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"Two Beyond Duality"

A Biography
of
His Divine Grace
Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja
and
His Divine Grace
Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī
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Introduction

The descriptions of the exploits of Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Śrī Śrīmad Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja are certain to bewilder materialistic persons, for one who is under the sway of worldly desires cannot enter into the mysteries of the deeds and thoughts of a person fully immersed in spiritual consciousness.

*dhanyasyāyaṁ nava-premā
yasyonmīlati cetasi
antarvāṇibhir apy asya
mudrā suṣṭhu sudurgamā*

“Even a most learned scholar cannot understand the activities and symptoms of an exalted personality in whose heart love of Godhead has awakened.” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 23.40, cited from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.4.17]

There are two kinds of realized devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa: the

bhajanānandīs and the *goṣṭhyānandīs*. The liberated preachers, or *goṣṭhyānandīs*, step down from the highest transcendence and behave in a way which is intelligible to ordinary conditioned *jīvas*, with a view to inspiring them to take up devotion to Kṛṣṇa. The liberated *bhajanānandīs*, on the other hand, generally do not step down to the platform of the *madhyama-adhikārī*, the preacher of moderate spiritual advancement. Remaining immersed in their service to Kṛṣṇa on the platform of spontaneous devotion, they take note of the illusory material world and those who inhabit it but occasionally, and then in a most perfunctory way. This is not due to a lack of compassion on their part, but rather is determined by the inspiration they receive from the Godhead and an intensity of humbleness that convinces them they are too lacking in devotion to school others in the holy life. Moreover, the *bhajanānandīs'* thoughts are not always transformed by them into a materially intelligible expression. Thus, their words and activities may at times seem inscrutable or otherworldly.

Some devotees are instrumentally utilized by the Lord in the work of propagating the science of devotion. Others are inspired by the Lord and His pure devotees to lead lives of seclusion and intense renunciation. It might be said that Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, who was a genuine *bhajanānandī*, did little preaching, yet his influence was felt by the greatest preacher of the day, and that preacher gave him credit as his inspiration. Therefore, although it is a fact that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Svāmī Prabhupāda all emphasized widely preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the benefit of all, we should not commit the blunder of imagining that a devotee like Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was less advanced than they.

Very few devotees in this age are qualified to perform *nirjana-bhajana* (solitary worship) in the manner of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Lokanātha Gosvāmī, Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja or Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. In fact, those who attempt it generally end up meditating on sex life and performing illicit activities in secret. Such efforts are often motivated by a desire to achieve name and fame as a Vaiṣṇava. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has

written about this and Śrīla Prabhupāda has also commented:

“One reference is made here for those who are very anxious to imitate the behavior of Ṭhākura Haridāsa in an unnatural way. One must receive the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu or His representative before adopting such a way of life. The duty of a pure devotee or a servant of the Lord is to carry out the order of the Lord. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked Nityānanda Prabhu to go to Bengal and preach, and He asked the Gosvāmīs, Rūpa and Sanātana, to go to Vṛndāvana and excavate the lost places of pilgrimage. In this case the Lord asked Haridāsa Ṭhākura to remain there at Jagannātha Purī and constantly chant the holy names of the Lord. Thus Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave different persons different orders, and consequently one should not try to imitate the behavior of Haridāsa Ṭhākura without being ordered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu or His representative. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura condemns such imitation in this way:

*duṣṭa mana! tumi kisera vaiṣṇava?
pratiṣṭhāra tare, nirjanera ghare,
tava hari-nāma kevala kaitava*

“ ‘My dear mind, you are trying to imitate Haridāsa Ṭhākura and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* in a secluded place, but you are not worth being called a Vaiṣṇava because what you want is cheap popularity and not the actual qualification of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. If you try to imitate him you will fall down, for your neophyte position will cause you to think of women and money. Thus you will fall into the clutches of māyā, and your so-called chanting in a secluded place will bring about your downfall.’ ” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 11.195 purport]

In his preaching Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī always spoke out against those who were cheating in the name of reclusive chanting. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, upon the order and approval of his gurus, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, spent some years performing such secluded *bhajana*, following a vow similar to that of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Yet he did not recommend it for his followers. In fact, he took *sannyāsa*, situating

himself within the *varṇāśrama* corpus so as to offer special respect to such *Paramahamsas* as Rūpa Gosvāmī and the Rūpānuga Gosvāmīs (including his father and *guru*), to demonstrate how exalted and rare such perfect devotion and purity are and how high the qualifications are for those who want to follow in the footsteps of liberated souls.

One should, at any rate, not misunderstand the position of a genuine devotee like Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, who was actually a liberated, Paramahansa Bābājī. According to the material view, he made his appearance in the world in an ordinary *vaiśya* (merchant class) family and was not well educated, being practically illiterate. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has described his spiritual master in his song *Śrī guru-paramparā: mahā-bhāgavata-bara, āri-gaura-kiśora-bara, hari-bhajanete jā'ra moda*—“...the eminent Mahā-bhāgavata Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, whose sole joy was found in *hari-bhajana*.” Śrīla Prabhupāda described him in a letter to Rāyarāma dāsa, dated December 14th, 1967: “To think of becoming a fool is the real qualification for a bonafide disciple. As soon as one thinks that he has become the wiser man than the spiritual master one is surely doomed. We should remain everlastingly a fool before the spiritual master. Not artificially, but feelingly, and then we can make real progress. Even my spiritual master, a great scholar, remained a so-called fool before his spiritual master, who was outwardly an illiterate village fellow. So in the Absolute world the fool is also the master, and the master is also a fool in reciprocal dealings. Lord Caitanya also accepted Himself a great fool before His spiritual master, and all of us must follow the transcendental process.”

In his manifest pastimes Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja exhibited a relentless, acute detachment and indifference to the material world. On the other hand, when he took occasion to extol the unlimited glories of the Holy Name and point out the varieties of cheating and hypocrisy of so-called renunciates, as well as to reveal the inherent uselessness of endeavors for material happiness, his preaching was always effective and penetrating for his sincere hearers. Although outwardly almost illiterate and seemingly blind, scholars would approach him for the proper *siddhānta* (conclusion) of difficult philosophical issues, and they always received perfect explanations. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora

dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was delighted to sit and hear the discourses of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at Surabhi-kuñja, Navadvīpa, and he respected Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda as a *śikṣā-guru*. This was his sincere feeling, as well as a proper observance of etiquette, for he took Bābājī initiation from Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī's disciple, Śrīla Bhagavat dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, which made Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the Godbrother of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's *dikṣā-guru*. Nevertheless, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura considered Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja his dear friend, and he took Bābājī initiation from him in 1908. It was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura who directed Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to the lotus feet of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

In the history which follows, it may not always be perfectly clear why Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī acted as he did, but we can at least be certain that he acted according to the dictation of Kṛṣṇa for the benefit of the world. By hearing about his unrelenting intolerance of all forms of hypocrisy and deception and his tremendous austerity and devotion, we may hope to gain determination to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness with purity and to give up all forms of deceit and duplicity. Crookedness, hypocrisy and deceit are *anarthas* (obstructive contaminations of the heart), which are represented by the demonic wizard, Bakāsura, who was killed by Kṛṣṇa. This is described in the *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The Ṭhākura also states that without the destruction of deceit and crookedness, "...pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa cannot arise."

Therefore, we should pray that by recounting the glorious activities of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, the eternal associate of the Lord, the personification of renunciation who constantly exhibited powerful, ecstatic feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa, and the cutter of the pretenders and hypocrites with the axe of his unstinting mercy, that he will be pleased to bless us with a particle of his mercy. Being thus blessed with his divine grace, one can easily surmount the illusory web of crookedness and deceit and gain entrance to the Kingdom of God.

mahat-sevām dvāram āhur vimuktes

*tamo-dvāraṁ yoṣitām saṅgi-saṅgam
mahāntas te sama-cittāḥ praśāntā
vimanyavaḥ suhṛdaḥ sādhave ye*

“One can attain the path of liberation from material bondage only by rendering service to highly advanced spiritual personalities. These personalities are impersonalists and devotees. Whether one wants to merge into the Lord’s existence or wants to associate with the Personality of Godhead, one should render service to the Mahātmās. For those who are not interested in such activities, who associate with people fond of women and sex, the path to hell is wide open. The Mahātmās are equipoised. They do not see any difference between one living being and another. They are very peaceful and are fully engaged in devotional service. They are devoid of anger, and they work for the benefit of everyone. They do not behave in any abominable way. Such people are known as Mahātmās.” [Bhāg. 5.5.2]

The following accounts are taken from articles which first appeared in the *Sajjana Toṣaṇi* magazine, the magazine originally published under the auspices of Śrīla Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and continued by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The articles first appeared in 1917, shortly after the disappearance pastime of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and bore the title *Amār Prabhur Kathā*, which in English means “Tales of My Spiritual Master”. These articles were written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the original articles may be found in the Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa, W. Bengal and its branch in Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh.

The Caitanya Maṭha later compiled these articles into a single, small book, upon which much of this volume is based. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructs us therein how bewildered souls, pregnant with arrogance and intoxicated with desires for sense gratification, approach the spiritual master pretentiously. The neophyte devotees are always in a precarious situation. Due to a lack of proper knowledge and sufficient faith, their tendency is to imitate exalted Vaiṣṇavas. Such imitation, however, causes one to become degraded. “...One should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or Mahā-bhāgavata without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually

become degraded.” (*The Nectar of Instruction*, p. 58) One must study Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja’s instructions in order to escape the jaws of false renunciation and offensive imitation.

In his introduction to these articles, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wrote: “I have been busy within this material world trying to bring sense gratification within the grasp of my hand. I have often thought that by obtaining the objects of sense gratification, all my shortcomings will be fulfilled. I often attained different facets that were very rare indeed, but my own personal shortcomings were never mitigated. In this material world I have had the association of very aristocratic persons. However, seeing their various deficiencies, I could not offer them praise. The most merciful Supreme Lord Śrī Gaurasundara, seeing me in such a lamentable condition at a time of adversity, gave permission to His two dearest devotees [Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī] to grant their blessings to me. Because I was always intoxicated with a worldly false ego, wanting to be repeatedly praised, I deprived myself of my own real benefit. But because of the influence of my previous births’ activities in devotional service, I came into the association of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who was the form of my spiritual well-wisher. My spiritual master [Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī] would go and visit Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and many times would reside with him. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, out of his compassion for other living entities, pointed out my spiritual master, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī. Upon seeing my spiritual master, the extent of my worldly false ego diminished. I knew that all the other living entities who have taken the human form of life were also fallen and low like myself. But by gradually observing the spiritual character of my master, I realized that only a Vaiṣṇava could reside in this material world and be of exemplary character.”

The two main sources of information for the life sketch of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja were *Gaura-parṣada-caritāvalī* and *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-jīvana*, two compilations of biographies of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas. Additional biographical information has been found in the autobiography of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Svalikhita Jīvani*,

and other biographical works about Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī was the pure link in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. He carried and preserved the pure message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu intact, and he was the instructor of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, who inaugurated the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout India and out to the Western world as well. He also initiated Bhagavat dāsa Bābājī, the *veśa-guru* of Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, instructed Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and instructed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself. According to some accounts there were occasions at Surabhi-kuñja (Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's place of *bhajana* at Godrumadvīpa in Śrī Navadvīpa-Dhāma) when three or four generations of pure Vaiṣṇavas, including Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura met together for *saṅkīrtana* and Kṛṣṇa-kathā. Some of these meetings and personalities were fictionalized in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's transcendental novel, *Jaiva Dharma*. The *saṅkīrtana* performed by these spiritual colossi was the source of tremendous auspiciousness for the world. Their transcendental gatherings were reminiscent of the meetings of the Six Gosvāmīs and their followers at the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana. All of the above-mentioned personalities were pure, eternally liberated souls, who had descended from Goloka for the benefit of the world: to inaugurate a renaissance of *bhakti* and the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's special contribution to this sublime resurgence of devotion to Kṛṣṇa was his role, in concert with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, of discovering and authenticating the precise location of the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda referred to him as Vaiṣṇava-sarvabhauma, the Commander-in-chief of the Vaiṣṇavas. From all reports he lived to be somewhere between 130 to 150 years old, and he is listed in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava succession (*paramparā*) as a contemporary of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, although his *bābājī-veśa-guru* was, by point of *dīkṣā* the disciple of the disciple of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Be that as it

may, he was the most prominent *ācārya* after Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and, being his spiritual equal, is thus counted as his co-*ācārya*. He was a perfectly self-realized soul, and he was the beloved leader of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas during the time of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, who accepted him as his *śikṣā-guru*.

Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

Family Life and Renunciation

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja appeared some time in the 1830's in the district of Faridapura, adjacent to the place called Tepakhola, in the village of Vagyana in East Bengal, or what is now known as Bangladesh. He appeared in that village, which is situated on the bank of the Padma River, as the son of a *vaiśya* most probably called Vamśidāsa. According to one biographer, however, Vamśidāsa was the name of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora before he took to the renounced order. During his boyhood his mother and father arranged a marriage for him, and he remained in household affairs for more than twenty years. While a householder, he worked as a broker in the grain business, but even at that time he exhibited his spirituality. After the demise of his wife, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora left his business and went to Vṛndāvana. There he approached Śrīla Bhagavata dāsa Bābājī, one of the foremost disciples of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and accepted from him the traditional Paramahansa Vaiṣṇava Bābājī dress.

After this, he became completely renounced and sojourned under trees in various parts of the 168-mile Vrajamandala (circle of Vṛndāvana). He continuously acted thus for a period of approximately thirty years. During this time he would sometimes travel to the holy places of pilgrimage in Northern and Western India, as well as the Gaura-mandala (the circle of Navadvīpa). He associated with Śrīla

Svarūpa dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja in Jagannātha Purī, whose ecstatic activities were recounted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his autobiography. He also associated with Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī in Kalna. He went to Kuliya, the holy site of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī's *bhajana* and associated with Śrīla Caitanya dāsa Bābājī. All of these Bābājīs were pure and exalted devotees. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī became very famous among the great devotees of Vṛndāvana and was awarded the appropriate title of *bhajanānandī*. Even though he received such honor, he never endeavored for even a modicum of material sense gratification and totally disapproved of the secret material desires of pseudo-renunciates. He was entirely removed from such inclinations and would perform his pure, unalloyed devotional pastimes alone, in a profound devotional mood.

In the year 1897, during the month of Phalguna, when he was in his sixties, and at the time when the Yoga Pitha (birth site of Śrī Caitanya) was revealed by the exertions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu proceeded to Navadvīpa-Dhāma from Vṛndāvana under the instruction of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. From this time until his disappearance, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī remained in Śrī Navadvīpa-Dhāma, living in different villages and realizing their non-difference from the holy places of Vṛndāvana. He begged by gathering dry foodstuffs from the householders of the Holy Dhāma. He would sometimes offer those foodstuffs to the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the simple expedient of holding them in his hand. In order to cook he would collect dry wood from the paths, and he would wash earthen pots discarded by the villagers along the roadside near the Ganges River on the occasion of eclipses (due to the effects of an eclipse such pots were considered impure and unusable). In order to clothe himself, he would go to the shore of the Ganges and collect and wash discarded cloth that had been used to cover corpses at the burning ghat. Thus he always remained independent of the support of others, simply by utilizing items of no value to anyone else. In such a manner he obtained the practical necessities of life.

In 1897 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura constructed his place of *bhajana* on the bank of the Sarasvatī River at Godruma, the island of the nine

islands of Navadvīpa-Dhāma which represents *kīrtana* (recitation of the names and glories of God). That *āśrama*, which was called Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja and consisted of a moderate two-story house, several small outbuildings and a walled compound, was a gathering place for exalted souls. Previously it had been the site of Lord Nityānanda's Nāma-haṭṭa, the place from whence Lord Nityānanda inaugurated His preaching exploits in Bengal under the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Here, the Ṭhākura recited and explained the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and other topics regarding the conclusions of devotional service, and Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja would come and hear those talks with great delight. The Ṭhākura often cited the behavior of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora to elucidate the meaning of the word *nirapekṣa*—'indifference'. He often discussed the unequalled renunciation, pure devotion and attachment to Kṛṣṇa that Bābājī Mahārāja displayed. In the days of the Ṭhākura's retirement the two souls met and associated in great happiness.

For some time Bābājī Mahārāja stayed in Surabhi-kuñja and performed *hari-bhajana*. His room, which adjoined the wall of the *kuñja*, has been preserved. Bābājī Mahārāja displayed fervent enthusiasm upon hearing the discourses of the Ṭhākura.

His only possessions were the Tulasī beads he wore around his neck and the Tulasī *mala* (rosary) he kept in his hand for counting his rounds. He also kept a few books, such as Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*. Sometimes he wore a torn cloth and sometimes he went naked. At other times he would utter harsh sounds of disgust for no apparent reason. Even though it appeared that Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī was not a learned Sanskrit scholar, still the purport and conclusions of all scriptures were luminous in his heart and character.

It was never possible for anyone to serve him, for he was never willing to accept any kind of service from any person. Whosoever witnessed his unearthly, genuine condition of renunciation was reminded of the pastimes of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. All kinds of divine powers and opulences were always waiting at his command ready to serve him. Sometimes such powers would be manifest in the

form of his appearing to be omniscient. He was always able to reveal the deceitful nature lying within the hearts of pretenders. Although a person resided outside his immediate purview, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora could elaborately and scrutinizingly reveal the person's cheating nature, because he was in direct contact with Supersoul. This ability, however, was not his principal virtue. He exhibited the highest standard of devotion to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and because of his exemplary character he was recognized as the personification of the deepest degree of separation from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is what distinguished him from most other Vaiṣṇavas and what spread the luster of his lotus feet.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has written: “Many young, clever, old, learned, foolish, proud and reasonable persons came into contact with Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu, yet they could not realize his real identity. This is indeed the mystic opulence of the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Many persons came to consult with Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu about their insignificant desires. They would always get suggestions, but those suggestions were usually the cause of their disappointment. Innumerable persons accepted the Bābājī dress and acted as devotees of the Lord, but actually they were imposters, far away from being real *sādhus*. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora never accepted such a false way of life; his sincerity was apparent in itself. His loving attitude was such that even when he obtained a very opulent offering, his renunciation predominated.

“Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī never displayed any distaste for those persons who were inimical to him. He also never manifested any special affection for those very dear to him. He would often express himself saying, ‘in this material world I am all alone in my service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Everyone is worshipable by me.’ Another noteworthy transcendental topic is that many materialistic, foolish persons masquerading as devotees and imitating pure devotion would come and surround him. They would consider that they were the dear objects of his affection, while they engaged their minds in so many worldly sense objects. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu would never display any intention of driving them away and also no symptoms of a compromising attitude.”

In Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja

In 1898, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, the embodiment of the highest boon in the succession of the Rūpānuga-sampradāya, arrived, singing in a plaintive voice, at the newly constructed Svānanda-kuñja. This transcendental crown jewel of the renounced order was wearing a cap made of tiger skin and was carrying a basket containing various items employed by him in his devotional service. After his arrival, he offered Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī four or five pieces of rope upon which to chant rounds of Hari nāma, a *tilaka* stamp with the initials of 'Hare Kṛṣṇa' ('*ha*' and '*kr*'), and the tiger skin cap and other paraphernalia for worship of the Lord. Bābājī Mahārāja had previously received the basket and cap from his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhagavat dāsa Bābājī. That same year, in the month of Māgha, Bābājī Mahārāja initiated Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

The great Vaiṣṇava often came to Svānanda-kuñja to hear Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's explanations of the *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He would usually arrive around three o'clock in the afternoon and leave around five o'clock. On several occasions he spent the night in a corner of Svānanda-kuñja in a small hut with a tin roof. Sometimes he would stay in Pradyumna-kuñja, and then again he would fast and under no circumstances accept *prasāda*. In this way he would either fast, accept *prasāda* or cook for himself. Sometimes he would behave as if afflicted by the disease called *śīroroga* (insanity) and by blindness. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura arranged a balanced diet for him, but to his dismay Bābājī Mahārāja continued to follow his program of unsurpassable renunciation, disregarding the aforementioned diet. He eventually lost his sight, almost fully, in both eyes.

In the year 1908, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora thoroughly lost his physical vision. In the following year he stopped traveling and resided principally in Navadvīpa at Pradyumna-kuñja, and sometimes stayed at Godruma with the Ṭhākura. Pradyumna-kuñja had previously been owned by Saraccandra Vasu of South Calcutta, but that gentleman died and the kuñja was inhabited by Bābājī Mahārāja. When he sojourned with the Ṭhākura he would chant *japa* and perform his internal service to Lord

Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes, becoming aloof from external bodily consciousness, he would be unaware of whether he was dressed or not, and he would go to swim in the Sarasvatī River with his cloth open. Thereafter, he would enter his small *bhajana-kuṭira*, and in a very deep voice would begin chanting the names of the Gopīs of Vṛndāvana.

