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nāmācārya-haridāsa-mahimā

The Glories of Namacharya Haridas Thakur





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DON'T CRITICIZE, BE THE EXAMPLE

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Regarding the general state of affairs at the Amsterdam temple, I can understand that there is some disturbance among you, but that should not be taken very seriously. Real business is preaching work, and if there is full attention on this matter only, then all other businesses will be automatically successful. Fighting amongst ourselves is not at all good, but if our preaching work is neglected, or if we fall down in following the regulative principles such as rising before four, chanting 16 rounds, like that, if these things are not strictly observed then *māyā* will enter and spoil everything. So my best advice to you is to strictly observe these things yourself and be the example so that all others may follow. We should not criticize each other, as *vaiṣṇavas*, because there is fault in everyone, and we may be ourselves subject to criticism. The best thing is to be above suspicion ourselves, then if we see discrepancies and make suggestion the others will automatically respect and take action to rectify the matters. That is cooperation. We must exist on such cooperation, otherwise the whole thing is doomed if we simply go on fighting over some small thing. So try to organize things and preach together in this spirit, and that will please me very, very much. 🍌

— Letter to Madhumangal, 18 November 1972.

Cover: Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu laments after Haridas Thakur passes away.
Artwork by Kshitindranath Majumdar.

NO FAULTS IN THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

You said that the faults of those who you had accepted as ideal led you to become disturbed and misguided. I say that if we control our mind then we can tolerate the strong urge to counter hostility. Every disturbance is a fault of my mind; nobody can actually harm me in this world.

Srila Vamsidas Babaji had accepted himself as a servant of Gaura-Nityananda and concluded that there are no faults in the servants of the worshipable Lord. Please bless me. When will that day come when I will realize the truth of these statements. By your blessings, may I understand that I caused anxiety to living entities by my mind and words. May this feeling remain forever fresh in my mind. 🌱

— From a letter of 20 January 1931. From *Patrāmṛta, Nectar from the Letters*. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Touchstone Media. Kolkata. 2012.

LORD BRAHMA TAKES BIRTH AS HARIDAS THAKUR

The *vaiṣṇavas* at Haridas Thakur's place of *bhajan* in Puri known as Siddha Bakul recite the following *praṇāma-mantra* to Haridas:

*catur-mukho jagat-kartā catur-veda-parāyaṇaḥ
haridāsaḥ kalau jātaḥ brahmāṇaṁ tvaṁ namāmy aham*

I offer my obeisances to Lord Brahma, who is the four-headed creator of the material universe, the knower of the four Vedas, and who took birth as Haridas Thakur in Kali-yuga.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada also described Haridas Thakur as an incarnation of Lord Brahma in a conversation he had with the editor of The Gaudiya magazine on 23 March 1926:

The Gaudiya: Who was Srila Thakur Haridas? Some people say he was Brahma. Is he a *sādhana-siddha* devotee?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada: Some people say that Prahlaḍ entered Thakur Haridas. *Śrī Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dīpikā* (text 93) asserts that Richika Muni's son Jamadagni, the greatly ascetic Brahma, and Prahlaḍ Maharaja appeared as Thakur Haridas. Srila Murari Gupta writes in *Śrī Caitanya-carita* that because Richika Muni's son did not wash some *tulasī* leaves after picking them,

his father cursed him to take birth in a *yāvana* family. He has now appeared as the most devoted Haridas.

Those who are eternally inclined to serve Lord Hari are called *nitya-siddha*, and those who are eternally averse to serving the Lord but who have now become inclined to serve him, by his mercy or the mercy of his devotees, are called *sādhana-siddha* devotees. Prahlaḍ is eternally inclined to serve Krishna's lotus feet.

