupada in his introduction to *Krishna Book*:

"It is essential for persons who are actually liberated to hear about the pastimes of Krishna. That is the supreme relishable subject matter for one in the liberated state. Also, if persons who are trying to be liberated hear such narrations... then their path of liberation becomes very clear. ...Lord Chaitanya has therefore advised His followers that their business is to propagate *kṛṣṇa-kathā*."

In keeping with this desire of Srila Prabhupada, the purpose of this magazine is simply to propagate *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. For that end we intend to research the history and literature of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, particularly in Orissa. Through the medium of this journal we want to help establish how everything is in Srila Prabhupada's books, and we will consider our efforts successful if this publication is a source of inspiration for the preachers of Krishna consciousness to continue their efforts to push on Lord Chaitanya's movement.

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## Editorial

### "Devoid of Radha"

Many *vaiṣṇavas* make it their daily habit to recite the *daśa nāmāparādha*, the ten offenses to the holy name as described in the *Padma Purāṇa*. The first of these offenses is *sādhu-nindā*, to offend a devotee of the Lord. Out of the ten offenses, Srila Vyasa-dev describes only this one as *parama-āparādha* — "the greatest offense". But what exactly constitutes *sādhu-nindā*? How serious is it, really? What are the consequences? What have our *ācāryas* instructed us in this regard? This issue of *Sri Krishna-kathamrita* explores this important topic.

Srila Haridas Thakur (in *Cc. antya* 3.60), quoting the *nāmāparādha bhañjana-stotra* of *Padma Purāṇa*, describes:

*nāmaikam yasya vāci smarāṇa-patha-gatam  
śrotra-mūlam gatam vā  
śuddham vāśuddha-varṇam vyavahita-rahitam  
tārayaty eva satyam*

The holy name is so powerful that if it is simply once remembered or heard it will certainly deliver one from material bondage, even if the pronunciation is incorrect. However, the verse goes on to say:

*tac ced deha-draviṇa-janatā-lobha-pāṣaṇḍa-madhye  
nikṣiptam syān na phala-janakam śīghram evātra vipra*

But if one commits offenses out of greed to enhance one's bodily comforts, wealth, or followers, then such chanting will still give results, but they will be delayed.

*Bhagavad-gītā* (2.40) states:

*nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate  
sv-āpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*

In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear.

Since the chanting of the holy name is *bhakti*, the result of such chanting cannot be destroyed. But the *Padma Purāṇa* clarifies, *na phala-janakam śīghram* — if there are offenses then the result will not come soon. One will become distanced from devotion. Therefore the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-abhidhāna* (Gaudiya Vaishnava dictionary in Bengali) defines *āparādha* as, *rādhā-śūnya* — "devoid of Radha".

So there are ten offenses to the holy name, and any of them will delay the results of the chanting. But still, *sādhu-nindā* is *parama-āparādha*. Why is that?

In his *Bhakti-sandarbha* (313), Srila Jiva Goswami quotes this statement concerning the severity of *sādhu-nindā*:

*ye nindanti hṛṣīkeśam tad-bhaktān puṇya-rūpiṇam  
śata-janmārjitān puṇyam teṣān naśyati niścitam  
te pacyante mahā-ghore kumbhīpāke bhayānake  
bhakṣitāḥ kīṭa-saṅghena yāvāc candra-divākarau*

One who criticizes Lord Vishnu or His devotees loses all the benefits accrued in a hundred pious births. Such a person rots in the Kumbhipak hell and is bitten by worms as long as the sun and moon exist.

*Vaiṣṇava aparādha* is thus a very serious offense and a great obstacle on the path of devotion. This issue of *Sri Krishna-kathamrita* examines this offense from a number of perspectives: from the teachings of our *ācāryas* such as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Thakur Bhaktivinode, Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta

Saraswati Thakur, as well through stories from the lives of Sachi-mata, Devakinandan Das, Jahnava Devi, Srila Rupa Goswami, and Krishna-priya Thakurani.

We have compiled this issue hoping that it may bring some pleasure to our revered spiritual master and the exalted *vaiṣṇavas*. We also hope that by this endeavor we might gain freedom from the dangerous grip of *vaiṣṇava aparādha*, which will allow us to very soon begin to taste the fruit of chanting the holy name.

*doṣa kṣami' mo adhame koro nija dāsa* — "O *vaiṣṇavas*, please overlook my faults and make me your servant."

— Śrī guru *vaiṣṇava dāsa anudāsa ābhāsa*,  
Madhavananda Das

## Letters to the Editor

*The response to our last issue was overwhelming. We want to thank all of those who took time to write us and offer their encouraging words. We are sorry but due to space limitations we are not able to print all of the letters we received.*

### Alarnath Magazine

The Alarnath edition of *Sri Krishna-kathamrita* is the best yet. You have excelled yourself. I am particularly taken by the article from *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* [Stages and Varieties of Faith]. The topic of varieties of faith and how they should be seen and interacted with has been current with me for along time.

— Isha Prakash Das

Like all the other issues, I very much appreciated the *Sri Krishna-kathamrita* issue on Alarnath. I like very much that you make sure that all the information is in harmony with our line, making sure that we get *rūpānuga* and *śrīla-prabhupādānuga* information. In this way, one feels very safe and sure, relishing all the information.

I want to request you that your transcendental pen will never become exhausted, which will be possible when you are always desiring to please guru and Krishna. Then the Lord, who gives what the devotee needs and maintains what he has, will always give you transcendental inspiration so that you can write for many thousands of years.

— Sacinandana Swami

The "Beyond Awe and Reverence" magazine is just FANTASTIC! Actually I am too neophyte to even be able to glorify this edition.

— Bhakta Amit Hingorani

### Your Letters are welcome. Write to:

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Please include your name and address. Published letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Issues 4 and 5 of *Sri Krishna-kathamrita* magazine were very beautiful, both in terms of their artwork and their inner content. The esoteric meaning of Alarnath was a great treat for me to learn. You are doing a great service to share these teachings with all of us in Prabhupada's movement. There appears to be no end to the nectar flowing from your publications.

— Satsvarupa dasa Gosvami

### Sādhu-saṅga and Institutions

It seems that although we receive the favor of *sādhu* we are frequently not able to comprehend or keep it. What does it depend on? Our good luck, *sukṛti*?

And please be merciful to this fallen soul and tell her why Srila Gour Govinda Maharaja said that he wanted to show people who are leaving Prabhupada's

Letters continued on page 54



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# The Most Dangerous



Excerpts from the  
teachings of

His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta  
Swami Prabhupada

# Offense

## Recognizing a Vaiṣṇava

The simple definition of *vaiṣṇava* is given by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: a person who immediately reminds one of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is a *vaiṣṇava*.  
— Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.21.37.

When one is advanced, he can see the importance of devotees. An advanced devotee never disobeys or disrespects another devotee. Disrespecting another devotee is a great offense. *vaiṣṇava aparādha* is a very serious offense. Therefore we teach [our students] to address devotees as, “Prabhu”. This should not be simply spoken by the lips. It should be realized. One should think of other devotees as his *prabhu*, master. Not that he should try to become master.

*ṭṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā  
amāninā mānadena...*

*Mānadena*, we should be always ready to offer respect to all. Not only devotees, but everyone. Everyone. Because every living entity is originally a devotee of Krishna. Circumstantially, being covered by the coat of *māyā*, he is playing like a demon. But his original nature is a devotee of Krishna. *jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa*  
— Everyone is eternally the servant of Krishna.<sup>1</sup>

— Lecture on *The Nectar of Devotion*, Vrindavan,  
23 October 1972.

Krishna’s devotee is not subjected to material conditions, even though his bodily features may appear materially conditioned. One should therefore not see a pure devotee from a materialistic point of view. Unless one is actually a devotee he cannot see another devotee perfectly. As explained

in the previous verse, there are three types of devotees — *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, *madhyama-adhikārī* and *uttama-adhikārī*. The *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* cannot distinguish between a devotee and a nondevotee. He is simply concerned with worshiping the deity in the temple. A *madhyama-adhikārī*, however, can distinguish between the devotee and nondevotee as well as between the devotee and the Lord. Thus he treats the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the devotee and the nondevotee in different ways.

— Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 6.

## Do Not Offend Anyone

Because of having insulted Dhruva Maharaja, Suruchi would become mad upon the death of her son and would enter a forest fire, and thus her life would be ended. This was specifically mentioned by the Lord to Dhruva because he was determined for revenge against her. From this we should take the lesson that we should never try to insult a *vaiṣṇava*. Not only should we not insult a *vaiṣṇava*, we should not insult anyone unnecessarily. When Suruchi insulted Dhruva Maharaja he was just a child. She of course did not know that Dhruva was a greatly recognized *vaiṣṇava*, and so her offense was committed unknowingly. When one serves a *vaiṣṇava* unknowingly one still gets the good result, and if one unknowingly insults a *vaiṣṇava* one suffers the bad result.

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.9.23.

## Don’t Judge Vaiṣṇavas Based on Their External Body

According to this formula, the *gosvāmīs* who are descendants of Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Adwaita Prabhu are certainly devotees, but devotees coming from other families should not

be discriminated against; indeed, whether the devotees come from a family of previous *ācāryas* or from an ordinary family, they should be treated equally. One should not think, "Oh, here is an American *gosvāmī*," and discriminate against him. Nor should one think, "Here is a *nityānanda-vaṁśa-gosvāmī*."

—Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 6.

On the other hand, a devotee who has attained the title of *gosvāmī* but is not born of a *brāhmaṇa* father or of a *gosvāmī* in the family of Nityananda or Adwaita Prabhu should not be artificially puffed up by thinking that he has become a *gosvāmī*. He should always remember that as soon as he becomes materially puffed up, he immediately falls down. This Krishna

of *gosvāmīs* or has the title of *gosvāmī* awarded to him. As soon as anyone becomes envious he falls from the platform of *paramahansa*.

—Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 6.

If we consider the bodily defects of a *vaiṣṇava* we should understand that we are committing an offense at the lotus feet of the *vaiṣṇava*.

—Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 6.

Those who think that Krishna consciousness is limited to a certain section of people, a certain section of devotees, or a certain tract of land are generally prone to see the external features of the devotee. Such neophytes, unable to appreciate the exalted service of the advanced devotee, try to bring the *mahā-bhāgavata* to their platform.

—Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 6.

### What about a Fallen Vaiṣṇava?

No one should criticize the bodily defects of a pure devotee. If there are such defects they should be overlooked. What should be taken into account is the spiritual master's main business, which is devotional service, pure service to the Supreme Lord. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30):

*api cet sudurācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ  
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

Even if a devotee sometimes seems to engage in abominable activities, he should be considered a sadhu, a saintly person, because his actual identity is that of one engaged in the loving service of the Lord. In other words, he is not to be considered an ordinary human being.

—Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 6.

*Api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ, sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ.*<sup>2</sup> Even there are some discrepancies, but if the only one qualification is there, that he's sticking to Krishna consciousness rigidly, then he is a sadhu. *sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ* — He is not to be neglected.<sup>3</sup>  
—Lecture on *The Nectar of Devotion*, Vrindavan, 6 Nov 1972.

### Respect but Don't Associate

Regarding your questions how to offer respects to *sannyāsīs*. Every *sannyāsī* you see, even a *māyāvādī sannyāsī*, offer him your respects — there will be no harm. As you have observed, we shall follow Lord Chaitanya's instruction that we give all due respects to others regarding their position, but there is no need of always associating with them. If there is a *vaiṣṇava* not of good character, we can give him the *vaiṣṇava* respect, but we cannot associate with him.

—Letter to Jayapataka 30 April 1970.



Photo by Ranjan Das

consciousness movement is a transcendental science, and there is no room for jealousy. This movement is meant for the *paramahansas*, who are completely free from all jealousy (*paramam nirmatsarāṇām*). One should not be jealous whether he is born in a family



## How to Correct Neophyte Devotees

I have noted your several complaints against the devotees. But it would be better to set the example rather than to criticize the defects of the devotees. We should always remember that we recruit members from people in general. It is not expected that every one of our members should be immediately to the standard qualification. The best thing for you is to set the example by your personal behavior and try to reform the others not by criticizing but by friendly behavior.

— Letter to a disciple, 14 Oct 1971.

## Dealing with Superior Vaiṣṇavas

It is also an offense to consider an empowered *vaiṣṇava* an object of disciplinary action. It is offensive to try to give him advice or to correct him. One can distinguish between a neophyte *vaiṣṇava* and an advanced *vaiṣṇava* by their activities. The advanced *vaiṣṇava* is always situated as the spiritual master, and the neophyte is always considered his disciple. The spiritual master must not be subjected to the advice of a disciple, nor should a spiritual master be obliged to take instructions from those who are not his disciples.

— Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 6.

## Greatest Offense

... if one offends a *vaiṣṇava* he spoils all his spiritual assets. Offending a *brāhmaṇa* is very dangerous, and this was known to Maharaja Rahugana. He therefore frankly admitted his fault. There are many dangerous things — thunderbolts, fire, Yamaraj's punishment, the punishment of Lord Siva's trident, and so forth — but none is considered as serious as offending a *brāhmaṇa* like Jada Bharat.

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 5.10.17.

The most grievous type of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is called *guro-aparādha*, which refers to offenses at the lotus feet of the spiritual master. In the chanting of the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead this *guro-aparādha* is considered the most grievous offense.

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.21.37.

## Results of Vaiṣṇava-aparādha

The *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* cites the following quotation from the *Skanda Purāṇa* concerning the blaspheming of a *vaiṣṇava*:

*yo hi bhāgavatam lokam upahāsam nṛpottama  
karoti tasya naśyanti artha-dharma-yaśaḥ-sutāḥ*

*nindām kurvanti ye mūḍhā vaiṣṇavānām mahātmanām  
patanti pityrbhiḥ sārtham mahā-raurava-samjñite*

*hanti nindati vai doṣṭi vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati  
krudhyate yāti no harṣam darśane patanāni ṣaṭ*

In a conversation between Markandeya and Bhagirath, it is said, "My dear king, one who derides an exalted devotee loses the results of his pious activities, his opulence, his reputation, and his sons. *Vaiṣṇavas* are all great souls. Whoever blasphemes them falls down to the hell known as Maha-raurava, accompanied by his forefathers. Whoever kills or blasphemes a *vaiṣṇava* and whoever is envious of a *vaiṣṇava* or angry with him, or whoever does not offer



Photo by Ranjan Das

him obeisances or feel joy upon seeing him, certainly falls into a hellish condition."

Also, the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (10.314) gives the following quotation from the *Dvārakā-māhātmya*:

*kara-patrais ca phālyante su-tīvair yama-sāsanaiḥ  
nindām kurvanti ye pāpā vaiṣṇavānām mahātmanām*



In a conversation between Prahlad Maharaja and Bali Maharaja it is said, "Those sinful people who blaspheme *vaiṣṇavas*, who are all great souls, are subjected very severely to the punishment offered by Yamaraj."

In his *Bhakti-sandarbha* (313), Jiva Goswami quotes this statement concerning the blaspheming of Lord Vishnu:

*ye nindanti hṛṣīkeśam tad-bhaktam puṇya-rūpiṇam  
śata-janmārjitam puṇyam teṣāṃ naśyati niścitam*

*te pacyante mahā-ghore kumbhīpāke bhayānake  
bhakṣitāḥ kīṭa-saṅghena yāvaca candra-dīvākarau*

*śrī-viṣṇor avamānanād gurutarām śrī-vaiṣṇavollaṅghanam*

*tadīya-dūṣaka-janān na paśyēt puruṣādhamān  
taiḥ sārtham vañcaka-janaiḥ saha-vāsān na kārayet*

"One who criticizes Lord Vishnu and His devotees loses all the benefits accrued in a hundred pious births. Such a person rots in the Kumbhipaka hell and is bitten by worms for as

long as the sun and moon exist. One should therefore not even see the face of a person who blasphemes Lord Vishnu and His devotees. Never try to associate with such persons."

In his *Bhakti-sandarbha* (265), Jiva Goswami further quotes from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.74.40):

*nindām bhagavataḥ śṛṇvāms tat-parasya janasya vā  
tato nāpaiti yaḥ so 'pi yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ*

"If one does not immediately leave upon hearing the Lord or the Lord's devotee blasphemed he falls down from devotional service."

— Purport to *Cc. madhya* 15.261.

Giving up the regulative principles and living according to one's whims is compared to a mad elephant which by force uproots the *bhakti-latā* and breaks it to pieces. In this way the *bhakti-latā* shrivels up. Such an offense is especially created when one disobeys the instructions of the spiritual master. This is called *guru-avajñā*. The devotee must therefore be very careful not to commit offenses against the spiritual master by disobeying his instructions. As soon as one is deviated from the instructions of the spiritual master, the uprooting of the *bhakti-latā* begins, and gradually all the leaves dry up.

— Purport to *Cc. madhya* 19.156.

When a mad elephant enters a beautiful garden, it destroys everything, leaving a barren field. Similarly, the power of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is so great that even an advanced devotee becomes almost devoid of his spiritual assets if he commits it. Since Krishna consciousness is eternal, it cannot be destroyed altogether, but advancement may be checked for the time being.

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 5.1.5.

### **Vaiṣṇava-aparādha Comes from Associating with Non-devotees**

When one associates with non-devotees the maddened elephant is set loose. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said, *asat-saṅga-tyāga*,—*ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra*. The first business of a *vaiṣṇava* is to give up the company of non-devotees. A so-called mature devotee, however, commits a great offense by giving up the company of pure devotees. The human being is a social animal, and if one gives up the society of pure devotees he must associate with non-devotees (*asat-saṅga*). By contacting non-devotees and engaging in non-devotional activities,

a so-called mature devotee will fall victim to the mad elephant offense. Whatever growth has taken place is quickly uprooted by such an offense. One should therefore be very careful to defend the creeper by fencing it in — that is, by following the regulative principles and associating with pure devotees.

Even if one thinks that there are many pseudo devotees or non-devotees in the Krishna consciousness society, still one should stick to the society; if one thinks the society's members are not pure devotees, one can keep direct company with the spiritual master, and if there is any doubt, one should consult the spiritual master. However, unless one follows the spiritual master's instructions concerning the regulative principles and chanting and hearing the holy name of the Lord, one cannot become a pure devotee. By one's mental concoctions one falls down. By associating with non-devotees one breaks the regulative principles and is thereby lost.

— Purport to *Cc. madhya* 19.157.



Photo by Ranjan Das

## Material Opulence is an Impetus for Vaiṣṇava-aparādha

To be extremely opulent in materialistic advancement is sometimes very risky. The materially opulent person does not care about anyone, and thus he commits offenses to great personalities such as devotees and great saints. This is the way of material opulence. As described by Sukadev Goswami, *dhana-durmadāndha*: too much wealth makes one blind. This happens even to Indra in his heavenly kingdom, and what to speak of others in this material world? When one is materially opulent, he should learn to be sober and well-behaved toward *vaiṣṇavas* and saintly persons; otherwise he will fall down.

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 8.5.15-16.

## A Vaiṣṇava Tolerates Insults

... a pure *vaiṣṇava* never takes anyone's insults seriously. This is the teaching of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

*tṛṇād api sunicena taror iva sahiṣṇunā  
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*<sup>4</sup>

"One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly."

A *vaiṣṇava* is always tolerant and submissive like trees and grass. He tolerates insults offered by others, for he is simply interested in chanting the holy name of the Lord without being disturbed.

— Purport to *Cc. antya* 3.207.

## Krishna Never Tolerates Offenses to His Devotees

Even if you insult Krishna, He will tolerate. But if you insult His devotee He will never tolerate. Then you are finished. Just like a big man. If you insult him he may think, "All right, let him." But if you insult or do some harm to his child he will never tolerate. Similarly, a devotee who is dependent on Krishna in everything, and if somebody does harm to him, insults him, Krishna will never tolerate.

— Lecture in Los Angeles, 2 December 1973.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Cc. madhya* 20.108.

<sup>2</sup> *Bg.* 9.30.

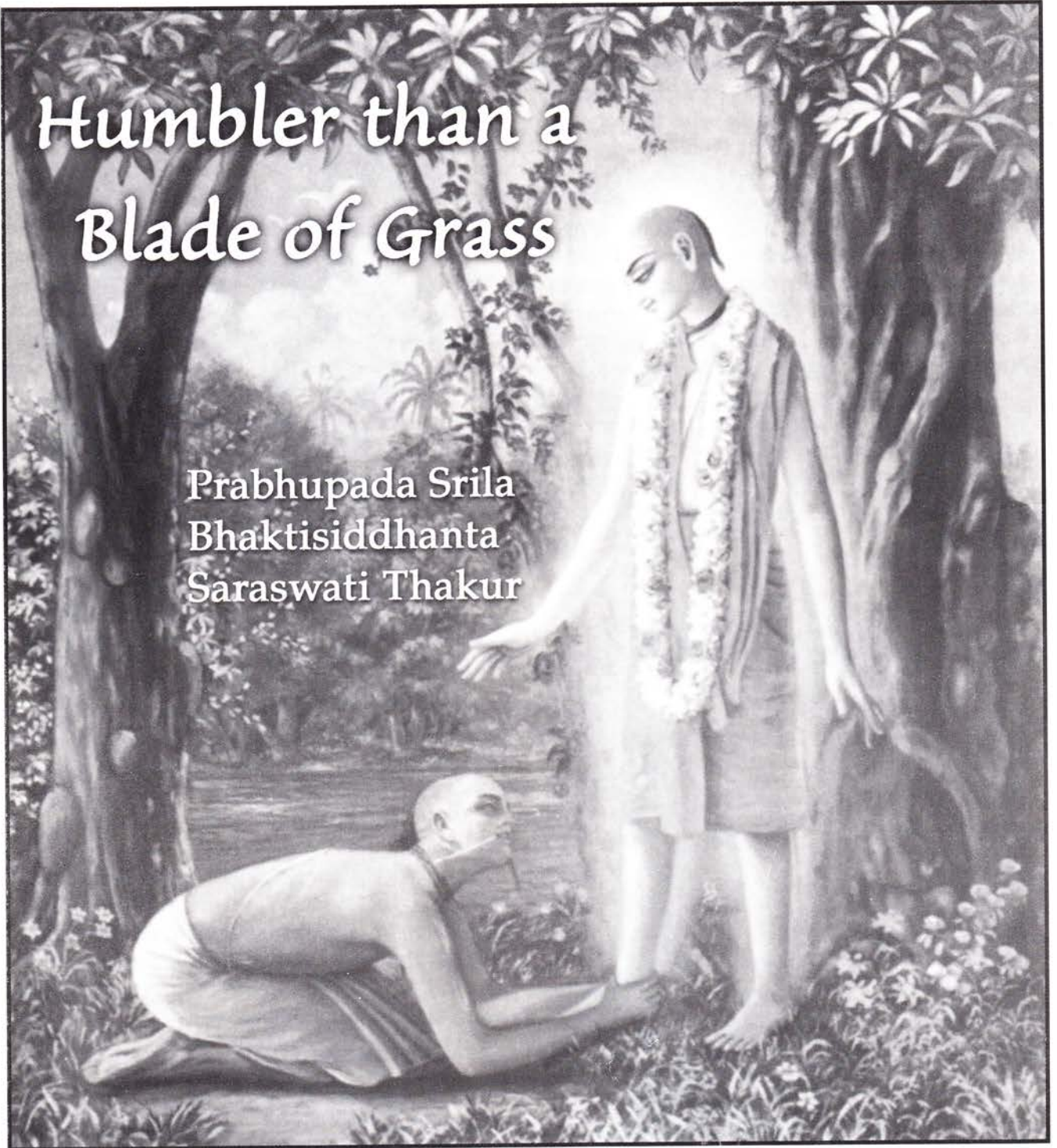
<sup>3</sup> *Bg.* 9.30.