The Illusory Universe

When it seemed that Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī’s eyesight was deteriorating, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura requested him to go to Calcutta for treatment. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda also repeatedly requested him to go there, but Śrīla Gaura-kiśora would reply, “I will never go to the illusory universe, Calcutta.” Once, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura informed Bābājī Mahārāja that his servant, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, would stay with him in Calcutta and thus Bābājī Mahārāja would not have to suffer any inconvenience there. Upon hearing this, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu replied, “I will never accept service from Prabhu, rather I shall die by drowning. If I drown myself in the Ganges, I will become a ghost—so I will drown myself in the Sarasvatī.” Repeating this statement, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora then left posthaste, running towards the Sarasvatī River, which flowed close to the entrance to Svānanda- Kuñja. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura pursued him, trying to dissuade him, humbly and repeatedly requesting him to return. After this incident, he was not to be found for forty-five days. Then, just as suddenly, he reappeared at Svānanda-kuñja and announced, “I can’t achieve Śrī Kṛṣṇa by killing myself. Nevertheless, I cannot tolerate anyone serving me.” Although requested hundreds of times to take medicine, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora never consented.

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora always observed the Ekādaśī fast rigidly, rejecting even water. On other days he often ate dried, cracked rice soaked in water, with chilies, or at other times simply earth from the bank of the Ganges. His renunciation was not artificial, however, but was symptomatic of his indifference to worldly existence.

Śrī Māyāpura

From 1907 to 1908, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura lived in Māyāpura at the Yoga Pīṭha. It was here that the Adhokṣaja Deity of Śrīla Jagannātha Miśra, the father of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, was later unearthed. Before construction of the Yoga Pīṭha temple began, Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī went there from Kuliya on many occasions. During this period he gave many instructions to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and Sarasvatī Ṭhākura engaged in his guru's service. Once, although externally completely blind, Bābājī Mahārāja arrived alone at Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura at the Yoga Pīṭha in the early hours of the morning. Later that day, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, amazed to see him, and realizing that he must somehow have crossed the Ganges in the dead of night and walked several miles, inquired, "When did you arrive?"

Bābājī Mahārāja replied, "I arrived at about two in the morning."

Completely astonished, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then asked, "What was it that brought you here last night, and how was it possible for you to see the path?"

Bābājī Mahārāja answered, "Someone showed me the proper way."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "We can see with our external vision, but you appear to be blind. Who would bring you such a long distance by the hand, and then upon arriving here suddenly leave in the middle of the night? How is it that you were able to come? It must have been Śrī Kṛṣṇa who personally brought you here."

Hearing this supposition, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja began to laugh slightly. The fact was that in those days one could not walk from Kuliya to Māyāpura because there were no footpaths, and one could not take a boat because there were no landing places. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī again inquired, "Who brought you across the river?"

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora answered in the same amused manner, saying, "Someone took me across the river." His disciple could then understand that the mysterious person was none other than Vrajanandana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The Real and Pretender Bhajanānandī

Once, while Śrīla Gaura-kiśora was residing in a *dharmasālā* in Kuliya, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him how he had lived at Vraja and many questions about the residents of Vṛndāvana and the various devotees who were performing solitary worship there. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura specifically asked about the *bhajanānandīs*, who were reputed to be perfectly self-realized souls. Upon hearing the question, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Gosvāmī laughed again and again and told Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, “They are all imposters.”

One of the Bābājīs in question, who lived at Kusama Sarovara in Vṛndāvana, was famed as a great *bhajanānandīs*. He had a few disciples who were also reputed to be perfectly self-realized. But Bābājī Mahārāja did not even slightly agree to their being genuine. After some time these pretenders became afflicted with leprosy of the throat and left their bodies after suffering terribly. They had resided in the Dhāma with their intelligence bent upon sense gratification, and they had behaved offensively toward Bābājī Mahārāja.

Deception and Actual Residence in the Holy Dhāma

Once, a young devotee, very anxiously desiring to perform devotional service and reside in the Holy Dhāma of Navadvīpa, came and revealed his intentions to Bābājī Mahārāja. This young devotee had made arrangements to remain in the Dhāma as a physician, to buy medicines by begging for the money and to thus treat the sick and infirm. He considered that in this way he would be performing his *bhajana* and also simultaneously performing great welfare activity. To receive confirmation of his plans, he had come to consult Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. When he arrived and presented his proposal, he quoted the following verses describing Murāri Gupta in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* *Adi-līlā* 10.50-51:

*pratigraha nāhi kare, nā laya kāra dhana
ātma-vṛtti kari' kare kuṭumba bharaṇa*

cikitsā karena yāre ha-iyā sadaya

deha-roga bhava-roga,—dui tāra kṣaya

“Śrīla Murāri Gupta never accepted charity from friends, nor did he accept money from anyone. He practiced as a physician and maintained his family with his earnings. As Murāri treated his patients, by his mercy both their bodily and spiritual diseases subsided.”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja could understand the young man’s inherent insincerity and the pretension of his wanting to live in the Māma and revealed the defects of his plan by saying, “Murāri Gupta is an eternal associate of Lord Caitanya and is always resident in the Holy Dhāma. He never expressed any intention to stay in the Lord’s Dhāma by unjustly supporting himself so as to enjoy sense gratification. He never, at the expense of any temple, supported his family, nor was he ever interested in earning money to fill his stomach. He neither accepted charity from his friends nor anyone else. He was the reservoir of ecstatic love of Lord Gaura. By his mercy one can achieve love for Gaura. Whomever he would treat would become completely freed from all disease and obtain love for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Without following the standard of his character, if Murāri Gupta’s behavior is imitated in a motivated way, then one will be forced to suffer the result of his misdeeds. You are suffering from the disease of material existence yourself, so how will you properly treat others? You should incessantly and earnestly pray for the mercy of Śrīla Murāri Gupta. Then you will be able to understand what real benevolence is. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has stated that sincere intelligence is exhibited by chanting the holy name of Hari, giving up all pretension. Those who chant with material intentions are considered unintelligent. You should renounce this sort of thinking and devote yourself seriously to the process of hearing and chanting the glories of the Supreme Lord, otherwise your ‘devotion’ will simply be lust and everything will be ruined. The desire to administer free medicine for the sake of personal prestige and the desire to reside in the Dhāma have nothing in common. A person interested in fruitive work can never live in the Dhāma.”

Hearing these instructions, the doctor asked, “What should I do?” Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī replied, “If you actually want the benefit of residing in the Dhāma, then you should first give up these ideas you

are entertaining. Abandon this misconceived notion of benefiting materialistic persons by distributing free medical treatment. Those who are resolute in performing worship unto the Supreme Lord, Hari, will never discharge any unfavorable activities, and they will perform only activities favorable to devotional service. Beyond this, all other activities will be the cause of deep conditioning. If you want to support yourself in the way you have planned, then you should leave the Dhāma and return to your former residence. Do not reside within the Supreme Abode of the Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and earn your livelihood deceitfully.”

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda commented on the two verses above cited as follows: “It should be noted that a *gṛhastha* (householder) must not make his livelihood by begging from anyone. Every householder of the higher castes should engage himself in his own occupational duty as a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, or *vaiśya*, but he should not engage in the service of others, for this is the duty of a *śūdra*. One should simply accept whatever he earns by his own profession—Murāri Gupta could treat both bodily and spiritual disease because he was a physician by profession and a great devotee of the Lord in terms of spiritual advancement. This is an example of service to humanity. One disease, which is called *ādhyātmika*, or material disease, pertains to the body, but the main disease is spiritual. The living entity is eternal, but somehow or other, when in contact with the material energy, he is subjected to the repetition of birth, death, old age and disease. The physicians of the modern day should learn from Murāri Gupta. Although modern philanthropic physicians open gigantic hospitals, there are no hospitals to cure the material disease of the spirit soul.

As pointed out by Bābājī Mahārāja, Murāri Gupta was an eternal resident of the Dhāma and an eternal associate of the Lord. Thus, his activities should not be imitated by one who does not have the power to cure the disease of material existence.

The New Bābājī

A neophyte devotee who had taken the dress of a Bābājī often came to converse with Bābājī Mahārāja. On one such occasion he decided to

take up residence in the Holy Dhāma. He approached a certain queen who was living in Kuliya, and who owned land thereabouts, in order to purchase three-quarters of an acre of land from her. Upon hearing this news, Bābājī Mahārāja commented, “The Supreme Abode of the Lord is transcendental. How is it possible that this queen has become a landowner in Dhāma? How is it that she is entitled to sell that new *bābā* a portion of the land of the Dhāma? All the jewels found within the universe are not valuable enough to purchase even one speck of dust in the Dhāma. Therefore, how can any landowner amass enough wealth to become the owner of a plot of the transcendental abode of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma? Has this new *bābā*, for the exchange of the practice of devotional service, become entitled to a portion of land in Navadvīpa-Dhāma? Anyone with such materially tinged intelligence is very offensive and far away from actual residence within the Dhāma. Those persons whose attitude is thus tainted by materialistic intelligence, who think that the Dhāma is part of the material universe, are considered by the devotees of the Supreme Lord to be *sahajiyas*, or cheap imposters.”

Bābājī Mahārāja

Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja’s analysis of this incident is very significant and fully exposes the mistaken attitude of the neophyte devotee. Nothing within the material creation can be possessed by anyone but the Supreme Proprietor:

īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat

“Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Supreme Lord...” *Īśa Upaniṣad* 1

It is the greatest illusion to imagine that any facet of the unlimitedly valuable and sublime spiritual realm, which is composed of *cintāmaṇi*, or the philosopher’s stone, is within the jurisdiction of our controlling power. As a matter of convention one may say that he owns something, but the real Proprietor must never be forgotten, otherwise such a conception becomes a source of bewilderment. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura purchased land in the Dhāma, but he was never censured by

Bābājī Mahārāja, for he perfectly understood who the Real Possessor was and considered himself merely the custodian of such land. One cannot achieve true residence in the Dhāma by purchasing a ticket or a plot of land. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has explained the actual process of entering and residing in transcendental abodes such as Navadvīpa and Vṛndāvana: *viśaya chāriya kabe śuddha ha'be mana kabe hāma herābo śrī-bṛndābana*” When one has forsworn material sense gratification and his mind is completely purified, then he is able to behold Vṛndāvana.”

Deception and Devotional Service

Once, a resident of Bangladesh (then East Bengal), who was a very wealthy landlord, scholar and *brāhmaṇa*, and reputed to be a great devotee of the Lord, came with a friend to see Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. The landowner appeared to be so deeply absorbed in devotional ecstasy that his friend had to support him as he walked lest he fall down due to excessive trembling of the body. When the pair arrived before Bābājī Mahārāja, two other persons in the assembly, recognizing the famous landlord, immediately received him as an advanced devotee of the Lord. They carefully offered their obeisances to him and arranged a sitting place. At that time, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, in his pastime of blindness, inquired, “Who has come?” The friend of the landowner introduced his companion by glowingly describing his erudition and devotion and his being disinterested in material sense gratification despite possessing unlimited wealth. He then described how, only a fortnight earlier, a thief had come and stolen forty-five thousand rupees from the landlord’s house. Despite suffering such a setback, the landowner, knowing devotion to be much more significant, had come to obtain Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja’s transcendental *darśana*. The friend added, “I am his friend. He has left all material sense gratification and keeps only my association. You will be able to realize his greatness by conversing with him. He once asked me a question about a confidential exchange between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I told him that only Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī could properly answer his question and certainly no

one else. We have already been to see many learned persons in this area, and yet we cannot come to an agreement about the meaning of this conversation. We think that only you are able to explain it properly.”

After the introduction was complete, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “I will tell you a process by which you can understand the conclusion of this conversation. But before trying to understand these confidential topics between Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya, you should renounce the association of this rascal imposter [the landowner] and take shelter of a pure devotee of the Lord. You should hear the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* one-hundred times in the association of authentic devotees of the Lord. In this way, being absorbed in devotional ecstasy, you will be able to realize the purport of these conversations. At the present moment all the devotees here want to perform congregational chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord. We don’t have time to discuss any other topics.” Having thus spoken, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja very loudly requested that everyone perform *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Everyone then began to congregationally chant the Lord’s Holy Name. After hearing the statement of Bābājī Mahārāja, the proud landlord and his friend immediately left that place. Later that evening, when almost everyone had left, some members of the assembly commented to Bābājī Mahārāja, “That very learned land-owner was absorbed in devotional ecstasy. We could not see any manifestation of material consciousness in him. He was devoid of worldly consciousness.”

Another person sitting nearby, who had always heard that Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī was very straightforward with everyone, inquired, “That person was so immersed in various loving devotional ecstasies that he could not even walk by his own efforts. How is it that you can say he was not on the highest platform of *bhakti*?”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja replied, saying, “After speaking with him for a few moments, I could understand that he had no good intentions in his performance of devotional service. One cannot measure a person’s devotion by the approval of the general mass. If a person is not serious in his devotional practice, then even if he exhibits the symptoms of renunciation, non-attachment and various ecstasies, still he should not be considered to have real renunciation or detachment. As soon as a

difficult test comes, his false renunciation will cease. Detachment seeks out those who are actually fixed in their intention to perform devotional service. When performing practical devotional service, we should never exhibit our devotional ecstasies. One should perform devotional service in such a way that his deep attachment to the Lord increases within his heart. Even if one displays hundreds and hundreds of exhibitions of external attachment, he will not be blessed by the Lord if he does not develop an internal loving attachment to Him. If one genuinely possesses a deep loving attitude, then Kṛṣṇa Himself will approach and claim such an advanced devotee. Whoever is not enticed by the fragrance of unflinching devotional service and whose heart is filled with material desires will wear different types of external bodily dress. Kṛṣṇa is proportionately aloof or available according to the degree of one's surrender. If one is deeply immersed in devotional attachment to Lord Hari, then even while suffering distressing diseases or other material miseries, he will still remain absorbed in transcendental loving service to the Lord. If you can fast and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa both day and night, and when you can always cry out with desire for the service of Vṛṣabhānu's Rādhārāṇī, without revealing it to others, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is very dear to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, will call you to take His shelter."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, strictly following the line of Śrīla Gaura-kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's instructions, never made any sort of public display of ecstasy, and when his ecstatic emotions occasionally overpowered him, he would endeavor mightily to bring them in rein. This mood can be compared to that of Dāruka, Kṛṣṇa's charioteer, who was once fanning the Lord with a *cāmara* (yak-tail whisk). While thus engaged, he became overwhelmed with ecstatic love for the Lord, and the symptoms became manifest in his body. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, "Dāruka was so serious about his service that he checked all of these manifestations of ecstatic love and considered them hindrances to his engagement. He did not care very much for these manifestations, although they automatically developed." It is not that when one experiences spiritual ecstasy that he is required to put it on display for the edification of ordinary persons.

In India it is very common for *sahajiyas* (those who take spiritual life

cheaply) to make an elaborate public display of their ecstasies. Such displays are pale reflections of spiritual sentiments and are exhibited with material motives. This was clearly the case with the landlord who approached Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī. In Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa it is not at all uncommon that such a person will enter a temple with an assistant, or even a crowd of followers, and go before the Deity. Seeing the Deity and hearing the *kīrtana*, he begins to dance wildly, and finally “faints”, and the assistant or group of followers then minister to him with great sympathy and concern. Thereafter, a curious throng of pilgrims gathers and witnesses the pathetic scene! When a sufficient crowd has gathered, the great soul “revives” and is assisted with great difficulty beyond the temple confines, where he hopes some of the unfortunate spectators will agree to become his followers and patrons! As Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī has demonstrated, the best procedure for dealing with such persons is to neglect them.

The Materialist’s Grains

A lawyer named Battacharya came to visit Bābājī Mahārāja. He was living in the vicinity and had contracted a certain caste Gosvāmī on a monthly basis to supply him food. When the lawyer approached Bābājī Mahārāja, he was asked, “What arrangement do you have for your foodstuffs?” The lawyer replied, “I have arranged to receive my foodstuffs in the house of certain Vaiṣṇavas and *brāhmaṇas*.”

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī then answered, “Give up eating their cooked rice. You should cook for yourself and eat that. Those persons from whom you are accepting food grains eat meat and maintain their service to Lord Caitanya in devious ways. Their activities are most offensive because they know that what they are doing is wrong. Those persons who have no fear of an offense they create to the Supreme Lord should never even be spoken to, otherwise, devotional service will be destroyed.”

Some time later, the lawyer brought several sweets and offered them to Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu. He prayerfully requested Bābājī Mahārāja to accept his offering. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja then told him, “I never

accept sweets.” Bhattacharya replied, “There is nothing higher than accepting food that the Lord has directly accepted.”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja sharply retorted, “Whoever eats fish is like a prostitute. If someone has perverted desires and offers foodstuffs to Lord Caitanya, those preparations can never be accepted as the prasada of the Supreme Lord, because the Lord does not partake of them. Whoever is not a sincere devotee of the Lord cannot understand what a non-devotee is. Even if one offers foodstuffs to the Supreme Lord, if one has perverted intentions, then that offering is never accepted. If one offers the covering of the banana flowers because he likes the taste himself, the offering is not accepted by the Supreme Lord. To offer foodstuffs to the Supreme Lord that have been contaminated by one’s lusty desires should be considered a great offense. If preparations favored by the great devotees of the Lord are offered, then the offering is considered proper. Kṛṣṇa tastes foodstuffs that have been tasted by the lips of His pure devotees. If one accepts the grains of a sinful person, then his mind becomes impure. One should think, ‘My worship to the Lord has not fructified yet—how can I obtain the service of a pure devotee of the Lord? In this way, with a heart full of grief, if one takes banana peels and the discarded skin of an eggplant and boils them without salt, [and offers them] this attitude of full surrender will cause those foodstuffs to become *mahā-prasāda*. One should think, ‘My worship to the Lord has not yet manifested—the pure devotee of the Lord accepts nice foodstuffs, but my doing so would only impede my devotion. What will happen to me if I continue eating sumptuously and wearing luxurious clothes?’”

Thus one is directed by Bābājī Mahārāja not to accept food cooked by lustful persons, especially by those who know the actual standard of behaviour expected of devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa but who nevertheless indulge in illicit activities. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī as follows: “When one eats food offered by a materialistic man, one’s mind becomes contaminated, and when the mind becomes contaminated, one is unable to think of Kṛṣṇa properly. When one accepts an invitation from a person contaminated by the material mode of passion, the person who offers the food and the person

who accepts it are both mentally contaminated.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Antya-līlā 6.278-279) In the purport to the first of these verses Śrīla Prabhupāda cites Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s commentary, saying, “...people who are materialistically inclined and *sahajiyas*, or so-called Vaiṣṇavas who take everything very casually, are both *viśayī*, materialists. Eating food offered by them causes contamination, and as a result of such contamination, even a serious devotee becomes like a materialistic man. There are six kinds of association—giving charity, accepting charity, accepting food, offering food, talking confidentially and inquiring confidentially. One should very carefully avoid associating with both the *sahajiyas*, who are sometimes known as Vaiṣṇavas, and the non-Vaiṣṇavas, or *avaiṣṇavas*. Their association changes the transcendental devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa into sense gratification, and when sense gratification enters the mind of a devotee, he is contaminated. The materialistic person who aspires after sense gratification cannot properly think of Kṛṣṇa.”

Aside from avoiding food prepared by sensualists, one should also take care not eat simply for the satisfaction of one’s tongue. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 6.227) it is stated:

*jīhvāra lālase yei iti-uti dhāya
śisnodara-ṣarāyaṇa kṛṣṇa nāhi pāya*

‘That person who runs here and there seeking to gratify his palate and who is always attached to the desires of his stomach and genitals is unable to attain Kṛṣṇa.’

Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita and Lord Caitanya have both instructed those serious about spiritual advancement to avoid dressing very nicely or taking very palatable foodstuffs. Lord Caitanya has stated, *bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā ṣaribe*: “Do not dress luxuriously and do not eat delicious foodstuffs.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Antya 6.236) Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has instructed, echoing the words of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *bhāla na khāibe āra bhāla na ṣaribe āra rādhā-kṛṣṇa sarvadā sevibe*: “Do not eat luxurious dishes or dress in fine garments, but always remain humble and serve Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in your heart of hearts.” (*Prema-vivarta*, Chapter Seven)

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja instructs us to think that our devotion is not pure and that only pure devotees can safely accept delicious *mahā-prasāda*, and to thus always eat frugally. He suggests that if one prepares something not generally considered edible (e.g. banana peels and the skin of eggplants boiled with salt) but offers it with genuine humility, then it will certainly be transformed into *mahā-prasāda* by the Lord's accepting it.

