

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

82.01.29.C_82.01.30.A

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...and all other layers, planes of ecstasy, that is all trash to me, such highest type of ecstatic, only for a lightening has captured, letting, and making me see. *Ko vu vido vartena* [?] Kṛṣṇa, He's playing, He's exploiting the beauty of the *gopīs*, the Braja girls. That attitude like lightening peeped in my heart, and I'm undone, all else is like trash and stool. I can't be normal with any environment, can't adjust. It is my heart drawn there, hopelessly drawn, but I can't retain my existence until any farther I come in the connection of that.

Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Nitāi Gaura Haribol.
Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu. Gaurāṅga Hari. Gaura Hari.
Nitāi Gaura Haribol. Nitāi Gaura Haribol. Nitāi Gaura Haribol. Mahāprabhu.

Today I finish here.

...

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Gaura Haribol.

Today is a very auspicious day, the day of advent of Viṣṇupriyā Devī, and also that of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Raghunandan Ṭhākura, and Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī Prabhu. And also the day of departure of Viśvanātha Ṭhākura: and also two of my *sannyāsī* Godbrothers, Bharati Mahārāja and Parvat Mahārāja, departed this day. And generally this day the goddess of learning, Sarasvatī Devī, is being worshipped.

Deve vide vide para ca para ca [?] In *Upaniṣad* we find, two classes of learning, *para* and *apara*. _____ [?] By which we can understand the unknowable, the transcendental truth, that is *para*, that is principal learning. And which takes them away from that sort of knowledge of reality, that is *apara*, the principal and the auxiliary. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes,

Bhakti bada yar hoite sei vida masta _____ [?]

Really Sarasvatī, mundane, Sarasvatī in *Purāṇic* conception is accepted as the wife of Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, etc, both of them, they are the serving potency of Nārāyaṇa, Sarasvatī. *Bhakti bada yar hoite* [?] Any learning, any knowledge, that stands in the way of our real relationship with the Absolute. Very hatefully, trample it down. And which helps us to go to reach to the object of our inner desired desire, which can satisfy the eternal thirst we're suffering from, which can quench that thirst, *svārtha-gatim hi viṣṇum* [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 7.5.31], the learning, the knowledge that will help us to reach the proper goal, destination of our inner hankering, we bow down to her.

Viṣṇupriyā Devī's life is that of helping the fallen to go to the utmost, the highest domain of love where Kṛṣṇa, love divine, where *jīva* can be very, very nearer to Kṛṣṇa. Mercy is over justice. Love is also over justice, *prema*, divine love over justice. Generally we cannot conceive that anything should be, can be good over justice, crossing justice, it is impossible. Then injustice, what is more justice that is injustice, but injustice cannot be endowed. But mercy got his noble place above justice. We may have certain conception of that, a vague conception of that, that

mercy is over justice: so *jñāna*, knowledge, estimation proper, but *prema*, the love, that is above. So for the fallen, love is only the object of our hope. We are needy, we are fallen. We have got no merit, no capacity.

So Mahāprabhu comes, “Take the chance! Take the chance! Go to the window where the fallen names are enlisted to be taken in. The royal help comes, royal, extraordinary grant for them, for the fallen. Go to that window and try to have a ticket there, buy, purchase if possible.”

vicārite āobi, guṇa nāhi pāobi, kṛpā kara choḍata vicāra
[From Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’ *Śaraṇāgati, Dainya, 5.5*]

“If you come to calculate, I have nothing, no qualification, so don’t go that side, where, according to merit the reward is given. Don’t go that side, avoid, and come to this side to try your fortune.”

So with *prema*, with love, with mercy, Mahāprabhu came. And Viṣṇupriyā Devī helps us in that way. Her whole life is that of sacrifice. And sacrifice may be of different quality, but here, sacrifice for which? For the highest attainment of the whole public, whole fallen! Her contribution is in that line. So whatever we may have, how she helped us indirectly, what was her own, she gave it to the world. And by her example the heart, the iron heart also had to melt. She led her life in such a stern, strict way of devotion, showing it to us that even the stone melted. The opposition party also had to appreciate. Such was her life. From the very young age she very strictly observed the way, to show us how we should try for our highest benefit. That is by her example. We’re told that she took the Name, counted it by rice grains, and that grain was cooked and it was dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. And that also He distributed to some of His devotees, and the remains she took. And daily emaciating from young age, daily, thinner and thinner, in this way she’s going. But her body is not like mass of flesh, us, but she continued.

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was graced by her, and many other devotees, later, got her mercy, grace. In this way she established, installed Mahāprabhu’s Vīgraha, and regularly by the help of His eternal dynasty, eternal succession, she arranged the worship of Mahāprabhu. And we find it still we’re told.

