

Hall Lecture On Srila Tamal Krishna Gosvami

HALL LECTURE BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CARU SWAMI ON SRILA TAMAL KRISHNA GOSVAMI, HIS DISAPPEARANCE DAY CELEBRATION ON 15 FEBRUARY 2010 IN SRIDHAMA MAYAPURA.



Transcription : Sacikumara Dasa, Ramananda Raya Dasa

Editing : Ramananda Raya Dasa

Audio-Reference : [Click Here](#)

Nama OM Visnupadaya Krishna prestaya bhutale
Srimate Tamal Krishna Goswami iti namine

Vancha-kalpatarubhyas ca kripa-sindhubhya eva ca
Patitanam pavanebhya vaisnavebhyo namo namah

Om ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya
Caksur unmilitam yena tasmai sri-gurave namah

I came to Krishna-consciousness quite late. I joined in 1976, and Srila Prabhupada left in 1977. It was in 1977, around this time, in Mayapur that I met Tamal Krishna Goswami for the first time. He was Prabhupada's secretary. I used to see him from a distance and I used to admire him. He always looked so majestic and so handsome. He was so charismatic, so grave. I didn't really have any opportunity to come close to him at that time. I was just seeing him from a distance. And at around that time I had the good fortune of rendering some service to Srila Prabhupada. During my first meeting with Srila Prabhupada he asked me to translate his books into Bengali. And that allowed me to come close to him, like from time to time I would bring the works that I have done, the translations that I have done, and I used to read them out to Srila Prabhupada. And he used to correct me, sometimes he used to appreciate the translation. And then around that time, Srila Prabhupada gave me another service, he gave me a stack of Bengali letters and he asked me to reply them. Like, I used to read the letters out to Srila Prabhupada and then Prabhupada used to give me the points how to reply and then I would make a draft of the reply, come and read it out to Srila Prabhupada. Then Srila Prabhupada used to give the final letter and then I would write them on Prabhupada's letter heads and then Prabhupada used to sign them. So, this actually brought me close to Srila Prabhupada, and at that time also I did not really have much association of Tamal Krishna Maharaja, although he was Prabhupada's secretary.

He was too lofty, too high, too great for an individual like me to approach him. And he also maintained a certain degree of gravity, like which didn't allow me, I didn't dare to come close to him. But then when the Bengali stack of letters was answered, then Prabhupada gave me a stack of Hindi letters and asked me to reply them. And during that time probably Srila Prabhupada was little pleased with me with that service and then one day, one afternoon, after I finished writing those letters...

[Battery Problem]

Guru Maharaja chants with the devotees :

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

...

Then Prabhupada gave me a stack of Hindi letters to reply and during that time, when I was replying those Hindi letters, one day Srila Prabhupada told me, that from now on I will appoint you as my secretary for Indian affairs. And then he called Tamal Krishna Maharaja, and then he told him also the same thing and he suggested that I move to the room which was Tamal Krishna Maharaja's room, Prabhupada's secretary's room.

This was some inconceivable stroke of good fortune for me and that's the time that I started to get to know Tamal Krishna Maharaja. I remember the first consideration was that there were two beds in that room. And I didn't feel like sleeping on the same level with Tamal Krishna Maharaja, so I suggested that I sleep on the floor. And Tamal Krishna Maharaja very graciously suggested, "No no, you sleep there, the other bed is there. And since that time I had a feeling that I got a wonderful shelter, of course Srila Prabhupada's shelter was there, but there was the shelter of another personality. And that gave a very wonderful reassurance, I must say, in my spiritual life.

The other day I was talking to Carl, Carl was telling me that how from his childhood Tamal Krishna Maharaja gave him the shelter and he was remembering like when he was learning to swim, it was Tamal Krishna Maharaja who was actually holding him, to teach him how to swim. And I was recalling that I also had the same or similar feeling that here is the shelter, here is assurance, here is the safety. And many devotees have a feeling that Tamal Krishna Maharaja was very heavy. And I also saw how heavy Tamal Krishna Maharaja could be. But one thing I noticed, that he was never heavy with me.

He chastized me but that was very mild compared to what he often could be. I also felt that he was like the elder brother. I always behaved like a younger brother, younger to him, surrendered to him, depending upon him. Actually by age, I was one year older than Tamal Krishna Maharaja. And when he got to know that he was quite surprised and shocked. He told me that : "you are older than me!". I said : "Maybe by the malterial calculation but I am always younger to you, dependant on you. And that's how I always felt. I always felt that he was such an exalted personality, such an exalted devotee. And specially the kind of relationship he had with Srila Prabhupada very awe inspiring. Like those days I was just a new devotee, a few months in the movement.

