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Ṭ H Ā K U R A

HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS

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ŚRĪ ŚRĪ GURU-GAURĀṄGAU JAYATAḤ

NĀMĀCĀRYA
ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS



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Photograph of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja in the *guru-paramparā*

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DEDICATION



O most worshipful *guru-pāda*padma

AṢṬOTTARA-ŚATA-ŚRĪ

ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA

who are most dear to Mukunda, I pray that this book,
offered unto your lotus hands, will inspire sincere devotees
who have taken shelter of the holy name
to humbly lead honest, spiritual lives of service
like that of Nāmācārya Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

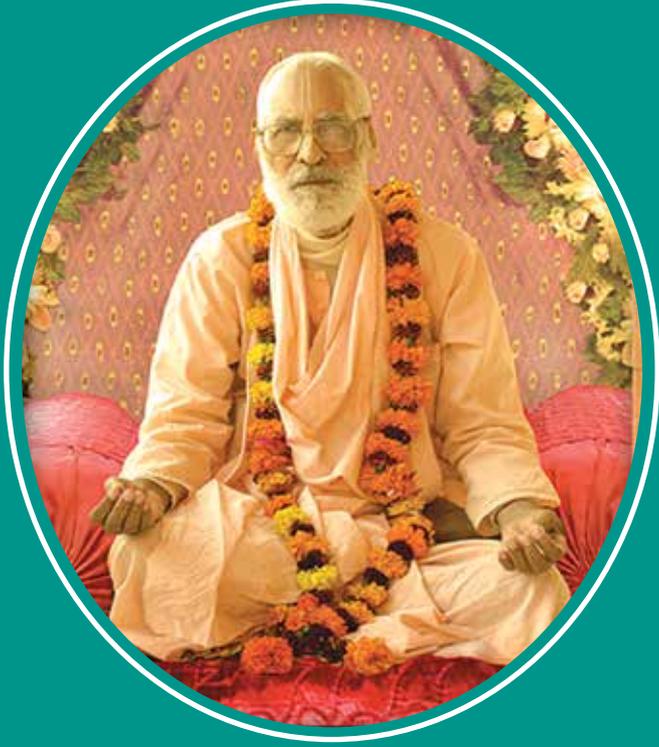
Desiring the service
of Śrī Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇava

Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

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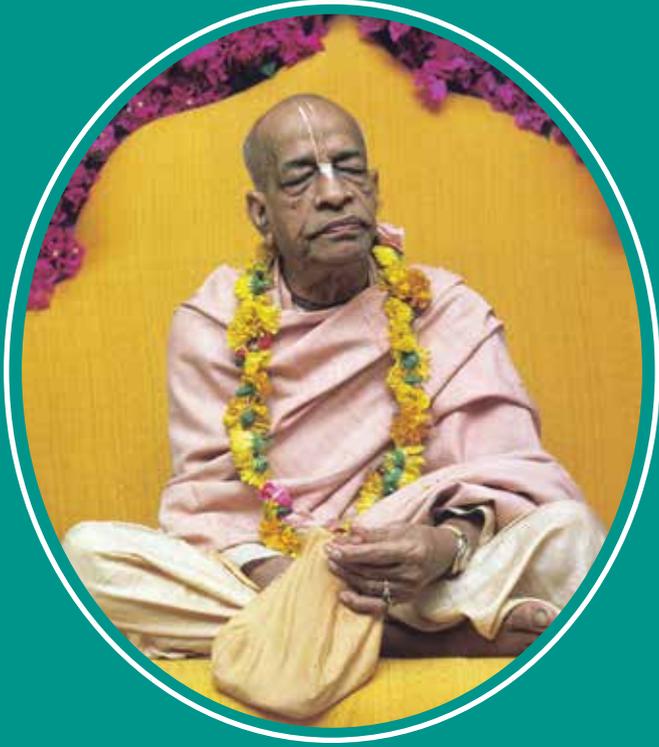
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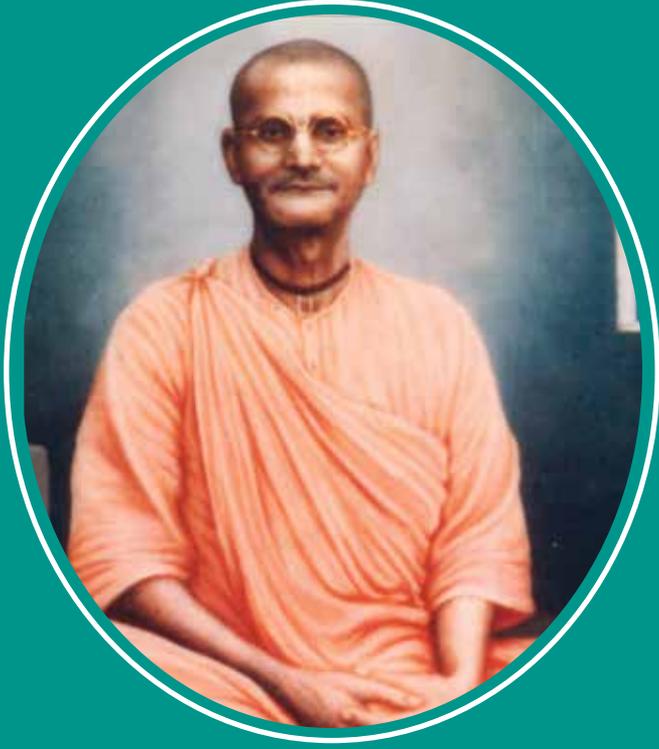


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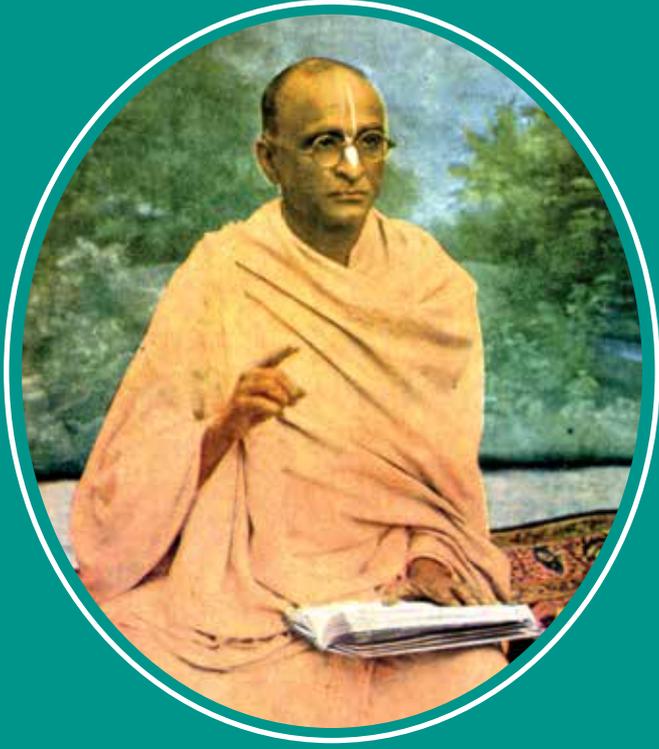


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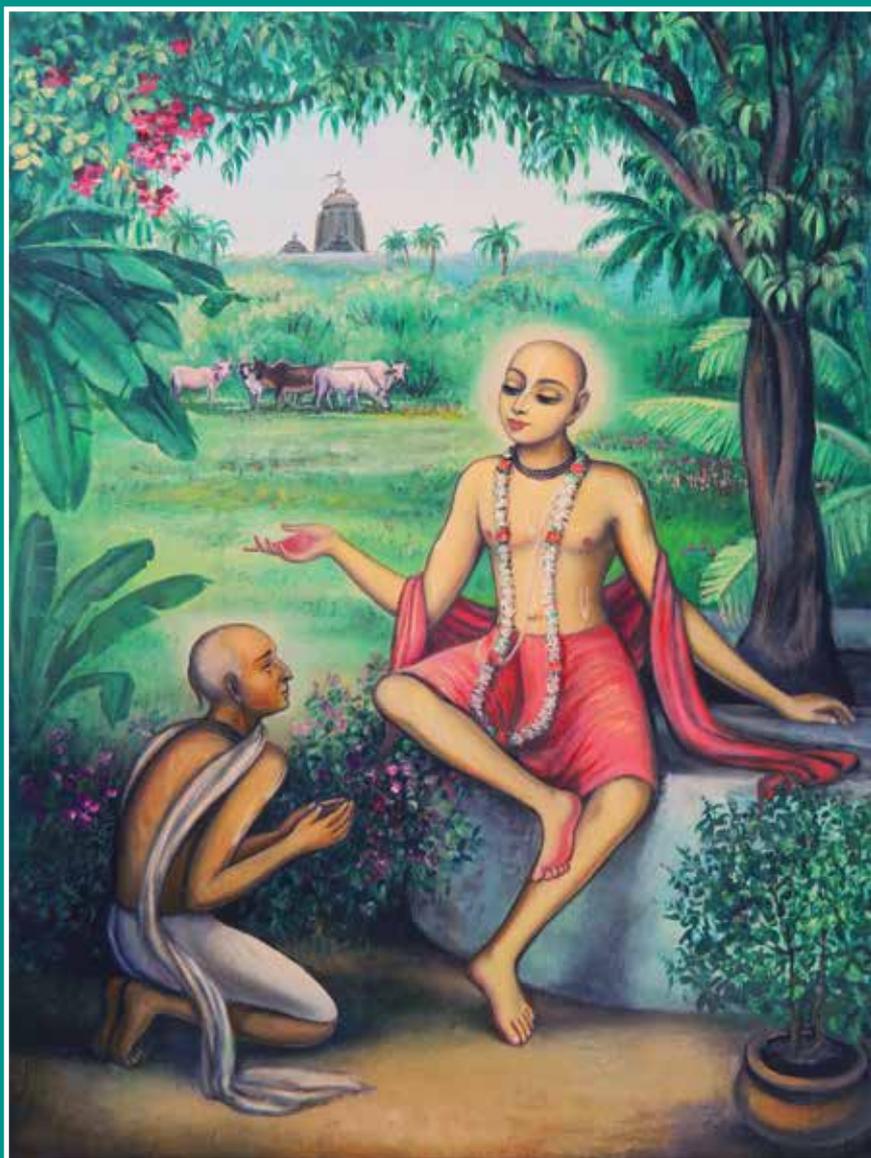
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ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA SARASVATĪ PRABHUPĀDA



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At night, after dressing herself most charmingly, the prostitute went with great delight to the cottage of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. There, he was loudly chanting the holy names in great ecstasy. (Chapter 3, page 14)



By Vāsudeva dāsa. Used with permission.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu took Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to a flower garden and gave him a solitary place to stay. Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Haridāsa, stay here and perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. I will come here every day to meet with you. From here, look at the *cakra* atop Śrī Jagannātha’s temple and offer obeisance. I will arrange for *prasāda* to be sent here to you.” (Chapter 14, page 130)



Śrīman Mahāprabhu bathed Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's body in the sea and declared, "Today, this ocean has become a great place of pilgrimage (*mahā-tīrtha*)." (Chapter 18, page 164)

INTRODUCTION

TO THE FIRST HINDI EDITION

Today, it brings me unlimited joy that by the inspiration and causeless compassion of my most worshipful master, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja*, we are presenting to the faithful readers an account of the life and teachings of *nāmācārya Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura* in Hindi, India's national language. We are doing this solely for the pleasure of *śrī gurupāda-padma*. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is one of the dear associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is endowed with the most radiant and elevated mellow of amorous love that was never previously given, who is the original inaugurator of the congregational chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy name, and who shines brilliantly with the mood and luster of Śrī Rādhā.

THE PURPOSE OF PUBLISHING THIS BOOK

The moods of Vraja cannot be attained through regulative devotion (*vidhi-bhakti*). Moreover, as long as a person has even the slightest desire to please his senses, he remains unqualified for the path of spontaneous attraction (*rāga-mārga*). What, then, is the duty of a spiritual practitioner (*sādhaka*) who may have developed a greed to obtain the moods of Vraja due to the

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

good fortune resulting from associating with pure devotees, but is unable to cultivate spontaneous devotion, being gripped by vice? In order to attain qualification for *rāga-mārga*, he should carefully cultivate the foremost means. This foremost means is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord, *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the supreme limb of devotion, as exemplified by *nāmācārya* Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who is the embodiment of following the teaching of Śrīman Mahāprabhu:

*tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam (3)

Only he who feels lower than a blade of grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who expects no honor for himself but is able to give due respect to others is qualified to perpetually chant the holy names of Śrī Hari.

There is, however, one thing we must always remember: it is impossible to carefully cultivate *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana* without the guidance of pure devotees. Śrī Nāma Prabhu personally grants the qualification to perform *rāga-bhajana* (spontaneous devotion) to those who, under the guidance of pure devotees, chant the holy names without offence.

Śrī Gaurasundara is supremely compassionate, and, He bestows the wealth of devotion to Himself, in the form of *vraja-prema*. His devotees are dearer to Him than His very life. Our sole duty is to attentively and continuously study the supremely sweet life and conduct of devotees who are enriched with the highest limit of loving service. Without thoroughly studying the lives of such devotees of the Supreme Lord (*bhagavad-bhaktas*), we can never understand service to the Supreme Lord (*bhagavad-bhajana*).

As a result of studying the lives of devotees, sincere affection is aroused for them. By this, we shall become recipients of the affection of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Bhagavān, who is affectionate to His devotees (*bhakta-vatsala*). For this reason, the scriptures state that the mercy of the Lord follows the mercy of His devotee. Bhagavān has personally said that service to His devotees is greater than service to Himself. He pays no notice to the honor or ostentatious worship of Him – Śrī Govinda – shown by those who neglect the worship of His devotees. Rather, He fully rejects the worship of such persons, considering it to be full of pride. It is impossible to worship Bhagavān in any way without the guidance of the devotees. The scriptures therefore state that one must firstly worship the lotus feet of *guru*, who is most dear to Śrī Mukunda. On the pretext of instructing His dear devotee Uddhava, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “O Uddhava, know the *ācārya* to be My very self. Never disobey or disrespect him, considering him to be an ordinary mortal, for *śrī gurudeva* is the embodiment of all demigods.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī personally declared Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to be the authority on the holy name, and they instructed the inhabitants of this world to follow in his footsteps. Repeatedly discussing *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s wholehearted, non-duplicitous service to *śrī nāma* melts our heart, which is as hard as thunderbolts, and awakens in it true repentance for our undevout, meaningless toil. At such a time, we will become anxious to receive the mercy of pure devotees.

The devotees of the Lord are pained to see the suffering of others (*para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*), they are endowed with an astonishing quality to forgive, and their character, being devoid of malevolence, hatred, envy, and so on, is supremely pure. As a result of studying and relishing the supremely munificent and ambrosial conduct of Śrī Gaurahari’s devotees, whose heart is one with His, we too can imbibe their ideal character and

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become free of such faults as narrow-mindedness, malevolence, hatred, and envy. In this way, we can gain entrance into the realm of pure devotion for the Lord.

bhaktākhyāna śunile kṛṣṇete bhakti haya

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.104)

Hearing the life account of devotees arouses devotion for
Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

We can understand from Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's description of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 3.91, 157) that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura abandoned his home (in Būḍhana) and went to Benāpola. From Benāpola, he went to Cāndapura, which is near Saptagrāma, and from Cāndapura he went to Śāntipura.

Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, however, makes no mention of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's going to Benāpola and Cāndapura. He wrote that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura left Būḍhana and stayed in Phuliyā, which is situated on the bank of the Gaṅgā, and Śāntipura.

Therefore, on the basis of the accounts given in these two authoritative scriptures, there is no explicit statement on the sequence of his pastimes. Still, we have made every possible effort to compile most of the accounts in this book according to the sequence described in the two aforementioned scriptures and on the basis of three commentaries: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's *Anubhāṣya* and *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya*. In particular, the conceptions of Śrīla Prabhupāda have been included throughout this entire book, and his name is mentioned often.

I have full faith that the society of devotees, especially the Gauḍīya *bhaktas*, will receive this book in a most cordial way.

Introduction

May the spiritually inclined readers, by their own goodness, accept the essence of this book and kindly forgive us for any typographical errors they may notice. We humbly request they oblige us by correcting such errors. My only prayer is that the study and recitation of the contents of this book may assist faithful persons who desire to attain the highest truth on their journey toward the supreme goal.

Alam-iti-vistāreṇa – Everything that needed to be said has now been expressed.

Praying for a particle of the mercy
of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas,

Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

Śrī Nityānanda-trayodaśī

February 7, 2009

522 Śrī Caitanyābda



PROLOGUE

IN EACH YUGA, THERE IS A DIFFERENT PROCESS TO ATTAIN THE SUPREME LORD

In every *yuga*, there is a different process to attain Bhagavān. In Satya-yuga, the prescribed process is meditation, or *dhyāna*; in Tretā-yuga, it is through performing extensive sacrifices, or *yajñas*; and in Dvāpara-yuga, the means is deity worship, or *arcana*. However, for the following reasons, all these processes are unfruitful in the present age of Kali:

- (1) In Satya-yuga, one's life expectancy was one hundred thousand years, and people attained perfection by performing meditation or penances for thousands of years. In Kali-yuga, however, life expectancy is about one hundred years and that, too, is accompanied by illness. Therefore, attaining Bhagavān through meditation is not possible in this age of Kali.
- (2) In Tretā-yuga, people achieved perfection by performing various types of sacrifices, such as *aśvamedha* (horse sacrifice), *agnihoma* (fire sacrifice), and *gaumedha* (cow sacrifice). In those times, *brāhmaṇas* (the priestly class)

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possessed high moral conduct and had perfected the recitation of *mantras*. The demigods they invited during the sacrifice would personally appear before them. In this Kali-yuga, however, such *brāhmaṇas* do not exist. The *brāhmaṇas* of this age have totally deviated from behavior befitting their order. They are thus *brāhmaṇas* in name only, and their performance of sacrifice does not bring about auspiciousness for anyone.

- (3) In Dvāpara-yuga, people attained perfection by installing deities in the grand temples they had built and elaborately worshipping that deity form of the Lord. In the age of Kali, however, the mind is so restless that it is impossible to attain perfection through this means, also.

HOW TO ATTAIN THE SUPREME LORD IN THE AGE OF KALI

Due to a short life expectancy, an absence of qualified *brāhmaṇas*, and restlessness of the mind, living entities of this age cannot attain perfection by meditation, by sacrifices, or by elaborate deity worship. Their condition is thus very pitiable.

The Lord's heart melts out of concern for the living entities' pitiful condition in Kali-yuga. To bestow His mercy on them, He personally descended into this world in the form of His holy name, in which He invested all His potencies. In order to bestow a special opportunity upon the conditioned souls of Kali-yuga, who are predominated by meager intelligence, misfortune, and laziness, the supremely merciful Lord did not establish any rules or restrictions in the chanting of His name. It can be chanted at any time, at any place, or in any circumstance, regardless of whether one is pure or impure.

The scriptures provide evidence of this. A number of examples are given below.

ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA'S DESCENT IN THE FORM OF HIS NAME IN KALI-YUGA

*kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa avatāra
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra*

*nāma binā kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma,—ei śāstra-marma*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 17.22, 7.74)

In the age of Kali, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has descended in the form of the holy name. Simply [chanting] the name of Kṛṣṇa delivers the entire universe. Other than chanting the holy name, all religious practices (*dharmas*) are futile in Kali-yuga. Chanting the holy name (*harināma*) is the sole essence of all *mantras*. This is the confidential purport of all scriptures.

ŚRĪ NĀMA-SAṆKĪRTANA DESTROYS ALL THE SINFUL CONTAMINATION OF KALI

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma
rāma rāma hare hare*

*iti ṣoḍaśakam nāmnām
kali-kalmaṣa-nāśanam
nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ
sarva-vedeṣu dr̥śyate*

Kali-santarna Upaniṣad (5.6)

The sixteen word *mahā-mantra*, which begins with the words *hare kṛṣṇa*, destroys the sinful contamination of the age of Kali. After searching through the entirety of the Vedas, one will not find any better method [to accomplish this].

**THE WORTHLESSNESS OF OTHER PRACTICES
IN KALI-YUGA**

*harer nāmaiva nāmaiva
nāmaiva mama jīvanam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa (38.126)

Meditation (*dhyāna*) is the predominant process for perfection in Satya-yuga, sacrifice (*yajña*) in Tretā-yuga, and deity worship (*arcana*) in Dvāpara-yuga. But in Kali-yuga, *harināma* is my only life, *harināma* is my only life, *harināma* is my only life. In Kali-yuga, other than *śrī harināma*, there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way for the living entities.

The ineffectiveness of any other practice (*sādhana*) in Kali-yuga has been stressed by repeating the statement three times.

**THE SIN OF KALI DOES NOT TOUCH ONE
WHO CHANTS THE HOLY NAME**

*hare keśava govinda
vāsudeva jaganmaya
itīrayanti ye nityam
na hi tām bādhatē kaliḥ*

Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa

The influence of Kali cannot cause any impediment to those who constantly chant, “O Hare! O Govinda! O Keśava! O Vāsudeva! O Jaganmaya!”

**ALL BHAGAVĀN’S ENERGIES ARE INCLUDED
IN THE HOLY NAME**

*dāna-vrata-tapas-tīrtha-kṣetrādīnaṅca yā sthitāḥ
śaktayo deva mahatām sarva-pāpa-harāḥ śubhāḥ*

Prologue

*rājasūyāśvamedhānām jñana-sādhyātma-vastunaḥ
ākṛṣya hariṇā sarvāḥ sthāpitāḥ sveṣu nāmasu*

Skanda Purāṇa

Whatever potency to nullify sins or bestow auspiciousness found in charity, vows, austerities, pilgrimage, the *rājasūya*- and *āśvamedha-yajñas*, knowledge of transcendental objects, and so forth, has been invested by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His holy names (that is, the primary names).

NĀMA-SAṅKĪRTANA CAN BE PERFORMED UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

*na deśa-niyamas tasmin
na kāla-niyamas tathā
nocchiṣṭādaḥ niṣedho 'sti
śrī-harer nāmni lubdhaka*

Viṣṇu-dharmottara

O you who are greedy for the holy name, there is no rule or consideration of time or place in regard to chanting Bhagavān's holy name. One can perform *harināma-kīrtana* in any condition, whether clean or contaminated, such as one's mouth being unwashed after eating.

NĀMA-SAṅKĪRTANA AWARDS PERFECTION TO ALL OTHER LIMBS OF BHAJANA

*mantratas tantrataś chidram
deśa-kālārha-vastutaḥ
sarvaṁ karoti niśchidram
anusankīrtanam tava*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (8.23.16)

[Śrī Śukrācārya said,] There may be discrepancies in chanting *mantras* [pronouncing them improperly, etc.] and *tantras* [error caused by reversing the sequence], and

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there may be discrepancies in regard to time, place, person, and paraphernalia [in activities like giving in charity], but by simply engaging in *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, all such activities become faultless and complete.

KALI-YUGA’S GREATEST QUALITY

*kaler-doṣa-nidhe rājan
nasti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya
mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.51)

O King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of all faults, it has one eminent quality: by performing *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, the living entity becomes free from the bondage of the deluding potency (*māyā*) and achieves Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth.

*kalim sabhājayanty āryā
guṇa-jñāḥ sāra-bhāginah
yatra saṅkīrtanenaiva
sarva-svārthau ’bhibhāyate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.36)

In Kali-yuga, simply chanting the names of the Lord fulfills all desires. Those exalted persons who are capable of extracting the essence of everything and who know the great qualities of Kali-yuga call this age “*dhanya kali* – the blessed age of Kali.”

THE SUPREMACY OF HARINĀMA IN KALI-YUGA

*dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais
tretāyām dvāpare ’rcayan*

Prologue

*yad āpnoti tad āpnoti
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam*

Padma Purāṇa (Uttara-khaṇḍa 72.25)

Whatever is achieved in Satya-yuga by meditation, in Tretā-yuga by the performance of *yajña*, and in Dvāpara-yuga by [deity] worship is obtained in Kali-yuga simply by *harināma-kīrtana*.

*kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum
tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām
kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.52)

Whatever was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by elaborate deity worship can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by performing *hari-kīrtana*.

THE LIVING ENTITIES OF KALI-YUGA DISRESPECT THE ALL-AUSPICIOUS ŚRĪ HARINĀMA

*yan-nāmadheyam mriyamāṇa āturaḥ
patan skhalan vā vivaśo grṇan pumān
vimukta-karmārgala uttamām gatim
prāpnoti yakṣyanti na taṁ kalau janāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.44)

If a man chants any name of Bhagavān in a distressful condition at the time of death, or in a helpless condition while falling or slipping, all bondage resulting from his previous action is destroyed and he attains the highest destination. But alas, the living entities of Kali-yuga turn away from the worship of such a merciful Lord.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Therefore, it can be concluded that the liberated souls, who are knowers of past, present, and future and who are free from such faults as illusion (*bhrama*), error (*pramāda*), cheating (*vipralipsā*), and imperfection of the senses (*karaṇāpātava*), have mentioned the process of *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana* as the only way for the conditioned souls of Kali-yuga to gain deliverance.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JĪVAS BY LORD ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA CAITANYA AND HIS ASSOCIATES

Although *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana* is extensively glorified throughout the scriptures, the unfortunate living entities of Kali-yuga are incapable of accepting this instruction and implementing it in their lives. Therefore, the most merciful Supreme Lord personally descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and instructed the living beings by performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, which purifies the age of Kali. Time and again, the Supreme Lord established this through His instructions.

*nāma binā kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma,—ei śāstra-marma
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.74)*

For the living entities of Kali-yuga, there is no other *dharma* (religious duty) but to chant the holy name. All scriptures proclaim that the name of the Lord is the essence of all *mantras*.

*sādhya-sādhana tattva je kichu sakala
harināma-saṅkīrtane milibe sakala
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 14.143)*

All truths regarding the goal of life (*sādhya*) and the means for attaining it (*sādhana*) are achieved by *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana*.

Prologue

*nāma-saṅkīrtane haya sarvānārtha-nāśa
sarva-śubhodaya kṛṣṇa-premera ullāsa*

*saṅkīrtana haite pāpa-samsāra nāśana
citta-śuddhi, sarva-bhakti-sādhana-udgama*

*kṛṣṇa-premodgama, premāmṛta-āsvādana
kṛṣṇa-prāpti, sevāmṛta-samudre majjana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-lilā 20.11, 13–14)

Performing *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* destroys all desires that impede spiritual purification (*anarthas*) and purifies the heart. It annihilates the sins accumulated from innumerable births, and it annihilates the material existence of repeated birth and death. It arouses all kinds of auspiciousness and sets in motion the varieties of *sādhana* that give rise to *prema-bhakti*, pure loving devotion. As a result of all this, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa, arises [in the heart] and one begins to taste the ambrosial nectar of *prema*. One then attains Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is ultimately cooled and purified by becoming thoroughly immersed in the nectarean ocean of devotional service.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu not only went Himself from door-to-door to personally propagate *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, but He impelled His associates Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, His left and right hands, to do the same. Through His many dear associates, particularly Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīman Mahāprabhu established throughout this world the infinite glories of the holy name. The Supreme Lord knew that unless the living entities saw the glory or wonder of a thing with their own eyes, they would not have faith in it. For this reason, through Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, He showed the people of this world the secondary effect of *śrī harināma*: by chanting it, one can very easily overcome the most difficult and fearsome problems, and the primary outcome: one can become a recipient of the Lord's special mercy.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

The scriptures glorify *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* profusely, and Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in order to distribute it. There is much to be learned from the life and character of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who throughout his life – day and night, at every moment – was immersed in *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*. By repeatedly studying these instructive accounts of his life, all living entities can receive pure *kṛṣṇa-prema* as practiced and preached by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and thus make their life most auspicious.



First of all, I offer repeated obeisances at the lotus feet of my most worshipful holy master, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja; then to my *parama-gurudeva*, Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ‘Prabhupāda’, the author of the commentaries on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, named *Anubhāṣya* and *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya*, respectively; to my *parātpara-gurudeva*, Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the author of the commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, named *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*; to Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; to the Vyāsa of *caitanya-līlā*, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, who authored *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*; and to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is decorated with the sentiment and complexion of Śrī Rādhā. Praying for their causeless mercy and blessings, this insignificant and lowly person begins to compile the life history of *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

All glories, all glories to the most auspicious life history of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura!

Svāmī B. V. Nārāyaṇa

CHAPTER ONE

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA'S
IDENTITY

Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra, the son of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's associate Śrī Śivānanda Sena, has mentioned in his Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā (93):

*ṛcikasya muneḥ putro nāmnā brahmā mahātapāḥ
prahlādena samam jāto hari-dāsākhyako 'pi san*

The combined form of that exalted ascetic Brahmā – the son of Ṛcika Muni – and Śrī Prahlāda is now known as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.



*murārī-gupta-caraṇaiś caitanya-caritāmṛte
ukto muni-sutaḥ prātas tulasī-patram-āharaṇ*

*adhau tam abhiśaptas tam pitrā yavantām gataḥ
sa eva hari-dāsaḥ san jātaḥ parama-bhaktimān*

Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā (94–95)

It is mentioned in Śrī Murāri Gupta's Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta¹ that the son of a sage once picked tulasī leaves in the early morning, with the intention of serving the Lord, and gave

1 Presently known as Śrī Caitanya-carita.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

them to his father [to use in the Lord's service], without first washing them. Because of this, his father cursed him to become a *yavana* (outcaste).

Cursed by his father, that son of the sage has now appeared [in a *yavana* family] as Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the greatest of devotees.



Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has mentioned in the fifth chapter (verses 125–157) of his *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*:

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu took Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī on *parikramā* (circumambulation) of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. When they reached Śrī Antardvīpa, Nityānanda Prabhu pointed toward one particular place and said, “At the end of Dvāpara-yuga, Brahmā performed austerities here, desiring to receive Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu's mercy.” [Relating an earlier incident of Lord Brahmā, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu continued,] “During Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Brahmā tried through his mystic power to deceive Govinda by stealing the calves and cowherd boys. Seeing his own mystic power defeated, the four-headed Brahmā became very unhappy due to his offenses. After speaking many words of glorification, Brahmājī begged forgiveness at Śrī Kṛṣṇa's feet, and the Lord of Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, forgave him.

“Then Lord Brahmā thought, ‘For me to think that I am Brahmā, the creator of the universe, is most contemptible. Due to this faulty mentality, I am deprived of *kṛṣṇa-prema* and of the ability to relish the transcendental loving relationships (*rasas*) in the pastimes of Vraja. If I had taken birth as a cowherd boy, I would have easily obtained service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of the *gopīs*. Previously, I did not have the great fortune to relish the *rasa* of those pastimes, but from now on, I shall not have any wicked mentality toward Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.’

