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**A Biography of
His Divine Grace
Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda
Ṭhākura
(1838-1914)**

by Rūpa-vilāsa dāsa Adhikārī
Edited by Karṇāmṛta dāsa Adhikārī

"I have not yet seen the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan, but I consider you to be
the Seventh Goswami."

Shishir Kumar Ghosh (1840-1911)
Amrita Bazar Patrika, Editor and founder, in a letter to glorify
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Dedication

To His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, my
eternal spiritual master, who delivered the merciful teachings of the
Vaiṣṇava ācāryas to the suffering world. I pray that he may be a little

pleased with this attempt to glorify Śrīla Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

*namo bhaktivinodāya
sac-cid-ānanda-nāmine
gaura-śakti-svarūpāya
rūpānuga-varāya te*

namaḥ-obeisances; *bhaktivinodāya*-unto Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; *sat-cit-ānanda-nāmine*-known as Saccidānanda; *gaura*-(of) Lord Caitanya; *śakti*-energy; *svarūpāya*-unto the personified; *rūpa-anuga-varāya*-who is a revered follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī; *te*-unto you.

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda, who is transcendental energy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He is a strict follower of the Gosvāmīs, headed by Śrīla Rūpa."

Preface

The efforts of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to re-establish the pure form of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism can be better appreciated if something is said about the prevailing, and generally opposing currents of thought espoused by the ruling British, the Indian intellectuals of the time, and the common people of 19th century India. The British, with some notable exceptions amongst their scholars, such as H. H. Wilson and Sir William Jones, viewed any native endeavor to uncover and extol the glories of their great heritage as undesirable and foolish at best. At worst, they piled abuse and invective on Vedic thought and scriptures in ill-conceived and misinformed attacks. In 1838, the year of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's birth, there was some debate on India's Supreme Ruling Council, chaired by Lord Bentinck, as to the value of teaching Sanskrit and India's classical literatures, as well as regional languages, in schools to be established by the British for the education of the Indian people. A few members of the Council were mildly in favor of it, but the elegantly

expressed, fully ethnocentric and Philistine view of Thomas Macaulay prevailed. In his *Education Minute*, Macaulay wrote that he could not find one Orientalist: "... who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." He went on to make the outrageous assertion that, "... all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England." He then made the following creatively expressed, though uneducated assertion as his central statement of belief: "The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach the [English] language, we shall teach languages in which ... there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own ... whether, when we can patronize sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance at the public expense medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history abounding with kings 30 feet high and reigns 30,000 years long, and geography made up of seas of treacle and rivers of butter." His statement on education, especially in connection with Sanskrit, Sanskrit literature and regional languages, set the tone for British endeavors to educate the Indian natives thereafter, and he further declared, "... the great object of the British government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India."

This sort of extreme religious and cultural chauvinism was not rare, and, in fact, it prevailed. The historian, James Mill, denigrated the Vedic scriptures and deities with phrases like, "grossest images of sensual pleasure", "the worship of the emblems of generative organs", and ascribed to God "an immense train of obscene acts". He described the whole of Vaiṣṇavism as something "wild". H.H. Wilson, in response, made the following comments on Mill's historiography: "Mill's view of Hindu religion is full of very serious defects, arising from inveterate prejudices and imperfect knowledge. Every text, every circumstance, that makes against the Hindu character, is most assiduously cited, and everything in its favour as carefully kept out of sight, whilst a total neglect is displayed of the history of Hindu belief." Wilson, being more

liberal and much better informed, was appalled at Mill's presentation. Yet, he was himself convinced of the basic thesis that Indian culture and religion was something inferior, albeit fascinating.

Dr. Tytler wrote, "The histories of Buddha, Salavahana and Krishna comprise nothing more than perverted copies of Christianity." And the British missionaries were especially disturbed by the temple "idols", particularly those at Jagannātha Purī. George Gogerly, the historian, describes the reaction of Dr. Claudius Buchanan, one of the first British missionaries, who arrived in Bengal in 1790 and described "the horrors of Juggernaut". "Juggernaut" was generally referred to by the missionaries as "that Indian Moloch". Gogerly wrote, "The whole history of this famous God (Kṛṣṇa) is one of lust, robbery, deceit and murder ... the history of the whole hierarchy of Hindooism is one of shameful iniquity, too vile to be described."

Thus, with regard to the rulers of the day, their opinions were certainly not helpful towards a renaissance of Vaiṣṇavism, nor supportive of the publication of its important literatures and the excellently articulated views of the propounders of Vaiṣṇava thought. The situation was compounded in the course of time by Indian intellectuals who were trained in the schools established by the British, and who tended to parrot all the criticisms of their schoolmasters, and took it for granted that the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* were at best a fascinating collection of mythological tales that have little to do with reality. If there was any substance in Indian philosophy it was certainly not to be found in the histories and *Purāṇas*, but rather in the *Upaniṣads*, which, due to a certain degree of textual ambiguity, were easier to interpret from the impersonal viewpoint. Sometimes Indian reformers created elaborate fusions of Indian thought and the Christianity of their British conquerors. These they considered an improvement that could be more easily embraced by the so-called rational thinkers of the day. A clear example of this predilection is to be found in the ideas of Rammohun Ray, a famous Bengali philosopher, who borrowed eclectically from the doctrines of a number of Western thinkers and from Christianity. He created a belief system he called "Brahmoism" and he emphasized what he considered a rationalistic view of the Vedic scriptures. He rejected Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and was critical of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His

countryman K.C. Mitter says of him, "Rammohun tried to subvert Hinduism and disseminate purer and more elevated notions of religion and morality." Of course the so-called "purer and more elevated notions" of Rammohun Ray were simply mental speculations of no particular redeeming value, and his misdirected efforts, along with those of other misled Indian thinkers, led to all kinds of foolish theories about Vedic culture and philosophy, which was excellent beyond any of their insignificant imaginings and ramblings. The ideas of Rammohun, however, became popular with Young Bengal, which was steeped in the ways of the British, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had to contend mightily with the awful effects of such theorizing, as will be documented in this volume.

The last great obstacle confronted by the Ṭhākura was the widespread acceptance of the doctrines of the numerous, deviant *sahajiyā* (pseudo-devotee) groups which had sprung up after the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His principal followers. There were a variety of spurious ideas and practices espoused by these groups, which did not create much in the way of regard in the minds of the Bengali thinkers of the day. Unfortunately, such groups were thought to represent standard Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Some of them espoused very sentimental versions of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava doctrines in which mundane physical sensuality amongst its members was equalized with the completely transcendental conjugal affairs of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Some mixed Islam with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Some of them smoked *gañjā*, had illicit sexual intercourse, took advantage of sentimental people for material gain, practiced Tantric rituals, etc.-all this in the name of the pure doctrines of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. What is more, a group of publishers called the "Baratalas", out of commercial motivation, popularized the apocryphal literatures of many of these bogus groups by publishing and disseminating them widely in the villages. It is estimated that between 1815 and 1899 more than fifty such works were published, and thus *sahajiyā* Vaiṣṇavism and its rancid ideas became accepted as standard amongst the less educated masses in the villages.

Thus, the Ṭhākura had a great deal to contend with in his struggle to establish the pure and original teachings of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. And yet, because of his journalistic attempts (especially through the very

popular and widely read Vaiṣṇava journal *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*), his organization of door-to-door preaching in the villages, his publication of authentic philosophical works by the Six Gosvāmīs and their followers, his discovery and establishment of Śrī Caitanya's birthplace as the principal place of pilgrimage in all of Bengal, and his instructing and educating many followers, including his son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who successfully disseminated his father's mission all over India and other parts of the world, he was enormously successful. In Dr. Ramakanta Chakravarti's book *Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal (1486-1900)*, he frankly admits, "Vaiṣṇava journalism as well as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava organization in Bengal really became meaningful under the guidance of a dynamic Vaiṣṇava Deputy Magistrate named Kedaranath Datta, Bhaktivinoda (1838-1914) ..." He goes on to relate a little of the Ṭhākura's history which is more elaborately detailed in the succeeding pages of this book: "In his youth he came into close contact with Dvijendranath Tagore (1840-1926), eldest son of Devendranath Tagore. With Dvijendranath, Kedarnath assiduously studied Western Philosophy and History. Later he initiated the study of comparative philosophy in the light of Gauḍīya Vaisnava theology. When he was a Deputy Magistrate in Purī, Kedaranath caused the incarceration of a man named Visakisan, who was the leader of the heretical Ativadi sect ... Kedaranath first published the famous Vaiṣṇava journal, *Sajjanatoṣaṇī* in 1884. In 1885 he founded a Vaiṣṇava society named *Vaiṣṇava Sabhā*, and also set up the Depository Press in 181, Maniktala Street, Calcutta. The *Vaiṣṇava Sabhā* appointed three Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava preachers named Bipinbihari Gosvāmī, Mahendranath Gosvāmī and Harigopal Gosvāmī. They were to work in districts of Bengal..."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, was also responsible for the printing of many authoritative Vaiṣṇava tomes and was famous for confrontations with the thinkers of the day in which he was repeatedly successful in altering their stereotypical conceptions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's sublime philosophy. The result was a newly won respect for the brilliant doctrine of Lord Caitanya and his followers-the Six Gosvāmīs, a new pride in the culture and tradition of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and a serious interest among the educated classes in the teachings of Lord Caitanya. As a

result of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's inspired efforts, many educated and qualified men came forward and assisted him in spreading the mission of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda all over India and other parts of Asia, and even into Europe, eventually establishing sixty-four maṭhas, or temples. One of his disciples, the most eminent *mahā-bhāgavata*, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, was actually successful in spreading the profoundly mystical message of Lord Caitanya all over the known world, establishing more than a hundred temples, farms, schools and institutes, thus instrumentally fulfilling the most ardent desires of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Prologue