The Love of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī for Śrī Māyāpura-Dhāma

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja exhibited an unmatched, uncompromising spirit toward anything opposing the real conclusions of *bhakti*. He was above all mundane thought and one cannot possibly understand why he acted as he did unless one rigidly follows in the footsteps of the Paramahansa devotees of the Lord. Thus we should not be surprised that some persons who had his audience hundreds of times were never blessed with his special grace, while others received his mercy at once.

One day a householder devotee from Māyāpura went to Kuliya to get the association of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. The Paramahansa was seated in a chair made of reeds just within the door of his ' *kuṭira*, or cottage. When the *gṛhasṭha* approached him, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora nonchalantly closed the door. At that, the devotee informed an attendant of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja's that he wished to see him. Bābājī Mahārāja replied, "If he wants to have my *darśana*, then he must give two rupees." The attendant received the money from the *gṛhasṭha* and duly informed Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī. Bābājī Mahārāja then opened the door of the *kuṭira* and said, "Please have a look." The *gṛhasṭha* remained some distance away from the *kuṭira* and respectfully offered his prostrated obeisances. But by his own sweet voice, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja drew him closer, affectionately took his hands within his and said, "You have come from Māyāpura, the place where my Supreme Master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu has appeared. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has sent you here, so therefore I have a few words to say to you. Śrī Caitanya will certainly listen to this: you should take shelter of Kṛṣṇa by always

chanting His holy name. There will then be no more obstructions in your life.”

Whenever Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja saw the residents of Śrī Māyāpura, he would always show some special favor and with affection say, “The residents of the Holy Dhāma.” It was always seen that even if someone tried to offer great wealth he would personally remain indifferent. But then again he would request different persons to help him by giving him money and other paraphernalia for his service to the Lord’s devotees resident in the Dhāma.

One who takes birth in the Lord’s Dhāmas is understood to have done so as a result of attaining to a high standard of devotion to the Lord. To take such a birth is an indication that one is practically qualified to be a resident of the spiritual world, and thus his good fortune and good qualities are incalculable. Although such residents may externally appear to be conditioned souls, they are nevertheless spontaneously attracted to the Lord. Even if they perform impious activities within the boundaries of the Dhāma, they are not to be adjudged ordinary conditioned souls. Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained that even if someone comes to Vṛndāvana or Māyāpura from outside the Dhāma, lives and dies there, but performs sinful activities there, still he will have to take only one birth more as an animal. After that birth he is promoted to the spiritual world. He comments, “... devotees like the *gosvāmīs* living in Vṛndāvana who purposely commit some sinful activities are born in the bodies of dogs, monkeys and tortoises in that holy land. Thus they take on these lower life forms for a short while, and after they give up those animal bodies, they are again promoted to the spiritual world. Such punishment is only for a short period, and it is not due to past *karma*...” *Bhāg. 5.8.26* purport.

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī was fully aware of the unique status of the *Dhāma-vāsīs* (residents of the Dhāma), and thus he gave them special consideration and respect. Bābājī Mahārāja further teaches us that it is better not to accept charity for maintaining one’s own comforts and personal convenience, though one can enthusiastically do so in order to serve Vaiṣṇavas.

Displaying Ecstatic Symptoms

On one occasion Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja was sitting within his *bhajana-kuṭira* in Śrī Navadvīpa-Dhāma, loudly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Other persons who had assembled there were also chanting. At this time, someone came and began to display different ecstatic symptoms, such as crying. Some of the assembled devotees thought, “Lo, that person has attained the highest stage of devotional ecstasy by chanting the glories of the Lord.” Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, however, immediately requested the man to leave. Some of the onlookers became disturbed by this and left. Bābājī Mahārāja commented, “One who has actually attained love of Godhead will never display the symptoms thereof but will keep them hidden from the general populace. A chaste wife becomes very embarrassed when she has to show any part of her body in public, and she thus keeps her body thoroughly covered. In the same way, when one has real devotion for the Supreme Lord and becomes elevated to love of Godhead, he always feels embarrassed to exhibit symptoms of ecstasy and always keeps such symptoms hidden.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu demonstrated this principle on numerous occasions. Upon meeting Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya by the banks of the Godavārī, for example, He embraced him and felt so much ecstasy that, along with Rāmānanda, He was overwhelmed with spiritual emotion. However, in consideration of the fact that Rāmānanda Rāya was the Governor of Madras and was accompanied by many persons who could not understand such transcendental dealings, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu restrained Himself. On another occasion, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu met with Vallabhācārya near Prayaga, He was overwhelmed with ecstatic feelings, but He again restrained Himself, feeling bashful in the presence of a person who, though exalted, was not His intimate associate. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu felt great ecstatic love when they began discussing Kṛṣṇa, but the Lord checked His feelings because He felt shy before Vallabha Bhaṭṭa. Although the Lord restrained Himself externally, ecstatic love raged within. There was no checking that. Vallabha Bhaṭṭa was astonished to detect this.”

The Sharp Words of the Sādhu

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja always gave beneficial instructions to persons who approached him with faith and humility, no matter what their spiritual status. On one such occasion a seeker went to Bābājī Mahārāja to hear topics concerning the Supreme Lord, but he heard some harsh words from him instead. The seeker therefore resolved to never go near Bābājī Mahārāja again. After some time, however, having been stricken with a distressed and troubled mind, he suddenly returned to see Bābājī Mahārāja. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, instantly realizing the reason for his depression, told him, “Oh, you have left the association of devotees where topics about Kṛṣṇa are discussed, and now you are living in a secluded place and performing solitary worship of Kṛṣṇa. When one hears the topics of the Supreme Lord in the company of devotees, then one becomes freed from Māyā’s net of illusion. But if one performs worship of the Lord in a secluded place, not in association with devotees, one becomes caught by the illusory energy. As a consequence, instead of topics about the Supreme Lord possessing the heart, mundane subject matters will occupy it instead.”

The seeker replied, “I thought it better to reside in a secluded place and perform my own individual worship than to become disturbed by hearing the sharp words of a *sādhu*.”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “Please take note that those *sādhus* who speak sharp words to drive away the witch of the illusory energy are actually the only real devotees of Kṛṣṇa and friends of the living entities. The conditioned living being experiences the distressful quarreling of his wife and close relatives and is rudely treated by them until death, yet he never desires to leave their association. On the other hand, he absorbs himself in trying to appease and serve them. But when a devotee of the Lord, who is always desirous of the living entity’s ultimate welfare, chides him just once with instructions meant to drive away Māyā, then that conditioned entity immediately makes plans to leave the saintly person for his entire life. If you actually want to perform devotional service properly, then you must accept the harsh language of the *sādhu* as the medicine by which Māyā can be given up. By this one can obtain

the necessary spiritual advancement to successfully chant the Holy Name.”

The bound souls are prepared to accept unlimited abuse from their family members, but not a single sharp word from the *sādhu* who attempts to cut their attachment to illusory existence. The materialistic wife and family members induce a man to work like an ass and meanwhile deride him for not fulfilling all of their demands. Yet, while the family may legitimately plunder a man and denounce him bitterly for his shortcomings, the acquiescent victim is not in the least able to tolerate words which might awaken him to the reality of his situation. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura described the power of the *sādhu* in an essay called *Search For Truth* as follows: “There is no doubt that the words of the *sādhu* possess the power of destroying the evil propensities of one’s mind. The *sādhus* in this way benefit everyone who associates with them.’ There are many things which we do not disclose to the *sādhu*. The real *sādhu* makes us speak out what we keep concealed in our hearts. He then applies the knife. The very word ‘*sādhu*’ has no meaning other than this. He stands in front of the block with the uplifted sacrificial knife in his hand. The sensuous desires of men are like goats. The *sādhu* stands there to kill those desires by the merciful stroke of the keen edge of the sacrificial knife in the form of unpleasant language. If the *sādhu* turns into my flatterer then he does me harm, he becomes my enemy. If he gives us flattery, then we are led to the road that brings enjoyment but no real well-being.”

Without the association of devotees, one will almost certainly be overwhelmed by the illusory energy and his thoughts will naturally turn to gratifying his senses. During the discussions between Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Rāya, Lord Caitanya inquired, “Out of all auspicious and beneficial activities, which is best for the living entity?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “The only auspicious activity is association with the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. “ And in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.30 it is stated, “We are asking the most perfect welfare activity from you. I think that in this material world, association with devotees—even if it be for a moment—is the greatest treasure house for mankind.” The importance of materially conditioned devotees associating with saintly persons has

thus been stressed by all the Vaiṣṇava authorities, even those who seemed to shun the company of others in order to prosecute their solitary worship. Although it is a fact that great Paramahamsas like Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī performed such solitary worship in complete purity, this cannot be imitated by neophytes.

The Householders' Vow

A newly-married devotee and his wife once went to pray for the mercy of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī. Bābājī Mahārāja instructed the husband, saying, "If you actually want to perform devotional service, then you must live separately from your wife and thus, not depending on one another, chant the glories of the Lord." After hearing these instructions the newly-weds did as they were advised. A few days passed, and that devotee came again to Bābājī Mahārāja, who then asked, "Are you and your wife taking your foodstuffs together or separately?" The husband told him, "We are living separately and carrying on our worship as you instructed, but we take our foodstuffs together."

Bābājī Mahārāja then inquired, "What did you have today?"

The newly wed man answered, "We had very nice vegetables, the best dahl and fried eggplant."

Bābājī Mahārāja then explained, "If you only give up the external connection with your wife, that is not sufficient, because you are associating with her within. You have not been able to give up the finest foodstuffs prepared by your wife, so how will you be able to worship the Lord? Your wife is communicating with you through the medium of what she has cooked. Shame, shame! Even though you are acting as if you are chanting the Lord's Holy Name, still you are desiring the stems of the finest vegetables. Do you think that after someone suffers a loss of one lakh of rupees, he will be satisfied accepting only a handful of rice? Although he may gradually become accustomed to accepting the rice as a daily practice, still he will always think of the money he has lost. Even if one were to give such a person the most delicious foodstuffs, because he will always be anxious about what he has lost, he will not be able to put the longing for it from his heart. You have lost that which is

invaluable—your devotional service to the Supreme Lord. Thus, how can you become absorbed in eating such nice foodstuffs? As for your wife, externally you are disassociated from her, yet you are maintaining attachment within.”

Householders may feel intimidated by Bābājī Mahārāja’s uncompromising judgment of the abovementioned marriage. Fortunately, he gave other instructions that resolve the problem of the material attachment that inevitably arises within a marriage. These instructions are dealt with below.

Renunciation for Kṛṣṇa’s Pleasure and False Renunciation

A married man present during Bābājī Mahārāja’s conversation with the newly wedded husband inquired from the Paramahansa as follows, “We see that there are many Vaiṣṇavas living with their wives who perform devotional service to Lord Hari. Will any benefit accrue to such persons?”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “The living entity is the eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But when the conditioned soul looks upon his wife and sons he simply sees their material forms. If one does not have the eye of devotion one can never perceive his real identity as the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. The bound souls always have the inclination to enjoy their wives and children. These days the living entities do not like to hear the topics of the Supreme Lord or to get the association of the Lord’s devotees. If one does not attain the spiritual energy given by the chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord, then one will become attracted by his wife and offspring.

“Then again, some persons feign detachment from their wives, children and sense pleasures. This kind of external renunciation is like the renunciation of monkeys [who are not actually renounced, although they apparently eschew clothing, proper shelter, and the other trappings of sensory emolument]. The abnegation of the monkey-like renunciates [*markata-vairāgīs*] is simply a pretence. The genuine Vaiṣṇava will never maintain an attitude of sense gratification towards his wife; rather, he will always regard himself as the servant of Kṛṣṇa and the bona fide

guru. Those actually desirous of performing *hari-bhajana*, but in whose hearts the weeds of material desires grow, and who are unable to give up excessive attachment to wife and children, should also come and hear from the pure devotees, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and perform congregational chanting. In this way, they can quickly become detached from the inclination to enjoy their wives and children. They will gradually realize that if one completely surrenders to Kṛṣṇa, then one will attain all auspiciousness. As long as one remains in bodily consciousness, one cannot obtain the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The extension of bodily consciousness is seen in the affection displayed for one’s wife and offspring. And yet, one who leaves the association of his wife because of being thoroughly distressed in mind and continues to seek happiness for his own mind and body is not a real renunciate. The distinctive feature of the renunciation of the devotee of Kṛṣṇa is its not being diverted from Him in any way. A real renunciate accepts whatever is favorable for the Lord’s satisfaction and rejects whatever is unfavorable.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu described the alternative to monkey-like renunciation to Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī as follows:

*markata-vairāgya nā kara loka dekhāñā
yathā-yogyā viśaya bhujña’ anāsakta hañā*

“You should not make yourself a show bottle devotee and become a false renunciate [*markata-vairāgī*]. For the time being, enjoy the material world in a befitting way and do not become attached to it.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Madhya-līlā 16.238)

In his commentary on the above verse Śrīla Prabhupada states, “The word *markata-vairāgya*, indicating false renunciation, is very important in this verse. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, in commenting on this word, points out that monkeys make an external show of renunciation by not accepting clothing and by living naked in the forest. In this way they consider themselves renunciates, but actually they are very busy enjoying sense gratification with dozens of female monkeys. Such renunciation is called *markata-vairāgya*—the renunciation of a monkey. One cannot be really renounced until one actually becomes disgusted with material activity and sees it as a

stumbling block to spiritual advancement. Renunciation should not be *phalgu*, temporary, but should exist throughout one's life. Temporary renunciation, or monkey renunciation, is like the renunciation one feels at a cremation ground. When a man takes a dead body to the crematorium, he sometimes thinks, 'This is the final end of the body. Why am I working so hard day and night? Such sentiments naturally arise in the mind of any man who goes to a crematorial *ghāṭa*. However, as soon as he returns from the cremation grounds, he again engages in material activity for sense enjoyment. This is called *samāsana-vairāgya*, or *markata-vairāgya* ... The word *markata-vairāgya* is used by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to indicate so-called Vaiṣṇavas who dress themselves in loincloths trying to imitate Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Such people carry a bead bag and chant [Hare Kṛṣṇa], but at heart they are always thinking about getting women and money. Unknown to others, these *markata-vairāgīs* maintain women but externally present themselves as renunciates. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very much opposed to these *markata-vairāgīs*, or pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas."

That is the Highest Happiness

Someone once observed a follower of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja begging alms at noon in the hot summer sun, during the month of Caitra (April-May). Approaching Bābājī Mahārāja, he asked him, "Why is your servant begging in the hot sun? Everyone begs in the morning, and they then return to their residences."

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja told him, "Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has instructed his followers:

*tomāra sevāya, duḥkha hoyā jato,
sei to' parama sukha
seva-sukha-duḥkha, parama sampada,
nāśāye avidya-duḥkha*

'Troubles encountered in Your service shall be the cause of great happiness, for in Your devotional service joy and sorrow are equally great riches. Both destroy the misery of ignorance.' " (Śaraṇāgati 8.4)

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī has given this instruction to those who, desiring real benefit, always take shelter of the Supreme Master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the devotees of the Lord. One must tolerate the distress that assails one as one practices devotional service in this unhappy world. In this way, the dualistic sufferings which appear in the form of happiness and distress will diminish. As long as one renders service unto the Lord in order to achieve a comfortable material situation he cannot become free from the bondage of ignorance.

The Different Forms of Māyā

Once, during the rainy season, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja left his *kuṭīra* and dwelt under the porch of a *dharmasālā* in Navadvīpa. Rice *prasāda* was kept there for him on a hanging rope shelf. A poisonous snake slithered down the wall with the help of the rope shelf, took note of the aroma of

The *prasāda* and started to move away. Seeing the snake, an old woman came running, crying, “A snake is about to bite you!”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, who was blind, beat the ground with his hand and then asked, “Where is the snake? Where is the snake?” In the meantime the serpent disappeared.

The old woman exclaimed, “Oh Bābājī Mahārāja, have you gone mad? That snake could have bitten you. He has just disappeared by your right side. Had you extended your right hand a fraction more to the side, you would have been bitten for sure. We cannot allow you to stay here.”

Hearing this, Bābājī Mahārāja told her, “Mother, you have inconvenienced yourself by standing here so long. You must be tired. Please don’t stand here any longer.”

The woman replied with determination, “I shall not leave this place until you go into your room.”

Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “I am going to accept *prasāda* now. First, I will take *prasāda*, and then I will go into my room.”

The old woman continued to admonish him, saying, “That *prasāda* may have been touched by the lips of the snake. You cannot accept it

because if it is poisonous you will die. I will bring fresh *prasāda* for you.”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja then firmly stated, “I only accept *prasāda* that has been offered to the Deity or which I have obtained through begging, and not otherwise. I do not take food offered by materialistic people.”

Turning to one of Bābājī Mahārāja’s attendants, the old woman asked, “Will you please arrange for more rice for Bābājī Mahārāja.”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja then spoke more firmly, saying, “My dear Mother, if you do not leave this place, I shall not listen to anything else you have to say.” Feeling rejected, the woman left. After some time, the Bābājī asked the attendant if she had gone. Being answered in the affirmative, he remarked, “Did you see that, how Māyā is acting? How, under the pretension of sympathy, she tries to gain control, how she tries to gradually enter in various deceptive ways. Māyā takes on various forms. She knows many tricks to cause the living entity to give up the worship of the Lord. Under different pretensions, she tried to make me enter my room, not accept *prasāda* and so forth. She never lets the living entity serve the Supreme Lord.” Then the Paramahaṁsa began to loudly sing the following song by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura:

*gaurā pahu nā bhajiyā goinu
prema-ratana-dhana helāya hārāinu
adhane yatana kari dhana teyāginu
āpana karama-doṣe āpani ḍubinu
sat-saṅga chāḍi’ kainu asate vilāsa
te-kāraṇe lāgilo ye karma-bandha-phāṅsa
viṣaya-viṣama-viṣa satata khāinu
gaura-kīrtana-rase magana nā hainu
keno vā āchaye prāṇa ki sukha pāiyā
narottam dās keno nā gelo mariyā*

“Not having worshipped the lotus feet of Lord Gaurāṅga, I have met only ruin. I have lost the jewel of love of Godhead due to my own negligence. I have only given attention to that which is not real wealth and abandoned that which has actual value. I have sunk within the material world by the reactions of my own karma. Having left real association, I am performing materialistic activities. I have thus become

conditioned by the grasp of past *karma*. I have tasted the poison of material sense gratification over and over again.

For this reason, I have not become absorbed in the nectar of the congregational chanting of Lord Hari. Why do I remain alive? What is my happiness? Why hasn't Narottama dāsa given up his life?"

The Paramahaṁsa Bābājī considered that the snake and the argumentative old woman were agents of the illusory potency come to test his determination to serve the Lord according to his strict standard. Of course, such a Vaiṣṇava as Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was never subject to material tendencies of any sort. It was out of humility that he thought himself liable to be seduced by Māyā. If a devotee such as he thought thus, how much should we, who simply aspire for spiritual advancement, not knowing when we shall achieve our goal?

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Dāsa Bābājī and the Supersoul

One night, at about ten o'clock, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja suddenly awoke, crying, "Did you see that? Did you see that? That lecturer has gone to the district of Pavana, and at night he has had illicit sex with a widow there. Shame! Shame! These evildoers, by their vile activities, have scandalized the name of religion."

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja uttered these statements as though he were directly witnessing everything. He continued, saying, "Mahāprabhu has let me know the truth about this so-called scholar, who travels from place to place: advertising himself as very learned. In the name of giving Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam class he collects money to support himself. The common people do not know his real nature. He always keeps a widow with him. When anyone asks him about her, he passes her off as his wife. Whatever money he earns he spends to purchase expensive items for her. Is there anyone who is more of an offender and a hypocrite than this person?"

The opulence of omniscience was bestowed upon the Paramahaṁsa for the purpose of unmasking rascals and hypocrites. Such incidents evidence the fact that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was directing Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja to expose the various forms of deception and hypocrisy that exist in the name of spiritual life. We are

fortunate that he acted thus, for if he had not identified the cheaters around him his own character might not have shone forth as resplendently as it did.