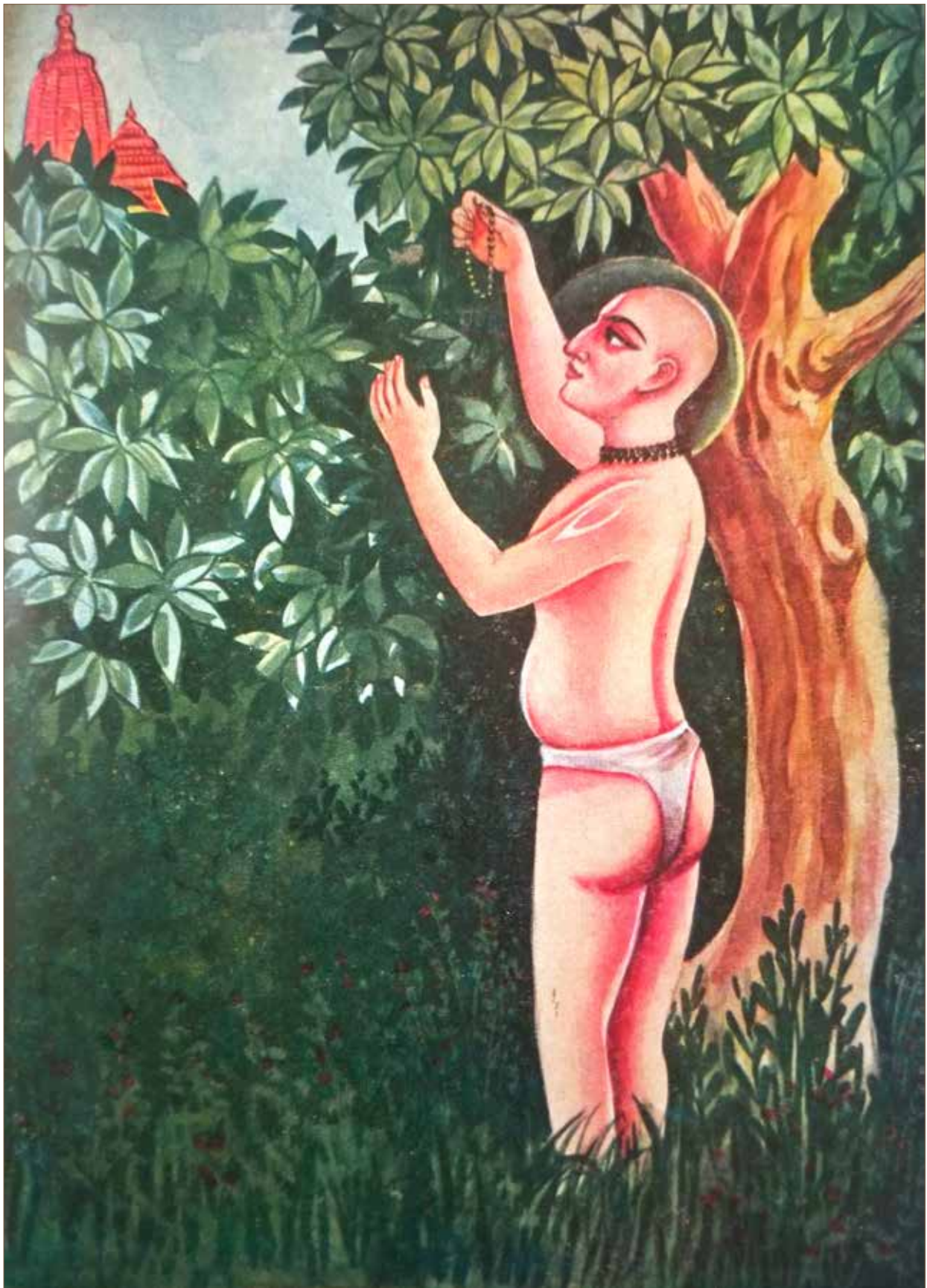
In chapter five of his *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*, Bhaktivinode Thakur elaborately explains how Lord Brahma took birth as Haridas Thakur. He says that once, at the end of the *Dvāpara-yuga*, deciding to test Sri Krishna, Lord Brahma stole away Krishna's cowherd boyfriends and calves and kept them in the caves of Mount Sumeru. Returning to Vrindavan after one of his moments, which was equal to one full year on the earth, Brahma was astonished to see that all the boys and calves that he had stolen were still there. Krishna then revealed that he had expanded himself into the form of each of the boys and calves. Regretting his offense, Brahma offered prayers and Krishna forgave him. For Brahma, though, that forgiveness was not enough.

