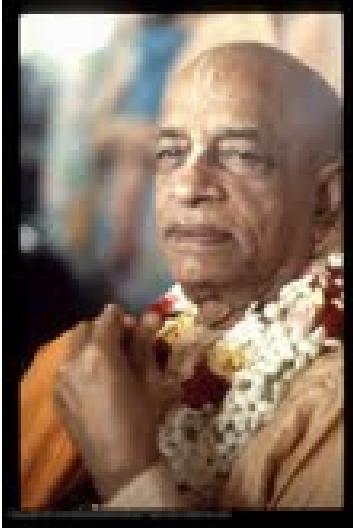


Guru Maharaja's Glorification Of Bhivu Chaitanya Prabhu

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE IS A GLORIFICATION OF BHIVU CHAITANYA PRABHU, GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI ON 23 DECEMBER 2007 IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA.



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Audio reference: [click here](#)



nama om vishnu-padaya krishna-preshthaya bhu-tale
shrimate bhaktivedanta-svamin iti namine
namas te sarasvate deve gaura-vani-pracharine
nirvishesha-shunyavadi pashcatya-desha-tarine

Gaur Premanande Hari Hari Bol!

Hare Krishna!

The day before yesterday at 9:45 at night, one of our God-brothers, Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu, left his body in Sridhama Vrindavana. So I decided that today I will speak on Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu, whatever I remember or whatever encounters I had with him. Actually I should have done it yesterday only, but somehow it didn't occur to me. Like, today I was reflecting on Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu and I thought that I should. Actually, yesterday evening I was

thinking of him and then I thought I would share my memories of Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu with all of you.

Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was a very wonderful devotee. I first met him in 1977 when I was serving Srila Prabhupada in Vrindavana. From Hrishikesha we went to Vrindavana with Prabhupada and that was actually my first visit to Vrindavana. And I was serving Srila Prabhupada, so I was practically occupied with Srila Prabhupada all the time and I did not have much contact with the local devotees in the temple at that time. But Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was one whom I developed a very, very friendly and warm relationship with, for various reasons – one reason is when he got to know that I was Bengali. Those days there were very few Indian devotees in ISKCON. Most of the devotees were from America and Europe. There were very few Indian devotees and when Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu got to know that I was an Indian devotee and a Bengali so he became very interested in me and so he started to display his special care and affection upon me. He was quite old at that time. Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu must have been about, well I am talking about thirty two years, thirty one years back. Thirty one years back Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was about fifty six years old, fifty five years old and he was quite old, I mean, those days we were young, very young. Fifty five was old man according to our calculation and to him I was just a young boy. And then he was very interested in me because I was serving Srila Prabhupada. Those days to become Srila Prabhupada's secretary, Prabhupada's servant was something out of this world. Like it was the most exalted position you can think of in ISKCON world. And he was obviously quite attached to me.

Those days Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu's service was cooking for the deities. And the meetings that we used to have, were mainly during Mangala Arotik and in the evening, if I could make to the evening Arotik. Because that's the time he used to be free. He was a very, very sincere and very committed devotee. The way I used to see him was like, Mangala Arotik, he would come to Mangala Arotik and right after Mangala Arotik he would just walk into the kitchen, deity kitchen. And the whole day he would be there. He would be cooking for the morning offering, then he would cook the Raja bhoga offering and then he would cook the afternoon offering. In between probably he used to get one or two hours just to take his bath and take his prasada, but otherwise he was, all the time he was in the kitchen. And the wonderful thing was that he was always chanting. He was cooking and he was chanting, and loudly. He would chant loudly in a melodious way. Not just mechanical repetition but very loudly he would sing the Holy Name of the Lord, very sweetly.

I heard one time that some people, some devotee complained to Prabhupada that Bhivu Chaitanya doesn't chant his sixteen rounds. Then Prabhupada asked, "What does he do?" He said, "He cooks for the deities from morning." Then Prabhupada said, "Well, he doesn't need to chant his sixteen rounds." Then one day Prabhupada was on a morning walk, just he was walking around the temple, and he heard Bhivu Chaitanya's loud chanting. And Prabhupada asked, "Who is chanting?" And I think he commented, "Who is chanting so beautifully?" And the devotees said that, "It's Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu." Then Prabhupada said his chanting, you know, he admired his chanting that he is chanting so beautifully. And then Prabhupada also commented that when one chants all the time, then he doesn't need to chant on his beads. If you can chant all the time, that is, there are two kinds of chanting japa. One is chanting with count, sankhya purvak. Sankhya means keeping count. So you chant by keeping counts, that's very good. Then you can chant 16 rounds, 34 rounds, 64 rounds, 128 rounds, 194 rounds, 192 rounds (three lacs). But if you are chanting all the time, then there was no need to keep count. And Prabhupada pointed out that when one chants

all the time, then that is called “asankhya nama.” Asankhya, countless, and that was an amazing thing and we always saw Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu is always chanting, always chanting. So Prabhupada noticed that.

And Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu otherwise, apparently he was a very simple devotee, a very simple devotee. Like, he was from Bengal, he came to Vrindavana and he saw ISKCON temple and he became interested and he wanted to join. And those days, although there were very few Indian devotees, but there was a very strict screening of selecting Indian devotees. Because especially in Vrindavana people would come, become devotees and would steal. They would not come to become devotees, they would come to take the opportunity to steal. Therefore the devotees were very, very strict about who they would allow to stay in the temple. But when Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu came everybody could see, that is what Hari Sauri prabhu reported, he was the temple commander in Vrindavana at that time and he was the one who was selecting, who used to do screening, and seeing Bhivu Chaitanya Prabhu, he could just see that he is a sincere devotee. He doesn't have any other motivation. Like, he was very simple hearted, very pure and very humble and submissive.

So he joined in '75 and I saw him in early '77 and he was already doing the deity cooking, cooking for the deities. So it was quite, quick progress you can say, like he had already got his first initiation, second initiation and he was engaged in one of the most important services. Actually in Vrindavana we had our first temple and that created quite a sensation in Vrindavana. It's a beautiful temple and that was the first temple Prabhupada built in India. Very beautifully designed, very beautifully built and we had three sets of deities, very amazing deities of Krishna-Balarama, Radha-Shyamsundara and Gaura-Nitai. And the deity worship standard Prabhupada established, the standard Prabhupada established in Vrindavana was extremely high, extremely lofty for deity worship, because that was considered to be the standard and the deity Shringara used to be exquisite, immaculate. I remember one French devotee, one of our God-brothers, of course those days everyone was either a God-brother or a God-sister. In ISKCON those days, all were Prabhupada disciples. And this devotee was very artistic and the way he used to decorate, he used to do the Shringara of the deities, it was very attractive!

So deities' Shringara was very opulent and very beautiful. The deity worship was very, very high standard and naturally then the prasada also was very high class. And Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was, actually, nowadays in our kitchen, how many devotees cook? The deity Raja bhoga and [devotee: five devotees] Now mind you, Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was doing, he was the only devotee and he was doing all the offerings every day. Those days there were not so many devotees in our temple. And that's one thing and another thing is that he wouldn't let anybody cook! [laughs] Because he could see that the devotees don't know how to cook. Most of the devotees didn't know how to cook. And so he was very particular about the standard and they wouldn't know how to cook and then later on when he handed over that service because of his old age, the devotees, the management of Vrindavana insisted that he retires from this service. That also after a lot of endeavor they managed to convince him, but he did that by training two devotees to cook. He personally trained two devotees for six months or so and then he handed over the service.

And the standard of the devotee's offerings were very, very high. And I would see, those days I used to cook for Srila Prabhupada so often I used to go, get some bhoga from him or some spices from him and I would go there and see that he was.... The deity kitchen in Vrindavana is quite large and he was the only person controlling the entire kingdom of the

devotee kitchen! [laughs] A large kitchen and the only person, he was everywhere. I mean amazing, personally, he was quite frail actually, he was not a big bodied person, he was quite old, he was quite thin.

With Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu I remember one incidence. Actually, the deity kitchen those days was just next to Srila Prabhupada's quarters. The same level, actually. Prabhupada's roof and the deity kitchen was on the same level, although two different buildings but that was on the first floor, Prabhupada's roof was on the same level. One day I was sitting with Srila Prabhupada, one afternoon, and Prabhupada was sitting on his bed on the roof. Bed means it's a "dari", like in India they make beds called "khatia." They are made of coconut ropes and Prabhupada had one and we used to put a cushion on top of that, a cotton mattress on top and Prabhupada used to sit there sometimes in the afternoon. Sometimes Prabhupada used to sleep there in the summer also at night. Prabhupada used to like to sleep on the roof during summer time. So Prabhupada was there, sitting on that "khatia" and I was sitting on the floor in front of Srila Prabhupada, and then all of a sudden Prabhupada asked me, "Go find out what are they cooking." So I went to the deity kitchen and I found that Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was preparing kachoris and samosas for the afternoon offering. And those days Prabhupada hardly used to eat anything because Prabhupada's health was not in a good condition. So I went and told, I thought Prabhupada was just curious to find out who is cooking because Prabhupada could get the smell after the cooking.