General Instructions

Once, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī wrapped his body and feet with a cloth. Sitting covered like this he said, “Many persons, after being informed by others that I am a Vaiṣṇava, come here to collect the dust from my feet. I tell them, ‘I am not a Vaiṣṇava. If you go where there are Vaiṣṇavas with their feet pretentiously decorated and extended to be touched, then you can get unlimited dust.’ “

At this time a person named Bhattacharya came from Vṛndāvana with his female companion to see Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. Approaching him, he said, “You are my spiritual master. Please be merciful to me.” Bābājī Mahārāja replied, saying, “I have nothing. I have no *rasagullas*, *sandeśa*, *luci*, *puris*, money, sweet rice or sweet words. How can I bless you? Those spiritual masters who can feed their disciples many sweets are praised as the most advanced. Nowadays such a person is qualified to become a spiritual master. Presently, the learned section defines the word *anukūla* [favorable] as ‘receiving wealth, a beautiful wife or sweet words.’ ”

Bhattacharya then remarked, “We have many misconceptions. Whatever you instruct, that we will do.”

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja then instructed him, “I can see what is most favorable for you. You should eat rice that has been soaked in water and sit on a grass seat. You should eat food that not even a dog would accept. You should wear clothes that even a thief would not steal. You must remain in the association of devotees and always chant the Holy Name of the Lord. By imitating the activities of one who is very renounced, one resembles a monkey. Monkeys sit in one place and remain quiet, but when they get the opportunity they steal something. As long as one acts like a monkey, then his devotional service will never become fixed.”

Bābājī Mahārāja thus instructed Bhattacharya with respect to his actual position, and responded to his insincere plea for instruction by giving him orders that a monkey-like renunciate could never follow. The humorous description of so-called spiritual masters given by Bābājī Mahārāja aptly describes a category of *guru* that people keep as a pet for fulfilling their material desires. Though speaking for Bhattacharya’s benefit, it is clear that the man was not sincere enough to actually hear the instructive words of a bona fide *guru*.

Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā

A so-called Gosvāmī approached Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja to learn the intimate pastimes of the Lord called *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* (‘pastimes pertaining to eight times of the day’). The first time he came, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja told him, “Just now I don’t have any leisure time. When I find the opportunity, I will explain it to you.” As many times as the so-called Gosvāmī came, he received the same answer. Finally, the Gosvāmī became disappointed and stopped coming. Some time later the Paramahansa remarked, “A person who becomes distressed at the loss of a useless coin cannot possibly learn the most intimate pastimes of the Lord. Just by reading a book about the *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*, real understanding will not develop. One may theoretically understand it, but where will his spiritual body [for assisting the Lord in such pastimes] come from? The attempt to reveal the Lord’s pastimes in ordinary literature has created havoc. When such things are written in ordinary books, such literature simply adds to a rubbish pile which is already heaped high. Everyone is building a high wooden platform, two stories high. Then, after climbing to the top of the platform, they simply pass stool. So many people come to see me, but none of them are genuine. Before they can understand *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*, they will have to give up bad association and continuously chant the Holy Name in the association of devotees. If they attempt to whimsically perform solitary worship, they will be snared by the illusory energy. The name, form, quality and pastimes of the Lord are manifested within the association of the devotees. Wretched persons who do not have full faith in the chanting

of the Holy Name are creating an inauspicious situation for themselves by separately attempting to understand such things. Their attempt to worship the Lord is undertaken without proper intelligence.”

Bābājī Mahārāja hereby declares that such esoteric subjects *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*, *siddha-deha* (spiritual body), etc. are not appropriate subjects for discussion with neophyte devotees. Those who have at least attained to the platform of *āsakti-bhakti*, where genuine attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa arises, may indeed relish and discuss these topics, having achieved a standard of realization which make such discussion relevant, but those of lesser attainments are expected to restrict themselves to the reverential glorification of the Lord in the association of devotees. By dint of that process the spiritual body, *siddha-deha*, the Lord’s pastimes, form, etc. are all revealed at the appropriate time.

An Unusual Bhajana-kuṭīra

On another occasion Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja remarked, “It is not possible to properly worship the Supreme Lord in an outhouse.”

Having made this remark, he saw that the people in his vicinity could not grasp his meaning, and so he explained, “A house where persons always indulge in eating and sensual pleasure is not a place for *sādhus*. Such places may appear to be *āśramas* or temples, but they are the abodes of lust. Sensual life may be permissible for the demigods, but not for devotees of the Lord. Materialistic persons who live in this way imagine they are residing in heaven, but they actually live in a deep pool of excrement in the form of the sense objects of the material world. However, when those who seriously worship the Supreme Lord take full shelter of Him, wherever they reside becomes non-different to Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa [the supremely holy pond of Śrī Rādhā].”

A few days after these remarks were made the proprietor of a Navadvīpa *dharmaśālā* named Mr. Girish, accompanied by his wife, came to see Bābājī Mahārāja. The proprietor’s wife very humbly requested Bābājī Mahārāja to allow them to build a *bhajana-kuṭīra* (a small cottage for worship) for him. They remarked that during the rainy and cold seasons he was undergoing extreme hardship in the thatched

cottage where he was then residing. Hearing this, Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “No, I am not experiencing even the slightest hardship. But there is one thing which causes me difficulty. If you will agree to help me, then I will tell you what it is.” The couple expressed their eagerness, and so he continued, “Many people come to me with selfish motives. They do not desire their real welfare, and they simply create a disturbance to my *bhajana*. If you can give me your latrine, it will serve as a favorable place for my chanting the Holy Name of the Lord. There I shall be able to worship the Holy Name without disturbance. People will hate to go there. If you cannot do this, then do not disturb me and make me waste this human form of life.”

On hearing this, Mr. Girish’s wife exclaimed, “Oh, most revered Bābājī, we are prepared to obey your command. But if we let a saint live in our privy, it will be a great sin for us.”

Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “I am not a saint. Those who are pūjārīs where the temple Deities are worshipped, or others who keep matted hair and wear tree bark are saints. I am unable to worship the Lord in a proper way, so a privy is the right place for me. If you can oblige me in this way, then say so, otherwise I shall not listen to you any longer.”

Having no other alternative, Girish and his wife agreed to the proposal and said, “Even if you do not utilize the room adjoining the privy, there will be two chambers there for those who serve you.” Girish had the exterior of the privy renovated by masons and the interior thoroughly cleansed. Otherwise, the inner structure was left unchanged for fear that the Bābājī would be displeased. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja stayed in the public latrine of a *dharmasālā* to teach people in general that attachment to material affairs under the pretense of devotion, is more foul-smelling than excreta.

Unlawful Imitation and Wickedness

There was no space in the latrine to accommodate more than one person. Bābājī Mahārāja used to bolt the door from the inside and chant the Holy Name of the Lord. Adjoining the privy was a dilapidated chamber. A man named Madhu moved into that room, had the roof

repaired with tin and began to chant in imitation of Bābājī Mahārāja. One day, Bābājī Mahārāja called out to him, saying, “What are you doing and what are you contemplating in that room with the door closed? What are you thinking about in your secluded state? He who does not chant the Holy Name of Hari in the association of devotees, free from offense, is not in a position to see anything but the four walls of a room. Are you seeing the surroundings? Are you thinking about desirable women, fame or material gain? If you remain in that room, then different kinds of rubbish thoughts will assail you:”

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora, although physically blind, then demonstrated his capacity for seeing by disclosing Madhu’s hypocrisy. He informed the hypocrite that he was cognizant of all of his “secret” acts: how he had stolen the money and food which was left for Bābājī Mahārāja by others, and how he had gone to various places in Navadvīpa to indulge in illicit intercourse with women. Eventually, this imitator became the victim of a serious disease. He became so ill that after a few days his friends had to come and carry him away to his house. It has thus been demonstrated how, as a result of offenses committed by the imitation of a *Mahā-bhāgavata*, one eventually falls down. He taught how worldly people, under the pretense of religious activities, experience only the seeming pleasure of sense gratification, which is compared to living in stool. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja displayed these pastimes with a view to instructing his followers.

Desire for Scholarship

A *brahmacārī* named Ayatra Punya approached Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī and requested him to allow him to perform *bhajana* in his association. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja advised him, “You should desist from committing offenses at the lotus feet of Vaiṣṇavas and engage yourself in chanting the Holy Name in the association of pure devotees.” The *brahmacārī* heard this instruction but was disinclined to follow it. Without informing Bābājī Mahārāja, he went to Rādhādeś and introduced himself there as a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and begged money, saying that it was for getting instruction in

the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Upon returning, he began to study grammar with a learned scholar. He thought that if he could become literate, then he would be respected. He considered that because Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja was illiterate he could not be very advanced. One day he visited Bābājī Mahārāja and was told, “You are studying grammar in order to get women and material position.” Hearing this, Ayatra replied that he had no such evil desires, but he simply wanted to learn grammar so that he could understand the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja attempted to help him again and told him, “You have been to West Bengal and saw how reciters of the *Purāṇas* make their living by reciting the *Bhāgavatam*. Therefore, you have become greedy and want to fill your begging bowl. If you desire your actual welfare, give up your offensive greed and engage yourself sincerely in worshipping the Lord.” The foolish *brahmacārī* once again ignored the good advice of Bābājī Mahārāja.

On yet another occasion the *brahmacārī* came to Bābājī Mahārāja and prayed, “Please be merciful to me.” Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja was silent for some time, and then he said, “You are thinking of earning your livelihood. Do not try to fulfill your desires in that way.” No one present at the time could understand to what Bābājī Mahārāja referred. When the would-be reciter left, Bābājī Mahārāja told those present, “He is having illicit intercourse with a widow.” He then instructed everyone there for their benefit, saying, “Do not persuade others to commit sinful activities, and if desires other than devotional service arise in your minds, please come to me before acting and allow your minds to be changed.”

By this instruction Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja indicated that illicit sex is the most abominable and forbidden act. He who externally behaves like a *sādhu*, but secretly has illicit intercourse, commits an even more heinous sin.

Devotion and Hypocrisy

A certain Dāmodara dāsa came to live with Bābājī Mahārāja for some time. For this, he gained some respect from the local people. He had

originally come from Orissa where he had formerly been married. Once, his former father-in-law came to visit him. The father-in-law was accustomed to go from place to place with a manuscript of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in his hand, reciting it as a means of earning his livelihood. Bābājī Mahārāja had permitted Dāmodara dāsa to collect substantial donations from the pilgrims who visited him. Without informing Bābājī Mahārāja, Dāmodara dāsa gave a certain portion of the collection to his father-in-law. The omniscient Bābājī came to know of it, and he stopped talking to Dāmodara dāsa. Prior to this incident, Dāmodara dāsa had occasionally been allowed to boil rice for Mahārāja, but after the theft, Bābājī Mahārāja stopped eating anything touched by him. He reverted to his practice of eating rice soaked in water. Realizing he had been discovered, the Orissan became terrified, and other associates of Bābājī Mahārāja became disturbed. The Orissan began to fast from all food and water. When Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī was informed of this, he said, “If this worldly person does not leave me immediately, then I will give up my life by drowning in the River Ganges.” Shortly thereafter, Bābājī Mahārāja plunged into the waters of the holy river. Seeing this, the people who were on the scene immediately went to his rescue. He shouted at them, “Leave me alone. Don’t touch me. If I cannot perform *hari-bhajana*, then I will not bear this body any more.” The people insisted on rescuing him however. When he was revived and made comfortable, he asked the people, “Why did you take me from the Ganges? This Orissan has given away all that I have to his father.” Hearing this, the people told him they would replace whatever he had lost. They would give him four times what the Orissan had given his father and were prepared to bring the money immediately.

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja told them, “I don’t need the money, but I refuse to keep this Orissan in my association. If I live with a hypocrite, then my *bhajana* will be hindered.” Many of the people had thought that the Bābājī had wanted to drown himself due to his attachment to money. Now, however, they could understand the truth: he was not attached to money, but he could not tolerate hypocrisy in the name of service. Hypocrisy or deceit is the sole province of Kṛṣṇa. Only He can exhibit it without sinful reaction. When an ordinary person practices deceit, it is

an unlawful imitation of the Lord.

The Enjoying Spirit of the Materialist

Once, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu gave one hundred rupees to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for safekeeping. In order to keep it secure, Śrīla Prabhupada deposited the money in a bank. One day, in his absence, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja suddenly came to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and requested him for the money. The Ṭhākura informed the Bābājī that Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has deposited the money in the bank, and in his absence it could not be withdrawn. Bābājī Mahārāja declared that he needed the money urgently and insisted on having it at once. Seeing no other alternative, the Ṭhākura took the money from his own pocket and paid him. The Bābājī sent that money to a well-known person in Vṛndāvana, and having sent it, he remarked, “Considering me a Vaiṣṇava, people have given me money for my enjoyment, but I am not a Vaiṣṇava. There are Vaiṣṇavas at Vraja. I have sent the money for their service.”

Whatever money the people had given him in the consideration that he was a great Vaiṣṇava, the Bābājī had kept, but not for his personal enjoyment. He always utilized any funds he collected in the service of other Vaiṣṇavas. The Bābājī said, “Things which are obtained by *madhukārī* [begging, i.e. going from place to place for sustenance like a bee] are transcendental. One should eat what is necessary for sustaining his worship of Hari. If one accepts more than he needs, his heart will become contaminated and an obstruction will arise in his worship of Lord Hari.”

In the Hope of Acquiring Wealth

One day, Govinda Gosvāmī of Kuliya, Navadvīpa, accompanied by a person in the garb of a Vaiṣṇava ascetic, came to Bābājī Mahārāja and said, “Bābājī, I have been abroad and have thus not been able to have your *darśana* for a long time.” Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja said, “For your *bhajana* at Navadvīpa you have been provided with a large house there,

as well as a well-constructed latrine. Why have you gone to the trouble of leaving the country? Why have you gone to these other places?”

At this, the man’s friend said, “He goes to other places for the deliverance of the people there. If our prabhu did not go to other lands, what would happen to those people?”

Hearing this, Bābājī Mahārāja felt extremely disgusted and remarked, “If it is your real object to elevate people of other lands, why do you desire the wealth of a king? I have studied your mentality. You are planning to construct a brick house. If you will only sincerely engage in *hari-bhajana* and not consider yourself a ‘prabhu’, I will inform Lord Nityānanda, and you will have fifty brick houses. But you desire accommodations for the material enjoyment of your sons and daughters, and thus Nitāi will provide you with material paraphernalia and deprive you of love of Kṛṣṇa. If, in the name of liberating humanity, you seek material profit, adoration and acclaim you will become fallen. What to speak of being liberated, the people will simply be cheated.” Having thus spoken, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja started chanting loudly and refused to stop until that evening. He cautioned those listening that as a result of an offense to the holy name or an offense in worshipping the Deity, one will achieve three results: *dharma* (mundane piety), *artha* (material opulence) and *kāma* (sense pleasure). These are actually misfortunes for the living entity. Our *guru*, Lord Nityānanda, cheats pseudo-devotees by supplying their material wants but depriving them of love of God.

Gaura! Gaura! Not Rupee! Rupee!

Once, some people came to Bābājī Mahārāja and praised the son of a certain caste Gosvāmī for his skill in explaining the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The boy always chanted, “Gaura! Gaura!” and expressed a variety of emotional feelings. In this way he made many disciples. In reply, Bābājī Mahārāja told the people, “This so-called Gosvāmī cannot explain the Gosvāmīs’ literature. He explains sense gratificatory śāstra. He does not chant, ‘Gaura! Gaura!’ He shouts, ‘Rupees! Rupees! My rupees!’ As long as he maintains this mentality, there is no question of his performing *hari-bhajana*. By reason of his materialistic activity the Vaiṣṇava *dharma*

remains concealed. It affords no benefit to the world; on the contrary, it creates a disturbance.”

One Suffers the Consequences of His Own Deeds

A certain young man came to Bābājī Mahārāja and expressed a desire to learn how to worship the Lord. Hearing this, Bābājī Mahārāja said, “If you can leave aside the association of pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas and *avaiṣṇavas* and can stay with us always, then you will be able to learn how to chant the name of Lord Hari. We maintain ourselves by living on remnants of the foodstuffs eaten by the inhabitants of the Dhāma, we use the rejected earthen pots of the residents of the Dhāma, and we collect and wear the discarded cloth used to cover corpses. If you associate with other so-called Vaiṣṇavas, or those practicing worldly religion, they will consider you untouchable and reject you, or you will commit the offense of touching them.” Hearing this, the young man said, “Yes, whatever you say, that I shall do.” After a while, however, being charmed by the melodious voice of a *bhajana* performer named Rāma dāsa, who dwelt close by, he joined him in *kīrtana* without Bābājī Mahārāja’s knowledge. The young man also ate so-called *prasāda* with and accepted the gift of a pair of *kāratālas* from him. One evening shortly thereafter, he chanted within the hearing of Bābājī Mahārāja, playing his new *kāratālas*. A few days later, after taking his morning bath in the Ganges, the young man began loudly reciting *Vaiṣṇava-vandana* within the hearing of Bābājī Mahārāja. When the young man went to collect alms, Bābājī Mahārāja called an attendant and said, “He is secretly coming and going to the house of Rāma dāsa, and whatever ‘devotion’ he is gathering there, he is trying to spread here. In fact, instead of devotion for Lord Hari, he is amassing sinful reactions.” Hearing this, someone said to Bābājī Mahārāja, “Who has informed you of all these things?” Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “By hearing his chanting and his manner of reading the *Vaiṣṇava-vandana*, I have been able to analyze him. He will not be permitted to stay here any more. If a man once takes the bad association of counterfeit Vaiṣṇavas or non-Vaiṣṇavas, he will never follow any beneficial instruction. He will only learn hypocrisy.” After this incident,

the young man, without informing Bābājī Mahārāja, suddenly left for Purī. Sorrowfully, Bābājī Mahārāja said, “That boy has been misguided. He was tempted by unsanctified food and other things. I was not able to protect him. The jiva is independent and reaps the results of his own deeds. Inspired by Kṛṣṇa, he came to me, but he secretly associated with others and has invited great danger. Now he will garb himself as a Vaiṣṇava ascetic. In this way the ill-intentioned persons of this world assist ordinary people in assuming the garb of devotees and turn them into fools. Hypocrites, who receive obeisances from others and are greedy for good food, assume the guise of Vaiṣṇavas. Their pretentious chanting of the Lord’s name is nothing but the noise made by frogs. The more they croak, the sooner they will be swallowed by the snake of material enjoyment.”

About a month later, the young man returned to Navadvīpa. He had assumed the dress of a religious mendicant. Accompanied by the Mahānta (head priest) of a nearby āśrama, he came to see Bābājī Mahārāja. After offering obeisances, the Mahānta said, “Your disciple has returned from Purī. He has become an advanced Vaiṣṇava and thinks himself fortunate. He has served Haridāsa Ṭhākura and is performing *bhajana* on the platform of spontaneous devotion.” At this, Bābājī Mahārāja said, “I cannot determine what-sort of disciple of mine he is. In this world I do not see anyone as a disciple. I have not been able to become a disciple; therefore, how can I be expected to be the spiritual master of others. If one artificially assumes the garb of a Vaiṣṇava, what sort of Vaiṣṇava will he be? The noise created by frog-like hypocrites is neither Hari-nāma nor *hari-bhajana*. The show of spontaneous devotion of such frog-like people is for achieving the happiness of sense pleasure, but they cannot enjoy that happiness for long. The black snake of material enjoyment will swallow them. It is not so easy to serve Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Why are you spoiling your life in the dress of a Mahānta? Why don’t you leave all this aside and chant the Holy Name with purity?”

To this stern query, the Mahānta replied, “I have no material motive in taking up this position. It is only for the welfare of the *bhajana-āśrama* and for service to the Vaiṣṇavas. This area was overgrown and I have cut down the tangle of vegetation and tidied the area.” Hearing

this, Bābājī Mahārāja was extremely mortified, and he refused to talk to the Mahānta. When the Mahānta left, Bābājī Mahārāja told those nearby, “This atheistic person has informed me that he has cut the wish-fulfilling trees and creepers of Navadvīpa. Alas! Alas! Just see! Just see! It grieves us to cut even a solitary dry tree of Navadvīpa. These trees and plants are our eternal friends. They assist Lord Gaura in His eternal pastimes. These cruel persons never achieve the qualification to perform devotional service to Lord Hari. By making an outward show of being a Vaiṣṇava, they bring misfortune to themselves and to others as well.”