“Thinking like this, Brahmājī began to meditate and perform austerities for a very long time in this very Antardvīpa. After some time, Śrī Gauracandra mercifully appeared before the four-headed Brahmā and said, ‘O Brahmā, being satisfied with your austerities, I have come to give you that boon for which you hanker.’ When Lord Brahmā opened his eyes and saw Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, he became unconscious and fell to the ground, at which time Mahāprabhu put His foot on Brahmā’s head. Having received transcendental knowledge, Brahmā began offering prayers: ‘I am very low and wretched. Being controlled by pride, I have committed offenses at Your feet. As a result, I have become absorbed in mundane enjoyment. All scriptures declare that Pañcānana (Śīva), Indra, all other demigods, and I are Your subjugated servants. We have not received the good fortune of becoming your pure servants, and therefore Your deluding potency (*māyā*) has covered us with her net of illusion. The first half of my life has passed, and now I am most anxious about how the second half will pass. Because I am indifferent toward You, my mind is disturbed by many difficulties.’”

*ei-mātra tava pade prārthanā āmāra
prakṛta-līlāya jena hai parivāra*

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

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya (5.143–144)

“My only prayer at Your feet is that I may join You as Your associate in Your manifest pastimes.

“May I attain such a birth that my conceit of being Brahmā, the creator, will be removed, that I may always remain with You, and that I may glorify You.’”

“Hearing Brahmā’s prayers, Śrī Gaurahari said, ‘So be it,’ and bestowed these boons upon him.”

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

*je-samaye mama līlā prakāṣa haibe
yavanera gr̥he tumi janama labhibe*

*āpanāke hīna bali' haibe geyāna
haridāsa ha'be tumi sūnya abhimāna*

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

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya (5.146–148)

“Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, ‘During My manifest pastimes, you will take birth in a *yavana*’s house. You will always think yourself lowly and fallen. Your name will be Haridāsa, and you will be free of all pride. Three hundred thousand names of Hari will daily dance upon your tongue, and you will have *darśana* of Me at the time of your leaving this world. By virtue of this practice, at the end of the second half of your present birth, you will attain this Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma and be immersed in eternal *rasa*.

“O Brahmā, listen to these words from My heart. Do not reveal them here and there in different scriptures. Having taken the mood of a devotee, I will relish the mellows of devotional service and manifest the extremely rare and sublime process of *saṅkīrtana*. I will drown all the devotees who were present at the time of My other incarnations in the moods of Vraja. My heart is controlled by Śrī Rādhikā’s *prema*, and I will appear in this material world having taken Her sentiments (*bhāva*) and bodily luster. I will thus taste the happiness that Śrī Rādhā experiences in serving Me. From today, you will attain the position of My disciple, and later, as Haridāsa, you will serve Me eternally.’

“Saying this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu disappeared, and Brahmā fell to the ground unconscious. [Upon regaining consciousness, he restlessly began to call out,] ‘O Gaurāṅga! O friend of the fallen! O You who are loving toward Your devotees, when will I attain Your lotus feet?’ ”

1 – Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s Identity

From this account, it is clear that Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s associate *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is none other than Lord Brahmā.



In conclusion, the words of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī are cited:

keha bale,—‘caturmukha jena haridāsa’

keha bale,—‘prahlādera jena parakāśa’

sarva-mate mahā-bhāgavata haridāsa

caitanya-goṣṭhīra saṅge jāhāra vilāsa

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.106–107)

Though some people say that Śrī Haridāsa is four-headed Brahmā and some say that he is a manifestation of Śrī Prahlāda, still everyone accepts that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who always performs pastimes with the associates of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a most exalted devotee of the Lord.

satya satya haridāsa—jagat-īśvara

caitanya-candrera mahā-mukhya anucara

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.142)

It is absolutely true that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is a great and prominent follower of Śrī Caitanya-candra, the Supreme Lord of the universe.

CHAPTER 2

THE LIFE HISTORY OF ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

In present-day Bangladesh, in the district of Khulna, there is a village named Buḍhana, where Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura made his appearance in the year 1372 of the Śakabda Era (A.D. 1450). Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself appeared in the year 1407 of the Śakabda Era (A.D. 1485). Therefore, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was older than Śrīman Mahāprabhu by thirty-five years.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu started His *saṅkīrtana* pastimes as an adolescent (ten to fifteen years of age), just after performing the pastime of accepting initiation from Śrī Īsvara Purīpāda. It is therefore estimated that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura became an associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu at around the age of fifty.

By the desire of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared long before He did. Even before becoming an associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who manifested in this world to purify Kali-yuga, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura performed many pastimes that illuminated the glories of the holy name (*nāma*). In fact, Śrīman Mahāprabhu established and preached the glories of *nāma* in this world, through the medium of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Nowadays, some people claim that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, but raised by a *yavana* family after the demise of his parents, and this is why he is called *yavana* Haridāsa. But this proclamation is completely wrong.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

It seems that in order to fulfill a particular selfish interest, some caste *gospāmīs* has begun professing this. Gradually, many bewildered people have also started to say the same thing.

THE REASON FOR HIS APPEARANCE IN A YAVANA FAMILY

Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, also known as the Vyāsadeva of *caitanya-lilā*, has mentioned very clearly in his *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.237–240):

*‘jāti, kula, saba—nirarthaka’ bujhāite
janmilena nīca-kule prabhura ājñāte*

*‘adhama-kulete jadi viṣṇu-bhakta haya
tathāpi se-ī se pūjya’—sarva-śāstre kaya*

*‘uttama-kulete janmi’ śrī-kṛṣṇa nā bhaje
kule tāra ki karibe, narakete maje”*

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

(The conditioned soul takes birth in higher and lower species due to worldly pious and impious deeds. Birth in a lower or higher caste is only an indication of the result of a soul’s past activities. But, from a transcendental viewpoint,) caste and lineage have no value at all. It is to establish this ultimate truth that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared in a *yavana* family by the auspicious desire of the all-auspicious Supreme Lord.

Although born in a low-class family, a person who worships Lord Viṣṇu is also worthy of worship. This is the verdict of all bona fide scriptures.

If, due to past pious activities, a person is born in a high-class family, but does not worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he will surely fall down to hell. His superior birth cannot protect him.

To prove all of the above scriptural statements, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared in a low-class family.

It would not be irrelevant to mention here that Śrī Brahmā had himself prayed to be born in a low-class family when Śrī Gaurāṅga manifested in this world, so that he would not again become influenced by false ego and thus be deprived of beholding the pastimes of Śrī Gaura.

HIS RENUNCIATION

Although Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared in a *yavana* family, he exhibited a deep, spontaneous taste for *harināma* right from his childhood. His parents passed away while he was very young, and he therefore moved to the village of Benāpola in the district of Yaśohara, giving up his original home and village. At that time, he had just passed through adolescence and was entering into adulthood. In a secluded place in the forest of Benāpola, he made a small hut and began to perform *bhajana* there. Every day he would chant three lakhs¹ of *harināma* without fail, and would also offer water and prayers to *tulasī*, circumambulate her, and perform various other services to her.

For the purpose of maintaining his life, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura used to beg alms from *brāhmaṇas*' homes. Except for this food, he never even slightly endeavored to collect any other thing. His time was completely spent in *bhajana*. Due to his strong determination in *bhajana*, his detachment, and his qualification as a Vaiṣṇava, everyone developed immense faith in him and had a mood of service toward him.

1 One lakh equals one hundred thousand.

CHAPTER 3

DELIVERING THE PROSTITUTE

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī mentions in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 3.95–98):

*haridāsera guṇa-gaṇa—asaṅkhya, apāra
keha kona aṁśe varṇi’ nāhi pāya pāra*

*caitanya-maṅgale śrī vṛndāvana dāsa
haridāsera guṇa kichu kariyāchen prakāśa*

*sab kahā nā jāya haridāsera caritra
keha kichu kahe karite āpanā pavitra*

*vṛndāvana-dāsa jāhā nā kailā varṇana
haridāsera guṇa kichu śuna, bhakta-gaṇa*

The transcendental qualities of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura are innumerable and unfathomable, and no one is capable of describing them completely. Therefore, whoever describes his qualities in fact describes only a portion of them, because they have no end.

And in *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* (now known as *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*), Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has described the qualities of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to some extent.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Though no one can describe all the qualities of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, some have tried to describe a portion of them, just to purify themselves.

I am describing only those qualities of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura that Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has not described in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*. O devotees, please hear them.

THE ENVIOUS RĀMACANDRA KHĀN

At the time when Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was residing in Benāpola, the *zamindar* (landowner) of the village was a person named Rāmacandra Khān. He was inimical toward Vaiṣṇavas, religious principles, and the Supreme Lord Himself.

He became very envious when he saw the people of Benāpola offering great respect to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and thought, “I am the landlord of this place, but instead of offering respects to me, people are offering them to this wretched Muslim dressed as a Vaiṣṇava. If I could somehow or other disgrace him in front of others, they would start to hate him.”

It is certainly rare to find people who can tolerate the fame and glorification of those more qualified than themselves. Most people, upon hearing somebody else being glorified, harbor an inner desire to bring harm to that person. They then want to disgrace him publicly by charging him with false allegations. Instead of appreciating his qualities with broadmindedness, they only try to find faults and shortcomings in him, while closing their eyes to his good qualities. They are like vultures, who use their high perch only to search for filth.

In this very same way, Rāmacandra Khān began nurturing various inimical thoughts toward Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. These inimical thoughts entered his mind due to *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* (offenses against the Vaiṣṇavas), which gives rise to an envious attitude toward the devotees.

Rāmacandra Khān began to search out faults in Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, thinking that only when he could expose

those faults would anyone listen to him. However, he could by no means find any fault in the character of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was a treasure-house of virtuous qualities. Having thus failed, despite his great endeavor, Rāmacandra Khān summoned prostitutes to put into action a plot that would bring about Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s downfall.

Considering Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to be a lusty person like himself, Rāmacandra Khān thought, “If the mere tinkling of the beautiful Menakā’s ankle bells were enough to break the meditation of Sage Viśvāmitra after thousands of years, then what chance does an immature ascetic like Haridāsa have [to save himself from the lures of a young woman]? These prostitutes will prove to be infallible weapons capable of disgracing Haridāsa. It is seen in this world that people strive to win over women even at the cost of their wealth and properties. When wounded by the arrow-like glances of a woman, they consider the opulence of Indra to be as insignificant as straw, and yearn for that woman’s association, to remedy their wounds.”

Considering all this, Rāmacandra Khān said to the prostitutes, “I want all of you to ruin Haridāsa’s vows of renunciation.”

Among those prostitutes was a beautiful young girl named Lakṣahīrā. Intoxicated by the pride of her youth and beauty, she confidently said, “I will steal the mind of that ascetic Haridāsa within just three days, and make his heart restless. I will deviate his mind from his *bhajana* and make him enamored with me.”

Upon hearing her, Rāmacandra Khān said, “I shall send one of my men with you. He will catch you with Haridāsa red-handed and bring you both to me.”

The prostitute replied, “First, let me unite with him once, then I shall take your man with me the second time.”

Rāmacandra Khān approved this plan.

LAKṢAHĪRĀ'S ATTEMPTS TO SEDUCE HIM

At night, after dressing herself most charmingly, the prostitute went with great delight to the cottage of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. There, he was loudly chanting the holy names in great ecstasy. The prostitute first offered obeisances to the *tulasī* plant outside the cottage, and thereafter approached the doorway and offered obeisances to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. She may have done this because of the cottage's sanctified nature, which was due to the chanting of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the personified deity of congregational chanting. Or she may have simply been making a show of respecting him. Regardless, the sinful prostitute unknowingly followed two limbs of *bhakti* by paying obeisances to *tulasī* and to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the best of Vaiṣṇavas.

After offering obeisances to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the prostitute stood by the door. Gradually, she removed some of her clothing to expose parts of her body and then sat down on the doorstep.

In a sweet voice, she said, "O Ṭhākura, you are so handsome and have just entered your youth. What woman could control her mind after seeing you? Seeing your youthful beauty, my mind is becoming restless. I eagerly desire to unite with you, and have reached such a state that I will not be able to remain alive if I do not do so."

After hearing the prostitute's words, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, "I shall certainly accept you, but I have yet to complete my fixed number of rounds. I do not do anything until I have completed my regular amount of chanting. Please sit and listen to the chanting of the holy name until I am finished. After that, I will surely fulfill your desire."

THE TRUTH OF HIS PROMISE

Disregarding the ill desires of the prostitute, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura only thought of delivering her. This is befitting a

Vaiṣṇava. By asking her to hear the most auspicious chanting of the holy name, he advised her to follow one of the primary limbs of devotion. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura had firm faith that if the prostitute would sit and hear him chant the holy name, then her heart would be cleansed, the lust within her would completely disappear, and she would become inquisitive about the conclusive truth in regard to the holy name (*nāma-tattva*). That is why Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura promised that as soon he finished his fixed number of rounds, he would surely accept her. He actually meant that when he knew her to be a sincere spiritual practitioner, he would accept her and answer whatever questions or doubts she would put forth.

If Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was even slightly motivated to fulfill the desire professed by the prostitute, he would not have cared to finish his regular chanting, nor would he have cared for his regulative principles. It would have become impossible for him to chant the whole night in the presence of that young and beautiful lady.

Unable to understand the deep meaning behind Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's words, the prostitute took only their external meaning, and patiently sat down. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura again began to chant loudly, and thus the prostitute heard the pure holy names. The light of morning appeared, but Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura had still not finished his daily rounds. Seeing that it was morning, the prostitute stood up and left. She went to Rāmacandra Khān and told him, "Haridāsa has promised that today he will associate with me, and so I will certainly have union with him."

The prostitute again visited Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura the following night.

Consoling her, he said, "Yesterday you were forced to endure much hardship because of me; the whole night you had to sit silently and stay awake. You couldn't even sleep, and beyond this, I was unable to fulfill your desire. For this you must have suffered greatly. I am the reason for your suffering, and so I therefore request you to please excuse my offenses."

Actually, by giving the prostitute a golden chance to hear the holy name, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura had brought about her eternal welfare. Yet, considering the external trouble she had gone through, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura requested her not to take any offense. Through this, he established the ideal that a Vaiṣṇava, by his conduct, should not give anxiety to any living entity in any way. He also demonstrated how magnanimous a person who desires true welfare for others must be.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura again reassured the prostitute with the following words: “I will certainly accept you, and I am very confident that today I will be able to complete my fixed number of rounds in proper time. Therefore, please sit here and listen attentively while I chant the holy name. Your desires will be fulfilled as soon as I have completed chanting my fixed number of rounds.”

The prostitute had come to degrade Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura only on the insistence of Rāmacandra Khān. If she had succeeded in degrading him, she would have received money and riches from Rāmacandra Khān as a reward. She had thought that these would enable her to fulfill all her desires.

However, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura assured the prostitute, “Don’t worry. All your desires will be fulfilled as soon as I finish my fixed number of rounds. I will give you a touchstone (*cintāmaṇi*) that will render insignificant the wealth that you would have earned, with which you were planning to fulfill your desires. Upon receiving this touchstone, you will never again have to beg for anything from anyone.”

How glorious is Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura! He put great effort into delivering that prostitute, who had intended to cause his downfall. Therefore, it is impossible to imagine what he would do for a soul who has taken shelter at his lotus feet without duplicity. It is indeed true that if someone throws pebbles in a milk pot, only milk drops will splash on that person. Similarly, because she came near Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was intoxicated by the elixir of *śrī hari-rasa*, this very *hari-rasa*

sprinkled the prostitute as well. That is why on that day, after paying her respects to *tulasī* and sitting near the door, she also began to chant “Hari, Hari,” from time to time, while listening to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s chanting.

As a result of hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s chanting, the prostitute herself started to chant. She unintentionally followed a limb of *bhakti – kīrtana* – and consequently her heart became pure. The holy name began manifesting on her tongue as a result of the following behavior: having *darśana* of a Vaiṣṇava, offering obeisances to *tulasī*, offering obeisances to a Vaiṣṇava, hearing the holy name chanted by a pure Vaiṣṇava, and visiting and staying for some time in the place where a Vaiṣṇava performs his *bhajana*. Another entire night slowly passed. By daybreak, the prostitute had become somewhat restless.

When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura saw that her restlessness came from considering whether or not he was cheating her, he said, “Please see that I am not cheating you in any way. I have taken a vow to perform a sacrifice (*yajña*) of chanting ten million names of the Lord in one month, which I am now about to finish. I assumed that I would be finished by today, and that is why I continued chanting the whole night. Still, I was unable to finish. I am quite sure that by tomorrow I will have fulfilled my vow. After that, I will associate with you without any hindrance.”

HIS USE OF THE WORD ‘ASSOCIATION’ (SAṄGA)

It is evident that, upon hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s words, the prostitute thought he meant he would meet with her to enjoy his material senses, but this could never have been his intention. In the first two instances, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura accepted her and spoke about fulfilling her heart’s desire. However, this time he spoke about *saṅga*, association. The word *saṅga* is composed of two verbal roots: *sam* and *gam*. *Sam* means ‘completely’ and *gam* means ‘obtaining.’ Thus *saṅga* means ‘uniting completely, for eternity.’

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura felt, “To have eternal *saṅga* (association) through the body is impossible, for such *saṅga* ceases when the body expires. However, by making the prostitute inclined toward *bhajana* and establishing her as an eternal servant of the Lord, I will make the relationship between us an eternal one. I shall then always be close to her heart.”

An objection may be raised in this connection: Why did Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura not offer this type of association (*saṅga*) with her the very first day? Why did he say that he would associate with her the following day? The answer is that the prostitute’s heart was not yet favorable to this transcendental type of *saṅga* with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Although by following the aforementioned limbs of *bhajana* her sins had been removed and the desires resulting from previous sinful activities had been uprooted, the shadow of sinful desires still remained within her heart. After a tree has been uprooted, it takes time to completely dry up. Similarly, the prostitute’s desire to attain material opulence had still not completely vanished from her heart. Some obstacle still remained which prevented him from giving her his association.

Therefore, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura told her, “Tomorrow I will freely associate with you.”

Hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s words, the prostitute again returned to Rāmacandra Khān and told him, “I will certainly unite with Haridāsa today”.

She returned to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura that night and, as always, offered her obeisances to *tulasī* and to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

When he saw her, he said, “I am about to finish my rounds and shall certainly fulfill your desire today.”

Hearing the sweet words of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the prostitute sat down in the doorway of the cottage. The whole night passed as she listened to *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and chanted “Hari, Hari.”

Although this night passed in the same way as the previous nights, by the proximity and power of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's association, the prostitute's heart completely transformed. Her desire to satisfy her senses completely vanished. She began feeling ashamed about her conduct. Regretting her misdeeds, her heart burned in the fire of repentance.

Feeling extremely regretful, she thought, “On the order of someone who is crooked, lusty, and a seeker of admiration, I plotted to defame such a saintly personality as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who is in complete control of his senses, devoted to chanting the names of the Lord, and sympathetic toward the distressed. Fie on me! Fie on me!”

Deliberating on all this, her heart trembled.

THE PROSTITUTE PRAYS FOR HIS MERCY

The prostitute fell down crying at the lotus feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and said, “I was sent by Rāmacandra Khān, and I came here with the most abominable desire to degrade you. I have committed a great offense. Being a prostitute, I have committed many sinful activities. I am very fallen, more degraded than an animal. Please be merciful and deliver this fallen soul. This is my only prayer at your lotus feet.”

Hearing the prostitute's words, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura spoke words of disregard about Rāmacandra Khān, who was extremely adverse to the Lord: “I was aware of the conspiracy of Rāmacandra Khān, but I know he is a foolish and ignorant person. He has no idea what he is doing or what the result of his actions will be, so I am not at all offended by this deed of his. It was only to deliver you that I stayed for three days. Otherwise, I would have left this place for another.”

In order to bring forth the glories of both *śrī harināma* and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, whose only shelter was *śrī harināma*, the Supreme Lord inspired Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura within the heart to deliver the prostitute.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

It is clearly evident from the above episode that by the mercy of great personalities like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and by the effect of *śrī harināma*, even the most fallen person can be delivered from the ocean of material existence and make his life successful by tasting the sweetness of the holy name.

At that time, the prostitute begged for her deliverance and said, “O great personality, please instruct me regarding my duties, so that I may be delivered from the misery of repeated birth and death.”

Hearing the prostitute’s pleading, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, “Donate all your belongings to the *brāhmaṇas* and start living in this cottage. While staying here, chant *harināma* incessantly and serve *tulasī*. By doing this, you will soon attain the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which will automatically liberate you from material bondage.”

MAHĀ-MANTRA INITIATION

Saying this, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura gave the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to the prostitute, and then left that place, chanting “Hari Hari.”

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda writes in his *Anubhāṣya* of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 3.178):

Although a *guru* is entitled to all the belongings of his disciple, a Vaiṣṇava *guru* never accepts their stool-like material possessions. Those who accept their *dakṣiṇā* (donations) go to the abode of Yama, the lord of death, through the *dakṣiṇa-mārga* (the southern direction). Vaiṣṇava *gurus* are not travelers of *dakṣiṇa-mārga*. Rather, they traverse the *uttara-mārga* (the northern direction). Therefore, an arrangement has been made for giving material opulence to *karmī-brāhmaṇas*, or *brāhmaṇas* who are after the fruitive results of their actions. Vaiṣṇava *gurus* do not follow or look to their

3 – Delivering the Prostitute

disciples expectantly, nor do they accept their wealth and opulence. On the contrary, considering material possessions to be the cause of aversion to Śrī Hari, they completely reject them. The only duties of a genuine Vaiṣṇava *guru* are to help his disciples give up their worldly ego and to refrain from accepting any of his disciples' material possessions for himself. This is the teaching of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Following the orders of her *gurudeva*, the prostitute then returned home to distribute to the *brāhmaṇas* all the wealth she had laboriously collected. She did so without worrying for her future. She shaved off her hair, wore a single piece of cloth, and then began residing in the run-down cottage abandoned by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. She began to feel supreme satisfaction there, daily chanting three hundred thousand holy names while crying incessantly. She served *tulasī* every day without fail and would eat only if something came of its own accord; otherwise, she would remain hungry.

Because she chanted the pure name, having followed *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's order, the prostitute completely conquered her senses. In a short time, *kṛṣṇa-prema* appeared in her heart.

*prasiddhā vaiṣṇavī haila parama-mahāntī
baḍa baḍa vaiṣṇava tāra darśanete jānti*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.142)

She became famous throughout the world as a great Vaiṣṇavī, and even the most exalted devotees came to see her.

Seeing such a great transformation in the character of a prostitute, people were astonished and began glorifying Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Although Rāmacandra Khān had tried to discredit and insult Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the result was just the opposite. The truth is that no harm can come to people who worship Bhagavān without duplicity.

VAIṢṆAVA-APARĀDHA

Genuine Vaiṣṇavas never take any offense; they do not even consider themselves to be Vaiṣṇavas. Even if someone inflicts harm on them, they consider this to be a reaction resulting from their own sinful activities and do not hold a grudge. However, Bhagavān is always affectionate to His devotees (*bhaktavatsala*), and never forgives those who commit offenses at their lotus feet. He never tolerates offenses toward His devotees, who are completely faultless and are always trying to deliver others. Therefore, the inauspiciousness and disaster that befall one who offends a Vaiṣṇava cannot be compared to any other calamity. The result of offending a Vaiṣṇava is sometimes visible immediately, and other times, later.

Because of the offense (*aparādha*) of Rāmacandra Khān's hostile behavior toward Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, that seed of *aparādha* grew into a gigantic tree. Although he was a non-devotee by nature, he turned into a demon by committing offenses against Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. A demon's nature is to try to create problems for the Supreme Lord and His devotees.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Gosvāmī Prabhupāda mentions in his commentary of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 3.145):

Although Rāvaṇa, the son of Viśvaśravā, was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, he became known as a demon due to the offenses he committed at the lotus feet of Śrī Viṣṇu. In a similar way, Rāmacandra Khān, because of his offenses against a Vaiṣṇava, came to be known as a demon by society. He soon began to constantly criticize *vaiṣṇava-dharma* and disrespect the Vaiṣṇavas. Because of these offenses, which he committed for a very long time, he had to face terrible consequences.

ŚRĪ NITYĀNANDA PRABHU AND RĀMACANDRA KHĀN

Once, while spreading *prema-bhakti* in Gauḍa-deśa and destroying atheists, the omnipotent Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu,

who is non-different from Baladeva Prabhu, arrived at the house of Rāmacandra Khān. He sat on the *durgā-maṇḍapa*, a place for worshiping the goddess Durgā. With Him were many Vaiṣṇavas, and so the courtyard in front of the *durgā-maṇḍapa* became completely full.

When, from within his house, Rāmacandra Khān saw that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu had arrived with many followers, he instructed his servant to go to Him.

The servant came to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and spoke as follows: “O great soul, I have been sent by Rāmacandra Khān. He says that this house belongs to a landlord, not just an ordinary householder. You won’t find a place to stay here. Come with me, and I will arrange for Your accommodation in the home of a householder. Also, the size of this place is insufficient for the many people who have come with You. That is why a big cowshed would be a perfect place for you all to stay. Come, I will take You there.”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu became extremely angry upon hearing the words of Rāmacandra Khān’s servant, and He came out of the *durgā-maṇḍapa*. In truth, the omnipotent Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu had come there only to punish Rāmacandra Khān for the offense he had committed at the lotus feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

In an angry mood, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu laughed loudly and said tellingly, “Rāmacandra is indeed right. This place is certainly unfit for Me to stay. It is fit only for the low-class murderers of cows.”

Speaking in this way, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, along with His associates, left that place in an angry mood. To punish Rāmacandra Khān, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu avoided staying in the same village as him.

After Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu had gone, Rāmacandra Khān contemplated that his place had been rendered impure, because Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and His associates had sat there. Therefore, displaying the peak of his blasphemy, he ordered

his servants, “Go and dig up the dirt where that *sannyāsī* was sitting and throw it far away. Then, purify it by smearing it with cow dung.”

His servants did as he ordered, but the envious and demoniac Rāmacandra Khān was still not peaceful at heart.

Although Rāmacandra Khān was a landlord, due to his thief-like mentality he never paid taxes to the king. The Muslim king therefore became angry and sent his Muslim minister, along with a few officials, to collect taxes from Rāmacandra Khān. The minister made Rāmacandra Khān’s *durgā-maṇḍapa* his residence for three days and tied up Rāmacandra Khān, along with his wife and children. He slaughtered and cooked their cows. He not only plundered Rāmacandra Khān’s house, but plundered the whole village for those three days.

In this way, Rāmacandra Khān’s noble rank, wealth, followers, position, and so on were all lost, and the whole village remained desolate for a long time. Thus, the entire village had to pay for the offense committed by Rāmacandra Khān. All the villagers had to suffer because of their association with one undesirable person.

The scriptures say:

*mahāntera apamāna je deśa-grāme haya
eka janāra doṣe saba deśa ujāḍaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.164)

Wherever someone offends an exalted devotee, that whole country or village becomes desolate due to that person’s fault.

How frightful is *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*! Due to his envy of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Rāmacandra Khān sowed a seed of *aparādha*. This seed bore the fruit of enviousness toward *akhaṇḍa guru-tattva*¹ Śrī Nityānanda Himself, and as a result, Rāmacandra Khān was completely ruined.

1 The undivided principle of *śrī guru*.

CHAPTER FOUR

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA ILLUMINATES NĀMA-TATTVA

Walking from Benāpola, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura arrived at Cāndapura, a village situated near the confluence of the three holy rivers at Saptagrāma, in the district of Huglī. Two brothers, Hiranya and Govardhana Majūmadāra, were the landlords of that village. Their priest was Balarāma Ācārya, who was the object of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s mercy. The priest looked after Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura with great care and attention during his stay in Cāndapura. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura stayed in a thatched cottage in a solitary place, incessantly chanting the holy name, and would go to Balarāma Ācārya’s home to accept alms (take *prasāda*).

Govardhana Majūmadāra’s only son was Raghunātha. When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura stayed in Cāndapura, Raghunātha was a young boy engaged in his studies. Raghunātha later became a very close associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and became famous by the name of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. Young Raghunātha came to see Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura from time to time, and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was very merciful toward that young boy. This very mercy was the reason that Raghunātha later on attained the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Regular assemblies of learned scholars, in which *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures were discussed, were held at the residence of Hiranya and Govardhana Majūmadāra. One day, Balarāma Ācārya requested Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to grace one such assembly, and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura agreed. Upon seeing Balarāma Ācārya and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura enter the assembly, the two brothers immediately arose. They fell down at the lotus feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and with great respect offered him a place to sit. The assembly was full of learned scholars, *brāhmaṇas*, and saintly people, and Hiranya and Govardhana were themselves quite learned. Most of the assembly knew the glories of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and the two brothers were elated when, with much enthusiasm, everyone began to glorify his saintly qualities.

Almost the entire assembly knew that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was chanting three hundred thousand (three lakhs) holy names of the Lord every day. Therefore, the scholars took the opportunity to discuss the glories of *nāma*. Some scholars said that the holy name (*harināma*) can destroy all reactions to whatever sinful activities one may have committed, while others said that by the power of the holy name one attains liberation from material bondage. In reality, all of them mistook the semblance of the pure name (*nāmābhāsa*) for the pure name (*śuddha-nāma*).

THE RESULTS OF CHANTING PURE NĀMA

After hearing both sides, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “Both of these benedictions – liberation and the destruction of sinful reactions – are not the true results of chanting *harināma*. The fruit of *harināma* is that one’s dormant love for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is awakened. It is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.40):

*evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ*

*hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyaḥ*

Saintly people who have firmly devoted themselves to serving Bhagavān with deep love constantly engage in *kīrtana* of the names of the Supreme Lord most loved by them. When deep attachment (*anurāga*) arises in them, their hearts thoroughly melt and they become mad in love of God. They laugh and cry loudly. Agitated by love, they sing about their Lord in sweet voices, and just like mad people, they dance and sing without a trace of shyness, unaffected by the opinions of ordinary people.

PURE NĀMA AND THE SEMBLANCE OF NĀMA

Haridāsa Ṭhākura continued, “It is also clear, from scriptural evidence, that liberation and the nullification of sinful reactions are but secondary results of chanting *harināma*, not the principal results. Anything that is automatically attained in the initial stages without any endeavor is known to be secondary.”

To clarify, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura recited the following verse from *Padyāvalī* (16):

*amhaḥ samharad akhilaṁ sakṛd
udayād eva sakala-lokasya
taraṇir iva timira-jaladhim
jayati jagan-maṅgalaṁ harer nāma*

After reciting this verse, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura asked the scholars present in the assembly to explain it, but everyone insisted that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura himself explain the meaning of the verse. At their insistence, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “With the appearance of the rising sun – that is, even before the sun has actually risen – the darkness of this world begins to dissipate, and the fear of ghosts, evil spirits, thieves, and the like is also eradicated. And when the sun rises,

all religious activities (*dharma*) and regulative duties (*karma*) begin. Similarly, the initial dawning of the pure holy name (*nāmābhāsa*) nullifies all the reactions of sinful activities, but the actual appearance of pure *nāma* (*śuddha-nāma*) awakens divine love (*prema*) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. All glories to the all-auspicious holy name, which, like the rising sun, bestows its primary fruit of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, along with its secondary fruit of burning away all the sins of a living entity.

“Simply a semblance of *nāma* burns away the reactions of sinful activities. This is established in the story of Ajāmila, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Liberation (*mukti*) is but an insignificant result of *harināma*, and is obtained by chanting a mere semblance of *nāma*. The pure devotees of the Lord never accept liberation, even if it is offered to them by the Supreme Lord Himself.”

