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DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

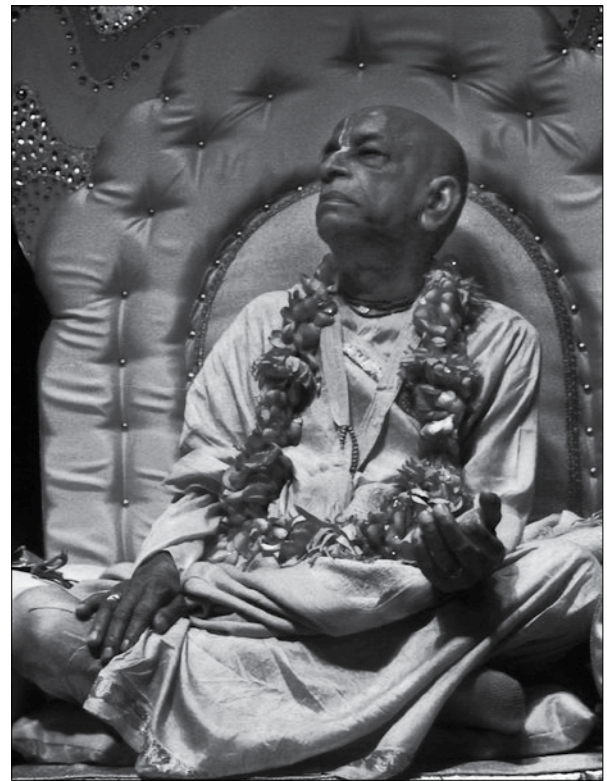
*His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada*

So far as your question about controversy amongst the disciples of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaja, that is a fact. But this controversy is not material. Just like in a national program, different political parties are sometimes in conflict and make propaganda against each other, but their central point is always service to the country. Similarly, amongst the disciples of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati there may be some controversy, but the central point is how to preach the mission of His Divine Grace. If the central point is fixed up then there is no harm in such controversy. Every individual being must have his opinion; that is the significance of individuality. But all such differences of opinions must coincide in Krishna. (Letter to Mandali Bhadra. 28 July 1969.)

Wherever there are individuals there is bound to be difference of opinion. (Letter to Rupanuga. 14 February 1973.)

As for your question about *sānta-rasa* and the opinions of Rupa Goswami and Sridhara Swami, I don't remember. You can send me the appropriate passages. There is no reason why *ācāryas* cannot differ on certain points. (Letter to Upendra. 19 February 1972.)

According to Sripad Sridhar Swami, the original commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*, there is not always a devastation after the change of every *manu*. And



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

yet this inundation after the period of *cākṣuṣa-manu* took place in order to show some wonders to Satyavrata. But Sri Jiva Goswami has given definite proofs from authoritative scriptures (like *Viṣṇu-dharmottara*, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, *Harivaṁśa*, etc.) that there is always a devastation at the end of each and every *manu*.

Srila Viswanath Chakravarti has also supported Srila Jiva Goswami, and he (Sri Chakravarti) has also quoted from *Bhāgavatāmṛta* about this inundation after each *manu*. Apart from this, the Lord, in order to show special favor to Satyavrata, a devotee of the Lord, in this particular period, incarnated himself. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 1.3.15.)

A basic principle is that one has to accept a spiritual master. Exactly how one follows the instructions of his spiritual master is considered a detail. For example, if one is following the instruction of his spiritual master and that instruction is different from the instructions of another spiritual master, this is called detailed information. But the basic principle of acceptance of a spiritual master is good everywhere, although the details may be different.” (*Nectar of Devotion*, p. 53. 1982, Los Angeles edition.) ❀

THE IDEAL GRIHASTHA IS A BRAHMACHARI

*Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami
Maharaja*

Gṛhastha-āśrama means that there is some concession for material enjoyment, sexual enjoyment. But there is some restriction. Unless one has practiced *brahmacarya*, he cannot become a real *gṛhastha*. He becomes *gṛha-vrata*, *gṛhamedhī*. He becomes attached to home, hearth, wife, son, daughter, to the last breath of his life. He cannot leave it. *Gṛhastha āśrama* is up to the fiftieth year. Until the fiftieth year one can remain in *gṛha* and get some sexual enjoyment. This enjoyment, that enjoyment. Sons, daughters, and so much burden will be there. He will not be able to sleep at night, crying, crying, crying. The wife’s demands, son’s demands, and daughter’s demands will all be there. So the old man feels, “Oh, they are devouring me. I earn this much money and there are so many demands. What shall I do?”