The Atonement for Adultery

A few days after this incident a person called Hīmavān came to see Śrīla Gaura Mahārāja dāsa Bābājī and begged him to allow him to stay in one of the *dharmasālā* rooms. The proprietors of the *dharmasālā* kept all the rooms on the northern side under the control of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. Hīmavān was permitted to stay in one of these rooms. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja told him within the hearing of others, “He who wants to perform *hari-bhajana* will not associate with worldly people. Those who secretly contemplate accepting such bad association, while making a show of good association, or who associate with religious hypocrites, develop sinful tendencies. I have seen many thousands of people ruining themselves by taking recourse to hypocrisy. Tolerating many troubles patiently, if one constantly hears and chants in the association of Vaiṣṇavas, he can maintain his worship of the Holy Name.”

Even after being so instructed, Hīmavān used to secretly converse with hypocritical religionists. Bābājī Mahārāja, upon considering this, became extremely angry, and shortly thereafter Hīmavān became seriously ill. Seeing his suffering, the supremely merciful Bābājī Mahārāja asked one of his attendants to serve him. After a few days it was observed that a young woman came and began tending to Hīmavān. The omniscient Bābājī Mahārāja came to know of this and asked his servant, “Who is serving Hīmavān?” The servant replied, “I’m serving Hīmavān. No one else is doing so.” Bābājī Mahārāja demanded in a deep, thundering voice, “Is anyone else coming to him?” At this, the

frightened servant admitted, “Yes, a woman comes to him.” When Bābājī Mahārāja received this confirmation, he instructed the servant, “As that woman is coming to serve him, you should not go to him any longer.” Bābājī Mahārāja called for Hīmavān and informed him, “If you want to stay here, you will have to pay me fifteen rupees. If you cannot afford to pay fifteen rupees, then you should go somewhere else, because if you happen to die, the money will be required to meet the expenses of your cremation.”

After this, Bābājī Mahārāja said quietly to himself, “If I do not let this man stay here, the woman will inevitably take him to her house. This is her desire, and she will then be able to nurse him at her ease.” After suffering for a long time, Hīmavān was cured of the disease, and he then left for Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja ignored him and offered no resistance to his going. Having journeyed to Vṛndāvana, Hīmavān stayed with Dāmodara dāsa of Kusuma Sarovara. This Dāmodara dāsa was well known to Bābājī Mahārāja. After circumambulating the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana, Hīmavān went to Dāmodara dāsa one day and said, “In the garb of a Vaiṣṇava I have committed adultery. Please tell me how I can save myself.” Dāmodara dāsa said, “You must give up your life. Apart from this there is no atonement. This is what has been prescribed by Mahāprabhu.” Hīmavān had a few grams of opium brought from Govardhana and took it. After ingesting the opium, he perspired profusely, and, trembling, came to Dāmodara dāsa and informed him that he had taken opium with a view to giving up his life. After taking repeated doses, he lost his life. Simultaneously, Dāmodara dāsa was also attacked by a deadly disease. At that time, a certain Gosvāmī was in Vṛndāvana. He arranged for Dāmodara’s treatment and helped to save him. As soon as Dāmodara recovered, he returned to Navadvīpa and came to see Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. Seeing him, Bābājī Mahārāja warned him, “You stay somewhere else! If you stay here with me, you will lose your life, because there are two dacoits nearby. One is Narendra and the other is Larāi. Professing to be my servants, they have made propaganda with my neighbors that they are staying with me. Where they stay at night, I do not know. Once, in the dead of night, I called for them to bring me a glass of water. I shouted for a long time, but there was no

response from them. The following morning, when I mentioned this to them, they said, ‘We didn’t hear a thing.’ “ Thereafter, being ignored by Bābājī Mahārāja, Dāmodara dāsa took shelter in the house of a certain young woman. Hearing about his activities from others, Bābājī Mahārāja became furious and said, “Don’t speak about any of this in my presence.”

Another hypocrite in the dress of a Vaiṣṇava had also lived at Kusuma Sarovara with Dāmodara dāsa. He was similarly rejected by Bābājī Mahārāja. A story was related that during the night several dacoits took out his eyes and cut his body to pieces. People said that the duplicitous fellow had stolen goods with him which he had kept well hidden. He was cruelly murdered by the dacoits on that account.

These incidents vividly illustrate the danger of posing as a Vaiṣṇava but secretly associating with materialists and committing sinful activity. The young man who went to Vṛndāvana, associated with sinful persons and fell down with a young woman, was unjustly advised by the hypocrite, Dāmodara dāsa, to commit suicide. Dāmodara dāsa suggested an atonement which he himself could never have performed and for an evil act he later indulged in himself. Although suicide is sometimes prescribed as the atonement for such misbehavior on the part of a *sannyāsī*, and was approved of by Mahāprabhu in the case of Junior Haridāsa, taking recourse to the constant chanting of the holy name is generally considered sufficient atonement—provided the malefactor is prepared to give up his evil ways. At any rate, it can be easily concluded from these incidents that sinful activities conducted by someone dressed as a liberated Vaiṣṇava have particularly grave consequences. Of course, it should not be imagined that it is hypocritical *not* to indulge in the sinful things one may desire in one’s impure heart. If one feels unable to decry that evil with which he is yet afflicted, then he should keep silent but steadfastly refuse to succumb to it.

One derives no benefit from the association of *Mahā-Bhāgavatas* if he does not heed their advice and associates instead with hypocritical religionists. No good will be availed to one who is insincere in his assumption of the dress of a Vaiṣṇava and his renunciation of the world. On the contrary, such insincerity is productive of great misfortune. Those who were hypocritical in their dealings with Śrīla Gaura-kiśora

Prabhu were ruined as a result of their committing the offense of deliberately maintaining material attachment while chanting the holy name.

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu and Mahārāja Manindra Chandra

Knowing that Bābājī Mahārāja was a superlative Vaiṣṇava and the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the famous zamindar of Kasimbazar, Śrī Manindra Chandra Nandy, invited Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu to a Vaiṣṇava conference, which was to be held at his palace. Moved by the invitation of the Vaiṣṇava king, and with a heavy heart, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja responded, “If you want my association, you will have to leave your property in the hands of your officials and come and reside here. You must dwell on the bank of the Ganges River at Navadvīpa in a thatched hut with me. You won’t have to think of procuring food. I shall personally feed you by begging alms. Thus, I shall be obliged to come to your chanting compound by your daily invitation. But if I presently accept your invitation and leave the transcendental Gaura-Dhāma and go to stay at your royal palace, then in no time I shall consider myself your competitor. As a result of this, I shall attempt to acquire land and property. This will create a great obstacle to my *Kṛṣṇa-bhajana* and the desire to worship the objects of the senses will arise in my heart. In the course of time, I shall become envious of a Vaiṣṇava king. Naturally, if I want to maintain everlasting love and friendship with you, and if, as my Vaiṣṇava friend, you sincerely wish to show kindness to me, then it will be our bounden duty to stay at this transcendental place of Visvambhara’s, maintain our lives by the activities of madhukārī and always remain busy in worshiping Lord Hari.”

Another account of this incident and Bābājī Mahārāja’s response to the king’s entreaty is as follows:

“The Mahārāja of Kasimbazar, the late Manindrachandra Nandi Bahudara, tried with great effort to take Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja to the Kasimbazar palace, but his desire was not successful. When the Mahārāja’s man went to Bābājī Mahārāja and said that by the order of

the Mahārāja he would take Bābājī Mahāsaya with great care by palanquin to Kṛṣṇanagar and from there by First Class train to Kasimbazar, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja replied—‘If I go to the Mahārāja’s palace I may become greedy for wealth and due to that there would be a possibility of strained relations with the Mahārāja. Let him give over all his worldly possessions to his relatives and officers and come to me. I shall have a boat-cover like mine made and give it to him for a dwelling place, and together we shall blissfully perform *hari-bhajana*.’ Seeing no other means, the Mahārāja’s man left.”

Bābājī Mahārāja was, of course, perfectly realized and aloof from all material temptation. Yet he graciously warned the non-liberated devotee, by this humble example, of the danger of accepting materialistic association or excessively opulent material facilities. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu voiced similar warnings in His dealings with Mahārāja Pratāparudra. Initially He would have nothing to do with the king. He would not even meet him, saying that it was improper for a *sannyāsī* to meet with a materialistic, person, despite His knowing the monarch to be an elevated devotee. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s adherents exerted themselves to arrange meetings on the king’s behalf, but Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would not agree. Eventually, the king came to Him, stripped of his royal attire, dressed as a mendicant and reciting verses from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and thereby received the mercy of Mahāprabhu. Regarding associating with mundane people, Śrīla Prabhupāda comments in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya-līlā, chapter 13 verse 187: “Although outwardly the King was a mundane man interested in money and women, internally he was purified by devotional activities. He showed this by engaging as a street sweeper to please Lord Jagannātha. A person may appear to be a pounds-and-shillings man interested in money and women, but if he is actually very meek and humble and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is not mundane. Such a judgment can be made only by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His very confidential devotees. As a general principle, however, no devotee should intimately mix with mundane people interested in money and women.”

Secret Immoral Behavior

There was a certain paṇḍita Bābājī of Kuliya, who wore only a loincloth as his dress. This paṇḍita Bābājī was a much-respected person, whose secret immorality wounded the feelings of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu. As a result of this, Bābājī Mahārāja left aside his loincloth and outer garment one day and dressed himself in a fine dhoti and chaddar. Having attired himself in the manner of a dapper materialist, he went to see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja. The Ṭhākura, beholding him in this unexpected dress, asked him why he was so attired. Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “We have adopted the dress of Śrī Caitanya, but privately we do not hesitate to commit adultery. Hence, it is better for us to dress like the husband of a prostitute than to assume the guise of Śrī Caitanya and commit adultery secretly. In this way we will at least be free from hypocrisy.”

Another version of this incident is found in *Prabhupāda Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura*:

‘Seeing the wretched condition of these monkey-like renunciates, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja arrived one day before Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at the Śrī Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja wearing a beautifully bordered dhoti and shawl. Seeing the crest-jewel of possessionless saints in that dress the Ṭhākura became extremely amazed. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja said—“It is a thousand times better to put on the dress of a well-to-do gentleman than to wear a loincloth and secretly perform immoral behavior. Not only in the countryside villages, but even in the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas’ very famous holy places, what outrages—what mischiefs are being carried on by these monkeys! They forget—

*‘gorāra āmi, gorāra āmi, mukhe bolile nāhi cale,
gorāra acara, gorāra vicāra loile phala phale
loka-dekhāna gora bhaja tilaka-mātra dhari’,
goṇanete atyācāra gora dhare curi.’*

“It will not do if you just vibrate the sounds, ‘I am Gaura’s, I am Gaura’s’, with your mouth. If Gaura’s behavior and deliberations are accepted, then results will fructify. If you only wear tilaka and worship Gaura to show off to other people while secretly acting immorally, Gaura detects your theft.”

Result of Offense Committed to the Ācārya

A certain Ayatra Punya lived at Māyāpura for a few days, and then he departed. Shortly thereafter, he brought alms from Māyāpura to Navadvīpa and went to take *darśana* of Bābājī Mahārāja, who resided there at that time. Bābājī Mahārāja inquired from him about Māyāpura. In reply Ayatra Punya remarked, “I will not go to Māyāpura any more, because that Sarasvatī and others there are Vaiṣṇava men. They are interested in the *aiśvarya* mood, I prefer *bhajana* in the mood of Vraja. I am not interested in their association.” Hearing this, Bābājī Mahārāja felt disgusted and said, “It is ridiculous for a sparrow to attempt to cross the ocean. If you are really serious about living in Vraja, give up your criticism, be lowly and humble like the grass and always chant the Holy Name of the Lord day and night. The first and foremost principle is that you should give up offensiveness at the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas. Do you think you will get information about Vaiṣṇava from hell? Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is in Vaiṣṇava, and he is in Vṛndāvana as well. You are presently in the lap of the witch Māyā. How will you know the Sarasvatī of Vraja?” At this rebuke, Ayatra Punya said, “I will live with you in Navadvīpa.” Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja said, “You are not in a position to live at Navadvīpa. One who commits offenses at the lotus feet of Vaiṣṇavas cannot live in Navadvīpa. You are an offender at the feet of transcendental Māyāpura. You are sure to become degraded. I live at Māyāpura and Navadvīpa as well. Those who detest living in Māyāpura will never be able to live at Navadvīpa. Śrī Māyāpura is the birthplace of the son of Śaci. It is a transcendental abode. You don’t possess the eyes to see how Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Sarasvatī Prabhu have exemplified the performance of *hari-bhajana* with pure ecstatic emotion. You are inimical to one Vaiṣṇava and pray to another for mercy.”

Thereafter, it actually came to be, as predicted by Bābājī Mahārāja, that the aforesaid man became atheistic and indulged in illicit intercourse with women. He was begging alms and purchasing expensive gifts for various women with whom he had illicit connection. Such is the result of committing offenses against great personalities.

Sensuous People View the World with Lust

The aforementioned Ayatra Punya went to Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja one day and criticized an intimate and elevated associate of Bābājī Mahārāja's: "He whom you consider a soul of great devotion and address as 'Prabhu' is showing signs of attachment to the objects of the senses. There is every probability that he will become a horrid materialist." Hearing this, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja became so grave and silent that those who were nearby were frightened by his mood and they requested Punya to leave the place immediately. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja's attitude that day has been aptly expressed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

*vaiṣṇava caritra sarvadā pavitra
yei ninde hisa kori
bhaktivinoda na sambhāṣe tāre
ṭāke sadā mauna dhorī*

"The actions and character of a Vaiṣṇava are always pure. One who criticizes a Vaiṣṇava commits violence. Bhaktivinoda does not speak to one who criticizes a Vaiṣṇava and thus maintains his silence. "

When Punya departed, Bābājī Mahārāja spoke in a trembling voice in his direction, saying, "This wretched fool has become lustful for material things. By assigning his own mischief to a Vaiṣṇava, he indicates his own condition. A Vaiṣṇava never becomes materially attached except to render service to Kṛṣṇa. A person who has the least attachment to material objects can never develop love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa. That one has the symptoms of natural love and devotion cannot be clearly understood without one's exhibiting great attachment to the objects necessary for his service to Hari. He who is greatly devoted to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows a great natural attachment for objects favorable to Their service. Such attachment is not for the purpose of their own enjoyment or for that of their family members. Seeing their attachment, which is greater than that of a materialist's, to worldly objects necessary for serving Kṛṣṇa, the so-called renunciates and the sensualists think that the affectionate devotee is materially attached. In fact, those who are without such sincere attachment—their show of

devotion to Kṛṣṇa is nothing but hypocrisy. He who privately speaks ill of a Vaiṣṇava should be avoided. I shall not look upon the face of that wicked man again.”

The Attachment of a Mahā-bhāgavata

A householder Vaiṣṇava once presented a valuable shawl to Śrīla Gaura-kiśora. He accepted it, kept it with great care and highly praised the present. On another occasion a man from a Vaiṣṇava family gave Bābājī Mahārāja a few rupees. He accepted it, knotted it in the border of his outer garment and kept it very carefully. He examined it with his hand repeatedly to see whether the money was safe. A wealthy, materialistic man from Calcutta noticed this and lost whatever little faith he had for Bābājī Mahārāja. A few days later Bābājī Mahārāja gave away the shawl and the money to a Vaiṣṇava. When the foolish materialist met Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in Calcutta, he remarked, “I went to see Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, but I saw that he very eagerly received a shawl and some money. He glorified the donors repeatedly. I am unable to discern what sort of *sādhu* he is.” Hearing this foolishness from the wealthy, worldly man, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sharply replied, “You have merely observed his superficial behavior. In reality, he has shown his attachment to the service of Kṛṣṇa. The rest of us show our attachment to worldly pleasure. Those fools to whom wealth is dear think that Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja is also greedy for wealth. He has merely praised a person who favorably served a Vaiṣṇava, and we flatter those who help us achieve our personal sense gratification. As lustful men see the world full of beautiful women, materialistic and falsely renounced devotees of Kṛṣṇa look upon the activities of a *Mahā-bhāgavata*, which are pleasing to Kṛṣṇa’s senses, as sense gratification.

Unconditional Shelter at the Lotus Feet of a Bonafide Spiritual Master

Sincere devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is far above worldly ethics and learning. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Ṭhākura have shown this ideal by expressing it through the following pastime:

Under the instruction of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura went to meet Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu and prayed for *bhagavati-dīkṣā*. On the occasion of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s first attempt, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja told him, “I shall ask Mahāprabhu about this, for without asking Him, I am in no position to tell you anything.” On the succeeding day, when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura approached him again, Bābājī Mahārāja said that he had forgotten to ask Mahāprabhu. Sarasvatī Ṭhākura earnestly implored him, saying, “If I do not get your mercy, I shall not maintain my life.” On the third day, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura presented himself before Śrīla Gaura-kiśora, who said, “I inquired from Mahāprabhu, but He said, ‘Good behavior and scholarship are extremely insignificant in comparison to devotional service to the Supreme Lord.’” Hearing this, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was rather hurt and said, “Because you worship Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of hypocrites, are you thus not deceiving me? If I do not receive the mercy of your divine lotus feet, I shall give up my life. Goṣṭhi Pūrṇa favored Śrī Rāmānujācārya after his request for initiation was turned down eighteen times. Certainly, I shall wait to be favored by you some day. This is my firm vow.” Hearing this, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja was extremely pleased and sprinkled him with the dust of his lotus feet. That same day Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was initiated at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja by Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

The Pride of Artificial Renunciation

Gopāla dāsa Bābājī, who was proud of being the disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, lived in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He began to artificially imitate the indifference to worldly affairs of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī. He was always absorbed in chanting in the place where he stayed—a fruit orchard. In order to present himself as being rapt in chanting, he ignored the cows who destroyed the fruits of the orchard. He maintained indifference to all disturbances and thus attempted to show that he was

always absorbed in chanting and was disinterested in external affairs. One day he proudly informed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that he was more apathetic to worldly affairs than Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu. Hearing this, and considering the man’s welfare, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura rebuked him, and then feelingly extolled the extraordinary character and indifference to worldly affairs of Bābājī Mahārāja. Gopāla dāsa complained to Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda about this. The Ṭhākura’s rejoinder was, “It will be to your advantage to hear Sarasvatī Prabhu’s chastisement and advice.” Even the old Muslim inhabitants of Māyāpura would speak amongst themselves about the detachment of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī and Gopāla dāsa Bābājī—the former’s being natural, the latter’s—artificial. One cannot become a renunciate or *bhajanānandī* simply by mimicking the detachment of *Mahā-bhāgavatas*.

A Hypocrite’s Prayer for Mercy

On another occasion Ayatra Punya came to see Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Māyāpura on the pretext of wanting to perform *hari-bhajana* in his association. He used to also visit Bābājī Mahārāja, but the latter paid no real attention to him. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the favorite of Bābājī Mahārāja, so Ayatra Punya often requested Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to speak a few words on his behalf, so that he could obtain the mercy of Bābājī Mahārāja. Being oft entreated by Ayatra, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mentioned his plea to Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu one day and requested Bābājī Mahārāja to be merciful to him. Bābājī Mahārāja informed Sarasvatī Ṭhākura about the hypocritical nature of Ayatra and told his disciple that it was not proper that a sincere Vaiṣṇava of Sarasvatī’s status should intercede on behalf of a hypocrite. As a matter of course, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu told Sarasvatī Ṭhākura many things relating to this matter. After some time he took the dust of his own feet and smeared it on Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s head and said, “You are non-different from Lord Nityānanda. Thus, your heart melts at the sorrow of others. But this person is extremely hypocritical and inveterately sinful. He does not desire his own welfare. His prayer for my mercy is merely an affectation.”

As if to reveal the extent of wickedness, Ayatra Punya one day drank water from a skull and told Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, “Behold! I am more detached from the material world than Gaura-kiśora Prabhu. Can he drink water from a skull?” Hearing this, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, “You evil wretch! Leave this place! My master will not perform the abominable acts of a worshiper of Kālī. You are a demon, an atheist! You therefore have a taste for all kind of abominable activities. You are sure to be condemned to hell.” As a result of his pride and his offenses to great saintly persons, Punya contracted the disease of illicit connection with women, and he took to begging to provide the prostitutes he visited with their daily necessities.

Single-minded Chanting of the Lord’s Holy Name

Once, an old Vaiṣṇava, who was as venerable as a spiritual master to Bābājī Mahārāja, became attached to Deity worship instead of showing the ideal path of constant chanting of the Lord’s name. While staying at Kuliya, Bābājī Mahārāja mentioned this to Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. “The old Vaiṣṇava has adopted the practice of *arcana* at the fag end of his life.” Hearing this, Sarasvatī Ṭhākura questioned him, saying, “Are you teasing me? There cannot be any deviation in the behavior of one who is like your spiritual master.” To this Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “If that is so, I shall not say any more in this regard.” Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu narrated this incident in order to instruct us that the path of *arcana* might constitute a reduction in the indifference to worldly affairs of one advanced in the performance of *Hari-bhajana*.

