

# *Sri Krishna Kathamrita*



## *Bindu*

Issue 553

*Saintly Ladies*





# Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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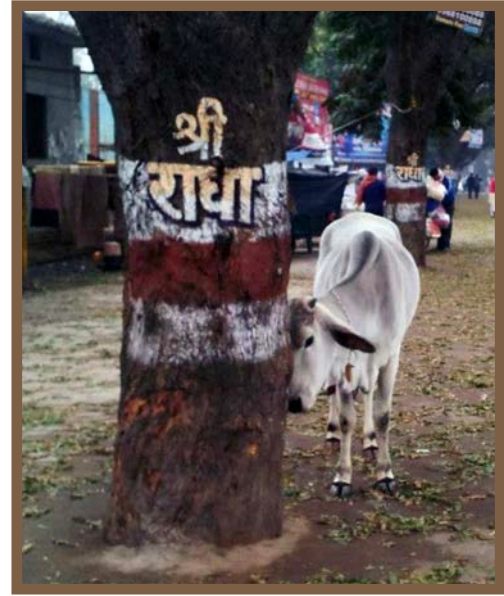
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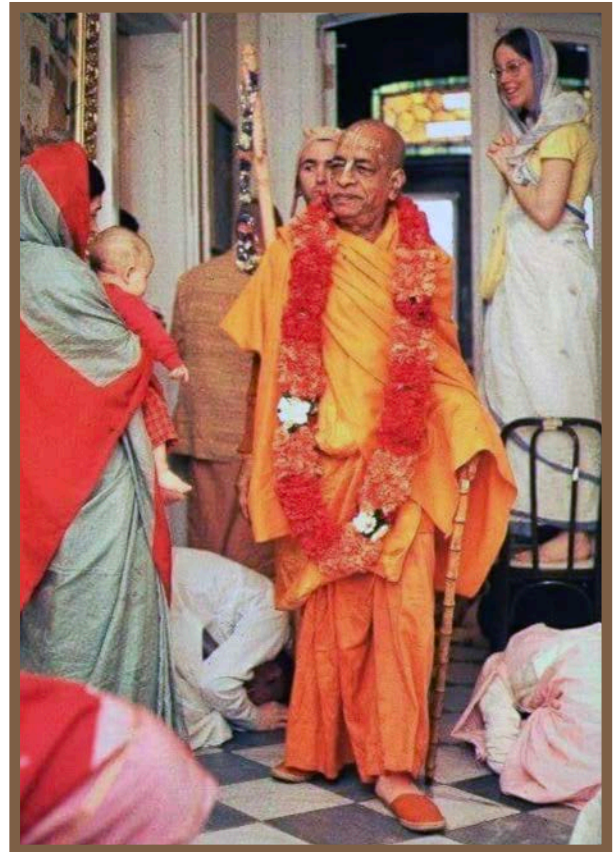
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## JAPA IN THE TEMPLE ROOM WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX



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

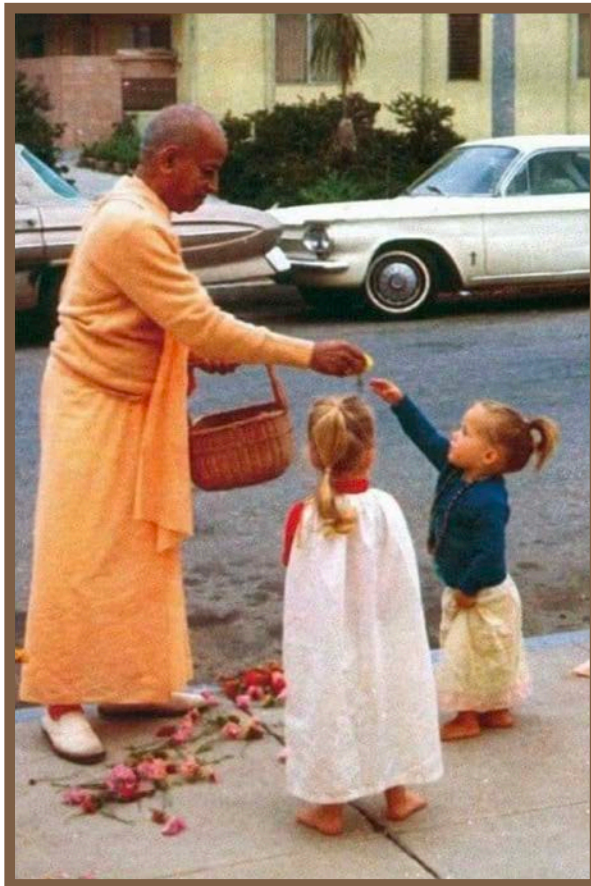
I do not know why these things inventions are going on. That is our only business, to invent something new programme? We have already got our *vaiṣṇava* standard. That is sufficient for Madhvacharya, Ramanujacharya, it was sufficient for Lord Chaitanya, the Six Goswamis, for Bhaktivinode Thakur, for my Guru Maharaja, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, for me, for all big, big saints and *ācāryas* in our line — why shall it be inadequate for my disciples that they must manufacture something? That is not possible. Who has introduced these things, that women cannot have chanting *japa* in the temple, they cannot perform the *ārati* and so many things? If they become agitated, then let the *brahmacārīs* go to the forest, I have never introduced these things. The *brahmacārīs* cannot



Unknown photographer

Cover: Two lady devotees worshipping Tulasi. Pahari school Guler style, circa 1750.

Unknown photographer



*Srila Prabhupada gives some prasādam flowers to little girls at the Los Angeles temple on Watseka Ave in 1970*

remain in the presence of women in the temple, then they may go to the forest, not remaining in New York City, because in New York there are so many women, so how they can avoid seeing? Best thing is to go to the forest for not seeing any women, if they become so easily agitated, but then no one will either see them and how our preaching work will go on? (Letter to Ekayani, 3 December 1972)

### Simply Rascals and Fools

**Devotee:** Prabhupada, sometimes I’ve seen devotees say that they did not like to chant in the temple room with the opposite sex.

**Prabhupada:** Then that is a rascal. He is not a devotee. He is a rascal. If he does not like the temple and he thinks to be happy outside, what is he? What kind of devotee he is? He is not a devotee.

**Devotee:** What I meant to say is he does not want to chant with women in the temple room. I have seen this before. He says, “I do not want to chant in a room with women. I would rather be away from the women.”



