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REFORMING RASCALDOM

*His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada*

Lord Nityananda is guru. He can instruct us, but ultimately it depends on the disciple. A doctor may say, "Do this, but do not do that," but if the patient does not follow the prescription, what will be the result? Similarly, Nityananda Prabhu will hear the prayer of an insincere rascal only if the rascal actually wants to change his condition. One must agree not to be a rascal any more, and then his rascaldom can be reformed. Jagai and Madhai were prototype rascals — drunkards and debauchees. They begged the Lord for his mercy, but Lord Chaitanya told them, "First stop your nonsense activities, then I will accept you." So a rascal may be accepted, provided he agrees to stop his nonsense. To be reformed, one must agree to the reforming process. ❀

— Letter to Rudra, 9 March 1970.

NITAI AND BANKA RAY

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Another *līlā* associated with the boyhood of Nityananda Prabhu is the pastime of his younger brother Banka Ray. Banka Ray was taking care of the cultivation of the land. One day, Hadai Pandit, the boys' father, had engaged many laborers in clearing all the weeds from a big patch of land. It was mid-day and still the laborers had not finished the work.

Banka Ray said to them, "It is noon and you must be hungry. All of you go to your homes, take your meal, and come back in the afternoon." After they left, Banka Ray uprooted all the weeds and cleared the whole plot of land by himself. He was collecting the weeds and putting them in a big mound when the laborers returned. When they saw that this small boy had done so much work by himself, they went to his father and said, "Pandit, your son Banka Ray has alone uprooted all the weeds of that huge plot of land. Now he's putting them in a big pile. Hadai Pandit and many villagers came to see. When Banka Ray saw everyone coming, he hid himself behind the mound of weeds and disappeared. Everyone looked, but they couldn't find him. When mother Padmavati heard that her son had vanished, she came running, crying. Upon hearing that Banka Ray was gone, all the villagers, as well as Hadai Pandit and mother Padmavati, were crying.

Then they heard Banka Ray's voice from the sky, "You will not see me again in the same form. On the coming *Ekādaśī* day you'll find me floating in the river Yamuna in the form of a wooden deity. [There is a small river in Ekachakra named Yamuna.] On that *Ekādaśī* day, people went there and at the proper time they saw a deity floating on the river. Nityananda Prabhu himself picked him up and installed him. That deity is known as Bankimdev or Bankim Ray, and is still there today in the village of Ekachakra. It is said that when Nityananda Prabhu disappeared, he entered into this deity.

In that village they have a very big festival on Nityananda Prabhu's appearance day. ❀

— Excerpted from the article, *The Amazing Childhood Pastimes of Lord Nityananda*, published in Sri Krishna Kathamrita magazine, issue number 3. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

NITAI MEETS LAKSMIPATI

*Adapted from Narahari Chakravarti
Thakur's*

Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara 5.2241-2328

*śrī caitanya eka deha nityānanda-rāma
tānra janmasthāna rāḍe 'ekachakra' -grām*

Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda Rama are one and the same body. Nityananda Prabhu was born in the village of Ekachakra. (Text 2241)

His mother was Padmavati and his father was Hadai Pandit. Who can describe the love they felt for their son? He was their breath of life. Padmavati's blissful son enjoyed many pastimes in Ekachakra Gram. Filled with ecstasy, Nityananda showed the people the pastimes of Krishna's *avatāras*. The people of Ekachakra were very fortunate. For all of them, Nitai was a treasure more dear than life. Their love for him grew and grew. For twelve years, Nityananda Prabhu stayed in that village.

Who has the power to understand Lord Nityananda's heart? Without Sri Krishna Chaitanya's association, Nitai could not remain peaceful. One day, Lord Nityananda thought in his heart, "It is not yet the time for me to obtain him. Sri Krishna Chaitanya is now in Nabadwip. Concealing his true identity, he enjoys pastimes as a child. When he openly manifests his true identity and enjoys pastimes with the devotees, then I will go and meet him. For now I will go on pilgrimage." Thinking in this way, Lord Nityananda smiled.