Love and Lust

A learned caste-gosvami delivered a discourse on *Bhramara-Gītā* (Śrī Rādhā’s soliloquy to a bee) at Kuliya in Navadvīpa. After he had lectured for two or three days, someone informed Bābājī Mahārāja that his discourses were excellent, and that no one had ever heard such discourses before. Hearing this, Bābājī Mahārāja told his informant, “Don’t go to hear that discourse on *Bhramara-Gītā* again. Behold! When

there is rain, weeds grow very quickly. Carefully planted seeds can also grow, but some are destroyed prematurely by a heavy downpour. By hearing a discourse about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, the seeds of love for Kṛṣṇa bud forth in the heart of those persons who are pure, devoid of material desires and sincerely dedicated to the service of the spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas. Those in whom the seed of lust is found, however, will immediately become lustful upon hearing of the sportive pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. By pretentiously hearing the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, their lust becomes inflamed. The consciousness of the conditioned living beings is covered by lust, and thus they take the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda to be the libidinous exploits of a mundane hero and heroine. Those who assume that, because they have faith in the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa they are able to experience the transcendental nature of those pastimes, are unaware of their own carnal desires, being overwhelmed by the illusory energy. You cannot understand from their utterances whether the pastimes are transcendental or whether they have proper regard for the pastimes.”

Hearing this, another man from the assembly said, “I saw that some members of the audience who were listening to the *Bhramara-Gītā* cried out in spiritual ecstasy, and some wept saying, ‘O Kṛṣṇa! O Rādhā’ “

Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “It was not spiritual ecstasy, but rather the madness born of lust. This kind of deviation will cause the ruin of the world. You have come to know of their so-called ecstasy by seeing them weep. He who has no love for himself, how can he get love of God through the display of Māyā? If someone has truly achieved love of God, then request him to leave his home and family. He should come to the banks of the Ganges, renounce sense gratification and take shelter of honest, non-duplicitous bhajana. If we observe him performing this austerity for one year, then we will know the true extent of his eagerness to hear *Bhramara-Gītā*.”

This is the test of advancement enjoined by Bābājī Mahārāja for those who exhibit the signs of spiritual emotion. Let them disassociate themselves from their kith and kin, for at least one year, and live the life of renunciation as is found in those truly detached from worldliness. If they cannot pass this test then we must assume that they are foolish

pretenders and their ecstasies the outward sign of licentiousness.

What is Genuine Madhukārī?

A person named Saha used to voluntarily send bags of rice to Bābājī Mahārāja. Other well-wishers used to send some rice for him as well. This rice was stocked in a room at the Rani *dharmasālā* at Kuliya, Navadvīpa. This practice came to the notice of Bābājī Mahārāja. After two months of accepting Saha's donation, Bābājī Mahārāja sent a man to request him to stop sending the rice. As soon as Saha was thus informed, he came to see Bābājī Mahārāja and inquired, "O Prabhu, how have I offended you? Why have you refused my alms?" In response, Bābājī Mahārāja remarked, "My spiritual master told me that it is better to be a virtuous bull than a domesticated cow." Overhearing this, one of the persons present asked Bābājī Mahārāja to explain the meaning of this statement. Bābājī Mahārāja then explained, "A cow is well looked after by the householder who gets milk from her. Thus, a person who sustains his life by taking food from only one man becomes dependent on that man just like a domesticated cow. When the protector gets into debt, however, his creditor will sell the cow and thus realize the debt. On the other hand, a virtuous bull is not under the control of a particular person. The animal moves freely from field to field and thus nourishes his body. Although the bull sometimes receives blows, it is not under any lifelong bondage. Moreover, those who keep badly behaved cows occasionally have to pay fines due to the cows' destruction of the property of others. If someone begs with a desire to get his necessities becomes like the protected cow. These days the word *madhukārī* is very commonly used. Those who take up the dress of the Bābājī often say they will take to *madhukārī*. *Madhukārī* is a transcendental practice. Those who adopt this occupation surrender themselves to Kṛṣṇa, their bodily consciousness being vanquished. On the other hand, the materialists who have a taste for gratifying their tongues and genitals are bound in the cycle of birth and death for a long time. Dependent on materialists, those who want to chant and worship in Vraja or Navadvīpa are like cows kept under protection. Those who collect their alms by begging

from door to door in the name of *madhukārī* for eating well are pious bulls. This principle of *madhukārī* has been well stated in the song composed by Bhaktivinoda Prabhu:

*kabe gaura-vane, suradhunī-taṭe,
'hā rādhe hā kṛṣṇa' bole'
kāṅḍiyā beḍā'bo, deho-sukha chāḍi',
nānā latā-taru-tale*

*śwa-paca-grhete, māgiyā khāibo,
ṭibo saraswatī-jala
ṭuline ṭuline, gaḍā-gaḍi dibo,
kori' kṛṣṇa-kolāhala*

*dhāma-bāsī jane, pranati koriyā,
māgibo kṛpāra leśa
vaiṣṇava-caraṇa- reṇu gāya mākhī',
dhori' avadhūta-veśa*

*gauḍa-braja-jane, bheda nā dekhibo,
hoibo baraja-bāsī
dhāmera swarūpa, sphuribe nayane,
|hoibo rādhāra dāsī*

“When will I wander weeping under the shade of various trees and creepers on the banks of the celestial Gaṅgā river in the land of Navadvīpa, crying, “O Rādhā! O Kṛṣṇa!” and forgetting all physical comforts?

“I will take my meals by begging at the homes of *candālas*, and will drink the water of the Sarasvatī river. In ecstasy I will roll on the ground from bank to bank of the river, raising an uproar of “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!”

“Bowing down to the inhabitants of the holy land of Navadvīpa, I will beg an iota of their mercy. I will wear the dress of a mendicant and smear the dust of the Vaiṣṇavas’ feet on my body.

“I will see no difference between the inhabitants of Vraja Bhūmi and those of Navadvīpa, and I will be transformed into a resident of Vraja.

The true nature of the Lord’s abode will manifest itself to my eyes, and I will become a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”

The Duty of Married Couples

After his wedding, a rich man from Calcutta, who had taken shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, wished to know how he could utilize his time in *hari-bhajana* while situated in married life. With that purpose in mind, he approached Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for instruction. The wealthy gentleman became very depressed when he was informed by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that there might well be various obstacles in his attempt to perform *hari-bhajana* as a householder. Later on, this gentleman, accompanied by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, went to meet Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja on the riverbank at Kuliya. When it was mentioned to Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja that the gentleman had married, Bābājī Mahārāja commented, “Yes, it is all right that he has married. From this time on he will daily cook and offer foodstuffs to Lord Viṣṇu. After offering it to Him, he will serve the *prasāda* to his wife, and then as a Vaiṣṇava he will take her *prasāda* remnants. He will consider her as Kṛṣṇa’s servitor and his spiritual master. He will not think of her as an object for sensual gratification. Everything in this world: wealth, jewelry, men and women, are all for worshipping Kṛṣṇa: That which is meant for Kṛṣṇa’s service should be utilized as such. Do not consider your wife as one meant for your service. Instead, respect her as a servitor of Kṛṣṇa.”

Here is the purport to Bābājī Mahārāja’s foregoing discussions with householders. The sense of proprietorship of one’s spouse is to be eschewed, and the conception of one’s spouse as Kṛṣṇa’s worshipable servitor is to be nurtured. When one regards one’s mate as the servitor of the Lord and thus suitable for His enjoyment only, one can easily transcend the urge to indulge in illicit sex which so bedevils many a married couple.

The Return Ticket

Kailasa Bandyopadhyaya, M.A.B.L., once went from Calcutta to Kuliya to have the audience of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. When he was introduced, the latter told him, “Very good! You should stay here for *Hari-bhajana*.” Mr. Bandyopadhyaya replied, “But I have a return ticket for Calcutta.” Bābājī Mahārāja was astonished at this and said, “You have booked a return ticket! So why have you come to me? There was no need of your coming to me if you have booked a return ticket! According to my understanding, only those who are genuinely interested in *hari-bhajana* come to the Dhāma.”

There is no return to material life for one who visits the Holy Dhāmas of the Lord with a steadfast vow to become eternally situated in His loving service. We can only assume that Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja expected Śrīmān Kailasaji to return to his wonted materialism when he availed himself of his return ticket rather than return as a man altered by his association with the residents of the Dhāma. The particular benefit afforded one by a pilgrimage to the abode of God manifest on earth is getting the association of *sādhus*. Unless one surrenders himself in a mood of eagerness at the lotus feet of a genuine *sādhu*, one cannot derive the full benefit of visiting a holy *ārtha*. Mr. Kailasa’s excuse for not engaging wholeheartedly in devotional service was so trivial as to simply invite a stern castigation.

External Purity and Material Desire

A famous professional *Bhāgavatam* reciter from Navadvīpa named Gosvāmī once visited Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu, clad in a woolen garment. While conversing, they began to discuss purity in devotional service. When asked about this, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu said, “People with desires contrary to devotional service, who are attached to gold and women, who make a show of purity, cannot perform sacrifices or other religious performances purely. Their manifold, impure activities are merely heaps of impurity on already piled-up garbage. If there is a spot of leprosy on any part of the body, it gradually spreads to other parts. There are people who want to maintain purity by simply putting on woolen clothes at the time of going to the latrine or by taking bath in the

Ganges River. Their minds, however, are full of thoughts of sense gratification. They are very impure. They are so impure that they cannot realize their impurity even if it is explained to them. There are people who superficially put on woolen or saffron cloth, eat only sunned rice and take bath in the Ganges River to show that they are genuine Vaiṣṇavas, but their hearts are full of material desires. They show great concern for their sons, wealth, women and position, but the service to a Vaiṣṇava does not appeal to them. However, Kṛṣṇa does not happily accept the service of those who are not attached to serving the Vaiṣṇavas, however pure they may try to be.”

It should not be misunderstood from this incident that it is improper to wear woolen cloth, to bathe in the Ganges or to eat sunned rice. Practices which help one maintain external purity, which rid one of sinful reactions or promote health no doubt have their place. But they are of no avail if one is unprepared to take the foot-dust of pure devotees of the Lord upon one’s head. Men who have no devotion in their hearts are often found to act irreproachably with respect to ritual acts of purification and matters pertaining to the well being of the mortal frame. As it is stated in *Bhagavad-Gītā*:

*bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām
tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ
samādhau na vidhiyate*

“In the minds of those who are too attached to sense enjoyment and material opulence, and who are bewildered by such things, the resolute determination for devotional service to the Supreme Lord does not take place.” (Bg 2.44) Śrīla Prabhupāda offers the following comments in this regard, “*Samādhi* [absorption in spiritual ecstasy] is never possible for persons interested in material sense enjoyment, nor for those who are bewildered by such temporary things. They are more or less condemned by the process of material energy.”

The Birthplace of Lord Gaura

Once, a man constructed a tin-roofed hut under a neem tree at the southwest corner of the outdoor theater of a wealthy resident of Navadvīpa. He installed a Deity of Bala-Gaura (baby Gaura) there and declared to his neighbors that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had been born under that very neem tree. He explained that the Lord's birthsite had previously been lost and covered. In order to re-establish this long-lost, holy site, he began to collect donations from pilgrims. The enterprising rascal invited Śrīla Vamśī dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who was a pure Vaiṣṇava and very austere, to visit this newly discovered *tīrtha*, and he spared no pains in seeking to persuade him that this site was the actual Māyāpura of Navadvīpa. He explained all of this with the hope that Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu could be prevailed upon to believe that the above-mentioned site was the authentic birthplace. Presently, this counterfeit birthplace is known variously as Vanikpada, Śankharipada or Malañcapada, etc. The rascal claimed that this had all been revealed to him by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself in a dream. He declared that the present Māyāpura, which is situated opposite Navadvīpa on the eastern bank of the river Ganges, was not the authentic place of Mahāprabhu's birth. Upon being informed of his claim, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu commented, "The words of those great souls who have already uncovered the birth site of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by the power of their *bhajana* are the genuine, conclusive proof. The lost holy places of Mahāprabhu cannot be revealed by dreams alone. Holy places reveal themselves to pure devotees, and those saintly persons do not restore the lost *tīrthas* for the sake of acquiring wealth. Only those who are Gaurāṅga's personal associates can re-establish the lost birthplace of Gaurāṅga. Others do not have such spiritual power. By the power of their knowledge and proper discrimination Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda have discovered the real birth site of Mahāprabhu, just as Śrī Advaita Ācārya brought about the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu." As soon as Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu had uttered these words, Śrīla Vamśī dāsa Bābājī took up a sickle and cut the fence which enclosed the imposter's tin hut. By this act he informed the innocent pilgrims that a hypocrite was illegally imitating great self-realized souls.

A Festival for Paupers

Once, on the day preceding the observance of the disappearance of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja informed a devotee: “Tomorrow is the day when Śrī Gosvāmī Prabhu disappeared. We will observe a great festival. In Navadvīpa such festivals are not observed by the caste Gosvāmīs.” Hearing this, the devotee inquired, “How shall we obtain the necessary articles for the festival? How shall we celebrate it?” Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “Keep this to yourself. We will forego our daily meal and constantly chant the Lord’s Holy Name. This is how paupers like us will celebrate the festival.”

How to Recognize a Vaiṣṇava

Once, someone asked Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu, “The actual character of topmost Vaiṣṇavas does not always seem to correspond to the descriptions of their character which are revealed in the scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Such Vaiṣṇavas sometimes even appear to exhibit mundane characteristics. Please be merciful and instruct us in this matter so that we can easily recognize a genuine Vaiṣṇava.”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja responded, “Out of his own free will and the inspiration of Kṛṣṇa, a great Vaiṣṇava, being saddened by the misery of the fallen and conditioned souls, advents himself in a certain family, in a certain place and at a certain time. When such an exalted Vaiṣṇava attracts people by his ecstatic love and devotion and teaches them devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord considers with some trepidation, ‘It will be difficult for Me to repay the debt to those who have surrendered themselves to such Vaiṣṇavas, who are as dear to Me as My life. I will become the servant of those who are affectionate to My pure devotees, and thus I will easily come under their control.’ With this fear Śrī Kṛṣṇa occasionally conceals the spiritual qualities of great souls from the eyes of the public. By the power of Kṛṣṇa’s *māyā-śakti*, the characteristics of the genuine Vaiṣṇavas are concealed from those who have interests contrary to devotional service. Thus genuine Vaiṣṇavas appear to the materialistic to have materialistic characters. In this mood, Kṛṣṇa

examines the living entity to see how much he is actually attracted to the Absolute Truth, and if he is, He reveals the spiritual characteristics of the great souls. Hence, without the exercise of the independent will of a Vaiṣṇava, no one can know him even after seeing in him all of the characteristics described by the scriptures. It is often observed that the Vaiṣṇavas praise the materialists and thereafter keep their distance from them. Sometimes, out of fear of the crowd, such Vaiṣṇavas conceal their natural spiritual symptoms. Sometimes they make a pretense of converting materialistic persons into their disciples. They seem to want to be served by them and always take their advice. Thus, they keep their true nature obscured. I have seen with my own eyes that at Vraja a great *bhajanānandī* used to worship and chant at a village some distance north of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Many distressed people used to visit him. He gave them the hope that they could fulfill their desires, both physical and mental, by praying to Kṛṣṇa. In the course of time, his fame spread near and far, and people went there in droves, day and night. He came to be reputed as a man of pure devotional austerity, a *siddha-bābāji*. When the news was spread that he was an extremely renounced soul, devoid of the desire for gold, women and adoration, and compassionate to conditioned souls, he was much harassed by a constant flow of visitors. Troubled by this, he made arrangements with a rich man for a monthly allowance, and with that money he engaged a young sweeper woman who sat in front of his cottage and acted as his servant. Seeing this, the people began to criticize him, concluding that this Vaiṣṇava was a womanizer and attached to wealth, etc. Others stopped visiting this great-souled *bhajanānandī* when they no longer obtained any material results from their homage to him. In fact, he was a real Vaiṣṇava. When the Vaiṣṇavas graciously reveal themselves, faithful persons who become attracted by the mercy of those Vaiṣṇavas and completely surrender to them, can know the true identity of such Vaiṣṇavas. Those who are very fortunate are not deprived of their service or their mercy. Otherwise, the Vaiṣṇavas devise various deceptive means to hide themselves. To know a Vaiṣṇava one has to pray sincerely at the lotus feet of Gaura-Nityānanda, and by Their mercy, when one's heart becomes devoid of pride and filled with humility, Nitāi-Gaura then reveal the true identity of a Vaiṣṇava in one's heart. Nitāi-Gaura are revealed through the

Vaiṣṇava, and the Vaiṣṇava is revealed by Gaura-Nitāi. It has been well-stated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta by Śrī Kavirāja Gosvāmī: *ei dui bhāi hṛdayera kṣali' andhakāra dui bhāgavata-saṅge karaṇa sakṣātkāra.*"

The Imitation of Mahā-bhāgavatas

A *brahmacārī* born in a brāhmaṇa family went to Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu and expressed his eagerness to execute *hari-bhajana* in his association. Shortly thereafter, he became well respected by the people for his devotional austerities. Seeing the reverence which the people showed him, the *brahmacārī* decided to build a thatched hut like Bābājī Mahārāja's. He secretly collected funds for this purpose and built a cottage on the bank of the river Ganges. The *brahmacārī* then thought to take the permission of Bābājī Mahārāja before he entered the hut, but before he could broach the subject the omniscient Bābājī said, "Oh, respected *brahmacārī*, that you have a desire to execute *bhajana* is good, but if you enter the house of Māyā, you will be increasingly entangled by Māyā. You should leave this thatched hut and perform your *bhajana* under a tree."

At this, a sentimental follower of Bābājī Mahārāja asked, "You previously advised us to do *bhajana* by going into a room and bolting the door from the inside. Why do you now say that *Hari-bhajana* should be performed under a tree, otherwise it will not be *Hari-bhajana*?" Hearing this, Bābājī Mahārāja replied angrily, "Yes, I was correct in saying so. This body is the house, and our two eyes are doors. He who closes the doors and learns to imitate the external behavior of a Vaiṣṇava can never be said to have closed the door. His only means for success is to take shelter under a tree. One gets the supreme benediction if he obeys the instruction of his spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas. If he maintains faith in such instruction, he will gradually develop the ability to follow it. However, if he imitates their behavior, he is sure to quickly fall."

Eventually, the *brahmacārī* left the association of Bābājī Mahārāja, who commented, "Behold! Such people are so evil minded! He performs *Hari-bhajana* with a desire to be respected by the common people. After two or four days he will become greedy for money. Those who are

unqualified to carry the burden of asceticism still want to act as though they were Paramahamsas.”

After this incident the *brahmacārī* decided to return home. One of Bābājī Mahārāja’s neighbors asked him, “Why has he been entrapped by Maya despite associating with *sādhus*. Why isn’t he reaping the result of good association?” To this, Bābājī Mahārāja responded, “The pretense of associating with *sādhus* is not genuine association with *sādhus*. One is not benefited if he leaves the association of saintly persons before the benefits thereof fructify. The *brahmacārī* has gained this much: in the future he will not eat flesh or fish or he will superficially follow certain principles of pious behavior, but he will not be able to enter into the kingdom of *hari-bhajana*.”

Anyābhilāṣa (Desire for Other Things)

Once, the day before the celebration of Rathayātrā, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu asked the people who had gathered for his association, “Where will you go to see the forthcoming Rathayātrā? At Podamatala there is a large cart and festival, and to the east there is a prominent zamindar who has a cart, and if one goes there he can get *rasagullas* and yogurt and flat rice.” In this manner Bābājī Mahārāja described five or seven places where Rathayātrā was to be held. At this, everyone began to wonder whether Bābājī Mahārāja was encouraging them to attend the car festivals. Almost every day they had been gathering to read, Śrī *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and Śrīmad-*Bhāgavatam*, and Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja used give the philosophical understanding of the portions studied. He liked to repeatedly hear about the character of Prahlāda Mahārāja, because Caitanya Mahāprabhu had frequently exhibited the pastime of hearing about the activities of Prahlāda Mahārāja. At other times Bābājī Mahārāja listened to *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and would explain the proper conclusions of those songs. A reciter would read the scriptures, but the commentator was Bābājī Mahārāja. On the actual day of Rathayātrā, the usual class was not held as everyone had gone to see the chariot parades. Bābājī Mahārāja opened the door of his thatched

cottage, came out and announced with a slight smile on his face, “Today I can save my breath, as everyone has gone. Those who were chanting Hari-nāma with offense have given up the hearing and chanting of *Hari-kathā* in the association of devotees, and having gone to see the Rathayātrā. They will look at the young women, the crowd of worldly people and other objects of enjoyment. They have no attraction for *hari-bhajana* in the association of Vaiṣṇavas. They have come on the plea of associating with Vaiṣṇavas, but since they lack real attachment [for hearing and chanting the Lord’s glories] they are being swept away by the current of desires for other things (*anyābhilāṣa*).” Thereafter, Bābājī Mahārāja began to chant to himself at the top of his voice. Later that day, seeing those who had participated in the car festival gradually returning, Bābājī Mahārāja, looking very grave, did not speak to anyone.