<sup>4</sup> *Cc. adi* 17.31.



# Humbler than a Blade of Grass

Prabhupada Srila  
Bhaktisiddhanta  
Saraswati Thakur



If we become arrogant after having adopted the path of devotion, if we worship only God and disregard the worship of His devotees, then we will be subjected to manifold difficulties for our offense at the feet of the servants of God. We will be overtaken by the greatest of all misfortunes by being afflicted with apathy for the principle of devotion itself.

Human life is meant solely for the attainment of the supreme good. Why do I forget it? Why do I forget

that I am the meanest and least of all entities? The ambition to lord it over others, to be great, to be an elevationist or a salvationist, is brought about when we allow ourselves to fall victim to the temptations of the deluding energy of God. Such ambition is petty and useless. If there is any use in curbing one's hankering after becoming great in the eyes of the world, if there is any use in gaining one's real health, it is imperative to accept the line of thought of the *vaiṣṇavas*.

Those who are fit possess abundant power of devotion. They are strong. I should not apply myself to find out the shortcomings of the *vaiṣṇavas*, or to condemn the service of Lord Vishnu or to seek to establish my own point of view by neglecting the method by which I may be enabled to serve the Lord and His devotees. No language can describe the havoc that is wrought in human life by such arrogance. I make this submission with all humility, "May you kindly refrain from merely imitating the conduct of the *vaiṣṇavas*. May you always follow their line of thought." There is no relationship for us other than with the devotees of Vishnu. Relationship with other persons can only aggravate the desire for sensuous gratification.

One who serves Lord Hari counts himself as the least of all entities. One is lifted to the highest order of the *vaiṣṇavas* when one can feel himself the least of all. One can then proclaim the message of the highest devotion to Lord Hari. "The best of all persons deems himself to be less than all others." Such is the great dictum.

It is necessary for the best to scrutinize their own ineligibility. Why should a person be anxious to pry into the defects of others when he does not seek to scrutinize his own conduct? Is this the disposition of the *vaiṣṇava*? Even those who are low in the scale of service may attain the higher level. Let us remember the texts: "Not to speak of persons who listen to and remember with care the instructions of the spiritual scriptures, even those who live by sin, viz., women, *sūdras*, *hūṇas*, *śabaras*, and the birds of the air, can know God and prevail over His deluding power if they follow the conduct of the devoted servants of the Lord who covers all the worlds by His wonderful strides."<sup>1</sup>

"Even the wise cannot understand the acts and expressions of the *vaiṣṇavas*."<sup>2</sup> The devotees are attached to the Lord who pervades the worlds with His wonderful strides. Let us not be misled by apparent considerations. Many a person has mistaken the pebble

for the pearl, the snake for the rope, or evil for good by falling a victim to delusion by too much reliance on appearances. It is only when a person allows himself to fall into the clutches of self-delusion by supposing himself to be an inhabitant of this phenomenal world that one's senses show their eagerness for supplying the wants incidental to this world. We should consider well how we can be delivered from being thus exploited by the deluding energy. We will never obtain relief if we adopt the mentality that we are the supplier of our

own wants, taking care to avoid what certain hasty persons have dubbed, 'the slave mentality of the devotees of God.' Such modes of thinking accelerate our march towards the inferno by plunging us into the course of sensuous indulgences.

If in order to elevate ourselves we disregard or ignore the devotees of God, we would thereby be cast into the prison of three dimensions and spring towards inflation instead of contraction. The proper kind of judgment is to resolve for ourselves: "I will be good." "I will be

cured of my mundane desires." "I will have real well-being." It is not at all laudable to entertain the contrary thoughts, "I will be great." "I will gratify my malice by stopping the course of the whole world." It is by no means proper to set up one's superiority against the worshipfulness of God's devotees. The path of hearing the transcendental word has been obscured by the misinterpretation of the text "*aham brahmāsmi*". I have listened to the true interpretation of this text at the lotus feet of my divine master. The correct understanding is to this effect, "It is our eternal duty to chant constantly the name of Hari, by being infinitely more truly humble than the smallest blade of grass, more truly forbearing than even the proverbially patient tree, and to honor others without seeking honor."

What persuasive courtesy, what humility do these words express! How great is the benefit, how great the good that we may have by listening to such words!



We have it from the *Upaniṣads* that those who aspire to be masters of the devotees, who are the masters of God Himself,<sup>3</sup> are indeed, most culpably arrogant. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* significantly declares, “Let those who profess to know God brag of their knowledge, but let me have nothing to do with such fellows. This is all I have got to say in this matter.”<sup>4</sup>

Not one among the paths of this material world is a path of the service of the divinity. The idea that one should be master of God’s devotees leads to inferno. It is harmful to follow any worldly path. To follow the devotees of God is the only path that leads to one’s real good. Whatever method the devotees follow is worthy of being cherished with the utmost love and reverence.

Holding straw between my teeth I pray time and again only for this boon, that I may be a particle of dust of the lotus feet of the most revered Sri Rupa Goswami Prabhu. Birth after birth may we follow the path of the devotees of Sri Rupa by being particles of dust on the lotus feet of the Lord’s devotees. The root of all this is humility or the due realization of one’s own ineligibility. If the conviction of our unfitness for the service of God is revealed to us either automatically or by the instruction of other persons, we are only then in a position to appreciate the beauty of the lotus feet of God’s devotees. In all of the talks of the average people of this world the idea that is uppermost is how to promote the gratification of one’s senses. If we happen to be obsessed with the idea that such is the path of religion, we would be prevented for good from becoming truly religious.

All persons are accustomed to worship the beautiful feet of God. But the conception of God as a supplier for our comforts and conveniences in lieu of worship is worthy of a shopkeeper. Desiring to receive things in exchange for our worship is not the trend of thought of the devotees of God. If one seeks to follow such a course, one will never understand the nature of the service of Krishna. God is full of the highest well-being. It is no proof of one’s goodness of judgment to pray to God for the gratification of one’s senses instead of praying for the highest good. It should be the duty of all persons to follow the line of thought that seeks to find out how Krishna is to be served.

“Oh my Lord, I pray to Thee for being employed in Thy service. I will no more serve dogs and horses, iron and gold, men and gods. I have courted my own destruction by engaging in their service. Thy service, O Lord, is the only means of being delivered from this dire misfortune. But it is a far cry to seek to obtain Thy service without serving those who have dedicated themselves to Thy service. The service of Thy devotees is productive of greater good than any other method.

We do not find God in this world. The devotees, out of their mercy, show themselves to us. We should follow their conduct and teaching. It is the only path to our well-being. Due to our meager education and small experience, to most of us the ideas and ways of thinking of the devotees of God appear to be an unedifying slave mentality. Let us not indulge in such profane ravings under the urge of mental aberration. On the contrary, our line of thought should be, “Let the censorious people calumniate [slander] us to their hearts’ content. We will not mind them. Let us roll in the dust and forget everything in the ecstasy of intoxication by excessive drinking of the strong and tasty wine of the love of Lord Hari.”

—From *Srī Caitanya’s Teachings*, Chapter VI, pages 283-288



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to *Bhāg.* 2.7.46:

*te vai vidanty atitaranti ca deva-māyām  
strī-sūdra-hūna-sābarā api pāpa-jīvāḥ  
yady adbhuta-krama-parāyana-sīla-śikṣās  
tiryag-jaṇā api kim u śruta-dhāraṇā ye*

Women, fourth-class men, uncivilized hill tribes, hunters and many others born of low families, as well as birds and beasts, can engage in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead — who acts very wonderfully — and follow the path of the devotees and take lessons from them. Although the ocean of nescience is vast, they can still cross over it. What, then, is the difficulty for those who are advanced in Vedic knowledge?

<sup>2</sup> This is a reference to *Cc. madhya* 23.39:

*yānra citte kṣṇa-premā karaye udaya  
tānra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*

Even the most learned man cannot understand the words, activities and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead.

<sup>3</sup> Krishna describes:

*sadā mukto ‘pi baddho ‘smi bhaktena sneha rajjubhiḥ  
ajito ‘pi jito ‘ham tair avaśo ‘pi vaśīkṛtaḥ*

“Although I am supremely free and independent, eternally liberated, and unconquerable, still I am bound up with the rope of love of My *bhakta*.”

— *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* 14.29.

<sup>4</sup> This is a reference to *Bhāg.* 10.14.38:

*jānanta eva jānantu kim bahūktyā na me prabho  
manaso vapuṣo vāco vaibhavaṁ tava go-caraḥ*

There are people who say, “I know everything about Krishna.” Let them think that way. As far as I am concerned, I do not wish to speak very much about this matter. O my Lord, let me say this much: As far as Your opulences are concerned, they are all beyond the reach of my mind, body and words.

# Jahnava-mata and the Miscreants

Adapted from Srila Narahari Chakravarti's  
*Sri Bhakti-ratnākara*, chapter 11, texts 30-89



Painting by Narayan Das

When Jahnava-mata, the wife of Lord Nityananda Prabhu, went to Vrindavan she bestowed mercy upon everyone she met along the way. One day, arriving at a large village, Sri Jahnava saw the miserable condition of the residents and reflected upon how to make their lives glorious. Most of the villagers were *pāṣaṇḍīs*, offenders and atheists, who were accustomed to ridiculing the *vaiṣṇavas*.

*Sri Krishna-kathamrita*

That evening, the envious persons saw a group of *mahā-bhāgavatas* come to worship the lotus feet of Jahnava Thakurani. The *pāṣaṇḍīs* smiled derisively, saying, "This wife of a *brāhmaṇa* has captured our attention."

One said, "These *vaiṣṇavas* are ignorant, therefore they are bowing down to a human being instead of bowing down to the demigods."

Another said, "If Chandi (Durga) gives her mercy then they will be able to understand."



Srimati Jahnava Devi Speaks on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam

Another said, "How will these fools understand? Neither this wife of a *brāhmaṇa* nor the *brāhmaṇas* with her have offered worship to Goddess Chandi. These *vaiṣṇavas* have committed an offense to the goddess!"

Laughing amongst themselves, the *pāṣaṇḍīs* arrogantly went to the temple of Chandi Devi. After offering obeisances, again and again they told Goddess Chandi, "This very night we will kill them. Only if they worship your lotus feet with their body, mind and words may they be saved." Saying this, the *pāṣaṇḍīs* went back to their homes and fell asleep.

Goddess Chandi indeed became angry — with the foolish demons and not with the *vaiṣṇavas*! Her eyes turned red and her lips quivered in anger. Appearing in the dream of each one of those villagers, the goddess chastised them angrily with many harsh words. In roaring fury, Chandi said, "Oh wicked offenders! I will not tolerate your nasty activities. I will cut off your heads! You are drowning in false pride and have lost all intelligence by blaspheming the all-worshipable pure devotees of the Lord. You do not know the truth about this *brāhmaṇa*'s wife. Know from me that she is the

wife of Nityananda-Balaram Chandra, and is worshipable by all. Her name, Jahnava, is full of sweetness. Simply by uttering her name all material miseries are removed. She is the dear wife of Prabhu Nityananda, who is Himself the manifestation of mercy, spontaneously distributing *prema-bhakti* to all the *jīvas*. There is no one who does not worship her lotus feet. All are glorifying her and thereby destroying the miseries of this material world."

Chandi said:

*nityānanda-priyāṁ prema-bhakti-ratna-pradāyiniṁ  
śrī jāhnaveśvarīṁ vande tāpa-traya-nivāriṇīṁ*

"I worship Sri Jahnava Ishwari. She is the wife of Lord Nityananda and the giver of the jewel of *prema-bhakti*. She eradicates the three-fold miseries of material existence. [Br. 11.52]

"If she bestows her mercy upon you, your life will be happy. Otherwise you will only suffer. If you surrender to her then you will escape, otherwise I will kill you all!"

After speaking in this way, the goddess disappeared. The wicked sinners at once woke up, trembling in fear. When morning arrived, with deep remorse in their hearts, they immediately went to see the exalted *vaiṣṇavas*. With tears in their eyes they begged forgiveness again and again, "We

have committed a great offense, please excuse us. You have come only to deliver great atheists like us. Please eradicate our offenses. We take shelter at your lotus feet. Sri Ishwari, Jahnava Devi, will be pleased if we make you happy. You have the ability to both give and receive *bhakti*." They wanted the mercy of the *mahantas*, knowing that if the *mahantas* forgave them then surely Jahnava-mata would also forgive them.

They began to pray to Jahnava Devi, "Chandi has told us that we cannot understand you in *tattva*. Please be merciful and reveal yourself to us. Otherwise how will we be able to take shelter of your lotus feet? Everyone knows that we are very wicked demons. If you deliver us then your fame will spread all over the world." Saying this, all the *pāṣaṇḍīs* prostrated themselves at Sri Ishwari's feet. Seeing their miserable condition, Jahnava's heart melted and she bestowed her mercy upon them. Receiving Jahnava's unlimited mercy, all those *pāṣaṇḍīs* became happy. After blessing the heretics, Jahnava Devi stayed in that village for two or four days and then continued her journey. By the mercy of Jahnava-mata, all of those former *pāṣaṇḍīs*



began to swim in an ocean of *bhakti*. Furthermore, those who got their association also became devotees.

### The Robbers

Continuing her journey to Vrindavan, along the way Jahnava Devi stopped at another village, a sacred place on the bank of a river. In that village were a group of *yavana* dacoits, Muslim thieves, who were very dangerous. Seeing Jahnava Devi and her associates, the thieves thought they must be carrying jewels and other valuable possessions. Deciding to rob Jahnava, they gathered different weapons and sent one of their men to find out everything about her camp. The spy reported that after finishing *nāma-kīrtana*, Jahnava Devi and her followers had all fallen asleep.

During the second half of the night the leader of the gang of bandits took many men and weapons and began running towards Jahnava's camp. Somehow the short distance they had to cover could not be crossed, as it continually grew further and further away. Because of their wicked desires they could not understand what was happening. The distance to the camp became so far that the bandits spent the whole night running. When dawn finally began to break they became frightened. The leader of the gang was confused as to how they had run the entire night but were still in their original place in the morning.



Painting by Narayan Das

*Goddess Chandi Comes in a Dream*

The leader told the other thieves, "What has happened is impossible! Due to our offensive desire to steal from these *gauḍīya-sādhus* we have run all night long for a distance that should have taken us only a few minutes. My heart is trembling out of fear and I foresee inauspicious days ahead for us. We have committed innumerable sins and great punishment in hell awaits us. In my opinion we should beg forgiveness. Let us go to that *vaiṣṇava* woman and beg for her mercy."

Together they gave up their bandit's clothing and humbly approached Sri Ishwari Devi. Upon seeing the pure devotees, the dacoits received pure knowledge and were transformed. Crying, they rolled on the ground at the feet of Jahnava-mata and begged for her mercy. "We are notorious thieves. Please be merciful to us. If you will bestow your mercy on us you will be praised throughout the world." Saying this, they became silent as tears rolled down their cheeks like rain. Sri Ishwari immediately forgave them and blessed them, and the news of her mercy towards the dacoits spread far and wide.



— Translated by Trailokyanath Das.  
From the Gaudiya Mission edition of  
*Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara*. Bagbazar, Calcutta. 1987



Painting by Narayan Das

*Worshiping Goddess Chandi*

# An Offense to Krishna-priya Thakurani

From Srila Narahari Chakravarti's  
*Narottama Vilāsa*



Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu once very carefully gave a *govardhana-śilā* to Sri Raghunath Das Goswami. No one can begin to describe the bliss that Das Goswami felt while worshiping that holy rock. When Das Goswami left this world, Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami became absorbed in serving that *śilā* with great care and attention. When Kaviraj Goswami left this world, then Sri Mukunda Das sank into the ocean of *prema* simply by serving the *śilā*, and he worshiped it for quite some time thereafter.

Now I will elaborate about how the *govardhana-śilā* was passed on. The most dear devotee of Sri Lokanath Goswami is Sri Thakur Narottam Mahasaya. Narottam's disciple was Chakravarti Ganga-narayan. Ganga-narayan's wife was named Vishnu-priya. Her heart was happiest when she was absorbed in the *rasa* of serving Sri Govindadev. Her daughter Krishna-priya was just like pure devotion personified. Indeed, she was so devotional that she even earned the title, "*rādhā-kunḍa-vāsī thākuraṇī*". She left Gaudadesh and wandered all over Vraja. Observing strict self-imposed rules and regulations, she settled at Sri Radhakund. At this time, Sri Mukunda Das observed her wonderful character, and he continually praised her in great happiness.

When Mukunda Das became very old, he once ate some bad food and developed a stomach disorder. But Krishna-priya put him on such a diet that cured the malady and gave him a good appetite as well. Mukunda Das would tell her again and again, "You show affection for me just like a mother." One day, he said, "I cannot fathom the great devotion you have for Lord Krishna. Therefore, you are certainly fit for the transcendental mellows of this *govardhana-śilā*." Saying this, he handed over the sacred rock of

Das Goswami to her. A few days later, Mukunda Das left this world. Thus Thakurani continued rendering service to Raghunath Das Goswami's *govardhana-śilā*. She had such a loving affection for it that, without factually understanding such affection, I can say nothing really concrete about it.

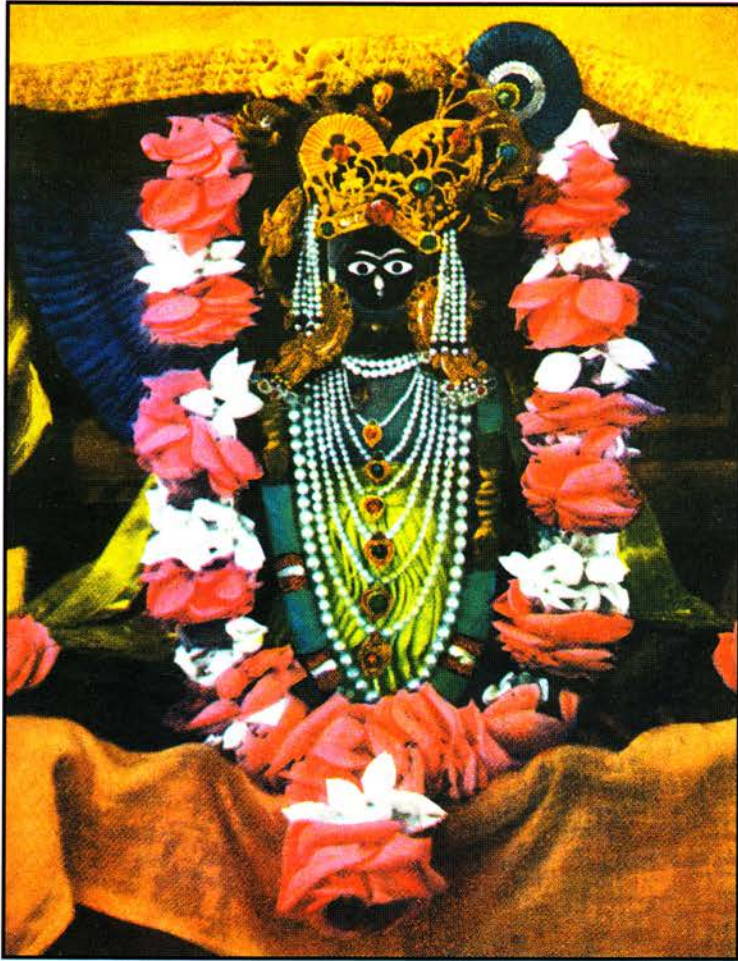
One day, Srimati Krishna-priya Thakurani directly saw Vrajendra-nandan in the *śilā*. There's no way to describe the fun that went on that day.

## Rupa Kaviraj's Offense

It is practically impossible to relate to you the activities of Krishna-priya Thakurani. *Hari-nāma* was constantly present on her tongue. To whomever she showed her mercy, that person would have all desires fulfilled. But if anyone offended her, he became ruined. Once, a devotee named Rupa Kaviraj committed an offense to her; consequently he became afflicted with leprosy and died miserably, becoming a ghost. Some other time I will explain this story in detail. Now I will briefly outline it here.

Rupa Kaviraj was born in a very elevated family and was accustomed to saintly behavior. I will describe what kind of *guru-kṛpā* he received by explaining the different guru-disciple relationships that were current at the time.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's dear devotee is the merciful Sri Lokanath Goswami. His disciple is Srila Narottam Mahasaya. His disciple is Chakravarti Ganga-narayan. His disciple is Chakravarti Sri Krishna-charan. His disciple is Rupa Kaviraj (the godbrother of Viswanath's guru Radha-raman Chakravarti). Sri Rupa Kaviraj traveled with his spiritual master from Gauda to Vraja. He had very firm faith that guru and Krishna are one. Receiving the order of his spiritual master, he resided at Sri Radhakund. Previously

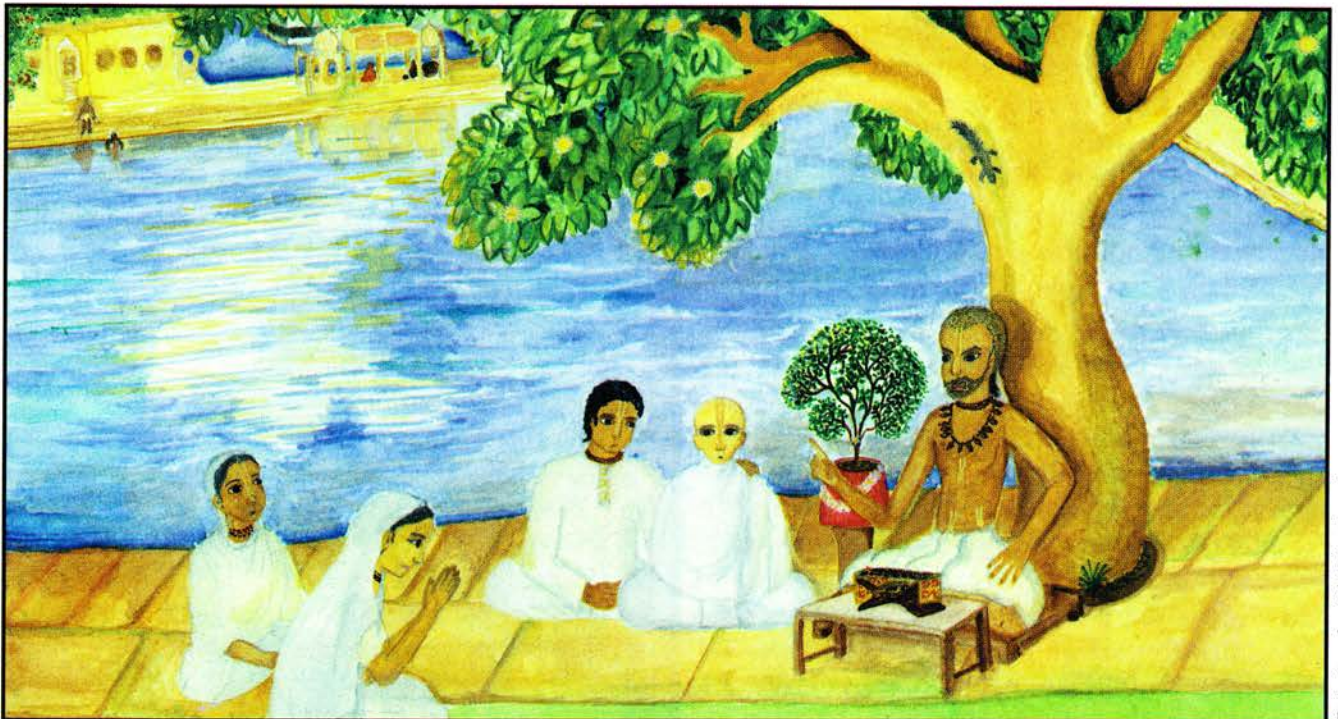


The original govardhana-silā worshiped by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.  
Found today at the Bhagavat Ashram, Raman Reti, Vrindavan.

he had studied different branches of knowledge such as Sanskrit grammar, and subsequently he developed a sincere desire to study the scriptures headed by *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Taking permission from his guru, he thus began to study the literature of devotion under the guidance of Sri Mukunda Das. Sri Krishna-charan Chakravarti then returned to Gauda.