After renunciation, five years, Mahāprabhu came here to visit, according to the custom of the *sannyāsīns*. And He approached towards His home, previous, and Viṣṇupriyā Devī very dirtily clad in dirty clothing, fell near the feet of Mahāprabhu the *sannyāsīn*. And Mahāprabhu took off the sandals and blessed her and went away immediately. “Soften your burning heart by the help of these sandals.” Uttering these words Mahāprabhu went away. And she took those sandals and worshipped them as long as she lived. Those sandals are still shown to us by the disciplic succession.

So Viṣṇupriyā Devī, very silent, modest, bashful life she led. She did not come out of the home. And her contribution towards our emulation of devotion is great. So today we’re told the day of her appearance. We invoke her mercy on us fallen souls that we can have for the highest benefit of our fortune, she may be propitiated with us.

Next comes Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. He was born in Chaṭṭagrām, Chaṭṭalabhumi in Sanskrit. In a *brāhmaṇa zamīndār* family he was a well-to-do man. But at heart he was very rich with Kṛṣṇa

prema, love divine, but outwardly a man of luxury, luxurious life. Curling hair in a fashioned way, with scented oil: then the smoking style also, very princely, then also the bedding, and his dress: all of a very princely style.

Then at that time, of course for the purity and divinity of the Ganges, many persons used to come – used to come to the Ganges side to take bath sometimes. So he had also a house in Navadvīpa. At that time of course the boat was the conveyance. Sometimes he used to come and live here.

And Mukunda Datta who was one of the favourite disciple servitors of Mahāprabhu, he also comes from that place, that Chāttagrām. He remained here permanently. He knew him. When Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi has reached Navadvīpa after a few days Mukunda Datta has come to Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Gadādhara Paṇḍita is younger in age and very mild temperament, who is supposed to be the incarnation of Rādhārāṇī's *bhāva*, very sober, mild, young, and soft hearted, and tending towards devotion from childhood.

Mukunda Datta respected and liked him best, and asked Gadādhara Paṇḍita, “Paṇḍita, do you like to see a Vaiṣṇava?”

“Yes, yes. I want to see Vaiṣṇava.”

“Then come with me.” He took Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita went there and saw that in a rich bedstead he's sitting. And with that tobacco pipe in his mouth, and curled hairs fashionably arranged, and very rich dress. And Mukunda Datta, he's a *brāhmaṇa*, Mukunda Datta went straight and made obeisance. Gadādhara Paṇḍita also imitated, but he thought in himself, “What a Vaiṣṇava he has taken me to see?”

Then Mukunda Datta could feel that Gadādhara Paṇḍita is little _____ [?] So Mukunda Datta in his natural sweet tone he read this *śloka* of *Bhāgavatam*, chanted.

*aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭam, jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitām tato 'nyam, kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema*

[Uddhava says: “Oh, how amazing it is! The sister of Bakāsura, Bakī (Pūtanā), desiring to kill Śrī Kṛṣṇa, smeared poison on her breasts and forced Kṛṣṇa to drink their milk. Even so, Lord Kṛṣṇa accepted her as His mother (*dhātrī*), and so she reached the destination suitable for Kṛṣṇa's mother. In this way she came to try and kill Him; yet Kṛṣṇa gave her a position as a nursemaid in His group of assisting mothers. So gracious is the Lord. There is limitless Grace in Him. Of whom should I take shelter but the most merciful Kṛṣṇa? Who else but Kṛṣṇa should we approach for our good? Who can be so kind, so gracious?”]

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 3.2.23] & [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, 22.98]

This *śloka* was, in a sweet voice and tune, was sung by Mukunda Datta there. Then that touched the heart of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, and gradually shivering began. And then abnormal mind came down and began to throw his limbs. Then began to snatch his hair, and began to roll, and began to throw his legs and head in such a way. That where is that tobacco pipe: where is that richly set dress? All these things, he began to roll. “*Kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema.*” This is on his lips, “*kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema.*” He's convulsing, divine convulsion.

Then Gadādhara was afraid. “What have I done? Such a great Vaiṣṇava, and *kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema*, in this way!”

So more than an hour such happenings took place, and anyhow they tried their best to nurse him, befitting the position. And then gradually he became peaceful, and after long time he came to these worldly senses.

