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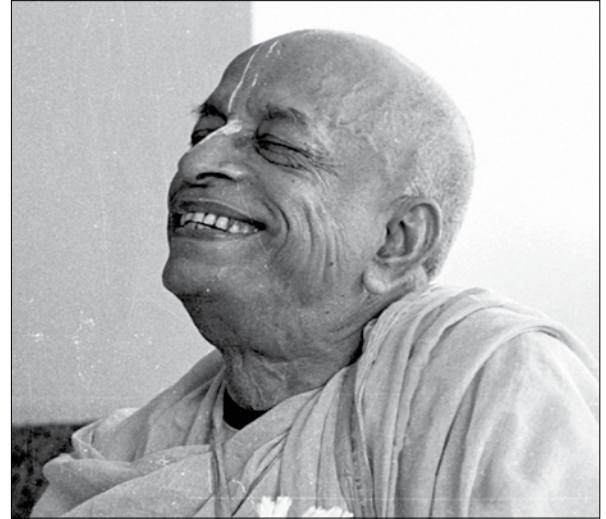
WHOM SHOULD I SELECT AS GURU?

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Guru is one who eradicates the *ajñāna*, *andhakāra* — the darkness of ignorance. *ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā* — In the darkness, if someone brings a lamp, the *jñāna-rūpa*, torchlight of knowledge, he is guru. There may be different degrees, but anyone who opens the spiritual eyes, he is guru. In *śāstra* it is said, *gurur api kāryākāryakam ajānataḥ* — if I accept someone as guru, but later on it appears that he does not know what is to be done and what is to be not to be done, then Srila Jiva Goswami says that, *parityāgo vidhīyate*, such a guru should be rejected. The degree that one is on doesn't matter. If the guru teaches Krishna consciousness, then he may be on a lesser degree, but he is accepted as guru. There is no question of rejection, because Krishna is actually *jñāna*, or personified knowledge. One who teaches Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead: "One has to know Krishna, one has to surrender to Krishna," this kind of teaching is required.

If the guru says, "I am Krishna." "Everyone is Krishna." "The poor man is Krishna." "The poor man is Narayan." then he is not a guru. He is misguiding. *Avaiṣṇavo gurur na syāt*. This is the *śāstric* injunction. Generally, a qualified *brāhmaṇa* becomes guru. That is natural. *Brāhmaṇas* are the head of the society. Without becoming a *brāhmaṇa* no one can become guru. That is a fact. Because *brāhmaṇa* means *brahma jñānātīti brāhmaṇaḥ* — one who knows Brahman is a



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

brāhmaṇa. This means a qualified *brāhmaṇa*, not just a born *brāhmaṇa*, so-called *brāhmaṇa*. A *brāhmaṇa* must be qualified. *Śāstra* says *ṣaṭ-karma-niṣuṇo vipraḥ*, even if a *brāhmaṇa* is expert in executing the six kinds of business, and *mantra-tantra-viśāradaḥ*, and very well known in the Vedic mantras and hymns and everything, but if he is not a *vaiṣṇava*, he does not know *viṣṇu-tattva*, or *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, then he cannot become a spiritual master. *avaiṣṇavo gurur na syād vaiṣṇavaḥ śva-paco guruḥ* — However, if one is a *vaiṣṇava*, who knows *viṣṇu-tattva* and *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, even if he is born in a family of *śva-paca*, dog-eaters, *caṇḍāla*, he can be accepted as guru. The real test is whether the guru is a *vaiṣṇava*, whether he know the science of Krishna. That is also confirmed by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu:

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, sūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā sei 'guru' haya

Whether one is a brāhmaṇa a sannyāsī or a sūdra — regardless of what he is — he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krishna. [Cc. madhya 8.128]

It doesn't matter whether he is a sannyāsī or a gṛhastha or born in brāhmaṇa family. yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā — Anyone who knows Krishna, he can be a guru, not others. That is the statement of the śāstras. Someone who is not a vaiṣṇava cannot become guru. ❧

— From a lecture in Ahmedabad, 13 December 1972.