Rupa Kaviraj studied the books of Sri Rupa Goswami, Srila Das Goswami, and others, and thus he became constantly absorbed in tasting and relishing the divine mellows of *prema-bhakti*. All of the residents of Radhakund felt very happy to see him thus engaged. Within a few short days Sri Mukunda Das awarded Rupa Kaviraj with divine transcendental knowledge.

Later, however, after Mukunda Das left this world, an amazing thing happened. Just a few days after Mukunda Das disappeared, this Rupa Kaviraj committed a grave offense unto Srimati Krishna-priya Thakurani. One day, as Rupa Kaviraj was preparing to recite the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, all the *vaiṣṇavas* assembled to hear the transcendental narration. Krishna-priya Thakurani



Rupa Kaviraj criticizes Krishna Priya Thakurani

Painting by Bhaktin Sumitva

arrived in great happiness. Being honored by everyone, she was offered a courteous welcome with great delight by the assembled devotees. However, Rupa Kaviraj did not show her any respect. Nevertheless, she didn't think anything of it, but simply sat there perfectly content and jubilant to listen to *śrī kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

After reciting the *Bhāgavatam* for a short while, Rupa Kaviraj looked up and said to Thakurani, "How is it possible for you to do two things at the same time? It is greatly disturbing to see that while listening to *Śrī Bhāgavata* recited by me your tongue is chanting the holy names. How can you do this?" Thakurani replied, "It is simply the habit of this tongue to constantly chant. It doesn't impede my hearing in the least."

Upon this, Rupa Kaviraj just sat there and became overwhelmed with furious anger. That very moment he was ruined. First, he developed a contemptible mentality towards his own spiritual master, then likewise towards *kṛṣṇa-caitanya-vigraha* and the *vaiṣṇavas*. He became bereft of the supremely rare path of devotion. Being pinched by his offense, he was robbed of the *prema-āveśa* (overwhelming absorption in ecstatic love) that he was previously feeling. In all ways he increased his puffed-up false conception of himself, thinking he was very important and distinguished. Gradually, he committed many more offenses unto others. Concocting his own erroneous philosophy, he became most troubled, and thus he embarked on the selfish path followed by those who are envious of the Supreme Lord.

The luster of his body faded, and his fire of digestion decreased. This lack of luster became visible in every limb. Finally he realized that he was afflicted by leprosy, which was spreading quickly throughout his entire body.

Within a few days, Rupa Kaviraj's envious activities became very clear to everyone. Reduced to a ruined, decaying wretch, he fled back to Gaudadesh. He tried returning to his gurudeva's *āśrama* by deceitfully pretending that nothing was wrong, but everyone there already knew the whole story, and he was greatly embarrassed. The story of Rupa Kaviraj rejecting his guru spread all around, and people were talking about it everywhere. Thus humiliated and utterly ruined, he felt very uneasy in Gauda, so he fled to Orissa and stayed in Khuriya-gram. Living there, his body gradually became eaten up and totally

devastated by the leprosy. Being severely afflicted with pain, he finally died after terrible suffering. Becoming a ghost, he began to seize and haunt other persons who also offended *vaiṣṇavas*. Whomever he haunted would immediately understand, "Now I've committed some offense."

Whenever someone asks me, "If he was such a qualified devotee, then how was it possible for him to suffer this terrible outcome?" Then I reply, "By committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, what can you expect?"

It is stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*vaiṣṇavera sthāne haya kṣudra aparādhā  
mahā mahā premīra premete paḍa vāda*

"By committing a small, seemingly insignificant offense unto a devotee of the Lord, even a topmost devotee who possesses the highest standard of transcendental love falls down from that *prema*."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, has explained all this in detail, informing everyone of the consequence of the bitter fruit of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Therefore, that person who becomes very careful not to offend devotees becomes the greatest, most fortunate person within the entire universe.



— Translated by Dasarath Suta Das

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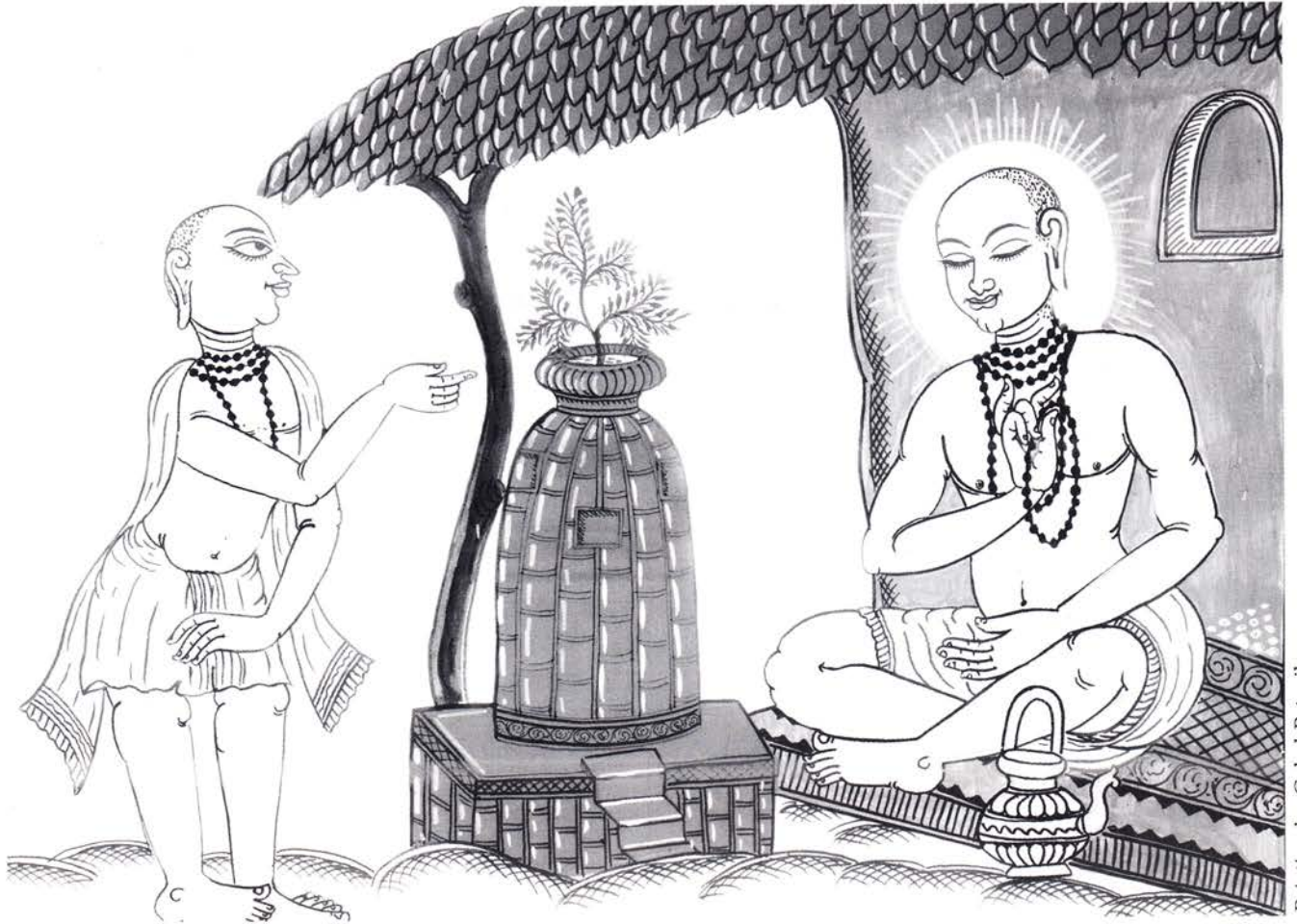
### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This verse quoted by Narahari in *Narottama Vilāsa* is not found in the edition of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* published by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur nor in the version translated and published by Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. As there are many versions of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is possible that this verse is found in another edition. In any case, evidence that even a *premika-bhakta* could fall down upon committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is found in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.10.25):

*mahad-vimānāt sva-kṛtād dhi mādyū  
nanṅṣyaty adūrād api śūlapāṇiḥ*

"If one insults a great devotee then even if they are as powerful as Sulapani, Lord Siva, they will fall down."

# Srila Rupa Goswami's Laughter



Painting by Gokul Patnaik

From Srila Narahari Chakravarti's *Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara*, fifth wave

*bhakta-sthāne sābadhāna habe sarva-mate  
yena kona akauśala nahe tān'ra cite*

Always be careful in your dealings with devotees and never create any ill feelings in their hearts.<sup>1</sup>

*akauśala ha-ile saba haya antarāya  
prasaṅga pāiyā kichu kahiye ethāya*

Creating ill feelings with the devotees will create impediments on one's path. I will relate a story to reveal this truth.<sup>2</sup>

One day in Vrindavan Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupada sat rapt in meditation, feeling great bliss in his heart. While he was sitting in his *samādhi* he observed a wonderful pastime. The *gopīs* were decorating Srimati Radharani while Krishna stood behind Her watching. Krishna revealed His presence to the *sakhīs*, bringing an increasing festival of joy to their hearts, but Radharani was unaware that He was there. In many wonderful ways the *gopīs* braided and decorated Radha's hair. Then they placed a mirror before Her. As She gazed at the beauty of Her own

face, Radharani also saw Sri Krishna's moonlike face in the mirror. Radha became very shy and quickly covered Herself with Her cloth. The *gopīs* happily laughed at this, and Srila Rupa Goswami also joined in their laughter.

Just at that moment a *vaiṣṇava* arrived who was very eager to see Rupa Goswami. Seeing Rupa laughing, the *vaiṣṇava* did not say anything, but feeling very sorrowful in his heart he went to see Srila Sanatan Goswami. [According to the tradition in Vrindavan, this *vaiṣṇava* was a famous devotee named Krishnadas. It is said that Krishnadas was lame and unable to walk and that when Rupa Goswami laughed, Krishnadas thought that he was laughing at his disability.<sup>3</sup>]

The *vaiṣṇava* told Sanatan, "I went to see Sri Rupa, but when he saw me he suddenly burst into laughter. My heart filled with sorrow! I don't know why he acted in that way. I didn't say anything, but came to ask you about it." Sri Sanatan then explained the true

reason for Rupa Goswami's laughter. Hearing this, the *vaiṣṇava* became repentant at heart. Lamenting greatly, the *vaiṣṇava* said, "Why did I approach him at that moment? Not understanding his heart, I have offended him." The *vaiṣṇava* became very agitated. Sanatan Goswami pacified him and made him peaceful again.

Meanwhile, when the *vaiṣṇava*

had felt offended, Srila Rupa Goswami suddenly lost his vision of the Lord's pastimes. He became very disturbed and looked everywhere. Considering the situation carefully, he concluded that someone must have come to see him while he was absorbed in seeing Krishna's pastimes. "I did not honor the person that came, and thereby I committed an offense." Thinking in this way, Rupa also went to Sanatan Goswami's place.

When he saw Prabhupada Srila Rupa Goswami coming, that *vaiṣṇava* approached him. Falling on the ground, he offered his respects. With great humility he told Rupa, "O great soul, I have committed an offense to you. Please forgive me. Previously when I went to see you I did not understand that you were rapt in meditation." Standing before Srila Rupa Goswami, the *vaiṣṇava* prayed, "Please be kind and forgive me for my offense. If you are merciful to me, only then can my heart become peaceful."

When he heard these words, Srila Rupa Goswami became very agitated at heart. Falling to the ground, he offered respectful obeisances to that *vaiṣṇava*. Folding his hands, he said, "I have no power to say how great was the offense that I committed to you. Please kindly forgive me."

Both devotees were very humble and both were filled with *bhakti-rasa*. Forgiving each other, they both became peaceful. The two of them then went to Srila Sanatan Goswami. For a long time they all plunged into relishing nectarean topics of Lord Krishna. When everyone heard about this incident they all became filled with wonder.

Concluding this story, Srila Narahari Chakravarti cautions everyone:



*ohe bhāi vaiṣṇavete sābadhāna habe  
prānapāṇa kari' aparādha kṣamāibe*

O my brothers, please be very careful in dealing with the *vaiṣṇavas*. Beg their forgiveness for any offense with your heart and soul.<sup>4</sup>

*vaiṣṇavera doṣa-dṛṣṭe habe sābadhāna  
nirantara karibe vaiṣṇavera guṇa-gāna*

Be careful not to see a *vaiṣṇava*'s faults, and always sing their glories.<sup>5</sup>

*pūrva pūrva bhāgavata-gaṇa ei kaya  
vaiṣṇavera kriyā-mudrā vijñe nā bujhaya*

All of the previous great devotees have said, "No one can understand the behavior of a *vaiṣṇava*."<sup>6</sup>

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu priya-bhakta-dvāre  
anyere dilena śikṣā ei ta' prakāre*

Although Srila Rupa Goswami is a highly elevated devotee very dear to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord used him to teach all of us of the dangers of *vaiṣṇava aparādha*.<sup>7</sup>

*bhakta-pāda-padma dhari' mastaka-upara  
bhakti-rasa-sāyare ḍubaha nirantara*

Hold the devotees' lotus feet to your head and always dive in the nectar of pure devotional service.<sup>8</sup>

— Translated from the Gaudiya Mission edition, Bagbazar, Calcutta. 1987.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Text 3803.

<sup>2</sup> Text 3804.

<sup>3</sup> O.B.L. Kapoor. *The Goswami's of Vrindāvana*. Sarasvatī Jayaśrī Classics. Vrindavan. 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Text 3832.

# THAKUR BHAKTIVINODE ON VAISHNAVA APARADHA



Chapter 75 of *Śrī Bhaktivinoda-vāñī-vaibhava*

**B**haktivinoda-vāñī-vaibhava is a collection of the teachings of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode compiled by Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinode, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, and published in 1938. The book is in the form of a series of questions composed by the compiler, with answers extracted from Thakur Bhaktivinode's writings.

**I) What is the duty of a person on hearing blasphemy of a śuddha-*vaiṣṇava*, a pure devotee? How should one behave upon hearing *vaiṣṇava-nindā* from someone in the position of guru?**

*Vaidhi-bhaktas*, devotees practicing the process of *bhakti* according to scriptural injunctions, will neither approve nor support the blasphemy of either the Lord, the scriptures like *Bhāgavatam*, which are non-different from the Lord, or the *bhāgavatas*, the devotees of the Lord.

If *vaiṣṇava-nindā*, blasphemy of devotees, takes place in an assembly, then if one has capability one should immediately protest. If protest does not change the situation or stop the blasphemy then one should simply not hear it. If one is not capable of protest then one should immediately leave the place.

If one hears blasphemy from the guru's mouth then one should very humbly caution him. If the guru is extremely blasphemous toward *vaiṣṇavas* he should be rejected and shelter should be taken of another worthy person.

— Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta 3.4.

**II) What are the difficulties one faces upon hearing *vaiṣṇava-nindā*?**

A *sādhaka*, a devotee, will not hear blasphemy of the Lord or His devotees. One should immediately leave the area where blasphemy takes place. When those who are weak at heart (*hrdaya-daurbalya*) hear blasphemy of Krishna and the *vaiṣṇavas* they fall down from the path of *bhakti*.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 11.5 article entitled "Tat-tat-karma-pravartana".

**III) Why is *vaiṣṇava-nindā* considered to be the most heinous offense?**

It is *brhad-aparādha*, the gravest offense, to criticize any saintly person who, giving up all *karma*, *dharma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*, has taken exclusive shelter of the holy name. The holy name, which is non-different from the Lord, does not forgive the criticism of the great souls who are spreading the glories of the holy name throughout the world.

The holy name quickly bestows its causeless mercy upon those who, giving up criticism of *nāma-parāyana-sādhus*, saints who have taken shelter of the holy name, instead accept the exalted position of those *sādhus* and chant the holy name in their association.

— *Jaiva-dharma* chapter 24.

#### IV) What is the result of committing *sādhu-nindā*?

One should firmly distinguish and respect the *vaiṣṇavas* and abandon the association of non-*vaiṣṇavas*. The glories and understanding of the name never become revealed in the heart of one who criticizes *vaiṣṇavas*.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.5 article entitled "*Vaiṣṇava-nindā*".

#### V) What are the six kinds of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* and what are their consequences?

The foolish person who commits *vaiṣṇava-nindā* descends to the hell named *mahā-raurava* along with his forefathers. Killing a *vaiṣṇava*, criticizing a *vaiṣṇava*, being envious of a *vaiṣṇava*, not offering a happy welcome when a *vaiṣṇava* comes, showing anger at a *vaiṣṇava*, and becoming unhappy upon seeing a *vaiṣṇava* — all of these heinous actions lead to one's fall.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.2. article entitled "*Vaiṣṇava-nindā*".

#### VI) What are the results of hearing *vaiṣṇava-nindā*?

One who does not leave the place where the Lord or His devotees are being criticized, at once loses all *sukṛti*, merits earned by devotional service, and falls down.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.2 article entitled "*Vaiṣṇava-nindā*".

#### VII) Does a *śuddha-vaiṣṇava* ever criticize others?

If one has a fondness for sin, then he is not even counted amongst the *vaiṣṇavas*. Even neophyte *vaiṣṇavas* do not have attraction to either sin or piety. If someone is a pure *vaiṣṇava* he has no impurities of any kind, what to speak of the fault of blasphemy! Thus, if someone says that such a pure *vaiṣṇava* is criticizing others, he is making a false accusation.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.2 article entitled "*Vaiṣṇava-nindā*".

#### VIII) What are the envious criticisms that wicked people make of *vaiṣṇavas*?

There are three varieties of envious criticism that wicked people make of *vaiṣṇavas*. First of all, although pure *bhakti* has arisen in the devotee, still wicked people criticize whatever faults were there in the devotee previously (prior to the awakening

of pure devotion). When *bhakti* arises in the heart all impurities are quickly destroyed.

Secondly, although the impurities in a *vaiṣṇava* are gradually diminishing, during the time when some traces still remain wicked people criticize the leftover impurities.

There is a third thing that wicked persons somehow find to talk about in a pure *vaiṣṇava*. A pure *vaiṣṇava* has no desire to perform any sinful activity. However, sometimes, by chance, some improper activity may come about. Although that fault won't remain for long, still such wicked persons will talk about it and thereby commit *bhīṣaṇa vaiṣṇava-nindā*, terrible blasphemy against that *vaiṣṇava*, and thus fall down.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.2 article entitled "*Vaiṣṇava-nindā*".

#### IX) When discussing about the activities of a pure *vaiṣṇava*, what should be kept in mind?

Unless one has a noble intention, one should never discuss about any previous faults that a *vaiṣṇava* might have had prior to the awakening of *bhakti*. Nor should a *vaiṣṇava* be criticized for any leftover impurities he or she may have.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.3. Article entitled, "*Vaiṣṇava-nindā*".

#### X) Without good intentions, is it ever proper to discuss any of the rarely occurring and nearly extinguished faults that one may see in a *vaiṣṇava*?

Since impure activities existed in a *vaiṣṇava* before the awakening of *bhakti*, it is natural that they may continue to arise later as well. But by the strength of devotional service, after some days such activities will become insignificant and will soon be destroyed. Seeing those activities, and without any good intention discussing them, is *vaiṣṇava aparādha*. By chance there may be some fault seen in a *vaiṣṇava*, but don't criticize.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.5. Article entitled, "*Vaiṣṇava-nindā*".

#### XI) What are the faults of a *vaiṣṇava* which when discussed constitutes *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*?

To discuss the faults that may arise by chance in a *vaiṣṇava* is an offense. The main thing is that the discussion or even consideration of these faults in a *vaiṣṇava* is an offense to the holy name, etc.

Casting false blame on a *vaiṣṇava* and finding fault with a *vaiṣṇava* for any of the following three reasons are offenses against the holy name:

- 1) Impurities that have come from the *vaiṣṇavas* past — *prag-utpanna*.
- 2) Impurities that are perishing — *kṣayāvaśiṣṭa*.
- 3) Impure activities that take place accidentally — *daivotpanna*.





*Sri Sri Radha Madhava, the original deities of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode.*

*Sri Sri Radha Madhava were worshiped for more than four hundred years in Bhaktivinode's native place, Choti, in east-central Orissa. Lost for fifty years, Sri Sri Radha Madhava were recently re-discovered and are currently being worshipped by ISKCON devotees in Bhubaneswar, Orissa.*

Criticizing a *vaiṣṇava* for these reasons prevents *nāma-sphurati*, the appearance of the holy name in one's heart, and keeps one from becoming a *vaiṣṇava*.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.5. Article entitled, "Vaiṣṇava-nindā".

**XII) Without good intentions is it ever desirable to discuss about others?**

The scriptures do not forbid one from discussing others' faults if one has good intentions. Good intentions are of two kinds:

1. If some auspiciousness comes to a person by discussing their sins, then it is good to do so.
2. If the result is beneficial for the world, one may speak about sinners and their activities. Such an act is considered pious.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.5. Article entitled, "Vaiṣṇava-nindā".

**XIII) Is it *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* to discuss about the bad qualities of a *vaiṣṇava* even after understanding his or her saintly status?**

When a disciple approaches the guru and asks him to explain who is a *vaiṣṇava*, then, desiring the welfare of both his disciple and the world, the guru tells him that persons who are bereft of good character and who do not follow the regulative principles given in *śāstra* (*asadācārīs*) are not *vaiṣṇavas*. He then describes the characteristics of *sādhu-vaiṣṇavas*. For a disciple who wants to take shelter of the lotus feet of *sādhu-vaiṣṇavas*, the guru cautions about the faults of the *asat dharmadvajīs* (materialistic, hypocritical pretenders) and instructs the disciple to give up such association. Such instruction is not *sādhu-nindā* or *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

— *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.5. Article entitled, "Vaiṣṇava-nindā".