Now he has gained this bad experience. Therefore it is said, *dillikā laḍḍū — jo khāye woh pacchtāye, jo na khāye woh bhi pacchtāye*. This is a famous saying in Hindi: There is a famous variety of *laḍḍū* in Delhi. One who has eaten it, he laments. One who has not eaten, he too laments. Yes. One who has become a *gṛhastha*, he has already eaten it. What is that *laḍḍū*? It is

this enjoyment, sexual enjoyment. One who has tasted it, he says, ‘I have already experienced it. Oh! No more, no more, no more!’

There is a story. There was a jackal who saw a jungle of sweet sugarcane. He entered into it with a desire to eat. There he saw a beehive that was round in shape. He thought, “Oh, this is the fruit of sugarcane. Sugarcane is so sweet, therefore the fruit must be much sweeter, so I must eat the fruit first, then I’ll eat the sugarcane.” So he tried to eat it and immediately wasps came out, stinging him. “Ohh! No more, no more, no more eating.”

Therefore, in order to gain some experience, one is allowed to become a *gṛhastha*. Guru says, ‘All right, go and become a *gṛhastha*. Accept a wife and gain some experience. Enjoy and get the reaction. Then you’ll say, ‘No more, no more, no more!’ and give up this thing.’ If the guru observes that he has material desires and cannot remain *brahmacārī* throughout life, he is allowed to marry. He has already practiced celibacy during his *brahmacārī* period. So unless one becomes a good *brahmacārī*, he cannot become a proper *gṛhastha*. He becomes a *gṛhamedhī*, attached to home and hearth, wife, son, daughter, and all other enjoyment. He is *adānta-gobhiḥ*, which means that he has not controlled his senses. *punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām* — again and again he is chewing the chewed [*Bhāg.* 7.5.30].

Gṛhastha is also a *brahmacārī*. He is known as *upakurvāṇa-brahmacārī*. Two types of *brahmacārīs* are there: *naiṣṭika-brahmacārī*, and *upakurvāṇa-brahmacārī*. Both strictly follow the rules and regulations of the *brahmacārī āśrama* and become free from all material desires. A strict *brahmacārī* is free from all material desires. *brāhmaṇo ḡnir iva jvalan* — A *brāhmaṇa* who observes the great vow of celibacy becomes brilliant like fire [*Bhāg.* 11.17.36]. He is not allowed to accept marriage. He remains in *guru-gṛha*, the ashram of the guru, till the end of his life. He is a proper candidate for *sannyāsa*. The purpose of marriage is to accept a wife who will produce a worthy son. A son who is a *kṛṣṇa-bhakta*, a *vaiṣṇava* son, who will render service to the senses of Krishna. ❀

— Lecture in Bhubaneswar. 12 April 1995.



Sri Sri Radha Gopinath worshiped by SarangaThakur

SRI SARANGA THAKUR

Sri Saranga Murari Thakur used to reside at Modadrumadwip (Mangachi), where his deities of Sri Sri Radha Gopinath are still present. There is also a Bakul tree there which is existing since the time of Saranga Thakur. There is a local legend concerning this tree, as follows:

One day when Mahaprabhu came there, he noticed that the Bakul tree in the courtyard of Saranga's temple was dying. So he asked, "Saranga! This Bakul tree is dying! What are you going to do?" Saranga Thakur replied, "Other than by your mercy, Prabhu, I don't see any hope for this tree, or for any of the rest of us for that matter."

Mahaprabhu then proceeded to embrace that tree, which has remained healthy to this day and has grown to a huge size.

Saranga Thakur had resolved that he would not accept any disciples. However, once when Mahaprabhu was returning home with Srivas Pandit, he passed by Saranga Thakur and inquired from him, "Saranga! Why don't you accept disciples?"

Saranga replied, "I haven't found anyone qualified."

Mahaprabhu told him, "Whoever you accept will automatically become qualified."