Soon thereafter, a *sannyāsī* came to that village and, getting directions from the inhabitants, he arrived at Hadai Pandit's house. Seeing the saintly guest, Hadai Pandit became joyful. In a moment he placed many foodstuffs before him and requested him to eat.

The *sannyāsī* said, "O brahmin, promise that you will fulfill my request, only then will I eat." Attaining that promise, the renunciate took his meal. Then, at the time of his departure, he asked that Nityananda be given to him. Consoling his father and mother, and with a peaceful heart, Nitai departed with the *sannyāsī*. In this way, Nityananda Prabhu left home. Who has the power to understand his wonderful pastimes?

Nityananda Chandra is in the full bloom of youth. His handsomeness charms all the worlds. A single glimpse of him brings cooling bliss to the eyes. Wherever Nitai, who was filled with divine love, went, the people, their hearts wild with ecstasy, ran to see him. Showing great mercy to everyone, Nityananda Svarup, the Personality of Godhead himself, walked like a great king of the elephants.

Nityananda Prabhu visited the same holy places he visited as Lord Balaram in *Dvāpara-yuga*. Traveling south, he went to Pandharpur. There, Lord Nityananda saw the deity of Lord Vitthalanath. In that town lived a gentle brahmin who was a godbrother of Madhavendra Puri. Inviting the Lord to his home, the brahmin respectfully offered fruits, roots, milk, and other foods for him to eat. Gazing at Nityananda Rama, the fortunate people of Pandharpur felt their life's breath filled with cooling bliss.

Who can understand the desires in Nityananda Prabhu's heart? After seeing Lord Vitthalanath, Nityananda stayed in a secluded place. Coming from afar, that brahmin's spiritual master, Sri Lakshmiapati, suddenly came to that village. Seeing him, the brahmin was very excited. Lakshmiapati was very old. His glorious activities were beyond description. His fame extended everywhere. He was a great saint, surrounded by followers, learned in all scriptures, who walked on the path of pure devotional service. Who can describe the fatherly love that Lakshmiapati felt for his disciples?

*ke kahite pare lakṣmīpatira mahimā?
yān'ra śiṣya mādhavendra pure — ei sīmā*

Who has the power to describe Lakshmiapati's glories? His disciple was Madhavendra Puri, whose glories were the greatest. (Text 2271)

*mādhavendra pure prema-bhakti-rasa-maya
yānra nāma-smaraṇe sakala siddhi haya*

Madhavendra Puri was the abode of the mellow of pure love of godhead. The remembrance of his name grants all perfection. (Text 2272)

Madhavendra Puri's disciples, headed by Sri Isvara Puri and Sri Ranga Puri, were all intoxicated with the nectar of ecstatic love. Stripad Madhavendra had many disciples in Bengal, Orissa, and other places. They were all devoted to Krishna and were absorbed in ecstatic love. Madhavendra Puri was famous in the *Madhva-sampradāya*. He was an ocean of good qualities and very dear to his spiritual master.

Lakshmiapati took his meal at that brahmin disciple's house. Eagerly he spoke of Lord Krishna. Again and again Lakshmiapati said,

"I see great auspiciousness has come to your house. I have come to your home many times, but never has such bliss taken birth in my heart! I think a great devotee must be staying here."

To this, the brahmin replied. "Your mercy is very powerful." By Lord Nityananda's wish, the brahmin did not reveal Nitai's presence in the house. The day was passed in speaking topics of Sri Krishna.