Translated by Syamasundar Das.





# A Short History of the Poet Devakinandan Das

The great *vaiṣṇava* poet Devakinandan Das Thakur was born in the village Kumarahatta, or Halisahara, in Bengal. Other than his birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family, nothing is known about his parents. His initiating spiritual master was Srila Purushottam Das. Purushottam Das was the son of Sadasiva Kaviraj. Like his father, Purushottam Das was a great devotee of Lord Nityananda Prabhu. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 11.39) describes Purushottam Das as the twenty-fourth branch of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. In his *Śrī Gaura-ṅaṇoddeśa-dīpika* (text 130) Srila Kavi Karnapur has described Purushottam Das as the incarnation of Krishna's dear friend Stoka Krishna. Devakinandan Das has described his guru as follows:

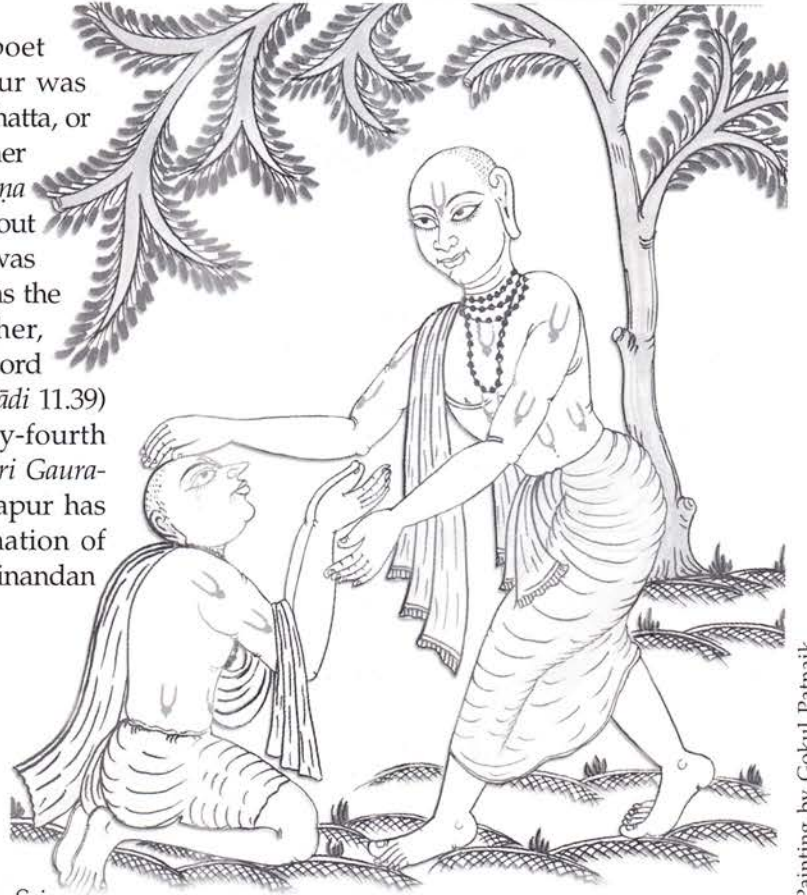
*iṣṭa-deva vandoṅ śrī-puruṣottama nāma  
ke kahite pāre tān'ra guṇa anupama  
sarva-guṇa-hīna ye tāhāre dayā kare  
āpanāra sahaja karuṇā-śakti bale  
saptama vatsare yānra kṛṣṇera unmāda  
bhuvana-mohana nṛtya śakati agādha*

I pray to my worshipable deity, my gurudeva, Sri Purushottam. Who can describe his incomparably good qualities? He is very kind to those who have no good qualities, and they very easily get his mercy. In his seventh year he exhibited ecstatic madness in *kṛṣṇa-prema* and by the uncommon strength of his dancing he enchanted the entire world.<sup>1</sup>

Manohar Das, a sixteenth century *vaiṣṇava* and grand-disciple of Srila Srinivas Acharya, mentions both Purushottam Das and Devakinandan Das in his book *Anurāga-vallī*:

*śrī-nityānandera priya śrī-puruṣottama mahāśaya  
devakīnandana ṭhākura tānra śiṣya haya  
teṅho ye karala baḍa vaiṣṇava-vandanā*

Purushottam Mahasaya is very dear to Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Devakinandan Thakur is the disciple of that Purushottam Mahasaya. He wrote the great prayer known as *vaiṣṇava-vandanā*.



Painting by Gokul Patnaik

Devakinandan Thakur is well known as the author of "*Saṁskṛta-vaiṣṇavābhidhāna*" (*Vaiṣṇava* dictionary in Sanskrit). He wrote only a little more than a half-dozen poems, all in Bengali except for one written in Brajaboli. He is particularly famous for his "*Vaiṣṇava-vandanā*". Composed of 386 lines of the Bengali verse form known as *payāra*, this *Vaiṣṇava-vandanā* mentions the name of every important contemporary follower of Mahaprabhu as well as some of Mahaprabhu's important predecessors. It is greatly valued amongst devotees and scholars for its devotion and historical importance.

According to the family tradition of Srila Purushottam Das, Devakinandan Das was formerly known as Gopal Chapal. After offending Srivas Thakur, as described in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 17.38-59), Mahaprabhu instructed Gopal Chapal that to be forgiven of his offense he would have to take shelter of Srivas Pandit. Srivas Pandit in turn

श्री कृष्णकथामृत

instructed him to take shelter of Purushottam Das. Purushottam Das gave him initiation and the name Devakinandan Das. He then ordered Devakinandan to worship and pray to the *vaiṣṇavas* by which he would become free from his offenses. Taking this order on his head, Devakinandan traveled from country to country collecting the names of all the *vaiṣṇava* devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for including in his *Vaiṣṇava-vandanā*.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is famous as *kali-bhaya-nāśana*, the destroyer of all fear caused by the age of Kali, has instructed:

*ei satya kahi, tomā sabāre kevala  
nā jāniyā nindā yebā karila sakala  
āra yadi nindya-karma kabhu nā ācare  
nirantara viṣṇu-vaiṣṇava stuti kare*

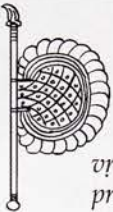
*e sakala pāpa ghuce ei se upāya  
koṭi prāyaścitte o anyathā nāhi yāya*

What I say is the truth. If a person who has committed blasphemy stops blaspheming others and instead praises Lord Vishnu and the *vaiṣṇavas*, then all of that person's sins and offenses will be destroyed. That is the right way to destroy them. Millions of rituals of atonement will not destroy them. <sup>2</sup>

Bearing in mind the above instructions of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, many Gaudiya Vaishnavas make it their daily practice to recite Devakinandan Thakur's *Vaiṣṇava-vandanā*, or at least the final portion of it known as *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-śaraṇa*. This prayer is seen as a means to help purify one of offenses to *vaiṣṇavas* as well as to prevent *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

## Śrī Vaiṣṇava-śaraṇa

Surrender to the Vaiṣṇavas  
By Devakinandan Das Thakur



*vṛndāvana-bāsī jata vaiṣṇavera gaṇa  
prathame vandanā kori sabāra caraṇa*

First of all, I offer my worship to the lotus feet of the residents of Vrindavan, all of whom are *vaiṣṇavas*.

*nīlācala-bāsī jata mahāprabhura gaṇa  
bhūmite paḍiyā vandoṅ sabāra caraṇa*

Next, I fall down on the ground and worship the lotus feet of all of Mahaprabhu's associates who live in Nilacala, Jagannath Puri Dham.

*navadvīpa-bāsī jata mahāprabhura bhakta  
sabāra caraṇa vandoṅ hañā anurakta*

I then worship the devotees of Mahaprabhu in Nabadwip and pray for loving attachment to their lotus feet.

*mahāprabhura bhakta jata gauḍa-deśe sthiti  
sabāra caraṇa vandoṅ koriyā praṇati*

I then worship the lotus feet of all of Mahaprabhu's devotees residing in Gaudadesh, Bengal.

*ye deśe ye deśe baise gaurāṅgera gaṇa  
ūrdhva-bāhu kori' vandoṅ sabāra caraṇa*

With upraised arms I worship the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga Mahaprabhu's dear devotees, wherever they may reside.

*hañāchena haibena prabhura jata dāsa  
sabāra caraṇa vandoṅ dante kori ghāsa*

With straw in my teeth I worship the lotus feet of all the servants of Mahaprabhu that ever were in the past or that ever will be in the future.

*brahmāṇḍa tārite śakti dhare jane jane  
e veda-purāṇe guṇa gāya jebā śuṇe*

In the Vedas and *Purāṇas* it is said that each of the dear devotees of Sriman Mahaprabhu has the potency to deliver the entire universe.

*mahāprabhura gaṇa-saba patita-pāvana  
tāi lobhe mui pāpī la-inu śaraṇa*

The devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are deliverers of the most degraded persons. Being greedy for that deliverance, this sinner surrenders unto them.

*vandanā korite mui kata śakti dhari  
tamo buddhi doṣe mui dambha mātra kori*

What power or ability do I have to glorify the devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu? Being engrossed in ignorance, it is only out of pride that I attempt to do so.

*tathāpi mūkerā bhāgya manera ullāsa  
doṣa kṣami' mo adhame koro nija dāsa*

Even though I have no speaking power to glorify them, still I am feeling great pleasure in my mind. Please overlook my faults, O *vaiṣṇavas*, and make me your servant.

*sarva vāñchā siddhi haya yama-bandha chuṭe  
jagate durlabha hañā prema-dhana luṭe*

The great wealth of *prema* is very rare in this world, but by somehow obtaining it all desires are fulfilled and one achieves freedom from the clutches of Yamaraj.

*manera vāsanā pūrṇa acirāte haya  
devakīnandana dāsa ei lobhe koya*

Being greedy that the desire of his heart be fulfilled very soon, Devakinandan Das writes this song.



Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates perform nāma-saṅkīrtana

### Comments on the song Śrī Vaiṣṇava-śaraṇa

The first four stanzas of this prayer have a particular significance. In the first line, Devakinandan Das uses the word *prathame*, first, to indicate a chronological sequence — the song will worship the *vaiṣṇavas* in respectful order. First, he offers prayers to the *vr̥ndāvana-bāsīs*, the residents of Vrindavan. Since all of the residents of Vrindavan are *vaiṣṇavas*, in this case the word “*jata*” means “all of whom”.

The famous Oriya book *Dāḍhyatā-bhakti* describes that there was once a sadhu named Sujnani Acharya who lived in a village named Subahu Sasana, near the Godavari river. Being a devout devotee of Lord Krishna, Sujnani Acharya once decided that he would go to Vrindavan for pilgrimage. While in Vrindavan, one day Sujnani Acharya requested alms from one of the local Brijbasi. Hearing his request, the Brijbasi reached in his mouth, took out a piece of the *roti* he was eating and offered it to Sujnani. Sujnani Acharya was aghast. He told the Brijbasi, “Don’t you know? I am a *sādhu vaiṣṇava*! How can you offer me your remnants? It is very offensive.” At that time Sri Krishna appeared on the scene and told Sujnani Acharya, “You should know that all of the residents of Vrindavan are very special. They are all My devotees.”

This fact is also described by the poet Krishnadas, “*jaya jaya vr̥ndāvana-bāsī jata jan* — All glories, all glories to all of the residents of Vrindavan.”<sup>3</sup>

In the second stanza of the song, Devakinandan Das continues his progression by next offering respects to the devotees of Nilacala, Jagannath Puri. Then in the third stanza he glorifies Mahaprabhu’s devotees in Nabadwip, and in the fourth the other devotees of Bengal. One may ask, why has he chosen to glorify the devotees in Nilacala before the devotees in Nabadwip and Bengal?

When he speaks of the Nilacala Vaishnavas, Devakinandan calls them, “*mahāprabhura gaṇa*.” When he refers to the Nabadwip Vaishnavas, he addresses them as, “*mahāprabhura bhakta*”. The use of these two words, “*gaṇa*” and “*bhakta*” is significant. “*Gaṇa*” is a more intimate term.

In Jagannath Puri, unlike Vrindavan, Devakinandan Thakur is not offering respect to all of the residents — only to *mahāprabhura gaṇa*, the associates of Mahaprabhu. There are many different types of *vaiṣṇavas* in Puri. Some belong to the Gaudiya-sampradaya, some the Ramanandi-sampradaya, others the Nimbarka-sampradaya, others the Madhva (Tattva-vadi) sampradaya, the Vishnuswami-sampradaya and the Vallabha-sampradaya. Aside from them there are also some *kṛpā-siddha* Vaishnavas, who do not belong to any *sampradāya*. Devakinandan does not refer to all of them, but only to *mahāprabhura gaṇa* — the intimate devotees of Mahaprabhu. Of the three-and-a-half most intimate associates of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu all were Oriya devotees except for Swarup Damodar Goswami, and all of them,

including Swarup Damodar, associated with the Lord in Puri. The intimate associates of Mahaprabhu are all the intimate associates of Srimati Radharani, so therefore the phrase “mahāprabhura gaṇa” in this song also means “rādhikāra gaṇa”. Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami uses the phrase *rādhikāra ‘gaṇa’* to describe Mahaprabhu’s most intimate associates in Puri:

*prabhu lekhā kare yāre — rādhikāra ‘gaṇa’  
jagatera madhye ‘pātra’ — sāḍe tina jana*

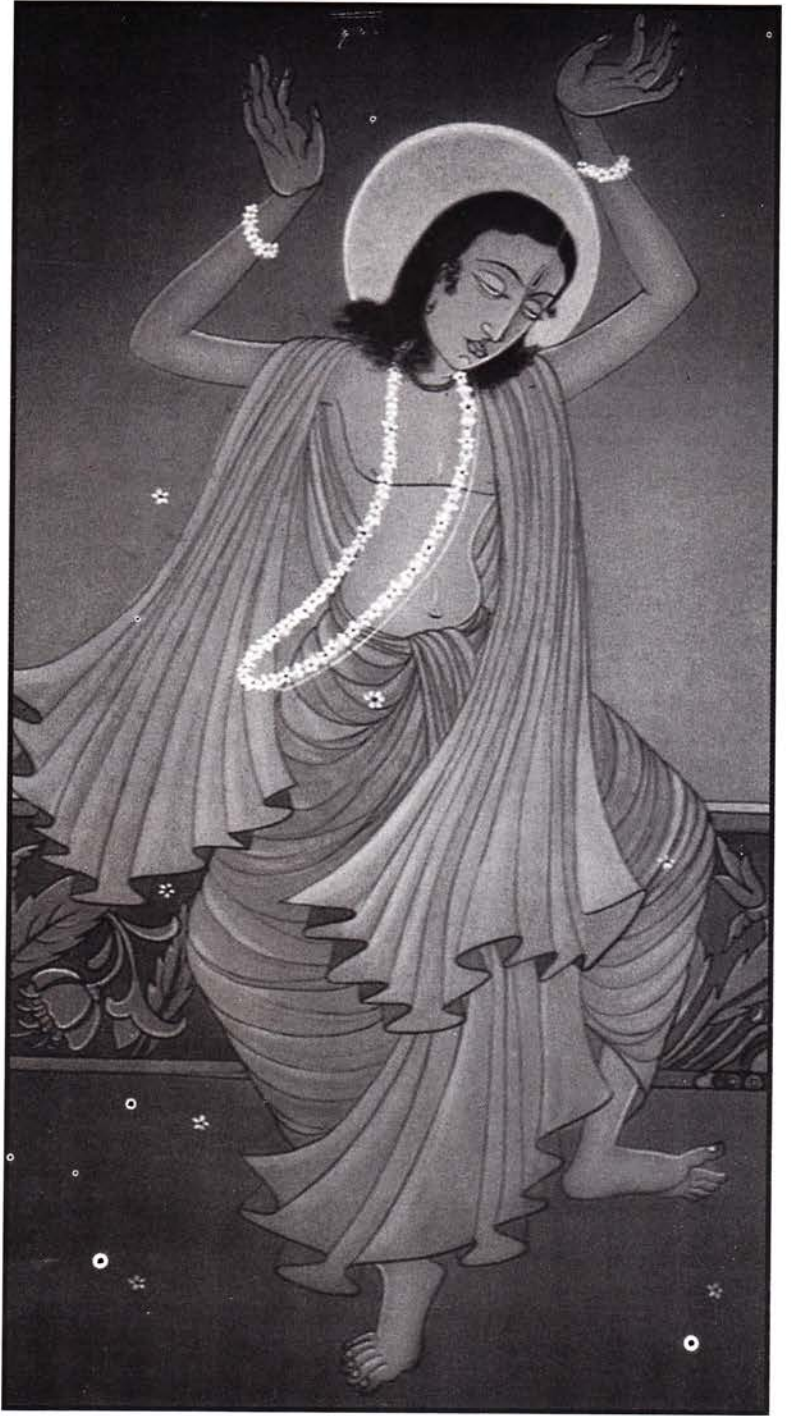
*svarūpa gosāñi, āra rāya rāmānanda  
śikhi-māhiti — tina, tāira bhaginī — ardha-jana*

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted her [Madhavi-devi] as having formerly been an associate of Srimati Radharani. In the entire world, three and a half people were the intimate devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The three were Swarup Damodar Goswami, Ramananda Raya and Sikhi Mahiti, and the half a person was Sikhi Mahiti’s sister.<sup>4</sup>

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-vandanā*, texts 92-94.
- <sup>2</sup> *Cb. antya* 3.456-458.
- <sup>3</sup> *Śrī Vraja Dhāma Mahimāmṛta*, line seven.
- <sup>4</sup> *Cc. antya* 2.105-106.





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# “EVERYONE IS MY SERVANT”

In his Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur has recorded many statements from Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu on the subject of vaiṣṇava-aparādha. Mahaprabhu has specifically given one instruction and one prohibition:

*bāhu tuli’ jagatere bale gauradhāma  
“anindaka ha-i sabe bala kṛṣṇa-nāma  
anindaka ha-i ye sakṛt ‘kṛṣṇa’ bale  
satya satya muṇi tāre uddhāriba hele”*

Raising His arms, fair-complexioned Lord Gauranga declared to the entire world, “Renouncing criticism of others, everyone please chant Lord Krishna’s name. I will personally deliver anyone who avoids criticizing others and who once chants ‘Krishna!’ I vow that this is the truth.”

— Cb. madhya 19.213-4

In this verse Srīman Mahaprabhu is indicating that even though one may be chanting, if one offends a vaiṣṇava one will not receive the expected results from such chanting. This is also explained elsewhere in Sri Caitanya-bhāgavata:

*ṭhākura caitanya bale — “śuna sarva jana  
sakṛt murāri-nindā kare yeijana  
koṭi gaṅgā-snāne tāra nāhika nistāra  
gaṅgā-hari-nāme tāre kariba saṁhāra*

“Everyone please listen! Whoever once criticizes My devotee Murari will not be delivered by even millions of baths in the Ganga. I will destroy him through his baths in the Ganga and by his chanting of the holy name.”

— Cb. madhya 10.29-30

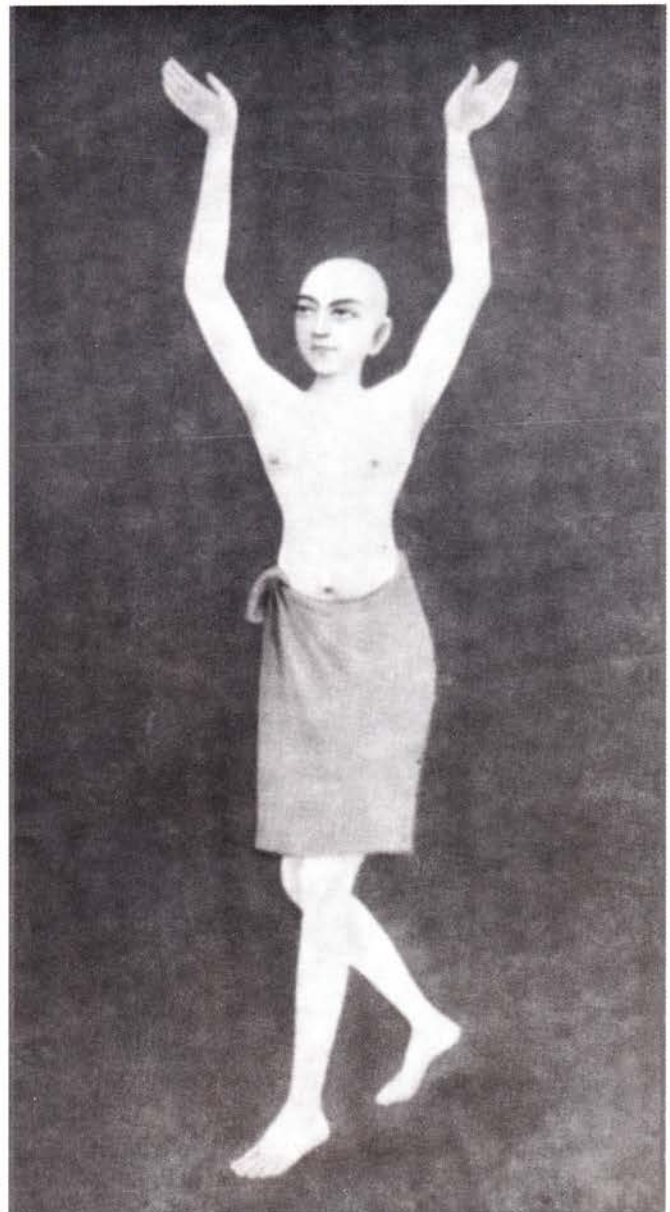
*ye āmāra dāsera sakṛt nindā kare  
mora nāma kalpataru saṁhāre tāhāre*

“My holy name, which is a kalpa-vṛkṣa tree, destroys anyone who once blasphemes My servant.”

— Cb. madhya 19.209

This verse says that such offenses extend to all of the Lord’s servants. So, one may then question, “Whom we should consider to be the Lord’s servants?” This is answered in the very next verse:

*ananta brahmāṇḍe yata, saba mora dāsa  
eteke ye para himse sei yāya nāsa*



“The living entities who live in the numberless universes are all My servants. Therefore any living entity that harms another living entity will perish.”

— Cb. madhya 19.210

And just in case a sannyāsī or other renunciate might think that this injunction does not apply in his case, Mahaprabhu adds:

*sannyāsī yadi anindaka nindā kare  
adaḥpāte yāya sarva dharma ghuce tāre*

“If a sannyāsī blasphemes an innocent person, the sannyāsī will fall down. All of his piety will perish.”

— Cb. madhya 19.212



— Translated from the Sri Gaudiya Math edition of Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata . Bagbazar, Calcutta. 1984.



# Sachi-mata's Offense



Adapted from Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur's *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavat*

In his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta ādi 12.42*, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada writes:

Mother Sachi-devī was similarly punished, as mentioned in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *madhya-khaṇḍa*, chapter twenty-two. Mother Sachi-devī, apparently showing her feminine nature, accused Adwaita Prabhu of encouraging her son to become a *sannyāsī*. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, taking this accusation as an offense, asked

Sachi-devī to touch the lotus feet of Adwaita Acharya to mitigate the offense she had supposedly committed.