Srila Jiva Goswami writes in his *Bhakti-sandarbhā* (265.57-8):

sat-prabhṛtiṣv aparādhe tu tat-santoṣaṇārtham eva santata-nāma-kīrtanādikaṁ samucitam ... uktas ca nāma-kaumudyām — mahad-aparādhasya bhoga eva nivartakaḥ tad-anugraho vā



The Chand Kazi ordered Haridas Thakur to be beaten to death in 22 market places



Unknown artist

Srila Haridas Thakur in Jagannath Puri



Photo by Ananta Vrindavan Das

Deity of Haridas Thakur at Siddha Bakul in Jagannath Puri

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.”

Lord Brahma received the *kṣamā*, forgiveness, of Krishna, but Brahma was not satisfied with that alone. He understood that more importantly he also needed to get the *anugraha*, favor, of the Lord.

In the same chapter of *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*, Bhaktivinode describes Brahma’s prayers to Krishna:

*brahma-buddhi dūre jāya, hena janma pāi
tomāra saṅgete thāki’ tava guṇa gāi*

“May I attain such a birth that my conceit in being the creator will be removed, that I may remain with you the whole time, and that I may glorify you.” (144)

In *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.2.62), Srila Sanatan Goswami describes the words spoken by Lord Brahma to his son Narada Muni, wherein Brahma explains that it was his conceit in being the

creator of the universe and a great devotee that were the root cause of his problem:

*tan-māyayaiva satataṁ jagato ‘haṁ guruḥ prabhuḥ
pitāmahaś ca kṣṇasya nābhi-padma-samudbhavaḥ
tapasvy ārādhakas tasyety-ādyair guru-madair hataḥ
brahmāṇḍāvaśyakāpāra-vyāpārāmarśa-vihvalaḥ
bhūta-prāyātma-lokiya-nāśa-cintā-nyantritaḥ
sarva-grāsi-mahā-kālād bhīto muktīm paraṁ vṛṇe*

I am always bewildered by Krishna’s illusory energy *māyā*. Thus, I think myself the controller, grandfather, and guru of the universe. Proud of my birth from Krishna’s lotus navel, I consider myself to be a great ascetic and great worshiper of Krishna. I am overwhelmed by the countless duties of universal management. Worrying about the imminent destruction of my planet, I live in terror of the all-devouring end of time. [In spite of my external show] *muktīm paraṁ vṛṇe* — all I [really] want is liberation for myself.

In short, Lord Brahma felt that his problem was pride in his position and that although he appeared to be a great personality, he felt that the reality was that he was not really attached to pleasing Krishna, rather he was only interested



Nāma-tattva

THE NISTHA OF HARIDAS THAKUR

**Srīla Vrindavan Das Thakur's
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata ādi 16.94**

*khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai deha yāya yadi prāṇa
tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi hari-nāma*

“Even if my body is cut into pieces and I give up my life, I will never give up chanting the Lord's holy name.”

— English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajaraj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.



in *muktim param vṛṇe*, his own benefit in the form of his personal liberation. Brahma thought that due to having pride in his position he had cheated himself of love of Krishna and of being able to take part in the nectarean relationships in Vrindavan. Bhaktivinode says that Brahma thus decided that he should pray to receive the Lord's mercy at the time when Krishna would manifest himself in Kali-yuga as the most merciful Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Accordingly, Brahma meditated and perform austerities in Antardwip of Sri Mayapur Dham. Pleased by his sincerity, after some time Gauranga Mahaprabhu appeared before him and offered to fulfill his desire. Mahaprabhu told him:

*ye samaye mama līlā prakāṣa ha-ibe
yavanera grhe tumi janama labhibe*

“At the time my pastimes manifest, you will take birth in a yavana's house. (5.146)

*āpanāke hīna bali ha-ibe geyāna
haridāsa habe tumi sūnya abhimāna*

“You will always think of yourself as low and fallen. Your name will be Haridas, and you will be free from all pride. (147)

*tina-lakṣa harināma jihvāgre nācibe
niryāṇa-samaye tumi āmāke dekhibe*

“Daily, three-hundred-thousand names of Hari will dance upon your tongue, and at the time of leaving

this world, you will have *darśana* of me. (148)

*ohe brahmā, śuna mora antarera kathā
vyakta-kabhū nā karibe śāstre yathā tathā*

“Oh Brahma, hear these secret words, but do not reveal them openly in the scriptures. (150)