ŚRĪLA Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura appeared in the 19th century at a critical, historical juncture, when the teachings of Lord Caitanya had been so much disparaged and depreciated that the Ṭhākura, despite eight years of inquiry and endeavor, was unable to secure a copy of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (the most important biographical work on the philosophy and life of Lord Caitanya) even in manuscript form. Lord Caitanya's pure teachings had been virtually lost, though only a few hundred years had elapsed since His disappearance. These teachings were preserved solely by a handful of reclusive renunciates, who were not actively preaching His message, except by their living example. Although the Ṭhākura is especially noted for his having re-discovered the site of Lord Caitanya's birth, in fact, he practically re-discovered and re-established Lord Caitanya's movement, which was obscured by the cultural and religious chauvinism of the ruling British, and discredited by the perverse and useless activities of a number of *sahajiyā* (deviant) sects and other groups with motivated, concocted philosophies. He revived Lord Caitanya's message, published the writings of the Gosvāmīs (Lord Caitanya's principal apostles), and proved the timeless importance and relevance of these teachings to the

modern world.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's life can easily be misrepresented and misunderstood if subjected to a mundane, scholarly approach. At the outset he appears to be a typical Bengali intellectual, a product of the British educational system and Calcutta literary scene and a student of European philosophers. Nineteenth century Calcutta was the epicenter of the cultural, literary and religious life of India. The Ṭhākura appears in the midst of this period of historic ferment in the guise of a typical, British-educated, Bengali Babu. He seems to dabble in various philosophies and to eventually take up the study of Kṛṣṇa consciousness out of intellectual curiosity. He then appears to have been transformed by spiritual association into an ardent apologist of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in reaction to its misrepresentation by others, both foreign and native, and to take up the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, gradually achieving a state of elevated spiritual consciousness. Although this view of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is superficial and far removed from a true understanding of his spiritual significance, it may nevertheless appear to have some merit. Ultimately it does not, but unfortunately some scholars present him in just such a superficial and uncomprehending manner. In writing a biography about Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, the intimate associate of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, cautions the reader in the beginning, "This brochure is not to be considered as a hagiological attempt but an endeavor for inculcating [a] procedure of following the life of a transcendental devotee who had a thoroughly peculiar mood of service of the Absolute, unknown to the vitiated mundane atmosphere ... Readers ... are respectfully solicited to go through these pages, not with a challenging mood but with an approaching aptitude, to be acquainted with the undiscovered track of Devotion. A submissive and attentive audiencing will surely facilitate comprehension of the transcendental procedure, aiding one's journey to his hitherto unexplored transcendence. The Absolute must not be obliged to come under finitudinal examination by our poor senses..." Having opened like this, he nevertheless tried to accommodate readers heavily conditioned by a tendency to view the life of a self-realized soul in an empiric way. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wrote a whole chapter called "The Lord and His Beloved (Viewed by Empiricists)", which he

concludes by saying, "This is a short narrative of the Supreme Lord and Rai Ramananda as gauged by mundane spectators known as hagiolaters who search about the accounts of heroes." His next chapter takes the reader to unexplored regions of the profoundest depth and has the same title as above, but this time it is sub-titled "Viewed by Devotees", in which he begins, "We have surveyed in the last Chapter the seeming conception of worldly people about Rai Ramananda. Now we are to enlighten those who are interested in the esoteric aspect of the devotee. Savants of the spiritual manifestations do not corroborate the view of the ordinary observer of mundane phenomena. Conception is carried both in worldly phenomena as well as in Transcendental Manifestive Aspects. A stricter caution may not be neglected in distinguishing the two different planes so as to rescue the true view from confusion." It is the purpose of this biography to keep uppermost the true view of the Ṭhākura as a fully spiritual personality, despite whatever deluding appearances external details or ordinary observers may attempt to establish. The spiritual plane is real and eternal. The material plane is unreal being temporary. When a spiritual personality comes to the material world for the salvation of others, there is bound to be bewilderment on the part of those whose vision remains clouded by the material world, as to who and what he is.

Thus, "to rescue the true view from confusion" we must know that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is *nitya-siddha*, an eternally realized associate of the Supreme Lord, who descended from the spiritual world to assist Lord Caitanya in establishing His mission. Whatever external appearances, forms and figures are present in his life, he was never a conditioned soul of this world. This assurance we have from our *ācāryas*. He was a member of Kṛṣṇa's inner circle in Goloka-Vṛndāvana, the supreme spiritual planet of the spiritual world, and he has come to rescue *us* from confusion. The inner life of a *nitya-siddha* devotee can never be fully understood, but the aim of a biographical work of this sort is to attempt to delve into the inner life and mood of a great soul, so as to afford inspiration and direction to those who have set out, or are yet to set out, on the path back to Godhead: life's only truly great journey. The inner life of a *mahātmā* can be traced out, especially in his writings, in which his personal ecstasies are revealed, so far as words can describe them.

This was especially true in the case of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who left detailed descriptions of the spiritual process and his personal experience of the Transcendental Reality Himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Great souls may exhibit ordinary seeming activities, but they are not to be misunderstood because of this.

In the process of attempting to appreciate the Ṭhākura's inner life, we must simultaneously note the recorded movements of this great soul's course through the world, which can also help us to gain understanding. The activities and words of such persons do not simply exhibit a temporary significance, but rather instruct us eternally. As the Ṭhākura himself has written in *The Bhagavat* regarding Vyāsa and other great sages: "These great souls were not mere luminaries like comets appearing in the firmament for a while and disappearing as soon as their mission was done. They are like so many suns shining all along to give light and heat to the succeeding generations." Nevertheless, the Ṭhākura himself called matter "the dictionary of spirit", so a good deal can also be comprehended from the trajectory of his observed and recorded activities and deeds, which included tremendous efforts to communicate Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message by book and magazine publication, personal door-to-door preaching and his many public addresses and lectures. By carefully hearing from both worlds: his philosophical and revelatory writings by which he lives eternally in sound, as well as the historical details of his activities described by the various hagiographers, we can hope to gain a glimpse into his transcendental life. Furthermore, by thus hearing about him and from him, we may realize the greatest boon of human existence: association with a pure devotee, a *paramahansa* of the highest order, one who was justly honored as the "Seventh Gosvāmī" due to his writings and spiritual realization being of equal stature to that of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, the principal disciples of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Prabhupāda commented on the importance of not misunderstanding the life of the Ṭhākura in a letter to Madhusudan Prabhu written on November 20, 1968: "Regarding your questions, 'I read in a book sent from India that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was sent directly by Lord Śrī Caitanya from the spiritual sky. I am not sure if the book was bona fide. Is the above true? Someone, a God-brother,

[mentioned that] he heard that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda was at one time an impersonalist. Was he ever?' Yes, what you have heard is all right. Just like Arjuna is [the] constant companion of Kṛṣṇa, as it is confirmed in the 4th chapter [of *Bhagavad-gītā* where] Kṛṣṇa says that both Arjuna and He appeared many times on this world, but he had forgotten his past appearance and Kṛṣṇa did not. Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, and *māyā* is just like darkness. When Kṛṣṇa is present there cannot be any darkness of *māyā*. So although Arjuna was always in the presence of Kṛṣṇa as an eternal companion in friendship, still he had some illusion in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, and Kṛṣṇa had to dissipate that darkness by the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The purport is, sometimes even a liberated person like Arjuna plays the part of a conditioned soul in order to play some important part. Similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was for some time associating with the impersonalists. And then he exhibited himself in his true color as pure devotee, exactly in the same way as Arjuna exhibited [himself] in the beginning as a conditioned soul, and then as a liberated soul. So there is nothing to be misunderstood in this connection. Kṛṣṇa and His devotees sometimes play like that, as much as Lord Buddha although an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, preached the philosophy of voidism. These things are conducted in terms of place, audience, time, etc. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said that the activities of the Vaiṣṇava cannot be understood even by the greatest scholar. So we have to understand everything through the transparent via media of the Spiritual Master. There is no doubt about it-that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the eternal energy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And whatever he did, was just to suit the time, place, circumstances, etc. There is no contradiction in his activities." [S.P. Letters 68-11-34]

Therefore, it is described in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 23.39):

*yāñra citte kṛṣṇa-premā karaye udaya
tāñra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*

"Even the most learned man cannot understand the words, activities and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead."