Unknown photographer



Unknown photographer

*Top and bottom: Children offering garlands to Srila Prabhupada*

**Prabhupada:** That means he has got distinction between men and women. He is not yet *paṇḍit*. *Paṇḍitaḥ sama-darśinaḥ* [Bg. 5.18]. He is a fool, that’s all. So what is the value of his words? He is a fool. ... He should always consider, “There is a woman. She is my mother.” That’s all. *Māṭṛvat para-dāreṣu*. Suppose you sit down with your mother and chant. What is wrong? But if he is not so strong then he should go to the forest. Why he should live in Nairobi city? On the street there are so many women. He will walk on the street closing the eyes? [laughter] This is all rascaldom. They are rascals. They are not devotees — simply rascals. (From a morning walk discussion in Nairobi, 2 November 1975) 🍌

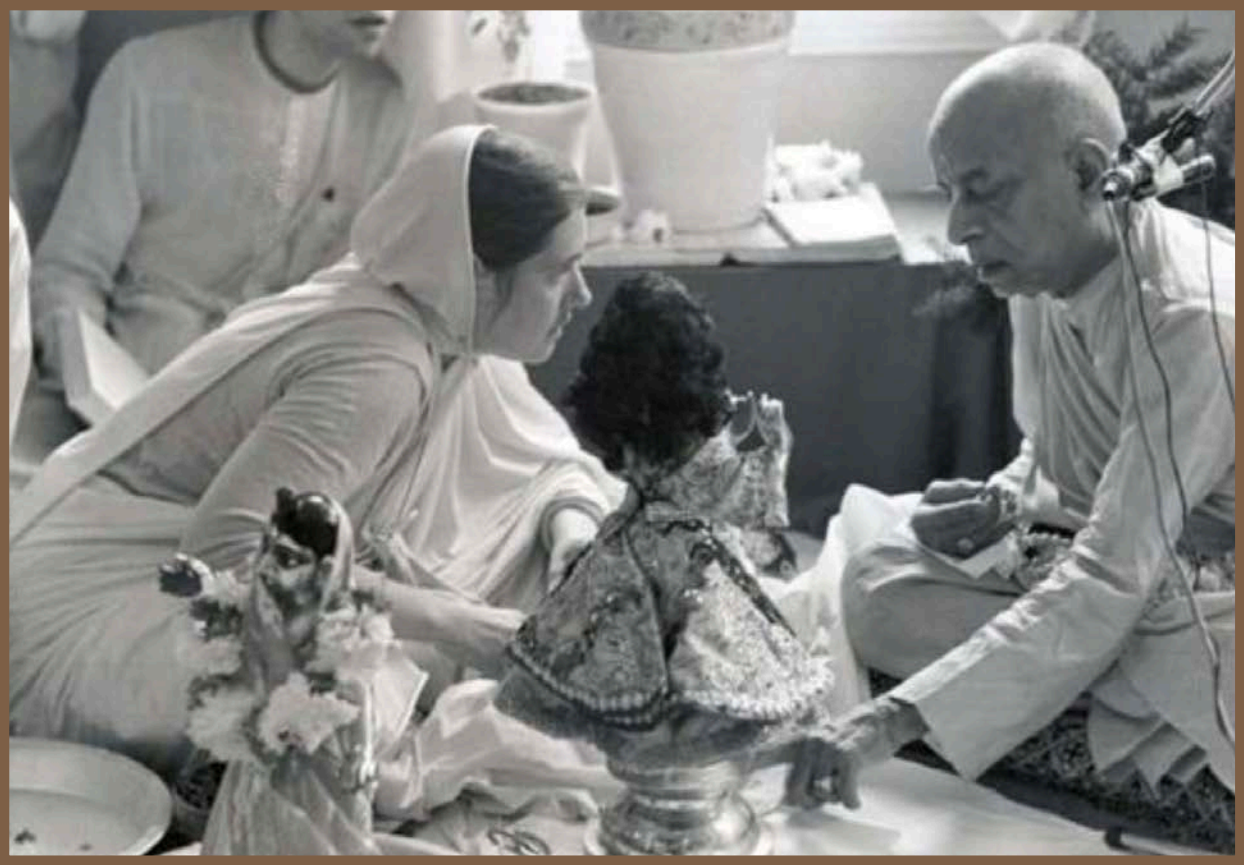
## WOMEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE INITIATED



*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada*

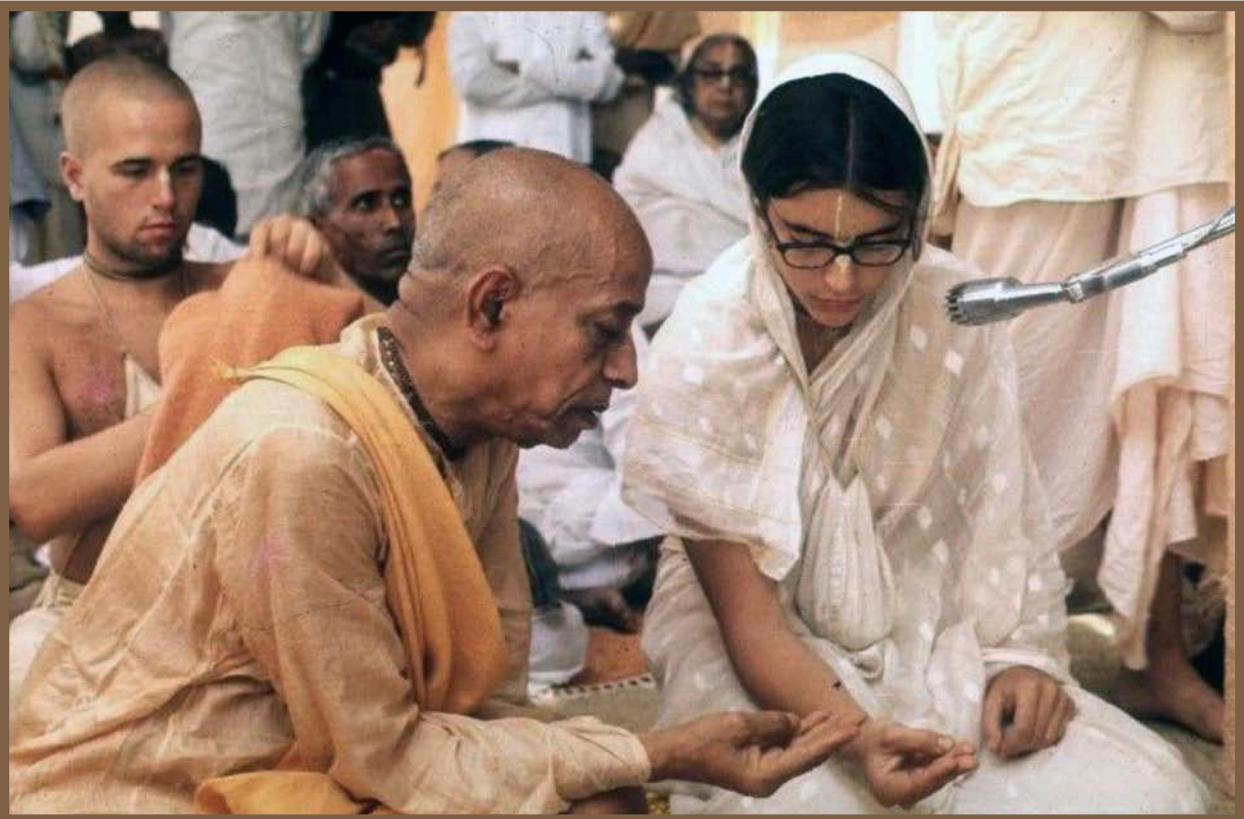
Based on the scriptural injunctions, each and every one has the right to receive spiritual initiation.