*bhakta-bhāva la'ye bhakti-rasa āsvādība
parama durllabha saṅkīrtana prakāśība*

“Taking the role of a devotee, I will taste the nectar of *bhakti-rasa* and propagate the rarest process of *saṅkīrtana*. (151)

*anya anya avatārakāle bhakta yata
vraja-rase sabe mātāiba kari rata*

“I will make the devotees of all the previous *avatāras* drunk with the nectar of Vrindavan. (152)

*śrī rādhikā prema-baddha āmāra hṛdaya
tānra bhāvakānti la'ye ha-iba udaya*

“The love that Sri Radhika possesses is beyond my experience, so I will appear with her sentiments and complexion. (153)

*kibā sukha rādhā pāya āmāre seviyā
sei sukha āsvādība rādhā-bhāva laiyā*

“Taking the position of Radha, I will taste that happiness that only Radha obtains in serving me. (154)

*āji haite tumi mora śiṣyatā labhibe
haridāsa-rupe more satata sevibe*

“From today, act as my disciple and, in the form of Haridas, always serve me.” (155)

Saying this, Gauranga suddenly became invisible, and Brahma fell to the ground unconscious. Then rising to his feet, Brahma began to weep and called out:

*hā gaurāṅga dīna-bandhu, bhakta-vatsala
kabe vā pāiba tava caraṇa-kamala*

“Oh Gauranga! Oh friend of the poor! Oh you who are affectionate to your devotees! When will I attain your lotus feet?” (157)

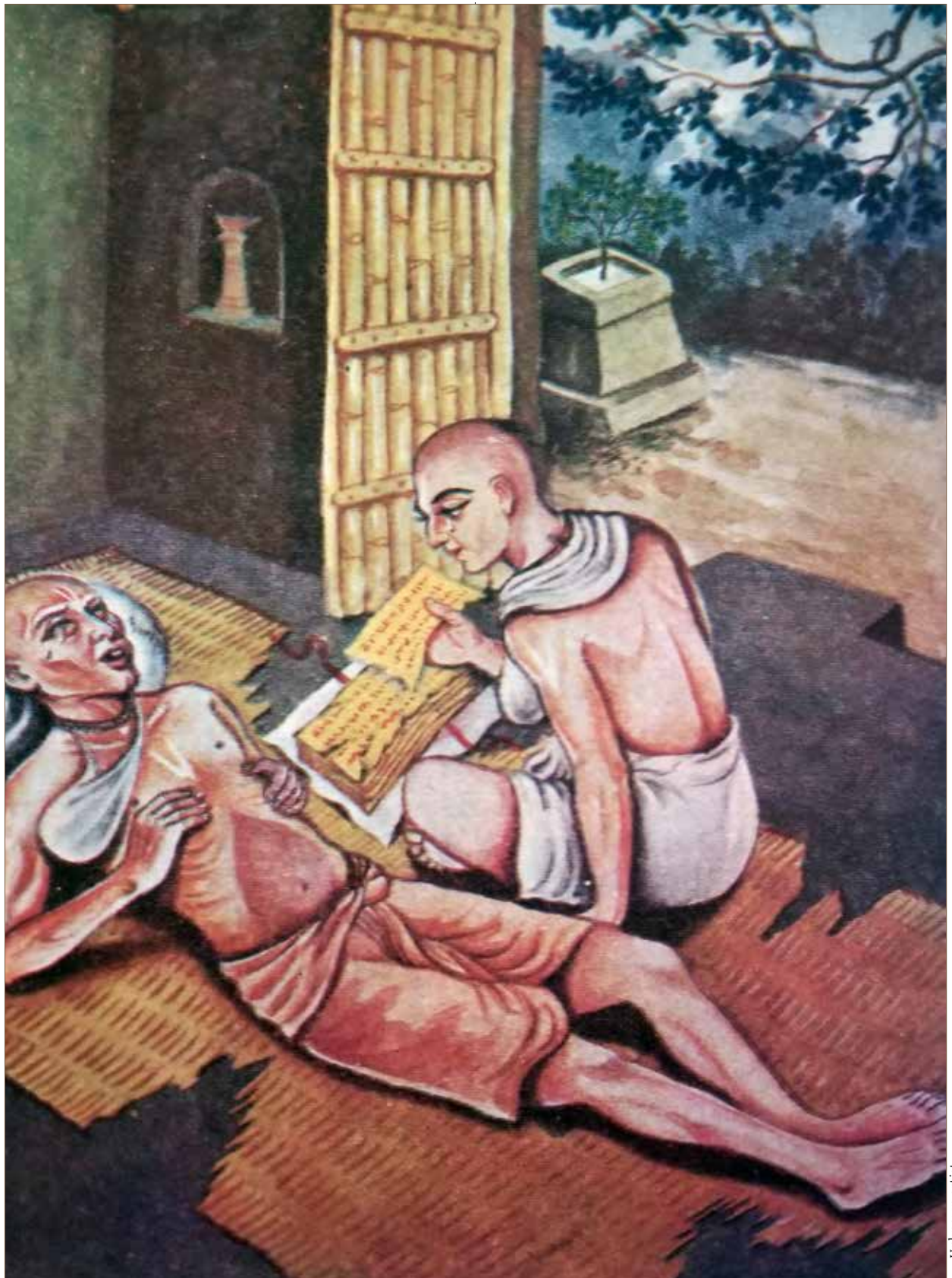
In this way he cried for many days and then returned to his duties in Brahmaloaka.