Of course I got the good fortune of being very close to Srila Prabhupada. But still I was just a few months in the movement and that was the reality. And Tamal Krishna Maharaja was Prabhupada's man, all the way. He was not only his right hand man, he was his man. Like I remember often... Often I used to be with Srila Prabhupada in the morning hours, and when Prabhupada would wake up, the first thing he would ask "Where is Tamal". And then I would run and get Tamal Krishna Maharaja. And then Tamal Krishna Maharaja would come and start to speak to Srila Prabhupada. And it would be so deep, so intimate. Often what was going on between them was above my head, flew above my head, I could not really figure out what was going on. But one thing just remained very deeply engrained in my mind. He was someone very, very close to Srila Prabhupada. The kind of questions he would ask to Srila Prabhupada, I mean it was really mind blowing. I could not think that anyone could probe so deep into the affairs of our movement. Often time Prabhupada would discuss with him about the future of our movement, about the management of the movement. And Tamal Krishna Maharaja was so brilliant, he would ask such probing questions.

And I felt very fortunate. To some extent I think I felt some sense of pride to get the good fortune of associating with such an exalted personality. And I had the good fortune of being with him in one room. Wherever we went, we stayed in the same room. It started off in Mayapur, then we went to Bombay, then to Hrishikesh, then we went to Vrindavana, and wherever we went, Tamal Krishna made it a point that I would stay in the same room with him. And there are so many memories. Today the time is short, I won't take too much time, there are other exalted speakers who also had a very, very close relationship with Tamal Krishna Maharaja.

I just recall one or two incidences that often I reflect on. One thing, I used to see that Tamal Krishna Maharaja's exalted position was displayed by many actions. Like one thing, although it may sound quite insignificant or silly even, but it was very striking about his personality. I was even thinking about it now. You see Tamal Krishna Maharaja's tilak, is it not perfect? And you know something, he always put on his tilak without a mirror. He would just take the tilak and smear it. And he would get a perfect tilak. I have never seen him using a mirror while putting on his tilak. You can see, not only this one. That picture also is perfect. He was so meticulous, so perfect in whatever he did.

Like once I was in Dallas and from Dallas we went to Oklahoma, there was a ratha yatra festival. Those days in Oklahoma there was a farm and the ratha yatra was supposed to be there. So, Tamal Krishna Maharaja invited me to ratha yatra. Before that something happened also. We all were in Gita Nagari ratha yatra. I was asked to give the class on that ratha yatra day. I gave the class in the morning. And Tamal Krishna Maharaja became so interested that he told me : "Look, you have to come to Oklahoma ratha yatra and you have to tell the story of Jagannatha. I went, I think it was about a month after that. I again repeated that story of Jagannatha's appearance. This story actually consisted of three aspects of Jagannatha. One was the Jagannatha's appearance as it appeared in Skanda Purana. Then another aspect of Jagannatha by the way Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur narrated it. And the third aspect was the way it has been described in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita.

After I narrated the story, Tamal Krishna Maharaja and I were taking breakfast together. He said, you know something, I was thinking of writing a drama. And now I got the theme. I am

going to write a drama about Jagannatha's appearance. We started to work together on that. But he took the time to study the entire Nakta Sastra by Rupa Gosvami. He got that translated. He also asked me to translate. He also got me to translate Lalita Madhava by Rupa Gosvami. That was another incidence.

We all, after the Mayapur festival we generally used to go to Hrishikesh and we used to stay in the same house where Srila Prabhupada stayed during his last visit to Hrishikesh. And we used to have a lot of fun. And Tamal Krishna Maharaja, he used to invite other devotees also. So generally we used to have a lot of fun but this time he gave me the assignment to translate Lalita Madhava and he gave me seven days. That seven days that we were in Hrishikesh, he wanted me to translate that book. That meant I did not have any time for anything. When they had a lot of fun in Ganges, swimming and floating with the logs, I was just sitting there translating. He got me to translate Lalita Madhava he got a professional person to translate the Nakta sastra of Rupa Goswami.

When he had all these materials ready, then only he embarked on writing the Jagannatha-priya naktaka. Rupa Gosvami in his nakta sastra gives a very, very scientific understanding of the nakta sastra, the art of drama and how the different mellows must blend with each other in order to ultimately culminate to the right conclusion. And he followed all that through that drama of Jagannatha-priya. So Jagannatha-priya was written. Then he told me, we have to enact it now. And we started to look in America, approaching different devotees who could produce that. Those days in our movement there was quite a number of drama groups. there was a group of actors and actresses in New York, there was a group in San Francisco, there was a group in Berkeley. But none of them could actually embark on this program because they could not commit themselves.

Then I told him why don't you try to do it in India. And I came back to Calcutta and started to organize this group. And we got semi-professionals and we made a team, made a group. And we had in 1986 for Mahaprabhu's anniversary, we had that drama enacted both in English and in Bengali and also. And those days Tamal Krishna Maharaja stayed [unclear] directing the actors and actresses to perform that drama, every evening from five to seven, eight o'clock sometimes. Like this is Tamal Krishna Maharaja. Whatever he did, is perfect. As Mother Sita Prabhuh was telling me about cooking. He wanted to make sure that she was doing it perfectly. And he made it a point that she did it in a perfect way. That is Tamal Krishna Maharaja, whatever he did, was immaculate, was perfect.

His Holiness Tamal Krishna Maharaja Ki Jaya !