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu on Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Śrīmatī Bhagavatī Devī, the wife of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and the Ṭhākura’s second daughter, Kadambinī, sometimes went to Kuliya, Navadvīpa, from the Bhakti Bhavan in Calcutta, to have *darśana* of the lotus feet of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Gosvāmī. On one such occasion Bābājī Mahārāja questioned them, “Why have you come to Kuliya, leaving behind the deity [Ṭhākura] of your home? Have you come to shop in the market or have you come to see the deity of the market? The internal associate of Lord Gaura has appeared in your home. If you want to keep him there for some time, then you should go home and perform *Hari-bhajana* with single-mindedness. Otherwise, you will not be able to keep him there much longer.”

The Artful Pastimes of a Vaiṣṇava

When Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda exhibited his pastime of illness in his final years, he was residing at Bhakti Bhavan in Calcutta. A caste Gosvāmī visited Bābājī Mahārāja in Kuliya, and the latter said, “You go to Calcutta, the material world, and bring Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to this holy Dhāma.” The caste Gosvāmī could not grasp what the

intimate associate of Lord Caitanya was indicating. He did not understand, *tomāra hṛdoye sadā govinda-viśrāma*—“The heart of the Vaiṣṇava is always the resting place of Lord Govinda.” And, “Wherever there are Vaiṣṇavas, that place is Vṛndāvana, and in that place there is unlimited bliss.” Wherever a *Mahā-bhāgavata* appears, he lives there with his Goloka associates and serves Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vraja, twenty-four hours a day. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda’s saying “My house became Goloka” was beyond mere hyperbole and should be accepted as factual.

When the caste Gosvāmī arrived in Calcutta, he conveyed Bābājī Mahārāja’s message to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the Ṭhākura responded by giving his blessings to Śrīla Gaura-kiśora for his performance of *Hari-bhajana*. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura later explained the truth of the Vaiṣṇavas to the ignorant Gosvāmī, telling him, “Having perceived the evil in our hearts, the Vaiṣṇavas, in accordance with the verse from *Bhagavad-Gītā*: *ye yathā mām prapadyante tām̐s tathaiiva bhajamy aham*, deceive us in various ways. Having perceived the motive with which we approach them, the Vaiṣṇavas feel there will not be much benefit in their instructing us, and accordingly they speak about various other matters to test our sincerity, keeping themselves absorbed in uninterrupted *bhagavata-bhajana* in the meanwhile.” Many materialistic people whimsically approached Śrīla Gaura-kiśora and were instructed by him according to their predispositions. Being thus deceived, they returned whence they had come. Hearing ordinary talk from Bābājī Mahārāja about everyday articles, such as flour, rice, oil, betel, potatoes, patola, etc., they got the opportunity to become more interested in worldly affairs. If one possesses a hypocrite’s materialistic instinct, then he cannot truly associate with *sādhus*. If, on the other hand, one surrenders fully to a *sādhu*, he will be pleased to reveal himself to one and will continually speak the Absolute Truth, free from illusion.

Śrīla Gaura-kiśora’s Benediction

Bhakti-pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja, with the encouragement of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and the permission of Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, crossed the River Ganges to have *darśana* of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora

Gosvāmī. Tīrtha Mahārāja was a *grhastha* at the time and had not yet been initiated by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. While going to visit Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu, he carried a melon with him. Ordinarily Bābājī Mahārāja did not accept presents, but when he heard that someone had come from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura he accepted the fruit. He told that devotee in the dress of a householder to sing some kirtana from Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura’s *Prārthanā*. The householder sang ‘*gaurāṅga’ bolite habe pulaka-śarīrā ‘hari hari’ bolite nayane ba’be nīra*. Having heard him sing, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora gave him the following instruction, “Keep faith in the spiritual master and other Vaiṣṇavas. Be as humble as a blade of grass and with the forbearance of a tree always chant the name of the Lord. Keep yourself aloof from the association of non-devotees.” Hearing this, Bhakti-pradīpa Prabhu told Bābājī Mahārāja, “At this time I do not have the shelter of the lotus feet of a guru.” Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu replied, “You have taken *darśana* of Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in Māyāpura, and that is the place of *ātmā-nivedana*—complete surrender. As you have surrendered yourself to the lotus feet of the bona fide *guru*, then how can you say you have not achieved his shelter? Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is waiting for you. Go and take his mercy!” After hearing this, the *grhastha* devotee got his head shaved. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Prabhu then told him, “When you take *sannyāsa*, the name of Mahāprabhu will be spread from country to country and village to village.” Thus blessed by Bābājī Mahārāja, Bhakti-pradīpa Prabhu touched his lotus feet and offered him obeisances. When hypocritical and materialistic people came to pay respects to Bābājī Mahārāja in that manner, he would say, “Everything you have will be destroyed. Your home will be razed to the ground.” In this way he displayed his pastime of anger. In this case, however, his attitude was quite different. That same day the devotee went to Godruma to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and was initiated by him into the *kāma-bija* and *kāma -gāyatrī mantras*. According to the prediction of Bābājī Mahārāja, he was the first disciple to be given *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, whom he considered his *śikṣā-guru*. He was known as Bhakti-pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja. According to his capacity, he preached the philosophy of Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in India and abroad.

His Entrance Into the Eternal Pastimes of the Lord

In the Bengali year 1322, at dawn, on the thirtieth day of the month of Karttika, corresponding to November 16, 1915, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Dāsa Gosvāmī entered the eternal pastimes of the Lord. That day at sunrise, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura left Śrī Māyāpura for the Rani Dharmasālā at Kuliya, where Bābājī Mahārāja had been staying. The head priests of Navadvīpa’s various temples and *āśramas* began to argue amongst themselves about where Bābājī Mahārāja’s spiritual body would be interred. A heated argument arose. There was a material motive behind the dispute, for the contending parties considered that establishing the Bābājī’s *samādhi* at their *āśrama* or temple would put them in a position to earn handsomely from the pilgrims who would flock to see the tomb of the Paramahaṁsa. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura opposed their illegitimate attempts, however. Apprehending a breach of peace, Navadvīpa’s Inspector of Police, who was at that time Mr. Jatindranath Simha, arrived there.

After much controversy the various hypocritical Vaiṣṇavas stated their position: “Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is not a sannyāsī and thus has no right to prepare a *samādhi* for a person who has renounced his home.” Hearing their pronouncement Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied in a voice like thunder, saying, “I am the sole disciple of Paramahaṁsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Even though I have not accepted *sannyāsa*, I am a celibate *brahmacārī*, and, by the grace of Bābājī Mahārāja, I am not a hypocritical renunciate secretly addicted to abominable habits or fornication as some monkeylike people are. I take pride in saying this as a bearer of Bābājī Mahārāja’s shoes. If there is someone here who is a renunciate of truly stainless character, then he can come forward and arrange for the *samādhi*. I have no objection to that. He who within the last one year, or six months, three months, one month or even three days has not indulged in illicit association with women will be able to touch this spiritually blissful body. If anyone else touches it, he will be completely ruined.” Hearing these words the Inspector of Police said, “How will the evidence for this be produced?” Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura rejoined, “I will believe what they say.” After this challenge was offered, the Bābājīs

turned their backs one by one and departed from that place. The Inspector of Police was dumbfounded.

Some of the people remaining there advised that Bābājī Mahārāja had expressed a last desire that his body be dragged through the streets of Navadvīpa in the dust of the Dhāma. To this Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, “Although we are fools, inexperienced and offenders, we will still not be disinclined to understand the true meaning of those humility filled words, which have been spoken by my Gurudeva to destroy the pride of worldly-minded people. Even Kṛṣṇacandra will personally think Himself successful if He carries my Gurudeva on His head or shoulders. After the departure of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Gaurasundara took the spiritual body of the Ṭhākura on His lap and danced. What dignity He adorned it with! Therefore, following in the footsteps of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, we shall also bear Bābājī Mahārāja’s spiritually blissful body on our heads.”

On the following day, November 17, 1915, on the Utthana Ekādaśī in the afternoon and according to the scriptural ordinances, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura laid the body of his guru to rest on a newly formed sandpit of the Ganges at Kuliya. A low caste person of Lohagara from the district of Jessore donated his property and claimed to give up all rights to it. Yet after some time he forgot his promise and utilized that land for various illicit materialistic activities. Although he was criticized for this, he maintained his pride and committed offenses to the eternal associates of Lord Caitanya. Sixteen years later, by the will of Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, his place of rest was eroded by the River Ganges and inundated by it. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura organized a party of men and recovered the *samādhi* intact and brought it to the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa at Vrajapattana, where he reestablished it before a memorial to Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī. Nitya Gaurāṅga dāsa Adhikārī, a disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, helped to construct a beautiful *samādhi*-temple on the site.

We close our recounting of the transcendental deeds of Bābājī Mahārāja with this oft-recited prayer:

*namo gaura-kiśorāya sākṣād-vairāgya-mūrtaye
vipralambha-rasāmbhode pādāmbujāya te namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja [the spiritual master of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī], who is renunciation personified. He is always merged in a feeling of separation from and intense love of Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī

Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Srīmad Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja appeared in this world sometime around 1750 A.D. in a remote village in the subdivision of Tangail, in the district of Mayaman Singh, in what is now known as Bangladesh. He belonged to a very aristocratic family.

The Gaudiya Vedāntācārya Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana’s initiated disciple was Uddhava dāsa Bābājī, and his initiated disciple was Madhusūdana dāsa Bābājī, and Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī accepted Bābājī initiation from Madhusūdana dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. According to the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-jīvana* the *dīkṣā-guru* of Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī was Jagadānanda Gosvāmī of Srīngarvat, Vṛndāvana, whose *veśa-guru* was Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī of Govardhana fame.

Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī performed *bhajana* in Vraja-maṇḍala for many years. He was famed throughout the region as a *siddha-bābā* (a perfectly realized soul). He was known to sometimes chant continuously for three days and nights in a row without sleeping, and he would fast throughout. After the completion of his vow, he would breakfast upon flat rice and yogurt *prasāda*.

In the year 1880, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura visited Bābājī Mahārāja’s lotus feet in Vṛndāvana and got many valuable instructions from him. In the 1880’s the Paramahansa Bābājī came to the Burdwan District, staying in the village of Amalajoda. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura went there on the pretext of government business, thereby obtaining the association of Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī for the second time. The Bābājī was delighted by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s enthusiasm for preaching the glories of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. Thereafter,

Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī sojourned in Burdwan for eleven days and performed uninterrupted *kīrtana* (chanting and scriptural discussion) day and night. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura established a *praṇa-āśrama* (a monastery for surrender to Kṛṣṇa) in Amalajoda village.

In the year 1893, Jagannātha dāsa Babaji was residing in Kuliya, Navadvīpa, and he went to see Surabhi Kuñja, the residence of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. The entire grove was electrified by his arrival and appeared especially beautiful. Later, together with his followers, he proceeded to Māyāpura and visited many holy places like the Yogapiṭha, Śrīvāsaṅga, etc. When he arrived at the birthplace of Lord Gaura, which had been discovered by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, he began to dance in ecstasy, although he was very old at the time, and had previously been thought unable to walk. He thus established the authenticity of the site beyond any doubt. He spent some time at the Yogapiṭha in the association of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and he miraculously cured one of the Ṭhākura's sons of a skin disease simply by telling him to lie down in the dust of the Lord's place of appearance.

He passed most of the time chanting the Holy Name on the bank of the Ganges in Kuliya. His *bhajana kuṭira* and *samādhi* may still be seen there. One day he asked Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to construct a veranda to shelter the devotees who came to see him, which the Ṭhākura did immediately.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was well versed in astronomy by the age of twelve. Hearing of this, Bābājī Mahārāja summoned him one day and instructed him to make a Vaiṣṇava calendar which would include the appearance and disappearance days of all the associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Viṣṇu-priya Ṭhakurāṇī. Accordingly, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura made the necessary calculations and began publication of the *Śrī Navadvīpa-pañcika*.

Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī's life and soul was the chanting of the Holy Name and rendering service to Vaiṣṇavas. He lived on this earth for 135 years (according to *Gaura-pariṣada-caritāvalī*) and preached the Holy Name of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Although he was almost bent double in his old age, still, during the time of *kīrtana*, his body would expand to well over six feet, and his appearance would replicate the

dancing figure of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

His favorite disciple was Bhagavat dāsa Bābājī, who had accepted Bābājī initiation from him. Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī took Bābājī initiation from Śrīla Bhagavat dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Gaurahari dāsa Bābājī, Rāmahari dāsa Bābājī and Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī were disciples of Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī who hailed from Barsana in Vraja-maṇḍala. Another disciple, called Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī, was from Kadamkhandi. Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja's personal servant and disciple, Śrī Bihārī dāsa, was very stout and powerful. Due to Bābājī Mahārāja's advanced age he could apparently not walk. Śrī Bihārī used to carry him everywhere on his shoulder in a bamboo basket. Once, when he was traveling thus, a wealthy man gave him a rupee, which was deposited with Bābājī Mahārāja's servant, Bihārī. After journeying for some miles, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja had his servant take him back to the donor and he returned his one rupee. He told the man, "I understand that you have a good deal of money. I could not bear the burden of one rupee, and I wonder how you tolerate the burden of so many." Bābājī Mahārāja sometimes accepted donations for rendering service to the Vaiṣṇavas, but in this instance he instructively exhibited his detachment, showing how one must be wary of accepting charity from the pounds, shillings and pence class of men.

Inspired by Bihārī dāsa, the villagers of Sūrya-kuṇḍa built a room and a small temple for Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. The Siddha Baba asked Bihārī dāsa to install a Deity in the temple. Upon receiving this order, Bihārī proceeded to Sonaruddi village, which was about eight miles from Katoa. He requested the local landlord to give him a Deity. He duly received Gaura-Nitāi Deities, went to Calcutta, and collected donations totaling 5,000 rupees from Śrīnath Rai, the renowned Laha families and others. He then returned to Sūrya-kuṇḍa. With great pomp and festivity, the Deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi were installed in the temple, where They glistened like gold. Shortly thereafter, a band of dacoits stormed the temple one night and attempted to carry away the Deities, thinking them to be actually fashioned from gold. However, they were unsuccessful in attempting to purloin those Golden Lords and fell exhausted in the temple. They fled without achieving their aim just

before the arrival of dawn. This incident disturbed Bābājī Mahārāja greatly, and he told Bihārī dāsa to donate the Deities to some devotee in Vṛndāvana. Bihārī dāsa went to Vṛndāvana town and presented them to a Gosvāmī of Bengali extraction. These Deities are still being worshipped in the temple of Dhobigati of Gopalbagh and are famous by the name of Sonar Gaura, i.e. the Golden Gaura.

Several days after this incident, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja told Bihārī dāsa, “I cannot live without the Deities. Bring another Deity from wherever you can find one.” Hearing his *guru-mahārāja*’s command, Bihārī proceeded to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and met Śrī Dhenu dāsa Bābājī of Mathurā. There, in Rādhā-kuṇḍa in a stack of hay, which had been gathered for feeding the cows, they discovered a Deity of Ṣaḍ-bhuja, a six-armed Deity of Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Kṛṣṇacandra and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu combined. Bihārī dāsa had the Deity properly painted in Vṛndāvana, and returned to Sūrya-kuṇḍa with great enthusiasm. The beautiful form of the Lord was installed according to the scriptural ordinances, and Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja worshipped Him for ten years.

With the passing of a decade, Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was inspired to go to Navadvīpa, and he therefore requested Bihārī dāsa to deliver the Deity to someone in Vṛndāvana. Bihārī dāsa thus proceeded to Vṛndāvana and gave the Deity to the head priest of the Gopāla-guru-āśrama, who was known as Śrī Narottama dāsa Bābājī. The Lord in his six-armed form is worshipped to this day in the Ṣaḍ-bhuja Temple situated in a lane near Nidhuvana.

Bihārī then carried his *guru-mahārāja* on his shoulder to the Mathurā Railway Station and boarded a train for Navadvīpa. When they reached the Memri station in Bardhawan, a British railway officer was so impressed by the simplicity and blissful nature of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja that he assisted them in many ways. They alighted from the train, before reaching Navadvīpa, hired a bullock cart and traveled to the *āśrama* of a famous pure soul named Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī, who resided at Ambika-Kalna in Bengal. This great soul was extremely pleased to see Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and he exclaimed in a state of transcendental exultation, “Oh! My friend has come!” He then

embraced Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī. Both of them fell to the ground in a state of profound transcendental ecstasy and, becoming unconscious, entered into an impenetrable, spiritual trance. They remained motionless, locked in their embrace of loving friendship from ten o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock that night. The servants of the two Siddha Bābās began to feel uneasy, and Śrī Viṣṇudāsa, the servant of Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, requested Bihārī dāsa to do something to bring them back to external awareness. Bihārī dāsa began to massage his guru's chest and chant the *mahā-mantra*-this device brought them both back into external consciousness, and they got up. Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja had not eaten or drunk during his three days of travel, and so *prasāda* was immediately arranged and he broke his fast at midnight. After this, they slept a while.

After staying at Kalna for ten days, Jagannātha dāsa Prabhu decided to proceed to Navadvīpa by bullock cart. Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī had only eighteen rupees in his possession, but he insisted upon giving it to Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī for his journey, which he happily accepted. On the way, Bihārī inquired where they would stay in Navadvīpa, suggesting that they stay in a large *āśrama* popularly called "Bada-akhara".

Śrī Bābājī Mahārāja replied, "No, we will not stay in any *āśrama*. We will stay under some tree." They indeed stayed under a tree for some time, but later a devotee named Śrī Mādhava Datta purchased the land adjacent to the tree and donated it to the Bābājī. A year later, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura built two small huts there for him. Rajarsi Śrī Vanamali Rai, a famous landlord, built three more huts and a boundary wall about them. An elderly and wealthy lady had a well dug for drinking water. The Bābājī stayed there in Kuliya for thirty-two years. According to *Gaudīya-vaiṣṇava-jīvana* he lived to the age of 147 years, at which time he entered the pastimes of the Lord.

He used to strictly and regularly follow the vows of Caturmasya (the four-month-long rainy season). In the first month he would take only four bananas each day in the evening. In the second month he would only take guavas. In the third month he drank some buttermilk. And in the fourth month, he consumed only the flowers of the banana tree. He once went to Rishikesh to purify his chanting, which involved the

performance of the purificatory practice called *puraścaraṇa*. This penance had to be performed with extreme rigidity. He used to bathe at three o'clock in the morning and chant inside a closed room until sunset without speaking or eating. In order to complete the vow properly one is expected to take bath after each call of nature and even after passing air. Once, after observing this regimen for two months, he inadvertently spoke to Bihārī dāsa. He began the entire process again and completed his vow in three months' time. He thereafter pronounced that if one wanted to have *darśana* of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he should perform *puraścaraṇa* in this manner.

Bābājī Mahārāja once accepted some bread from a person belonging to the sweeper caste in Vṛndāvana. This action was much criticized by the local Vaiṣṇava community. Many people approached him and challenged him to explain his action. He replied, "Do you know who these sweepers are? Before appearing in Vraja-Dhāma, Lord Kṛṣṇa asked 88,000 sages to take birth there, and they were born in low-class families. Devotees reside in Vraja-Dhāma simply to get the opportunity of smearing their bodies with its dust and indeed to give up their bodies here. These sweepers are always serving the dust of Vṛndāvana. Therefore, I regard them as servants of Vraja-Dhāma and see them as no different from any other Vaiṣṇavas." After this incident, the Bābājī decided to chant in seclusion, and proceeded to a place called Pesi Kadankhandi, which was miles away from any village, near Khandirvana, one of Vraja's twelve forests. He and Bihārī spent the Dāśamī and Ekādaśī there, fasting completely. On the Dvādaśī morning, Bihārī began to think that Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja had gone to a place where nothing was available to eat, and that the Ekādaśī fast could not be properly broken by their eating *prasāda* made from grains. However, the Bābājī ordered Bihārī to chant the Mahā-mantra loudly to the accompaniment of kārātālas, and before noon a Brijbāsī came and brought some grains for them to prepare *prasāda*. From the following day onward, huge amounts of milk came to them daily.