GOPĀLA CAKRAVARTĪ DISHONORS ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

In the assembly, there was a scholar named Gopāla Cakravartī, a handsome young man, who worked for Hiraṇya and Govardhana Majūmadāra. Gopāla had studied many scriptures on his own without any authorized guidance, and could not tolerate the words of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Angrily, he proceeded to say that Śrīla Haridāsa had exaggerated the glories of *nāma* and, while pointing at him, said disdainfully, “O learned men, just hear this sentimental devotee's idea of the scriptural conclusion! Liberation is not easily attained, even after cultivating absolute knowledge for millions and millions of births. Yet this sentimental devotee – who himself has no intellect and is easily influenced by the words of others – is saying that one can easily achieve such liberation merely by the semblance of *nāma*.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura then said to Gopāla Cakravartī, “Why do you doubt my statements? These statements are not

mine, but rather those of the scriptures. If you want to ask why devotees refuse to accept liberation, although it is granted by the mere semblance of *nāma*, or why, to attain *bhakti*, they endure much suffering in their performance of *sādhana-bhajana*, then please listen to my answer. The happiness of liberation is absolutely insignificant and trivial when compared to the transcendental happiness found in *bhakti*. That is why a devotee completely rejects liberation, even if it is offered by the Supreme Lord Himself.”

It is impossible to compare *mukti* with *bhakti*:

*tvat-sākṣāt-karaṇāhlāda-
viśuddhābdhi-sthitasya me
sukhāni goṣpadāyante
brāhmāṇy api jagad-guro*

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (14.76)

[In his prayers to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja said,] “O Bhagavān, *guru* of the Universe! Having attained direct *darśana* of You, I am drowning in an ocean of transcendental ecstasy. When compared to this ocean of ecstasy, all other kinds of happiness, including even the happiness of liberation, seem to be like the water in the hoof-print of a calf. In other words, just as the amount of water contained within a calf’s hoof-print is incomparable to that of the vast ocean, there is also no comparison between the happiness derived from *bhakti* and any other kind of happiness.”

Hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s words, the proud *brāhmaṇa* spoke angrily, “If *nāmābhāsa* does not grant liberation as per your words, be certain that I will cut off your nose.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied with firm faith, “Be sure that if *nāmābhāsa* does not grant liberation, I will cut off my own nose.”

Fearing the inauspiciousness that might befall them due to Gopāla Cakravartī’s dishonoring of the holy name’s glories

and his disrespect of *mahā-bhāgavata* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, everyone present in the assembly cried, “Alas, Alas!”

Hiraṇya and Govardhana Majūmadāra cried, “Fie upon that agnostic *brāhmaṇa!*”

Balarāma Ācārya also angrily admonished him, “O foolish logician, you are showing off your scholarship just by collecting information from here and there. What do you know about the glories of *bhakti*? You have dared to insult a great soul such as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Consider it certain that you will be utterly ruined for this offense, and it will be impossible for you to obtain auspiciousness.” With this, Majūmadāra kicked the proud *brāhmaṇa* out of his house that very moment.

Becoming somewhat saddened by the incident, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura got up to leave. Seeing this, Hiraṇya, Govardhana, and all the other scholars present in the assembly fell down at his lotus feet.

Smiling, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura consoled them with sweet words: “None of you are responsible for what transpired. In reality, that *brāhmaṇa* is ignorant; even he is not at fault. His heart is fixed on dry speculation and logic. But the holy names of Bhagavān are transcendental to any logic. Since it is impossible to appreciate the glories of *nāma* through dry speculation and logic, how can he possibly understand their greatness? Please return to your respective homes with complete peace of mind. May Śrī Kṛṣṇa shower His blessings on you all. Please do not feel even the slightest bit of grief for my sake.”

In this way, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who never sees faults in others, left the home of Hiraṇya and Govardhana Majūmadāra.

From that time on, Hiraṇya and Govardhana forbade Gopāla Cakravartī from entering their home. Within just three days of this incident, that *brāhmaṇa* contracted leprosy. Soon after, his high and beautiful nose melted off because of the disease. His fingers and toes, which used to be as beautiful as the buds of *campaka* flowers, also withered and melted away.

People were left amazed by this incident, and they glorified Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and offered him obeisances.

Although the most merciful Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura took no offense at the behavior of that *brāhmaṇa*, Bhagavān [could not tolerate it and] made him suffer the consequences. It is the nature of pure devotees to forgive the offenses of ignorant people and to only wish for their welfare. Bhagavān's nature, however, is that He cannot tolerate even the slightest offense or criticism of His pure devotees.

Upon hearing of Gopāla Cakravartī's sad plight, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura felt extremely sorry for the *brāhmaṇa*. After informing Balarāma Ācārya what was transpiring in his heart, he left for Śāntipura.

CHAPTER FIVE

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA AND ŚRĪ ADVAITA ĀCĀRYA

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is an eternal associate of the Lord. He appeared in a *yavana* family in the village of Buḍhana, within the Yaśohara district. By his mercy, many people residing in that district attained spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) and developed faith in *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*. Before Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared, there were hardly any people in that district who performed *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, but his appearance there dispelled this deficiency. After staying in Buḍhana for some years, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura moved near the bank of the Gaṅgā. He spent time in Śāntipura, where Śrī Advaita Ācārya resided, and also in a village named Phuliyā, which was not far from Śāntipura. When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura met Śrī Advaita Ācārya, he immediately paid obeisances to Him with great faith. In response, Śrī Advaita Ācārya honored him with an affectionate embrace.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya had a cave prepared for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's residence. It was in a secluded place on the bank of the Gaṅgā River, very conducive for *bhajana*. There, Śrī Advaita Ācārya explained to him the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* in accordance with *bhakti* (devotion to the Supreme Lord). Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura happily lived there

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and chanted *harināma*. Śrī Advaita Ācārya daily invited Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to His home for *prasāda*, where they would relish narrations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*śrī kṛṣṇa-kathā*).

One day, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura asked Śrī Advaita Ācārya, “O Ācārya, I would like to make a request. Why do You feed me every day? Why is it that although there are so many high-class and noble *brāhmaṇas* in Śāntipura You could feed, You instead insist on showing respect to me? Do You not hesitate to behave like this? Do You not fear the opinion of general society? I hesitate to make any comments about this uncommon behavior of Yours, but I am unable to stop myself. My humble request is that You please act in such a way that society will not disrespect or have an opportunity to criticize You.”

*ācārya kahena, “tumi nā kariha bhaya
sei ācariba, jei śāstra-mata haya*

*tumi khāile haya koṭi brāhmaṇa-bhojana”
eta bali’ śrāddha-pātra karāilā bhojana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.221–222)

Hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s words, the teacher of the masses, *jagad-guru* Śrī Advaita Ācārya, remembered the impartial words of the scriptures related to the Supreme Truth (*sātvata-śāstras*). Laughing, He said, “There is no need to be afraid. I will only act in a way that is recommended by the revealed scriptures. Feeding you is equivalent to feeding tens of millions of *brāhmaṇas*.”

Śrī Advaita Ācārya then offered the *śrāddha-pātra*, or offerings of oblations to the forefathers, to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Having obtained the association of such a like-minded, affectionate pure devotee possessing a deep taste [for *harināma*] as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the happiness of Śrī Advaita Ācārya knew no bounds. Out of love, Śrī Advaita Ācārya roared loudly. Overwhelmed in such great happiness, He expressed himself

in this outburst of joy. By the influence of the association of his *iṣṭadeva* (his worshipable Lord, Śrī Advaita Ācārya), Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura also became submerged in the nectarous ocean waves of *śrī govinda-rasa*.¹

THEIR DESIRE FOR ŚRĪMAN MAHĀPRABHU'S DESCENT

Chanting the holy name, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura stayed in a solitary place near the banks of the Jāhnavī (river Gaṅgā) in a cave. The meeting of Śrī Advaita Ācārya and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was like the joining of a gem with gold. It seemed as if these personalities, like the supremely purifying Yamunā and Gaṅgā, had appeared to remove the filth of this world. Their goal was one and the same: to cause the descent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is non-different from Vrajendra-nandana, so that He may deliver the decrepit souls who have turned their faces away from Hari and are thus suffering the threefold miseries. While the most merciful Śrī Advaita Ācārya was absorbed in worshipping Śrī Viṣṇu by offering Him Gaṅgā water and *tulasī* leaves, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was engrossed in loudly performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana* in his cave.

1 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has mentioned in his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 16.21):

“Many people hold the notion that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura kept himself busy only in chanting the holy name, and that he had no entry into relishing the nectarean mellows (*rasa*) of Śrī Govinda. However, this belief of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* [who understand the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord to be mundane] is completely erroneous. *Śrī nāma* is *cintāmaṇi*, a transcendental wish-fulfilling gem, and is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the personification of *rasa*. One cannot taste the *rasa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by any process other than chanting *śrī nāma*. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who is completely conversant with the *rasa* of *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma*, is the principal teacher granting entrance into the scriptures dealing with *rasa*.

“Because of offenses committed to *nāma*, the sentimental *prākṛta-sahajiyā* community, which is utterly engrossed in materiality, has no idea about the transcendental nectar of *nāma*.”

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*dui-janer bhaktye caitanya kailā avatāra
nāma-prema pracāra kailā jagat uddhāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.224)

It was due to the devotion (the call) of Śrī Advaita Ācārya and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended and delivered the entire world by preaching *nāma-prema*.

THE DIVINE BEAUTY OF ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

While roaming along the banks of the Gaṅgā, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura would loudly cry out in ecstasy, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.” He was completely detached from all material pleasures, and his lotus mouth was supremely blessed, being always filled with *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. He never, even for a moment, stopped chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, and because he was submerged in *bhakti-rasa* at every moment, many varieties of ecstatic symptoms would appear on his transcendental body. Sometimes he danced and sometimes he roared loudly like a mad lion, sometimes he cried bitterly, sometimes he laughed loudly, and sometimes he fell down unconscious. In one second he would call out to someone with divine words, and in the very next second he would beautifully explain the meaning of those words. As soon as he would begin to dance in *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, all the ecstatic symptoms that appear as a result of extreme loving devotion (*prema-bhakti*) – such as the shedding of tears, the hairs of the body standing on end, laughter, the loss of consciousness, and perspiration – would enter his body. His performance of *kīrtana* was laden with love, and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s lotus limbs became completely drenched in the tears of ecstasy flowing from his eyes. Even complete atheists devoid of *bhakti* became astonished to see Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in such a state. Even Lord Brahmā

and Lord Śiva became struck with wonder upon seeing such ecstatic transformations in his divine body.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda has stated in his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgvata* (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.22–32):

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s state was just like that mentioned in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.3.25–26) and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.40):

*kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvam
viraktir māna-sūnyatā
āsā-bandhaḥ samutkaṇṭhā
nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ*

*āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne
prītis tad-vasati-sthale
ity ādayo ’nubhāvāḥ syur
jāta-bhāvāṅkure jane*

When *bhāva* (pure spiritual emotion) arises, the following nine symptoms are observed in a devotee: forbearance, effective use of one’s time, detachment, absence of pride, steadfast hope that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy, intense longing to obtain one’s goal, constant taste for chanting the holy name, attachment to hearing about Kṛṣṇa’s qualities, and affection for Kṛṣṇa’s pastime places.

*evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyah*

In the heart of devotees who have adopted the vow to serve Bhagavān through *bhakti-yoga* characterized by pure love, deep attachment arises for the chanting of the names of their most beloved Lord, and their heart melts. Being indifferent to public opinion, they sometimes burst into laughter, sometimes weep, sometimes

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call out to the Lord in a loud voice, sometimes sing,
and sometimes dance as if mad.

While he manifested such symptoms of love, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's tongue remained busy in constantly chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Due to incessantly uttering *śrī nāma*, his tongue was extraordinarily beautiful. Both Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and his tongue were thoroughly indifferent to material pleasures. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* never dances on the tongue of materially engrossed people. Those who are always busy tasting the six different types of delicious foods and whose heart is agitated and forced to dart here and there, being greedy for and expectant of material pleasures, are never seen to have any interest in chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. As the materialists remain indifferent to *harināma-bhajana*, so too do the pseudo-renunciants, who do not accept *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Due to his complete absorption in *nāma-bhajana*, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was utterly indifferent to material pleasures; this was his pre-eminence.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura left no room for indifference or laziness while chanting Govinda's names. He, in a multitude of ways, was at every second absorbed in the mellows of devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*).

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's transcendental body was not like the bodies of materialists, which are made of blood, flesh, and skin. Many different ecstatic symptoms (*suddha-sāttvika-bhāvas*) would appear in his divine body as a result of his constant service to Śrī Nāma Prabhu. Materialists remain indifferent to the cultivation of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-anuśilana*), while they keep themselves focused on the health of their bodies. In complete contrast to this, the Vaiṣṇava associates of the Lord, who are inclined to perform service to Him, always have the multitudes of pure ecstatic bodily transformations (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) wildly dancing throughout their body.

CHAPTER SIX

TESTED BY MĀYĀ-DEVĪ HERSELF

Describing the transcendental personality of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 3.227–228):

*āra alaukika eka caritra tāhāra
jāhāra śravaṇe loke haya camatkāra*

*tarka nā kariha, tarkāgocara tāra rīti
viśvāsa kariyā śuna kariyā pratīti*

I will now describe an extraordinary incident from the life of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura which leaves all who hear it astonished. [Please] do not put forth any arguments, because the glories of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *bhakti* are beyond the realm of debate. Therefore, O *bhaktas*, please hear them with complete faith.

One day, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was sitting in his cave and loudly chanting *harināma*, overwhelmed with great ecstasy. It was an exceptionally beautiful night, and the rays of the moon illuminated the ten directions. The waves of the Gaṅgā shimmered with reflected moonlight. At the cave's entrance, a *tulasī* plant sat atop a platform smeared with cow dung. The

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cave's beauty was such that it spontaneously attracted the mind of whoever saw it.

At that time, a supremely beautiful and enchanting woman appeared in the courtyard. Her radiant limbs illuminated the surroundings still more. The fragrance emanating from her body perfumed the ten directions, and she was decorated with many varieties of jeweled ornaments. The sweet tinkling of her ornaments charmed the ears. That woman of bewitching beauty proceeded slowly. She first offered her obeisances to *tulasī*, circumambulated her, and then approached the cave's entrance.

Folding her hands, Māyā-devī offered her respects to the feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and while standing at the cave's entrance, she spoke in a voice so sweet that it put the melodious sound of the *viṇā* to shame: "O Haridāsa, you are a friend of the entire world, extremely attractive, and possessed of supremely virtuous qualities. Enchanted by your beauty and qualities, I have come here hoping to unite with you. Please be merciful to me and fulfill my desire, for it is the nature of saintly people to be kind to those in need."

So as to arouse lust in the mind of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, she then made various flirtatious gestures that would agitate the mind of even great sages. But Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's mind was sober and unwavering; he only felt pity for her.

HIS FIRM FAITH IN NĀMA-SAŅKĪRTANA YAJŅA

With extremely sweet words, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, "I consider my chanting of a fixed number of rounds to be a *mahā-yajña* (a monumental act of worship), that I have vowed to complete every single day. I do not involve myself with anything else until I have finished this fixed number of rounds. This is my strict vow. As I have yet to complete my rounds for today, kindly sit near the entrance and hear the chanting of *harināma*. I will certainly fulfill your desire as soon as I have finished."

Having spoken thus, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura chanted loudly while the woman sat near the entrance, listening. In this way, the whole night passed. At daybreak, the woman stood up and left.

In this way, she approached Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura for three continuous days, making flirtatious gestures that could captivate even the mind of Brahmā. But they had no effect on Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was completely absorbed in chanting *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma*.

All the postures that the enchantress exhibited before Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura proved to be as futile as crying alone in the wilderness. Just as someone's cries in the wilderness go unheard by others, the provocative gestures and mannerisms that the woman assumed had no effect on Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

On the third day, as night was coming to an end, she spoke to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura: "O great soul, for the last three days you have promised to fulfill my desire upon completing your chanting. However, even after chanting throughout the entire day and night, you have yet to finish your fixed number of rounds."

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, "What can I do? How can I break my vow?"

Hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's words, the beautiful woman offered her prostrated obeisance to him and said, "O Prabhu, I am none other than Māyā-devī, the illusory energy of the Lord. I came here just to test you. I, who am powerful enough to captivate the minds of all living beings including Brahmā, today accept my defeat by you.

"I was unable to arouse even a trace of lust in your mind. You are certainly a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a most exalted devotee. By seeing you and hearing the chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names from your lotus mouth, my heart has been purified. I have also developed a desire to chant *harināma*. Therefore, out of your compassion, please make my life successful by initiating me into the chanting of the holy name."

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With great eagerness, Māyā-devī spoke:

*caitanyaṅvatāre bahe premāmṛta-banyā
saba jīva preme bhāse, pṛthivī haila dhanyā*

*e-vanyāya je nā bhāse, sei jīva—chāra
koṭi-kalpe tabe tāra nāhika nistāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.252–253)

The advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has brought a flood of nectarean divine love (*premāmṛta*), in which all living entities are floating. The whole world has thus become blessed.

The birth of one who does not drench himself in this flood of nectarean *kṛṣṇa-prema* is useless. They cannot be delivered even after millions of *kalpas*.

“Some time ago I was initiated into the chanting of *rāma-nāma* by Lord Śiva, but by your association I have developed greed to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. The holy name of Rāma is known as *tāraka-brahma*, or the sound vibration that enables one to cross over *māyā*. It appears just to liberate the conditioned souls. This means that by chanting *rāma-nāma*, conditioned souls attain liberation. *Śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma*, however, is not satisfied by bestowing liberation alone, and therefore also blesses a person by granting him *prema*. Therefore, kindly bless me by bestowing upon me the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then I, also, may be carried away by this flood of ambrosial *prema*.”

Having spoken these words, Māyā-devī began glorifying Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

MĀYĀ-DEVĪ RECEIVES INITIATION

The ocean of mercy, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, instructed Māyā-devī on *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Māyā-devī, who bewilders the entire universe, was utterly defeated by this venerable Vaiṣṇava. As a piece of iron is transformed into gold by contacting a

touchstone, Māyā-devī gave up all material desires by dint of her association with a pure devotee. She then left, happily chanting the all-auspicious holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

If a person chants the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa incessantly, without offense or duplicity, it is impossible for anyone to shake him from this most auspicious path of *hari-bhakti* by offering any worldly temptation. Even Māyā-devī herself cannot degrade such souls. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is the best example of this fact.

Pure devotees are eternally the objects of Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure (*kṛṣṇa-bhogyā*); they are never bewildered by the illusory energy. Māyā is not an enjoyer (*bhoktā*). In *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14), Śrī Kṛṣṇa has referred to Māyā as *mama māyā*. This means that Māyā is the object of Kṛṣṇa’s enjoyment, and it is Kṛṣṇa alone who is the enjoyer. One who takes exclusive shelter at the lotus feet of Bhagavān crosses over *māyā*. Both Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas are beyond the influence of *māyā*. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared in this material world and demonstrated by his own example that when a person utilizes all his senses in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then despite her best efforts, Māyā’s attempts [to delude that living entity] are as ineffective as throwing a pebble at the Himalayan mountains in an attempt to level them.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has mentioned at the end of this narration in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: “Most people think that Māyā-devī could never have taken *harināma* initiation from Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Yet I will tell you why you should have faith in this. Upon hearing this reason, everyone will surely believe that my narration is true.”

At the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s advent, personalities like Brahmā, Śiva, and the four Kumāras, being greedy for *kṛṣṇa-prema*, descended to this Earth. Having received the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they danced and became drenched in the flood of *prema*. Devotees like Śrī Nārada,

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Śrī Prahlāda, and Śrī Lakṣmī came down to Earth in human forms to attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and they relished that *prema*. Even Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, descended to taste this great *prema*. What, therefore, is surprising about Māyā-devī, who is just a shadow of His potency, begging for this love? There is nothing astonishing about this, because without the mercy of great souls (*mahat-puruṣas*), no one can attain this *prema*.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA'S CONVICTION IN THE HOLY NAME

U pon seeing transformations on the body of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, induced by his practice of *bhakti*, all the *brāhmaṇas* of Phuliyā Village, who busied themselves practicing *karma-kāṇḍa* (Vedic ritualistic activities), became astonished. Thus realizing the utter uselessness of *karma-kāṇḍa*, they condemned their performance of ritual and developed profound faith in him.

After taking bath in the Gaṅgā, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura used to roam here and there, while loudly chanting the names of Śrī Hari. The Kāzī (Muslim magistrate) of Phuliyā saw this and could not bear it. Haridāsa was Muslim by birth, a *yavana*, but because he was chanting the names of the Hindus' God and adopting Hindu conceptions, the Kāzī considered Haridāsa's behavior contrary to their religious principles and a grave, punishable offense.

Because of his sectarian thinking, he considered the living *bhāgavata* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to be subordinate to material time, place, and circumstance. Actually, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was transcendental to any influence of material time, place, and circumstance, being a self-realized soul. Due to the Kāzī's contaminated consciousness, he tried to bring Śrīla Haridāsa

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Ṭhākura’s supramundane spiritual practice under the control of his government, which was contaminated by mundane time, place, and circumstance.

Thus the Kāzī went to the king of Bengal, a Muslim, and complained about Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, saying, “Although born a Muslim, Haridāsa has adopted the beliefs of the Hindus. You should quickly have him brought here and punished, or else other Muslims may see him and also become attracted to Hinduism.”

Hearing the words of the sinful Kāzī, the wicked Muslim king, who was antagonistic toward *bhakti*, ordered his soldiers, “Go seize Haridāsa and bring him here.”

Following the king’s order, the soldiers quickly went to the village of Phuliyā to seize Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. When they informed him of the king’s order, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who by the mercy of the Lord, possessed great power and fearlessness, immediately began walking with them of his own accord. As he walked, he chanted “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.” Eventually, they arrived at the court of the king and presented themselves before him.

*kṛṣṇera prasāde haridāsa mahāśaya
yavanera ki dāya, kāler-o nāhi bhaya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.39)

By Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, Śrīla Haridāsa Mahāśaya was not even scared of death, to say nothing about the *yavana* king.

The residents of Ambuyā had already heard about Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s performance of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and of the transformations of *prema* on his transcendental body. Therefore, when they heard that he would be arriving in their village that very day, their hearts filled with joy at the possibility of receiving his *darśana*. At the same time, they felt extremely morose that the *yavana* king had called Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura

to punish him. They knew well that the king was terribly cruel and envious of the devotees, and that he would severely torture such an exalted devotee as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

HIS MYSTERIOUS BLESSING UPON THE PRISONERS

When news of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s auspicious arrival reached the ears of the prisoners confined within the king’s prison house, those prisoners with a noble heart began to dance of joy. They knew that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was a supremely elevated devotee and that merely glimpsing such a person drives away all kinds of suffering. Therefore, they firmly believed that by having *darśana* of him on that very day, all their suffering would be removed. With folded hands, they therefore presented a request to the guards: “O brothers, when the soldiers bring Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to the king, kindly permit us to have *darśana* of him.”

The guards accepted their request, and all the prisoners eagerly awaited Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s arrival.

After a short while, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura reached Ambuyā with the soldiers. When he saw the prisoners, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura desired to bestow his mercy upon them, so he went and stood before them. Seeing the all-enchanting and unparalleled beauty of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s body, with his long arms and his face with eyes like lotuses, the prisoners bowed before him in great faith. As soon as they offered their obeisances to him, transformations of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* arose in their hearts, and they began to weep in ecstasy.

Smiling, the causelessly merciful Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura gave them a concealed blessing: “May you forever remain in your current condition.”

The prisoners were saddened to hear this, unable to understand the hidden purport behind Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s words. They thought to themselves, “He is indeed a very cruel person.”

When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura saw their reaction he understood what was going through their minds. “Because you do not understand the real meaning of this blessing, you feel unhappy,” he explained. “I urge you to carefully consider its real meaning. I have never given a blessing that would bring inauspiciousness upon anyone. ‘May you forever remain in your current condition’ means, ‘May you continue to constantly think about Kṛṣṇa and chant His names together, as you are doing right now.’ At this time, you are devoid of the tendency to harm or give trouble to others. Therefore, call out ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa,’ in a distressed voice and meditate on Him. You have attained a good opportunity to develop your Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

Bad association can make one forget *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, so Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura cautioned everyone to give up all kinds of bad association. “When you are released from prison, may you not again pollute your consciousness by associating with wicked people. Keep in mind that it is impossible for living entities to engage in *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, as long as their propensity to enjoy material pleasures remains strong.

“Know for certain that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is very far from materialists,” he continued. “A mind absorbed in material pleasures is the root cause of all sorts of entanglements. Wife, children, other family members, and other dear ones are *māyā*’s traps, and they are death personified. It is only due to great fortune that a soul possesses the spiritual credit (*sukṛti*) to associate with saintly persons. By hearing the instructions of those personalities and by receiving their mercy, the mind of the materialist withdraws from material enjoyment, and he engages in *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The purpose of my blessing was not that you should remain forever locked in this prison house. Instead, I meant that you should, for all time, forget material pleasures and chant, ‘Hari, Hari.’ May you attain the perpetual association of high-class *sādhus* so that you remain immersed in cultivating activities pleasing to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇānuśilana*), and may you

always have the good fortune of associating with *sādhus* and chanting the names of Śrī Bhagavān. I spoke enigmatically, so please do not feel even slightly sorrowful after hearing this blessing. My glance upon all living entities is compassionate. I give all of you my blessings to have unflinching devotion for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Do not worry; you will be released from this prison house within two or three days, but you must be especially careful to not again fall into bad company, for this will drive devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa from your heart. Do not concern yourself with the joys of this gross body, which come with its freedom from prison, nor with the sufferings resulting from its imprisonment. Simply chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa for all time.”

The blessings of the venerable Vaiṣṇavas, who are oceans of mercy and who bestow *amandodaya-dayā*¹, never bring inauspiciousness to anyone in any situation. Indeed, their blessings are supremely auspicious in all ways and under all circumstances.

THE YAVANA KING'S ADVICE

After bestowing mercy upon the prisoners, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura came to the king. Upon seeing the astonishing brilliance coming from the transcendental, radiant, and enchanting body of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the king offered him a sitting place with great respect, while Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s tongue incessantly chanted *harināma*.

Seeing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s unbroken absorption in transcendental sound (*vaikuṅṭha-śabda*), the narrow-minded king, who was intolerant of other religions, politely asked, “I want to know this: What has caused your degradation? There is no race superior to the *yavanas*. It is only out of great fortune that you have taken birth in a *yavana* family. Why, then, have you

1 Compassion that is *amanda*, or never causing inauspiciousness.

accepted the behavior and customs of the wretched Hindus? Hindus belong to a class inferior to ours, and that is why we reject even food touched by them. Yet you freely mix and eat with them, without any concern. You have taken birth in a very reputable race. It does not befit you to give up your topmost noble class and degrade yourself to this lower one. By acting like the Hindus, you are transgressing the principles of your religion and social position. How will you gain deliverance after death? Have you ever pondered this? It seems to me that you have never seriously considered this matter. Therefore, I advise you to atone for the sins that you have unknowingly committed in ignorance by reciting *kalmā*².”

ONE GOD FOR ALL

Hearing the statements of the king, who was bewildered by *māyā*, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “Just see the influence of Lord Viṣṇu’s illusory energy.”

The causelessly merciful Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura thus smiled and began to explain the Absolute Truth (*īśvara-tattva*) with sweet words. “Dear Sir, the Supreme Lord is non-dual, eternal, unequalled, and the master of everyone. The Supreme Lord for all – whether Hindu or Muslim, young or old, man or woman – is one. Both Hindus and non-Hindu *yavanas* who are ignorant of the truth regarding the Supreme Lord imagine there are various Gods, owing to His different names. They thus ignorantly oppose each other. But when they give up this disharmonious difference of opinion and impartially examine both the *yavanas*’ scripture – the Koran – and the Hindus’ scripture – the Purāṇas – they will not find any incongruity regarding the Absolute Truth. Therefore, the conclusion is that there is only one Supreme Lord for all. For the Hindus and Muslims, the only difference lies in His names. The Supreme

2 Special verses from the Koran that are recited in adopting the religion of Islam.

Lord is completely pure and transcendental. He is indestructible and eternally unchangeable. He cannot be divided by sectarian feelings. He is inexhaustible and can never be diminished. He is present as the indwelling Supersoul (*antaryāmī paramātmā*) in the hearts of the souls of both Hindus and Muslims. The Supreme Lord present in the hearts of the *yavanas* is also present in the hearts of Hindus.

“Since time immemorial, the conditioned souls have turned their faces from Kṛṣṇa, and their pure intelligence has been contaminated as a result. In other words, by coming under the control of temporary convictions based on material time, place, and person, they consider themselves the enjoyer and become averse to serving the Lord. As a result of not realizing that fully complete and indivisible Supersoul situated in their heart, they are led astray, and they thus wrongly take Him to be finite like themselves. Yet even in such circumstances, if a person gives up imaginary material enjoyment, as well as mental speculation, which is rooted in renunciation, then through the power of *bhakti* he can realize that Śrī Bhagavān is the only true object of service.

“That indivisible, imperishable, eternally pure Lord directs the conditioned souls who, following the dictates of their mind, perform different types of fruitive activities according to whatever qualifications He has bestowed upon them. In other words, the souls situated within the three worlds act only according to the inspiration bestowed upon them by the Lord. In this world, people of all religions glorify the name, qualities, and so forth of that Supreme Lord in terms of the conclusions of their own religious scriptures. The Lord is known as *bhāva-grāhī* Bhagavān Janārdana, the Lord who accepts the mood (*bhāva*) of a devotee [rather than just his external actions]. If one commits violence by disrespecting the transcendental sentiments of another, then that violence is actually directed toward the Supreme Lord. Therefore, one ought not to commit violence [by action or intention] toward another living entity.

If a person tries to forcefully convert another, influencing that person's way of thinking in terms of his own personal, narrow-minded views, then he is not only denouncing the other's religion but is also committing violence toward the object of worship of all religions, the Supreme Lord Himself. Service to the Supreme Lord and violence to Him are two completely contradictory acts.

“If due to bewildered intelligence, a person considers an act of violence as service to the Supreme Lord, then he eventually becomes averse to service to the Lord and violent toward His devotees. When a living entity is devoid of love for Bhagavān, he sometimes becomes filled with material desires (an *anyābhilāṣī*), sometimes a fruitive worker (*karmī*), sometimes a *haṭha-yogī*, sometimes a seeker of the undifferentiated *brahma*, and sometimes a *rāja-yogī*. To induce the *jīva* to serve Śrī Mukunda for the *jīva*'s own eternal welfare is certainly not violence. On the other hand, to involve the living entity in activities opposed to the service of the Supreme Lord, which are meant only for gratifying the senses, is to commit violence against him. Everyone should certainly give up such activities.

“I am engaged in serving the Supreme Lord in whichever way He inspires me in my heart. A person is able to progress in his service to Bhagavān according to the particular type of mercy He gives him.