[some devotees enter] Haribol, Kaivalya prabhu! Hare Krishna, Chaitanya! Kaivalya prabhu ki jaya! Kaivalya prabhu is a God-brother of ours from America, Dr. Mahajana. He is a very well known doctor there in Philadelphia area. So Kaivalya prabhu just arrived. You came a day early? [devotee: inaudible] Oh, and you had some rest and you got your rooms and everything? Priyavrata, you took care of him nicely? [devotee: inaudible] Oh, I see, you knew he was coming. Good. Yesterday, the day before yesterday, Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu, our God-brother in Vrindavana left his body. So today we are just remembering him. So I went and told Prabhupada that Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu is cooking kachoris and samosas. And Prabhupada said, "Get some for me." When Prabhupada said, "Get some for me", it was the most wonderful thing for me because Prabhupada hardly used to eat those days and now he wanted to eat something. So I just ran and right at that time Tamala Krishna Maharaja and Bhavananda Maharaja were just coming in to Prabhupada's room on the roof and when they saw me running like that, they asked me, "What happened?" They were a little concerned what happened. So I said, "Prabhupada wanted to have some kachoris and samosas." Now Tamala Krishna Maharaja was very particular in taking care of Prabhupada. So he said, "You can't give kachoris and samosas to Prabhupada." I just screamed, "Prabhupada wanted it!" And I just ran between the two of them and I went to Prabhupada's kitchen. [laughter] I got his silver thali and went up to the deity kitchen and I told Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu that Prabhupada wanted some kachoris and samosas. He was very happy to hear that Prabhupada wanted his kachoris and samosas. So I got two kachoris and two samosas on the plate and I came to Prabhupada's roof and then I offered it to Prabhupada. Prabhupada took the plate. It was very hot, because they were just out of the frying pot. And so it was very hot so Prabhupada just smashed it. And then he started to pick up small pieces and started to eat. Actually, Tamala Krishna Maharaja's concern was correct because Prabhupada did not eat for a long time. All of a sudden, when one was not eating for so long, to have just fried in ghee kachoris and samosas dripping with ghee, I mean, he thought that it was something not really going to be suitable for Srila Prabhupada. But

Prabhupada started to eat and Tamala Krishna Maharaja and Bhavananda were sitting on the floor on the roof, so Prabhupada just looked at them and then Prabhupada said, "Don't see!" [laughter] And immediately their heads dropped!

And Tamala Krishna Maharaja got on my case afterwards, he said that you gave kachori and samosa to Srila Prabhupada and Prabhupada will feel uneasy through the night, he won't be able to sleep and his health condition will deteriorate. Tamala Krishna Maharaja was very, very concerned about Srila Prabhupada, because he took it as his responsibility to take care of Srila Prabhupada's health condition and that time Prabhupada's health was not very good. And I reasoned with him, "See, Prabhupada wanted it, what can I say? Could I tell Prabhupada that, no Prabhupada, you should not eat kachoris and samosas?" At least I couldn't do that. And his main concern was that, that night Prabhupada would not be able to sleep. And in the morning when I went to Prabhupada, the first concern actually was how Prabhupada slept, and I could see that Prabhupada didn't have any difficulty, Prabhupada slept very well. So I was very relieved and I told him, "See!" [laughter] And then later on I told Pishima about that incidence. Pishima was Prabhupada's sister. And then Pishima just commented, "If Prabhupada wants he can even digest rocks!" So we should not think that Prabhupada was an ordinary person. Prabhupada was a pure devotee of the Lord and he is not subjected to the material conditions.

Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was, as I mentioned, he was a very, very dedicated devotee, like the whole day he was just cooking for the deities. And it was not just one or two days: seven days a week, thirty days a month, 365 days a year. And those days Prabhupada actually told us in Vrindavana that we don't need to go out of the temple. That means we don't need to go out of our premises of ISKCON temple, ISKCON temple premises. And Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was one devotee who never went out of Vrindavana. He never went out of the temple, not only Vrindavana. He never went out of the ISKCON temple premises. I was told only once he went out, only once. Otherwise he just stayed there, the whole day and serving, from morning till night. He didn't need to go out. He never went out in any parikrama, he didn't go out in sightseeing. If you'd ask Bhivu Chaitanya where is Banshi ghat, where is Keshi ghat, he didn't know anything. All he knew is Krishna Balarama, Radha Shyamsundara and Gaura Nitai and Prabhupada. He had an implicit faith that Prabhupada is a pure devotee and he was simply attached to Srila Prabhupada.

So Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu, all he did is just served and chanted. He would serve from morning till night. Right after Mangala Arotik, he would just walk straight from the temple into the kitchen, deity kitchen and he would be there the whole day. What he was chanting, what he was doing, while he was cooking he was chanting, and chanting in a melodious way, in a very sweet melodious way. I was thinking of repeating how he used to chant it but then I decided not to, because he chanted so sweetly that I won't be able to repeat it properly. I will not be able to demonstrate it properly, very sweet.

And he was very, very strict in all respects, like in one hand he was very humble but he would be very, very strict and very pure in his intention. Later on, as I said, Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was forced actually to stop cooking for the deities. Because his body bent down with age, he actually, but still he was just cooking for the deities. And I remember, still, although his body was bent down with his age, but he was so strong. I remember once I just arrived in Vrindavana, I was in Mangala Arotik and somebody just came and embraced me from behind. And I could feel, I mean, anyway, he embraced me and then I turned around and I saw that it was Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu. He would do that, whenever he would see me, he would just embrace me. But what I remember that, although his body bent down with age,

but that embrace was so strong! [laughter] And whenever I would go, he would make it a point to give me the charanamrita. And Vrindavana charanamrita used to have a lot of ghee and he would just give me the ghee. [laughs] So much ghee.

Such a nice devotee! I used to tell my disciples in Vrindavana to take care of him and they did that. They kind of felt (?) a very wonderful relationship with Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu. Last time I remember, when I went to Vrindavana he was sick, so I told him that I would go to see him. I sent a message that I would come to see him. And then when I went, I saw that he made an elaborate arrangement for me. He had a seat, really nicely decorated, he assembled all the junior devotees, including my disciples there, and he had a grand reception of me when I went to see him! [laughter] I went to see him but he gave me a grand reception and he was insistent. I was telling him, "Look, I came to see you here. I didn't come here to get my Guru Puja here." That's what he arranged. Like he had arranged a Guru Puja and then he offered, made it a point, like I had to sit on that 'asan', had a Guru Puja there, he arranged all the flowers and he arranged the nice prasada, the mahaprasada from the temple and he wanted me to honor the prasada. He made me sit down and there was no sign, I thought that I am coming to see a sick person who probably is incapacitated and bed-ridden, but here he was, although he was, as I mentioned, he was bent with age. But he was so active and he would not take any seva from anybody. Like, we had to force the devotees would take care of him. And he allowed, he was staying in the guest house, at the back of the guest house, one room. And he allowed two devotees to stay with him, but he did not treat them as his servants but he used to kind of treat them as, you know, two devotees who are sharing the room with him and he used to take care of them instead of them taking care of him.

It's a pity that for a long time that I haven't been able to go to Vrindavana. My last visit to Vrindavana was over a year ago, no, about two years ago almost. The last visit was a very short visit when Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Maharaja left, that was, how long ago was that? [devotee: one and a half]. About one and a half, yeah, fourteen months. But that was, I just went and that's the time I saw Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu for the last time. Otherwise previously, I used to go to Vrindavana for the month of Kartik and stay there for the whole month. But when I started to get more and more busy with other responsibilities, I couldn't spend so much time in Vrindavana and my visits were also very sporadic. And I feel bad that such a wonderful devotee, I couldn't really take his association. He was very simple and humble. He wouldn't give an impression of a very learned, exalted person. He was simple. He had simple faith that Radharani had very been merciful unto him that She allowed him to serve. He used to think that his service to the kitchen, deity kitchen was simply the mercy of Radharani and he used to always think that Krishna is always there to take care. He didn't want to take medicine. He said, "What's the use of medicine? Whatever Krishna does, that will be fine." He wouldn't take any medicine. He wouldn't take any service from anybody. Such a wonderful example for all of us!