It is not at all possible by any process of scholarship or review of a devotee's biographical facts and figures to understand the nature of one

who is situated in love of Godhead. When Lord Caitanya described the glories of Mukunda, the royal physician, He also confirmed this point. Mukunda was sitting with a Mohammedan king on a high platform, and the servant of the king brought a peacock fan and held it over the king's head to shade him from the sun. Mukunda became absorbed in ecstatic love of Godhead merely by seeing the fan, which invoked his remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he fell unconscious from the platform. When the concerned sovereign questioned Mukunda as to why he had suddenly fallen, Mukunda claimed to be afflicted with a form of epilepsy, but the king, being perceptive in spiritual matters, began to glimpse the actual glory of Mukunda. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu declared:

*bāhye rāja-vaidya inho kare rāja-sevā
antare kṛṣṇa-prema inhāra jānibeka kebā*

"Mukunda dāsa externally appears to be a royal physician engaged in governmental service, but internally he has a deep love for Kṛṣṇa. Who can understand his love?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, "Unless Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu discloses the fact, no one can understand who is actually a great devotee of the Lord engaged in His service. It is therefore said in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 23.39): *tāñra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*: even the most perfect and learned scholar cannot understand a Vaiṣṇava's activities. A Vaiṣṇava may be engaged in governmental service or in a professional business so that externally one cannot understand his position. Internally, however, he may be a *nitya-siddha* Vaiṣṇava—that is, an eternally liberated Vaiṣṇava. Externally, Mukunda dāsa was a royal physician, but internally he was the most liberated *paramahansa* devotee. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu knew this very well, but ordinary men could not understand it, for the activities and plans of a Vaiṣṇava cannot be understood by ordinary men. However, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His representatives understand everything about a devotee, even though the devotee may externally pretend to be an ordinary householder and professional businessman."

Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi also concealed himself in the guise of a worldly enjoyer, and so expertly that only Mukunda, Vāsudeva Datta and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu understood his actual position. Gadādhara

Paṇḍita was very dear to Mukunda, and so Mukunda told him to come with him to meet a very exalted devotee. Gadādhara agreed but was surprised to see, upon meeting Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, that he was living in tremendous opulence. He beheld him lying on a couch being fanned by servants, and smeared with perfume; in short, living in the style of a sense-enjoyer or extravagant prince. Gadādhara experienced some doubts on seeing all of this. Then Mukunda, following the movement of Gadādhara's mind, sang some verses about Kṛṣṇa's merciful treatment of the Pūtanā witch, who came to kill Kṛṣṇa with her poison-smeared breast but was compassionately given the position of His mother in the spiritual world. Immediately upon hearing these verses, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi underwent a radical transformation and began to exhibit all of the ecstatic symptoms of love of Godhead simultaneously. He cried out, "Say more! Say more!", fell to the floor, and began to thrash around in the grip of spiritual emotion, breaking all of the room's furnishings to pieces in a helpless state of extreme ecstasy. Ten men tried to hold him down so that he would not be injured, but it was useless. Finally, after some time, he recovered and was pacified. Gadādhara then realized that he had disrespected a great devotee in his mind and commented, "I was heading into a critically dangerous position, but as you have brought me here today, I have been able to avoid that pitfall. Seeing Śrī Vidyānidhi dressed as a sense enjoyer, I supposed that he was a materialistic devotee. But you were able to understand my mind and therefore you so kindly caused his devotion to dawn, just as the sun rises in the east in the morning. As long as I continue to make mistakes you should always remain diligent in pointing out to me the errors in my thinking. All those who take up this path of devotion accept a spiritual guide. But I have not as yet accepted anyone as my preceptor. I should get myself initiated by this personality. If I can do that then the fault of whatever contempt I felt will be reduced."

Thus, the true glories of the Vaiṣṇavas may not easily be known, but by the grace of a pure Vaiṣṇava or the Lord Himself, their glories can be revealed. Although Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura appeared to be no more than a magistrate with a large family and many material concerns, he produced over a hundred books explaining the philosophy of Lord Caitanya and the Gosvāmīs in the greatest depth. And in his songs and

poems he described his states of ecstatic emotion and realization, which the *ācāryas* in our line have confirmed to be pure expressions of the highest understanding of love of Godhead and non-different from the vibration of Vedic literature. Furthermore, by his practical life's demonstration, he exhibited his true feeling for the Lord by engaging twenty-four hours a day in his service, striving with his whole being to deliver the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for the benefit of the suffering world. He was successful in re-establishing the purity of the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, sending the Lord's teachings to the West for the first time and having as his son the great *paramahansa* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who expanded his mission to an unprecedented degree. He can be said to be mainly, even solely, responsible for the revival of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in its original form and the most important Vaiṣṇava philosopher in the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism since the time of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who composed *Govinda-bhāṣya*, the authoritative Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Family Lineage

ŚRĪLA Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was born on September 2nd, 1838, on Sunday, in the ancient village of Birnagar (Ulāgrām or Ulā) located in the Nadia district of West Bengal. He was the third son of Ānanda-candra Datta and Jagat-mohinī Devī. It can be said that he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, as both his mother and father came from illustrious and wealthy families. However, he suffered great miseries and trials throughout his youth. He was given the name of Kedaranātha, a name of Lord Siva, by his father.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote a book in 1876 called *Datta-vaṁśa-mālā*, in which he detailed the genealogy of his father's family line. He also explains in his autobiography: "I was born a descendant of Purushottama Datta, a Kanyakubja Kayastha. Among the five Kayasthas who came to the Gauḍa region at the invitation of King Adisura,

namely, Makarananda Ghosh, Dasaratha Vasu, Kalidas Mitra, Dasaratha Guha and Purushottama Datta, Sri Purushottama Datta was the foremost. His community was settled at Baligram. Later on, some individual in his lineage settled in Andulagram and became known as the chief of all the Kayastha community." Also in his line was Rājā Kṛṣṇānanda Datta, the father of the great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and a great devotee of Lord Nityānanda, and who often received that Lord in his home. Kedarānātha was thus later called the seventh son of Rājā Kṛṣṇānanda. Rājā Kṛṣṇānanda's grandson was Govinda-śaraṇ Datta. The Sultan of Delhi once gave Govinda-śaraṇ some land on the banks of the Ganges in West Bengal. On that land Govinda-śaraṇ established the town of Govindapur. This town was later joined with two neighboring towns: Kali Ghat and Sutanuti to form the city now known as Calcutta, a city of tremendous importance to the British Empire. When the British built Fort William at Govindapur, Govinda-śaraṇ and his family were given land in exchange, and the Datta family moved to Hāṭkholā where they began a settlement and became known as the Hāṭkholā Dattas.

Govinda-śaraṇ's grandson was Rāmchandra Datta, whose son Kṛṣṇacandra was a great Vaiṣṇava. Kṛṣṇacandra's son was the famous Vaiṣṇava, Madan Mohan Datta, who was a contemporary of Lord Clive, and a merchant and zamindar in Calcutta. He was famous in Bengal for constructing 395 stone steps at Preshtasila Hill at Gayā, where the impression of the Lotus Feet of Lord Viṣṇu are enshrined, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of rupees, so that the pilgrims could climb the sacred hill. The Lotus Feet of the Lord at Gayā were the meeting place of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Īśvara Purī and where Lord Caitanya experienced deep ecstasy after seeing the Lord's Feet. Madan Mohan's son was Rāmtanu Datta, and his son was Rājavallabha Datta, the paternal grand-father of Kedarānātha. He possessed mystic powers and could foretell the future.

In his autobiography Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes his father and mother in the following manner: "My father Ānanda-candra Datta Mahāsaya was very religious, straightforward and detached from sensual things. Regarding his beauty, many people used to say that in Calcutta there was no one at that time who was as handsome. My mother was

called Śrīmatī Jagat-mohinī. She was possessed of intellect, straightforwardness and devotion to my father. It can be said that there was no one like her." His mother was the daughter of Iswara Chandra Mitra Mustauphi, a descendant of the noble Rameswara Mitra Mustauphi family. Her father was a man of immense wealth and generous disposition. As a generous zamindar [zamindars were prominent landholders who often had the power, wealth and prestige of kings] of the West Bengal district of Nadia, he was held next in esteem to the King of Nadia.