“By the Lord's desire, I am involved in serving Lord Viṣṇu, which is the *dharma* of the *brāhmaṇas*, although I have taken birth in a *yavana* family. Similarly, if the Lord so desires, a person born in a *brāhmaṇa* family can give up his position as a *brāhmaṇa* and, following the whims of his mind, abide by the scriptures of a society that is inimical to the Vedas. In such a situation, what could the Hindus possibly do? Whatever activities a living entity engages in as per his inclination and inspiration, he receives his due punishment or reward. Therefore, there is no need to punish him separately. According

to impressions from his previous births, a particular faith (*śraddhā*) and inclination arises in his heart. Neither you nor the Hindus can do anything about this. It is entirely improper to try to prevent someone from accepting a *dharma* they feel inclined toward by threatening punishment. Dear Sir, please consider my statements carefully. If you still feel I am at fault, then you can certainly punish me.”

UNWAVERING FAITH IN ŚRĪ NĀMA PRABHU

Hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s truthful statements, which were in line with the Vedic scriptures, the king and all other Muslims present became completely satisfied. Only one person remained dissatisfied: the wicked Kāzī who originally complained to the *yavana* king about Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Upon seeing the *yavana* king’s heart changing, the Kāzī flared with anger and he induced the king to act. “Do not get carried away by his statements. Please order him to desist from chanting the name of the Hindus’ God and from visiting and eating at their homes. Please order him to study the Koran and chant Allah’s name. If he does not comply with your order, then you should certainly punish him. Otherwise, this miscreant will definitely inspire others to become like him. This would bring great calamity upon our Muslim religion.”

Hearing the words of the Kāzī, who was blind to all piety, the king deliberated on what the Kāzī had said and then politely said to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, “O brother, if you agree to study the Koran and chant Allah’s name, then you will have no need to worry; no one will disturb you. Otherwise, even if I do not order him to do so, the Kāzī and his men will punish you later. At that time, out of fear of punishment, you will have no choice but to accept our Muslim religion. Therefore, it would be better for you to again happily accept it now. What is the use of being unnecessarily shamed?”

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Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura fearlessly said, “Whatever the Lord desires will come to pass. Without His desire, no one can do anything. It is the Supreme Lord alone who rewards or punishes a soul according to his activities, yet the ignorant soul boasts of being the master of his own destiny. The *jīva* is only the medium. In reality, everything happens by the will of Bhagavān. Therefore, if it is the Lord’s desire to punish me, then I happily accept it.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is the ever-truthful embodiment of resolute faith in *śrī harināma-kīrtana*. Being the brilliant example of tolerance and unflinching faith (*śraddhā*) in his most cherished Śrī Nāma Prabhu, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura expressed submission and said, “This much is certain.”

*khaṇḍa-khaṇḍa hai deha jāya jadi prāṇa
tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi harināma*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.94)

My body may be cut into pieces or I may lose my life, but I will never abandon uttering the holy name.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura continued. “This material body, obtained from one’s mother and father, is temporary. A person whose life runs against the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is absorbed in material pleasures and thus subject to change and destruction. Śrī Bhagavān and His name, however, are eternal and inseparable from each other. The transcendental name is not like the names of material objects, which have been contrived by human beings. The transcendental name (*vaikuṅṭha-nāma*) and Bhagavān, the possessor of the name (*nāmī*), are one and the same. I can therefore never give up my service to *nāma* and put my faith in service to my gross and subtle bodies. Every living entity is a servant of Bhagavān – that is, everyone is a Vaiṣṇava. Vaiṣṇavas have no occupation other than chanting *śrī harināma*. The only occupation of the living entities in the stages of both

practice (*sādhana*) and perfection (*siddha*) is to render service to *śrī nāma*. I would never give that up for proper social conduct as defined by ordinary men. Happily and without protest, I would accept any punishment dealt out by such a society and its rulers, but I would never give up eternal service to Śrī Hari to run toward temporary material happiness. I have no other duty than performing *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* of *vaikunṭha-nāma*, which I have received through the disciplic line. Because I am an eternal entity, both my gross body and mind are separate from me, the soul, whereas my body and mind are temporary objects.”

After hearing the infallible words of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the *yavana* king asked the Kāzī, “Now what should we do with him?”

In an attempt to shroud the truth broadcast by *jagad-guru* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was completely fixed in the transcendental sound received through the disciplic line, the demoniac Kāzī adopted a course of violence and said, “Without any further consideration, order your guards to drag him through twenty-two marketplaces and beat him until he dies. If he survives, then I will believe him to truly be an honest and perfected soul, and I will believe that whatever he says is the truth. But if he dies, it should be understood that he received the punishment he so rightly deserved.” The Kāzī shouted out to the guards, “Drag him through twenty-two marketplaces and whip him so thoroughly that he dies. He has committed a fearsome offense by converting to Hinduism, even though he took birth in a Muslim family. He can be delivered only after his death. For a *yavana* who gives up his own religion and accepts the customs and religion of the Hindus, death is the only justifiable punishment. There is no greater sin than converting to Hinduism after taking birth in a Muslim family. The only atonement for such a sin is capital punishment.”

The sinful king agreed with the atheistic Kāzī and ordered his soldiers to have Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura dragged and beaten

in twenty-two marketplaces. The cruel guards caught hold of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and in great anger dragged him from one marketplace to the next, brutally beating him in each one. Those who bear malice against Vaiṣṇavas quickly become filled with sin. The atheistic Kāzī and the king who acted on the Kāzī's advice committed a grave offense against Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and were thus the most wretched of offenders. Those servants of the king, who, on his and the Kāzī's order, caught Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and beat him, also became wicked due to their fault of associating with sinners. Yet, even while the guards were thrashing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, he remained in total bliss, absorbed in meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa and chanting *harināma*. Because he was immersed in *nāma-rasa*, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura did not experience even the slightest bit of difficulty. The contented Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who had fully absorbed his mind in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was totally oblivious to external distress and happiness, and complied with the desires of those cruel men.

Seeing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura being beaten so brutally by the cruel guards, those possessing some devotion became extremely disturbed and heartbroken. Some people cried and said, "This kingdom will soon be destroyed because such a great saint is being so mercilessly beaten here without any reason." Some people, distraught by the *yavanas'* ill-treatment of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, cursed the Kāzī and the king, while others made plans to attack the guards beating Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Some people begged the soldiers to be merciful and spare Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's life, while others ran and fell at the feet of the guards, crying, "O brothers! Please beat him a little more gently. We will give you a large sum of money."

Yet, even after hearing the pleas of these people, the hearts of those cruel, hateful sinners, who were malicious toward devotees, did not melt even a little. On the contrary, they angrily beat Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura with even more force.

By the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura did not feel even the slightest pain from the guards' brutal beating. It was similar to how no harm came to Prahlāda when, on the order of the demon Hiranyaśipu, he was tormented in many ways by demons.

Such tolerance is naturally inherent in great devotees. They are so deeply absorbed in the Lord's service that they are not disturbed by the cruelty of the inhabitants of this world who are averse to Bhagavān. It is for this reason that Śrī Gaurasundara has mentioned in His *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* that only one who is even more tolerant than a tree can perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana*; others cannot. If a spiritual practitioner has no tolerance, then he cannot perform *hari-kīrtana*. In this world, people who are inimical to the Lord have causelessly and repeatedly attacked the propagators of the Truth, who are engaged in *hari-kīrtana* and who bestow all kinds of auspiciousness. They make all sorts of evil attempts to close such preachers' mouths, which are intent on chanting *hari-kīrtana*. Intoxicated by the liquor of pride in their birth, caste, wealth, and mundane scholarship, the society of those opposed to the Supreme Lord relentlessly and laboriously endeavors to obstruct the only truthful reality, *śrī hari-saṅkīrtana*.

CONCERN FOR HIS ATTACKERS

Simply by the *smaraṇa* (remembrance of the Lord) of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was truth personified, the most terrible sufferings were automatically dispelled. What disturbance could these sufferings possibly bring him? He was thus completely unaffected by the guards' fearsome blows and instead worried for their fate. This is quite befitting, since saintly people feel agony in their hearts for those great offenders (*aparādhīs*) who act against the devotees of the Lord. They consider such pitiful offenders to be in the greatest need

of welfare and deliverance. The same quality could also be observed in Jesus Christ and in Muhammad.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was worried. “Bhagavān will never forgive these guards for beating me,” he thought. “What will be their destination?” His heart began to melt, and he prayed, “O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, please forgive them. Please do not punish them because of me.”

Although Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura prayed to Bhagavān for the welfare of those merciless soldiers, they ruthlessly beat him while dragging him from one marketplace to the next. With a desire to kill him, their anger increased at every moment, and their beating of him was horrific. But, even after beating him relentlessly, they saw no sign of distress on Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s face.

Upon seeing their demoniac endeavors utterly defeated, the guards discussed the situation among themselves. “Can any human possibly survive such a brutal beating? We have previously beaten many others like this, but they died after just one marketplace or, in some cases, two. Yet, today we dragged him into twenty-two marketplaces. Not only that, instead of dying, he is blissful. There is not even the slightest hint of distress or pain on his face. In fact, he is smiling! He must certainly be some kind of *zinda-pīr*³ (an empowered soul equipped with divine mystical powers).”

After deliberating in this way, they said, “O Haridāsa, today all of us will be doomed because of you. When the Kāzī hears that you did not die even after being beaten so much, he will surely kill us in a rage.”

HE WILLFULLY STOPS BREATHING

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is free of envy. Although the guards who beat him were verily the followers of demons, to protect

3 Persian for ‘living [Muslim] saint.’

them from the imminent rage of the cruel Kāzī, he assured them that no harm would come to them and, smiling, said, “If inauspiciousness will befall you by my staying alive, then I will die just now.”

Saying this, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura became so completely absorbed in the remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that his body grew inert, so much so that even his breathing stopped. The soldiers were left astonished. They then lifted him and dumped his body by the king’s door.

When the king saw Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s unconscious body, he ordered, “Go and put it in a grave.”

Hearing this, the Kāzī said, “If we bury him in a tomb, he will attain a higher destination. After many births he had the good fortune to take birth in a Muslim family, yet he committed the most abominable act of adopting Hinduism. Because of this, it would be appropriate to throw his body in the Gaṅgā, so that his *ruh* (soul) will writhe there for eternity.”

Although all the *yavanas* heeded the order of the Kāzī and tried to lift the body of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to throw it in the Gaṅgā, he could not be moved. While he was enraptured in his blissful trance, Śrī Viśvambhara [the maintainer of all living entities] entered his body. With Śrī Viśvambhara situated there, who had the power to move Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura? The mighty *yavanas* tried to push the body of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura from all sides, but he continued to lie motionless, like a pillar. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was entirely unaware of the external world, due to being fully immersed in the ocean of remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He did not even know where his body was – in outer space, on Earth, or in the Gaṅgā. He always carried the Lord in his heart. His absorption was like that of Prahlāda Mahārāja, who also had no awareness of the external world, due to being ever submerged in the remembrance of Śrī Bhagavān. This kind of rapture was not unusual for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

THE POWER OF NĀMA-BHAJANA

In reality, no one was capable of even touching the body of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but in order to instruct to the world the topmost ideal of tolerance, he accepted the terribly cruel beating of the *yavanas*, just as Śrī Hanumān was voluntarily bound by the *brahmāstra* weapon sent by Indrajit, in order to maintain everyone's respect for it. By this, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura also showed that although those averse to *bhakti* – the *anyābhilāṣīs* (those with desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa), the *karmīs*, and the *māyāvādīs* – may perform many outrageous acts against a devotee, the devotee never gives up his *nāma-bhajana*. If a person takes shelter of *harināma* with resolute determination, then no one in this world has the power to cause him harm. Śrī Nāma Prabhu will Himself certainly protect him. For these reasons, when Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura returned somewhat to external consciousness, he allowed the *yavanas* to do as they desired. Otherwise, who could throw someone like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, whose protector is Śrī Govinda Himself, in the Gaṅgā?

satya satya haridāsa—jagat-īśvara
caitanya-candra mahā-mukhya anucara
 Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.142)

It is certain that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is one of the greatest followers of Śrī Caitanya-candra, the Lord of this universe.

The *yavanas* had been unable to move Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's body even an inch, though they had tried to do so in many ways. They became astonished that they were now able to move his body effortlessly, and they threw his body in the Gaṅgā. As he was carried away by the river's current, he drowned in the ocean of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. After some time, by the Supreme Lord's desire, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura fully returned to his senses. In other words, he regained external consciousness after fainting in *prema*. In supreme bliss, he reached the bank of the Gaṅgā and then, while loudly chanting

the holy name, walked to the village of Phuliyā. There was not even a single bruise visible on his body. Moreover, his body was even more effulgent than before. People could not believe their eyes when they saw that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was still alive, even though it seemed he had been beaten to death and thrown in the Gaṅgā by the *yavanas*. The news spread like wildfire. Seeing his astonishing power, the *yavanas*’ intentions to harm him left their hearts, and their minds became free of contamination. Whoever offered *praṇāma* at his feet with reverence and humility, understanding him to be a liberated soul, became free from the conditioning of material life.

THE KING PRAYS AT HIS FEET

When the news of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s apparent resurrection reached the king, he came running and fell at the feet of Haridāsa Ṭhākura to beg forgiveness.

“You are truly a *mahā-pīr* (perfected soul),” said the king. “The *yogīs* and *jñānīs* only profess to be perfected souls, but you have actually achieved perfection. I have come here only to receive your *darśana*. Please be merciful and forgive all my offenses. To you, both friends and enemies are equal. Not to speak of me, nobody in this universe has the power to know you. I am just an insignificant human. Without understanding your glories, I have committed a heinous offense at your feet. Now you can stay on the bank of the Gaṅgā, in a secluded cave or anywhere, according to your desire. You may do whatever you like; no one will create any obstacle for you. Please bestow your merciful glance upon me and forgive the unpardonable offenses committed by this extremely sinful and abominable being.”

How astonishing are the supramundane glories of the *paramahansa mahā-bhāgavata*⁴ Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura! The king had been completely devoid of *bhakti* and filled with animosity towards Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Controlled by vehement anger,

4 Topmost, swan-like devotee of the Lord.

he had ordered his soldiers to bring Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in front of him and punish him brutally. But in the end, that very same atrociously sinful person, who had been completely opposed to Śrī Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, became astonished and charmed upon seeing the brilliant epitome of forgiveness and tolerance shown by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. The king began to worship Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's lotus feet, understanding him to be a *mahāpuruṣa* sent by the Supreme Lord. Not only that, but that atheistic *mahā-aparādhī*, burning in the fire of remorse, begged forgiveness for his offenses. He even felt compelled to offer prayers at the lotus feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

After showering his mercy on the king and other Muslims, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, while loudly chanting *harināma*, arrived in the assembly of *brāhmaṇas* in Phuliyā. Influenced by the narrow-minded sectarian views and animosity toward *bhakti* prevalent in society at that time, some so-called *brāhmaṇas* had not accepted Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura as a pure devotee. After hearing of his extraordinary and astonishing potency, however, the dignified *brāhmaṇas* now accepted him as such. As soon as they had *darśana* of him, they joyfully broke out into an uproarious *kīrtana*. Upon hearing *hari-kīrtana*, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura danced exuberantly. His transcendental form manifested symptoms of ecstasy (*aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāva*), such as the shedding of tears and horripilation, as well as laughter, fainting, and roaring. Immersed in *prema-rasa*, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura sometimes fell to the ground. The *brāhmaṇas* were enraptured. After some time, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura composed himself and sat down and the *brāhmaṇas* also sat, surrounding him on all sides.

HE ACCEPTS THE YAVANAS' PERSECUTION OF HIM AS A GIFT FROM BHAGAVĀN

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura considered himself to be an ordinary living entity bound by the reactions to his previous *karma* (action). In great humility he said, "O respectable

brāhmaṇas, please do not feel sorry about the punishment I had to face. In reality, I received this punishment from the Lord Himself, as the fruit of a frightful offense: hearing criticism of Him. It was Bhagavān’s special mercy to forgive me and give me such a small punishment. Otherwise, I would have received the due punishment for hearing blasphemy of the Lord, which is residence in the hell named Kumbhipāka. The Lord gave me a fitting punishment for my offense, so that I shall never repeat the same mistake again.”

Om viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda has clarified the above statements of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 16.166):

(Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura thought to himself,) “It is due to the faults of my previous misdeeds and to my aversion to Bhagavān that I faced the punishment of having to hear words that opposed Him. While following the *dharma* of tolerance, I did not appropriately counter the piercing words of atheistic people, and that is why Bhagavān has punished me in this way.”

Bhagavān issues severe punishment to those who, in the name of tolerance, do not attempt to defeat the statements of those who blaspheme Him and His devotees.

Even after hearing the criticism of Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas, the members of the *prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya*⁵ try to pass off their detestable duplicity as Vaiṣṇava etiquette. For this reason, they will certainly attain a ghastly, contemptible destination.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura certainly exemplified the top-most ideal of the *dharma* of tolerance, but the hypocritical *prākṛta-sahajiyās* try to artificially imitate Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s tolerance, and thus they receive many different types of suffering.

5 Those who understand the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord to be mundane and think that transcendental truth is attained by material practice.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Mahā-bhāgavata paramahansa Vaiṣṇavas naturally possess a heart that is free of all criticism and so on. They do not pay even the slightest heed to the criticism, glorification, idle talks, gossip, and other discussions indulged in by others. However, when *prākṛta-sahajiyās* attempt to imitate such *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas, having not reached that advanced stage, their conduct can only be called abhorrent and deceitful. For this they must certainly suffer. In order to make the duplicitous *prākṛta-sahajiyās* understand this point, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura brought up the matter of karmic reactions as suffered by ordinary persons. The *prākṛta-sahajiyās* are subject to the reactions of their actions, but Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who is the crest-jewel among liberated souls and forever engaged in chanting *harināma*, is not bound by such reactions. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has addressed this point in the fourth verse of *Śrī Nāmāṣṭaka*:

*yad-brahma-sākṣāt-kṛti-niṣṭhayāpi
vināsam āyāti vinā na bhogaiḥ
apāiti nāma! sphuraṇena tat te
prārabdha-karmeti virauti vedaḥ*

Without undergoing any suffering, a devotee's *prārabdha-karma* (fructifying reactions to previous acts) cannot be eliminated, even by resolute meditation on impersonal *brahma*. However, O Master, such *karma* is at once uprooted by Your appearance as *śrī nāma* on the tip of his tongue [in the form of *nāmābhāsa*, a semblance of the pure holy name]. The Vedas also loudly declare this fact.

[In his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Ādī-khaṇḍa* 16.167, 168, 169, and 171), Śrīla Prabhupāda further states:]

That foolish person who, misinterpreting the real import of the verse of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* beginning *taror api sahiṣṇunā*, feigns politeness and tolerance upon hearing the blasphemy

of Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas and poses as being elevated and liberal in valor, should be understood as undergoing the reactions of a grave offense.

The endeavors one makes with the senses to receive the gratification of collecting material prestige should not be mistaken for *hari-bhajana*. Therefore, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, in targeting the great fault of the foolish *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, who make a show of deceitful humility, instructed the whole world by humbly saying, “It would have been befitting if Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas were to punish me, a great offender, who did nothing to confront blasphemy against them, with a more severe punishment. However, Bhagavān is supremely merciful; He freed me from this offense through the tiny punishment of being brutally assaulted by the guards. By doing so, He has only demonstrated His great *amandodaya-dayā*⁶, which has left me feeling extremely happy and satisfied. I twisted the meaning and purport of the verse beginning *tat te ’nukampām* mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.8),⁷ which is why I did not protest. This was my grave offense.

It is mentioned in the scriptures that he who does not protest upon hearing the criticism of Bhagavān is an atheist who must go to the exceedingly torturous hell named Kumbhipāka.

With the intention of teaching the *prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya* practicing this [gross misinterpretation of the term ‘humility;’] Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “From now on, I will never hear the blasphemy of Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas while priding myself as a Vaiṣṇava under the cover of *trṇād*

6 Compassion that is *amanda*, or never causing inauspiciousness.

7 “One who accepts as Your mercy the results of his own actions as well as the happiness and distress of his *prārabdha-karma*, who endures them with an undisturbed mind, and who maintains his life by offering himself unto You by body, mind, and words, is eligible to attain Your lotus feet, which are the shelter of liberation” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8).

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

*api sunīcena*⁸ and the veneer of *taror api sahiṣṇunā*⁹. I have received a suitable lesson. Bhagavān is supremely merciful; He taught me by giving me an insignificant punishment for my grave offense.”

Unfortunately, the members of the *prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya*, who are offenders of the holy name (*nāma-aparādhis*), fail to understand the real purport and essence of these statements by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

After some days, the atheistic *yavanas* met with the same miserable condition that all tyrants receive as a result of bearing hostility toward the Vaiṣṇavas. It is said in *Skanda Purāna*:

*hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi
vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣam
darśane patanāni ṣaṭ*

One falls down to a degraded position by these six types of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* – to kill a Vaiṣṇava, to slander him, to bear malice against him, to fail to welcome or please him, to display anger toward him, and to not feel happiness upon seeing him.

In accordance with this infallible ruling of scriptures, those *yavanas* [who neither begged forgiveness nor repented] contracted ghastly diseases, such as tuberculosis and cholera, and were destroyed, along with their families.

8 From the third verse of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, meaning ‘more humble than a blade of grass.’

9 Also from the third verse of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, meaning ‘more tolerant than a tree.’



CHAPTER EIGHT

THE POISONOUS SNAKE

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura resided alone in a cave on the bank of the Gaṅgā, meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Chanting throughout the day and night, he would complete three lakhs of *nāma* (300,000 names). That venerable, great soul was the spiritual master of the entire universe and a crest-jewel in the liberated Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* lineage. He performed *kīrtana* and *śravaṇa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name with realization of the non-difference between Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the possessor of the name (*nāmī-kṛṣṇa*), and His holy name (*nāma*), form (*rūpa*), qualities (*guṇa*), speciality of His associates (*parikara-vaiśiṣṭya*), and pastimes (*līlā*). Through this, he taught the people of this world how to remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes.

There are those who, with an impure and lustful heart that is seized by longing for worldly pleasures, give up hearing and audibly chanting *śrī nāma* without offense. Instead they put on an artificial display of meditating on the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (*līlā-smaraṇa*). They do this to satisfy their material senses. Their imitative *līlā-smaraṇa* is contrary to the service of the Lord and is therefore nothing but an expression of their thirst for sensual enjoyment.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

By the influence of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *bhajana*, his cave became like Vaikuṅṭha in the spiritual world. Our *ācāryas* have written:

*je-dina grhe, bhajana dekhi,
grhete goloka bhāya*

[My home is transformed into Goloka Vṛndāvana when I see *bhajana* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa being performed there.]

While considering the import of these words, it is important to understand that the cave in which *nāmācārya* Ṭhākura Mahāśaya sat while loudly chanting the supramundane syllables of *śrī harināma*, was equivalent to Vaikuṅṭha-dhāma, which is the pastime place of *nāmī-kṛṣṇa*, the embodiment of the transcendental name. The heart of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the topmost preacher, is composed of pure goodness (*śuddha-sattva*).

An enormous, frightening snake lived within that cave. Its poisonous fumes were so pungent that anyone who came to hear the instructions of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura or have his *darśana* could not bear them, and felt severe burning on their body. They could not remain in the cave for long, but Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was completely oblivious to the fumes.

All the *brāhmaṇas* assembled in an effort to determine why entering this cave burned them so.

In that village lived a physician with a sound knowledge of poisons. When *brāhmaṇas* brought him to the cave, he immediately understood the cause. “An extremely poisonous snake lives here,” he said. “This intense burning is caused by its poisonous fumes.”

Upon hearing this, those present said to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, “Haridāsajī! This cave is inhabited by a most terrible, poisonous snake. Its fumes alone cause searing, intolerable pain. The snake is so dangerous that this cave is not a suitable place for your residence; it may harm you at any time. It would be better for you to stay elsewhere.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who possessed one-pointed faith in *śrī nāma*, did not want to harm the snake. “I have been living in this cave for quite some time,” he said, “and as of yet, I have never experienced any such burning on my body. Although I have never felt inconvenienced by the snake’s poison, it is a matter of distress that you are all unable to tolerate it. Therefore, if all of you want me to leave this cave, then for your welfare and satisfaction I declare this: if a great poisonous snake truly resides in this cave, and if it has not left by tomorrow, I will certainly leave this place myself. All of you please be peaceful, and without fear, chant the glories of the Supreme Lord.”¹

Everyone became calm and began to sing the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with one-pointed concentration.

Those people, who had firm belief in the words of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, were now devoid of fear. As they drank through the cups of their ears the all-auspicious narrations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa emanating from his lotus mouth, they became immersed in sheer ecstasy. At that moment, an astonishing event took place. Upon hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura say that he would leave the next day, that most marvelous and frightening snake, with stripes of yellow, white, and blue and its hood glittering with a brilliant jewel, decided to leave instead. Right before everyone’s eyes, it slowly slithered out of its hole and away from the cave. The sight of it filled those present with fear, and they chanted, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!”

As the snake left the cave, the burning poison it emitted left with it.

1 Śrīla Prabhupāda has mentioned in his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 16.186–188): After hearing the words of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, one is reminded of the words spoken by Śrīla Parikṣit Mahārāja to countless *rājarṣis*, *maharṣis*, *devarṣis*, and *brahmarṣis*: “There is no harm if the snake bird, Takṣaka, sent by the son of the *brāhmaṇa* Śṛṅgi, comes and bites me, but you should give up all kinds of mundane talks, which are opposed [to devotion] to Kṛṣṇa, and spend every moment reciting topics related to Him.”

Witnessing the fearsome snake leaving the cave by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s mystical potency and magnanimity, even those *brāhmaṇas* who revered yogic powers, and who were antagonistic towards *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* now developed strong faith in him. These ancestral *brāhmaṇas*, who were bound by their *karma* and due to be punished by Yama, had considered Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s birth in a *yavana* family to be like that of ordinary living entities taking birth in low-class families: the result of their past misdeeds. They thus thought, “This person is inferior to us pious *brāhmaṇas*.”

Now, however, having seen the glory of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura that day, they began to regard him as the topmost *brāhmaṇa*.

It is not astonishing that this snake left the cave by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s influence. After all, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s mere glance undoes the shackles of ignorance, and even Bhagavān Himself never acts in opposition to his words.

In reality, the only people who meet their demise through snakebite are those who cause distress to other living entities, are averse to Śrī Hari, materially engrossed, and given to harming others. *Mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, however, possess such immense potency that even the most fearsome of poisonous snakes cause them no fear or disturbance. In fact, such snakes obediently follow their orders, which are beneficial for all.

Only those souls who have received the mercy of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura can become free from offenses. Under the shelter of *śuddha-nāma*, they are able to devote themselves to the service of Śrī Hari at every moment. It is then that their ignorance – the cause of their desire to enjoy – is destroyed at the root. Even Bhagavān comes under the control of such people by the power of the mercy of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and service to him.

CHAPTER NINE

THE KING OF SERPENTS GLORIFIES ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

One day, a snake charmer visited a rich man's house. Immediately upon being 'bitten' by the fangless snake he chanted *mantras*. Under the influence of those *mantras*, he became possessed by the presiding deity of serpents, *nāga-rāja* Vāsuki. Due to the powerful effect of the *mantras* and his associates' singing and playing of *mṛdaṅga* and cymbals, all present became mesmerized.

By the will of providence, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura arrived at the scene. He stood to the side and watched the spectacle. *Nāga-rāja* Vāsuki himself – that is, the devotee of Śrī Viṣṇu, Ananta Śeṣa – was situated in the snake charmer's body by the power of the *mantras*. Before everyone's eyes, Vāsuki began to dance freely through the snake charmer, in the manner of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of all arts, when He climbed atop the serpent Kāliya in Kāliya-daha and performed the *tāṇḍava nṛtya* (a frenzied and vigorous dance). The snake charmer also sang a song describing how Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestowed mercy upon the evil serpent Kāliya, on the pretext of punishing him.

Hearing the song about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy from the mouth of the snake charmer, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura became entranced. He attained a state of internal absorption and fell

unconscious, showing no signs of life, not even breathing. When he returned to consciousness after some time, he roared loudly and began to dance in ecstasy. Seeing *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura Śrī Haridāsa dancing absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the snake charmer respectfully stood some distance away and faithfully watched.

As Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura became completely absorbed in love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his body showed transcendental symptoms such as trembling, horripilation, and the shedding of tears. While hearing and remembering the incomparable compassion that Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestowed on Kāliya, who was the cruelest of those in the wicked snake dynasty, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura began to roll on the ground and loudly wail.

As they watched the dancing of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was absorbed in *prema*, the snake charmer and his associates sang that song again and again. For some time Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura remained completely absorbed [lying inert]. Eventually the snake charmer again resumed his dancing. The people standing there were delighted to watch Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's dance and ecstatic moods. Everyone collected dust from wherever Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's feet had touched the ground, and faithfully smeared it on their bodies.

Seeing everyone smearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's foot-dust on their bodies, a wicked-minded pseudo-*brāhmaṇa*, who considered the unworldly moods, actions, and mannerisms of Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura to be ordinary, wanted to mimic them.

That fallen *brāhmaṇa* thought to himself, "Because of their blind faith, when common foolish people witness a person's ordinary dancing and singing, they revere him. These people are offering Haridāsa excessive respect and prestige upon seeing his commonplace display of a few emotions. He is not even a Hindu by birth! I am a highborn Hindu *brāhmaṇa*, so I cannot estimate how much fame, adoration, and prestige I would receive if I danced about like an actor, deceitfully

imitating the mannerisms and the eight transcendental ecstatic transformations exhibited by the Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura.”

Thinking in this way, the atheistic, sanctimonious *prākṛta-sahajiyā* suddenly began to tremble and then fell to the ground, feigning unconsciousness.

Understanding the imposter’s duplicity, the snake charmer angrily beat him with a cane. He mercilessly and unremittingly lashed the atheist’s head, arms, legs, and so on. For some time, the imposter tolerated the beating, the snake charmer being in no mood to stop. When the imposter could no longer endure the thrashing, he jumped up and fled, screaming, “O Father! O Mother! I am being killed!”

The carefree snake charmer then resumed his joyful dancing. The spectators, however, were left utterly astonished. With folded hands they asked him, “O snake charmer, when Haridāsa Ṭhākura fainted in ecstatic rapture after his dance, you stood to the side with folded hands. When this *brāhmaṇa* was in the very same state, why did you beat him so ruthlessly?”

Hearing the people’s question, Ananta Śeṣa, who was situated in the snake charmer’s body, began to speak through him: “The answer to your question is extremely confidential. Although it should not be disclosed, I will tell you. When you saw Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura dancing in ecstasy, you reverentially smeared the dust of his feet on your body. Upon seeing this, the deceitful *brāhmaṇa* made a drama of falling unconscious, hoping to gain prestige. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is free from duplicity and by nature is a loving, pure devotee of the Lord. But this degraded *brāhmaṇa* is an abominable *prākṛta-sahajiyā*. It was only with a desire to rival a pure and sincere devotee that he mimicked Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. His only motivation was to acquire cheap worldly fame from ignorant people. He mimicked this *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura for these reasons, and also out of hatred and envy. Therefore, I have appropriately punished him.”