Wherever they went, *prasāda* was always miraculously available to them. Once, in Navadvīpa, a similar event took place during the rainy season. The whole city was flooded with the water of the Ganges, and it

continued raining heavily for one week. No one could go out to beg alms. Suddenly, four persons appeared in a small boat and donated Bābājī Mahārāja 20 kilograms of flat-rice, yogurt and *sandeśa*.

While he was staying in Navadvīpa, he became the object of great affection and acclaim. On one occasion, the famous landlord, Śrīnath Rai, and several family members went to have an audience with the famous saintly person. Not recognizing him they asked if he knew where the famous *siddha bābā* lived. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja replied, “I don’t know anyone who is a *siddha bābā* here. I am staying here, but I am simply an ordinary living entity like all of you.” The Rais then realized that they were actually addressing Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, who was completely free from any desire for recognition or fame. Nevertheless, they humbly requested him to show them a miracle. Becoming disturbed, the Bābājī declared, “I don’t know how to perform any miracles.” He then picked up a stick and started beating the ground, apparently out of annoyance. The landlord, fearful that he had committed an offense, begged the Bābājī not to be angry with them for their having made an unpleasant request.

Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī replied, “I am not angry with you. I was just chasing out a goat who was eating the Tulasī plant near the cottage of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.”

The Rais were much astonished to hear this, and to test the veracity of his statement they immediately sent a reply paid telegram to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The reply came back the following day, and it confirmed that a goat had entered the cottage of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī and ruined the Tulasī plant there. This incident convinced many doubting persons of the Bābājī’s perfection. They returned to see him and fell at his feet to offer their obeisance. Perfect devotees of the Lord, being disinterested in the material universe, never desired to make an exhibition of miraculous powers. In order to increase the faith of worldly creatures, however, they are sometimes inspired by the indwelling Godhead to perform some supramundane deed for their edification.

Once, while residing in Navadvīpa, Bihārī dāsa became seriously ill. He suffered a severe fever and delirium, and periodically lapsed into unconsciousness. A medical expert was summoned from Calcutta, but he

declared that the illness was too far advanced to respond to treatment. He predicted that Bihārī would expire before morning. Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja then sat by the side of his dear servant. He put a sanctified Tulasī leaf in his mouth and began to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahā-mantra*. Within half an hour Bihārī was cured. He rose from his bed and proceeded to the kitchen to cook *prasāda*, knowing that Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, who had fasted throughout his servitor's illness, would not eat anything unless it was prepared by him.

Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī used to say that the best time for chanting was from three o'clock in the morning until seven in the morning, and again from sunset until eleven o'clock at night. He declared that no serious-minded devotee should sleep during these hours, as Lord Śiva comes to inspect the devotees of his guru, Lord Kṛṣṇa, at those times.

Although the Bābājī could not walk properly during his last years, still he would dance very enthusiastically during the performance of *saṅkīrtana*. His body would expand while dancing. He daily paid one-thousand obeisances to his Giridhārī Deity until the last day of his life. He did not like the idea of leaving any *prasāda* on his plate, and if he thought anyone was going to eat his remnants, he would consume every last morsel, and even the leaf plate to prevent it.

Bihārī dāsa was illiterate and did not even know the alphabet. One day Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja asked him to read the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* to him. When Bihārī reminded his guru Mahārāja of his illiteracy, the Bābājī requested him to simply look at the book for some time and then start chanting its stanzas. Within minutes, Bihārī dāsa started reciting the pastimes of Lord Caitanya from the pages of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Whenever he went to Calcutta, he would sojourn in the house of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura on Maniktala Street. Many devotees tried to take him to their homes to give him *prasāda*, but he never accepted their invitations. He donated a Govardhana-śīla to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who worshipped the *śīla* at his Bhakti Bhavan.

His eyesight was dimmed due to old age, and people who came to see him used to offer donations. Bihārī dāsa would keep the contributions in

an empty clay water-pot. One day, Bābājī Mahārāja suddenly asked, “Bihārī, give me all the donations you have received.” Bihārī would sometimes set some of the money aside for Bābājī Mahārāja’s needs, but Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī would immediately discern the exact amount missing and demand that it be returned. Bihārī would laugh and immediately comply. Bābājī Mahārāja used to spend the collection according to his own grave desires. Once he purchased 200 rupees-worth of rasagullas for the cows of Navadvīpa-Dhāma—an enormous amount of sweetmeats in those days!

On another occasion, a dog gave birth to five puppies on the bank of the Ganges near Bābājī Mahārāja’s *bhajana kuṭira*. When the sage sat down to take *prasāda*, the dogs sat around his plate. Bihārī tried to move some of the puppies, but Bābājī Mahārāja said, “Take my plate away, I will not eat today”, whereat Bihārī would produce the dogs and say, “Here are the dogs.” Bābājī Mahārāja would say fondly, “They are the dogs of the Dhāma.”

Many people used to approach Bābājī Mahārāja and beg to be initiated by him, but he did not generally accept them. He would, however, request them to render various kinds of service. Most of them would soon leave due to the pressure of being heavily engaged by him. One gentleman in particular, Śrī Gaura Hari dāsa, came for initiation, but Bābājī Mahārāja refused to accept him. On that account Gaura Hari fasted for three days in front of the Paramahaṁsa’s cottage. Finally, Bābājī Mahārāja took mercy on him and granted him Bābājī initiation.

He once told a professional *Bhāgavatam* reciter, “Your speaking the *Bhāgavatam* is the same business as a prostitute’s. Those who recite the *Bhāgavatam* as a business are offenders of the Holy Name, and one should not hear from them. If anyone hears from them, he will simply become degraded.” That gentleman immediately ceased his recitations, and he became a great devotee, living a humble existence in Vṛndāvana.

Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji used to stay six months in Vraja and six months in Navadvīpa-Dhdma. According to *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-jīvana*, at the advanced age of 146, when he was set to travel to Navadvīpa from Rādhā-kuṇḍa, many Brijbasis and other Vaiṣṇavas went to him to inquire why he was leaving Vraja-Dhāma at such an advanced age. In a

very humble and transcendently depressed mood he replied, “You can all stay here in Vraja-Dhāma because you are all pure Vaiṣṇavas. I am very offensive, and therefore it is better for me to stay at Navadvīpa. Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi do not count one’s offenses, as They have appeared to liberate all offenders. But here in Vraja-Dhāma offenses are counted and reactions thereto are strictly enforced.” This was his last journey to Navadvīpa-Dhāma. A few months after his arrival, on the first day of the new moon in the month of Phalgunā, a fortnight before the anniversary of Lord Caitanya’s appearance, he entered the Lord’s eternal pastimes.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura used to always call Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, Vaiṣṇava-Sarvabhauma—the “Commander-in-chief” of the Vaiṣṇavas.

*gaurāvirbhāva-bhūmes tvām nirdeṣṭā saj-jana-priyaḥ vaiṣṇava-
sārvabhaumaḥ śrī-jagannāthāya te namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, who is respected by the entire Vaiṣṇava community and who discovered the place where Lord Caitanya appeared.”

Appendices

‘108 Vishnupad Sreela Gaur-kishore Das’

by Prof. Nishikanta Sanyal, M.A.

The following essay was written by Professor Sanyal for Sajjana Toṣani under the direction of its Editor, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. The reader should note that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wished to have himself portrayed as an ordinary conditioned soul in the section detailing his approaching Gaura-kīṣora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja for initiation, and should not unnecessarily ascribe any fault to his obedient disciple in that regard!

The infinitesimal dissociated particle of the power of the Absolute, that manifests himself on the border-line between the spiritual and mundane spheres, is all-spirit in essence. In other words he has his own unalloyed spiritual body and senses which are identical with his entity. It is both natural as well as easy for him to seek incorporation in the spiritual sphere. He may or may not be incorporated in the realm of the spirit even when he seeks for the same. He may also seek to function in the mundane sphere. But he may not obtain the automatic fulfillment of his wish also for this purpose. Nevertheless it is far easier for him to obtain a footing in the spiritual than in the mundane realm.

This infinitesimal particle has perfect freedom of choice between two incompatible and alternative courses of conduct. He may choose to serve the Absolute or, in the alternative, to dominate over (measure) the non-absolutes. He is unable to realise either of these wishes till he is prepared to undergo a process of progressive acclimatization to either sphere under proper guidance. It is only by strenuous whole-hearted endeavour, backed by the guidance of a power far superior to himself, that the infinitesimal entity is gradually enabled to find his footing and function in the respective spheres.

The mundane is not independent of the spiritual sphere. It consists of two distinct constituents viz., semi-conscious and unconscious entities. The semi-conscious entities, dwelling in the mundane sphere, do not possess real consciousness. They possess only shadowy or deceptive consciousness. The apparently semi-conscious entities are termed 'jiva-maya' while the unconscious entities are 'jada-maya'. 'Jiva-maya' is related to 'jada-maya' as enjoyer and enjoyed, measurer and measured, lord and servant.

The term 'to measure' and 'to enjoy' are in the above sense synonymous. They denote the activity of the mundane mind misidentified by the soul in the conditioned state as his own. The infinitesimal Absolute is said to wish for a footing in the spiritual sphere when he is inclined to learn to serve the Absolute Infinity under His unconditional guidance. He is said to wish to function in the mundane sphere if he is inclined to learn to lord it over the entities of this material world. This latter function is, however, not practicable till he is

endowed with a second ego and material organs by means of which he is enabled to establish contact with mundane entities. The second ego is 'jiva- maya'. It is so constituted that the soul can identify himself with its entity and through its means establish the relation of lord, enjoyer or 'measurer' with the entities of this world.

By the above process this mundane civilization has been built up. It should be possible to retrace our steps, by a system of corresponding activities, towards the service of the Absolute Infinity. But so long as a person continues to be enamoured of the state of lordship over 'Nature', he is not likely to go in for the alternative course.

Sreela Gaur-Kishore Das Babaji was known to the Gaudiya-Vaishnava communities of both Nabadwip and Braja as a self-realised soul and for his severe asceticism. He was utterly lacking in all those qualifications that are valued by worldly people.

A Vaishnava ascetic does not belong to the category of the destitute, unemployed and stupid people of this world. Sreela Gaur-Kishore Das Babaji has also nothing in common with that objectionable type of the Babajis of Nabadwip and Brindavan who are the very worst specimens of fallen humanity. Sreela Gaur-Kishore Das Babaji did not also belong to the category of the infinitesimal absolutes. He belonged to the Divine category of plenary power and as such it was never possible for the conditions of the physical or mental spheres of this mundane world to exercise any control over him. But he chose to appear to the perverted view of worldly people in the likeness of a mortal being destitute of all good and bad qualities and given to the severest ascetic practices.

It was to this Vaishnava ascetic that the Editor of this journal was directed by Sreela Thakur Bhaktivinode for receiving his spiritual enlightenment. The Editor was then passing as a young man of high lineage possessing a handsome physical appearance, a keen and trained intellect and the purest morals. From the worldly point of view he was thus the exact contrast of the person to whom he was sent for his spiritual guidance.

Sreela Gaur-Kishore Das Babaji promptly refused to have anything to do with the deputed supplicant of his mercy on the ground that Krishna

would never accept a person so utterly unfitted for His service. It seems that the earthly merits of Editor were his spiritual drawback. But as Editor was not prepared for such a rude jerk to his vanity, it was with the greatest difficulty that he could retain his better judgment and rightly guess the hidden purpose of Sreela Thakur Bhaktivinode in sending him to a person who is not to be captivated by his good morals and high intellectual equipment.

To his worldly contemporaries Sreela Gaur-Kishore Das Babaji appeared to have had very few and simple occupations. He passed all his time in a tiny shed, ate raw earth and similar food, dispensed with all covering for his body and seldom spoke to any visitor.

The Editor on meeting with the above rebuff did not give up the attempt of obtaining his mercy. His sincerity was tested and rewarded after due trial of his perseverance. He happened to be the only disciple that Babaji Maharaja ever had.

After having received the mercy of Babaji Maharaj, Editor experienced such a complete upsetting of his outlook on life that for a year he could feel no interest in any other affair. His days and nights were fully devoted to living communion with the Divine Personality of the Guru in the privacy of a solitary room which he had built for himself at Sreedham Mayapur.

From this time to the disappearance of Babaji Maharaj, Editor seldom met his saviour at the latter's shed and, when he met Babaji Maharaj at his place, did not spend much time in his company. But there were a number of persons who stayed at all time with Babaji Maharaj and practised austerities in imitation of his conduct. These persons regarded themselves intimate associates and elected recipients of the special mercy of Sreela Gaur-Kishore. But it so happened that none of them could long retain intact their artificial modes of living, and all of them fell away even from the path of ordinary morality.

Those persons had not and as a matter of fact very few persons of this world have any idea of the real nature of spiritual communion with the Divine Master. Spiritual discipleship is realised by the disciple being raised to the plane of spiritual communion with the Divine Master. This

communion is not interruptable by any interval of time or space, and is practised on a plane and by means of instrumentals whose nature and existence are utterly incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

I was not, therefore, surprised on going through the letter of Professor Bauver of Zeko-Slovakia to the Editor requesting information about the number of disciples, the details of publications and other particulars about the Gaudiya Mission, in order to be enabled to form an idea of the nature of the purpose, method and popularity of the cause. It is the most illogical of blunders to seek to be acquainted with the activities of a religious Mission by the statistical method. No human ingenuity can enable a person to force an entry into the realm of the Absolute. The causeless mercy of the pure devotee can alone acquaint us with his real personality.

There is no worldly means of understanding the ways of the soul on his own plane of unalloyed cognition.

When Babaji Maharaj was pleased to disappear from the view of the people of this world, an attempt was made by those very persons who used to be in attendance upon him to commit a horrible offence against his holy transcendental body, which appeared to them to be a corpse, by causing it to be dragged along the streets of the town of Nabadwip by a rope fastened to the neck, in pursuance of a verbal instruction to that effect left to them by Babaji Maharaj himself. It appeared that Babaji Maharaj had told them that as he had never served God his body would be purified by contact with the pure dust of Holy Nabadwip if his body was dragged through its streets by the hands of scavengers pulling it by a cord fastened round his neck. Editor who was at Sreedham Mayapur at the time of the disappearance of Babaji Maharaj arrived just in time to be able to prevent those rascals from carrying out their horrible sacrilege. He told them that Babaji Maharaj had lamented the fate of bad men like themselves by such instructions regarding the disposal of his own transcendental body and that none among them according to the Shastras was eligible to touch his body unless they had been uncontaminated by carnal association with loose women at least the previous night. This statement produced the strange effect of dissuading all those persons from laying their hands on the transcendental remains

of the great saint.

Editor was enjoined by Sreela Babaji Maharaj not to stay in Calcutta which place was described by him as the seat of Discord (Kali), as nobody there possessed any spiritual inclination. The busy life of a great modern city absorbed in the pursuit of wealth is particularly unsuited for fostering spiritual interest.

But Editor did not receive the advice in its literal sense. He could understand that those words were expressive of the most profound concern for the spiritual well-being of the citizens of the premier city of India, who had no time or inclination for giving their serious thought to the needs of their souls. He accordingly conceived the resolution of preaching the tidings of the Transcendental Service of Krishna to the peoples of all the great cities of the world and to make Calcutta the head-quarters of this propaganda. He has worked for the realisation of this idea in the face of the greatest public indifference to the concerns of the soul.

The utterances from the press and the platform of the Editor have since been carried to the remotest parts of India, to Burma and Europe, by the agency of a large number of dedicated souls who have joined the Mission.

It is not possible to bring out in detail the bearing of the doings of Sreela Babaji Maharaj on these activities of the Editor within the limits of a short article, nor to explain their connection with the conduct and writings of Thakur Bhaktivinode who initiated the movement for the propagation of the Teaching of Mahaprabhu Sree-Krishna-Chaitanya. Empiric critics have not failed to detect serious discrepancies between the doings and sayings of the Editor and the words and conduct of Sreela Babaji Maharaj and Thakur Bhaktivinode. But such misunderstanding is only one more instance of the failure of the attempt of worldly-minded people to understand the transcendental careers of pure devotees with the resources of their limited misguided judgment.

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya stresses the supreme necessity of serving the Transcendental Name of Krishna appearing on the lips of His pure devotees for the purpose of attaining to the transcendental plane of

unclouded judgment of our awakened souls. On that plane there is activity of the cognitive energy of Krishna, which an undivided whole, so that the Name on that plane is identical with the object itself. Every activity of the pure devotee is characterized by both fullness as well as individuality. By taking the Name of Krishna the devotee serves Krishna in every way. The devotee is constantly engaged in chanting the Name of Krishna as he does nothing but the Service of Krishna and as the performance of every form of His Service is a performance of all its forms. It is to this transcendental plane of the activities of the plenary cognitive potency of Krishna that the performances of Sreela Babaji Maharaj and Thakur Bhaktivinode belong. It is not possible to understand how both of them are constantly engaged in the service of Krishna in every way, till one is admitted to the very highest plane of the transcendental service by their special mercy.

It is not possible to understand the real nature of the practice of austerities by Sreela Babaji Maharaj unless we are lifted to the plane of his transcendental activities by being inclined to submit unconditionally to the guidance of the plenary power of Krishna or the Divine Master (sat-guru) by his special mercy. This is the result of spiritual initiation.

The eligibility to confer the fullest measure of enlightenment is certainly a large claim to be made on behalf of any empiric teacher. But it is the irreducible minimum claim on behalf of a real teacher of religion. It is meaningless for any person to pose as a teacher of religion unless he is in a position to lift his pupil to the plane of his transcendental discourse. This function can be performed only by the power of Krishna or God Himself. Krishna is the Supreme World-teacher. He teaches all souls by appearing in the Form of the Divine Sound on the lips of His Power or the Saviour Guru. The Name is the Supreme Teacher. The power of the Name, by means of whose agency the Name manifests Himself, is the Guru. The Guru or power of Krishna lifts the soul to the plane of the Transcendental Name and also establishes and maintains contact of the soul with Krishna.

Excerpts from Letters by Śrīla Prabhupāda

“So far as your second question [is concerned], Thakur Bhaktivinode was not official Spiritual Master of Gour Kishore das Babaji Maharaj. Gour Kishore das Babaji Maharaj was already renounced order, Paramhansa, but Thakur Bhaktivinode while He was even playing the part of a householder, was treated by Gour Kishore das Babaji Maharaj as Preceptor, on account of His highly elevated spiritual understanding, and thus He was always treating Him as His Spiritual Master. The Spiritual Master is divided into two parts; namely, siksha guru and diksha guru. So officially Bhaktivinode Thakur was like siksha guru of Gour Kishore das Babaji Maharaj.” (SPL 69-5-1)

“You have suggested that on every back cover there will be a picture of me in BTG, but I think a better proposal is that on page one or page three you may have a picture of me one month, then Guru Maharaj, then Gour Kishore das Babaji, then Bhaktivinode Thakur, then Jagannath das Babaji, then Lord Chaitanya. This will be very nice, showing the Guru Parampara.” (SPL 69-7-56)

“Yes, there are examples of Kṛṣṇa conscious persons whose worship was solitary life, and the greatest example is Haridas Thakur. Haridas Thakur used to live only in a cave sometimes and would spend his whole time chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. Similarly, Gour Kishore das Babaji, the spiritual master of my guru maharaj, would chant alone in a solitary place so as not to be bothered by anyone in his meditation on Krishna. But these great personalities are not to be imitated. If we artificially imitate, out of some negative feeling or out of desire for adoration as a saintly person, it will not be very beneficial. On the authority of Lord Caitanya and my spiritual master, I am requesting my disciples to always stay in the association of devotees and to propagate the sankirtan movement all over the world, so that others may get a chance also to become liberated from the material condition. Prahlad Maharaj prayed, ‘I am not satisfied to go back to the kingdom of God alone, but I must bring back with me all these poor fools who have no alternative ultimately than to surrender to You.’ This form of worship is called gostonandi is more superior than the bhajanandi, or the holy man who lives alone in meditation of the Lord within the heart. This is the estimation of scripture.” (SPL 74-6-35)