THE GLORIES OF SRILA RAGHUNANDAN THAKUR

Śrī Raghunandana Mahimā
By Sri Uddhava Das

Uddhava Das is a well known Gauḍīya poet. He was born in the village of Tenga Vaidyapur in the Mursidabad district of West Bengal. His birth name was Krishnakanta Majumdar, and he was a disciple of Radhamohan Thakur, one of the great-grandsons of Srinivas Acharya.

prakaṣa śrī khaṇḍa vāsa nāma śrī mukunda dāsa
ghare sevā gopinātha jāni
gelā kona kāryāntare sevā karibāra tare
śrī raghunandane ḍāki āni

In Srikhanda lived the devotee Sri Mukunda Das. In his home they served the deity Gopinath. One day Mukunda had to go elsewhere for his work, so he asked his son Sri Raghunandan to perform the deity service.

ghare āche kṛṣṇa sevā yatna kari khāoyāibā
eta bali mukunda calilā
pitāra ādeśa pāyā sevāra sāmāgrī laiā
gopināthera sammukhe āilā

“Krishna is served in this home. Feed him carefully.” Saying this, Mukunda set off. Receiving this order from his father, Raghunandan came before Gopinath with various items of service.

śrī radhunandana ati bayahkrama śiśumati
khāo bale kāndite kāndite
kṛṣṇa se premera rase nā rākhīyā avāśe
sakala khāilya alakṣite

Sri Raghunandan was only a child. He said, “Eat! Eat!” and started crying. With great love, Krishna then secretly ate everything leaving no remnants.

āsiyā mukunda dāsa kahe bālakera pāśa
prasāda naivedya āna dekhi

śiṣu kahe bāpu śuna sakali khāile punaḥ
avaśeṣa kichui nā rākhi

When Mukunda Das returned he told the boy to bring him some prasādam remnants. The child said, “Oh father, Gopinath ate everything and didn't leave any remnants.”

śuni aparūpa hena vismita hṛdaye punaḥ
āra dina bālake kahiāyā
sevā-anumati diyā bāḍira bāhira haiyā
punaḥ āsiyā rahe lukāiyā

Hearing this uncommon news, Mukunda's heart became astonished. The next day, in the name of his work, Mukunda again instructed Raghunandan to serve Gopinath. Mukunda then left the house, but came back again and hid himself.

śrī raghunandana ati haiyā haraṣita mati
gopināthe lāḍu diyā kare
khāo khāo baleghana arddhaika khāite hena
samaye mukunda dekhi dvāre

At that time, from the doorway, Mukunda saw Raghunandan with great delight offering a lāḍu in his hand to Gopinath. “Eat! Eat!” the boy said, and Gopinath ate half of the lāḍu.

ye khāila rahe tena āra nā khāila punaḥ
dekhiyā mukunda preme bhora
nandana kariyā kole gadagada svare bale
nayane barikhe ghana lora

[Suddenly,] Gopinath stopped eating and wouldn't take any more. Seeing this, Mukunda became overwhelmed with ecstatic love. He took his son on his lap, and while crying spoke to him in a choked voice.

adyāpi śrī khaṇḍa pure arddha lāḍu nāche kare
dekha yata bhāgyavanta jane
abhira madana yei śrī raghunandana sei
śrī uddhava dāsa rasabhane

Even today in Srikhanda, those who are greatly fortunate can still see that half-eaten laddu in Gopinath's lotus hand. Thus Sri Uddhava Das sings the glories of Raghunandan, who is non-different from Madan (Cupid). ❧

— Translated from Kishori Das Babaji's Śrī Gaurāṅga Pārṣada Vargera Śicaka Kīrtana. Vaishnava Research Institute. Halisahar, West Bengal. 2005. Bengali. Page 47.

SIN ON THE STRENGTH OF CHANTING

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

The pseudo-vaiṣṇavas say that “One name of Krishna takes away more sins than a sinner can commit during a lifetime. Therefore if the holy name is with us, where is the fear of committing sin? We chant



Photo by Thakur Saranga Das

The deity of Gopinath worshiped by Raghunandan in Sri Khanda

the holy name and we perform sinful activities. At first there will be gain and loss, but eventually there will be no trace of sin.” Such persons who think like this and who, after taking shelter of the holy name, willingly commit new sinful activities, are known as hypocrites or offenders to the holy name.

There are some stories illustrating this offensive attitude. Once a householder gave up committing violence to others and took shelter of the holy names. Later, because of some bad association, he developed a desire to eat fish and meat. Then, for satisfying his inclination, he firmly resolved that, “Today I will chant another ten thousand holy names to free myself of the sin of eating fish.” One who thinks like this and chants the holy name after taking fish is an offender to the holy name. Another story: One renounced *vaiṣṇava* once saw a beautiful young lady and developed the following desire, “Since I always

chant the holy name, if I give *harināma* initiation to this girl and accept some service from her, then all the sins that may be there will surely be destroyed by our chanting. Moreover, she will become a *vaiṣṇavī* and association with the *vaiṣṇavas* is very rare. Besides that, by associating with her I will learn many things about *gopī-bhāva*. Where can one achieve such rare association?” Thinking thus, he made that lady a *vaiṣṇavī* and started accepting service from a *vaiṣṇava*. Thus his *nāmāparādha* reached its peak. Considering these two examples, *gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇavas* and renunciates should carefully avoid offenses to the holy name. ❧

— From Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s article *Nāma-bale-pāpa-pravṛtti*, “a tendency to commit sin on the strength of the holy name”, translated by Brijbasi Das from *Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākuraera Prabandhāvalī*, Sri Chaitanya Math, Mayapur, 2004.