Kedaranātha's paternal grandmother was the daughter of Ray Rayan Jagannath Prasad Ghosh who owned property in the district of Cuttack, in the state of Orissa. The village known as Choti Govindapur, situated on the bank of the Virupa River, as well as other villages, were their family property. However, Kedaranātha's paternal grandmother and grandfather were living in Calcutta at the time of Ray Rayan's death, and the property fell into the hands of Ray Rayan's chief servant, named Ramahari, who took possession of everything. Therefore, Kedaranātha's paternal grandfather and grandmother, who were destitute in Calcutta, went there to reclaim their property, but the rascal Ramahari would not give it up. A lawsuit was started, and Ānanda-candra, at the request of his father, went to Orissa to settle the case, which took almost three years. When his paternal grandfather and grandmother moved from Calcutta to Orissa, Ānanda-candra and Jagat-mohinī went to her ancestral home, taking Abhayakali, their first born, with them. Shortly after their arrival, the second son, Kaliprasanna, was born and then Ānanda-candra went to Orissa to help his father secure the ancestral lands.

Birth and Infancy

DURING the time his father was away, Kedaranātha was born in Bīrnagar (Ulāgrām or Ulā). At the time of his birth, an astrologer sat marking the time with an hourglass, and an English account of the time

was also kept. Kedaranātha was born in the time of the British East India Company's ascendancy. The last powerful Muslim ruler, Shah Alam, had lived only to see the troops of the British East India Company march into Delhi in 1803. In the first half of the 19th Century a number of wars of conquest were waged by the British. The Marathas, who had previously become very powerful under their king, Shivaji, were crushed in three grueling wars; their confederacy was thus broken, and with it any hopes for self-rule, by 1818. From 1818 to 1857, during the time Kedaranātha came of age and was educated, the British fought a number of wars of annexation, and by 1857 almost two thirds of the subcontinent had fallen to them. Bengal, and especially Calcutta, was a hub of the East India Company's trading operation.

Kedaranātha's maternal grandfather, an aristocratic landholder, was fabulously wealthy. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes in his autobiography: "My maternal grandfather had incomparable wealth and a grand estate. There were hundreds of male and female servants. When I was born I was a good weight. I had an older brother Abhayakali, who had previously died, and a second brother, Kaliprasanna, was still living. I was my father's third son. It was said that of all my brothers I was a little ugly. But my mother said, 'Very well, let this boy be the servant of the rest, just let him live a long time.' My mother told me that when I was eight months old I got a boil on my thigh and as a result I became weak and emaciated. I also heard that while I was being carried in the arms of my nurse, Shibu, down a flight of stairs, I cut my tongue on my teeth. To this day I have a scar [on my tongue]. This happened around the time my teeth were coming in."

When the boy was almost two years old, his father returned from Orissa. His nurse later told him that a few days before his return, the boy saw a crow flying to a perch, and he composed a rhyme:

*kak, kal, jhingera phool
baba aseta, nade baso*

"O crow, Kal, flower of the Jhinga squash, father comes, sit aside."
As he spoke, the crow changed his position. Some people nearby noticed this and said, "Oh, your father must certainly be coming soon." His father arrived a few days later.

Schooling

KEDARANĀTHA'S first school was on the veranda of his maternal grandfather's *pūjā* building where many of the village boys used to gather for their education. The teacher was very forbidding, and the boys were afraid of him. The Ṭhākura says of this: "I have some recollection of going to a school run by Karttika Sarkara when I was three years old. Even now it comes to mind, that cane he used to show."

There were many festive occasions observed in the house of his grandfather, especially Durgā- or Jagaddhatri-pūjā, which was performed with great pomp. His mother's side of the family were mostly *śaktas*, worshipers of Durgā. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls: "Hundreds of chandeliers would hang on the *pūjā* house ... lanterns would be wrapped around all the pillars and columns. All the guards at the doors would be dressed in sepoy uniforms. Numerous stout men dressed in golden embroidered clothes would come from Ranaghat and Śantipura. Many bodyguards and soldiers used to accompany all these men. In terms of people [the scene] was like a forest of humanity, and in terms of lights it was like the battle of Kurukṣetra. The scene was filled with fireworks and rowdy pomp ... Late at night there would be *kavi-gana* [singing of poetic compositions]. At dawn I would listen, but the *kavi wallahs* [the reciters] would scream so loudly that it would hurt my ears ... I can remember that we used to have twenty-five or thirty *brāhmaṇas* from west [Bengal] come and carry the goddess to the place of worship and perform the worship ... On the sixth day two types of drums would be beaten and the sound would shake the whole *pūjā* house. On the ninth day many goats and buffalo would be sacrificially killed ..."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura observed with sardonic humor, "Everybody used to enjoy this occasion, except the goats and the buffalo. Most of the *brāhmaṇas* and *paṇḍitas* used to come solely for the taste of mutton." He continues: "During Dola Yatra [another annual festival] there was singing and various kinds of sport. So much red dye was thrown about that everything appeared to be blood colored. At this time even the

guards took part in the festivities. They would enter the temple courtyard singing and throwing dye. Because of all their commotion I would stay a little distance away from them. I would enjoy watching the festival bonfire."

When he was five years old he began his schooling, but the school was run by a cruel teacher, who instituted a system of punishments utilizing older students, which kept the younger boys terrorized. "Those who were a little older used to act as agents of the teacher and would harass the younger among us. If we came late to school these older boys would apprehend us. The rule was: whoever came to school first was hit with the stick once, whoever came second was hit twice, and whoever was third was hit three times and the number kept increasing in this way. The routine was as follows: The youngest students used to write their *ka kha ga's*... [abc's] on *talpata* with black coal. After a year they would write their numbers on banana leaves and after that they made a copy on paper. All the older boys were taught accounting, which was the work of the office of the Zamindar. From time to time, under the scrutiny of the teacher, we would learn the deliberation of a court. The youngest boys would lodge a complaint and their witnesses and evidence would be deliberated upon as in a court. In the end there would be the determination of punishment. All the decisions of the court had to be confirmed by the teacher. There were different kinds of punishment: twisting of ears, slapping, caning... and paying a fine... We saw our teacher as the personification of Yama [the judge of the dead], and the older students used to act on behalf of the teacher as if agents of Yama. Sometimes these older students would act on their own and sometimes they would arrange a court on behalf of the teacher. Some boys would make false complaints and bring false witnesses to court and other boys would administer punishment."

At one point, being intimidated by the older boys, Kedaranātha stole some jackfruit from his home for his teacher. His mother, however, found out and became very angry. "...when my teacher heard about this he became frightened. He said that I should only take things that would not be noticed. 'Don't bring big things!' 'The neighbors' children used to steal tobacco and give it to him... I used to steal soaked chickpeas and give them to him [instead].'" Kedaranātha's brother, Haridas, who also

attended the school, eventually became so furious with the teacher and the boldness of the older boys, that he took up a machete and entered the man's home while he slept. Kedaranātha, who chanced to be present, took the machete from him and threw it away. The teacher immediately resigned and departed that very day, and another teacher replaced him. Up to the end of his sixth year he attended this Bengali medium school, where he studied as follows: "We would begin in the morning by standing and loudly reciting the multiplication tables, addition tables, 'ganda' tables, 'cowrie' tables and so on. The older students would recite in a loud chorus. First the older students would together say, 'Four cowries make one ganda.' Then we in the younger students' group would immediately respond, 'Four cowries make one ganda.' The recitation would proceed in this manner. When it was finished we would sit down and write it all out. As we wrote our teacher would often declare, 'Say it, say it, then write it.' We would repeat a word in a loud voice and then write it. In the [resulting] tumult no one could understand anyone else." Then an English school opened in his maternal grandfather's home which was started by his grandmother. An Indian-ized Frenchman named Dijor Baret began to give Kedaranātha, his elder brother Kaliprasanna and some of the other boys English lessons, and a nice relationship developed between Kedaranātha and his teacher. During his play time he sometimes wandered in his grandfather's gardens and picked ripe mangoes or caught caterpillars of various kinds, which his father used to raise by feeding them appropriate leaves, eventually releasing them as butterflies. There were many beehives in the gardens and the boys used to break the hives and steal the honey. Kedaranātha used to show some restraint in his honey eating, but his brothers did not. Their mother used to feel their bodies to see if they were unusually warm from eating honey, and if so, they would be punished. The Ṭhākura recalls: "One day, the honey bees stung us. My older brother, Kaliprasanna, was an innocent fellow, but the bees stung him so much that he had a fever for several days." His brothers were so rambunctious that they were not satisfied to simply play in their grandfather's grounds. They used to venture out and get into trouble. Kedaranātha used to sit and talk with the gatekeepers to avoid getting into difficulty with his brothers. The soldiers used to tell him stories and

recite the *Rāmāyaṇa*, to which Kedaranātha was very much attracted, and he began to recite the stories to his mother and maid-servant. His mother was pleased and sent some gifts to the gatekeepers. In return, Srital Teoyari, the main story-teller, would share his rotīs (flat breads), dahl (bean soup) and kichari (a combination of dahl and rice) with Kedaranātha, and Kedaranātha would become very happy. These incidents serves to show how Kedaranātha was attracted to hearing about Rāma and Kṛṣṇa from the very beginning of his life, in preference to the playful sports of his brothers. This is a feature in the lives of great souls, as evidenced by the histories of others, like Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Uddhava, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, etc. whose childhoods are described in the pages of the scriptures. Their primary attraction was to God and was exhibited from the very beginning of their lives.