By the blessing of Lord Gaurasundar, Brahma took birth in *Kali-yuga* as Haridas Thakur. Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur has described in *Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

*'jāti, kula, saba-nirarthaka' bujhāite
janmilena nīca-kule prabhura ājñāte*

“On the order of the Lord, Haridas was born in a low-class family to show that birth in a high caste or good family are useless. (ādi 16.237)

*'adhama-kulete yadi viṣṇu-bhakta haya
tathāpi sei se pūjya'—sarva-śāstre kaya*



Unknown artist

Govinda, the servant of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, visits Haridas shortly before his departure



Siddha Bakul in Jagannath Puri where Haridas Thakur did his bhajan and left his body

“If a devotee of the Lord is born in a low-class family, he is still worthy of worship.” This is the verdict of the scriptures. (238)

*‘uttama-kulete janmi’ ś ri-kṛṣṇe nā bhaje
kule tā’ra ki karibe, narakete maje’*

And if someone is born in a high-class family but does not worship the lotus feet of Sri Krishna, then his high birth is useless, and he falls to hell. (239)

*ei saba veda-vākyera sākṣī dekhāite
janmilena haridāsa adhama-kulete*

Haridas thus took birth in a low-class family to prove the words of the scriptures. (240)

*prahlāda yehena daitya, kapi hanumān
ei-mata haridāsa nīca-jāti nāma*

*haridāsa-sparśa vāñchā kare deva-gaṇa
gaṅgā o vāñchena haridāsera majjana*

Haridas was born in a low-class family just as Prahlad was born in a demoniac family and Hanuman was born in a monkey family. The demigods desire the touch of Haridas, and even Mother Ganga desires that Haridas immerse in her waters. (241-242)

Although he was the great Lord Brahma, as Haridas Thakur he was disrespected. His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada describes in his purport to *Cc. madhya* 11.195:

Since he was born in a Muslim family, Srila Haridas Thakur could not enter the temple of Jagannath due to temple restrictions. Nonetheless, he was recognized by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as “Namacharya Haridas Thakur”. Haridas Thakur, however, considered himself unfit to enter the Jagannath temple. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu could have personally taken Haridas Thakur into the Jagannath temple if he wished, but the Lord did not like to disturb a popular custom. Consequently, the Lord asked his servant simply to look at the Vishnu wheel on top of the temple and offer obeisances (*namaskāra*). This means that if one is not allowed to enter the temple, or if he thinks himself unfit to enter the temple, he can look at the wheel from outside the temple, and that is as good as seeing the deity within.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu promised to come daily to see Srila Haridas Thakur, and this indicates that Srila Haridas Thakur was so advanced in spiritual life that, although considered unfit to enter the temple, he was being personally visited by the Lord every day. Nor was there any need for his going outside his residence to collect food. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu assured Haridas Thakur that the remnants of his food would be sent there. As the Lord states in



Unknown artist

A young beautiful prostitute was sent by envious persons to bewilder Haridas Thakur, but she ended up taking shelter of him as his disciple

the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.22), *yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham*:
“I arrange all life’s necessities for my devotees.”