Unknown photographer

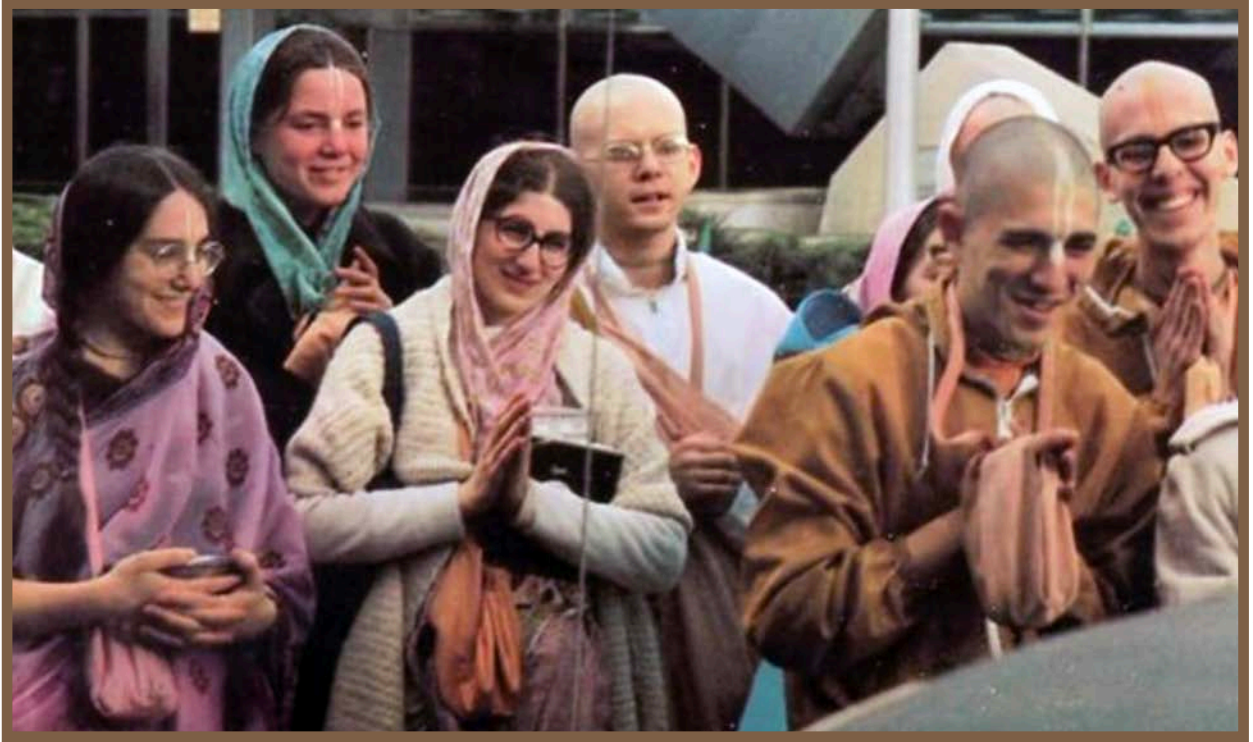


*Srila Prabhupada instructs Gauri Dasi in deity worship in Boston in 1971*

Unknown photographer



*Srila Prabhupada initiates Vishakha Dasi into Gāyatrī mantra, on 29 Feb 1972 in Mayapur*



Unknown photographer

Devotees at the New York airport with Srila Prabhupada circa 1973

Unlike the worldly initiation, it is not confined within a certain sect or community. I am citing a few evidences in this respect. Please explain the meanings to the *pañḍita mahāśaya*.

*athādhikāra-nirṇayaḥ* — the qualities of a candidate eligible for chanting these mantras:

*tāntrikeṣu ca mantreṣu dikṣāyān yoṣitām api  
sādhvīnām adhikāro 'sti sūdrādīnām ca sad-dhiyām*

Not only faithful twice-born Brahmins, but also chaste ladies and pious *sūdras* who are engaged in the service of their spiritual master are qualified to be initiated into these mantras described in the *Tantras*. (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 1.194)

In the *Smṛti-artha-sāra* as well as the *Padma Purāṇa*, *vaiśākha-māhātmya*, in a conversation between Sri Narada and Sri Ambarish, it is stated:

*āgamoktena mārgeṇa strī-sūdrair api pūjanam  
kartavyam śraddhayā viṣṇoś cintayitvā patim ḥṛdi*

According to the rules and regulations mentioned in the *Āgama* literature, women can faithfully render devotional service to Lord Vishnu while remaining devoted to their husbands, and *sūdras* who have taken initiation can also worship Lord Vishnu.

*sūdrāṇān caiva bhavati nāmnā vai devatārcanam  
sarve 'py āgama-mārgeṇa kuryur vedānukāriṇā*

After receiving initiation according to the rules and regulations described in the Vedas and *Āgamas*, one should worship the deity of his worshipable Lord. Even uninitiated *sūdras* can worship their worshipable Lord while chanting the holy name.

*strīṇām apy adhikāro 'sti viṣṇor ārādhanaḍiṣu  
pati-priya-ratānām ca śrutir eṣā sanātānī*

Initiated women are also eligible to worship Lord Vishnu, especially if they desire benefit for their husband. This is an ancient custom.

In the *Agastya-saṁhitā*, regarding the *rāma-mantra*, it is stated:

*śuci-vrata-tamāḥ sūdrā dhārmikā dvija-sevakāḥ  
striyaḥ pati-vratāś cānye pratilomānulomajāḥ  
lokāś cāṇḍāla-paryantāḥ sarve 'py atrādhikāriṇaḥ*

*Sūdras* who are religious, who serve the Brahmins, and who observe sacred vows, as well as chaste ladies, those born in intercaste families, and even dog-eaters, are eligible to chant Sri Rama mantras. (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 1.194-198)

In the *Gautamīya Tantra*, it is stated in a general way:

*atha kṛṣṇa-manūn vakṣye dṛṣṭā-dṛṣṭa-phala-pradān  
yān vai vijñāya munayo lebhire muktim añjasā*

Now I will describe the Krishna mantras, the chanting of which give results which can sometimes be seen and sometimes unseen. By knowing these mantras, the thoughtful practitioners can easily attain liberation.