He did not want to have a big worship but he was very, yes, I can say proud that he received Srila Prabhupada's mercy. He considered that that's his greatest good fortune that he received the mercy of Srila Prabhupada. Prabhupada appreciated him so much! Prabhupada used to go out on morning walks, devotees used to just try to get this opportunity to go out with Srila Prabhupada. There used to be a competition, there used to be a real struggle to make one's way with Srila Prabhupada in the morning walk. Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu never tried to do that. He never tried to have any recognition or any big position. He didn't want

to become a big devotee in any way. All he wanted to do is chant the Holy Name and serve with implicit faith.

And I was told his passing away was very wonderful. He was already quite old and bed ridden and the temple management wanted to shift him to some other better facility where they could take care of him in a better way, but he refused. He just wanted to be there. And all along he used to say, "Krishna is there, He is going to take care." He stopped, the functions of his organs gradually stopped. And the day before yesterday they saw that he was not able to recognize anybody. He was kind of completely withdrawn. So the devotees started a kirtana. The news spread, many devotees came. I was told that Dhanurdhara Maharaja came, was there, Bhurijana prabhu was there. Many Prabhupada disciples were there and they were massaging his feet. And in the middle of kirtana, they had continuous kirtana for ten hours in his room, and then at 9:45, the day before yesterday, he left his body.

So here is a perfect example of a pure devotee, a humble devotee who is just happy serving and following Prabhupada's instructions. Prabhupada told him there is no need to go out, I mean not him, Prabhupada just made a general announcement actually that our devotees, ISKCON devotees do not need to go out of the temple premises. And although the standard changed with time, now ISKCON devotees are everywhere in Vrindavana. And Vrindavana is flourishing with the ISKCON devotees' bank accounts. And Loi Bazaar and all those places are becoming so prosperous, devotees come, spend money, but Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was one person, one devotee who just stuck to that instruction of Srila Prabhupada. He never felt any need to go out of the temple. What to speak of going out of the temple premises, personally I have seen, like he hardly went out of even the temple room. Just he was in the temple room and I don't know when he went to, I mean when he was actively serving, I didn't see when he even used to go his room. Those days he used to stay in Gurukula, (unclear) building, where brahmacaris stayed and that also he must have gone late at night. In the morning everyday he was there for Mangala Arotik and straight from Mangal Arotika, I remember, had a darshan of Gaur-Nitai, Krishna Balarama and Radha Shyamsundara and then the stair case leading to the deity kitchen and he just walked in there. And the whole day he was there. He didn't even come out of the kitchen. And yes, that incidence, when I later on I came and told him that how much Prabhupada liked his samosas and kachori, I mean the expression in his face was something like, all his cooking endeavors have achieved its ultimate success that Prabhupada liked his cooking.

Prabhupada liked the samosa and kachori and he ate it.

Such a wonderful example and this shows that we don't have to become a big devotee. All we have to become is a simple devotee, a humble devotee, a sincere devotee. And Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu was the perfect example of that; absolutely clean in his heart, no duplicity, no duplicitous attitude, no ambition, no personal agenda. All he wanted is just to serve and chant, serve and chant. And he was a perfect example, as Prabhupada said, "Chant Hare Krishna and be happy." He was always so happy, he was always happy. Never had any complaints, never had any demand, never criticized anybody. Just simply served and served with such intensity that even when his body became incapacitated, he was not willing to give up his service. He would just continue on and on and on.

And same service, no change like finally I think, at least I saw him cooking for the deities in '77 and it must have been only about five, six years back that he was asked to, I mean he was forced to give up his service. So that would mean what – twenty five, about twenty five

years doing the same service, rendering the same service day in and day out. Such a wonderful example.

I used to tell him that I envy his position. He is there in Vrindavana all the time and he used to say, "No, you are preaching the glory of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You are spreading Krishna consciousness all over the world. Your service is the highest kind of service. You don't need to be in Vrindavana. You are carrying Vrindavana with you." So inspiring, he's always looking at things in such a positive way and assuming such a humble position for himself. His mood was not, "Yes, I am in Vrindavana. I never left Vrindavana. I didn't even leave the temple premises. I stayed within the temple serving Krishna Balarama all the time." No, rather he was always glorifying others that "No, you are doing such an important service." And he maintained a very humble position, never really tried to become a big scholar. He was to begin with, he was a simple person. At least I don't know what his background was, maybe he was a very scholarly person, but the impression that he gave is, as if he is illiterate, not a very scholarly person.

Bhivu Chaitanya prabhu ki jaya!