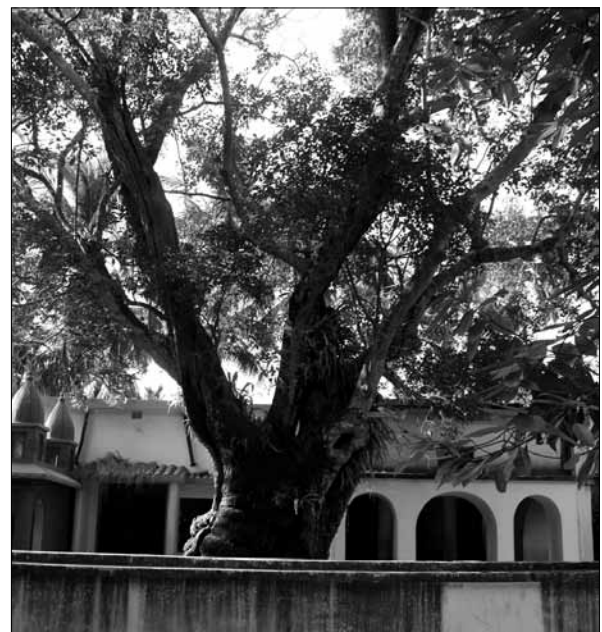
Saranga agreed, by saying, "Since you are requesting me, then the first person I see tomorrow will be accepted by me as my disciple."

In the early morning of the next day he went to take his bath in the Ganges. By the arrangement of providence,

the dead body of a child came and touched his feet as he entered the water. Picking up the body, he said, "Who are you? Get up!"

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the witness of everything, prompted Saranga Thakur, "Saranga! Say the mantra in his ear!"

When Saranga uttered the mantra in the ear of that dead child, the body became conscious. The child said, "My name is Murari. I am your servant. Please bestow your mercy upon me."



*Bakul tree restored to life
by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*

The child went on to say that on the day when he was to be invested with the sacred thread, he had been bitten by a snake and died. As he was only a boy, the custom was not to burn the body but rather to place it on a raft of banana trees and float it down the Ganga.

When news of the miraculous act of Murari's regaining his life reached his parents, they came to take him home. But Murari declined to return with them. He said, "I will remain in the service of he who has given me my life again, for I am indebted to him."

The descendants of Murari's family are still residing at Sargram in Barddhaman district. Srila Kavi Karnapur has described Saranga Thakur as follows in his *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (text 172):

*vraje nāndīmukhī yāsīt sādya sāraṅga-thakkuraḥ
prahlādo manyate kaiścīn mat-pitrā na sa manyate*

The Vraja brahmani Nandimukhi Devi appeared as Saranga Thakur. Some people think that Saranga Thakur was the incarnation of Prahlad Maharaja. My father (Shivananda Sen) did not agree with them.

Saranga Thakur's appearance is on the 14th day of the dark fortnight in the month of *Āṣāḍha* (June-July). His disappearance is on the 13th day of the dark fortnight in the month *Agrahāyana* (November-December). The temple of Saranga Thakur and his worshipful deities, Sri Sri Radha-Gopinath, are still to

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be found at Mamgachi (Jahannagar), just north of the present town of Nabadwip. The worshipful deities of Vasudev Datta Thakur, Sri Sri Radha Madan-Gopal, are also residing there. ❀

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JAYA JAYA GOPINATH

Gopal Das

*jaya jaya gopīnātha madana-mohana
yugala-kiśora jaya rasika-ramaṇa*

All glories to you, O master of the *gopīs*, more charming than Cupid! All glories to you, O youthful divine couple who taste the nectar of transcendental pastimes!

*jaya rādhā-vallabha murali-adhara
jaya vraja-vinoda prema-sudhākara*

All glories to you, O beloved of Radha, with a flute placed to his lips! All glories to you, O nectar moon of spiritual love, who enjoys pastimes in Vraja!

*mādhava giridhara gopī-cira-hārī
lalita tri-bhaṅga nāgara vanoyārī*

All glories to you, O husband of the goddess of fortune, lifter of Govardhana Hill, who steals the *gopīs'* hearts! All glories to your graceful threefold-bending form as an amorous hero adorned with forest flowers!

*rati-sukha-sāgara vraja-suvilāsī
rūpa-rasāyana gokula-vāsī*

All glories to you, O ocean of amorous pleasure, enjoying pastimes in Vraja! All glories to you, who resides in Gokula in a form of soothing nectar!

*vraja-pati bāla lāla mada-nāyaka
parama-pravīṇa prema-sukha-dāyaka*

All glories to you, O master of Vraja! O playful boy, O hero of amorous pastimes, O most wise and learned Lord, and giver of transcendental bliss and love!

*śyāmera vāme ki pyārī śohe
śrī-gopāla-dāsa-ki mana mohe*

O my dark Lord Krishna! Who is the affectionate and glorious girl to your left? Gopal Das' heart has become enchanted by seeing you. ❀

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