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur describes this pastime as follows:

vaiṣṇavera kṛpāya se pāi viśvambhara  
'bhakti' vinā japa-tapa akiñcit kara  
vaiṣṇavera ṭhāṇi yāra haya aparādha  
kṛṣṇa-kṛpā ha-ileo tāra prema-bādha



### Śrī Pañca-tattva

e baḍa adbhuta kathā śuna sābadhāne  
vaiṣṇavāparādha ghuce ihāra śravaṇe

*Only by the mercy of a vaiṣṇava can one attain Lord Chaitanya. If a person has no love and devotion, his austerities and japa will not help him attain the Lord. Even if he has attained Lord Krishna's mercy, a person who offends a vaiṣṇava is stopped from attaining ecstatic love for Lord Krishna. Please carefully hear this amazing story. By hearing it one's offenses to vaiṣṇavas are destroyed.<sup>1</sup>*

#### Distributing Boons

One day at the house of Srivas Thakur, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sat down on Lord Vishnu's altar. Placing the *śālagrāma-śilās* from the altar on His lap, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu manifested His transcendental glories. He said, "I am Krishna, come to the Kali-yuga! I am Narayan! I am Ramachandra, who bridged the ocean! I was sleeping on the milk ocean and Nara's (Adwaita Acharya's) calls broke My sleep. I am here to freely distribute pure spiritual love and pure devotional service. O Nara! O Srivas! Ask for a boon! Ask for a boon!"

Seeing that Mahaprabhu was now openly manifesting His glories, Nityananda Prabhu held a great parasol over the Lord's head. On the

Lord's left, Gadadhar held betelnuts. In the four directions the devotees waved *cāmaras* and worshipped Lord Chaitanya.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Gauranga began to freely distribute *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* to all of the devotees. He gave many boons. He gave whatever the devotees desired. Someone said, "My father is sinful at heart. Please make his heart good. That will be a great relief to me." Some devotees asked for blessings for their teachers, some for their students, some for their children, and some for their wives. They asked whatever they wished and Mahaprabhu granted whatever was requested. Smiling, He gave everyone the gift of ecstatic *prema-bhakti*.

#### Sachi-mata Refused

Then, *mahāśaya* Srivas Thakur said, "O Lord, please give the gift of ecstatic love for Lord Krishna to Your mother. Everyone wants You to give her that gift."

Mahaprabhu replied, "Srivas, I will not give love for Lord Krishna to her. She has offended a *vaiṣṇava*, and therefore she cannot have *kṛṣṇa-prema*."

Hearing this, the eloquent Srivas said, "My Lord, these words will make us all leave our bodies! You are her son! You entered her womb. Why is she not

qualified to attain ecstatic love for Lord Krishna? Your mother is everyone's life. She is the mother of all the worlds. O Lord, please give up Your tricks and illusions and give her *kṛṣṇa-prema*. You are her son, and therefore she is also the mother of us all. How can a mother offend her son? That is my opinion. If she has offended a *vaiṣṇava*, then please be kind and break her offense to pieces."

Gauranga Mahaprabhu replied, "I have the power to teach her, but I have no power to break apart her offense to a *vaiṣṇava*. Only the offended *vaiṣṇava* can forgive the offense. There is no other way. My mother offended Nara (Adwaita Acharya). Only when Adwaita forgives her will she attain the mercy that gives ecstatic love for Lord Krishna. When she takes the dust of Adwaita's feet and places it on her head, then, by My order, My mother will attain *prema-bhakti*."

The *bhaktas* then went to Adwaita and told Him all that Mahaprabhu had said. Hearing these words, Adwaita remembered Lord Vishnu and said, "You all want to take away My life! It was through Sachi's womb that Mahaprabhu entered this world. She is My mother. I am her son. It is I who should take the dust of Mother Sachi's feet. I do not understand even a single sesame seed of her power and glory. Sachi-mata is the personification of devotional service to Lord Vishnu. She is the mother of the universe. How can you speak in this way? Even if a person, thinking it an ordinary material word, speaks the syllables 'ā-i' ("mother", indicating Mother Sachi), the power of that word 'ā-i' is such that the speaker will no longer suffer." After speaking the truth about Mother Sachi, Adwaita entered an ecstatic trance and fell to the ground.

Seeing her opportunity, Sachi-mata came and placed the dust of Adwaita's feet on her head. Mother Sachi is a great *vaiṣṇavī*. She is pure devotional service personified. She had the power to hold Mahaprabhu in her womb. When she took the dust from Adwaita's feet, Sachi became overwhelmed and fell to the ground. She was no longer in external consciousness.

Seeing all this, the *vaiṣṇavas* ecstatically called out, "Jaya! Jaya hari!" They tumultuously chanted the names of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. By the power of Mother Sachi, Adwaita was not in external consciousness and by Lord Adwaita's power, Mother Sachi was not in external consciousness. They were both overwhelmed by each other's power. Meanwhile the circle of *vaiṣṇavas* chanted, "Hari! Hari!"

*Sri Krishna-kathamrita*



*Srila Adwaita Acharya Prabhu*

Sitting on the deity's throne, Mahaprabhu Viswambhar smiled and laughed. Pleased, He said to His mother, "Now you may have pure devotion to Lord Vishnu. Your offense to Adwaita is no more." Hearing these merciful words from the Lord's graceful mouth, everyone called out, "Jaya! Jaya hari!"

After relating the above story, Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur describes the events that lead up to Sachi-mata's offense to Adwaita Acharya Prabhu:

### **Viswarup's Sannyāsa**

Prior to the time when Mahaprabhu revealed Himself as the Supreme Lord and began freely distributing *kṛṣṇa-prema*,



externally there were no *bhaktas* to be found in Nabadwip. Seeing the people empty of devotion to the Lord, Viswarup, the elder brother of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, was not happy. The whole world was intoxicated by materialism. No one understood the glories and auspiciousness of devotion to Krishna. The people spent great wealth on festivals for their children and others. No one was aware of worship offered to Lord Krishna or the religion of devotion to Krishna. The learned teachers lectured on material logic. None of them knew anything about *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* or *kṛṣṇa-pūjā*. If someone lectured on *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* he would not say anything about *bhakti*. Their explanations were all dry. Although He looked in all of the four directions, Viswarup did not hear descriptions of devotional service anywhere. Thus he felt greatly unhappy at heart. Only in Adwaita did He find the happiness of pure love for Lord Krishna. Thus, Viswarup always stayed with Adwaita. Accompanied by Viswarup, Adwaita happily tasted the mellows of pure devotion. At this time Prabhu Gaurasundar was still a small boy. His limbs were fair and handsome and His hair was gracefully curly. His charming form stole everyone's heart. Mother Sachi would tell Him, "Viswambhar! Quickly go call Your brother and bring Him home." On His mother's order, Viswambhar would run to Adwaita's home. There Adwaita sat, surrounded by many devotees including Srivas and other great souls.

Smiling and smiling, Viswambhar would say, "Brother, come home and eat rice. Don't delay." Prabhu Viswambhar stole the hearts of everyone. They all gazed at the supremely beautiful form of the boy. Completely enchanted and forgetting everything else, Adwaita's eyes were riveted on the Lord's face. In this way, on the pretext of calling for Viswarup, on Their mother's order, Lord Gauranga came there every day.

Gazing at Viswambhar, Adwaita thought in His heart, "This very handsome boy has stolen My heart. This person who now enchants Me must be My Lord. Who else has the power to steal My heart?" Understanding Adwaita's thoughts, Lord Viswambhar, who is *sarva-bhūta-hṛdaya ṭhākura*, the Supersoul in the hearts of all beings, quickly returned to His home.

*Sri Krishna-kathamrita*

Rejecting material pleasures, Viswarup always stayed with Adwaita. After some days, Viswarup accepted *sannyāsa* and traveled about. He became known in this world by the name Sankararanya. He was the foremost of *vaiṣṇavas*.

Vrindavan Das Thakur describes that when Viswarup left home, *nirabaddhi āira vidare śoke yuka* — "Mother Sachi's heart was always broken with grief."<sup>2</sup> Becoming thoughtful, Sachi decided in her heart, "Adwaita made My son leave home." Afraid to offend a *vaiṣṇava*, Mother Sachi said nothing. In her heart she was very unhappy.

Gazing at the face of her darling Viswambhar, Mother Sachi forgot her grief. The Lord made His mother's happiness grow. After some days, by divine arrangement, Mahaprabhu manifested His true nature. Then He began always enjoying pastimes in the association of Adwaita Prabhu. Neglecting His wife Goddess Lakshmi and leaving the happiness of His own home, Lord Chaitanya always stayed at Adwaita's abode. Seeing that her son no longer stayed at home, Sachi-mata thought, "Adwaita will take my son away." Unhappy, she said, "Who says He is 'advaita' (or equal to all)? That *vaiṣṇava* is 'dvaita' (full of duplicity). "He has already driven away one of my moonlike sons. Now he will not leave my other son alone. I am a helpless widow. No one is kind to me. To the world He is 'advaita'. But to me He is 'dvaita-maya' (full of duplicity)."

This was the entirety of her offense. There was nothing more than that. Yet because of this offense Lord Gaurasundar would not give His mother devotional service.



### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Cb. madhya* 22.7-8,12.

<sup>2</sup> *Cb. madhya* 22.107.

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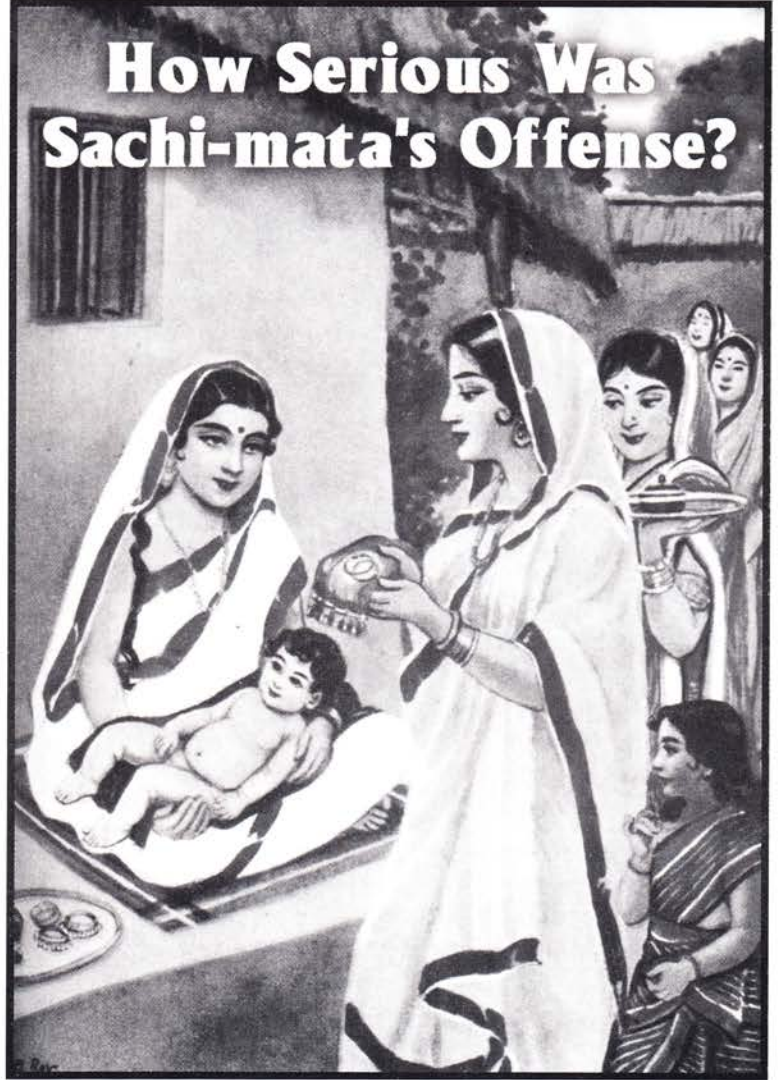
Both Sachi-mata and Adwaita Acharya Prabhu are *nitya-siddha pāriśadas* — eternally perfect associates of the Lord. How then would it be possible for Sachi-mata to commit an offense to Adwaita Acharya? And why did Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who loves His mother dearly, chastise her in a public forum? Furthermore, Sachi-mata, as the mother of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, is a senior personality and is eternally worshipable for Srivas Thakur. Why then did Srivas break with Vedic social etiquette and solicit Mahaprabhu to give Sachi-mata *prema*? These are important questions that should be analyzed carefully.

### Bhagavān-bhāva

Krishna is known as *rasa-rāja*, the greatest enjoyer of transcendental mellows. When the Lord wants to enjoy pastimes of reverential worship from His loving devotees, those pastimes are known as *aiśvarya-maya-līlā*, opulent pastimes of awe and reverence. In such pastimes the Lord manifests His *bhagavān-bhāva*, the mood of being the Supreme Lord. When the Lord wants to enjoy sweet intimate pastimes, they are known as *mādhurya-maya-līlā* or *prema-maya-līlā*. In such pastimes the Lord relishes being subjugated by His devotees. In His *mādhurya-maya-līlā* the Lord enjoys worshiping His mother and playing with His friends. Absorbed in that sweetness, the Lord serves His parents and worships their feet. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavan. His mother, father, guru, etc., are all His eternal servants. However, during *gaura-līlā* Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's *bhakta-bhāva*, the mood of a devotee, is predominating. During His early pastimes Mahaprabhu did not reveal Himself as the Supreme Lord. Rather, He kept Himself hidden and enjoyed sweet exchanges with His intimate devotees in Nabadwip. He first revealed His position as the Supreme Personality of Godhead to the devotees in the house of Srivas Thakur. That pastime, which went on for twenty-one hours, is known as Mahaprabhu's *mahā-prakāśa-līlā*. At that time, overwhelmed in *bhagavān-bhāva*, Gauranga sat upon Vishnu's altar at the home of Srivas Thakur, bestowed boons upon His devotees, and accepted their opulent worship.

According to Srila Kavi Karnapur in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Mahākavya*, it was during this

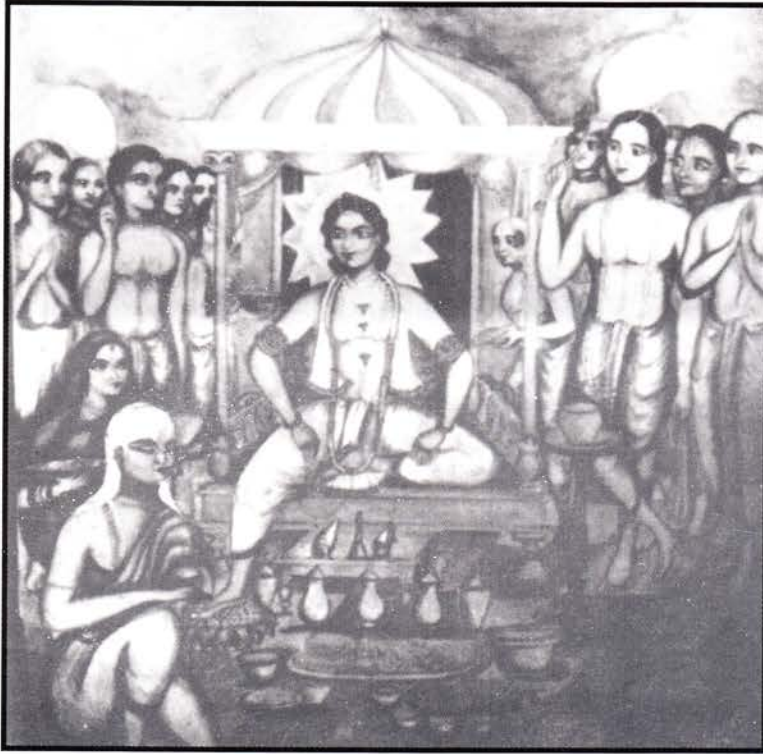
## How Serious Was Sachi-mata's Offense?



opulent *mahā-prakāśa-līlā* that Gauranga corrected His mother's offense.<sup>1</sup> In His *bhagavān-bhāva*, the Lord judges all with an equal eye. He sees no difference between His own mother and a widow begging on the street. During this pastime Sachi-mata could not see Nimai as her son. She stood before Bhagavan, her body shaking and trembling like an offender. With her hands folded together in prayer, Sachi-mata accepted her punishment.

### Teaching Others

It is significant that Mahaprabhu punished His mother in front of everyone. He chose to do this for several reasons. First of all, as previously mentioned, in His mood of *bhagavān-bhāva*, Mahaprabhu did not make any special distinction about Sachi-mata and so He did not correct her privately as normally a loving son would. Secondly, the reason why the Lord chastised her publicly was that in His *bhagavān-bhāva* Mahaprabhu wanted to use her as an example to teach others, *loka-śikṣā*.



*Maha-prakaśa lilā*

Vrindavan Das Thakur describes:

*jananīra lakṣye śikṣā-guru bhagavān  
karāyena vaiṣṇavāparādha sābadhāna*

By making an example of His mother, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the teacher or *śikṣā-guru* of all, taught everyone to carefully avoid offending *vaiṣṇavas*.<sup>2</sup>

*ataeva daṇḍa dekhāiyā janānīre  
sākṣī karilena advaitādi-vaiṣṇavere*

By punishing His mother, Lord Chaitanya showed the result that comes from offending Lord Adwaita or any other *vaiṣṇava*.<sup>3</sup>

### The Greatest Devotee

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur, the *vyāsa* of *gaura-līlā*, offers a third reason why Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu arranged this pastime:

*trikāla jānena prabhu śrī-śacīnandana  
jānena, — sevibe advaitere duṣṭa-gaṇa*

As the Supreme Lord, Sachinandan knows everything that happens in all three phases of time, past, present, and future. He knew that in the future some demoniac people would serve Lord Adwaita.

*advaitere gāibeka 'śrī-kṛṣṇa' baliyā  
yata kichu vaiṣṇavera vacana nindiyā*

They will refer to Lord Adwaita by the name "Sri Krishna". In this way they will reject the words of the true *vaiṣṇavas*.

*ye balibe advaitere 'parama vaiṣṇava'  
tāhāre beḍiyā laṅghibe pāpī saba*

Those sinners would thus disobey the devotees who affirm that Adwaita is "the greatest *vaiṣṇava*" [and is not Krishna].

*se-saba-gaṇera pakṣa advaita dharite  
eta baḍa śakti nāhi — e daṇḍa dekhite*

Many persons will consider themselves the followers of Lord Adwaita, but they will not have the power to see how in the future they will be punished.

*sakala-sarvajña-cūḍāmāṇi viśvambhara  
jānena vilambe ha-ibeka bahutara*

Lord Viswambhar, who is *sakala-sarvajña-cūḍāmāṇi* — the crest jewel of those who know everything, knew this. Therefore He did something to try to stop it from happening.<sup>4</sup>

A fourth reason for this pastime is that by destroying His mother's *aparādha*, Mahaprabhu was able to arrange to hear the glories of His mother from the mouth

of Adwaita Acharya. Vrindavan Das Thakur writes that when Mahaprabhu heard the glories of Sachi-mata from Adwaita Acharya Prabhu, *hāse' prabhu viśvambhara khaṭṭāra upare prasanna* — "Mahaprabhu laughed and became pleased."<sup>5</sup>

### Pastime

But we should keep in mind that Sachi-mata's offense was only apparent. In *tattva* it was not possible for her to offend Adwaita Acharya. Sachi-mata's anger towards Adwaita was a manifestation of her intense love for Lord Gauranga. It was a symptom of her *vātsalya-prīti*, transcendental motherly love, and is therefore under the category of *bhakti-rasa*. Her feelings were a manifestation of *hlāḍini-śakti*, the internal pleasure potency of the Lord, and were completely transcendental and pleasing to the Lord. As a *nitya-siddha pāriṣada*, Sachi-mata is under the influence of the *yoga-māyā* potency. Enviousness is only manifested by conditioned souls under the influence of the Lord's external energy known as *mahā-māyā*. Sachi's "offense" to Lord Adwaita Acharya, is a pastime of the Lord and should not be seen from a mundane perspective.

In this connection, Srila Prabhupada has described:

... in the Vaikuntha world there is no question of enmity between the Lord and the residents.<sup>6</sup>

When the individual *jīva* souls are under the control of the internal energy, their only engagement is the satisfaction of Krishna or Vishnu.<sup>7</sup>

... *nitya-siddhas*, they belong to the spiritual world. They never come in contact with this material world, and even [if] they come for some business under the order of the Supreme Lord, they do not touch these material qualities. They remain always transcendental. As Krishna remains always transcendental, even though He is in this material world, similarly, Krishna's *nitya-siddha* associates, they are also transcendental. They never touch this material world.<sup>8</sup>

### Impertinent

The next question is why did Srivas Thakur pray to Mahaprabhu to give *prema* to Sachi-mata? As personified *bhakti* and the mother of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Sachi-mata is certainly all-worshipable for Srivas Thakur. Why then did Srivas, the best of the *brāhmaṇas*, become so impertinent as to solicit the Lord to give her *prema*? It is not proper etiquette for a junior person to solicit blessings for a senior personality. In his purport to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 3.4.26, Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada has described:

Although one may be well versed in the transcendental science, one should be careful about the offense of *maryādā-vyatikrama*, or impertinently surpassing a greater personality.

### Sachi-mata's Position

We should first examine the ontological position of Sachi-mata. In his *Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (text 37) Srila Kavi Karnapur describes that Sachi-mata is Yasoda in *kṣṇa-līlā*. In his *Śrī Caitanya-carita* (2.1.18) Srila Murari Gupta describes her as *sākṣād-bhakti-svarūpiṇī* — personified *bhakti*. When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was preparing to leave home to take *sannyāsa*, to pacify His mother's broken heart He spoke the following words:

*āro dui janma ei saṅkīrtan-ārambhe  
ha-iba tomāra putra āmi avilambe*

*'mora arcā-mūrti', mātā tumi se dharaṇī  
'jihvārūpā' tumi mātā, nāmera jananī*

"I have taken birth twice to begin the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Both times I am your son. You are the earth goddess, and therefore you are the mother of My deity-form. You are also the tongues of everyone, and therefore you are the mother of My form as the holy name."<sup>9</sup>

Srivas Thakur certainly knew the glories of Sachi-mata, so then why did he disregard etiquette and solicit Mahaprabhu on her behalf?

### Nārada-avātara

To answer this we also need to understand the identity and nature of Srivas Thakur. Srila Kavi Karnapur in his *Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* describes, *śrīvāsa-panḍito dhīmān yaḥ purā nārado muniḥ* — Srivas Pandit was formerly Narada Muni.<sup>10</sup> Devarsi Narada is famous for always taking the role of a transcendental meddler, mischief-maker, and conniver in Krishna's various pastimes. Although Narada appeared as Srivas Thakur in order to relish the *līlā-rasa* of Nabadwip





during the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, his eternal transcendental scheming nature did not change. This was seen in his divine ruse of approaching Mahaprabhu and soliciting Him to give His mother *prema* for the purpose of invoking, at least temporarily, a reverential attitude in Sachi towards Lord Gauranga. Srivas schemed to have Sachi-mata understand once and for all just who "her son" actually was. As *nārada-avātara*, Srivas desired to see Sachi's conception of Nimai as only her beloved son, change into a reverent understanding that He was actually the Supreme Lord. This is clearly expressed in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya*:

*kāruṇyaṁ kuru bhagavan prabho tad asyai  
yeneyaṁ tvayi na karoti putra-bhāvam  
yeneyaṁ tava caraṇe bhavet prapannā  
tenaiḥ prabhavati nirvṛtir mamāpi*

"So be merciful to her, O Lord, O master, that she no longer thinks of You as her son, so that she surrenders to Your lotus feet. This will bring joy to not only her, but to me as well."<sup>11</sup>

This wonderful pastime of Sachi-mata's apparent offense to Adwaita Acharya contains many important instructions for the *sādhaka* devotee's progress on the path of *bhakti*.