In a note on the fourth verse of the first chapter of his book, *Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode gives us a further indication of the astonishing greatness of Haridas Thakur. He says that while in Puri, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu personally heard these from the mouths of various devotees. The Thakur writes:

śrī rāmānanda-rāya-mukhe rasa-kathā; śrī sārvaḥauma-
mukhe mukti-tattva-kathā; śrī rupera mukhe rasa-vicāra o
śrī haridāsera mukhe śrī-nāma-māhātmya.

“From the mouth of Ramananda Ray, Mahaprabhu heard *rasa-kathā*, topics about *rasa*; from the mouth of Sarvaḥauma Bhattacharya he heard *mukti-tattva-kathā*, topics about liberation; from the mouth of Rupa Goswami he heard *rasa-vicāra*, considerations on *rasa*, and from the mouth of Haridas Thakur he heard *Śrī-nāma-māhātmya*, the glories of the holy name.”

Haridas was the most exalted person. Again, in chapter sixteen of the *ādi-līlā* of *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur describes:

sparśera ki dāya, dekhilei haridāsa
chiṅḍe’ sarva-jīvera anādi karma-pāśa

What to speak of his touch, just by seeing Haridas one is released from the bondage of fruitive activities. (243)

haridāsa āśraya karibe yei jana
tā’ne dekhile o khaṅḍe’ saṁsāra-bandhana

Indeed, even if one sees a person who has taken shelter of Haridas, he is freed from material bondage. (244)

Yet that same exalted person, who as Lord Brahma on the order of the Lord creates the universe, and who originally installed the deities of Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra in Puri in *Satya-yuga* — in his birth as Haridas Thakur was unable to enter the Jagannath temple in Puri! The same person who Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu personally heard from about the glories of the Holy Name was barred entry to have *darśana* of the deities he installed.

And he never complained!

Therefore, Haridas is the *nāmācārya*, the teacher who showed by his example how to chant the holy

name in a humble, tolerant frame of mind, while always giving respect to others. One of the great lessons we learn from the example of Haridas Thakur is that a devotee who wants to chant the holy name should be free from any attitude of entitlement.

When teaching Suklambar Brahmachari about the famous *harer nāma* verse in the *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa*, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said:

*ei-mata vaiṣṇava kāre kichu nā māgiba
ayācita-vṛtti, kinvā śāka-phala khāiba*

“A *vaiṣṇava* should not ask anything from anyone else. If someone gives him something without being asked, he should accept it, but if nothing comes, a *vaiṣṇava* should be satisfied to eat whatever vegetables and fruits are easily available.

*sadā nāma la-iba, yathā-lābhetē santoṣa
eita ācāra kare bhakti-dharma-poṣa*

“One should strictly follow the principle of always chanting the holy name, and one should be satisfied with whatever he gets easily. Such devotional behavior solidly maintains one’s devotional service. (Cc. adi chapter 17.29-30)

In the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the living example of that behavior is Lord Brahma in his incarnation as Namacharya Srila Haridas Thakur. — MD 🍃

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THE GLORIES OF SRILA HARIDAS THAKUR



By an Unknown Medieval Gaudiya Vaishnava

(sung in śrī rāga)

*jaya jaya prabhu mora ṭhākura haridāsa
ye karilā harināmera mahimā prakāśa*

All glories! All glories to my lord Thakur Haridas, who manifested the greatness of the holy name!

*gaurabhakta-gaṇa madhye sarva agragaṇya
yāra guṇa gāi kānde āpane caitanya*

Among all the devotees of Gaura, Haridas is the best. Singing the glories of Haridas’ character, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself cried.

*advaita ācārya prabhura prema-sīmā
teṅho se jānena haridāsera mahimā*

Advaita Acharya Prabhu is the last limit of love for Mahaprabhu. He could grasp the depth of the glories of Haridas Thakur.

*nityānanda-cānda yāre prāṇa hena jāne
caraṇa paraye mahī deha dhanya māne*

Haridas Thakur knows the moonlike Nityananda as his life and soul. The touch of the lotus feet of Haridas makes the earth auspicious. 🍃

— Translated from *Gaura-pada-taraṅginī*. Jagadbandhu Bhadra (editor). Sri Gauranga Press. Calcutta. 1931. Bengali.