Sometimes the boy used to wake up at night and talk to the night guards of the inner grounds, particularly one called Officer Naph, who was very old but still used to carry his lantern, stick, club and sword. Officer Naph was a much trusted guard of Kedaranātha's grandfather. He was fearless, and a former dacoit (robber). Kedaranātha used to ask him many questions. When Naph was a dacoit, he had accidentally beheaded his own guru during a raid. Since that time he had constantly chanted the holy name of Hari. Although only six or seven and incapable of understanding all of Naph's amazing stories, Kedaranātha liked to hear him talk. Not the least of his attractions must have been the almost constant vibration of the holy name issuing from his mouth.

Since Kedaranātha's mother was the daughter of a very wealthy man and was thus unable to tolerate much physical labor, a maid-servant named Shibu took care of Kedaranātha most of the time. She was completely dedicated to the brothers, even more than to her own children: "In the morning time she would serve us a light breakfast and then take us to school. [Later in the day] she would bring us rice to eat. At noon she would find us wherever we were and supervise us while we took milk. In the evening she would take us home and put us to bed and lay down herself with us. She would give up her own happiness for our happiness. Even if her own daughter wanted to take her home, she would be reluctant to leave us."

There were doctors in residence who used to prepare various Ayurvedic medicines for Kedaranātha's family members, as well as training students who came to them to study the science. They made various medicines with herbs, as well as special potent formulas which involved the difficult processes of burning gold, oxidizing iron and grinding precious stones.

Sometimes, in the late afternoon, Kedaranātha sat in his father's parlor and told stories to him or heard stories from him. At the time of evening prayers his father would give him *sandeśa* (a milk sweet). Most of the time though he stayed with his older brother Kali. His younger brother, Gauridas, who was very beautiful, was extremely naughty and always in trouble.

On certain festival days buffalo-elephant fights were staged. Huge buffaloes had their horns tipped with iron, and the elephants' tusks were similarly tipped, and then they were set loose to fight. Everyone would watch from the second floor of the buildings. Sometimes the buffaloes would win and sometimes the elephants. On other days, the boys would ride atop their personal elephant named Shivchandra, who would carry them to the places of entertainments during festivals. During this period his maternal grandfather was so wealthy that anyone in need could come to him for their necessities. The village was a very happy place, and no one lacked anything. Hardly a day passed without some festival taking place. "In those days Ulā was free from suffering. There were fourteen-hundred good *brāhmaṇa* families, and there were many *kāyastha* and *vaidya* families too. No one in the village went without food. One could get by with very little in those days. Everybody was cheerful-people used to sing, make music, and tell entertaining stories. You could not count how many jolly [fat] bellied *brāhmaṇas* there were. Almost everybody had a good wit, could speak sweetly and was skilled in making judgments. Everyone was skilled in the fine arts, song and music. Groups of people could be heard at all times making music and singing, playing dice and chess... If anybody was in need they could go to the home of Mushtauphi Mahaśaya [his maternal grandfather] and get whatever they required without any difficulty. Medicine, oil and ghee were plentiful... The good people of Ulāgram did not know the need of finding work in order to eat. What a happy time it was!"

When Kedaranātha was seven, the king of Krishnanagar established a college and invited prominent landholders and neighboring kings to send their sons. Kedaranātha, Kali Prasanna (his elder brother) and other boys from their family attended. Their nursemaid accompanied them, and they lived in a house in the midst of the bazaar at Krishnanagar. Next door to them lived an oil-press man who was about to die. He had arranged for the daily recitation of *Mahābhārata*. Kedaranātha very much liked to hear the stories from the *Mahābhārata*, and the stories about Bhīma especially attracted his mind. He humorously observed: "On certain days the speaker would get a lot of things to eat, and on those days he would be most eloquent. On those days when he received nothing, his heart would be very depressed." On Saturdays the boys would be brought home to Ulā by palanquin at great speed and happily spend the weekends with their families. Classes at the college were held at the official residence of the district magistrate, and an Englishman named Captain Richardson was the college principal. The son of the king of Krishnanagar, Bahadur Satish Chandra, was Kedaranātha's classmate. Kedaranātha excelled in English studies and received a class promotion and an award for his scholarship. After this, he was greatly praised all over Ulā, especially by his father and maternal grandfather, as well as his mother and other family members. Even his former English teacher, the Frenchman, came for a visit and praised him greatly. Finally, Kedaranātha's father put a stop to his being praised in the presence of others. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura observed, "Hearing all this praise my pride became much inflated. In my mind [the importance of] my reading and writing very soon amounted to nothing."

Kedaranātha's class performance fell off, the teachers began to chastise him, and the envious students gave him a hard time. He felt tormented and could no longer study. Instead of attending classes, Kedaranātha used to hide in the woods or pretend to be ill. His nanny was no longer present, due to the boys having adjusted well to living in Krishnanagar, but one of their servants, a man named Keshi, understood his mind and took his side.

Then one day the boys ate some impure foodstuff prepared by a well-meaning relative. Later that night Kedaranātha's elder brother, Kali

Dada (Kaliprasanna) became ill with cholera. A local doctor declared it very serious, and Kedaranātha and Kali Dada set out for their home by palanquin. "Kali Dada was sinking gradually into the illness. As we crossed the river Anjana I made a strenuous effort to pacify his mind. By eight o'clock the following morning the palanquin arrived at Ulā." An hour after arriving home, the boy left this world, and a great cry of grief went up from the women of the house.

After several days it was decided that Kedaranātha would remain at home, which was to his satisfaction. At this time he was about eight years old, and he went for some months without schooling. Soon, however, some respectable men organized an English school in Ulā in the parlor of Kedaranātha's uncle's house. The boy soon regained his aptitude and proficiency in studying, and his teachers showed him much affection. He used to play cricket, but after being struck on the brow with a bat and bleeding profusely, he gave it up and never played again. He excelled in reading and reciting and learned Bengali and mathematics as well.

Kedaranātha's maternal uncle died, and after that, many inauspicious things began to happen to his maternal grandfather. Numerous expenses came, swindlers took advantage of the elderly gentleman's generosity, and he fell into debt. All of his sons had died, and he was given the bad advice that he should marry again and try to produce an heir, but there was no result in the union. Somehow he maintained his status despite heavy debt. However, the elephant Sivchandra died, the horse was sold, the horse-carriage also, and only a goat cart remained. The Durgā festivals could only be celebrated by taking out loans.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls the recitation of *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* at the festivals: "When there was recitation of the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* etc. at the old house I would go to hear. I liked to hear about Hanumān crossing the ocean to Laṅkā and about the demoness Simhika. The honorable reader would speak with specific accompanying gestures, and in my mind a great love would arise. I would make a regular habit of going to hear the reading after school." Again we can observe the boy's strong, spontaneous attraction for hearing the Lord's activities in lieu of the usual attraction to childish sports and playing.

In his eighth year Kedaranātha's two younger brothers, Haridas and Gauridas, successively died. His mother and father experienced deep grief and suffering on this account. That left only Kedaranātha and his younger sister, Hemlatā. Their nanny went everywhere with Hemlatā on her hip and holding Kedaranātha by the hand. His mother was so worried that none of her children would survive that she put many talismans around the necks of the children.