Thakur Vrindavan Das describes:

*'śūlapāṇi-sama yadi vaiṣṇavere ninde'  
tathāpihā nāśa pāya, — kahe śāstra-vṛnde*

If even a person equal to Lord Siva offends a *vaiṣṇava*, the offender will perish. This is the verdict of *śāstra*.

*ihā nā māniyā ye sujana-nindā kare  
janme janme se pāpiṣṭha daiva-doṣe mare*

Those who do not follow these instructions and blaspheme good people are sinners. They will suffer birth after birth.

*anyera ki dāya, gaura-simhera janani  
tānhāreo 'vaiṣṇavaparādha' kari gaṇi*

What to speak of others, even Lord Gauranga's own mother was punished for offending a *vaiṣṇava*.<sup>12</sup>



*Nārada-avātara  
Sriḥas Thakur*

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur's account is slightly different from Kavi Karnapur's. He also describes the pastime of forgiving Sachi-mata as taking place at the home of Srivas Thakur, but he describes the Lord's *mahā-prakāśa līlā* as taking place at another time.

<sup>2</sup> *Cb. madhya* 22.54.

<sup>3</sup> *Cb. madhya* 22.127.

<sup>4</sup> *Cb. madhya* 22.122-126.

<sup>5</sup> *Cb. madhya* 22.51.

<sup>6</sup> Purport to *Bhāg.* 3.15.32.

<sup>7</sup> Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* text 2.

<sup>8</sup> London, 14 July 1973. Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 1.13-14.

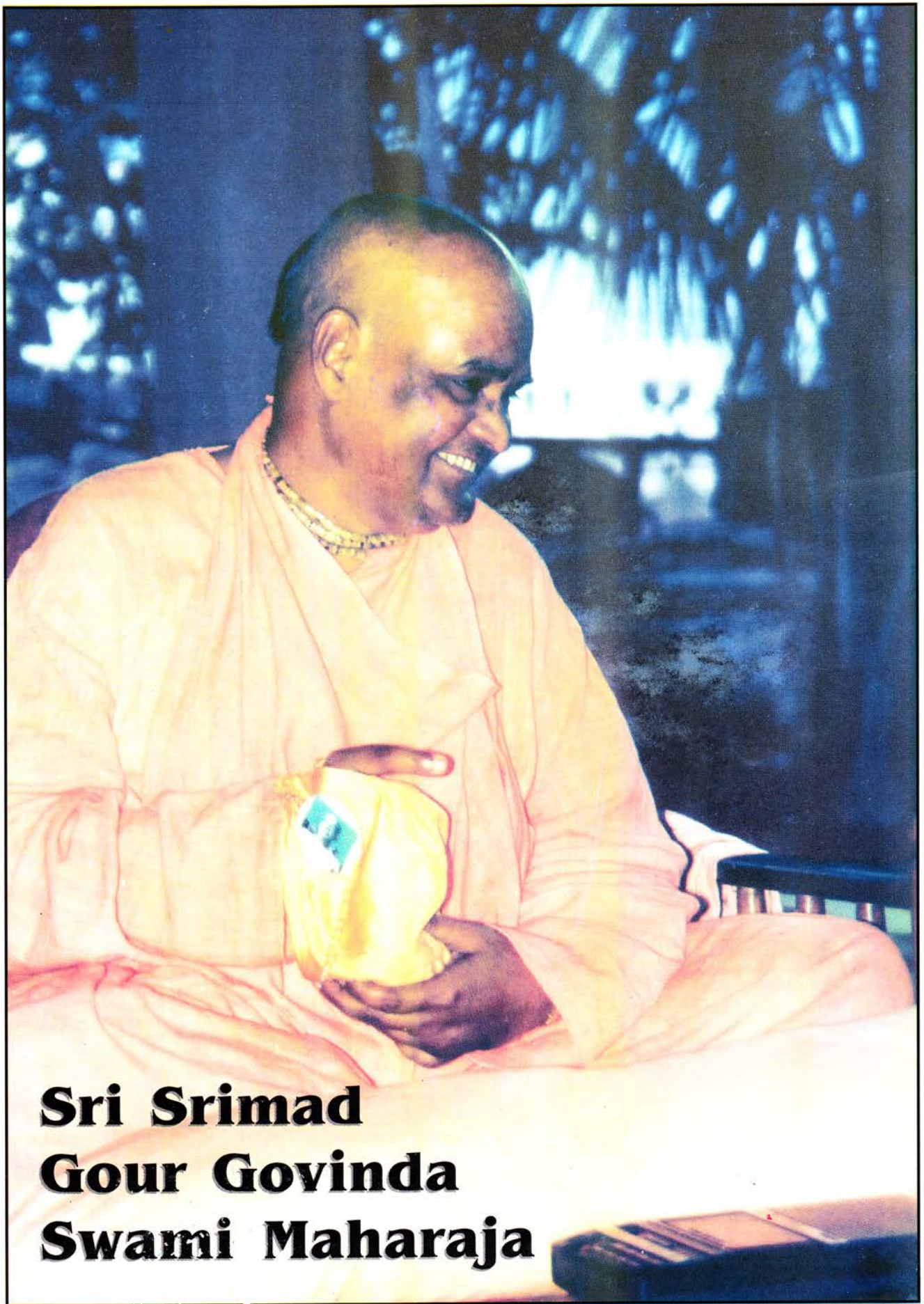
<sup>9</sup> *Cb. madhya* 27.47-48.

<sup>10</sup> text 90.

<sup>11</sup> 5.87.

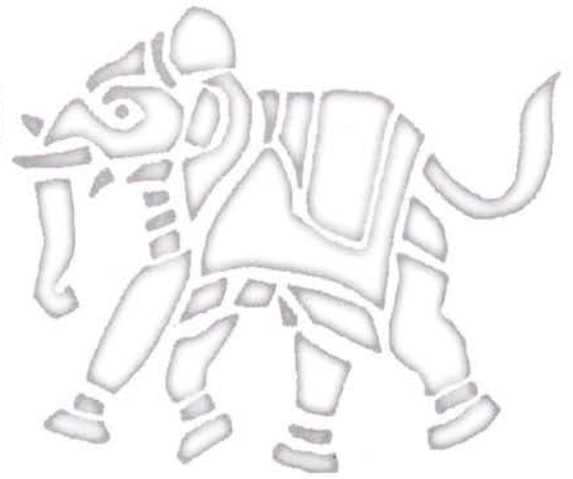
<sup>12</sup> *Cb. madhya* 22.55-57.





**Sri Srimad  
Gour Govinda  
Swami Maharaja**

# THE MAD ELEPHANT



Lecture on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 9.4.68  
Bhubaneswar, 25 September 1993

*sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ sādḥūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham  
mad-anyaṭ te na jānanti nāhaṁ tebhyo manāḡ api*

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

## PURPORT

Since Durvasa Muni wanted to chastise Maharaja Ambarish, it is to be understood that he wanted to give pain to the heart of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for the Lord says, *sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyam*: "The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart." The Lord's feelings are like those of a father, who feels pain when his child is in pain. Therefore, offenses at the lotus feet of a devotee are serious. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has very strongly recommended that one should not commit any offense at the lotus feet of a devotee. Such offenses are compared to a mad elephant because when a mad elephant enters a garden it causes devastation. One should be extremely careful not to commit offenses at the lotus feet of a pure devotee. Actually, Maharaja Ambarish was not at all at fault; Durvasa Muni unnecessarily wanted to chastise him on flimsy grounds. Maharaja Ambarish wanted to complete the *ekādaśī-pāraṇa* as part of devotional service to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore he drank a little water. But although Durvasa Muni was a great mystic *brāhmaṇa*, he did not know what is what. That is the difference between a pure devotee and a so-called learned scholar of Vedic knowledge. The devotees, being always situated in the core of the Lord's heart, surely get all instructions directly from the Lord, as confirmed by the Lord Himself in *Bhāgavad-gītā* (10.11):

*teṣāṁ evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ  
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāvastho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

"Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance." The devotee does not do anything not sanctioned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As it is said, *vaiṣṇavera kriyā mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*.<sup>1</sup> Even the most learned or experienced person cannot understand the movements of a *vaiṣṇava*, a pure devotee. No one, therefore, should criticize a pure *vaiṣṇava*. A *vaiṣṇava* knows his own business; whatever he does is precisely right because he is always guided by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

• • •

The loving relationship between *bhagavān* and *bhakta*, the Lord and the devotee, is perfect and eternal. This relationship is so strong and loving that even the all-powerful Supreme Lord cannot break it.

## Krishna is Captured

In the eleventh canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Krishna says to Uddhava:

*na sādhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava  
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā*<sup>2</sup>

"Uddhava, I am completely captured by *bhakti-yoga*, *prema-bhakti*. No one can approach Me or capture Me through *aṣṭāṅga-yoga sāṅkhyālocanā* (the eight-fold yoga process) nor by undergoing severe austerities and penances, nor by sacrificing everything by taking *sannyāsa*. I am only captured by pure devotion, *śuddha-bhakti*, *prema-bhakti*."

Krishna tells Uddhava:

*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyah śraddhayātmā priyah satām  
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śva-pākān api sambhavāt*

"I am only captured through such unalloyed devotion, pure devotion. Even a *caṇḍāla* (dog-eater) develops such devotion, he becomes very dear to Me and he captures Me, binds Me."<sup>3</sup>

The purport is that such a devotee is always, day and night, twenty-four hours, engaged in the loving service of the Lord, because he doesn't know anything but the Lord. *mad-anything te na jānanti nāham tebhya manāg api* — Here the Supreme Lord says very clearly, "Such pure devotees don't know anything but Me and I don't know anything but them. Such a devotee is My heart, and I am the heart of such a devotee." *Jñānīs, yogīs, and karmīs*, those who have no devotion, how can they understand the Supreme Lord? How can they approach the Supreme Lord, what to speak of capturing Him? Pure devotees are always engaged day and night in the loving service of the Lord. The Lord says that they are dearer to Him than He Himself. He has said to Uddhava:

*na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ  
na ca saṅkaraṣaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavān* <sup>4</sup>

Krishna told Uddhava, "ātma-yonir, Brahma, is not so dear to Me. Śaṅkara, Sivaji, is not so dear to Me. Saṅkaraṣaṇa, Balaram, is not so dear to Me. Śrī, Lakshmi, is not so dear to Me. Even naivātmā, I Myself, am not so dear, O Uddhava, yathā bhavān, as you are dear." How dear is such a devotee!

*nirapekṣam munim śāntam nirvairam sama-darśanam  
anuvrajāmy aham nityam pūyetye aṅghri-reṇubhiḥ* <sup>5</sup>

Krishna says, "Unnoticed, I follow behind such pure devotees to get some dust from their lotus feet." Why? Because that dust has such a powerfully purifying effect. Krishna thinks, "With that dust I will purify My entire creation.

### To Purify Krishna

*pūyeya mad-antarvarti-brahmāṇḍāni pavitrī-kuryām iti  
bhāvenety arthaḥ*

This is Sridhar Swami's opinion as to why Krishna follows behind to get some dust from the feet of such pure devotees, *premī-bhaktas*: He wants to purify His entire creation.

Srila Jiva Goswami has given a different opinion:

*mad-bhakti-anīkṛti-doṣāt pavitrītaḥ syām iti bhāveneti bhāvāḥ*

[Krishna says:] Since I am not able to repay My devotees for their devotional service, I perform atonement by following them to take the dust of their feet for My own purification.<sup>6</sup>

Rupa Goswami has described the nature of such *premī-bhaktas*:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve Krishna favorably, as Krishna desires.<sup>7</sup>

Rupa Goswami uses the term *anyābhilāṣa*, which means that such pure devotees have no other desires — no desire for material enjoyment, and no desire for liberation. *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā* — They are always engaged in loving service meant to give pleasure to Krishna. They never pray for their own pleasure or happiness. They do everything for the pleasure and happiness of Krishna. This is *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam*. In Mahaprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka* He says that this is the symptom of a dear devotee, *premī-bhakta*. He never asks for anything in exchange for his service:

*na dhanam na janam na sundarīm  
kavitām vā jagad-īśa kāmaya  
mama janmani janmanīśvare  
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi*<sup>8</sup>

"O Jagadish, O Lord of the Universe, I don't want anything from You. *na dhanam* — I don't want material wealth. I don't want *jana*, followers. I don't want a beautiful woman to enjoy. I don't want liberation. *bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi* — Life after life I will serve Your lotus feet and give You pleasure and happiness. Nothing else, life after life."

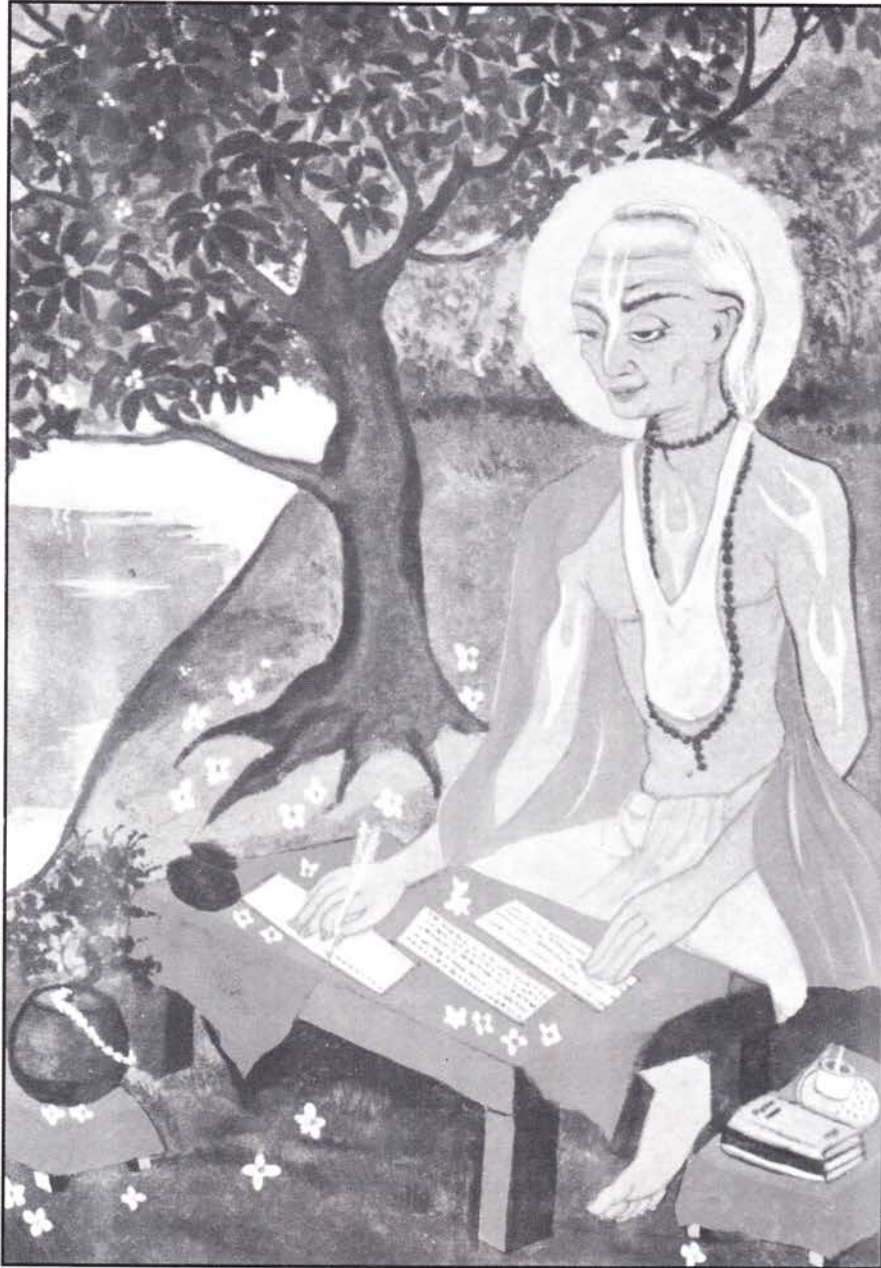
Life after life means, "I don't want liberation." Such a devotee does not even disturb the Lord to destroy his karmic reactions.

*nija-karma-guna-doṣe ye ye janma pāi  
janme janme yeno tava nāma-guna gāi* <sup>9</sup>

Bhaktivinode Thakur has sung, "According to the result of my past karma, whatever species I deserve to take birth in, let me have it. I have only one prayer: *janme janme yeno tava nāma-guna gāi* — Remaining in such species life after life, I only want to render loving service unto You, giving You pleasure and happiness. Nothing else."

### Repaying His Debt

Such a pure devotee never wants anything. The Supreme Lord has said that such devotees never aspire for the four types of *mukti* — *sārūpya, sāmīpya, sālōkya*, and *sārṣṭi*. They don't want them. *dīyamānam na grhṇanti vinā mat-sevanam* — Even though he is offered all kinds of liberation, the pure devotee does not accept them. He is fully satisfied engaging in the service of the Lord.<sup>10</sup> The Lord is prepared to give such benedictions. He says, "Take it! Take it!" Still, such devotees don't accept, "No! We don't want! We don't want!" Krishna sees, "They only want to serve Me, to give Me pleasure. They don't want anything in return?" So Krishna thinks, "What shall I do? I cannot repay them!" Krishna wants to repay. *ye yathā mānī prapadyante tānī tathaiva bhajāmy aham* — Krishna always repays according to the degree of your surrender and service.<sup>11</sup> But such a *premī-bhakta* doesn't want anything. So



*Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has said that the position of being a devotee is higher than that of equality with Krishna.*

Krishna cannot repay him. Krishna becomes indebted. How can He pay back this debt?

Srila Jiva Goswami says:

*mad-bhakti-anīṣṭyī-dōṣāt pavitritaḥ syām iti bhāveneti bhāvaḥ*

[Krishna says:] Since I am not able to repay My devotees for their devotional service I perform atonement by following them to take the dust of their feet for My purification.<sup>12</sup>

Krishna has become indebted to such dear devotees, *premi-bhaktas*. So to pay them back He follows unnoticed behind them to get some dust from their lotus feet. If He gets that dust and smears it on His body, then He will be purified of His debt. This is what

Jiva Goswamipad has said. The purport is that without the dust of such *premi-bhaktas* no one can develop *prema-bhakti*; no one can understand this *mādhurya-rasa-tattva*, the mellow of conjugal love.

The purpose of such statements is to give a high position to the devotees. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Kaviraj Goswami has said, *kṛṣṇera samatā haite baḍa bhakta-pada* — The position of being a devotee is higher than that of equality with Lord Krishna.<sup>13</sup> Krishna is the supreme truth. No one can be equal to Him. *haris-tv-ekam tattvaṁ vidhi-śiva-sureśa-praṇamito* — Lord Hari is the supreme truth. Vidhi, Brahma; Siva; and *sureśa*, *devarāja* Indra, the heavenly king, are all subordinate to Him.<sup>14</sup> Krishna Himself has said in the *Gītā*, *mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya* — “O Dhananjaya, O Arjuna, there is no one superior to Me.”<sup>15</sup> Yet one who becomes a completely surrendered devotee with no desires for material enjoyment, no desire for liberation, only life after life giving pleasure to Krishna and rendering loving service to His lotus feet, Krishna makes such a *premi-bhakta* greater than Him. Krishna says, “He becomes My controller.”

He has already said this in the *Bhāgavatam*:

*ahaṁ bhakta-parādhīno hy asvatantra iva dvija  
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said to the *brāhmaṇa*: I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotee, even those who are devotees of My devotee are very dear to Me.<sup>16</sup>

Krishna says, “Such a *sādhu* is My controller. He controls Me. He binds Me with the rope of love in the heart, and that bondage is very strong. I



cannot break it." In the tenth canto of the *Bhāgavatam* He has said, *na pārāye, na pārāye, na pārāye* — "I cannot, I cannot, I cannot."<sup>17</sup> *prema-bandhana*, the bondage of love, is so strong! So without the dust of the feet of such a *premī-bhakta* no one can develop *prema-bhakti*. No one will be able to understand *mādhurya-rasa-tattva*, this conjugal mellow. That is the purport here. Because such a devotee is greater than the Lord he becomes the controller of the Lord. Whatever he says, Krishna does that, and Krishna gets pleasure out of it. "Yes, let that devotee control Me." The example is Yasoda-mata and Nanda Maharaja. Yasoda-mata binds Krishna, and Nanda Maharaja orders his two-year-old son in Vrajabhumi, "Kanu, my wooden sandals are lying there, will You please bring them?" Krishna puts the wooden sandals on His head and comes, "All right, take them." In His own words as spoken to Durvasa Muni: *aham bhakta-parādhīno* — "I am controlled by My devotee."

### Creepers of Love

In order to glorify such a devotee, Krishna follows unnoticed behind him to get some dust from his feet. So, if someone commits an offense at the lotus feet of such a *vaiṣṇava*, *sādhu*, what will happen? In this purport to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 9.4.68, Srila Prabhupada has written, "Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has very strongly recommended that one should not commit any offense at the lotus feet of a devotee. Such offenses are compared to a mad elephant, because when a mad elephant enters a garden it causes devastation." In *rūpa-śikṣā*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Mahaprabhu has said,

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

Wandering in countless universes, in millions and millions of different species of life, a fortunate *jīva* gets the seed of the *bhakti* creeper by the mercy of guru and Krishna — *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*. Then what is to be done? After the seed is sown the gardener's duty is to water it. What is that watering? *śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana* — The watering process is *śravaṇa-kīrtana*, hearing and chanting.<sup>18</sup> It must be daily watering, *nitya*, not once or twice. By this daily watering the seed fructifies, then it starts growing. How does it grow and where does it go?

*upajiyā bāde latā 'brahmāṇḍa' bhedi' yāya  
'virajā', 'brahma-loka' bhedi' 'para-vyoma' pāya  
tabe yāya tad-upari 'goloka-vṛndāvana'  
'kṛṣṇa-caraṇa'-kalpa-vṛkṣe kare ārohaṇa*<sup>19</sup>

Mahaprabhu says, the creeper grows and grows, up, up, up, and penetrates all the eight layers of this material universe. Then it goes to Viraja, the causal ocean that is like a water channel dividing the spiritual world and the material world. It continues to go on to Brahmaloaka, and the *brahmajyoti*, the impersonal effulgence that is coming out of the body of the Supreme Lord. It goes beyond that and enters into the spiritual sky, Vaikuntha. It continues to grow, *tabe yāya tad-upari 'goloka-vṛndāvana'*, until at last it goes to Goloka Vrindavan, the abode of Krishna, the topmost planet in *paravyoma*, the spiritual sky. That *latā*, creeper, requires support. What kind of support is needed? A strong tree trunk. That strong tree trunk is the '*kṛṣṇa-caraṇa'-kalpa-vṛkṣe kare ārohaṇa*, the lotus feet of Krishna.