*Srila Prabhupada and his disciple Yamuna Dasi in San Francisco in December 1967.  
Yamuna is wearing a sari that Srila Prabhupada brought for her from India.*

*grhasthā vanagāś caiva yatayo brahmacāriṇaḥ  
striyaḥ sūdrādayaś caiva sarve yatrādhikāriṇaḥ*

It is stated in the *Agama* literature:

*Brahmacāris, grhasthas, vānaprasthas, sannyāsīs, women,  
and sūdras are all eligible to chant these mantras. (Hari-  
bhakti-vilāsa 1.217-218)*

The living entities attain the human form of life especially for serving the Supreme Lord. Animals cannot accept spiritual initiation, only humans are eligible for it.

*dvijānām anupetānām svakarmādhyayanādiṣu  
yathādhikāro nāstīha syāc copanayanād anu*

*tathātrādīkṣitānām tu mantra-devārcanādiṣu  
nādhikāro 'sty ataḥ kuryād ātmānaḥ śiva-saṁstutām*

Just as a Brahmin boy is not qualified to perform his occupational duties and study the Vedas if he is not initiated, so a person who has not taken spiritual initiation is not eligible to chant spiritual mantras and worship the Supreme Lord. By accepting initiation into Vishnu mantras, one makes himself worthy of praise even by Lord Shiva. Just as one cannot separate himself from worshiping the Supreme Lord, he cannot separate himself from accepting initiation.

In a conversation between Brahma and Narada recorded in the *kārttika-prasaṅga* section of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the following statement is found:

*te narāḥ paśavo loke kiṁ teṣāṁ jīvane phalam  
yair na labdhā harer dīkṣā nārcito vā janārdanaḥ*

Those who have not taken initiation from a spiritual master according to the prescribed rules and regulations and who have not worshiped the Supreme Lord, Janardan, are no better than animals and their lives are spent uselessly. (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 2.5)

This statement confirms that initiation is an eternal function.

In a conversation between Rukmangada and Mohini, in *Viṣṇu-yāmala*, the following is stated:

*adīkṣitasya vāmoru kṛtaṁ sarvaṁ nirarthakam  
paśu-yonim avāpnoti dīkṣā-virahito janaḥ*

O beautiful one! All activities performed by an uninitiated person are useless. After death, such a person receives the body of an animal. (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 2.6)

The soul is neither female, male or neuter. The living entities, who are compelled to enjoy or suffer the fruits of their own actions and deeds, forget

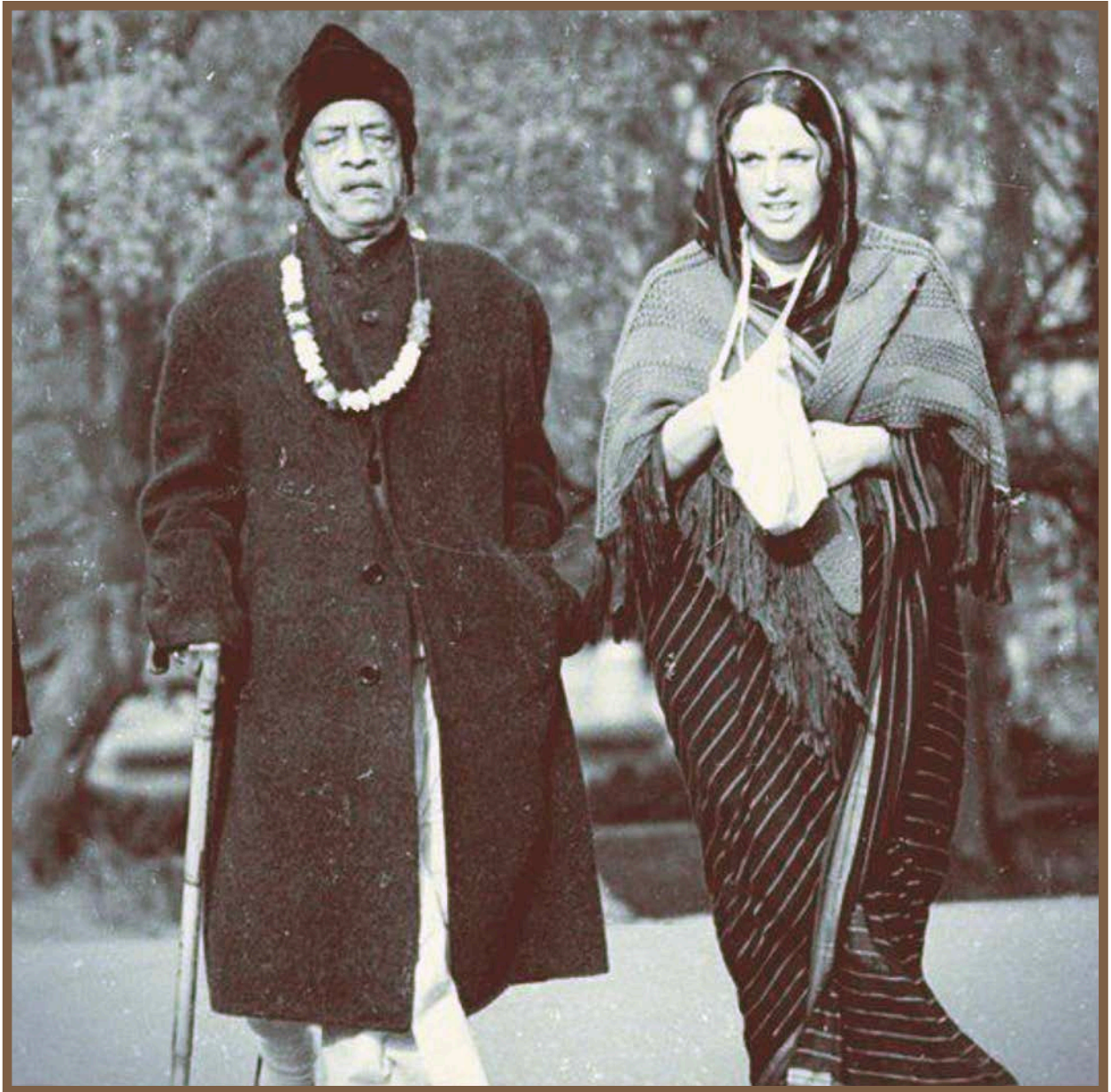


Photo by Gurindas

*Yamuna Dasi and Srila Prabhupada on a morning walk at Stowe Lake in San Francisco in December 1967.*

their own constitutional position of a spirit soul and consider themselves to be male or female, accepting their material body to be their self. The learned persons do not accept this.