**PURE VAIṢṆAVAS DANCE
TO DELIGHT ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA'S SENSES**

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda writes in his *Anubhāṣya* of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 16.228–231):

Like this degraded *brāhmaṇa*, other deceitful, atheistic people cheat the public by displaying an artificial reflection of a semblance of spiritual emotion, in order to be seen as a great devotee. Those who imitate the transcendental activities of a *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇava while desiring the worldly prestige of being a 'bhakta', lack any tendency to serve the lotus feet of Bhagavān. They dress themselves as devotees of Kṛṣṇa and cheat people only to gratify their own mundane senses. *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, which is free from deceit, does not exist wherever the symptoms of such sanctimonious hypocrites (*baka-dharmī*) and those who make an external display of religiousness (*dharmā-dhvajīs*) are found. Pride, cheating, and all extraneous motives unrelated to the service of Kṛṣṇa are found wherever such faults are present.

Watching the dancing of the Lord's pure devotees, which is saturated with *kṛṣṇa-prema*, unbinds one from this material realm. On the other hand, watching the feigned activities and mannerisms of *prākṛta-sahajiyās* greatly increases the miseries of material bondage. Pure Vaiṣṇavas dance to delight Śrī Kṛṣṇa's senses. A non-duplicitous mood of a Vaiṣṇava is bound to arise in one who witnesses such dancing. In contrast, the detestable endeavors of impostors produce only inauspicious results. When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura exhibits transcendental dancing pastimes (*nṛtya-līlā*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His associates come under the control of his non-duplicitous love and dance with him. *Darśana* of that transcendental dancing frees the most fortunate living entities of this world from sins accumulated over many lifetimes. They become purified, having acquired *bhakti-unmukhī-sukṛti* (spiritual merit that leads to *bhakti*). Such dancing even purifies the entire universe.

THE PURPOSE OF HIS LOW BIRTH

Vāsuki continued, “He is truly a servant of Śrī Hari, and thus his name is Śrīla Haridāsa. Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra eternally resides in his heart. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is endowed with tender affection for all living entities – be they moving or non-moving, and he acts for their welfare. Whenever Bhagavān descends to this material world, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura descends with Him. For this very reason, He is an eternal associate of the Lord. As such, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura has never committed any offense toward Śrī Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas. Unlike the ordinary men of this world, he never deviates from his service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, even in his dreams.”

*tilārdha ūhāna saṅga je-jīvera haya
se avaśya pāya kṛṣṇa-pāda-padmaśraya*

*brahmā-sivo haridāsa-hena bhakta-saṅga
niravadhi karite cittera baḍa raṅga*

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

*‘adhama-kulete jadi viṣṇu-bhakta haya
tathāpi se-i se pūjya’—sarva-śāstre kaya*

*uttama-kulete janmi’ śrī-kṛṣṇa nā bhaje
kule tā’ra ki karibe, narakete maje*

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

*prahlāda je-hena daitya, kapi hanumāna
ei-mata haridāsa nīca-jāti nāma*

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

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

*sparśera ki dāya, dekhilei haridāsa
chiṇḍe’ sarva-jīvera anādi karma-pāsa*

*haridāsa āśraya karibe jei jana
tā’ne dekhile o khaṇḍe’ saṁsāra-bandhana*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.235–244)

“If, by the fruit of great fortune amassed over many lifetimes, a soul attains Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s association, even for less than a fraction of a moment, he is sure to attain the shelter of Bhagavān’s lotus feet.

“Even the demigods headed by Brahmā and Śiva yearn to be blessed by the association of *mahā-bhāgavata* devotees like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

“Due to the results of pious or impious activities, conditioned souls take birth in higher or lower species of life. Their birth-class simply indicates the fruits of their *karma*. From a spiritual point of view, the prestige of caste or ancestry has no value. To exemplify this fundamental truth, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared in a *yavana* family by the will of the all-auspicious Lord.

“If one who has taken birth in a low-class family performs *bhajana* of Lord Viṣṇu, he is worthy of worship.’ Indeed, all the Vaiṣṇava scriptures say this.

“If one has taken birth in a high-class family as a result of his pious *karma*, but fails to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he is sure to fall down to hell. His high birth cannot save him.

“To demonstrate the truth of these Vedic statements, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura took birth in a low-class family.

“By the desire of the Lord, Śrīla Haridāsa appeared in a lowly *yavana* family. Similarly, Śrī Prahlāda took birth in a family of demons hostile toward Viṣṇu, and Śrī Hanumān took birth in the animal species. Generally, men desire to become purified by touching the demigods or taking bath in the Gaṅgā. But the demigods headed by Brahmā and even the supremely pure

Bhagavatī Gaṅgā, who emanates from the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu, desire to be blessed by the touch of *mahā-bhāgavata paramahansa vaiṣṇava-ācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who is the representative of all the demigods.

“To say nothing of touching Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, a living entity’s bondage, born of ignorance since time immemorial, is cut to pieces simply by seeing him.

“Just by seeing those devotees who have taken shelter of *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa as their spiritual master, a conditioned soul is released from material bondage.

“You are all most fortunate, for your inquiries allowed me to extol some of the glories of a devotee of the Supreme Lord. If I were to sing the glories of the transcendental qualities of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura with hundreds of mouths for hundreds of years, I still would not find their end.

“I assure you that a person who even once utters the name of the venerable Vaiṣṇava Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura attains the abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Having spoken thus, the king of snakes [speaking through the snake charmer] fell silent. Having heard the glories of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, everyone became extremely pleased.

CHAPTER TEN

THE PLIGHT OF THE FAITHLESS IN ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA’S TIME

Materialists are always oblivious to Śrī Hari. Somehow or other they remain very far away from *bhakti*, which aims at remembrance of Śrī Hari, and are instead mad to gratify their material senses. Even during Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s time, people were bewildered by *māyā* and exceedingly obsessed with satisfying their senses; therefore, they had become completely devoid of devotion to Lord Viṣṇu. Although the scriptures sing about the limitless glories of the holy name, atheistic people would not bother to study them. Nobody could understand why Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura performed *harināma-saṅkīrtana* or what his motive was. This is because Śrī Gaurasundara had not yet begun propagating *bhakti* in the form of love for chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name (*kṛṣṇa-nāma-prema*) in this world.

Due to the absence of *hari-kathā* and *kīrtana*, people had become devoid of devotion to Śrī Viṣṇu, and were therefore unable to understand the exalted position of Vaiṣṇavas. Thus they envied the Vaiṣṇavas, disregarding and ridiculing them.

Avoiding the association of such envious people, all the devotees would meet in a secluded place and perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. The atheistic miscreants, knowing nothing of *bhagavad-bhakti*, could not tolerate this. They would furiously ridicule them, saying, “All these *brāhmaṇas* who loudly perform

harināma-kīrtana are sentimentalists and employ many deceptive tricks to fill their bellies and earn their livelihood. O brothers, the way these hypocrites loudly perform *kīrtana* of Bhagavān's names is against the verdict of the scriptures. They only make a show of a religious performance to fill their bellies. A terrible famine will consequently befall our country. These people will only bring misfortune to the world by introducing such a practice of begging.”

Some godless *smārtas* would say, “It is now Cāturmāsya, when Bhagavān rests for four months. But these hypocrites are still screaming out His name. Is this appropriate? If their shouting interrupts the Lord's rest, then He will certainly become angry. His anger will lead to famine; there's no doubt about it.”

Hearing this, others would angrily say, “If at any time we lack grains or if the cost of food increases, then we will catch those people and give them a good beating.”

Someone with a little knowledge of Ekādaśī said, “It is written in the scriptures that on the day of Ekādaśī one should stay awake the whole night and perform the Lord's *kīrtana*. But what is the need to do such loud *kīrtana* on all other days?”

These evil-minded people thought, “There is no use in loudly calling out the Lord's name over and over again. Since the living entities are bound by the fruits of their action (*karma*), and because the Lord is also subservient to the laws of *karma*, the conditioned living entities only increase their bile secretion by calling out the name of the Lord.”

In this way, those who were neither devotees nor entirely atheistic put forth such useless statements. When any of these statements reached the ears of the Vaiṣṇavas, they would feel aggrieved. Nonetheless, they did not give up performing *harināma-saṅkīrtana*.

Ulterior desires and the practices of *karma* (reward seeking activity), *yoga* (pursuit of mystic power), or *jñāna* (philosophical speculation) harbor deceit. Neither such pretense of service to the Lord nor a direct act against Him can ever be called *bhakti*.

However, the people of that time were greatly taken by such anti-devotional considerations. The conditioned souls’ physical and mental propensities deter them from the path of pure *bhakti*, thereby concealing her glories even as they blaze before them.

THE VAIṢṆAVAS’ EVERY ACT BRINGS AUSPICIOUSNESS TO THIS WORLD

Such false accusations against the Lord’s devotees never bring the living entities auspiciousness; rather, they lead them to hell. Through *kīrtana*, the devotees render Bhagavān the highest service. It is not that Vaiṣṇavas, out of laziness, become greedy for the hard-earned money of ordinary people; they do not enjoy or accept any part of it. Rather, the Vaiṣṇavas utilize the objects ordinary people have amassed for their sense gratification, in the service of Śrī Hari, and thereby they act for everyone’s eternal benefit.

Seeing the world averse to Bhagavān and *bhakti*, the supremely compassionate Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura felt great pain in his heart. He fearlessly continued to loudly chant *harināma*.

Due to their sinful tendencies, many people did not wish to hear the pure *harināma-kīrtana* coming from the lotus mouth of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Only extremely unfortunate people develop such an inauspicious and sinful propensity.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was a sincere servant of the non-dual Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Although most of the society was inimical toward *bhakti*, he was devoid of even the slightest fear arising from material absorption. Even after facing many types of difficulties and impediments set forth by wicked persons, he never stopped engaging in *hari-saṅkīrtana*.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA
PROVES LOUD CHANTING
TO BE SUPREME

There are two systems in this world that determine one's caste (*varṇa*). The first, seminal, is in regard to the particular lineage one was born into as a son or daughter. In this more common system, one obtains one's father's caste in accordance with his father's lineage. The son of a *brāhmaṇa* is considered to be a *brāhmaṇa*, and the son of a *vaiśya* (merchant or agriculturer) is considered to be a *vaiśya*. In the second system, one's caste is determined by dint of one's personal qualities (*guṇa*) and activities (*karma*). For example, although Rāvaṇa took birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family, his qualities and activities mark him as a demon, not a *brāhmaṇa*.

The natures of human beings are divided into two categories: pious and wicked. Vaiṣṇavas, who are engaged in the service of Bhagavān, are pious. And arrogant persons averse to the service of Bhagavān and devoid of good qualities are sinful, regardless of the caste they were born into. If a person born in a *brāhmaṇa* family commits violence against a Vaiṣṇava, this wicked act classifies him as sinful. A person who is envious of Śrī Viṣṇu, devotion to Śrī Viṣṇu, and the devotees of Śrī Viṣṇu may be deemed a *brāhmaṇa* by the community of the foolish and wicked, but a pious society considers his

demonic propensities and designates him as a wicked person (*durjana*) only.

In the village of Harinadī in the district of Yaśohara, there lived a wicked *brāhmaṇa* who was fit to be called *durjana*. One day, by the will of providence, he was sitting in the company of other *brāhmaṇas* when Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura passed by. Because this cruel *brāhmaṇa* was naturally envious of the devotees, he burned in anger as soon as his wicked vision fell upon the Lord's dear most Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was constantly engaged in loudly chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*.

This ignorant, atheistic, degraded *brāhmaṇa* stopped Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and angrily put forth unreasonable arguments. “O Haridāsa! What have you started? Do you not know that the scriptures state that the holy name of Bhagavān should only be chanted in the mind? No scripture sanctions loud congregational chanting of *harināma*. This practice of yours is unauthorized. Who gave you the foolish idea to chant loudly? These scholars here are greatly learned. Answer my questions before them.”

Mahā-bhāgavata Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura never desired honor for himself (*amāni*) but gave all honor to others (*mānada*). He spoke gently and with deep humility, “It is greatly learned people like you who know the glories of the holy name. I have not the slightest understanding of the subject. I have not heard the scriptural descriptions of *śrī harināma-kīrtana*'s incomparable glories from those on the path of logic and argument, but I have heard those glories from the lips of devotees who are thoroughly versed in the truth of the holy name (*nāma-tattva*) and who chant the holy name purely (*śuddha-nāma*).

“Whatever knowledge I have, I present to you all. The result achieved by chanting the holy name loudly is one hundred times greater than that achieved by chanting it in the mind. Therefore, the scriptures never condemn loud chanting,

but rather extol its supreme glories. It is stated, ‘*uccaiḥ śata-guṇam bhavet* – one obtains one hundred times more benefit by chanting out loud [than by chanting in the mind].’ ”

In his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 16.273), the most worshipful Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explains the inner meaning of this verse:

Those who say that the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is only to be chanted softly while doing *japa* are incapable of realizing the true essence of the scriptures. The three names of address – Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma – are to be softly chanted in *japa* and loudly sung in *kīrtana*. Bhagavān’s names can be chanted in the mind or out loud. If one chants loudly, many people can hear Bhagavān’s names. By this, everyone obtains auspiciousness. The act of hearing the Lord’s holy name (*śravaṇa*) is prominent among the nine limbs of *bhakti* (*navadhā-bhakti*). If saintly people do not chant *hari-kīrtana* loudly, then no one will become qualified for *śravaṇa*. Therefore, this unreasonable argument by persons averse to chanting loudly is certainly incited by Kali.

In [the *dharmas* (processes) of the previous ages, namely,] meditation (*dhyāna*), sacrifice (*yajña*), and deity worship (*arcana*), *kīrtana* of the holy name is nearly imperceptible. Because of this, there are many disputes in Kali-yuga regarding these practices. Those who have been spoiled by Kali create obstructions in the *hari-bhajana* of those who pursue the ultimate goal of life. Those practicing the *dharmas* of Satya-, Tretā-, and Dvāpara-yuga – meditation, sacrifice, and deity worship, respectively – abstain from entering into argument with persons spoiled by Kali. However, to remove their wicked tendencies and bring about their eternal welfare, those who chant *harināma* extol *śrī nāma*’s unlimited glories. Thus the hearts of the wicked, which have been infected by [a taste for] argument, obtain the proper medicine.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Upon hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s words, the wicked *brāhmaṇa* grew angry. “You are saying that loud chanting gives one hundred times more benefit. Tell us now the reason for this.”

Numerous statements from the Vedic scriptures began to manifest on the tongue of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was most learned, and he exuberantly described the glories of loudly chanting the holy name. “My dear Sir,” he said, “I will now repeat whatever the Vedas, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and other scriptures say on this matter. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the king of all scriptures, states:

*yan-nāma grhṇann akhilān
śrotṛṇ ātmānam eva ca
sadyaḥ punāti kim bhūyas
tasya sprṣtaḥ padā hi te*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.34.17)

[A learned demigod named Sudarśana, who possessed the body of a serpent, said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa:] ‘O Master, one who chants Your holy name becomes purified, along with all those who hear his chanting. How much more beneficial, then, is the touch of Your lotus feet?’

“O *brāhmaṇa*, when the transcendental sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s holy name emanates from the lotus mouth of a *sādhu*, a *bhakta*, or a Vaiṣṇava, it enters the ears of living entities eager to hear it and thereby frees them from the bondage of *māyā*. This is because the transcendental holy name removes the living entity’s inclination toward gratification and awakens his drive to serve the Transcendental Object [Bhagavān]. By chanting the Lord’s names, a living entity becomes *jīvan-mukta*, or liberated while in his present body. To attain liberation from material bondage, the conditioned living entities should approach a liberated soul for his mercy in the form of initiation (*mantra-dīkṣā*).”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura then explained the aforementioned verse as follows:

*paśu-pakṣī-kīṭa-ādi balite nā pare
śunilei harināma tā'rā saba tare*

*japile śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma āpane se tare
ucca-saṅkīrtane para upakāra kare*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.280–281)

“O *brāhmaṇa*, the animals, birds, insects, worms, etc. cannot utter the names of the Lord, but they are delivered simply by hearing them.

“When someone chants *harināma* in his mind, he delivers only himself. But when he chants *harināma* loudly, he brings about others’ true welfare, along with his own.

“Thus the scriptures proclaim that one receives one hundred times more benefit by chanting *harināma* out loud [than by chanting it in the mind].

*japato hari-nāmāni
sthāne śata-guṇādhikāḥ
ātmānam ca punāty uccair
japan śrotṛn punāti ca*

Nārādīya Purāṇa

(spoken by Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja)

The fruit of loudly performing *harināma-kīrtana* is one hundred times greater than that of chanting it in the mind. This is because while one who chants silently purifies only himself, one who chants loudly purifies both himself and all those who hear him.

“The purport is that although people generally chant in their mind for their own deliverance, Bhagavān is more pleased with one who chants Govinda’s names loudly to deliver not only himself but others as well.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

“There are other living entities, apart from human beings, who have a tongue and can make many kinds of sounds. Yet only humans can utter *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Someone may thus ask, ‘Trained birds can also utter *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma*, so can they also attain liberation?’ The answer is that imitating (*anukaraṇa*) and following (*anusaraṇa*) are entirely different. One may attain petty benefits through imitation, but one will not attain *śrī kṛṣṇa-prema*. The conclusion is that no non-human can utter *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma* in the true sense. It is also certain that a conditioned soul cannot gain auspiciousness until he receives the opportunity to chant or hear *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Even if a living entity is unable to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, he can still hear it from the devotees of the Lord (*bhagavad-bhaktas*). One’s life is truly useless if one has not obtained the qualification to even hear the transcendental name (*vaikuṅṭha-nāma*). By chanting it loudly, one brings success to the lives of all who hear. Because every living entity can be liberated in this very life by hearing *vaikuṅṭha-nāma*, loud *harināma-kīrtana* must never be the subject of argument or criticism. Please think for yourself: what fault is there in loudly chanting the name of Hari? It is beneficial in every respect.”

NĀMA-JAPA AND NĀMA-KĪRTANA

*keha āpanāre mātra karaye poṣaṇa
keha vā poṣaṇa kare sahasreka jana*

*duite ke baḍa, bhābi’ bujhaha āpane
ei abhiprāya guṇa ucca-saṅkīrtane*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.289–290)

“A selfish person maintains only himself, while someone else may maintain thousands of people as well. Now kindly tell me: who is the better of the two? The person loudly performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is not selfish; rather, he is a selfless benefactor. Therefore, a person who chants loudly is superior to one who chants softly.”

After hearing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s statements, which were replete with philosophical conclusions (*siddhānta*), the degraded *brāhmaṇa* became furious and spoke harshly. “Six primary philosophies are famous in India. The principles and conceptions of them all are largely faithful to the Vedas. Until now, the respective masters (*ācāryas*) of these six philosophies are Kapila, Patañjali, Kaṇāda, Akṣapāda, Jaiminī, and Vyāsa. From where has this Haridāsa emerged to become the *ācārya* of a ‘seventh philosophy’? I am seeing the path shown by the Vedas gradually disappearing. I have heard that at the end of Kali-yuga, *śūdras* (laborers) will study and teach the Vedas, but it has begun already, now, at the very beginning of Kali-yuga. With *śūdras* and *yavanas* like you already studying and teaching the Vedas, I cannot imagine the situation at the end of Kali-yuga. Alas! It is certainly the age of Kali. Influenced by inevitable time, people like Haridāsa have begun to destroy the Vedic path. What other new philosophies must we endure due to the influence of Kali?

“Posing as a transcendental philosopher, you are giving an explanation that contradicts those fruitive workers who are against *bhakti*. You do this to exalt yourself and to cunningly bring others under your control, so that you can gather delicious food from them. People such as you act in this way only to eat opulently at others’ houses.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s exceptional scriptural statements about the holy name only intensified the animalistic nature of that atheistic, degraded *brāhmaṇa*. He furiously cursed Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and vowed, “If Haridāsa’s explanation of the holy name’s glories differs from that of the scriptures, I will retaliate by publicly cutting off his nose and ears.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura did not respond to the harsh words of that conceited *brāhmaṇa*. Although aggrieved at heart, he smiled outwardly, and loudly chanting, continued on his way. All the other *brāhmaṇas* there were controlled by their sinful minds. They sat silently and did not give Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s statements due consideration.

DEMONIAC ‘BRĀHMAṆAS’

Those who support sinful people are themselves sinful. The evil people in that assembly did not counter the offensive words of that atheistic, degraded *brāhmaṇa*, what to speak of support the scripturally based statements of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. The true duty of *brāhmaṇas* is to perform *hari-bhajana*. A person averse to this duty is termed a demon (*rākṣasa*), even if he took birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family. Such people, upon their demise, suffer profuse punishment at the hands of Yamarāja. That was an assembly of *brāhmaṇas* in name only; factually they were only demons.

*kali-yuge rākṣasa-sakala vipra-ghare
janmibeka sujanera himsā karibāre*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.300)

In Kali-yuga, demoniac people who spite Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas take birth in *brāhmaṇa* families in order to harm the Vaiṣṇavas.

*rākṣasāḥ kalim āśritya
jāyante brahma-yoniṣu
utpannā brāhmaṇa-kule
bādhante śrotriyān kṛṣṇān*

Varāha Purāṇa

(spoken by Lord Śiva)

Taking shelter of Kali-yuga, demons take birth in *brāhmaṇa* families and harass those extremely rare virtuous souls who adopt the Vedic way of life.

*e saba viprera sparśa, kathā, namaskāra
dharma-śāstre sarvathā niṣedha karibāra*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.302)

Religious scriptures completely forbid one to touch, speak to, or offer *praṇāma* to such *brāhmaṇas*.

In his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* on the above verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura writes, “One should not even touch conceited *brāhmaṇas*, who are inimical to Śrī Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. If one touches such a *brāhmaṇa* by chance, then it is one’s duty to bathe fully clothed in the Gaṅgā. By conversing with such *brāhmaṇas*, one is sure to fall down. If one respects them by offering obeisance and so on, one will certainly deviate from the path of *viṣṇu-bhakti*. Therefore, authorized scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *dharma-śāstras* declare those who are against following Vaiṣṇava etiquette to be fallen, along with their families.”

*kim atra bahunoktena
brāhmaṇā ye hy avaiṣṇavāḥ
teṣāṃ sambhāṣaṇaṃ sparśaṃ
pramādenāpi varjayet*

Padma Purāṇa
(spoken by Lord Śiva)

There is no need to speak much on this subject. But (one thing you should always remember is that) one should not, even by mistake, speak to or touch a person who although a *brāhmaṇa* [by birth] is not a Vaiṣṇava.

*śvapākam iva nekṣeta
loke vipram avaiṣṇavam
vaiṣṇavo varṇa bāhyo ’pi
punāti bhuvana-trayam*

Padma Purāṇa

Just as it is improper, or prohibited [by *śāstra*], to see dog-eaters, it is also improper to see a *brāhmaṇa* who is not a Vaiṣṇava. Yet regardless of his caste, a Vaiṣṇava purifies the three worlds.

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*brāhmaṇa haiyā jadi avaiṣṇava haya
tabe tā'ra ālāpeha puṇya jāya kṣaya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.305)

One loses one's piety by conversing with someone who, although born a *brāhmaṇa*, is a non-devotee who has not been initiated into the Vaiṣṇava path.

That contemptible *brāhmaṇa*, who was envious of Vaiṣṇavas, was doomed to be punished for his offence at the feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Within a few days he contracted leprosy and his nose melted off. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura never cursed that wicked *vaiṣṇava-aparādhī* and atheist, nor did he desire inauspiciousness for him, yet the Lord punished the *brāhmaṇa* severely for his harsh criticism of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was aggrieved to see the pathetic condition of those averse to Śrī Hari and engrossed in worldly enjoyment. His heart melted in compassion and as he chanted “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa,” he would sigh deeply.

THE RESIDENTS OF ŚRĪ MĀYĀPURA WARMLY RECEIVE HIM

After some days, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura went to Śrī Māyāpura Navadvīpa, desiring to see the pure Vaiṣṇava associates of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. All the devotees became joyful to see him.

Śrīla Advaita Ācārya Prabhu had residences in both Śāntipura and Māyāpura. Sometimes he would stay in Śāntipura and at other times in Māyāpura. When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura arrived in Navadvīpa-Māyāpura, Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu happened to be there.

*ācārya-gosāñi haridāsere pāiyā
rākhilena prāṇa haite adhika kariyā*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.311)

Upon meeting Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Advaita Ācārya deemed him dearer than his own life and kept him there with utmost care.

All the Vaiṣṇavas had great affection for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura had deep respect for them.

Seeing the Vaiṣṇavas' affection for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the malevolent atheists shot at them with arrows of envious words. Hearing these words, the devotees sorrowfully discussed the pitiful condition of such wretched people.

At that time, people intoxicated by the *rasa* of worldly pleasure never endeavored to study or follow Vaiṣṇava scriptures like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Instead, they tried to satiate their senses. Despite this, the pure devotees increased each other's bliss by discussing *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. They held such discussions about their worshipable deities (*iṣṭa-goṣṭhī*), while staying far away from material enjoyment and desiring the highest, eternal welfare for the entire world.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PASTIMES WITH
ŚRĪMAN MAHĀPRABHU

In His early divine pastimes, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was known as Nimāi Paṇḍita. At that time, He played in a most charming manner in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, while keeping His real nature hidden. When He went to Gayā on the pretext of offering *śrāddha* (oblations) to His deceased father, He accepted initiation from Śrī Īśvara Purī. Thus “Nimāi the scholar” became “Nimāi the devotee.”

Previously, He had behaved like a restless and proud scholar. Due to the influence of His internal deluding potency, the Vaiṣṇavas did not understand His glories and would advise him to do *bhajana*. Some Vaiṣṇavas even tried to avoid Him. “Because Nimāi does not perform *bhajana*,” they thought, “He will just waste our time in useless argument.”

Yet upon His return from Gayā, [it was evident that] His nature had undergone a complete transformation. The words “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa” flowed continuously from His mouth, and streams of tears flowed from His eyes like the Gaṅgā and Yamunā rivers. Stricken by pangs of extreme separation, He would sometimes call out, “O Kṛṣṇa! O Lord of My life! Where have You gone, leaving Me behind?” He would then loudly lament and fall to the ground unconscious. Seeing the Lord’s

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state, all the Vaiṣṇavas – headed by Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura – came under His shelter. It was then that the Lord began to manifest *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, the religion of the current age (*yuga-dharma*), within this world.

In the beginning, the Lord would relish this chanting exclusively with devotees, behind closed doors in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita’s home.

FINDING ŚRĪ NITYĀNANDA PRABHU

One day, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu indirectly told the devotees of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu’s arrival in Navadvīpa. “Today I had an extraordinary dream,” He said, “wherein an exalted personality told Me, ‘I am Your brother; We shall get to know each other tomorrow.’”

“I told all of you earlier that we would soon receive the *darśana* of a great personality.

*cala haridāsa! cala śrīvāsa paṇḍita!
cāha giyā dekhi ke āise kon bhita*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 3.160)

“Go, Haridāsa! You also go, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita! Find out which great personality has come, and where he is.”

On the order of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the two *mahā-bhāgavatas* happily searched everywhere in Navadvīpa for this great personality, saying to one another, “It seems Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa has come.”

*ānande vihvala dūhe cāhiyā beḍāya
tilārdekha uddeśa kothāo nāhi pāya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 3.163)

Exhilarated, they continued searching everywhere, but found not the slightest indication of a new person’s arrival.

When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita found no one, despite searching throughout Navadvīpa for three *praharas* (nine hours), they returned to the Lord. “We found no one with the characteristics You described” they humbly submitted. “We looked in the homes of Vaiṣṇavas, in the *āśramas* of renunciates, in the homes of ordinary householders, and even in the homes of atheists antagonistic to the devotees, yet we were unsuccessful.”

*dōhāra vacana śuni' hāse gauracandra
chale bujhāila 'baḍa gūḍha nityānanda'*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 3.168)

Śrī Gauracandra smiled as He heard the account of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. Through these two eternal associates of His, He cleverly revealed to the entire world that the truth (*tattva*) behind Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is a most profound mystery.

Along with all of His associates, Śrīman Mahāprabhu went to the house of Śrī Nandana Ācārya. There, He met with Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

The deep significance of this pastime is that only a person who has received the mercy of Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya-candra can obtain the *darśana* of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, the undivided principle of *śrī guru (akhaṇḍa guru-tattva)*. Only the dear servants of Śrī Caitanyadeva can, by His mercy, understand the true nature of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. It is impossible for souls bound by *māyā* to take shelter at the feet of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. One is enabled to realize the truth about Nityānanda (*nityānanda-tattva*) only by the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's merciful form as *caitya-guru* (the Lord in the heart).

*sarvathā śrīvāsa ādi tā'ra tattva jāne
nā haila dekhā kona kautuka-kāraṇe*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 3.173)

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In reality, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita knew the truth (*tattva*) regarding Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu very well. Their not being able to receive His *darśana* should be understood as a special, mysterious pastime (arranged by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu).

HIS PERFORMANCE AS A GUARD

One day, Śrīman Mahāprabhu told His devotees, “Today, according to the rules of *anka* (one of the ten types of theatrical performances), I shall dance as a woman. Only those in full control of their senses will be allowed to enter the house to see Me dance.”

The Lord called for Sadāśiva and Buddhimanta Khān, and said, “Collect conch shells, bodices, *sārīs*, and ornaments. Arrange for everyone to receive appropriate costumes.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu then called all the devotees before Him and said, “Gadādhara will dress as Rukmiṇī, and Brahmānanda will portray Rukmiṇī’s elderly female companion Suprabhāta. Nityānanda Prabhu will portray an elderly lady,¹ Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita will play the role of Nārada, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura will dress like a guard and keep everyone alert.”

In this way, according to Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s instruction, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, donning the clothes of a guard, appeared on stage first. He sported a fake mustachio, wore a large turban and a beautiful *dhotī*, and laughed loudly. He called out to everyone, “O my brothers, attention! Today, the very soul of the universe will dance as goddess Lakṣmī.”

With stick in hand, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura ran in all directions. His bodily hair stood on end as he roused everyone by chanting “Kṛṣṇa.” He proudly called to them, “Worship Kṛṣṇa, serve Kṛṣṇa, and chant the names of Kṛṣṇa!”

1 Editor’s footnote: Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka (3.11) states that Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu came on stage appearing as the elderly ascetic goddess Yogamāyā, who is expert in arranging the meetings of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Everyone laughed as they watched him. “Who are you, and why have you come here?” they asked.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, “I am the guard of Vaikuṅṭha, and I always wander around causing everyone to awaken. The Lord has left Vaikuṅṭha and come here to give everyone *prema-bhakti* to Him. Today He will dance, dressed as goddess Lakṣmī. All of you, delight in this *prema-bhakti* most attentively.”

After speaking thus, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura twirled his mustachio with both hands and proceeded to run here and there with Murāri Gupta. At that time, both their divine bodies horripilated in *prema*, for Śrī Gauracandra enjoyed His pastimes within their bodies.

In this way, for the next seven days, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura played the role of a guard in Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s [theatrical] pastimes, giving bliss to Śrīman Mahāprabhu and all the devotees.