### Wonderful Fruit

Then what happens?

*tāhān vistārita hañā phale prema-phala  
ihān mālī sece nitya śravaṇādi jala*<sup>20</sup>

Mahaprabhu says that when it climbs to the strong tree trunk of the lotus feet of Krishna it produces fruit. What sort of fruit? *Prema-phala*, that fruit is *prema*, *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Still, the *mālī*, the gardener, should go on watering. Don't stop watering. This watering, *śravaṇa-kīrtana*, will go on continuously, eternally. Don't think, "Now the creeper has produced fruit. I have got the fruit, so no more watering." No, no, no. You should continuously go on, *ihān mālī sece nitya śravaṇādi jala*, daily watering should be there.

Krishna is *sat-cid-ānanda*, full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. And that *prema-phala*, the fruit of love of Godhead, is also *sat-cid-ānanda*. It is not material fruit. This fruit belongs to Krishna, no one else. Conditioned souls, who are running after their own happiness and material sense enjoyment, cannot have this fruit. Only a dear devotee, one who is *anyābhilāṣa-sūnyam*, who has no desire for material enjoyment, no desire for liberation, and who is day and night twenty-four hours engaged in the loving service of Krishna, can have it. Krishna gives it to such a devotee.

### Wicked Animal

But there is one danger. What is that? Mahaprabhu says:

*yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hātī mātā  
upāde vā chiṇḍe, tāra śukhi' yāya pātā*

If the devotee commits an offense at the feet of a *vaiṣṇava* while cultivating the creeper of devotional

service in the material world, his offense is compared to a mad elephant that uproots the creeper and breaks it. In this way the leaves of the creeper are dried up.

*tāte māli yatna kari' kare āvaraṇa  
aparādha-hastira yaiche nā haya udgama*

The gardener must defend the creeper by fencing it all around so that the powerful elephant of offenses may not enter.<sup>21</sup>

One very, very wicked, very dangerous animal comes. That is a mad elephant. This is *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is a mad elephant. This dangerously wicked animal can still come. Even at this stage, if some *sādhu* or *vaiṣṇava* commits *aparādha* at the lotus feet of such a dear *vaiṣṇava*, then this mad elephant comes, breaks their fences, enters into their garden, and completely devastates everything. This elephant pulls the creeper out from its root and throws it away — finished. *upāḍe vā chiṇḍe, tāra śukhi' yāya pātā* — Completely uprooted, the creeper becomes dried up. So one should be most careful that this dangerous and wicked animal should not enter into your garden. Take the utmost care to maintain this *bhakti-laṭṭā* creeper.

### Sin and Offense

At this point I want to mention something about *pāpa* and *aparādha*. One should understand that there is a difference between sinful activity and offense. One may be a greatly sinful person who has committed many sinful activities in this life and previous lives, but all of these sinful reactions are like *dhūli-lepa*, layers of dust. They can be washed off very easily. But *aparādhas* are like *vajra-lepa*, very strong layers like a thunderbolt. They cannot be washed off. This is the difference. The reaction to sinful activities can be easily washed off. If you merely chant Hare Krishna and attain the stage of *nāmābhāsa*, then karmic reactions are washed away. The example is Ajamila. He was a very sinful person. Chitrugupta, who records all of the sinful activities of the conditioned souls, had made a very big book for him. When the Yamadutas came to take him, Ajamila uttered the name of Narayan. He was only calling his son, yet he attained the stage of *nāmābhāsa* and his sins were completely washed off, finished. So, sin is like *dhūli-lepa*, a layer of dust, which is very easily washed off. But *aparādha* is a layer like a thunderbolt.



Even the Supreme Lord tells Durvasa Muni, "I cannot wash it off. No. It is *vajra-lepa*, a very strong layer." If the Supreme Lord says He cannot wash it off, then who can? Only that *vaiṣṇava* at whose feet you have committed *aparādha* can excuse you.

Jiva Goswami says that if a thorn has pierced your body on the heel, do you think that it will come out from the shoulder? It will only come out from where it was pierced — the same heel. That means you must go and approach that *vaiṣṇava* at whose lotus feet you committed the offense. Only he or she can excuse you. No other *vaiṣṇava* can excuse you. Even the Supreme Lord cannot excuse you.

### Don't Criticize

Srila Prabhupada has written:

The devotee does not do anything not sanctioned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As it is said, *vaiṣṇavera*



*kriyā mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*. Even the most learned and experienced person cannot understand the movements of a *vaiṣṇava*, a pure devotee. No one, therefore, should criticize a pure *vaiṣṇava*. A *vaiṣṇava* knows his own business; whatever he does is precisely right because he is always guided by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Prabhupada has quoted this verse from tenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*teṣāṃ evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jan tamah  
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance.<sup>22</sup>

Krishna is in the core of the heart of His pure devotee and He is guiding him. So no one should criticize such a devotee. This criticism is not *bhakti*. Don't criticize. You cannot understand the activities of a pure *vaiṣṇava*. Srila Gaura Kishore Das Babaji Maharaja was staying in a place where people pass stool. How can one understand? "Hey! How can a *paramahansa vaiṣṇava* stay in a nasty, filthy place, with a bad odor coming out? What kind of *vaiṣṇava* is this? He is a *sādhu*?"

It's said that at the time of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur there was one *vaiṣṇava* who was purchasing fish from the market, putting them in front of his cottage and letting the sun dry them out. Someone may criticize, "Oh, this *vaiṣṇava* is eating dry fish?"

Who can understand the behavior of a *vaiṣṇava*? This *vaiṣṇava* was thinking, "If I do this then no one will come here and disturb my *bhajana*." No one will go to a filthy place where people pass stool. Therefore Gaura Kishore Das Babaji stayed there so that no one would disturb him. *vaiṣṇavera kriyā mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya* — however *vijñeha*, wise or learned, a person may be by material estimation, he cannot understand the activities of such a *vaiṣṇava*. If you criticize him, "Hey! What sort of *vaiṣṇava* is he that he is doing such a thing?" then you commit *aparādha*. What is the reaction of such an offense? It is described:

*hena vaiṣṇava nindā kare yei jana  
se-i pāya duḥkha — janma jīvana maraṇa*

*vidyā-kula-tapa saba biphala tāhāra  
vaiṣṇava nindaye ye ye pāpī durācāra*

*pūjā o tāhāra kṛṣṇa nā kare grahaṇa  
vaiṣṇavera nindā kare ye pāpiṣṭha jana*<sup>23</sup>

This is Mahaprabhu's instruction in *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. Anyone who blasphemes Krishna's dear devotee is a great offender. If he offers *pūjā*, Krishna never accepts it. His tongue will never utter Krishna's holy name. Life after life he will be put into hell and suffer there. He will lose all of his education, the

results of his *tapasya*, *sādhana*, and anything else he acquired. I quoted from *rūpa-śikṣā* that even for a very powerful person whose *bhakti-laṭā* has climbed up to the lotus feet of Krishna and the *prema-phala*, the fruit of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, has come, if they commit offense, still everything is finished.

### Even Lord Siva

Sulapani, Sivaji, is a very powerful person. He is so powerful that he drank an ocean of poison. He has such potency. However, Vrindavan Das Thakur has said:

*śula-pāni-sama yadi vaiṣṇavere ninde  
tathāpiha nāśa pāya, — kahe śāstra-ṁṁde*

*ihā nā māniyā ye sujana-nindā kare  
janme janme se pāpiṣṭha daiva-doṣe mare*<sup>24</sup>

Even if a person is as powerful as *śula-pāni*, Sivaji, still if he commits *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, if he criticizes a *vaiṣṇava*, *sādhu*, who is dear to Krishna, then he falls down from his most elevated position and he perishes.

If someone cannot understand this and still blasphemes such a *vaiṣṇava*, *sādhu*, then life after life he'll go to hell and suffer — *janme, janme*.

Mahaprabhu describes what punishment is awaiting such an offender:

*prabhu bale, vaiṣṇava nindaye yei jana  
kuṣṭha-roga kon tā'ra śāstiyē lekhaṇa*

*āpātataḥ śāsti kichu haiyāche mātra  
āra kata āche yama-yātanāra pātra*

*caurāśi-sahasra yama-yātanā pratyakṣe  
punaḥ-punaḥ kari' bhūñje vaiṣṇava-nindake*

It is written in the scriptures that one who blasphemes the *vaiṣṇavas* will suffer from leprosy, after which he will be punished by the agents of Yamaraj again and again, in 84,000 births.<sup>25</sup>

This is awaiting the person who does *vaiṣṇava-nindā*, who blasphemes a *vaiṣṇava*, *sādhu*. Not only do they go to hell but also all of their *pitṛ-puruṣa*, their forefathers, will also go to hell. *Skanda Purāṇa* describes:

*nindān kurvanti ye mūḍhā vaiṣṇavānān mahātmanān  
patanti pitṛbhiḥ sārḍham mahā-raurava-samjñite  
hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati  
krudhyate yāti no harṣaṁ darśane patanāni ṣaṭ*<sup>26</sup>

There are six types of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*: (1) One who kills a *vaiṣṇava*. He is a great offender. (2) One who blasphemes a *vaiṣṇava*. (3) One who upon seeing a *vaiṣṇava* does not offer obeisances. (4) One who gets angry at a *vaiṣṇava*, *krodha kare*. (5) One who upon seeing a *vaiṣṇava* does not feel delighted. (6) *Dveṣṭi*, one who thinks ill of a *vaiṣṇava* in the mind. He does not speak

anything but in the mind thinks, "Oh, who is that?" *Skanda Purāna* says, *patanti pīṭybhīḥ sārḍham mahā-raurava-samjūite* — Not only does such an offender go to hell but generations of his ancestors do also.

### Hearing is an Offense

Srila Jiva Goswami has written, *vaiṣṇava nindā śravaṇe 'pi doṣa uktaḥ* — If you hear someone criticizing, speaking ill of a *vaiṣṇava*, then you also commit offense.<sup>27</sup> The *Bhāgavatam* says:

*nindām bhagavataḥ śṛṇvāns tat-parasya janasya vā  
tato nāpaiti yaḥ so 'pi yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ*

Anyone who fails to immediately leave the place where he hears criticism of the Supreme Lord or His faithful devotee will certainly fall down, bereft of his pious credit.<sup>28</sup>

In *Bhakti-sandarbhā* Jiva Goswami has commented on this *Bhāgavatam* verse:

*tato 'pagamaś cāsamarthāsyaiva; samarthena tu nindaka-  
jihvā chettavyā; tatrāpy asamarthena sva-prāṇa-parityāgo  
'pi kartavyaḥ*<sup>29</sup>

*Śāstra* says that if you hear such criticism then you will commit *aparādha*. It is better on your part to leave that place, "I won't hear." If you cannot leave, and if you have the power to cut out the tongue of the person who is blaspheming a *vaiṣṇava*, then he will never say such things again. But if you cannot cut off the tongue of that blasphemer and you cannot leave the place, then it is better to kill yourself. "Let me be killed, let me die — *sva-prāṇa-parityāgo 'pi kartavyaḥ*." Otherwise you will be an offender. The example is given in the sixth canto of *Bhāgavatam* of Sati, the wife of Sivaji and the daughter of Daksha Prajapati. *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ* — Sivaji is a great *vaiṣṇava*.<sup>30</sup> His father-in-law, Daksha, criticized him, and thereby committed *aparādha*. Daksha was performing a sacrifice. He invited all of his daughters and sons-in-law, but he didn't invite Sati. Sati wanted to go there but Sivaji said, "Don't go. We are not invited." Sati said, "What invitation is required to go to the father's house?" So Sati went. But there she heard her father Daksha criticizing Sivaji, *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhu*. What should Sati do? She could not cut off the tongue of her father, and she could not leave the place, so she committed suicide and left her body. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is so serious, so dangerous. One should not commit it. It cannot be washed away. It is *vajra-lepa*, like a layer of thunderbolt. *Pāpa*, sinful activities, are like a *dhūli-lepa*, a layer of dust. They are very easily washed off. But this *vajra-lepa*, the layer like a thunderbolt, cannot be washed off. Only the *vaiṣṇava* whom you offended can excuse you. Otherwise it cannot be washed off. Even the Supreme Lord says, "I cannot remove it."

The Lord tells Durvasa Muni, "Go beg excuse from Ambarish Maharaja. If he will excuse you then you will be free from danger and this *sudarśana-cakra* will let you go. Otherwise the *cakra* won't leave you,"

### Importance of Association

In the neophyte stage, the *sādhaka* who has come to the path of *bhajana* has very strong attachment, developed over many hundreds and thousands of lives, for his body and bodily relations. No one is free from this bodily attachment and bodily relationships, *artha, deha, geḥa, putra, kanya* — wealth, body, home, son, daughter, and wife — this is such a strong attachment. How can you develop attachment to the lotus feet of Krishna? There should be only one attachment, which is attachment to the lotus feet of Krishna. There should be no other attachment. But we have such strong attachment to our body and bodily relations, wife, son, daughter, kith and kin. How can we transfer it, direct it to Krishna? Bhaktivinode Thakur sings:

*viṣaye ye priti ebe āchaye āmār  
sei-mata prīti houk caraṇe tomār*<sup>31</sup>

"O Lord, I am a materialistic person. I have such strong attachment to this material sense gratification and material relations. I offer prayer at Your lotus feet. You can do everything. Nothing is impossible for You. To give up such strong attachment is impossible for us, but You can do it. Please direct this attachment towards Your lotus feet."

In the neophyte stage, when we have such strong attachment, one should regularly take *sādhu-saṅga, vaiṣṇava-saṅga*, association of a *sādhu, premī-bhakta*, who has bound up the Supreme Lord in his heart with the rope of love. Krishna never leaves the heart of such a *sādhu*. Such a devotee has no attachment to his body and bodily relations. He has only one attachment, to the lotus feet of Krishna. If you get the mercy of such *vaiṣṇavas* by associating with them, hearing from them and rendering service unto them, then this strong attachment will be channeled towards the lotus feet of Krishna. *Sādhaka* means practicing *sādhana-bhakti*, the preliminary, neophyte stage. *Sādhakas* at such a level should be very, very careful. They should develop intense greed, "How can I have the association of such a *sādhu* or *vaiṣṇavas*. How can I get it daily? How can I always stay in such association?" Such association is like a strong fort or a shield. It will give you protection from dangerous animals. Because of material attachments we commit offenses, *aparādha*. So one should develop greed to have the association of such *sādhus* and *vaiṣṇavas*. Thereby you will

develop this desire, how can all this attachment be directed towards the lotus feet of Krishna? By the mercy of *sādhū*, you will get the mercy of Krishna. Then it is possible to give up these material attachments. Otherwise it is not possible.

*sādhū sañge nija-tattva avagata hana  
nija tattva jāni' āra saṁsāra nā cāya  
kena vā bhajinu māyā kare hāya hāya* <sup>32</sup>

By association with a *sādhū*, one can understand, "Who am I? I am *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*." *Sādhū* speaks about these topics — *sādhū-saṅge kṛṣṇa-kathā haya ālāpana*. What sort of discourses go on in the association of such *sādhū*s? Politics? Topics of sense gratification? No! Only *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*! No other topics are there. Hearing from the lips of such pure *sādhū*s is so powerful. Doing so one can understand, "Who am I? Oh, I am *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*." Then he says, "Oh, what I have done? I have not become *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*. I have become *māyā-dāsa*. For lakhs and lakhs of lives I have become *māyā-dāsa*. Alas! Alas!" *kena vā bhajinu māyā kare hāya hāya* — "Why have I become *māyā-dāsa* for so many lives?"

*keñde bole ohe kṛṣṇa! āmi tava dāsa,  
tomāra caraṇa chāḍi haila sarva-nāśa*

The *jīva* then cries, "O Krishna! my Lord, I am Your eternal servant. Having left the shelter of Your lotus feet my life has become destroyed."<sup>33</sup>

Then he will cry and dash his head on the stone. "Oh Krishna! I am Your *dāsa*! I have disregarded Your lotus feet. Oh Krishna! Now I am completely doomed." When you cry and say that before Krishna, then Krishna will shower His mercy on you. "Now he is crying for Me. Yes. He wants to come to Me."

At that time,

*māyāke pichane rākhi kṛṣṇa-pāne cāya  
bhajite bhajite kṛṣṇa-pāda-padma pāya* <sup>34</sup>

When the *jīva* takes shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna and breaks free from the spell of the witch Maya, then he says, "Oh ugly Maya, get out! Get out ugly Maya!" The devotee then constantly looks to Krishna. No looking back to Maya. Maya calls, "Hey! Come back, come back. I have a nice garland for you." She comes with a tinkling, tinkling sound, lipstick, and laughing

with a nice garland, very nice. "Oh, ugly Maya, get out, get out, get out!" Pushing her back, constantly, steadily, such a devotee gazes at the beautiful lotus feet of Krishna. No looking back. Then Krishna inculcates spiritual strength into you. That comes through *sādhū*. You then become so strong that you will be able to kick out Maya. Otherwise you cannot.

*māyāre kariyā jaya chāḍāno nā jāya  
sādhū-kṛpā binā āra nāhika upāya*

Even if I can cure my blindness and defeat the *māyā*-hangman, I cannot become free from material illusion without the mercy of the *sādhū-guru* and the saintly devotees.<sup>35</sup>

In the *Gītā* Krishna says:

*daivō hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*

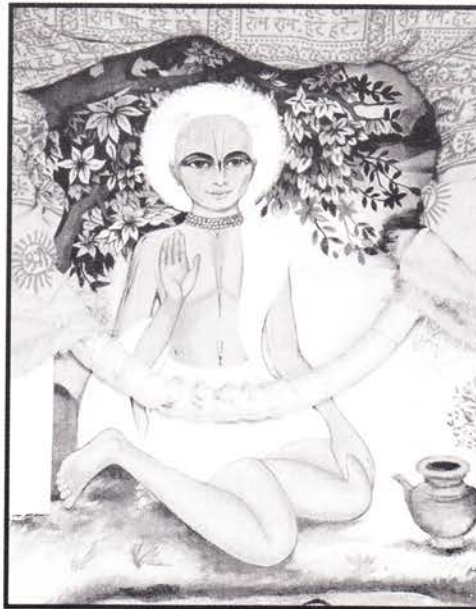
This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.<sup>36</sup>

*Māyā* is so strong. Although it is the external, inferior energy, it is very strong. You cannot conquer *māyā* through your own strength. Without spiritual strength received from Krishna through *sādhū-guru* you cannot conquer *māyā*.

### Devour You

*Sādhū-kṛpā bina āra nāhika upāya* — There is no other means than by the mercy of *sādhū-guru*. If you get that spiritual strength from *sādhū* then you will be able to conquer *māyā* and completely surrender unto Krishna. So, in this first stage of *bhājana* — the *vaidhi*, neophyte, beginning stage — one should be very careful. Always avoid *asat-saṅga*, association with *strī*, women, and association with *strī-saṅgī*, men who are attached to

women. They will commit this *aparādha* and then you will open your door towards the darkest hell, *tamo-dvāra*. *Sādhū-saṅga* opens your door towards the spiritual abode, while your attachment to your body and bodily relations, your wife, son, and daughter, drag you to the darkest region of hell. This material world is compared to a *sindhu*, an ocean. In the ocean you will find that there are very ferocious aquatic animals. The crocodile is there, the shark, the whale, and greater



*Srila Jiva Goswami has written, If you  
hear someone criticizing, a vaiṣṇava,  
then you also commit offense.*

**Devotee:** So anyone could be a *vaiṣṇava*.

**Gour Govinda Swami:** The *jīva* is *vaiṣṇava*! *jīvera* 'svarūpa' haya *kṛṣṇera* 'nitya-dāsa', the *svārūpa* of the *jīva* is *vaiṣṇava*. But we have no such vision. We cannot see, because we are such rascals, degraded fellows.



animals that devour the whale, *timinṅgila*. The whale is a very big animal, bigger than an elephant, yet another bigger animal is there that devours whales. That is the *timinṅgila*. Such ferocious, dangerous aquatic animals are there in the sea. Similarly, in this *bhava-sindhu* — the material world that is compared to the ocean — sharks, crocodiles, whales and devourers of whales are also here. Who are they? They are your bodily relations, wife, son, daughter, friends, kith and kin, family members. They are the ferocious animals in this materialistic existence that is compared to the ocean. They are always devouring you, devouring you!

*sādhu-saṅge kṛṣṇa-nāma—ei mātra cāi  
saṁsāra jinite āra kona vastu nāi*

The only desirable object is to chant the holy name of the Lord in association of pure devotees. This is the best and only way to conquer nescience.<sup>37</sup>

If you want to get out of this very dangerous ocean filled with ferocious aquatic animals that are always trying to devour you, then you have to do *sādhu-saṅga*. *sādhu-saṅga kṛṣṇa-kathā* — Always, daily, take the association of such *sādhu-vaiṣṇavas*, dear devotees of Krishna and Mahaprabhu, and hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from their lips. This is the only means. No other means is there. Thank you very much.

### Questions

**Devotee 1:** Even if we become situated in Goloka Vrindavan, can we fall down if we commit offense?

**Gour Govinda Swami:** Yes, if you commit such *aparādha*. It is so dangerous!

**Devotee 1:** So that is why we are here in the material world?

**Gour Govinda Swami:** Yes, therefore you are here. So many causes are there. You have committed *aparādha* and also sinful activities; it is not only *aparādha*.

In the spiritual world there is no question of committing offense. However, even if one who has gotten *kṛṣṇa-prema* commits *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* then

he can fall from that elevated position.<sup>38</sup> One should be very, very careful. Therefore we should consider all to be *vaiṣṇavas* but me. I am not a *vaiṣṇava*.

*ṭṛṇād api su-nīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā  
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

One who thinks himself lower than grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor but is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord.<sup>39</sup>

This is Mahaprabhu's teaching. One should think that all are superior to me, all are greater than me. I am the lowest of the low. We should think, "Everyone is a *vaiṣṇava* except me. I am not a *vaiṣṇava*." One who has developed *kṛṣṇa-prema* thinks:

*premera svabhāva — yāhāṅ premera sambandha  
sei māne, — 'kṛṣṇe mora nāhi prema-gandha'*

Wherever there is a relationship of love of Godhead, its natural symptom is that the devotee does not think himself a devotee. Instead, he always thinks that he has not even a drop of love for Krishna.<sup>40</sup>

Such a devotee says, "I have no touch of *prema* at all. I am such a rascal, such a stupid fellow. I am fallen and most degraded. I have not developed *prema* at all. I have no touch of *prema* at all." Kaviraj Goswami says, *uttama hañā āpanāke māne ṭṛṇādhamā* — Although he is very exalted, he thinks himself lower than the grass on the ground.<sup>41</sup> *Vaiṣṇavas* are *uttama*, very elevated, but they think, "I am *adhāma*, fallen". This is *ṭṛṇād api su-nīcena*. If some tinge of pride, arrogance, and false ego comes then you are finished. Then you will commit this *aparādha*. This is what Mahaprabhu is teaching. It is a question of pride. Krishna says in the *Gītā*:

*dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca  
ajñānam cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurīm*

Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance—these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature, O son of Pritha.<sup>42</sup>

These are demoniac characteristics. A *vaiṣṇava* is an elevated person, but he is so humble. *ṭṛṇād api su-nīcena* — He is much humbler than a blade

of grass lying in the street. Without such humility one will definitely commit offense.