Then they came away, then Gadādhara Paṇḍita had a great reaction. “I have committed offence against Vaiṣṇava. Mentally I disregarded him, so surely I have committed offence against Vaiṣṇava, such a great Vaiṣṇava.” Then he thought within himself, “How to be absolved of this Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*? It is heard in scripture that if we take shelter under his protection as disciple then he will forgive all my offences. The Guru does not take any offence, generally, from the disciple side. He’s always merciful. So I have not yet accepted any Gurudeva, officially, so if I really want to be absolved from this Vaiṣṇava *aparādha* then I must surrender to his feet wholly.” Then he thought, “Of course my real master is Nimāi Paṇḍita. I shall have to get permission from Him.” Then he went to Mahāprabhu.

And Mahāprabhu, Nimāi Paṇḍita at that time, He’d already come from Gayā and He’s continuing His *saṅkīrtana* campaign most intensely. And suddenly one day He began to cry, “*Puṇḍarīka Bāp Puṇḍarīka! Bāp!*” He began “*Puṇḍarīka Bāp!*” None knows what is the name: who is Puṇḍarīka. Mahāprabhu is crying, “*Bāp Puṇḍarīka! Oh My father, Puṇḍarīka, where are you? When will you come to see Me?*”

In this way, but generally none knows who is Puṇḍarīka, only Mukunda Datta whose home was just nearby in Chaṭṭagrām, he knew Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. He’s a good Paṇḍita also, Sanskrit scholar. Vidyānidhi was his title. And he was a friend to Svarūpa Dāmodara, we are told hear after. But then, Puṇḍarīka, after Mahāprabhu cried in this way, wailed in this way, taking the name of Puṇḍarīka, within a few days Puṇḍarīka reached Navadvīpa, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi.

And Mahāprabhu instead of saying Vidyānidhi, He used to give the name Premanidhi. Mahāprabhu told Premanidhi not Vidyānidhi.

And Gadādhara Paṇḍita asked permission from Nimāi Paṇḍita. “I have not yet been initiated, but in the Vaiṣṇava School there’s the custom that one must take initiation. So I’d like to take initiation from Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi.”

“Yes, yes. He’s your Gurudeva. He’s your father.”

Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi is the incarnation of Vṛṣabhānu, father of Rādhārāṇī.

“Yes, you do it, certainly you take initiation from him.”

Then it was proposed through Mukunda Datta, and Gadādhara Paṇḍita took initiation from him, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, who was the incarnation of Vṛṣabhānu Raja.

Also later on we find in Purī once, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, though he himself is a typical student of *rāga-mārga* without caring *viddhi*, still he had some suspicion in mind that, “Why the *pāṇḍās* in Orriya they dress Jagannātha with _____ [?] without washing the clothing, after it is washed then some prepared some...”

Devotee: Starch.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Starch, is applied there, *margowa*, *marg*, means the juice of the rice, that is applied in the new clothing, and that was used for the dressing purpose of Jagannātha.

But Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi told that, “It must be cleansed and then it should be, Jagannātha should be dressed.” Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi thought like that, and that very night he had a dream and he sees that both Jagannātha and Balarāma They’re giving a heavy slap on his both cheeks. And in the morning his intimate friend Svarūpa Dāmodara he’s going to him. “What is my fate? Last night I get such a heavy slap that you see my cheeks have been swollen.”

Svarūpa Dāmodara he, “It is only possible for you. Your devotion has attracted Them.”

“Here, all these superfluous-ness, this purity or impurity, not to be considered here in Jagannātha *kṣetra*, you Puṇḍarīka.” In this way he was given stricture. “You have come to scrutinise in these smaller things. I am here, generous of the generous to deliver the fallen of the

fallen. So these things are ignored here. You have come to...in this way.”

And one, there was some water play in the Indrayumna Sarovar, Mahāprabhu is enjoying with Sārvabhauma and Rāmānanda, very sublime, as ocean, like They’re engaged in childish play, one is throwing water against another. The Sārvabhauma Paṇḍita man of the greatest position of the learned school, and also Rāmānanda Rāya, a most grave governor who was the ruler under Pratāparudra King after Madras the whole Andhra Province was under Orissa governor empire, included. The most serious and grave type of men they’re like engaged in childish play. Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi and Svarūpa Dāmodara there also, Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Prabhu They’re also playing with water, and Mahāprabhu enjoying from the banks.

And asking that Gopīnātha Ācārya who first introduced Mahāprabhu that, “He’s not a man, human being, but the Lord has come here,” that Gopīnātha Ācārya. Mahāprabhu says in a merry sport, “What these serious temperament men are doing like a childish play? Gopīnātha, go and stop Them what They’re doing. How the people will say when they look at Them?”

Then Gopīnātha Ācārya says, “Your love, You have brought it in this world that can merge the big mountains, what to speak of these two stone chips.” *Meru mandala saila kali* [?] “Big mountains are to go down in the flood of divine love, and these two child, what to speak of them _____ [?] they’re beside themselves. Where is their sobriety and their vanity and all these things. They’re like child. And it is Your credit that You have made them such.”

That Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, his birthday, his day of appearance today. So we invoke for his mercy to us fallen souls.

And you know of Raghunandana in Śrī Khanda near Katwa. He was the son of Mukunda Kavirāja, a well-to-do man, this treatment is his occupation, good practice. His son was Raghunandana. And Raghunandana’s early life is very wonderful and mysterious.

Once, Mukunda got a call for treatment to a distant part of the country. The boy, Raghunandana was asked, “Please feed my Deity.” The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was the family Deity to be worshipped in their house, and he asked the young Raghunandana, “I’m going far and I may not come back in time, so my boy, you are to serve Them, to feed Them in time.”

Raghunandana, when the time has come, or has not yet come, he took the dishes, and first worshipping took the dishes there, closed the room and said, “Oh Lord, You must take this.” Then closed the door and went away. Opening, that is as it was. He has not swallowed. “Then what is this?” He began to cry. Again shut the door. “Please take, otherwise what my father will say to me? Take it!” So in his simple earnestness he’ll have to cry. “You take it my Lord, otherwise what, my father will punish me.” Twice, thrice, then the Lord swallowed.

Then after a little, mother has come to take, remove the dishes. “What is this? You have eaten it all up, the whole thing. What is this?”

“No, no, no, I have not. The Gopāla has eaten.”

“Gopāla has eaten? You fool. You want to befool me, Gopāla has taken? You have taken.”

“No, no, I’ve not taken. Gopāla has taken.”

Then the father came back. Mother told, “You asked the boy to do it, then the empty pot I had to take out. The naughty child has devoured everything.”

“What’s the matter Raghunandana?”

“No, no, my father, first He did not take. But I told Him repeatedly, the father will come and chastise me. He asked me to feed You and You don’t take then I’ll be punished by my father. I cried. And then Gopāla took it.”

“Is it? Is it Gopāla took it?”

“Yes.”

“Can you show me?”

“I may try.”

Then Mukunda, being outside, appointed Raghunandana to worship Them. And when Raghunandana offers it is vacant, but when he himself he prays, nothing, as it is.

So one day, “How Gopāla can eat, can’t you show me?”

“Yes, I shall try.”

So anyhow, by the peeping through the window, a little distant, he, Mukunda, saw that Gopāla eating. “The Raghunandana is not ordinary child. Who is he come to my house?”

Then Mahāprabhu with Raghunandana, Raghunandana was very beautiful, exquisitely beautiful, and he was a good dancer, very charming dancing he could manage. Later on the Vaiṣṇava scholars have given their opinion that he was Pradyumna Avatāra, Pradyumna. Very beautiful and dancing also very charming!

Raghunandana and Mukunda both went to Purī to see Mahāprabhu.

Mahāprabhu asking Mukunda, “Who is father, who is son? Mukunda, you are Raghunandana’s father or Raghunandana is your father?”

Mukunda could understand the tenor, “No, Raghunandana is my father.”

yāñhā haite kṛṣṇa-bhakti sei guru haya” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 15.117]

āmā sabāra kṛṣṇa-bhakti raghunandana haite [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 15.116]

“We have got a little devotion what we think from Raghunandana. But he’s my Guru and so he’s my father, and not that I’m his father.”

“Yes!” *Yāñhā haite kṛṣṇa-bhakti sei guru haya*. “Who gives, imparts Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*, devotion of Kṛṣṇa, he’s the superior, right you are.”

That is Raghunandana. And when the Jagannātha’s chariot was going there were seven groups that sang and danced, seven *sañkīrtana* parties, and one party completely made of the Śrī Khanda staff, the Narahari Sarakara, Raghunandana, Mukunda, and their following, one party. And Raghunandana used to dance there, madly, and very charmingly, we’re told. And he was bachelor whole life, Raghunandana. So he was such a type of devotee, we’re told.

So we all beg his grace, pray for his grace.

Then Raghunātha Dāsa, that is a famous, who’s considered to be the *prayojana* Ācārya, what is our highest goal, he has played the part of that himself, practised, and shown to us and left also for us that *Rādhā-dāsyā*. *Rādhā-dāsyā* is the supreme-most goal of all of us.

He’s born in a very rich family. His parents, his father, uncles, they’re all not only rich but very benevolent. Advaita Ācārya and others, big Paṇḍitas, they all got some regular help from him. In that ancient time, twenty *lākhs* income from the state, and twelve *lākhs* to Nawab, and eight *lākhs* net profit...

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