Kedaranātha was very attracted to any kind of religious festival or *pūjā* that was being performed. If he heard of one, he would arrange to go and see it. He occasionally visited a *brahmacārī* who performed worship according to the doctrine of *tantra* (sorcery). The *brahmacārī* had cups made from skulls which were kept hidden in a small room in his house. "Some people said that if you gave Ganges water and milk to a skull it would smile. I tried to observe this and thus gave water and milk to a skull, but I saw nothing." Another person who lived in the same area used to sing devotional songs. During the Durgā festivals Kedaranātha would visit the houses of the *brāhmaṇas* to get *prasādam*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls, "Sometimes, in the hope of getting some nice *prasāda*, I would accept an invitation to eat. In some homes I would get good dahl along with vegetable curry and rice. In other homes I would get kichari and dahl cooked with jackfruit and other things." At the age of nine Kedaranātha went to Jagat Bhattacharya to learn astrology. His cousin Kailash Datta also tried to learn. Kedaranātha took notes with care and committed to memory whatever he was taught. On both the paternal and maternal sides of the family, fortunes declined. His paternal grandfather's residence was mortgaged, and other property was lost. Kedaranātha's father tried to help by securing property for his father in Calcutta, but his father refused to accept it, being very firmly resolved to stay in Orissa. Ānanda-candra then tried to secure land for his immediate family, seeing the failing fortunes of both his father-in-law and father, and he got an offer to take managerial responsibility for some property from a Mr. David Farland, a friend of his father-in-law's. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura observes: "...a man's thoughts alone produce no result, only what God desires can endure." Ānanda-candra went to see Mr. Farland's land. In the meantime, upon the death of Ānanda-candra's step-mother, Rāṇī Rādhārāṇī, Ānanda-

candra inherited six rent-free villages in Orissa. A family friend, Umacharan Vishvas, set out for Ulā to report this news. Two or three days after Ānanda-candra's return to Ulā, after seeing the land of Mr. Farland, he came down with severe fever. The best medicines available were administered. Nothing worked. Kedaranātha was constantly by his father's side. One night while Kedaranātha slept, his father gave up his life and was taken to the bank of the Ganges at Śāntipura. The house was filled with lamentation. "When I rose at dawn I could not see father. There was no one around. At that time Lalu Chakravarti and Parameśvara Mahanti had come from Orissa, and they had carried my father to the bank of the Ganges. Seeing everybody crying, I also began to cry. My honorable mother, being in anxiety, was weeping, and many people were trying to console her... Loud sounds of crying filled the house. My honorable grandfather closed the door."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls, "Even while father was living I began to become a little thoughtful. 'What is this world? Who are we?' These two questions were in my mind when I was ten years old. On some days I thought I had the answers, on other days I had none. One day, in the evening, as the moon was rising, while I was wandering about on the roof of my father's parlour, I noticed that the moon was moving with me. I thought this must be the same moon that we saw in Krishnanagar, and that this small disc exists everywhere in the same fashion. I previously thought that in different places there was a different moon. But now, seeing the moon move, I concluded that it was the same moon everywhere... I would read the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Kāli Purāṇa*, *Annadā Maṅgala*, etc. from Bengali manuscripts and imbibed much lore in this way. I would discuss these edifying subjects with whomever I met who was a little learned." This scrutinizing mood reminds one of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who examined everything around him after emerging from the womb, as he looked for Kṛṣṇa, Whom he had seen there. We will observe that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had this same searching mood as a boy, and he was never satisfied in that search until, years later, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* finally came into his hands. At that time the Object of his search was found, and his true devotional glories became fully manifested.

A learned man named Vachaspati Mahasaya would often talk to

Kedaranātha about spiritual topics and told him that there was no talk between the demigods and mankind in Kali-yuga. One day, when the boy went to eat star-apples in the garden near the parlor of his grandfather, he became frightened due to fear of a ghost that was reputed to stay there. Vachaspati Mahasaya described the forms of ghosts to him in some detail, and the boy became more frightened. However, he also had a strong desire to eat the star-apples. He then spoke to the mother of a friend who was reputed to be expert in the occult, and she told him that there is no fear of ghosts as long as one chants the name of Rāma. By way of an experiment, the boy went to the orchard constantly calling out the name of Rāma. He then became convinced in his heart that chanting the name of Rāma was protection against ghosts. From that time on he was not afraid to go out at dusk, and when he did he constantly chanted the holy name of Rāma. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls, "At dusk I would always utter the name of Rāma. When walking about in the streets and alleys I always chanted the name of Rāma. I obtained such great satisfaction in my mind [from this] that for many days afterwards I took this medicine against ghosts. I heard that a ghost lived in the homa [sacrificial fire] building. Uttering the name of Rāma, I chased the ghost away..."

Kedaranātha had an elderly friend who was a sculptor who made backdrops for the goddess Durgā. He told the boy that he had no confidence in anyone but Parameśvara (the Supreme Controller), and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura remarks, "I had faith in the words of this old man." Becoming more inquisitive, he questioned a Mohammedan guard who gave him a very imaginative explanation of the creation, but confirmed that the holy name of God is the remedy for ghosts.

Kedaranātha was thinking in philosophical terms almost constantly. He recalls, "There were many thoughts in my mind. At one time I thought that this world was false-that the Lord alone was real, and that I appeared to be the Lord..." His uncle's father was an eclectic worshiper who in the mornings would first study *Vedānta*, then recite the *Kalma* like a Muslim and then pray to God as a Christian. He gave Kedaranātha the idea that God alone was the Supreme Person, that the *Vedas* know Him as Brahman, the *Koran* as Allah and that in the *Bible* He is called God. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states, "I believed him."

But later he remarked, "I was greatly confused. I was young and sensitive and had many questions. Seeing all this difference of opinion my mind was not happy." His Uncle Paraśurāma told him, "O baba, everything comes from Nature and that is God. There is nothing separate from Nature."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: "Because all the conclusions were uncertain, I never gave up the name of Rāma which warded off the fear of ghosts."

Kedaranātha was eleven years old at the time of his father's death. It was a very disturbing time for him with uncertainty in all directions. He continued his studies but his heart was not in it. He began to secretly drink castor oil to make himself sick, so that he wouldn't have to go to school, and he would often get fevers. He continued to think in a very philosophical way and wrote a poem called *Ulā-caṇḍi-māhātmya* about the deity of Ulā (Durgā), a book which, according to the Ṭhākura, no longer exists.

Marriage & Studies in Calcutta

UPON his reaching the age of twelve his mother arranged a marriage with a five-year-old girl from Ranaghat named Śayāmaṇi, the daughter of Śrīyukta Madhusūdana Mitra. She hoped to improve the family fortunes by this arrangement. Childhood marriages were not uncommon at that time in Bengal. Such marriages were generally arranged by astrological calculation so that the partners would be compatible, and the couple usually came from similar family backgrounds. The psychological reasoning behind these early marriages was that a girl in Vedic culture could feel secure knowing that her future was arranged and her protection guaranteed. The couple did not generally live together until they reached adulthood. A grand wedding was held which Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura compares to a child's doll marriage: "There was a pleasure boat, a wedding palanquin, decorations, lights, English music etc. The marriage took place between a twelve year old boy and a

five year old girl and was exactly like a child's doll marriage. Drinking Ganges water and milk I arrived at the house of my father-in-law with a great, festive crowd. The reception was huge. Many gentlemen of the Teli [oil] caste dressed in bright and varied clothes and wearing *jari* outfits came to the reception. Even though I was of such a tender age, I was able to understand that except for the *kāyasthas* and the *brāhmaṇas* [who were dressed nicely] the good clothes and ornaments did not look well on the others... Two reciters of genealogies read out the family histories of the Mitra and Datta families and the marriage was gradually concluded. I said that I was not able to stay alone in the house of my father-in-law..." Kedaranātha's nanny came to stay at his father-in-law's house to care for him, and he was accepted there just like a family member. His maternal grandfather subsequently died at Bhavanipura, where he had gone after his fortunes had utterly failed.

"Thereafter we went to Calcutta by boat [to spend some time in nearby Bhavanipura]. In those days Calcutta was a fearful place. Immediately upon arriving my nose was assailed by a severe, foul smell. This stench took away my appetite. After residing in Bhavanipura for a few days we visited numerous places in Calcutta and Bhavanipura. We saw Kalighat [where Goddess Kāli is worshiped]. Being exceedingly disgusted I was not able to appreciate anything. When we returned to Ulā, I was the first to leave. Upon arriving in Ulā, Mahesh Dada, Meja Mami and her brother, Rāja Babu, performed *śrāddha* [the funeral rites] for my grandfather."

Kedaranātha then returned to Ulā and tried to manage the shambles of his grandfather's estate. He was not well suited to do it, being young and inexperienced, but by various means, family debts were paid off.

However, it seemed that there was never enough money, and his family experienced suffering on this account, being so much accustomed to a comfortable existence. The Ṭhākura recounts: "Everybody thought that my mother had a lot of money and jewelry. Except for a few properties, all her wealth was lost. At the time my father went to Murashidabad he took 1,500 rupees from my mother. That money was lost. On another occasion my father went to extricate one of the sons of Mukherjee from some difficulty and loaned 2,500 rupees from my mother's family with a security of jewelry [to that end]. Most of that money was never repaid. My wedding cost almost 2,000 rupees, and my mother paid 1,000 rupees

of the expenses ... In this way there were numerous expenses and no money remained in my mother's hand. I was in complete anxiety. My grandfather's house was huge. The guards were few, and I was afraid of thieves at nights. I thus gave the guards bamboo rods to carry. In this regard I was not lax."