Narottam Das Thakur has written a very nice song:

*ki-rūpe pāiba sevā mui durācāra  
śrī-guru-vaiṣṇave rati nā haila āmāra*<sup>43</sup>

We should think, "How can I get the opportunity to serve Krishna? I have not developed attachment, love and affection for the lotus feet of Sri Guru and the *vaiṣṇavas*. I am such a rascal. I have so much hatred in my heart and mind, so how can I get it?"

*adoṣa-daraśi-prabhu patita-uddhāra  
ei-bāra narottame karaha nistāra*

O master, O purifier of the sinful, O savior of the fallen souls! Please rescue this Narottam Das.<sup>44</sup>

Offer prayers at the lotus feet of such a *vaiṣṇava*, "I have offended you, but you are *adoṣa-darśi*, you never see any *doṣa*, fault, with anyone. Please excuse me. I am *patita*, I am most degraded. Please shower your mercy and deliver me." This is the *vaiṣṇava* way.

**Devotee 2:** Devotees sometimes think, "This devotee is not really a *vaiṣṇava*, he is only a neophyte, therefore if I think something bad of him it is all right."

**Gour Govinda Swami:** Don't hear such a thing.

**Devotee 1:** It is very difficult to not hear such talk.

**Gour Govinda Swami:** Do you think it is easy to get Krishna? It is very difficult and it is very easy. You think, "I will do all nonsense and I will get Krishna." What is this? Day-dreaming! It is not so easy!

**Devotee 2:** So anyone could be a *vaiṣṇava*.

**Gour Govinda Swami:** The *jīva* is *vaiṣṇava*! *jīvera* 'svarūpa' haya *kṛṣṇera* 'nitya-dāsa', the *svārūpa* of the *jīva* is *vaiṣṇava*. But we have no such vision. We cannot see, because we are such rascals, degraded fellows. We are blind. We have no proper vision. So how can we see the *svārūpa*? We only see the outward, nasty things, the outer body. We have no vision to see. But every *jīva* is a servant of Krishna — *jīvera* 'svarūpa' haya *kṛṣṇera* 'nitya-dāsa'. That is what Mahāprabhu has said. But we cannot see it. A real *sādhu*, *paramahansa*, pays respect to one and all. *amānī mānada* — Don't demand respect for yourself, rather, pay respect to one and all. A *sādhu* doesn't even disrespect an ant. He sees him as a *jīva*. You should know that before you offer respect to a *sādhu*, the *sādhu* has already paid respect to you in his mind. For practical dealings we have this consciousness of superior and inferior. But a *sādhu* offers respect to one and all. Seeing the *jīva* soul within, he doesn't disrespect even an ant.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cc. madhya 23.39.

<sup>2</sup> Bhāg. 11.14.20.

<sup>3</sup> Bhāg. 11.14.21.

<sup>4</sup> Bhāg. 11.14.15.

<sup>5</sup> Bhāg. 11.14.16.

<sup>6</sup> Krama-sandarbha commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.14.16.

<sup>7</sup> Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11.

<sup>8</sup> Śikṣāṣṭaka 4.

<sup>9</sup> Gītāvalī, Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka Song 4.

<sup>10</sup> Bhāg. 3.29.13.

<sup>11</sup> Bg. 4.11.

<sup>12</sup> Krama-sandarbha commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.14.16.

<sup>13</sup> Cc. ādi 6.100.

<sup>14</sup> This same verse appears as text 77 in Srila Thakur Bhaktivinoda's Śrī Gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotra and text 3 in his Śrī Daśamūla-śikṣā.

<sup>15</sup> Bg. 7.7.

<sup>16</sup> Bhāg. 9.4.63.

<sup>17</sup> Bhāg. 10.32.22.

<sup>18</sup> Cc. madhya 19.152.

<sup>19</sup> Cc. madhya 19.153-154.

<sup>20</sup> Cc. madhya 19.155.

<sup>21</sup> Cc. madhya 19.156-157.

<sup>22</sup> Bg. 10.11.

<sup>23</sup> Caitanya-bhāgavata antya 4.360-362.

<sup>24</sup> Caitanya-bhāgavata madhya 22.55-56.

<sup>25</sup> Caitanya-bhāgavata antya 4.375-377.

<sup>26</sup> Skanda Purāṇa quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 10.311-312.

<sup>27</sup> Bhakti-sandarbha 265.19.

<sup>28</sup> Bhāg. 10.74.40 quoted in Bhakti-sandarbha 265.20.

<sup>29</sup> Bhakti-sandarbha 265.21.

<sup>30</sup> Bhāg. 12.13.16.

<sup>31</sup> Gītāvalī 12.4.5.

<sup>32</sup> Srila Jagadananda Pandit's Prema-vivarta 1.6.7-8

<sup>33</sup> Srila Jagadananda Pandit's Prema-vivarta 1.6.9.

<sup>34</sup> Srila Jagadananda Pandit's Prema-vivarta 1.6.11.

<sup>35</sup> Srila Narottam Das Thakur's Prārthanā 46.4.

<sup>36</sup> Bg. 7.14.

<sup>37</sup> Prema-vivarta 1.6.13.

<sup>38</sup> To say that there is no question of the residents of the spiritual world committing offense, and then to say that if they do commit offense they will fall down, may seem contradictory. However, both points are important for our understanding. Consider the following example: It is correct to say that if a man holds his hand in a fire long enough then all of his flesh will burn away. However, it is

also correct to say that no one would do such a thing. Similarly, *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is such a powerful offense that even if a soul on the level of Lord Siva commits this offense he will fall down. However, someone on the level of Lord Siva would never do such a thing. — Editor.

<sup>39</sup> Śikṣāṣṭaka 3.

<sup>40</sup> Cc. antya 20.28.

<sup>41</sup> Cc. antya 20.22.

<sup>42</sup> Bg. 16.4.

<sup>43</sup> Srila Narottam Das Thakur's Prārthanā 46.1.

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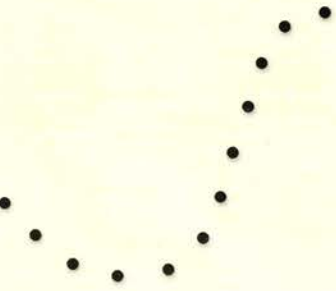
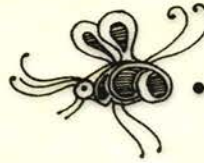


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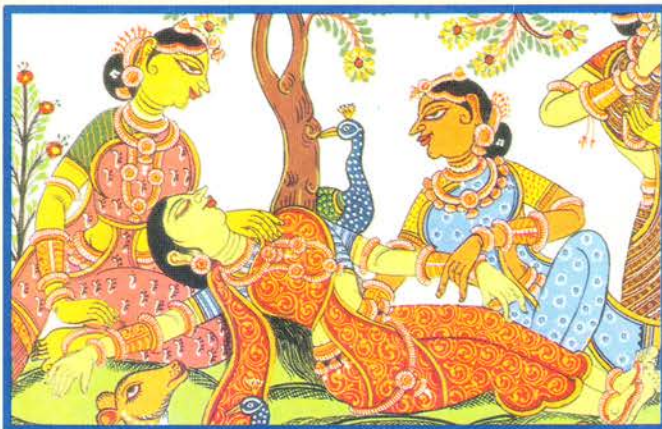
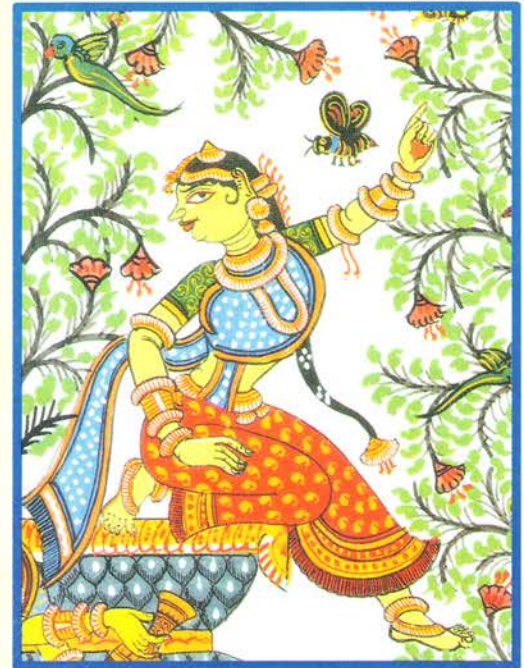
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movement and going outside for so-called higher association, that everything is here in ISKCON, in his Guru Maharaja's movement, and that there is no reason for them to leave.

— Aradhana Priya Dasi

**OUR REPLY:** To get the mercy of *sādhu* we have to qualify ourselves internally by following their instructions, as our Guru Maharaja would say, "as it is, without adding your own deliberation to it." If we really receive the favor of *sādhu* then there is no question of ever losing it. However, due to offenses we may become temporarily separated from it.

The association of *sādhus* is not something that can be gained by any mundane endeavor, because it is not possible for the conditioned soul to see who is a genuine *sādhu* and who is not. The only hope that we have to obtain such association is the mercy of Krishna. Krishna wants us to have *sādhu-saṅga* more than we do. We should chant Hare Krishna and cry in our heart. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura has described:

"At the dawn of our spiritual life we sincerely and with complete submission and self-surrender pray to God for receiving the protection of Sad Guru. The Supreme Lord, perceiving our earnestness and devotion with a view to guide us on the true path, will send a real guru to us. Otherwise it is impossible for us to find Sad Guru by our own fallible energy. If we guide ourselves by our own energy we shall come across the pseudo-gurus and being caught hold of by them by their temporary pleasing manners, run down to hell."

— *Harmonist* p. 139 Vol. XXVII, No. 5. Oct 1929.

Regarding your second question: Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami remarked many times that he wanted to show devotees that everything was in Srila Prabhupada's society and that it was not necessary for anyone to go outside. He did not express this out of any dogmatic sectarian feelings or because of enmity to anyone. From his boyhood he was friends with many *vaiṣṇavas* from a wide variety of groups, and he was always affectionate and respectful in his dealings with everyone. He spoke in this way because he saw ISKCON as his gurudeva's *seva/saṅga*. He had faith that if devotees sincerely serve Srila Prabhupada and Krishna then it was not necessary for them to go elsewhere, that Krishna would provide whatever they needed to make advancement. He taught that regardless of what institution one may be affiliated with, devotees should render faithful loving service to the mission and instructions of their respective gurus. By thus pleasing the spiritual master one would obtain all perfection.

In an August 1994 interview for the Srila Prabhupada Centennial he was asked, "what can we do to bring devotees back to ISKCON who have left?" His reply was that the devotees should simply

speak nice *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and have nice *vaiṣṇava* dealings with others. If that was done, he said, then no one would want to leave the society.

### The Nectar of Kṛṣṇa-kathā

In the house of Advaita Acarya, all the Vaishnavas took pleasure in always talking of Krishna, always worshipping Krishna and always chanting the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*.

#### PURPORT

On these principles only does the Krishna Consciousness movement go on. We have no other business other than to talk of Krishna, worship Krishna and chant the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*. — *Cc. ādi* 13.66

One can understand from this verse and purport how essential it is to speak and hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

Verse two of Srila Rupa Goswami's *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* lists six activities which destroy one's devotional service. *Prajalpa*, unnecessary speech, is mentioned.

In his commentary on this verse named *Bhaktyaloka*, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur lists eight forums in which *prajalpa* can manifest: useless talk, arguments, gossip, debates, faultfinding in others, speaking lies, blaspheming devotees, and worldly talks. *Prajalpa* (useless talk) is so all pervading that mostly all talk is godless. Srila Bhaktivinode gives a clear explanation of each of these eight, qualifying them according to *āśrama* divisions.

In Kali-yuga, most speech falls into these various categories. In verse three of the *Upadeśāmṛta*, Srila Rupa Goswami lists the six activities necessary for advancement in devotional service. The fourth one is, *tat-tat-karma-pravartana*, or activities by which devotional service is cultivated, or hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord.

In *Bhaktyaloka*, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur refers to *Bhāg.* 11.19.20-24, wherein Sri Krishna describes to Uddhava those religious principles by which human beings, who have actually surrendered to Him, develop love for Him. Listed first and second is firm faith in the blissful narration of His pastimes and constant chanting of His glories.

In perfect line with this understanding *Sri Krishna-kathamṛta* is broadcasting the most sweet ambrosial nectar of the Supreme Lord's amazing pastimes in all their variegatedness, thereby enlivening anyone and everyone who comes in contact with this beacon of transcendental light which is absolutely essential for spiritual survival in this dark age of Kali, where godlessness and materialism are all pervading.

We humbly pray that those who have dedicated their time and energy to making this transcendental magazine available will continue with renewed enthusiasm.

Every issue is a masterpiece! May you receive the blessings and support of the *vaiṣṇavas*.

— Candramauli Swami



# Is Begging Forgiveness Enough?

The fourth canto, second chapter of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* describes how Daksha, the son of Lord Brahma, organized a great sacrificial ceremony, but in the process committed an offense to the topmost *vaiṣṇava* Lord Siva. Sivaji did not take Daksha's offense seriously and afterwards Daksha cried, begged forgiveness from Siva, and was forgiven. By the blessings of Lord Siva, Daksha was able to complete his sacrifice. However, in spite of achieving the forgiveness, Daksha had to suffer a reaction for his offense. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.30.48) describes: *yaśyām mahad-avajñānād ajany ajana-yonijaḥ* — As a result of his offense to Lord Siva, Daksha had to take birth again, this time in a *kṣatriya* family, a lower birth. In that next birth Daksha also committed an offense at the lotus feet of Sri Narada Muni. Jiva Goswami comments that this offense to Narada was an additional fruit of Daksha's previous offense to Lord Siva. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada describes this in his purport to *Bhāgavatam* 4.4.13:

He [Daksha] offended the lotus feet of Lord Siva because he thought that his body, being the father of the body of Sati, was superior to Lord Siva's. Generally, less intelligent men misidentify in that way, and they act in the bodily concept of life. Thus they are subject to commit more and more offenses at the lotus feet of great souls.

So if Lord Siva forgave Daksha, how is it that Daksha still had to suffer these multiple reactions? Why didn't Lord Siva's forgiveness forestall all reactions to the offense?

Earlier in the same purport, Srila Prabhupada gives a hint:

A great soul may forgive offenses, but Krishna does not excuse offenses to the dust of that great soul's feet...

In his *Bhakti-sandarbhā* (265.57-8), Srila Jiva Goswami says:

*sat-prabhṛtiṣṭv aparādhe tu tat-santoṣanārtham eva santata-nāma-kīrtanādikaṁ samucitam ... uktas ca nāma-kaumudiyām* — *mahad-aparādhasya bhoga eva nivartakaḥ tad-anugraho vā*

In order to be free from offenses unto great souls, one should please that same personality whom one originally offended through constantly

engaging in the process of bhakti, beginning with the chanting of the holy names.... *Nāma-kaumudī* confirms this as follows: "Offenses to great devotees may be relieved either by experiencing the calamities they bring or by attaining the favor (*anugraha*) of the offended devotee."

If Daksha had achieved the favor of Lord Siva then there should have been no reaction whatsoever. But *Bhāgavatam* 4.7.16 describes that he only achieved the forgiveness of Lord Siva (*kṣamā*), and not his favor (*anugraha*). Because he retained the concept of being the father-in-law of Lord Siva, he could not see Lord Siva in a superior position as an advanced *vaiṣṇava* and achieve his favor by bowing down to touch his feet.

One mundane example may serve to illustrate this important distinction. Suppose you lend some money to someone else, then later they come to you, apologize, and say that they are unable to repay you. You may say, "OK, you are relieved of the debt." But are you satisfied by such behavior? No. Satisfaction can only come through being repaid the debt as originally promised. Similarly, begging for and acquiring forgiveness for an offense is not the same as achieving the blessings and favor of the offended *vaiṣṇava*. If one actually achieves the favor of the offended *vaiṣṇava* then one will be protected from Krishna's displeasure.

In contrast to the behavior of Daksha, when Durvasa Muni realized that he needed to achieve the favor of Maharaja Ambarish in order to become free of his offense, he bowed down and touched the feet of that great *vaiṣṇava*, and immediately he was delivered. This he did even though he was a famous *sādhu* while Maharaja Ambarish was merely a king.

Another example is found in the pastime of Srila Gadadhar Pandit and Pundarik Vidyanidhi as described by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur (*Cb. madhya* 7.44-113). Upon seeing the material opulence of Srila Pundarik Vidyanidhi, some doubts came to the mind of Gadadhar Pandit. Later when he realized the exalted position of Vidyanidhi Mahasay, Gadadhar felt great remorse and felt it necessary to take initiation from Pundarik in order to become free from what he considered to be his offense.

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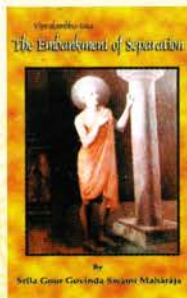
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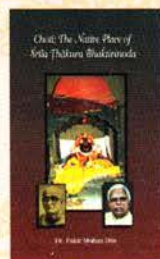


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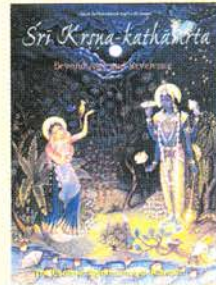
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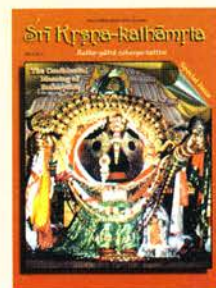


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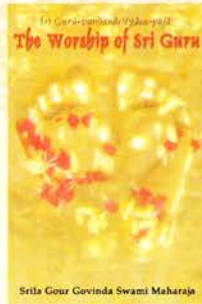
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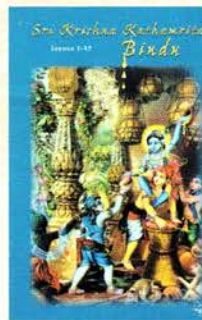


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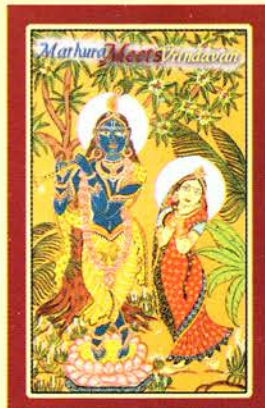


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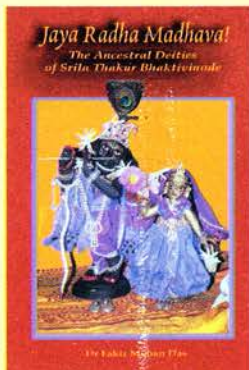
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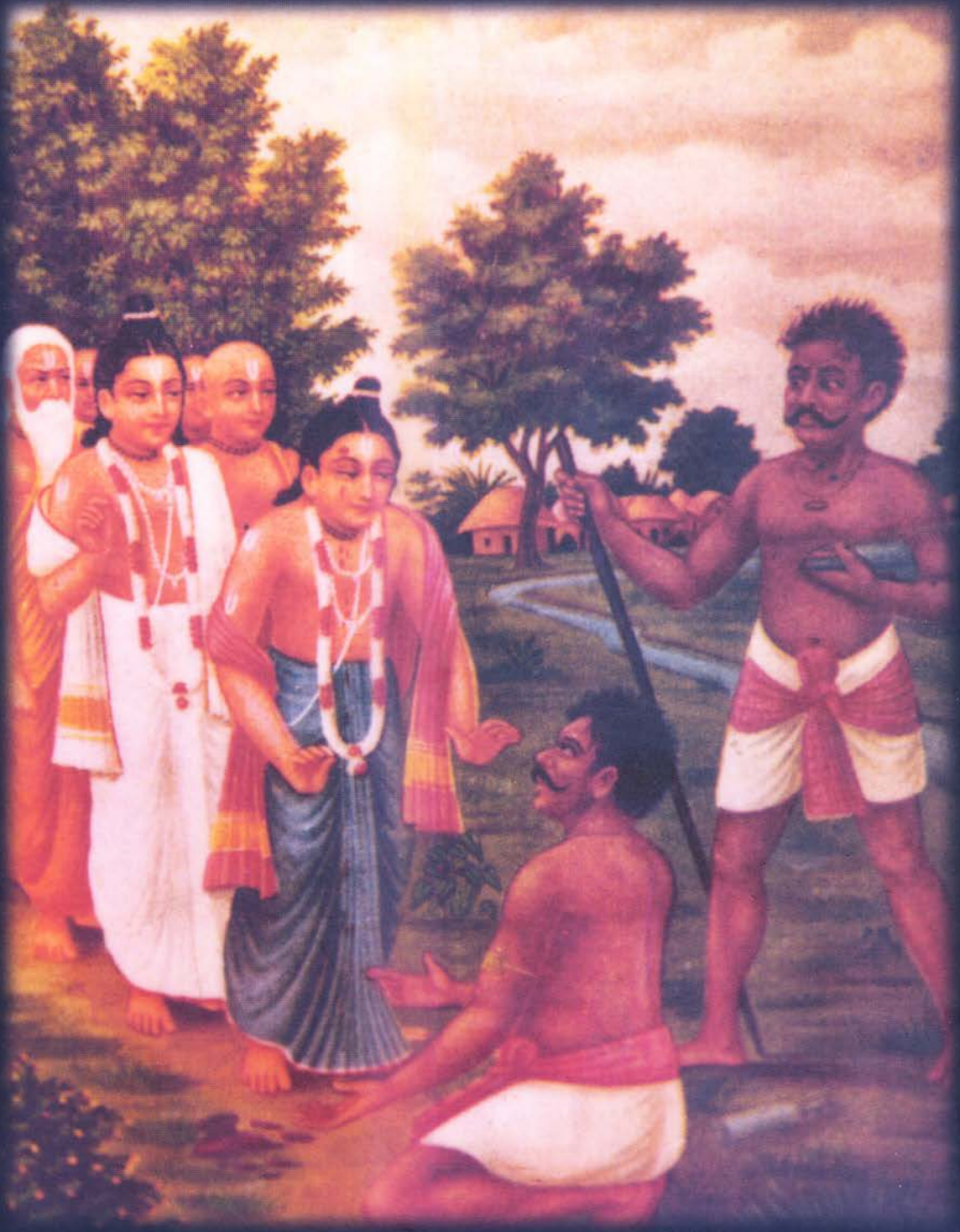
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*ohe bhāi vaiṣṇavete sābadhāna habe  
prāṇapaṇa kari' aparādha kṣamāibe*

**O my brothers, please be very careful in dealing  
with the *vaiṣṇavas*. Beg their forgiveness for any  
offense with your heart and soul.**