ŚRĪ GAURASUNDARA’S ECSTASY OF TWENTY-ONE HOURS

In Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita’s home, Śrī Gaurasundara once remained immersed in the mood of the Supreme Lord for seven *praharas* (twenty-one hours). He bestowed His mercy upon all the devotees present, as well as *darśana* of His various incarnations, such as Rāma, Nṛsimha, and Varāha. He revealed Himself to each devotee as their own worshipful deity, manifesting as Rāma for a devotee of Śrī Rāma, and as Śrī Nṛsimha for a devotee of Śrī Nṛsimha. This pastime evidences Śrīman Mahāprabhu as the root cause of all incarnations. Because He is Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara Himself, all incarnations manifest only through Him.

While bestowing mercy upon the devotees, the Lord very affectionately called for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

“Haridāsa, behold My form,” Mahāprabhu said, manifesting His divine form. Witnessing this, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura

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became overwhelmed with *bhāva* (spiritual emotion) and he wept, thus melting the Lord's heart.

Mahāprabhu said,

*ei mora deha haite tumi mora baḍa
tomāra je jāti, sei jāti mora dadha*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.36)

“Haridāsa, your body is superior to Mine. I belong to whatever caste you do.”

In his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* on the above verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has written:

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, “Some people consider your non-Hindu body to be inferior to My *brāhmaṇa* body, but their vision is defective. I can say with full conviction that there is no difference between your caste and Mine. Your body is superior to Mine in all respects.”

Modern Hindus consider their bodies to be superior to those of *yavanas*. Intoxicated by pride in their own castes, these atheistic Hindus look down on devotees born in other castes, justifying their position with dreadful arguments.

Materialists may consider the body of one constantly engaged in serving Bhagavān to belong to a particular caste, but this is offensive. Embodied human beings are always trying to establish their supremacy, using Hindu or non-Hindu determinants. They invent these determinants because they are indifferent to the resolute worship of Śrī Hari. The sinful *yavanas* and so-called pious Hindus establish their supremacy on a worldly basis, but by this they blaspheme the Vaiṣṇavas and traverse the path to hell; they do not meet with auspiciousness.

Just as contact with a touchstone transforms iron into gold, *bhakti* spiritualizes the material body and senses. Those who are blind to the truth cannot realize the inherent

nature and identity (*svarūpa*) of the Vaiṣṇavas. They therefore classify Vaiṣṇavas according to their past material designations, seeing their bodies as bags of flesh and bones, subject to birth and death. Thus they make offenses at the Vaiṣṇavas' feet.

A devotee's body, which is composed of eternality, knowledge, and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*), is appropriate for the Lord's service. It manifests of its own accord, whether the devotee resides in Vaikuṅṭha or elsewhere. As *bhakti* awakens, a devotee's body of five material elements transforms into *sac-cid-ānanda*. The birth and death of such a Vaiṣṇava's body are like the appearance and disappearance of Bhagavān's transcendental body. Those who consider the appearance and disappearance of Bhagavān and His devotees to be like the birth and death of *karma*-bound living entities never obtain liberation; instead, they must suffer material miseries again and again.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, "My heart breaks when I remember the horrific torture that the sinful Muslims inflicted upon you. Listen, Haridāsa. I was truthfully unable to tolerate the atrocities those wretches committed, beating you throughout the marketplaces. With *cakra* (disk weapon) in hand, I descended from Vaikuṅṭha to cut them all to pieces. Although they were beating you to death, you were not concerned for yourself. Instead, you wanted their well-being.

"My devotees are so tolerant that instead of retaliating against those who mean them harm, they wish such people auspiciousness. Just as I was about to release My *cakra* to sever their heads, you began to pray, 'O Lord, if I have even a trace of *bhakti* to You, then be merciful to them. Please ignore their offenses.' These wicked people were trying to torture you to death, yet you simply desired their well-being. Although I was furious, your prayers stopped My hand and I was unable to release My *cakra*.

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“The wretches showed no signs of stopping. They continuously struck your back with deadly blows. Seeing no other way to protect you, I covered your back with My own body and took the beatings Myself. I am not lying; My body still bears the marks.

“Haridāsa, I was going to descend much later, but because I could not tolerate the atrocities being committed against you, I had to come early. My Nāḍā (Advaita Ācārya) properly recognized you. Advaita is My special treasure. His service binds Me to Him in all respects.”

BHAGAVĀN’S LOVE FOR HIS DEVOTEES

Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura is the Vyāsa of Śrī Caitanya’s pastimes. While describing this pastime, he says that there is truly nothing Bhagavān would not do or say to increase His devotees’ eminence.

*jvalanta anala prabhu bhakta lāgi’ khāya
bhaktera kiṅkara haya āpana icchāya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.48)

For the sake of His devotees, the Lord even eats a blazing fire. By His own sweet will, He becomes their servant.

*bhaktera mahimā bhāi dekha cakṣu bhari’
ki balilā haridāsa-prati gaurahari*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.51)

O brothers, behold the devotees’ glories to the full satisfaction of your eyes. Hear what Śrī Gaurahari said regarding Bhakta Śrī Haridāsa.

Hearing such compassionate words from the Lord’s lotus mouth, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura fell to the ground unconscious.

The Lord then said, “Haridāsa, get up, get up! Behold My form to your heart’s full satisfaction.”

Hearing the Lord’s ambrosial words, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura regained consciousness, only to immediately become overwhelmed with *bhāva*. He rolled about in the courtyard. He was crying so much, what *darśana* could he possibly have? Mahāprabhu Śrī Gaurasundara tried to pacify him, but his rapture would not dissipate.

Weeping incessantly, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura prayed, “O Viśvambhara! O Prabhu! O Jagannātha! Please be merciful to this sinner. O Lord, how will be I able to describe Your pastimes? Society does not see me as high-class or middle-class, but as the most fallen. In this world, I possess no good qualities and am bereft of all virtues. I do not belong to any of the Āryan castes, and therefore, I possess no qualification to describe Your qualities.

*dekhile pātaka, more paraśile snāna
muī ki baliba prabhu tomāra ākhyāna?*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.60)

“One incurs sin, just by seeing me. If someone touches the body of this sinful person, he must bathe. How, then, can I glorify You?”

ŚRĪ KRṢṂA PROTECTS THOSE WHO REMEMBER HIM

“O Lord, You have vowed to never forsake anyone who remembers Your lotus feet, even though he may be as insignificant as an insect. And if even a king does not remember Your lotus feet, You punish him [appropriately]. O Lord, Your glories are endless. Your quality of mercy knows no limits, yet I am so unfortunate that I cannot even remember You.

“When, on the order of his elder brother Duryodhana, Duṣśāsana dragged Draupadī into the royal assembly and tried

to disrobe her, Draupadī helplessly cried out to You. Impelled by her remembrance, You swiftly entered her cloth and by Your potency, it became limitless. Even then, those sinful people were unable to understand Your glories.

“Once, witches surrounded Pārvatī-devī and tried to devour her. As soon as the terrified Pārvatī-devī remembered You, You appeared there to protect her and punish those witches.

“The wicked Hiranyakaśipu tried to kill Prahlāda by giving him poison, throwing him in a pit of snakes, burning him in a fire, and binding him to a heavy stone and tossing him in the ocean, but in every instance, You protected Prahlāda, because he remembered You.

“The power of remembering you saved the Pāṇḍavas from fear [of the wrath] of Durvāsā Ṛṣi, during their exile to the forest.

“O Lord, it is not at all surprising that You delivered all these personalities, because they were absorbed in [remembering] You. Most wondrous is Your deliverance of Ajāmila, who was not even a devotee. There was no sin that he had not committed. In fear of being caught by the Yamadūtas, he called out the name of his son, Nārāyaṇa. But when he witnessed the immense might of the Yamadūtas coming to take him and saw that his son was incapable [of protecting him], he remembered the narrations of Your pastimes and characteristics. He uttered ‘Nārāyaṇa’ to call his son, but because Bhagavān and His name are inseparable, this chanting freed him from the hands of the Yamadūtas. When You heard the dying Ajāmila fearfully call Your name, You dispatched Your messengers to save him from the clutches of the Yamadūtas.

“O Lord, although Ajāmila remembered You from far away, I cannot remember You at all. I completely lack the ability to remember You, yet You mercifully do not reject me. This shows Your causeless mercy. Otherwise, what qualification do I have to even see You? O Lord, please never deprive me of Your *darśana*; this is my only prayer to You. I do not want any benediction besides this.”

ŚRĪMAN MAHĀPRABHU'S BENEDICTION

Hearing the prayers of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the Lord said, “Haridāsa, ask Me for a benediction. What do you want? There is nothing I cannot give you. Whatever I have is yours.”

With folded hands, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura humbly replied, “O Lord, I am devoid of good fortune, but I have one great desire in my heart.”

*tomāra caraṇa bhaje je-sakala dāsa
tā'ra avaśeṣa jena haya mora grāsa*

*sei se bhajana mora hau janma janma
sei avaśeṣa mora—kriyā-kula-dharma*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.86–87)

“May the remnants of Your devotees, who are always absorbed in serving Your lotus feet, be my only food. May I become a servant subsisting only on their remnants.

“I do not want liberation. I only desire to be the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas, birth after birth. May accepting Your devotees’ remnants be my main engagement.

“May I only live within the society of Vaiṣṇavas, birth after birth, and adopt the *dharma* of honoring their remnants. O Lord! Please bless me to never be deviated by the desires of those who revere the formal Vedic instructions and who accept Vedic ritualistic activities as their prescribed duties. Such formal Vedic injunctions only nourish our worldly false ego and are secondary. Our primary duty is to accept the remnants of the Vaiṣṇavas.

*tomāra smarāṇa-hīna pāpa-janma mora
saphala karaha dāsocchiṣṭa diyā tora*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.88)

“My sinful life is devoid of remembrance of You. Please make it successful by gifting me the remnants of Your servants.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

“I am very proud, so please benedict me with the rare treasure of humility: to be humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree, and undesiring of honor yet ready to honor all others. I know that I have no qualification to achieve this. Although even personalities like Lord Brahmā seek the rare treasure of the Vaiṣṇavas’ remnants, I also desire them. I have thus committed an offense. O Lord, O Master, O Viśvambhara! Although I am alive, I am as good as dead. I have no intelligence. Please forgive my impertinence.

*śacīra nandana, bāpa, kṛpā kara more
kukkura kariyā mora rākha bhakti-ghare
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.91)*

“O Śacinandana, O Prabhu! Please be merciful to me and make me a dog in the house of Your devotee. As a landlord keeps pets like dogs to guard his house and rewards them with remnants of his food, please keep me in the house of a Vaiṣṇava as part of Kṛṣṇa’s household [and let me take their remnants].”

With these words, Śrīla Haridāsa became filled with *prema-bhakti*. Although repeatedly petitioning the Lord in a most humble mood, he remained unsatisfied.

*prabhu bale,—śuna śuna mora haridāsa
divaseko je tomāra saṅge kaila vāsa
tilārdheko tumi jāra saṅge kaha kathā
se avaśya āmā pābe, nāhika anyathā
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.93–94)*

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “My dear Haridāsa, hear Me now. You are the greatest personality in this world. If you mercifully speak with someone for a moment, or if they stay with you for even a day (in the mood of a servant), they are sure to gain service to My lotus feet. There is not even the slightest bit of doubt in this.

*tomāre je kare śraddhā, se kare āmāre
nirtantara thāki āmi tomāra śarīre*

*tumi-hena sevake āmāra ṭhākurāla
tumi more hṛdaye bāndhilā sarva-kāla*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.95–96)

“One who reveres you verily reveres Me, for I constantly live within your body.

“It is indeed servants like you who establish My supremacy. By your deep absorption in Śrī Hari’s transcendental *rasa*, you have bound Me within your heart everlastingly.”

Moved by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s humble prayers and loving devotional moods, the Lord said:

*mora sthāne, mora sarva-vaiṣṇavera sthāne
binā aparādhe bhakti dila tore dāne*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.97)

“O Haridāsa, I award you the qualification to perform *bhajana*. Never, on any day, shall you commit an offense to Me or to any Vaiṣṇava. Thus being free from offenses, continue to cultivate exclusive devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and follow His devotees. You have made no offense to Me nor to any Vaiṣṇava, and therefore, I bestow upon you the propensity to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

ŚRĪ KRṢṆA IS ATTAINED THROUGH LOVE ALONE

After hearing Mahāprabhu give Śrīla Haridāsa such a benediction, all the Vaiṣṇavas blissfully chanted, “Hari Hari!”

*jāti, kula, kriyā, dhane kichu nāhi kare
prema-dhana, ārti binā nā pāi kṛṣṇere*

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

*je te kule vaiṣṇavera janma kene nahe
tathāpiha sarvottama sarva-śāstre kahe*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.99–100)

Birth in a high-caste and noble family, pious deeds and wealth, these are all insignificant, for they cannot help one attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One cannot attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa without the wealth of *prema* or the intense desire to attain Him.

No matter what family a Vaiṣṇava is born into, he is always in the topmost position. All the scriptures proclaim this fact.

Love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema*) is the eternal, topmost goal for the living entities. When a person becomes qualified for that love, no worldly inferiority or deficiency (such as poverty, ugliness, or lack of intelligence) can impede him.

*ei tāra pramāṇa—yavana haridāsa
brahmādira durlabha dekhila parakāśa*

*je pāpiṣṭha vaiṣṇavera jāti-buddhi kare
janma janma adhama yonite ḍubi' mare*

*haridāsa stuti-vara śune jei jana
avaśya milibe tāre kṛṣṇa-prema-dhana*

*e vacana mora nahe, sarva-śāstre kaya
bhaktākhyāna śunile kṛṣṇete bhakti haya*

*mahā-bhakta haridāsa ṭhākura jaya jaya
haridāsa saṅgare sarva-pāpa-kṣaya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.101–105)

The proof of this is Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who appeared in a non-Hindu family. He witnessed the manifestation of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, a privilege that is difficult to attain even for one as great as Brahmā.

That sinner who considers that a Vaiṣṇava belongs to a particular caste or creed suffers in the lowest species of life, birth after birth.

That person who hears the prayers of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and the benediction Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave him, will certainly obtain the treasure of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

These are not my words; rather, all the scriptures declare that one attains *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* by hearing about the character and pastimes of devotees.

All glories, all glories to the great devotee Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura! Remembering him vanquishes all one’s sinful reactions.

GREAT SOULS DESIRE HIS ASSOCIATION

keha bale,—“caturmukha jena haridāsa”
keha bale,—“prahlādera jena parakāśa”

sarva-mate mahā-bhāgavata haridāsa
caitanya-goṣṭhīra saṅge jāhāra vilāsa

brahmā, śiva haridāsa-hena bhakta-saṅga
niravadhi karite cittera baḍa raṅga

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

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

prahlāda je-hena daitya, kapi hanumān
ei mata haridāsa ‘nica-jāti’ nāma

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.106–111)

Some say that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is four-headed Brahmā, while others claim that he is a manifestation of Śrī Prahāda.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Yet everyone agrees that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who affectionately engages in pastimes with Śrīman Mahāprabhu's associates, is a most exalted devotee (*mahā-bhāgavata*).

Lord Brahmā, the grandfather of all the planets, and Lord Śiva, the destroyer of everything, always desire the association of devotees like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

The demigods hanker for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's touch, and Gaṅgā-devī, the deliverer of fallen souls, wants him to bathe in her waters.

What to speak of touching him, merely seeing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura cuts to pieces the *jīvas'* beginningless karmic bondage.

Just as Śrī Prahlādajī is a 'demon' and Hanumānjī a 'monkey' in name only, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is a 'low-class *yavana*' in name only.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE DELIVERANCE
OF JAGĀI AND MĀDHĀI

At the time of Śrī Caitanyadeva's appearance, Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma was inhabited by Hindus abiding by Aryan culture and also by non-Hindus abiding by the *yavana* culture. In order to prove to those of both faiths that everyone has equal qualification for *bhagavad-bhakti*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave the following order to Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu, who was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, as well as to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was born in a non-Hindu (Muslim) family:

*śuna śuna nityānanda, śuna haridāsa
sarvatra āmāra ājñā karaha prakāśa*

*prati ghare ghare giyā kara ei bhikṣā
'bala kṛṣṇa, bhaja kṛṣṇa, kara kṛṣṇa-śikṣā'*

*ihā vai āra na balibā, balāibā
dina-avasāne āsi' āmāre kahibā*

*tomarā karile bhikṣā, jei na baliba
tabe āmi cakrahaste sabāre kātiba*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.8–11)

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

“Listen, Nityānanda! Listen, Haridāsa! On My order, both of you go to the houses of all types of people – be they outside, within, or above the *varṇāśrama* system – and beg them, ‘O brothers, kindly chant, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa,” and thus perform *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s names. Engage in worshiping Kṛṣṇa, serving Him through the performance of *kīrtana*. And become learned in Kṛṣṇa’s instructions.’

“Beg them for nothing but this, and give them no other instruction. Beg like this during the day for the benefit of all living entities, and in the evening return to Me and tell Me everything. I will be well pleased, knowing that you are endeavoring for the true welfare of the *jīvas*. This is My sole objective, and I will accomplish it through you – My right and left hands. With my Sudarśana *cakra*, I shall strike down those who refuse your request.”

Upon hearing the Lord’s order, all the Vaiṣṇavas laughed.¹ Who has the capacity to transgress the Lord’s order?

*hena ājñā, jāhā nityānanda śire bahe
ithe apratīta jā’ra, se subuddhi nahe*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.13)

Those who lack faith in the orders of Śrī Gaurasundara, which Nityānanda Prabhu Himself carries on His head, are certainly not very intelligent.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura immediately went out to preach. Whichever doorstep they came to, the people, seeing them in the attire of renunciates, invited

1 The vow of the Lord, in the incarnation of Śrī Gaura, is “*ebe astra na dharibe, prāṇe kāre na mārībe, citta-śuddhi kariba sabāra.*” This means that in this incarnation, He will neither carry a weapon nor slay anyone. Rather, He will purify the hearts of all. That is why all the Vaiṣṇavas began to laugh when they heard Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s declaration that He would kill anyone who disobeyed the order of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

them in to take a meal. At that time, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “Brothers, we only want these alms from you: chant, ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa,’ worship Kṛṣṇa, and hear charming narrations about Him. He is our life, our wealth, and our very soul. O brothers, please chant Kṛṣṇa’s names with one-pointed attention.” In this way, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura went door-to-door and begged people to chant *harināma*.

When the two *prabhus* arrived at the house of a gentleman, that gentleman (a devotee of the Lord) became delighted to hear their words and would say with folded hands, “We will certainly perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*.” On the other hand, wicked people would say, “Just see how Nimāi Paṇḍita has gone mad. Abandoning all His duties, He goes on chanting ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa’ day and night. By this, He makes peaceful, mannerly gentlemen go mad too. By associating with Him, you two, who were good, sane people, have also become mad. Why have you come to make us mad as well?!”

When Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura approached the house of someone who was barred from entering Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura’s house during Śrī Gaurasundara’s *kīrtana*, that person would be ready to beat them on sight. Some wicked people would say, “These two are thieves. During the day, they dress up as saintly personalities and roam around looking to see who has the most wealth and which house is unattended by its owner, so that they can return in the night with their clan, rob the house, and run away. Is this the behavior of a civilized person? If they come here again, we will catch them and take them to the magistrate.”

Hearing such statements, the two *prabhus* would laugh and continue on their way. By the potency of Śrī Caitanyadeva’s order, they were completely fearless. In this mood, they would go out to preach every day and then report back to Viśvambhara in the evening.

TWO NOTORIOUS DRUNKARDS

One day, as Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura were propagating *harināma*, they encountered two drunkards with extremely fearsome natures. Due to intoxication, their eyes were red. They had lost their minds to excessive drinking and had no inkling of what they were doing or saying. They sometimes embraced each other's necks, sometimes grabbed each other's hair and fought, and at other times cuss at each other with filthy language.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu made inquiries about them from those nearby. "To which caste do these two men belong? How has their intelligence become like this?"

Some people said, "O great soul, these two are *brāhmaṇas* by caste. Their parents were highly respectable people in society. Their lineage was flawless, but their intelligence has been spoiled by their mixing with wicked persons since their childhood. Because of this, they began to commit all kinds of illicit acts, and their family threw them out of their house. Since then, they have become out of control, wandering about with drunkards and gamblers. Having sinned extensively, they have become so uninhibited that people become terrified just hearing their name. These two may, at any time, set fire to someone's home or forcefully steal another's possessions. There is no sin they do not commit. They rob and plunder; and, although they are from a *brāhmaṇa* family, they eat cow flesh."

Hearing these details, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu felt great compassion for them both. He thus contemplated how to deliver them: "My Lord, Śrī Gaurasundara, has advented just to deliver the fallen souls, and where else could we find sinners such as these? People do not understand My Lord's glories because He keeps them hidden, and so they ridicule Him. If My Lord were to deliver such sinful souls as these two, then everyone in this world would see His divine power. Those unfortunate people who do not understand His glories and who

make offenses at His lotus feet by considering Him an ordinary human being will realize His magnificence and surrender to those lotus feet. If I can cause these two souls to have a revelation of Caitanya, then I, Nityānanda, will be known as His servant. They have become intoxicated and have forgotten their own selves. But should they become equally intoxicated by chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name, shedding tears, and crying out, ‘O my Prabhu!’, then My wanderings will have borne fruit. As of now, even upon touching their shadows, people jump in the Gaṅgā fully dressed [in order to purify themselves]. I shall have lived up to My name only when such people see them and consider it equal to bathing in the Gaṅgā.”

“O Haridāsa, just see the condition of these two *brāhmaṇas*! Although they took birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family, they are utterly wretched. Seeing their behavior, one would consider it impossible for them to ever be delivered from the clutches of Yamarāja. O Haridāsa, when the wicked *yavanas* tried to kill you, you prayed to the Lord for their well-being. Does your heart not melt today upon seeing the condemned condition of the two of them?

*jadi tumi śubhānusandhāna kara mane
tabe se uddhāra pāya ei dui-jane*

*tomāra saṅkalpa prabhu nā kare anyathā
āpane kahilā prabhu ei tattva-kathā*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.66–67)

“If, in your heart, you desire their well-being, then they may also be delivered, because the Lord would never violate your decision. The Lord has declared this Himself, so if you request Him to shower His mercy on these two unfortunate souls, He will surely hear you and deliver them.

“Today, let the three worlds witness first-hand an incident like the Purāṇas’ narration of Ajāmīla’s salvation. The deliverance

of these two will show everyone the power of Śrī Gaurasundara, the Lord of our life.”

Because Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura knew well the glories of Nityānanda Prabhu, he understood that the two drunkards were already delivered. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura knew Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu to be Baladeva Prabhu Himself. Thus he had faith that the two drunkards’ deliverance had been assured the moment Nityānanda Prabhu had desired it. Thinking like this, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “O Mahāśaya, this desire of Yours must also be the Lord’s desire. Out of Your humility, You are asking me to request the Lord to deliver them. By this, You are demonstrating that great personalities, though fully competent at everything, give honor to everyone. But I am like an animal, with no power to discriminate between right and wrong. If I were [so audacious as] to take Your words to mean I am a Vaiṣṇava, such that the merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa would deliver these two sinners on the strength of my appeal, then this would make me no better than an animal. [It’s only right that You hide Yourself from those with animalistic natures,] thus Your hiding Yourself from me is proof of my own animalistic nature. I am a living entity forgetful of Kṛṣṇa. You impart many teachings to me through Your own behavior, in order to manifest my true nature (*svarūpa*) and to engage me in service to Bhagavān.”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu embraced Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and tenderly said, “Let us inform these two of our merciful Lord’s order, which we take with us as we wander: let us tell them to chant *harināma*. Although they are great sinners, and it is doubtful whether or not they will chant at our request, to fulfil our duty, we must tell them about *harināma*. It will be up to them whether they chant or not.” Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu together with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura went to tell the two sinners about *harināma*.

People nearby strove to convince them not to go. “You will risk your lives by going near those two miscreants,” they said. Our throats become dry just hearing their voices as we sit inside our homes. We do not understand why you would so recklessly

go near them! O brothers, these people are completely oblivious to who or what a *sannyāsī* is. They even murder *brāhmaṇas* and cows, so who are you to them?!”

Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura paid no mind to the people’s words. They approached the two sinners while chanting, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.”

JAGĀI AND MĀDHĀI WERE FREE OF VAIṢṆAVA-APARĀDHA

Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has written:

*sarva-pāpa sei duir śarīre janmila
vaiṣṇavera nindā-pāpa sabe nā haila*

*ahar-niśa madyapera saṅge-raṅge thāke
nahila vaiṣṇava-nindā ei saba pāke*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.39–40)

All the sins in existence were present in the bodies of those two [drunkards]. The only sin (offense) they were free of was criticism of Vaiṣṇavas. Because they remained day and night in the company of drunkards, they had never committed the offense of criticizing a Vaiṣṇava.

The wise Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura detect what superficial observers can never see: they were fully aware that although these were the two greatest sinners, they were not offenders of the Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇava-aparādhīs*). Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura continues:

*je sabhāye vaiṣṇavera nindā-mātra haya
sarva-dharma thākileo tabu haya kṣaya*

*sannyāsī-sabhāya jadi haya nindā-karma
madyapera sabhā haite se sabhā adharma*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.41–42)

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

An assembly in which the Vaiṣṇavas are blasphemed is destroyed, even if all other principles of religion are present there. If a Vaiṣṇava is being criticized in an assembly of *sannyāsīs*, then that assembly is more sinful than a group of drunkards.

Going near the two drunkards, Jagāi and Mādhāi, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura imparted another teaching: those who follow the Lord's orders should never sit in an irreligious assembly where Vaiṣṇavas are criticized. The reason is as follows:

*madhyapera niṣkṛti āchaye kona kāle
para carcakera gati nahe kabhu bhāle*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.43)

It is possible for a drunkard to be delivered, but those who criticize Vaiṣṇavas can never attain an auspicious destination.

JAGĀI AND MĀDHĀI GIVE CHASE

Thinking in this way, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura stopped some distance from the two drunkards and said, “O brothers, both of you please chant ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa’ and worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because only Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the mother, father, wealth, and life of everyone. Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra has descended only for the welfare of people like you, so please give up your sinful activities and engage in *bhajana* of Him.”

When Jagāi and Mādhāi heard Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, they raised their heads to look at them and their eyes reddened in anger. They ran toward Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, in an attempt to catch them. Seeing them coming, the two *prabhus* fled. The two drunkards chased after them, shouting, “Stop! Stop!” and hurling various abuses. The two *prabhus* fearfully tried to run even faster.

Seeing them running, nearby gentlemen said to one another, “We warned them in advance, but they did not listen. Now they have put themselves in great danger.” Out of fear, the gentlemen began to pray to the Lord for their protection.

All the godless people gleefully laughed and said, “Bhagavān has given these two imposters a fitting punishment.”

Meanwhile, the drunkards chased after the two *ṭhākuras*, shouting, “We’ve got them now!” But they were unable to catch them.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu said, “I thought that by teaching them about Kṛṣṇa’s holy name, we would turn these two drunkards into Vaiṣṇavas; but we will be lucky to even survive!”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “Ṭhākura, what is the point of saying all this now? Your intelligence led You to instruct them about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and now we will fall into the jaws of death. It is an offense to give *harināma* to faithless persons; we are facing the proper punishment for instructing drunkards in *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. O my Lord, may we just come out of this alive!”

Talking like this, the two *prabhus* fled laughing, as the drunkards ran behind them bellowing threats.

Jagāi and Mādhāi were obese, so they were unable to run well, yet they staggered along quickly in an effort to catch the two *prabhus*. The drunkards called, “O brothers! Where will you run to? How will you escape the clutches of Jagāi and Mādhāi today? Do you not know that this is Jagāi and Mādhāi you are dealing with? Hey! Just stop and look back a moment!”

As they ran, the two *prabhus* called out in fear, “O Kṛṣṇa, please protect us! Kṛṣṇa, please protect us! O Govinda!” The youthful Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was able to leap forward as He ran, whereas the elderly and somewhat heavyset Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura could not run so quickly.

Gasping as he ran, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura affectionately reprimanded Nityānanda Prabhu: “I cannot run so fast. I do not know why I willingly came with this restless person to die. Only

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

recently Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa protected me from the hands of *yavanas*, and today I have again fallen into great danger – all because of this restless person’s intelligence.”

In retaliation, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu said with a gentle smile, “I am not restless. Consider for yourself who is truly to blame for our present dire situation. It is none other than your Lord, Śrī Gaurasundara Himself, who is responsible. Only after seeing His restlessness have I become restless; otherwise, I would not be even slightly restless. Mahāprabhu is a *brāhmaṇa* beggar, yet like a king He has given His order: to preach the holy name in every house. It is only on His order that we go from door-to-door, telling everyone about the Lord’s names. His order is unprecedented; it has never been heard anywhere else. And what do we get in return for fulfilling His orders? Someone calls us thieves; someone else calls us imposters. All these problems arise when we follow His instructions. But when we do not follow them, He becomes angry. And you blame it all on Me. You do not see any fault in your Lord.”

In this way, as they ran from the two drunkards staggering behind them, the *prabhus* engaged in playful, loving banter. At last, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura made it to Mahāprabhu’s home and quickly went inside. In their intoxicated state, the drunkards ran here and there [looking for them]. Unable to find them, they began to quarrel with one another. And because they were completely drunk, they could not determine where they were. After a while, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura peered out. The drunkards were not to be seen and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura became peaceful. Laughing and embracing one another, they went to Lord Viśvambhara.

CONFERRING WITH ŚRĪMAN MAHĀPRABHU

When Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura approached Mahāprabhu, He was seated in the midst of the

assembly of Vaiṣṇavas, discussing narrations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu was absorbed in explaining the fundamental truths underlying the identity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and it appeared as if the Lord of Śvetadvīpa, Śrī Viṣṇu Himself, was sitting among His associates. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura related all the events that had taken place that day. They said, “Today we saw two very strange people, big drunkards, but they call themselves *brāhmaṇas*. For their own benefit, we told them to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa, but they chased us all the way here. It was only by great fortune that we were saved.”

Mahāprabhu asked, “Who are they? What are their names? And why do they engage in such abominable activities as drinking and stealing, despite being *brāhmaṇas*?”

Gaṅgādāsa and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, “O Prabhu, their names are Jagāi and Mādhāi. They took birth in a high-class *brāhmaṇa* family here in Navadvīpa, but their intelligence was spoiled due to their keeping bad company. Their activities are so sinful that people become terrified just by hearing their names. There is no sinful activity that they have not committed. They even eat the flesh of cows. There is no house that they have not robbed. O Lord, it is difficult to describe their sinful acts.”

Mahāprabhu replied, “If those two wretches were to come here, I would cut their bodies into many pieces.”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu said, “I cannot say whether or not You would chop their bodies into pieces, but I can confidently say this: as long as they both remain in the area, I will not preach elsewhere. Your glories will only be revealed when You make them chant ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.’ Religious people naturally chant the names of Bhagavān, but their doing so does not show Your true glory. The two drunkards know nothing besides sin. I shall accept that You are *patita-pāvana*, the deliverer of the fallen, only when You reform them and bless them with *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. In delivering those two miscreants, Your glory will be many times more than in Your deliverance of us.”