*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke  
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ  
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij  
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ*

One who identifies one's self as the inert body composed of mucus, bile, and air, who assumes his wife and family are permanently his own, who thinks an earthen image or the land of his birth is worshipable, or who sees a place of pilgrimage as mere water, but who never identifies himself with, feels kinship with,

worships, or even visits those who are wise in spiritual truth — such a person is no better than a cow or an ass. (*Bhāg.* 10.84.13)

*prāyeṇa veda tad idaṁ na mahājano 'yaṁ  
devyā vimohita-matir bata māyayālam  
trayyāṁ jaḍi-kṛta-matir madhu-puṣpitāyāṁ  
vaitānike mahati karmaṇi yujyamānaḥ*

Being bewildered by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord, Yajnavalkya, Jaimini, and other compilers of the religious scriptures cannot know the secret, confidential religious system of the twelve *mahājanas*. They cannot understand the transcendental value of performing devotional service or chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. Because their minds are attracted to the ritualistic



Unknown artist.

A young devotee lady worshipping Krishna





Unknown artist

A mother and daughter paint Krishna

ceremonies mentioned in the Vedas — especially the *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Rg Veda* — their intelligence has become dull. Thus they are busy collecting the ingredients for ritualistic ceremonies that yield only temporary benefits, such as elevation to Svargaloka for material happiness. They are not attracted to the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Instead, they are interested in *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. (*Bhāg.* 6.3.25)

Without understanding the teachings of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and the concept of bondage and liberation, many people are bereft of the opportunity of receiving spiritual initiation. No learned follower of *sanātana-dharma* can disagree with the principal that every male and female has the right for spiritual initiation. The spirit soul is not a male or a female of this material world. There are many social and worldly duties which display their prominence due to a lack of the realization of one's constitutional position. One is advised to surpass all those conceptions and proceed on the path of devotional service.

— Ever well-wisher

Sri Siddhanta Saraswati 🍊

— From a letter to Srīman Thakura Prasada Adhikari. 2 March 1929. From, *Patrāmṛta Nectar from the Letters*. English translation by Bhūmipati Das. Touchstone Media. Kolkata. 2012, and <https://www.facebook.com/prapannapublications/photos/151396727037928>

**RENOUNCED LADIES  
ARE RARE**



*Srīla Thakur Bhaktivinode*

Women are allowed to enter the *gṛhastha āśrama* and *vānaprastha āśrama* only. Though some women, being exceptionally qualified, achieving high education, expert understanding of *śāstra*, and great expertise, may become *brahmacārīs* or *sannyāsīs*, it is not the normal rule, as women are usually of weaker body, faith, and discriminating power. 🍊

— *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* 2.4. English translation by Sri Bhanu Swami. Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education.

Painting by R. S. Chonke



In her dream Radha sees Krishna everywhere

## THE FAULT IS IN MY VISION



**Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja**

If we are not engaged in the service of the eternal being, the Supreme Lord, then it is abuse of our life. Both men and women should learn this, and both of them should be engaged in rendering loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead — all-beautiful Krishna. Then life will be successful. If they'll not do that, they will serve their body or bodily relations, husband and wife relations, if they establish material bodily relationships, then both of them will suffer. Their relationship should be established, based on the relationship with Krishna. Krishna is the only object of love. There are five categories of relationships, in all of them: father and son relationship, master and servant relationship, friend and friend relationship, etc., if they are based on a perfect, loving relationship with Krishna, then it is all right.

Otherwise, if you establish temporary, bodily, material relationships then you'll suffer. Instead of giving enjoyment and pleasure to the eternal Supreme Being, Supreme Lord Krishna, you are abusing your service mentality — giving pleasure to your senses and body. It is not that variegatedness is bad, that the creation of man is bad, or the creation of woman is bad. You should understand it was all created by Krishna. Krishna is the only enjoyer. Men will be enjoyed by Krishna and women will be enjoyed by Krishna. When a man sees a woman, immediately the desire for enjoyment comes up. He should immediately think, "Oh, Krishna is the enjoyer, and such a beautiful woman should be enjoyed by Krishna. I am not the enjoyer." Similarly, a woman should think like that. It is not that the fault lies with the man, or the fault lies with the woman. A *brahmacārī* should think, "Why is a woman created? I should not look at her. There is no wrong in them. There is wrong in me. I don't know how to look, how to see, how to behave. The wrong lies with me. 🍌"

— Lecture in Mauritius, 14 January 1996



Unknown artist. From Tehri-Garhwal 'Gitagovinda' Series. Guler or Kangra, c. 1775-80