That night, while sitting in his room, the glorious *sannyāsī* Lakshmipati sang songs glorifying Lord Balaram's pastimes, pastimes that enchant the heart. Absorbed in *ananya-bhakti*, unflinching love for Balaram, Lakshmipati wept. He prayed:

*ohe baladeva, mu adhama durācāre
kara anugrahana — yaśa ghuṣuka saṁsāre*

"O Lord Balaram, I am very fallen and ill-behaved! Please be merciful to me. I will sing your glories all over the world." (Text 2283)

Speaking these words, Lakshmipati could not remain peaceful. He rolled on the ground and tears streamed from his eyes. He lamented bitterly. Overcome with powerful emotions, he was speechless and agitated. Suddenly, by Lord Nityananda's will, he was drawn into sleep. Then, on the pretext of a dream, Nityananda Svarup happily revealed Lord Balaram's form to Lakshmipati.

How glorious was Lord Balaram! Cupid's pride was crushed. Lord Balaram's beautiful form rebuked a glistening silver mountain. His arms reached his knees. His chest was broad. Reaching almost to his ears, his large graceful eyes charmed the heart. A single earring on his ear charmed the hearts of the whole world. A delightful bugle-horn was tucked into the left side of the sash at his waist. His body was decorated with many ornaments. No metaphor or simile of this world could describe him. His face conquered the radiance of the full moon. On the pretext of speaking words, he created a flood of nectar.

Gently, gently, he said to his dear devotee Lakshmipati, "When I heard your lament, my heart broke. Krishna is the master of my life. Birth after birth you are his servant."

Grasping Lord Balaram's feet, Lakshmipati said, "I pray that in my heart I will never think you are different from Krishna."

Hearing Lakshmipati's words, Lord Balaram smiled and said, "Wearing the dress of an *avadhūta*, a brahmin's son has come to this village. He will become your disciple. With this mantra, make

him your disciple." After speaking these words, Lord Balaram spoke a *mantra* into Lakshmipati's ear. Receiving the *mantra*, Lakshmipati became joyful. After giving his mercy in this way, Lord Balaram disappeared.

Upon rising the following morning, Lakshmipati contemplated the wonderful dream. At that moment, Lord Nityananda Rama arrived. Seeing Nitai's effulgence, the *sannyāsī* Lakshmipati thought, "How wonderful is his effulgence! He is no mere human being." Thinking in this way, with unblinking eyes the wise *sannyāsī* gazed at Lord Nityananda's handsome face. Falling to the ground, Nityananda Prabhu offered respects at the feet of the holy man. Lakshmipati hurriedly picked him up and embraced him.

Again and again, Nityananda Ray begged, "Please give me *mantra-dīkṣā* and deliver me."

Hearing Nitai's sweet words, Lakshmipati floated in the tears from his eyes and could not remain peaceful. Unable to jump over Lord Balaram's command, that same day he gave *mantra-dīkṣā* to Nityananda. After giving him initiation, he embraced Nityananda Prabhu. His heart overflowed with bliss. Merciful Lord Nityananda was very dear to Lakshmipati. Nityananda Svarup had the power to do whatever he wished. What did he not have the power to do? In this way, Sri Nityananda Rama, who loves the devotees and who is the root of divine ecstasy, bestowed bliss on the *Madhva-sampradāya*.

An ancient verse describes:

*nityānanda prabhuṁ vande śrīmal lakṣmīpati priyam
śrī mādhva sampradānanda vardhanam bhakta-vatsalam*

I offer my respectful obeisances to Lord Nityananda, who loves the devotees, who is dear to Sri Lakshmipati, and who increases the bliss of the *Madhva-sampradāya*. (Text 2310)

Thus becoming Lakshmipati's disciple, Lord Nityananda was overwhelmed with astonishing happiness.

Lord Nityananda departed at once. No one has the power to understand his wonderful pastimes! In Nitai's absence, Lakshmipati became filled with sorrow. He did not speak a word to anyone. In his heart he lamented. As night was ending he was drawn into sleep. On the pretext of a dream, Nityananda Chandra appeared before him. Seeing Nityananda Prabhu, saintly Lakshmipati could not stop the tears flowing from his eyes. Suddenly Nityananda manifested the form of Lord Balaram. Seeing this, Lakshmipati immediately fell before

the Lord's glorious feet. He washed the Lord's feet with the tears from his eyes. Again and again he said, "Only to trick me have you descended to this world. No one has the power to know you. Even Brahma and all the devas don't understand you. Only if you reveal yourself can someone know you. Why do you trick a fool like me, a fool worthless like a pile of ashes? O Lord, please be merciful to me. I take shelter of you."