When Kedaranātha was fourteen, his maternal uncle, the famous Bengali poet Kashi Prasad Ghosh, came for a visit. Kashi Prasad was a journalist and the editor of the *Hindu Intelligencer*, a weekly journal. He was a literary luminary of his time, and his home was a meeting place of many famous figures of the Calcutta literary scene. Many aspiring writers came to him to be trained in effective English composition. He counted among his friends the Englishman, Major Richardson, commonly known as Shakespeare-Richardson, who was a noted author and journalist, as well as having been the Aide-de-camp to Lord William Bentinck, who in his time had wielded tremendous influence and power in the development of British affairs in India.

Kashi Prasad tested the English reading and writing of Kedaranātha, was impressed with his intelligence and gave him a mirror as a prize.

Kedaranātha's maternal aunt suggested to his mother that he go to Calcutta to pursue his studies. His aunt reasoned with his mother that she would care for him as though he were her own son, and it was thus decided that Kedaranātha would go to Calcutta for his education.

Arriving in Calcutta after the *pūjā* season, Kedaranātha stayed in the house of Kashi Prasad. It had very thick pillars and was situated on the northern side of a pond called Heduya. On the banks of the Heduya were the homes of missionaries, the church of Kṛṣṇa Bandor, Queens College and the Bethune School. It was a beautiful and aristocratic section of Calcutta. Kedaranātha was enrolled in the Hindu Charitable Institution School. He studied there for four years, from 1852 to 1856, constantly reading and studying literature with Iswara Chandra Nandi, in whom he had great faith. He described that gentleman as "...truthful, in control of his senses, religious, knowledgeable in the *sāstras* and well spoken."

The British were interested in creating a generation of Indians whose native ways could be transformed by education. In a famous education brief written in 1835, Thomas Macaulay put forward his argument

succinctly, if arrogantly: "To sum up what I have said: I think it is clear that we are free to employ our funds as we choose; that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing; that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic; that the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic; that neither as the languages of law, nor as the languages of religion, have the Sanskrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement; that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed.

"In one point I fully agree with the gentlemen to whose general views I am opposed. I feel, with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of people. We must at present do our best to form a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from our Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population."

Many Indians began to take advantage of this policy, but it was ultimately to be one of the major factors in the undoing of the British Raj, as the very intellectuals produced by British education were to later establish an independence movement that drove the British from India. During the annual examinations Kedaranātha won first prize and obtained a medal. In his first year there, however, during the rainy season, the boy fell sick with blood dysentery, fever, itching skin, etc. Becoming very weak, he returned with some residents of Ulā for a visit to his home. Since his illness was complicated, his mother spoke to a leather worker who said he knew a fakir who could cure him. A fakir named Chanda, arrived. Using bakash leaves he performed an exorcism and gave Kedaranātha *gura* leaves to eat. He gave Kedaranātha a *mantra* to chant and told his mother to feed him only vegetables and rice cooked with ripe tamarind in particular. He told Kedaranātha that in a dream something would be revealed. A dream came to Kedaranātha in which a black snake crawled out of his body. The fakir was satisfied that Kedaranātha was out of danger. He told him to continue with the

mantra and to never eat any demigod *prasādam*. The fakir then took him to his guru, a former cobbler, whose name was Golok.

Golok belonged to a branch of the Karta-bhāja sect. This particular group accepts the moral restrictions of strict Vaiṣṇavism, but their eclectic beliefs and philosophical conclusions are ultimately impersonal, for they think the formless Absolute to be the highest manifestation of transcendence. Nevertheless, the guru had many supernatural powers and Kedaranātha was impressed by him. The guru assured Kedaranātha that his itching, as well as all the symptoms of his other diseases would be completely eradicated. In a subsequent dream calcium powder was prescribed as the treatment for the sores, and in no time the ailment cleared up. Kedaranātha's body filled out and became healthy again. He continued chanting the *mantras* given to him and often went to see this guru. One day the guru predicted that Kedaranātha's boyhood home, Ulā, would soon be almost entirely destroyed. The people there would die from fever and disease. He also predicted that Kedaranātha would become a great Vaiṣṇava. Both predictions would prove to be true. After this impressive recovery he took his mother and sister to Calcutta and arranged a marriage for his sister. Then his mother and sister returned to Ulā. Kedaranātha studied all of the books in Kashi Prasad's library and assisted Kashi Prasad by reading to him all the articles which were submitted for publication in his magazines and newspapers. He also availed himself freely of the Public Library. He began to contribute articles to the *Literary Gazette* and the *Intelligencer*, which were edited by Kashi Prasad, and began the composition of the first two books of the *Poriade*, an epic poem which he intended to complete in twelve volumes. These two books were completed before he turned eighteen. He joined various debating clubs and freely exchanged thoughts on spiritual and literary topics with Krishna Das Pal, Devendranath Tagore and his two sons-Dvijendranath Tagore (who Kedaranātha came to count as his closest friend) and Satyendranath Tagore, brother of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, as well as many other figures who later became famous in different spheres of influence. About Dvijendranath Tagore, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls, "The honorable Dvijendranath Tagore was the older brother of my friend Sriyukta Satyendranath Tagore and my older brother as well. If ever among men there was a

close friend then *baro dada* [older brother] is that close friend. He was charitable, of good character, pure-hearted and honest, and my heart was enlivened by him. Upon seeing him, all my troubles would go away." In his association Kedaranātha studied the works of many Western philosophers, as well as the controversial views of the Brahma Samāja, led by Rammohun Rāya, which were promulgated by the Tagore family. Kedaranātha also met regularly with an open-hearted Christian missionary named Reverend Duff and had frequent discussions with him and read many books in his association. He also studied the works of Addison and Edward Young in the association of another missionary named Reverend Greaves.

College

KEDARANĀTHA developed talent as a philosopher and a debater. In the year 1856 he enrolled in the Hindu School, or what later came to be known as the University of Calcutta. Kedaranātha became the student of Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, a reputed scholar and the author of *Samagra Vyākaraṇa-kaumudī*. In that year a university was started and classes were held in the Presidency College. The senior classes of the Hindu School were held in the West Wing, Sanskrit College was in the middle section and junior classes were held in the East Wing. Kedaranātha began to write poetry for which he was much respected and praised and which gradually came to the attention of the Principal. An Englishman named George Thompson, a former member of parliament, taught him the art of oratory. Mr. Thompson told Kedaranātha that he used to deliver lectures to the corn fields on his way from his house to parliament. Pretending that the plants were the members of parliament, he would speak freely to them, and in this way had become an expert and pleasing speaker. Kedaranātha also pursued his studies privately by spending time at libraries like Metcalf Hall and being tutored by the Christian missionaries. Kedaranātha's friend, Sri Tarak Nath Palit, who bore the expenses for

establishing the Science College, invited him to speak at the British Indian Society, which many pro-British zamindars and Europeans attended. Kedaranātha was invited to become a member, and he eventually gave a lecture there concerning the evolution of matter through the material mode of goodness. At the end of 1856 he had completed Part One of the *Poriade*, which was an account in epic verse form of the wanderings of Porus, who fought Alexander the Great in the pre-Christian era. It was well received by his teachers. We see the continuing thread of existential questioning appearing in the pages of his epic, when Porus, the hero, shoots a deer and then begins to feel the sorrow inherent in material life:

*Now sad reflection clouds his mental realm,
 And questions past our thought his heart o'erwhelm:
 "From whom is life? and whence this frame of man?
 What mighty power has formed this mighty plan?
 Why live we here? and why desire and feel?
 For what we turn with Time's revolving wheel?
 I eat, and live, and sleep, and spend the day
 But never think of these! my life is gay!
 From this awaking hour I let my eyes
 Select my way, led by the guiding Skies.
 This day I leave my ever-gorgeous vest
 To visit lands, extending in the west.
 Ye woods! be witness, I my country leave
 And come not back until my end achieve."*

Reverend Duff instructed him in the works of Milton at this time, and at the house of a missionary, he read the works of Carlyle, Hazlitt and others. His poems were published in the *Literary Gazette*. Some of his classmates called him Mr. ABC. He also studied the *Koran*, and the works of Theodore Parker, Channing and Newman.