A sakhī describes Krishna's condition to a hesitant Radha

## WOMEN DEVOTEES AND SEGREGATION OF THE SEXES



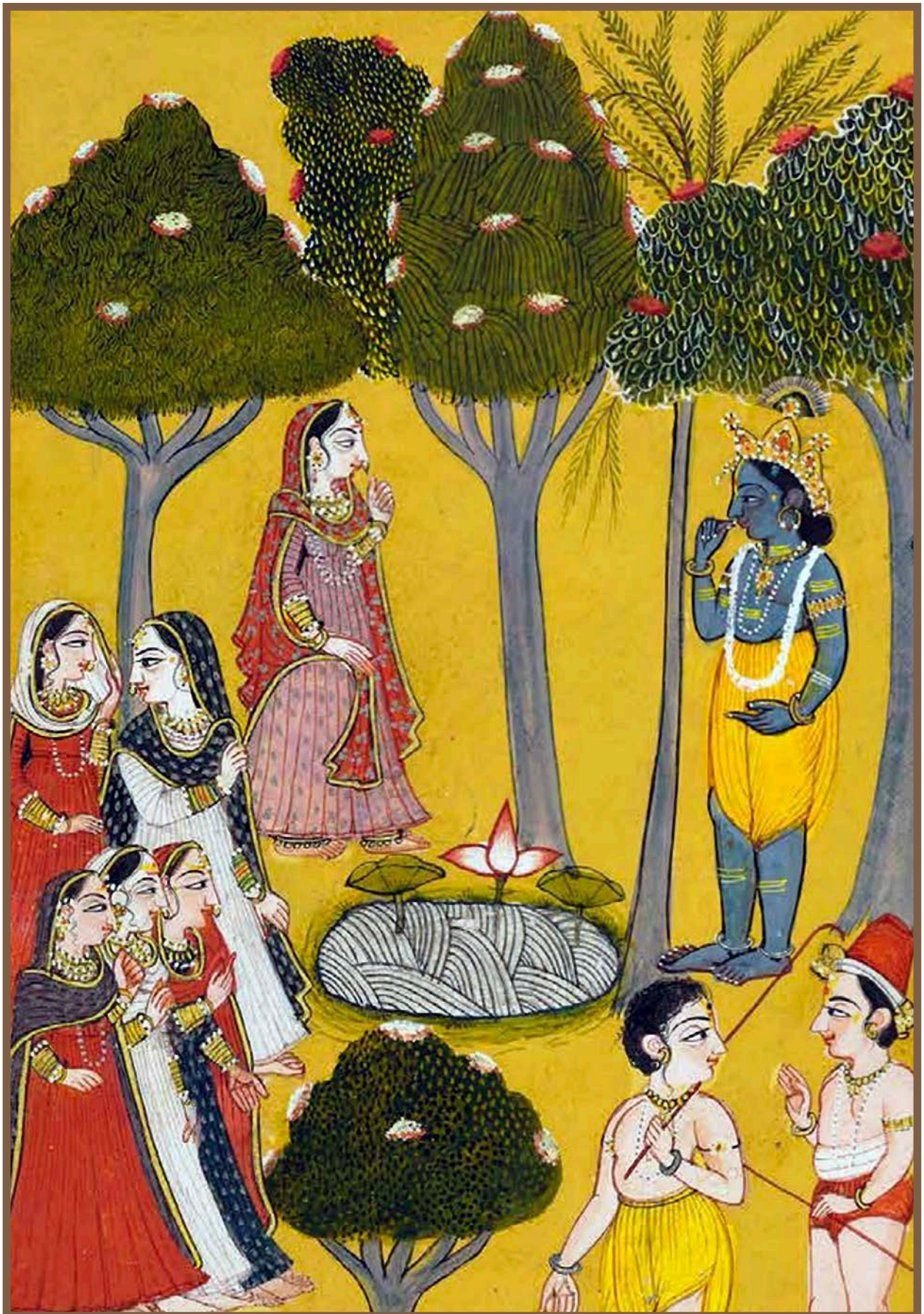
The following are some questions and answers regarding principles followed in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's temples. It was published in an article on 6 June 1931 in the Bengali Gauḍīya magazine, which was the main periodical of the Gaudiya Matha during the time of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur.

**Question:** Are women qualified like men to engage in *Bhagavad-bhakti* or not? If they are, then what if some woman by her good fortune becomes a devotee of the Lord (acting according to the *dharma* of the pure *vaiṣṇavas*) and wants to serve the Lord and reside in some *kṣetra* or *maṭha*, having renounced everything. Can she do that or not? And if some woman by such an activity becomes a pure *vaiṣṇavī*, then is it proper for a detached person or a pure *vaiṣṇava* to receive her association in order to get spiritual instructions?

**Answer:** Sriman Mahaprabhu taught, *bhaktau ṅ-mātrasyādhikāritā* — “Any human is automatically

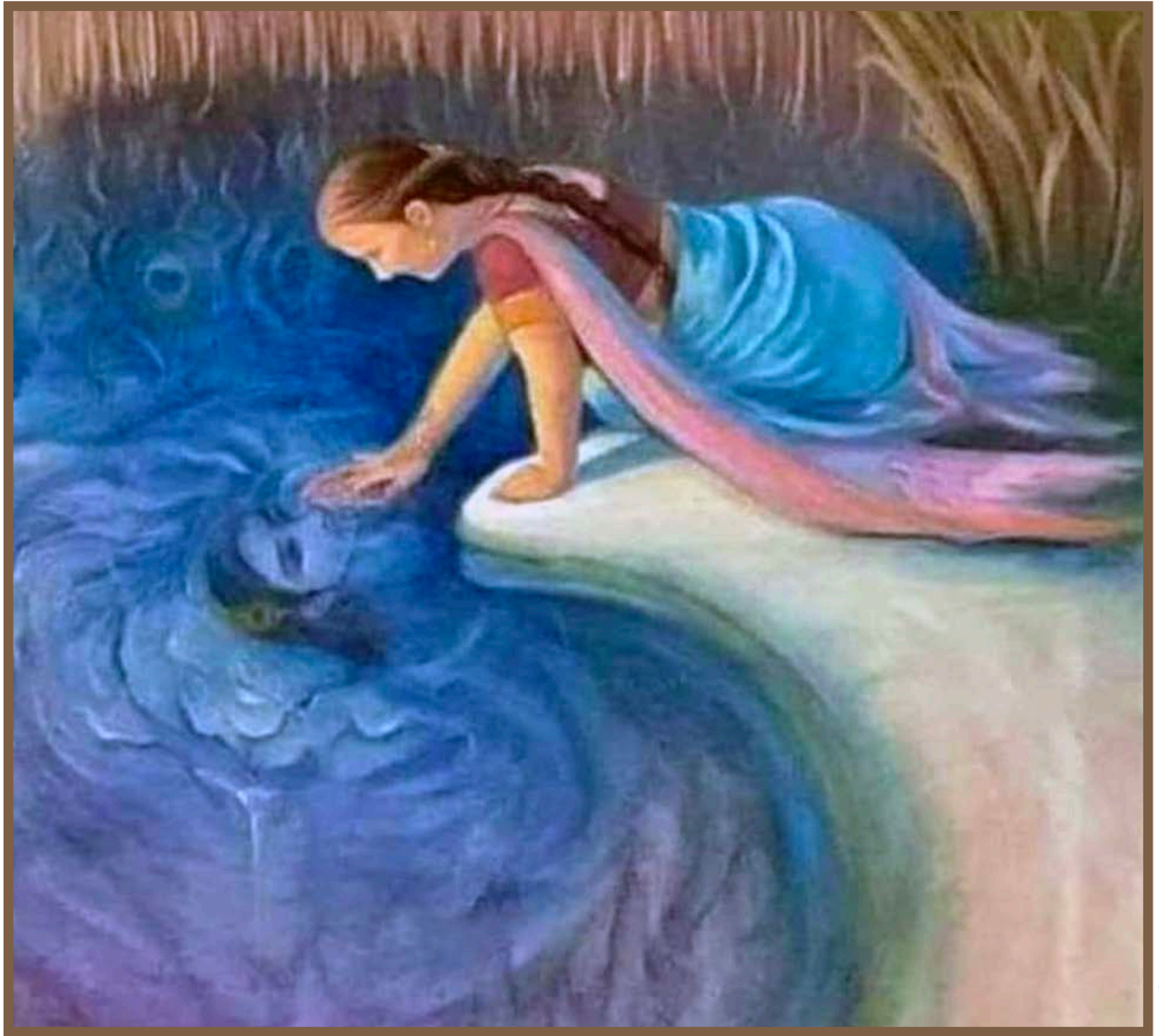
qualified for *bhagavad-bhakti*.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.60) That means (in metaphorical expression) any conscious or living being. A woman, a man, a child, an old man, an animal, a bird, a blade of grass, a bush or a creeper – all these are descriptions related to the body. *Bhakti* is not an activity of a gross or a subtle body. The pure *jīvātmā*, which is transcendental to the gross or subtle body, has a natural and eternal function — “*bhakti*”. Therefore, being a *jīva* is the only qualification for *bhakti*.