THE FIRST ATTRACTION – PART 8

From *Śrīla Jīva Goswami’s*
Gopāla-pūrva-campu, 15th pūrāṇa

Paurṇamasi continues explaining to Vrinda how the goṇīs are the wives of Krishna in the eternal spiritual world, and how this is something which the authors of various authoritative scriptures agree upon. While narrating the Bhāgavatam, Sri Sukadev Goswami described this truth in such a way that even those completely unaware of the real glories of the Lord’s relationships in the spiritual world would be able to understand it. Sri Sukadev Goswami simply said that since the Lord is the husband of everyone (because of being the Supersoul), he is also the husband of the goṇīs. In this way he makes everyone understand the truth, which would otherwise be very difficult to digest.

Paurṇamasi (continues):

*gopīnām tat-patīnām ca sarveṣām eva dehinām
yo ’ntaḥ carati so ’dhyakṣaḥ kṛīḍaneneha deha-bhāk*

“He who lives as the overseeing witness within the *gopīs* and their husbands, and indeed within all embodied living beings, assumes forms in this world to enjoy transcendental pastimes. (*Bhāg.* 10.33.35)

“The *antaraṅga-bhaktas*, internal devotees, know well that the *gopīs* in this material world are of two types, married and unmarried. The *gopīs* [who appear in this world and are unmarried here] are *nitya-siddha*, eternally liberated. They are all-auspicious and are actually the eternal wives of Krishna. The *gopīs* [who are married to other cowherds] and who are filled with other moods — such as the young maidens, adult ladies, and elderly women — as well as their husbands and their children — for such souls, too, Krishna is the Lord. What more can be said? For all the *vraja-vāsīs*, whose life and soul is Krishna and who have a spiritual body suitable for performing pastimes with the Lord, Krishna becomes attracted to such bodies and, remaining invisible (*antaḥ*) to the external world, he performs eternal pastimes (*krīdana*) with those devotees. That same Krishna sometimes makes such pastimes visible to the material world.”

[**Translator’s Note:** These pastimes are eternal and Krishna is the husband of these *gopīs*. However, the *gopīs* who already have another husband in the spiritual world do not possess such feelings of conjugal affection for Krishna. They have other

appropriate feelings and Krishna reciprocates with each of them according to their particular mood.]

Paurnameśi (continues): “Therefore, since he has an eternal conjugal relationship with the *gopīs*, it is not fitting to call their relationship in the spiritual world a ‘paramour’ relationship. The appropriate thing is to describe their relationship as being the same as the married relationship between Lakshmi and Narayan in Vaikuntha. This eternal married relationship is described beautifully in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.90.48 (*jayati jana-nivāso* — ‘All glories to the Lord of all the living entities.’) The final line of this verse says, *vraja-pura-vanitānām vardhayan kāmādevam* — ‘His blissful face always increases the lusty desires of the *pura-vanita*, the queens of Dwaraka.’ ‘*Vraja-pura-vanita*’ certainly also includes the *gopīs*.

Also, Uddhava says in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.47.58) — *etāḥ param tanu-bhṛto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo* — ‘Among all those who are embodied, these *gopīs* are topmost on the planet.’ Thus, he implies that such a destination attained by the *gopīs* is also desired by those who are *mumuksūs*, desirous of liberation, those who are *muktas*, already liberated, and devotees like himself. How elevated are these *gopīs* who roam around in Vraja, and how can they be compared to the degraded living entities who have developed a perverted reflection of such pure love?

“Having said like this, Uddhava noticed that such feelings [of the greatness of the *gopīs*] have also arisen in the Lord. Thus, he says (*Bhāg.* 10.47.60), *nāyaṁ śriyo ’ṅga* — ‘This favor [of being embraced by Lord Krishna’s arms] was never bestowed even upon Lakshmi.’

“In this way, he shows the superiority of the *gopī*-wives over Lakshmi-devi.”

Vrinda (her delighted mood now restored): “Why, then, did they not feel happy about their marriages (to other men)? And moreover, why did you not make them feel happy about it? Certainly nothing is impossible for you.”

[To be continued.]

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the *Gopāla-pūrva-campūh*. Published by Sri Nityasvarup Brahmachari. 1912 AD.

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