Hearing Lakshmiapati's words, the Lord at once manifested his form of Sri Nityananda. Gazing at the sweet glory of Lord Nityananda's form, a wonder that eclipsed a host of glistening lighting flashes, Lakshmiapati became wild with ecstasy. Then Lord Nityananda Rama gave his mercy to him. Lakshmiapati's desires were now fulfilled. Forbidding him to tell anyone of what had happened, and comforting him again and again, Lord Nityananda Prabhu disappeared.

When the Lord was no more visible, Lakshmiapati became filled with sorrow. His sleep fled far away and he saw that the night had ended. To whom could he tell anything of this? He could not be peaceful. From that day his life was filled with wonders. Seeing his condition, his disciples became worried. Leaving the world behind, Lakshmiapati suddenly left the field of their vision.

Who knows how to describe Lakshmiapati's glorious character and activities? In the world he is

famous as a devotee especially dear to Nityananda Prabhu. No one can describe the great devotion of the people in Pandharpur. By Lord Nityananda's mercy, even today the inhabitants of that village feel very strong devotion to the Lord. ॐ

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PRAYERS TO NITAI

*īṣad-āruṇya-svarṇābhaṁ nānālankāra-bhūṣitaṁ
hāriṇaṁ māliṇaṁ divyopavītaṁ prema-varṣiṇam
āghūrṇita-locanaṁ ca nīlāmbara-dharaṁ prabhuṁ
prema-daiṁ paramānandaṁ nityānandaṁ smarāmy aham*

I meditate on Lord Nityananda Prabhu, supreme bliss personified. For bestowing pure love of God, he has created a shower of that love. His body, shining with the luster of red-tinged gold, is decorated with various ornaments and a necklace. Donned in blue garments, he wears a flower garland and divine sacred thread.

*śuddha-svarṇa-vidāmbi-sundara-tanuṁ ratnādi-bhūṣāñcitan
premanmatta-gajendra-vikrama-lasat-premāśru-dhārākulam
śuklaṁ sūkṣma-navāmbarādi-dadhataṁ sañkīrtanaika-priyaṁ
nityānandaṁ ahaṁ bhaje sa-karuṇaṁ premārṇavaṁ sundaram*

I worship Lord Nityananda, who is the beautiful ocean of prema endowed with compassion and the sole lover of *sañkīrtana*. His handsome bright form, dressed in fresh fine clothes and decorated with ornaments like precious jewels, derides the glow of pure gold. Possessing the prowess of an intoxicated regal elephant and mad in pure love of God, Lord Nityananda is filled with the streams of tears shed out of that love.

*vidyud-dāma-madābhimardana-ruciṁ vistīrṇa-vakṣaḥ-sthalaṁ
premodghūrṇita-locanāñcala-lasat-smerābhiraṁyānanam
nānā-bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣitaṁ su-madhuraṁ bibhrad-ghaṇābhāmbaraṁ
sarvānanda-karaṁ paraṁ pravara-nityānanda-candraṁ bhaje*

I worship the transcendental moon of the foremost Lord Nityananda, who, being exquisitely sweet, makes everyone blissful. His effulgence defeats the pride of a string-like lightning. His chest is broad and his face extremely pleasing with its shining smile, and its eyes, restless out of pure love of God, making side-long glances. He wears garments resembling a rain-cloud and is adorned with various ornaments. ॐ

— Translated by Nityananda Das from *Śrī Manohara Bhajana Dīpikā*, published by Sri Sudhasindhu Das. Govardhan. Gaurabdha 519. Bengali; and *Vaiṣṇava Gītikā* edited by Bhajahari Das. Published by the Nitai Gaura Giridhari Mandir. Radha Kund. 1998. Bengali.

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