A *jīva* externally dressed as a woman can by her good fortune take shelter of *bhagavad-bhakti* and become an advanced devotee (*paramā-bhaktimati*). Still, a man and a woman who are both inclined towards *bhagavad-bhakti* should be very careful in their dealings with each other, because the possibility of fall-down is inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*. In *Kali-yuga*, women's qualification for renouncing the family is very rare, even if we say that it is completely absent that would not be an exaggeration. There are hardly one or two (*kvacit dui ekṭi*) examples of especially qualified women like Gangamata, whose qualification for *gṛha-tyāga* and *kṣetra-sannyāsa* (renunciation and living in the Holy Dham), etc., was always perfect (*nitya-siddha*). If we



Unknown artist. Rasikapriya series. Mandi: 1780-90

When Krishna saw Radha he became ecstatically confused



Unknown artist.

### *Radha sees Krishna in her reflection*

accept their capability as a general rule, a great disaster will come upon the world. [In general,] women should perform *hari-bhajana* without duplicity while staying at home. In many holy places women develop different *anarthas* being driven by very strong desires (*vāsanā*) that consist of other intentions (*anyābhilāṣa*) and that are manifested as *grha-tyāga*, etc. Although everyone is eligible for *hari-bhajana*, nevertheless, everyone should perform *hari-bhajana* according to one's own qualification, remaining in one's own position. If one gives up his position and wants to show his great thirst for *hari-bhajana*, then one's many varieties of other desires (*anyābhilāṣa*), lust (*kāma*), the desire for name and fame and for high position (*pratiṣṭhāṣā*), or divergent endeavors (*itara ceṣṭā*) become manifest. In this way one falls down from his *bhajana*. Many of us

have witnessed disturbances (*jañjāla*) that have come as a result of a great desire to take shelter of a *tīrtha* or *ṣeṭra*, but which are actually caused by ulterior motives. If a woman, who in all respects uses her body, mind and speech only for the service of the Lord and has completely given up all bad association, follows the pure example of *prema-bhakti-svarūpiṇī* Sri Sri Sachi Devi, or Sri Sri Vishnupriya Devi, and thus lives in the *dhāma*, then she can perform *hari-bhajana* in the same way. Just as Sri Sri Vishnupriya Devi was always serving the desires of Gaura while taking care of the elderly Sri Sri Sachi Devi, who was expert in non-duplicitous *bhajana*. Or just as Sri Sachi Devi, being completely free from all the other desires of this world, lived in Sridham Mayapur with her mind fully absorbed in *gaura-sevā*, in a similar



Unknown artist.

Ecstatically worshipping Krishna

way if someone receives instructions from a non-cheating *sad-gurudeva* and takes shelter of Sri Dham, then it is possible for them to live in the *kṣetra*, etc. In this regard, one should remain very careful and impartial (*nirapekṣa*). Therefore, Srīman Mahāprabhu showed the example of sending completely impartial Damodar Pandit to Sri Sachimata. *eka līlāya kareṇa prabhu kārya pāñca-sāta* — “The Lord fulfills five or seven purposes by performing one pastime.” (Cc. *antya* 2.169)

Mahāprabhu told Damodar Pandit:

*mātāra gr̥he raha yāi mātāra caraṇe  
tomāra āge nahibe kāro svacchandācaraṇe*

“It is best for you to go to the shelter of my mother’s lotus feet, for no one will be able to behave independently in front of you.” (Cc. *antya* 3.25)

It doesn’t matter how much detached a pure *vaiṣṇava* and a pure *vaiṣṇavī* can become by residing in Sri

Kṣetra or in Sri Dham or by serving the desires of the Lord, they should not stay together in a secluded place even for moment, being influenced by a duplicitous desire for some “spiritual instructions”. Such questions should not arise at all after Srīman Mahāprabhu instructed us by the example of Chota Haridas. There is no such *śuddhā-vaiṣṇavī* like Madhavi Mata in the whole world. In the words of *Caritāmṛta*, she is:

*vṛddhā tapasvinī āra parama-vaiṣṇavī*

“She was an elderly lady who always performed austerities. She was very advanced in devotional service.” (*antya* 2.104)

And:

*prabhu lekhā kare yāṅre rādhikāra ‘gaṇa’*

Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu accepted her as having formerly been an associate of Srīmatī Rādhārānī. (Cc. *antya* 2.105)



Painting by Shital Banerjee

*Vihara-bāsara, the time of separation*



Krishna begging for Radharani's mercy

When on the pretext of begging some rice, the detached Chota Haridas went to such a *paramā vaiṣṇavī*, Mahaprabhu said:

—”*vairāgi kare prakṛti sambhāṣaṇa  
dekhite nā pāroṇi āmi tāhāra vadana*

The Lord replied, “I cannot tolerate seeing the face of a person who has accepted the renounced order of life but who still talks intimately with a woman. (Cc. *antya* 2.117)

*durvāra indriya kare viṣaya-grahaṇa  
dāravī prakṛti hare munerapi mana*

So strongly do the senses adhere to the objects of their enjoyment that indeed a wooden statue of a woman attracts the mind of even a great saintly person. (Cc. *antya* 2.118)

*mātrā svasrā duhitṛā vā nā viviktāsano bhavet  
balavān indriya-grāmo vidvāmsam api karṣati*

One should not sit closely with one’s mother, sister or daughter, for the senses are so strong that they may attract even a person advanced in knowledge. (*Bhāg.* 9.19.17, quoted in Cc. *antya* 2.119)

*kṣudra-jīva saba markāṭa-vairāgya kariyā  
indriya carāṣā bule ‘prakṛti’ sambhāṣiyā”*

There are many persons with little in their possession who accept the renounced order of life like monkeys. They go here and there engaging in sense gratification and speaking intimately with women. (Cc. *antya* 2.120)

Also, Srīman Mahaprabhu taught us thousands of times by his own behavior that:

*niṣkiñcanasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya  
pāraṇi paraṇi jigamiṣor bhava-sāgarasya  
sandarśanaṁ viṣayiṇām atha yoṣitām ca  
hā hanta hanta viṣa-bhakṣaṇato ‘py asādhu*

“Alas, for a person who is seriously desiring to cross the material ocean and engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord without material motives, seeing a materialist engaged in sense gratification or seeing a woman who is similarly interested is more abominable than drinking poison willingly.” (Cc. *madhya* 11.8)

Therefore, any renounced *vaiṣṇava* or any person inclined towards serious *bhajana* should not in any way associate with women under the pretext of receiving spiritual instructions. Those who are not willing to accept



this instruction are inimical to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu will never see their face. Their only atonement is to die by throwing themselves into the waters of Triveni. Servants of the servants of Mahaprabhu will stay far away from the association of such people who engage in illicit association with women. 🍌

— Excerpted from Gauḍiya magazine, vol. 9, #42, p.698. Translated from the original Bengali by Brijbasi Das.