Lord Viśvambhara smiled and said, “O Nityānanda, their deliverance was assured the moment they had Your *darśana*. The fact that You are so eager for their welfare means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa will surely deliver them soon.” When the Lord said these words, the devotees joyfully called out, “Jaya!” Everyone was now assured of Jagāi’s and Mādhāi’s deliverance.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said to Śrī Advaita Ācārya, “Śrīman Mahāprabhu sends me out to preach with the extremely restless Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. He leaves me behind, and where He goes, I do not know. Sometimes He jumps into the flooding Gaṅgā in the rainy season and tries to catch crocodiles. Standing on the riverbank, I anxiously call out to Him, but He just goes on swimming. If my calling brings Him out of the river and onto its bank, He then chases after the children playing there with the intention of beating them. When the children’s parents come with sticks to beat Him, I have to catch hold of their feet and with great difficulty convince them to return home. Sometimes He snatches milk and yogurt from the milkmen and then flees, and they catch and threaten to beat me.

“O Ācārya! These are not even the most shocking [of all His activities]. Sometimes He does such things that I am embarrassed to even speak them aloud. When He sees a young unmarried girl, He orders her to marry Him. Sometimes He climbs atop a bull and declares, ‘I am Śiva,’ and at other times He milks others’ cows and then drinks that milk. When I tell Him not to do such things, He reviles You, saying, ‘What can your Advaita do to me? And what can that Caitanya, whom you call “Bhagavān,” do to Me?’

“I never tell Mahāprabhu these things. It is by great fortune that my life was saved today. Two drunkards were lying intoxicated on the street, and this *mahāśaya* (great personality) began to instruct even them on *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. To say nothing of chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name, they became infuriated and ran to hit us. It was only because of Your mercy that our lives were somehow or other saved.”

ŚRĪLA ADVAITA ĀCĀRYA’S LOVING CRITICISM

Hearing this, Advaita Ācārya laughed and said, “There is nothing surprising in this. One drunkard received the opportunity to associate with other drunkards.² Therefore, it is appropriate for all three drunkards to stay in one place together. But because you are already devoted to the Lord, do not worry, you are not obligated to go near them, they will come to you. I am well aware of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu’s character. He will make everyone intoxicated. Just see, Haridāsa. He will bring those two drunkards into our community in just two or three days.”

Saying this, Śrī Advaita Ācārya became overcome with anger. He removed some of his clothes and spoke many things. “Everyone will hear about Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa,” he said. “Everyone will see His potency exhibited through His dancing and singing. Tomorrow you will see Nimāi and Nitāi meeting and dancing with those two drunkards. Nimāi and Nitāi will equalize all castes. In this way, people will destroy not only their own caste, but all of ours as well. Let us therefore flee from here and save our caste.”

Not everyone has the capacity to understand Śrīla Advaita Ācārya’s love-laden words, but because Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was well aware of his position, he laughed to see him in such an angry mood. He was now fully convinced that both drunkards would be delivered very soon. And so it happened.

THE DELIVERANCE OF JAGĀI AND MĀDHĀI

Jagāi and Mādhāi habitually wandered from place to place. One day, they came to the *ghāṭa* where Mahāprabhu regularly bathed in the Gaṅgā. By providence, they made that place their temporary base. From that *ghāṭa*, they wandered elsewhere,

2 The internal meaning is that just as Jagāi and Mādhāi were intoxicated on ordinary liquor, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was intoxicated by the mellows of Śrī Hari’s name.

creating a nuisance wherever they went. Because of their behavior, all the residents of Navadvīpa – whether big or small, rich or poor – were terrified at heart. In fear of Jagāi and Mādhāi, those who would normally bathe at the three junctures of the day would not go [to the river] alone in the evening, but in groups of ten to twenty.

Jagāi and Mādhāi stayed near Mahāprabhu’s home at night and remained awake listening to the Lord’s *kīrtana*. Under the influence of alcohol, they would dance in great joy upon hearing the sounds of the *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* used in the *kīrtana*. As they danced they would continuously drink liquor. They would settle down a bit during a break in the *kīrtana*, but as soon as the *kīrtana* began again, they would resume their dancing. Due to their intoxication, they lost all sense of where they were and where they had come from. Thinking the musical sounds of the *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* to be a song to Maṅgala-caṇḍī (goddess Dūrgā), the moment they saw Śrīman Mahāprabhu they said, “Nimāi Paṇḍita, You must certainly complete the song to Maṅgala-caṇḍī. You all sing very beautifully, but we want to actually see You perform the *kīrtana* [and not just hear it from outside]. We will bring You whatever we can for Your worship of Maṅgala-caṇḍī.” Upon seeing the rogues, the Lord stayed far away from them, and all the people avoided them by taking another route.

One night, after wandering throughout the town, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was returning home alone. Dead drunk, Jagāi and Mādhāi came up to Him, one on either side, and shouted, “Who is this? Who is this?”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu said, “I am going to the Lord’s house.”
“What is Your name?”

Enacting a pastime in which He adopted the mood of a child, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu replied, “My name is Avadhūta.” The only reason that Nityānanda Prabhu went to that place that night was to deliver the two drunkards, but hearing Nityānanda

Prabhu say “Avadhūta,” Mādhāi became extremely angry and struck Him on the forehead with a broken clay pot. The pot shattered into many pieces and blood began to flow from Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu’s head. At that time, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu remembered Bhagavān Śrī Govinda.

Seeing the blood flowing from Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu’s forehead, Jagāi felt sympathy in his heart. Grabbing Mādhāi’s arms, which were raised and ready to strike Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu again, Jagāi said, “Mādhāi, why did you act so cruelly? Do you think you will become big and important by hitting an outsider? Leave him be. That’s enough. Do not hit Avadhūta again. What will you gain by hitting a *sannyāsī*?”

The people standing nearby observed this and were horrified. They ran to Mahāprabhu’s home to tell Him everything. Śrīman Mahāprabhu immediately ran to that place with His associates. Seeing the blood flowing from Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu’s forehead, Mahāprabhu lost His composure and shouted, “*Cakra! Cakra! Cakra!*” In an instant, Jagāi and Mādhāi directly saw Mahāprabhu’s *cakra* appear in His hand.

Seeing this, the devotees became uneasy. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu prayed to Mahāprabhu, “O Lord! Mādhāi hit Me, but Jagāi protected Me. And although blood is flowing from My forehead, I do not feel the slightest pain. Please be peaceful and mercifully give Me their lives in charity.”

When He heard the words “Jagāi protected Me,” the Lord, who is affectionate to His devotees, became pleased with Jagāi and embraced him. “Jagāi,” He said, “may Kṛṣṇa be merciful to you. By protecting Nityānanda today, you have purchased Me. Ask from Me whatever you desire. Today, you shall receive *prema-bhakti*.”

The Vaiṣṇavas rejoiced upon seeing the Lord bestow mercy on Jagāi. Jagāi fell unconscious in transcendental love the very moment the Lord said that. The Lord then showed him His four-armed form.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

When Mādhāi saw Mahāprabhu’s mercy upon Jagāi, he fell down at Mahāprabhu’s lotus feet and said, “O Lord, now that You have bestowed Your mercy upon Jagāi, please shower it upon me as well.”

The Lord said, “There is no possibility for you to obtain auspiciousness, for you have caused blood to flow from Nityānanda’s head. But if Nityānanda forgives you, then I will also forgive you.”

Weeping, Mādhāi fell at the lotus feet of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and begged for forgiveness. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu picked him up and embraced him, then said to Mahāprabhu, “O Lord, if I have performed any good deeds in any birth, then I give the results of those deeds to Mādhāi. Please accept him.”

Hearing this, Mahāprabhu became pleased and embraced Mādhāi. In this way, Jagāi and Mādhāi became topmost Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu brought Jagāi and Mādhāi to His home, along with Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, and many other devotees, and they all became completely immersed in the mellows of *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ARRIVING IN NĪLĀCALA

At the age of twenty-four, Śrī Gaurasundara renounced His family and accepted *sannyāsa*. He then became known as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and traveled to Śrī Jagannātha Purī (Nīlācala). On the request of Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, King Pratāparudra arranged for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s residence at the house of the king’s family priest, Śrī Kāśī Miśra.

Once, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura came to Śrī Jagannātha Purī to see Śrīman Mahāprabhu, along with Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Śivānanda Sena, Śrī Vāsudeva, Śrī Murāri Gupta, and about two hundred other devotees. From the roof of the palace, Śrī Gopīnātha Ācārya pointed out and described each devotee to Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and King Pratāparudra. When he indicated Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, he said, “*haridāsa ṭhākura īha bhuvana-pāvana* – that is Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the purifier of the entire world.”¹

All the devotees were going to Śrī Kāśī Miśra’s house to have *darśana* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, but they encountered Him on the way there. Śrīman Mahāprabhu was overjoyed to see the devotees, and He asked each about their well-being.

1 Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 11.86)

When He saw that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was not present, He asked, “Where is Haridāsa?”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura would not so much as step on the main road near the Jagannātha Temple, where the Lord was meeting with the devotees. He instead took *darśana* of the Lord from afar and to the side of the road, where he fell flat in prostrated obeisance. As soon as the Lord inquired about him, the devotees ran to where Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was offering *praṇāma* and called him. “Haridāsa!” they said, “Mahāprabhu wants to meet you! Come, let’s go to Him quickly!”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “I am untouchable, being of low caste, and have no right to walk on the main road near Śrī Jagannātha’s temple, where His servants always come and go. If there were a small, solitary place in a garden somewhere, I could stay there and pass my time. My desire is to stay where Śrī Jagannātha’s servants will not be able to accidentally touch this untouchable person.”

When the devotees conveyed Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s words to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, He became overjoyed.

At that moment, Śrī Kāśī Miśra arrived along with the temple superintendent. They offered respects unto Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s lotus feet and said, “O Lord, may we have Your permission to arrange for the accommodation of all these Vaiṣṇavas?”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Gopīnātha [Ācārya] will go with you to help find suitable residences for everyone. O Kāśī Miśra, in the garden near where I am staying there is a room that is quite solitary. I need such a room, so I may remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa in solitude.”

Śrī Kāśī Miśra said, “O Lord, everything belongs to You, so why must You ask? You may take whichever place You like.”

After offering obeisance to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the groups of Vaiṣṇavas left for their residences, and Śrī Gopīnātha Ācārya showed everyone to their respective rooms.

ŚRĪMAN MAHĀPRABHU WELCOMES HIM

*mahāprabhu āilā tabe haridāsa-milane
haridāsa kare prema nāma-saṅkīrtane*

*prabhu dekhi' paḍe āge daṇḍavat haīyā
prabhu āliṅgana kaila tāre uṭhāīyā*

*dui-jane premāveśe karena krandane
prabhu-guṇe bhṛtya vikala, prabhu bhṛtya-guṇe*

*haridāsa kahe,—prabhu, nā chuīo more
muī—nīca, asprśya, parama pāmāre*

*prabhu kahe,—tomā sparśi pavitra haite
tomāra pavitra dharma nāhika āmāte*

*kṣaṇe kṣaṇe kara tumi sarva-tīrthe snāna
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe kara tumi yajña-tapo-dāna*

*nirantara kara tumi veda-adhyayana
dvija-nyāsī haite tumi parama-pāvāna*

*aho bata śvapaco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
ūbrahmānūcur nāma grṇanti ye te²*

*eta bali' tāre laīyā gelā puṣpodyāne
ati nibhṛte tāre dilā vāsā-sthāne*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 11.185–193)

After this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu went to meet with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. At that time, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was lovingly performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

As soon as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura saw Śrīman Mahāprabhu approaching, he fell flat at His lotus feet. Mahāprabhu picked him up and embraced him.

2 This verse is quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.33.7).

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

They both cried in ecstatic love. The devotee was overwhelmed by the qualities of his Lord, and the Lord was overwhelmed by the qualities of His devotee.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “My Lord, please do not touch me. I am from a low caste. I am untouchable and extremely fallen!”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Haridāsa! I am touching you in order to purify Myself. I do not possess the purifying nature that you possess.

“At every moment, you bathe in all the holy places and perform sacrifices, austerity, and charity.

“You are constantly studying the four Vedas, and you are far purer than any *brāhmaṇa* or *sannyāsī*.”

[Quoting the *Bhāgavatam*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu declared,] “Even if born in a family of dog-eaters, a person is worshipable if Your [Kṛṣṇa’s] name is ever present on the tip of his tongue. Only those who are ever absorbed in Your *nāma-saṅkīrtana* are truly virtuous; only they have performed all kinds of austerities and sacrifices, taken bath in all places of pilgrimage, and truly studied all the Vedas as well as the auxiliaries of the Vedas. They are therefore counted among the Aryans.”

Saying this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu took Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to a flower garden and gave him a solitary place to stay.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:

*ei-sthāne rahi’ kara nāma-saṅkīrtana
prati-dīna āsi’ āmi kariba milana*

*mandirera cakra dekhi’ kariha praṇāma
ei ṭhāi tomāra āsibe prasādānna*

*nityānanda, jagadānanda, dāmodara, mukunda
haridāse mili’ sabe pāila ānanda*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 11.194–196)

“Haridāsa, stay here and perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. I will come here every day to meet with you.

“From here, look at the *cakra* atop Śrī Jagannātha’s temple and offer obeisance. I will arrange for *prasāda* to be sent here to you.”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Śrī Dāmodara Prabhu, and Mukunda Prabhu were all delighted to meet with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

After taking bath in the sea, Śrīman Mahāprabhu returned back to His residence. All the devotees gathered there to honor *prasāda*, which the Lord began serving with His own hands. But no one would take *prasāda* before Mahāprabhu Himself sat. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara thus requested the Lord, “All the devotees are waiting for You, so please sit with Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu to honor *prasāda*. I will distribute *prasāda* to all the devotees.”

SIDDHA-BAKULA, HIS PLACE OF BHAJANA

*tabe prabhu prasādānna-hāte dilā
jatna kari’ haridāsa-ṭhākure pāṭhāilā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 11.206)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu handed some *prasāda* to Śrī Govinda, to be carefully delivered to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

It was only after Śrīman Mahāprabhu had sent *prasāda* to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura that He seated the *sannyāsīs* and Himself to honor *prasāda*.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura began living in the hut given to him by Śrīman Mahāprabhu. There, he daily chanted three lakhs of *harināma*, while immersed in *bhāva* (spiritual emotion).

Each day, after attending the early morning *ārātī* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, the Lord would visit Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to give him His *darśana*. It is said that Śrī Jagannātha-deva’s

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

pujārī once gave Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu a *bakula dātuna* (a twig from a *bakula* tree, used for brushing one's teeth) that had been offered to Jagannātha. When Mahāprabhu went to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's hut, He planted that twig in the courtyard. Within moments, it grew into a giant tree. That tree became famous by the name Siddha-bakula. Even today, people call Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* 'Siddha-bakula,' and this same *bakula* tree still mercifully gives its *daršana* there.

Some say that Śrīman Mahāprabhu planted the twig on the day of Caitra-saṅkrānti in March. Therefore, even now, a festival called *danta-kāṣṭha-ropana* (planting of the tooth-brush twig) is celebrated on that day in Siddha-bakula.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA AND
ŚRĪLA RŪPA GOŚVĀMĪ

When Śrīla Rūpa Gośvāmī arrived in Nīlācala, having traveled from Vṛndāvana, he went directly to the place where Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was performing *bhajana*.

*haridāsa ṭhākura tāre bahu kṛpā kailā
tumi āsibe,—more prabhu je kahilā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.46)

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura showered Śrīla Rūpa Gośvāmī with abundant mercy and said, “Mahāprabhu told me that you would be coming here.”

When Śrīman Mahāprabhu next came to meet with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura informed Him, “My Lord, Rūpa is offering You obeisance.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu embraced Śrīla Rūpa Gośvāmī and sat down with both of them. After inquiring from Śrīla Rūpa Gośvāmī about his wellbeing, Mahāprabhu told him to reside with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and then He returned to His own residence.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu came daily to meet them, bringing them the *jagannātha-prasāda* given to Him by others.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

*haridāsa ṭhākura, śrī rūpa-sanātana
jagannātha-mandire nā jā'na tina jana*

*mahāprabhu jagannāther upala-bhoga dekhiyā
nija-gr̥he jā'na ei tintera miliyā*

*ei tina madhye jabe thāke jei jana
tāre āsi' āpane mile—prabhura niyama*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 1.63–65)

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura considered himself to be a barbarian (*mleccha*), so he never visited Śrī Jagannātha-deva's temple, for fear of breaking one of the temple's rules [to refuse entrance to anyone not born in an Indian Hindu family]. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī would also not visit Śrī Jagannātha's temple because, although they had taken birth in a highly respectable *brāhmaṇa* family, they had since worked for a Muslim king. They considered themselves to be the same as *mlecchas* and therefore resided with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Knowing this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, after attending the *upala-bhoga*¹ ceremony, would visit whoever of the three was present in their hut. He would then return to His own place.

THE RATHA-YĀTRĀ FESTIVAL

Although Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī would not enter the temple, the following verses make it clear that they attended the cleansing of the Guṇḍicā Temple. Furthermore, it shows that, during the Ratha-yātrā festival, they would dance and sing in *kīrtana* and take *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, along with the rest of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's devotees.

1 An offering that is performed from behind the *garuḍa-stambha* (column in front of the Jagannātha Temple on which the statue of Garuḍa is situated).

*bhakta-gaṇa laīyā kailā guṇḍicā-mārjana
āiṭoṭā āsi kailā vanya-bhojana*

*prasāda khāya, 'hari' bala sarva-bhakta-jana
dekhi' haridāsa-rūper haraṣita mana*

*govinda dvārā prabhur śeṣa prasāda pāilā
preme matta dui jana nācite lāgilā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.62–64)

The day before Ratha-yātrā, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, along with all the devotees, cleaned the Guṇḍicā Temple. Thereafter, they went to Āiṭoṭā Garden to take fruits, roots, and other such foods for lunch.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī were also present there. They were delighted to see the devotees accepting *prasāda* and on occasion calling out “Hari, Hari!”

After Śrīman Mahāprabhu and all the other devotees honored *prasāda*, Śrī Govinda brought Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s remnants to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Upon receiving those remnants, they began to dance, maddened in *prema*.

Another year, when Śrīman Mahāprabhu sat to honor *prasāda* with Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, and others, the following events transpired:

*'haridāsa' bali' prabhu ḍāke ghane ghana
dūre rahi' haridāsa kare nivedena*

*bhakta-saṅge prabhu karuna prasāda aṅgikāra
e-saṅge basite yogya nahi muī chāra*

*pāche more prasāda govinda dibe bahir-dvāre
mana jāni' prabhu punaḥ nā balite tāre*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 12.160–162)

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Śrīman Mahāprabhu very loudly called out for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to come to Him. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, standing at a distance, said, “O Lord, please honor *prasāda* with the devotees. This fallen soul is unqualified to sit in such company. After all of you have honored *prasāda*, Govinda will bring *prasāda* outside for me.” Understanding the mind of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said nothing further.

On the day of Ratha-yātrā, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī were always with Śrīman Mahāprabhu:

*ratha-yātrāya jagannātha-darśana karilā
ratha-agre prabhura nṛtya-kīrtana dekhilā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.72)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva's Ratha-yātrā festival, and also witnessed Śrīman Mahāprabhu dance and sing in front of the chariot.

The following verses clarify that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was present with the other devotees during Śrī Jagannātha-deva's Ratha-yātrā festival:

*tabe mahāprabhu mane vicāra kariyā
cāri sampradāya dila gāyana bāṭiyā*

*nityānanda, advaita, haridāsa, vakreśvare
cāri-jane ājñā dila nṛtya karibāre*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.34–35)

At the time of Ratha-yātrā, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, after some consideration, assigned singers to the four individual *kīrtana* parties. The Lord then ordered Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, to each dance in one of the four groups.

*vāsudeva, gopīnātha, murāri jāhā gāya
mukunda—pradhāna kaila āra sampradāya*

*śrīkānta, vallabha-sena āra dui jana
haridāsa ṭhākura tāhā karena nartana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.40–41)

The Lord made Śrī Mukunda the chief *kīrtanīya* (singer) [of the third party,] and made Śrī Vāsudeva, Śrī Gopīnātha, Śrī Murāri, Śrīkānta, and Śrī Vallabha Sena the assistant *kīrtanīyas*. He made Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura the dancer in this party.

ŚRĪLA RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ'S VERSE

After Cāturmāsya (the four months of the rainy season), all the devotees who had come from Gauḍa-deśa (Bengal) returned to their native place, but Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī stayed with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. One day, when Śrīman Mahāprabhu came to meet them, He saw Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was writing something. Upon seeing Śrīman Mahāprabhu, both Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī offered prostrated obeisance to Him. Śrīman Mahāprabhu embraced them both and seated Himself.

*'kyā pūthi likha?' bali' eka-patra nilā
akṣara dekhīyā prabhu mane sukhī hailā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.96)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu inquired, “What book are you writing, Rūpa?” Mahāprabhu then held up a palm leaf and, seeing the handwriting of Śrī Rūpa, became pleased and praised his writing.

*sei patre prabhu eka śloka dekhilā
paḍitei śloka, preme āviṣṭa hailā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.98)

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Upon reading a verse written on that leaf, Śrīman Mahāprabhu became overwhelmed with *prema*.

This verse by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is as follows:

*tunḍe tāṇḍavinī ratim vitanute tunḍāvali-labdhaye
karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate karṇābudebhyah sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṇām kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyadbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī*
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.99)

I do not know how much nectar the two syllables *kṛṣ* and *ṇa* have collected in themselves and produced. Just see! When these syllables dance in our mouth, we are filled with an increasing desire for many more mouths. When they enter the holes of our ears, a desire to have millions of ears awakens within us. When they arise in the courtyard of our heart, they conquer the activities of all our senses.

*śloka śuni' haridāsa hailā ullāsī
nācite lāgilā ślokera artha praśamsi*
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.100)

As soon as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura heard the above verse, he became ecstatic and danced while praising its meaning.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said:

*kṛṣṇa-nāmera mahimā śāstra-sādhu-mukhe jāni
nāmera mahimā aiche kāhā nāhi śuni*
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.101)

“Rūpa, I have heard much about the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name from the scriptures, and from great devotees. Yet nowhere have I heard such a glorification of the holy name [as you have written here].”

Mahāprabhu then embraced them both and left for the sea to perform His afternoon duties, such as bathing and honoring *prasāda*. On another day, Śrīman Mahāprabhu came with several devotees and heard many of the verses which Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had composed. The Lord and all the devotees praised Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in many ways.

When Śrīman Mahāprabhu returned to His residence with all the devotees, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura embraced Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and said:

*haridāsa kahe,—“tomāra bhāgyer nāhi sīmā
je-saba varṇilā, ihār ke jāne mahimā?”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.210)

“Rūpa! There is no limit to your good fortune. Who can understand the glories of all that you have described?”

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī said, “I personally do not know anything. I simply speak whatever Śrīman Mahāprabhu inspires me to.”

In this way, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura happily spent their time, immersed in the nectarean topics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*śrī kṛṣṇa-kathā*).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA AND
ŚRĪLA SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ

Once, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī traveled alone from Mathurā to Puruṣottama-dhāma by way of the Jhārikhaṇḍa forest. Because he had been fasting and drinking contaminated water, he had contracted a skin disease on the way. Pained by the disease and feeling himself unfit to serve Śrīman Mahāprabhu, he thought, “When I reach Jagannātha Purī, I shall give up my body by throwing myself under the wheel of Śrī Jagannātha-deva’s chariot.”

Upon his arrival there, he went to *bhajana* place of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

*haridāsera kailā tēha caraṇa vandana
jāni’ haridāsa tāre kailā āliṅgana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.14)

Upon seeing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī worshiped his feet. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, recognizing him, embraced him.

When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura observed Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s eagerness to have *darśana* of Mahāprabhu, he said, “The Lord will be here very soon.”

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Just at that moment, Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His devotees arrived at Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *bhajana-sthalī* to meet with him. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī offered their full prostrated obeisance to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who lifted Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and embraced him.

*haridāsa kahe,—“sanātana kare namaskāra”
sanātane dekhi' prabhu hailā camatkāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.18)

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “O Lord, Sanātana is offering obeisances to You.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu was astonished to see Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī there and embraced him as well, although Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī repeatedly tried to stop Him.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu then sat on a raised platform with His devotees. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī sat below, at their feet. Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī then spoke of many things.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu ordered Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī:

*bhāla haila, tomāra ihā haila āgamane
ei ghare raha ihā haridāsa-sane*

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rase dūhe parama pradhāna
kṛṣṇa-rasa āsvādana kara, laha kṛṣṇa-nāma*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.48–49)

“It is very good that you have come. Stay in this place with Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

“You two are most expert in relishing *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*. Both of you stay here together, relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mellows, and engage in *kṛṣṇa-nāma kīrtana*.”

SUICIDE IS FORBIDDEN

On another day, Śrīman Mahāprabhu suddenly said to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, “Acts such as suicide are steeped in the mode of ignorance. One can never attain *kṛṣṇa-prema* by committing suicide. Give up this ignorant idea and always engage in hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*). Very soon, you shall attain the wealth of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.”

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī was amazed to hear the Lord’s words. “The all-knowing Śrīman Mahāprabhu disapproves of my intent to commit suicide,” he thought, “so He is forbidding me to do so.”

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī asked the Lord, “What will You gain by keeping me alive?”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu replied, “You have surrendered to Me, and so now your body is Mine. Why do you want to destroy My property? Are you unable to discriminate between right and wrong? Your body is an important instrument through which I will accomplish many tasks. It is through you that I will elucidate the principles (*tattvas*) of the *bhaktas*, *bhakti*, and *kṛṣṇa-prema*; describe Vaiṣṇava duties and behavior; excavate lost places of pilgrimage; and teach about renunciation. I want you to do all this in My dearest abode, Mathurā-Vṛndāvana.

“On the order of My mother, I am staying here in Nīlācala, and so I cannot go there to teach religious principles (*dharma*). I want to accomplish all these tasks through the medium of your body, and yet you want to give up that body. How can I tolerate this?”

*haridāse kahe prabhu,—“śuna, haridāsa
parera dravya īho cāhena karite vināśa*

*parera sthāpya dravya keha nā khāya, bilāya
niṣedhiha ihāre,—jēna nā kare anyāya”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.87–88)

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, “Listen, Haridāsa, this Sanātana wants to destroy another’s property. One who is entrusted with another’s property does not embezzle or destroy it. Do not allow him to do such an unlawful thing.”

*haridāsa kahe,—mithyā abhimāna kari
tomāra gambhirā hṛdaya bujhite nā pāri*

*kon kon kārya tumi kara kon dvāre
tumi nā jānāile keha jānite nā pāre*

*etādrśa tumi ihāre kariyācha aṅgikāra
eta saubhāgya ihā nā haya kāhāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.89–91)

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “My Lord, I falsely pride myself in knowing Your heart, but in truth, I am unable to understand Your deep intentions. No one can know Your works or through whom You accomplish them, unless You enlighten that person.”

(In contrast to ordinary conditioned souls, who become frustrated and envious upon hearing a great leader glorify someone of a lower rank, the open-hearted and virtuous Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said,) “O Lord, who can be so fortunate as to be accepted in the way You have accepted Sanātana?”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu embraced Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. He then left to bathe and perform other noontime duties.

ŚRĪLA SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ’S GOOD FORTUNE

*sanātane kahe haridāsa kari’ āliṅgana
“tomāra bhāgyera sīmā nā jāya kathana*

“*tomāra deha kahen prabhu ‘mora nija-dhana’
tomā-sama bhāgyavān nāhi kona jana*

“*nija-dehe je kārya nā pārena karite
se kārya karāibe tomā, seha mathurāte*

“*je karāite cāhe īsvar, sei siddha haya
tomāra saubhāgya ei kahilū niścaya*

“*bhakti-siddhānta, śāstra-ācāra-nirṇaya
tomā-dvāre karāibena, bujhilū āśaya*

“*āmāra ei deha prabhura kārye nā lāgila
bhārat-bhūmite janmi’ ei deha vyartha haila”*

*sanātana kahe,—“tomā-sama kebā āche āna
mahāprabhura gaṇe tumi—mahā-bhāgyavān!”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.93–99)

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura embraced Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and said, “O Sanātana, no one can ascertain the limit of your good fortune. The Lord considers your body to be His own wealth. No one can be as fortunate as you.

“Through the medium of your body, Śrīman Mahāprabhu will accomplish works that He cannot accomplish with His own – and that, too, in His dearest abode, Mathurā-Vṛndāvana. Whatever Bhagavān wants to accomplish must surely come to pass. This indeed is your supreme good fortune.

“Through you, Śrīman Mahāprabhu will compose treatises on the conclusive truths of *bhakti* (*bhakti-siddhānta*) and the codes of proper Vaiṣṇava conduct gleaned from the scriptures. This is the Lord’s desire.

“Sanātana, this body of mine is unfit to be used in the Lord’s service. Although I have taken birth in Bhārata-bhūmi (India), my life has passed in vain.”

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī replied, “Who can be more fortunate than you? You are the most fortunate of all Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s devotees!”

ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA'S GOOD FORTUNE

“*āvatāra-kārya prabhura—nāma-pracāre
sei nija-kārya prabhu karen tomāra dvāre*

“*pratyaha kara tina-lakṣa nāma-sankīrtana
sabāra āge kara nāmera mahimā kathana*

“*āpane ācara keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha, nā karen ācāra*

“*‘ācāra’, ‘pracāra’—nāmera karaha ‘dui’ kārya
tumi—sarva-guru, tumi—jagatera ārya”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.100–103)

“One of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s missions is to propagate the glories of *harināma*. He is doing this work through you.

“Every day you chant three lakhs of the holy name and sing the glories of *śrī nāma* to everyone.

“Some people practice *bhakti* without preaching it, while others preach *bhakti* without practicing it themselves.

“Because you chant pure *harināma*, you are an *ācārya* (one who teaches by example). Through your own loud chanting, you initiate the people of this world into *nāma-yajña*, wholesale dedication to chanting the holy name, and thus you are a preacher. You are therefore the *guru* of all and are worshipable for the entire world.”

In this way, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī lived together and relished the many varieties of *rasa* present within topics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

ŚRĪ JAGADĀNANDA PAṄḌITA'S ADVICE

Whenever Śrīman Mahāprabhu saw Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, He forcibly embraced him. This distressed Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī at heart, so one day he inquired from Śrī Jagadānanda

Paṇḍita about his duty in this matter. Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita advised him to return to Vṛndāvana after the Ratha-yātrā festival. When Śrīman Mahāprabhu heard about this, he scolded Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita and established Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī as his superior.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, “You are a pure devotee. It is improper for you to think of your body as auspicious or inauspicious. It is especially inappropriate for Me, being a *sannyāsī*, to maintain such a consideration.”

*haridāsa kahe,—“prabhu, je kahilā tumi
ei ‘bāhya pratāraṇā’, nāhi māni āmi*

*“āmā-saba adhame je kariyācha aṅgikāra
dīna-dayālu-guṇa tomāra tāhāte pracāra”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.181–182)

Hearing Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s words, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “O Lord, You speak in this way only to deceive us. I do not accept these words of Yours; Your quality of being compassionate to the fallen is indicated by the fact that You have accepted such fallen souls as us.”

A VAIṢṆAVA'S BODY IS NEVER MATERIAL

*prabhu hāsi’ kahe,—“śuna, haridāsa, sanātana
tattva kahi tomā-viṣaye āmāra jaiche mana*

*tomāre ‘lālya’, āpanāke ‘lālaka’ abhimāna
lālakera lālye nahe doṣa-parijñāna*

*“āpanāre haya mora amānya-samāna
tomā sabāre karō muī bālaka-abhimāna”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.183–185)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu smiled and said, “Listen, Haridāsa and Sanātana. I am speaking My heart’s feelings for both of you.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

I consider you as boys, and Myself as your guardian. The guardian never sees the faults of his dependents.

“Due to My love and affection for you, My devotees, I never consider Myself to be worthy of your respect or worship. I simply see you all as My children.”

*haridāse kahe,— tumi īśvara dayāmaya
tomāra gambhīra hṛdaya bujhana nā jāya*

*vāsudeva—galat-kuṣṭhī, tāte aṅga—krīḍā-maya
tāre āliṅgana kailā haīyā sadaya*

*āliṅgiyā kailā tār kandarpa-sama aṅga
bujhite nā pāri tomār kṛpāra taraṅga*

*prabhu kahe,—vaiṣṇava-deha ‘prākṛta’ kabhu naya
‘aprākṛta’ deha bhaktera ‘cid-ānanda-maya’*

*ḍikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama*

*sei deha kare tāra cid-ānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tāra caraṇa bhajaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.188–193)

Hearing Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s words, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “You are the most merciful Supreme Lord. No one can understand the gravity of Your heart.

“The *brāhmaṇa* Vāsudeva was suffering from an aggravated case of leprosy and a morbid discharge oozed from his body, which was infested with worms. When You mercifully embraced him, his body became as beautiful as Cupid’s. [Yet after Your repeatedly embracing Śrī Sanātana, however, his disease remains. Therefore,] who can understand the waves of Your mercy?”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “O Haridāsa, a Vaiṣṇava’s body is never material but transcendental and full of spiritual

bliss. At the time of initiation (*dikṣā*), a devotee surrenders at the lotus feet of Bhagavān through the medium of *śrī guru*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then makes him transcendental like Himself. The Lord does not give him another body but spiritualizes that very body. With that spiritual body, the devotee then serves the Lord.”

*sanātanera dehe kṛṣṇa kaṇḍu upajāyā
āmā parīkṣite ihā dilā pāṭhāyā*

*ghṛṇā kari’ āliṅgan nā karitāma jabe
kṛṣṇa-thāi aparādhi haitāma tabe*

*pāriṣada-deha ei, nā haya durgandha
prathama divase pāilū catuḥsama-gandha*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.195–197)

“O Haridāsa, in order to test me, Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested this skin disease in Sanātana’s body and sent him here. If I had felt repulsed by his skin condition and failed to embrace him, I would have become an offender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

“Sanātana is an associate of the Lord. How is it possible for his body to emit a foul odor? When I first embraced him, I smelled the fragrance of *catuḥsama* (a mixture of sandalwood, musk, saffron, and *aguru*).”

Turning toward Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu then said, “Sanātana, do not feel any sorrow. Embracing you fills Me with joy.”

(Śrīman Mahāprabhu said that the Lord manifested this disease in Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and sent him to Nilācala in order to test him. Yet in reality, it seems that Śrīman Mahāprabhu was the one testing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī with various trials, which they both fully passed.)

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Thus, at the day's end, Śrīman Mahāprabhu again embraced Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. That day, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's disease vanished and his body became as radiant as gold.

*dekhi' haridāsa mane haila camatkāra
prabhure kahena,—ei bhaṅgī je tomāra*

*sei jhārikhaṇḍera pānī tumi khāowāilā
sei pānī-lakṣye ihāra kaṇḍu upajilā*

*kaṇḍu kari' parikṣā karāila sanātane
ei līlā-bhaṅgī tomāra keha nāhi jāne*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.202–204)

Witnessing this pastime of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was struck with wonder. He said, “O Lord, this is simply Your pastime. You made Sanātana drink the water from the Jhārikhaṇḍa Forest, which caused itchy sores to form on his body. Through this disease, You tested him. No one can understand the mysterious nature of Your pastimes.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu embraced Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and again embraced Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. When He had departed for His residence, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, enraptured in *prema*, sang His transcendental qualities.

In this way, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī stayed in Nīlācala for many days. Together with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, he continually relished narrations of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's qualities.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

ANSWERING
THE LORD'S QUESTIONS

One day, in His daily meeting with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Haridāsa, in Kali-yuga the *yavanas* greatly increase in number. These people, cause harm to cows and *brāhmaṇas* and are therefore extremely wicked. How will they be delivered? This concerns Me greatly.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “O Lord, do not fear for such wicked *yavanas*; they shall be easily delivered by the effects of *nāmābhāsa* (a semblance of the holy name). By their utterance of ‘*hārāma, hārāma*’ [an Urdu word for ‘abominable’], they are actually chanting *nāmābhāsa*.¹ The devotees’ chanting of ‘*Hā Rāma, Hā Rāma*’ is with love. Just see the good fortune of the *yavanas*: they utter those very same names, and so they will also be delivered.”

THE POWER OF NĀMĀBHĀSA

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura continued, “Although one who chants *nāmābhāsa* desires to attain something other than He who possesses the name (*nāmī*), still, *nāma*’s power is not diminished. It is stated in *Nṛsimha Purāna*:

1 “Rāma” being a name of God; “hā,” a prayerful entreaty.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

*damṣṭri-damṣṭrāhato mleccho
hā rāmeti punaḥ punaḥ
uktvāpi muktim āpnoti
kiṁ punaḥ śraddhayā gṛṇan*

Once, a wild boar pierced a *mleccha* (barbarian) with its tusks. Seeing the boar, the *mleccha* scornfully cried out, “*Hārāma, hārāma!*” and died. But because he indirectly chanted the holy name of Rāma, he was delivered.

“His intention in crying out ‘*hārāma*’ was not to call out the name of Bhagavān. Rather, he was decrying the boar as abominable. Yet the Lord delivered him, for in the word *hārāma*, the two syllables *rā* and *ma* are connected; they thus form the name ‘Rāma.’ Moreover, the syllable *hā*, a loving address, is there connected to the name ‘Rāma.’ Therefore, because the *mleccha* uttered the name of Bhagavān, his chanting was *nāmābhāsa*, even though he was addressing the boar. This is the astonishing nature of the holy name. Nāma Prabhu bestows the fruit of chanting *harināma*, regardless how one chants it.

“It is also described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* how Ajāmila, at the time of death, called out for his son Nārāyaṇa. By the power of the name ‘Nārāyaṇa,’ the Viṣṇudūtas freed him from the Yamadūtas. *Padma Purāṇa* (*Svarga-khaṇḍa* 48.90) states [quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (11.289)]:

*nāmaikam yasya vāci smarāṇa-patha-gataṁ śrotra-mūlaṁ gataṁ vā
suddham vāsuddha-varṇaṁ vyavahita-rahitaṁ tārayaty eva satyam*

O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, if even a single name of Hari appears on a person’s tongue, enters his ears or arises on the path of one’s remembrance, Nāma Prabhu will certainly liberate him, regardless if he pronounced *harināma* properly or improperly, or whether or not he uttered it in accordance with scriptural rules. In other words, *śrī nāma* does not consider all these things.

*nāmābhāsa haite haya sarva-pāpa-kṣaya
nāmābhāsa haite haya saṁsāreṇa kṣaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.61)

Nāmābhāsa destroys all types of sin and delivers one from this material existence.

NĀMĀBHĀSA DESTROYS SINS AND GRANTS LIBERATION

*taṁ nirvyājan bhaja guṇa-nidhe pāvanam pāvanānām
śraddhā rajyan matir atitarām uttama-śloka-maulim
prodyann antaḥ-karaṇa-kuhare hanta yan-nāma-bhānor
ābhāso ’pi kṣapayati mahā-pātaka-dhvānta-rāśim*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.1.103)

O reservoir of good qualities, just faithfully perform *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa without duplicity. He is the Supreme Savior among all saviors and the most exalted of those worshipped through poetic hymns. When His name, which is like the sun, rises even slightly within one’s cave-like heart, it destroys the darkness of the immense sins present there.

*mriyamāṇo harer nāma
grṇan putropacāritam
ajāmilo ’py agād dhāma
kim uta śraddhayā grṇan*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.2.49)

Because Ajāmila called for his son and yet attained *Vaikuṅṭha* due to [unintentionally] chanting the name of Śrī Hari, it is impossible to say what one would attain by chanting the holy name with faith.

“In the scriptures, there are many such examples of people attaining liberation simply by the power of *nāmābhāsa*.”

THE DELIVERANCE OF ALL LIVING ENTITIES

As Śrīman Mahāprabhu heard Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's words, jubilation filled His heart. Still, as a matter of course, He asked, "Haridāsa, there are many types of moving and non-moving living entities on this Earth. How will they all be delivered?"

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, "O Lord, You have already mercifully arranged their deliverance. Through the method of loudly chanting *harināma-kīrtana*, which You have made famous, all moving and non-moving living entities shall hear Bhagavān's holy name and thus be delivered. As soon as they hear the loud chanting of the holy name, moving entities, such as humans, birds, and animals, are liberated from the bondage of material existence. When the loud sounds of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* touch non-moving entities – such as trees and plants – there is an echo. In reality, however, this is not an echo; it is their response to the *kīrtana*. This apparent impossibility – that inanimate, mute entities can perform *nāma-kīrtana* – is made possible by Your mercy alone. Wherever there is loud *nāma-saṅkīrtana* in this world, the moving and non-moving entities dance, enraptured in love.

"While on Your way to Vṛndāvana, You delivered the birds, animals, snakes, and other living entities of the Jhārikhaṇḍa Forest by loudly chanting *harināma-kīrtana* and causing them to chant in reply. I have heard this account from the lips of Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya.

"Śrī Vāsudeva Datta prayed to You, 'Please allow me to suffer for the sins of all living beings so that they may be delivered. I shall endure the torments of hell in their place.' You accepted his prayer for the deliverance of all living entities, but did not make him suffer their reactions.

"O Lord! You have descended to deliver the whole world. In the mood of a devotee, You have taught the process of *bhajana* and clearly illuminated the path of deliverance. By

preaching the loud chanting of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, You have severed the *jīvas*’ connection with *māyā*.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “O Haridāsa, this universe will become devoid of living beings if they are all liberated.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, “While You remain in this world, You will send all moving and non-moving living entities from here to Vaikuṅṭha. You will then awaken unlimited minute *jīvas* and place them in the field of action (*karma-kṣetra*). In this way, the universe will again become filled with *jīvas*.

“Bhagavān Rāmacandra brought all the inhabitants of Ayodhyā with Him to Vaikuṅṭha, and then refilled Ayodhyā with other living entities. You have now opened a similar marketplace. Who can understand Your confidential intentions? Previously, Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended in Vraja and liberated the living entities by freeing them from the shackles of material existence.

*na caivaṁ vismayaḥ kāryo
bhavatā bhagavaty aje
yogeśvareśvare kṛṣṇe
yata etad vimucyate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.16)

There is no need to be astonished by the activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, from whom this entire universe attains liberation, who is the master of the masters of mystic powers, and who is without birth.

*ayaṁ hi bhagavān dṛṣṭaḥ kīrtitaḥ saṁsmṛtaś ca
dveṣānubandhenāpy akhila-surāsuraḍi-durlabhaṁ
phalaṁ prayacchati, kim uta samyag bhaktimatām iti*

Viṣṇu Purāṇa (4.15.17)

Bhagavān bestows great rewards, rarely achieved by the demigods and demons, to those who see, glorify, or even

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think about Him with an envious disposition. What, then, can be said of those who serve Him with loving devotion?

“Śrī Rāmacandra and Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra descended to this world and delivered all the *jīvas* in this universe, just as You have descended to Śrī Navadvīpa.

*je kahe,—‘caitanya-mahimā mora gocara haya’
se jānuka, mora punaḥ ei ta’ niścaya*

*tomāra je līlā mahā-amṛtera sindhu
mora mano-gocara nahe tāra eka-bindu*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.87–88)

“If someone were to say to me, ‘I know the glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu,’ then I could only say, ‘Brother, you can know whatever you know.’ Yet my conclusion, O Lord, is that Your pastimes are a shoreless ocean of nectar. They are so great that my mind is unable to conceive of even a single drop of them.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu was astonished to hear Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura speak these words. He thought, “How can Haridāsa understand My confidential pastimes?”

Being extremely pleased with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīman Mahāprabhu embraced him and forbade him to reveal these matters to anyone. By nature, the Lord desires to hide His opulence, yet He certainly becomes known to His devotees.

After returning from Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s hut, Śrīman Mahāprabhu extolled his glories to the devotees as though speaking with hundreds of mouths.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu becomes blissful while glorifying His devotees, of whom Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is topmost. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya-līlā 3.95):

*haridāsera guṇa-gaṇa—asaṅkhya, apāra
keha kona amṣe varṇi’ nāhi pāya pāra*

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s transcendental qualities are innumerable and unfathomable. No one can describe more than a fraction of his glories, for they are boundless.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE PASTIME OF
ŚRĪLA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA'S
DISAPPEARANCE

One day, Śrīman Mahāprabhu's servant, Śrī Govinda Prabhu, very happily visited Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura to give him Śrī Jagannātha-deva's *mahā-prasāda*. When he arrived, he found Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura lying down, chanting his fixed number of rounds very slowly.

"Haridāsajī," he said, "please rise and honor *prasāda*."

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, "Govinda, I shall fast today. I have yet to finish chanting my fixed number of rounds. How, then, can I honor *mahā-prasāda*? But since you have brought *mahā-prasāda*, how can I neglect it?" Saying this, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura offered prayers to the *mahā-prasāda* and honored it by taking just one grain.

The next day, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself came to see Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and said, "Haridāsa, I hope you are healthy."

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura offered his obeisance upon seeing the Lord and said with great humility, "O Lord, my body is completely fine. My mind and intelligence, however, are unwell."

"Please tell Me, what is your disease?" the Lord asked.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura then revealed the real cause of his sorrow: "I am unable to complete my fixed number of rounds."

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Accepting Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura as an authority on, and preacher of, the holy name, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Haridāsa, you are now very old, so reduce your number of rounds. You are a perfected soul. Why do you insist on performing such [rigorous] *sādhana*? Having descended to this world to deliver its inhabitants, you have widely propagated the glories of the holy name. Now please reduce the amount of *nāma* you chant each day.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura responded with words so humble that they could have melted stone, and he glorified Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s limitless qualities. He then explained his true intentions thusly, “O Lord, kindly hear my request.

*hīna jāti janma mora nindya-kalevara
hīna-karme rata muī adhama pāmara*

*adṛśya, asprśya more aṅgīkāra kailā
raurava haite more vaikuṅṭhe caḍāilā*

*svatantra īśvara tumi hao icchāmaya
jagat nācāo, jāre jaiche icchā haya*

*aneka nācāilā more prasāda kariyā
viprera śrāddha-pātra khāinu ‘mleccha’ haīyā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.27–30)

“I have taken birth in a low-class family, and my body is therefore abominable. Being despicable and wicked, I always act in a degraded way. Although I was unfit to be seen or touched, You accepted me. You pulled me from the hell named Raurava and raised me to Vaikuṅṭha.

“Because You are the fully independent Lord, You act according to Your own free will. You cause others to dance as You like. Out of Your mercy, You have made me dance in many different ways. I even ate the *śrāddha-pātra* (offerings of oblations to the forefathers) meant for the *brāhmaṇas*, although I am a *mleccha*.

“O Lord, I think that You will soon close Your pastimes in this world and return to Your eternal abode. Please do not show me Your disappearance pastime. I have long desired to leave my body before You conclude Your pastimes in this world.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura fell quiet for some time before expressing his cherished desire to attain the service of Gaura-Kṛṣṇa by mind, body, and words, when he disappeared from this world:

*hṛdaye dharimu tomāra kamala-caraṇa
nayane dekhimu tomāra cāda vadana*

*jihvāya uccārimu tomāra ‘kṛṣṇa-caitanya’-nāma
ei-mata mora icchā,—chāḍimu parāṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.33–34)

“Holding Your lotus feet upon my heart, I want to give up my body while beholding Your moon-like face and chanting Your holy name, ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya.’ This is my one and only desire.

“O merciful Lord, kindly accept my request. This desire of mine can only be fulfilled by Your mercy.”

With deep affection, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Haridāsa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is extremely merciful. He certainly fulfills the prayers of high-class devotees such as you.”

Faced with imminent separation from His dear associate, Śrīman Mahāprabhu spoke the following heart-wrenching words of compassion:

*kintu āmāra je kichu sukha, saba tomā lai yā
tomāra yogya nahe,—jābe āmāre chāḍiyā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.38)

“But Haridāsa, whatever happiness I have is all due to your company. It does not benefit you to go and leave Me behind.”

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Catching hold of the Lord's lotus feet, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, "O Lord, please do not bewilder me with Your deluding potency (*māyā*). You must grant mercy to this degraded soul.

*mora śiromaṇi kata kata mahāśaya
tomāra līlāra sahāya koṭi-bhakta haya*

*āmā-hena jadi eka kīṭa mari' gela
pipīlilkā maile pṛthivīra kāhā hāni haila?*

*'bhakata-vatsala' tumi, mui 'bhaktābhāsa'
avaśya pūribe, prabhu, mora ei āśa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.40–42)

"There are millions of devotees assisting in Your pastimes who are superior to me. If an insect like me were to die, Your pastimes and joy would remain untouched. When a small ant dies, does the Earth lose anything?"

"O Lord, You are *bhakata-vatsala* (affectionate to Your devotees). Even though I am but a semblance of a devotee, it is my hope that You will certainly fulfill this desire of mine."

Hearing this, the Lord embraced Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and assured him that He would return the following day after receiving *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva. He then went to bathe in the sea.

The next morning, after taking *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, Śrīman Mahāprabhu and all His devotees came in great haste to meet Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura worshiped the lotus feet of the Lord and all the devotees.

The Lord asked, "Haridāsa, how are you?"

Haridāsa replied, "O Prabhu, I am however You want to keep me."

Upon hearing this, Mahāprabhu began a *mahā-saṅkīrtana* in that courtyard. Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita danced, while Śrī

Svarūpa Dāmodara and all the other devotees surrounded Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and performed *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

There, before the devotees headed by Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Śrīman Mahāprabhu expounded Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s glories, as though speaking with five mouths. As He spoke, His bliss (*ānanda*) grew continuously. Everyone was awestruck to hear Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s glorification from the Lord’s lotus mouth, and they worshiped the Ṭhākura’s lotus feet.

*haridāsa nijāgrete prabhure basāilā
nija-netra—dūi bhṛṅga—mukha-padme dilā*

*sva-hṛdaye āni’ dhari’ prabhura caraṇa
sarva-bhakta-pada-reṇu mastaka-bhūṣaṇa*

*‘śrī kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu’ balen bāra bāra
prabhu-mukha-mādhurī piye, netre jala-dhāra*

*‘śrī kṛṣṇa-caitanya’-śabda karite uccāraṇa
nāmera sahita prāṇa kaila utkrāmaṇa*

*mahā-yogēśvara-prāya svacchande maraṇa
‘bhīṣmera niryāṇa’ sabāra haila smarāṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.53–57)

At that time, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura asked Śrīman Mahāprabhu to sit before him. He then fixed his eyes, which were like two bumblebees, on the lotus face of the Lord.

He held the Lord’s lotus feet near his heart. He took the foot-dust from all the devotees and placed it on his head as an ornament.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura repeatedly chanted the holy name ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya.’ As he drank the sweetness of the Lord’s lotus face, tears of joy glided from his eyes.

At that moment, he left his body while chanting the holy name, ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya.’

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Everyone watched as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, like the greatest of *yogīs*, left his body by his own will. This reminded them of Bhīṣma's departure.

The moment Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura left his body, the devotees chanted, "Hari" and "Kṛṣṇa" tumultuously. Śrīman Mahāprabhu became overwhelmed with the bliss of ecstatic love (*premānanda*). Taking Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's body in His arms, He danced in the courtyard. This sight in turn submerged the devotees in *prema*; they danced and performed *kīrtana*. The Lord was so absorbed in love for His dear Haridāsa that He lost all sense of the external world. He danced with the transcendental body of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in His arms for some time, until Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara somehow managed to pacify Him.

THE SEA BECOMES A SACRED PLACE

Then, accompanied by *kīrtana*, the devotees lifted Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura onto an aerial carrier (*vimāna*)¹ and walked toward the sea. Śrīman Mahāprabhu danced at the front of the procession, while Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita and the other devotees danced behind.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu bathed Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's body in the sea and declared, "Today, this ocean has become a great place of pilgrimage (*mahā-tīrtha*)."

All the devotees drank the water that had washed Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's feet. They placed remnants of Śrī Jagannātha-deva on his body, such as His silken rope, sandalwood pulp, and cloth. After that, they dug a hole in the sand and placed his body inside. Devotees performed *kīrtana* on all sides of the *samādhi*, and Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita danced in ecstasy. At that time, Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally covered the body of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura with sand, all the while chanting, "Haribol, Haribol!"

1 This refers to the nicely decorated stretcher on which they carried his body to the *samādhi*.

After the devotees also covered Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s body with sand, they built a platform there and fenced it well all around. After the *samādhi* ceremony, Mahāprabhu performed *kīrtana* and danced without reservation. The tumultuous vibration of the devotees’ *harināma-saṅkīrtana* filled the entire universe. After some time, Mahāprabhu and the devotees took bath in the sea and then circumambulated Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s *samādhi*. While performing *śrī hari-saṅkīrtana*, Mahāprabhu and His devotees walked to the Siṁha-dvāra gate of the Śrī Jagannātha Temple.

A FESTIVAL OF SEPARATION

Śrīman Mahāprabhu spread His cloth before the shopkeepers of Ānanda Bāzāra, inside the Jagannātha Temple, and said, “Please give Me some *prasāda* for the festival in honor of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.”

Hearing this, all the shopkeepers gladly donated huge quantities of *prasāda*, but Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara stopped them and requested Śrīman Mahāprabhu to return to the Gambhīra, along with all the devotees. They did so, while Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara remained with four Vaiṣṇavas and four porters.

He requested the shopkeepers, “Please give a small amount from each pot of *mahā-prasāda*.” In this way, they collected much *mahā-prasāda*, which the four porters carried on their heads. Śrī Vāṇinātha Paṭṭanāyaka and Śrī Kāśī Mīśra also sent huge quantities of *prasāda*.

At Śrī Kāśī Mīśra’s place, the Lord sat all the Vaiṣṇavas there in rows and, with the assistance of four other devotees, served them *prasāda*. On each plate, Mahāprabhu gave enough to feed five men.

Seeing Śrīman Mahāprabhu serving *prasāda*, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara said to Him, “O Lord, please sit and watch. Jagadānanda, Kāśīśvara, Śaṅkara, and I shall distribute.”

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

Although Śrīman Mahāprabhu sat down, He did not honor *prasāda*, because that day He had been invited to eat at the home of Kāśī Mīśra. Seeing this, everyone else also refrained from eating. It was only when Kāśī Mīśra personally brought *prasāda* to Mahāprabhu that He sat, along with Paramānanda Purī and Brahmānanda Bhāratī, and honored the *prasāda* Kāśī Mīśra so intently served Him. Seeing this, all the devotees happily began to honor *prasāda*. Mahāprabhu made the distributors give the devotees more, even if they refused it.

In this way, everyone blissfully honored *mahā-prasāda*.

After everyone had finished honoring *prasāda* and had washed their hands and mouth, Mahāprabhu applied sandalwood pulp to their forehead and garlanded them. Overwhelmed with ecstatic love, the Lord gave everyone the following benediction:

*haridāsera vijayotsava je kaila darśana
je ihānṛtya kaila, je kaila kīrtana*

*je tāre bālukā dite karila gamana
tāra madhye mahotsave je kaila bhojana*

*acire sabākāra habe 'kṛṣṇa-prāpti'
haridāsa-darāśane haya aiche 'śakti'*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.91–93)

“Anyone who has seen Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s festival of triumph, anyone who has danced and chanted here, anyone who offered sand to his *samādhi*, and anyone who honored *prasāda* at this festival of separation, will quickly attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such is the power of having Haridāsa’s *darśana*.”

Upon hearing Śrīman Mahāprabhu speak these words, the devotees’ hearts filled with joy.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu continued:

*kṛpā kari' kṛṣṇa more diyāchilā saṅga
svatantra kṛṣṇera icchā,—kailā saṅga-bhaṅga*

*haridāsera icchā jabe ha-ila calite
āmāra śakati tāre nārila rākhite*

*icchā-mātre kailā nija-prāna nikrāmaṇa
pūrbe jena śuniyāchi bhīṣmera maraṇa*

*haridāsa āchila pṛthivīra ‘śiromaṇi’
tāhā binā ratna-śūnyā haila medinī*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.94–97)

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa mercifully gave Me the association of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but today, by His supremely independent will, this association has been severed. Haridāsa desired to go, and I had no power to stop him. Just like Bhīṣma, Haridāsa left his body by his own will.”

“Haridāsa Ṭhākura was the crown jewel of this world. Without him, this Earth has become bereft of a priceless jewel.”

The Lord told the devotees, “Loudly call out, ‘Haridāsa Ṭhākura kī jaya!’” He then danced with great energy.

The multitude of Vaiṣṇavas called, “All glories to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who revealed to the world the glories of the holy name!”

Some time later, when Śrīman Mahāprabhu became somewhat composed, He bade farewell to all the devotees. Submerged in both joy and distress in separation from Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, He took rest.

THE BENEDICTION OF HEARING HIS PASTIMES

At the end of this narrative in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī wrote:

*ei ta’ kahilū haridāsera vijaya
jāhāra śravaṇe kṛṣṇe dṛḍha-bhakti haya*

*caitanyaera bhakta-vātsalya ihātei jāni
bhakta-vāñchā pūrṇa kailā nyāsī-śiromaṇi*

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

*śeṣa-kāle dilā tāre darśana-sparśana
tāre kole kari' kailā āpane nartana*

*āpane śrī-haste kṛpāya tāre bālu dilā
āpane prasāda māgi' mahotsava kailā*

*mahā-bhāgavata haridāsa—parama vidvāna
e saubhāgya lāgi' āge karilā prayāṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-lilā 11.101–105)

“I have thus described the festival of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s victory. By hearing it, one attains unflinching devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

“Through this pastime, one can understand Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s affection for His devotees (*bhakta-vātsalya*), because although He is the crown jewel of all *sannyāsīs*, He fulfilled the desire of His devotee.

“In accordance with Śrīla Haridāsa’s wish, the Lord blessed him at the last stage of his life with His *darśana* and touch. When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura departed, the Lord took his body in His arms and danced.

“With His own lotus hands, the Lord mercifully covered Haridāsa’s body with sand, and He personally begged for *prasāda* for the festival to honor his passing.

“Being expert in pre-eminent knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *mahā-bhāgavata* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was the topmost scholar. To achieve this great fortune [of revealing to the world the merciful Lord’s quality of affection for His devotees], Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura departed before Śrīman Mahāprabhu did.”

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s *samādhi* is still present in Śrī Jagannātha Purī, within Śrī Puruṣottama Kṣetra. Every year on the day of Ananta-caturdaśī, the devotees hold a festival to commemorate his passing.



*namāmi haridāsaṁ taṁ
caitanyaṁ taṁ ca tat-prabhum
saṁsthitāṁ api yan-mūrtim
svānke kṛtvā nanarta yaḥ*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-lilā 11.1)

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and his master, Śrī Caitanyadeva, who took the body of Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura in His arms and danced.

GLOSSARY

- A *ācārya* – spiritual preceptor
ārati – ceremony of offering a deity articles of worship, such as incense, lamp, flowers, and fan, accompanied by chanting and ringing a bell.
- B *bhajana* – meditation; internal worship and service
brāhmaṇa – a priest or teacher
bhakti – devotion to God
- C *Cāturmāsya* – the four months of the rainy season (August to November)
- D *darśana* – seeing or having audience of the deity, a sacred place, or an exalted Vaiṣṇava
dharma – socio-religious duties prescribed in the scriptures for different classes of persons in the Vedic social system that are meant to elevate one to the platform of *bhakti*.

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

- E **Ekādaśī** – a fast from grains, beans, and other foodstuffs, observed on the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight, so that the devotee can fully immerse himself in activities of pure *bhakti*.
- G **gopī** – a cowherd girl
gosvāmī – a title for those in the renounced order of life, commonly referring to the renowned followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who adopted the lifestyle of mendicants. Descendants of the relatives of such *gosvāmīs* or of their servants often adopt this title merely on the basis of birth. They are thus known as ‘caste *gosvāmīs*.’
- H **harināma** – chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s holy name
harikathā – narrations of the pastimes of Lord Śrī Hari and His devotees
- J **japa** – utterance of *mantras*, often referring to individual chanting on beads
- K **karatālas** – hand cymbals
kīrtana – chanting
- L **līlā** – pastime
- M **mṛdaṅga** – a double-headed clay drum
- N **nāga-rāja** – king of serpents
nāmācārya – one who expounds the glories of the holy name by one’s example

Glossary

- P** *praṇāma* – obeisances
 prasāda – food remnants that were offered to the deity
- R** *rasa* – taste, flavor
- S** *sādhana-bhajana* – devotional practices
 sādhu – a saintly personality
 samādhi – a tomb in which the body of a highly elevated devotee is placed after his departure from this world. When a pure devotee takes *samādhi*, it means that upon departing from this world, he enters the same level, position, and spiritual mood as the personal associates of his worshipful deity.
 saṅkīrtana – congregational chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa
 sannyāsī – a renunciant
 smārta – a mundane, ritualistic follower of the Vedas
 śravaṇa – hearing
- T** *tulasī* – a sacred plant whose leaves and blossoms are used by devotees in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- V** *Vaiṣṇava* – a devotee of the Supreme Lord
 vaiṣṇava-aparādha – offense against Vaiṣṇavas
 varṇāśrama – the Vedic system for the organization of civilized society, which divides society in the four *varṇas* (orders) of *brāhmaṇa* (priest or teacher), *kṣatriya* (warrior or statesman), *vaiśya* (merchant or agriculturalist), and *śudra* (laborer), and the four *āśramas* (stages of life) of *brahmācārya* (celibate student life), *grhastha* (married life), *vānaprastha* (retirement from family responsibilities), and *sannyāsa* (renounced, ascetic life).

NĀMĀCĀRYA HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKURA

viṇā – a musical stringed instrument

Vraja – the spiritual realm where Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs human-like pastimes

vraja-prema – the love of the residents of Vraja for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Y *yavana* – outcaste

yuga – one of the four ages that are described in the Vedas: Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga, Dvāpara-yuga, and Kali-yuga. These four *yugas* rotate, like calendar months. The duration of each *yuga* is different – they are said to be respectively 1,728,000; 1,296,000; 864,000; and 432,000 years. The descending number represents a corresponding physical and moral deterioration of mankind in each age.

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