## TWO LADY DISCIPLES & Their Salagram Worship



### From the Bhaktamāla of Sri Nabha

There are a number of books named Bhaktamāla, which are compilations of stories from the Bhāgavatam, other Purāṇas, and local traditions about the Lord and his devotees. However, some of these Bhaktamālas are not accepted by Gaudiya Vaishnavas. The Bhaktamāla compiled in Hindi around the year 1666 by the vaiṣṇava Nabha Das and later commented on by Priyadas in 1766 was accepted and appreciated by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada. It was quoted by him in a lecture in Midnapur on 10 February 1925. It is also mentioned by Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode in his autobiography. Furthermore, the 1897 issue of Sajjana-toṣaṇī included a review of a Sanskrit translation of Bhaktamāla. Also Nabha Das' Bhaktamāla was included in a list of suggested reading material for Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's Sampradāya-vaibhavācārya test that was administered to devotees of the maṭha.

Not much is known about Nabha Das. Priyadas writes in his commentary that Nabha was born in the line of Hanuman, presumably meaning a line of devotees of Lord Rama's monkey devotee. He says that Nabha was blind and that due to extreme poverty his mother left him in the forest when he was five years old. He was found by two saints, Sri Kilhadev and Sri Agradev, who sprinkled water on the boy's eyes and gave him sight. After that, Sri Agradev gave him initiation into a rāma-mantra and instructed him to stay at Galta ashram in the foothills near Jaipur. According to the local tradition in Galta, it was there that Nabha compiled his Bhaktamāla.

From the prayers given in the beginning of his commentary, it seems that Priyadas belonged to the Śrī Mādhva Gauḍiya sampradāya. He describes his spiritual preceptors as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Sri Srinivasacharya, and Sri Manohar Das.

There were two lady devotees of Krishna. One was a princess, and the other was the daughter of



Unknown artist.

### Worshipping Krishna

a sweeper. One day their guru came to their house. As he began worshipping his śālagrāma-śilā, the two ladies approached him and sat by his side. By seeing the Lord's worship, and by accepting prasāda, their desire to serve the Lord became more strongly manifest. They prayed to their spiritual master, "We would like to offer our service to beautiful Shyamasundar, so kindly give us this śālagrāma-śilā."

Seeing that, although they were young, the girls had pure love for the Lord, their spiritual master gave them his śālagrāma-śilā and said, "You should serve him daily with great care and attention. You have acquired a desire to serve the Lord. This is very auspicious and will lead you to liberation."

Thus, by the order of their spiritual master, both girls began worshipping the Lord and they soon became very attached to rendering service to him. The Lord in the form of the śālagrāma-śilā accepted their devotional service. It is the nature of the Supreme Lord, who is the most magnanimous personality, that if anyone worships him with a pure and simple heart, he becomes very easily accessible.

Now hear about the young princess, who was also fully devoted to the Supreme Lord. Her mind, speech, and actions were all dedicated to the Lord, for she had



*Srila Prabhupada initiates Rukmini Dasi in Montreal, Canada in 1968*

no desire to enjoy worldly happiness. She was fully detached from the materialistic way of life. Her mind constantly remained absorbed in the service of the Lord.

By the arrangement of providence, the princess got married to a man who was godless, as were his family members. When her godless husband came to take her to his house after their marriage, she was emotionally overwhelmed and began thinking about how to transform him so that he would become a devotee. Her family members duly bade her farewell. Always absorbed in her personal devotional mood, she was alone, for there was no companion to accompany her to her in-law's house. There was only one person to help her, and that was the Lord. On the journey, her husband came by her side and began speaking to her, but his suggestions were not at all to her liking. She became nervous and said, "Please don't come near me, for I am in distress."

The husband of the young princess asked, "What are you suffering from? Please tell me so that I can quickly make some arrangement to give you relief. I had a great desire to meet you. I am also nervous. So kindly talk to me so I can feel happy."

The devotee girl replied, "If you wish to speak to me, then you first have to manifest devotion for the Supreme Lord within your heart. Without devotion to the Lord, you will have to remain far from me. Do not touch my body."

Hearing this, the husband became angry and thought, "She is always thinking of the bag in which her worshipable Lord, the paraphernalia for his

worship, and the prayers for recitation, are kept. I should take that bag from her."

Thinking like this, the man stole the bag and threw it into a river. As a result, the princess experienced an even greater distress which caused her heart to burn with grief. This was due to separation from her Lord. Trembling with anger at her husband, the princesses refused all food and drink. Although her husband tried to cheer her up, since her Lord, who was everything for her, was taken from her, she could not be pacified. Finally, when they arrived at his house, the husband narrated the entire story to the other family members.

Day by day, the princess' body became lean and weak. Seeing this, the family members asked her, "Why are you so stubborn?" Her mother-in-law tried to pacify her, and even tried to feed her with her own hands, but she refused to eat anything. What to speak of eating, she even refused to talk to her husband's family members. She had palpitations of the heart because of separation from the Supreme Lord as her condition worsened day by day. Finally, the in-laws said, "We fall down at your feet. Whatever you say, we will do." The young princess said, "Only if my Lord returns to me will I be able to continue living."

Thereafter, the princess, along with her in-laws, went to the shore of the river where the box had been thrown. At that time, while remembering her Lord, her head began to spin and she suddenly fell down unconscious. Tears flowed from her eyes as with great



Unknown photographer

*Devotees doing hari-nāma in New York City 1971 or 1972*

difficulty she called out to the Lord of her life. Just as a lusty person remains under the control of lusty desires, Lord Shyamasundar remains under the control of his devotee's love. As soon as he heard the princess' pathetic cries, the box appeared before the princess.

When her husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and other family members saw this wonder, their minds became purified of all material contamination. They had no more doubt about the efficacy of devotion to the Lord. They realized that without devotion to the Lord, their lives were simply useless. In this way, the young devotee princess converted all

of her family members into devotees of the Supreme Lord. From that time onward, they engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord and his devotees. They understood that the presence of their daughter-in-law would bring auspiciousness to their house. 🍊

— Translated by Bhumipati Das. Unpublished manuscript.

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Painting by Mahadev Vishwanath Dhurandhar. 1867-1944

*Worship of Vishnu*