Kedaranātha decided to go to Ulā to visit his family. Spending a night with his in-laws, he left by boat for his home. There was a great storm that night but somehow he reached the ghat at Ulā safely. "The next day, by the grace of God, we reached the landing at Ulā without mishap. In the late evening, in the month of Aśvin, the light of the moon was

very splendid there. Prior to that evening I had received no news of Ulā... That year there was a fearful epidemic in the village of Ulā. The family of Mahesh Dada had come to Calcutta in the month of Bhadra because they were ill but had not said anything to me... Upon disembarking I saw some people who, being mad with the happiness which comes from hopelessness, were laughing and joking. The village was empty. As they were under the influence of *gañjā* [marijuana] they perceived no suffering. I questioned them but they gave no answers. [My friend] and I were amazed by the sight of them. Departing from the boat, we went to the house of Madhusudan. When we looked through the door we saw Madhusudan Vasu sitting on a low wooden seat. I paid respects to him and he addressed me, saying, 'O Kedar, stay here for the rest of the day; go to your house in the morning.'" There had been an outbreak of cholera and many persons had died, generally within four or five hours of symptoms first appearing. The words of the mystic guru had come true. Hearing this on his arrival, Kedaranātha wanted to proceed to his house to know the situation fully. When he arrived, he learned that his sister had died. His mother and paternal grandmother were there in great distress, and his mother, though recovering, had been delirious for many days. Ulā was the scene of a great disaster. Hundreds had died. Some of the villagers were blaming the epidemic on the tantric *brahmacārī* whom Kedaranātha used to visit. They foolishly theorized that a goat which he had freed to take the fever out of the village had actually spread it.

Taking his mother and grandmother in a boat, Kedaranātha proceeded to Ranaghat, the home of his wife, and heard the news that she had also been ill but was recovering. The Ṭhākura recalls, "The day before we departed I went to many places in Ulāgram. In a great number of homes there were no people [left alive]. At some homes there was [heard] the cry of pain of those who were sick. At some homes there were bodies lying around. At other homes there was little life. Some of the survivors were making preparations to leave Ulā. Many had already left. It was the time of Durgā-pūjā but there was no happiness [anywhere]." Staying at the house of his uncle, Kali Krishna, in Calcutta, Kedaranātha cared for his mother and grandmother. Times were difficult. He had no money and there were great hardships. He tried to take the college entrance

examination but was unable to prepare properly in an atmosphere of anxiety about his family members. Then he began to get recurrent fevers, which were finally cured by his taking quinine.

Although suffering from financial deprivation and recurrent illness, Kedaranātha did not reveal his troubles to others. He continued to meet with his friends, especially Dvijendranath Tagore. At that time he read many books with his friend on the science of God and religion, including Sanskrit books, as well as Western philosophers like Kant, Goethe, Hegel, Swedenborg, Hume, Schopenhauer, Voltaire, etc. This helped remove the anxiety from his heart. He gave a philosophical discourse to the British Indian Society, which was thought very deep by the Englishmen present, yet, a teacher of Kedaranātha's, Mr. Dal, raised a question which Kedaranātha took seriously: "How will the acquisition of such knowledge benefit mankind?" At another meeting of the British Indian Society, Kedaranātha recited the twenty-five stories of the *Vetala* (a type of ghost that inhabits corpses), which he had translated from the *Vetala-pañca-vimśati* of Somadeva in the form of a play in English. His recitation was followed by a great debate, and from that day his contemporaries began to broadcast his glories as a logician.

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was a young scholar, he received a similar reputation as a master of *nyāya*, or logic, and was thus known as Nimāi Paṇḍita. No one in the Vaiṣṇava assembly at the meetings of Advaita Ācārya and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita had any notion that He would prove to be the greatest Vaiṣṇava. Such was the case with Kedaranātha. As a logician no one could defeat him, but this was not his true glory. The time for his manifesting his actual glories was yet to come, just as the exalted position of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was not fully revealed until later in his life-when the time, place and circumstances were appropriate-and Kṛṣṇa utilized him for the purpose for which He brought him to the world.

Kedaranātha was fascinated by theism, and he spent his time studying the *Bible*, the *Koran* and the works of Parker and Newman. He developed deep faith in Jesus Christ. Whatever he read, he discussed with Dvijendranath. The Sepoy Mutiny occurred at this time. He read the newspaper every evening in the Tagores' parlor and learned the news before it was published by hearing the many discussions that took

place there. The Ṭhākura does not dwell upon the uprising in his autobiography, but there was much discussion and agitation in Calcutta's intellectual circles at the time, as many of the Sepoy rebels were Bengali soldiers. Calcutta also served as a haven for both British and Indians who fled the horrors of the rebellion.

The background of the mutiny was that the British, through their aggressive annexations, their construction of intimidating public works, their vigorous promotion of British style education, their contempt for the traditions of caste-ism and other ancient customs, and above all, their all too common disdain for the Indians as a race, were igniting feelings of resentment among large sections of the Indian people. A contemporary educated Indian critic declared: "The British Government professes to educate the Natives to an equality with Europeans, an object worthy of the age and of Britain. But if Englishmen, after educating the Natives to be their equals, continue to treat them as their inferiors-if they deny the stimulus to honourable ambition, and show the Natives that there is a barrier over which superior Native merit and ambition can never hope to pass ... are they not in effect undoing all that they have done, unteaching the Native all that he has been taught, and pursuing a suicidal policy, which will inevitably array all the talent, honour and intelligence of the country ultimately in irreconcilable hostility to the ruling power?" This analysis later proved to be correct. The Sepoy Mutiny stemmed from a multiplicity of underlying currents of dissatisfaction and fears-some groundless, some decidedly not. But the spark that ignited the Great Mutiny (Sepoy Rebellion) was the introduction of the Enfield rifle. The Indian sepoy (soldiers) were expected to bite open the end of cartridges which were rumored to be coated with beef and pork fat. This greatly offended both the Hindus and the Muslims. When eighty-five Indian soldiers in Meerut were publicly dishonored and sentenced to ten years imprisonment for refusing to use the cartridges, there was open and murderous rebellion. Three sepoy regiments revolted, killed their British officers and their families, who chanced to be on their way to church, and headed for Delhi. The revolt spread and Delhi, Lucknow and Kanpur fell to the rebels, who massacred every European they could lay hands on. However, by March of 1858 reconquest by the British and those Indian

regiments that remained loyal was complete. During this period of turmoil there was much savagery on both sides, and ultimately inexcusable acts of revenge. Some reforms followed, however, with some genuine attempts to assuage Indian sentiments, and the transfer of power was made from the East Indian Company to the British Crown. Visiting Burdwan, Kedaranātha got the opportunity to stay with the King, Mahārāja Pratap Chandra, at the time of Dola-yātrā. He presented the king with a copy of his *Poriade*, and the king read parts of it and liked it very much. Kedaranātha returned to Calcutta with many ambitions, but no money or help were available to him. He recalls: "Upon returning from Burdwan I saw that my maternal grandmother was bedridden at uncle Kali's house. I was thinking many things, [such as] 'I will study, I will make money, I will print books, I will lecture in many places. I will get somewhere where my mother and grandmother and my wife can all live together.' But there was no money. No help. Everyone was a calculating outsider. No one made even a little effort to help." He was then persuaded, against his better judgment, to go on an excursion by rail. "Upon returning I was put to shame. I was thinking of enjoying an excursion, but what was the condition of my grandmother? That I did not know. When I returned to Kali Kaka's house in the afternoon, I saw mother ... calling me from the doorway, 'Go at once to the ghat on the Gaṅgā. Your uncle Kali took your grandmother there.' I was wearing only one piece of cloth but I went swiftly to Nimatal Ghat. There I saw my grandmother, and Kali Kaka was performing *antarjali* [final ablutions] ... Her final suffering was unbearable, and thus there was much benefit for her in dying. When I lived in Ulā she was very good to me. I read *Kāli-kaivalyadayinī* and other books with her ... You could not find a woman who was as frugal as she and who would pay such painstaking attention to details. She would make various kinds of dishes and sweets. What she knew [of the culinary art] no others knew." His wife, then twelve years old and living at Ranaghat, begged Kedaranātha to be allowed to come and stay with him in Calcutta. He assured her that she could come when he had employment. He got a job as a second grade teacher in the Hindu Charitable Institution School, which he had earlier attended, at a pay of fifteen rupees per month. He was about nineteen at this time. It was 1857 and the height of the Sepoy

Mutiny. Kedaranātha rented a house for his mother and wife, and furnished it with ... one cot, two canopy beds, one table, two chairs, and one clothes rack", but he could not maintain the expenses. His mother had to sell a gold necklace to pay the back rent.

Kedaranātha continued his writing and somehow managed to publish the second volume of the *Poriade*. During this time, he met an elderly, eccentric English poetess named Mrs. Locke, who very much appreciated Kedaranātha's poetry. She was a spiritualist and would show various ghostly manifestations. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura reports, She would have spirits come and dance on her table. She could see the spirits, but I could only hear the sound of their dancing." He dedicated Book I of *The Poriade* to her with the words: "To Mrs. E. Lock. Authoress of 'Leisure Hours' Etc. Etc. This book is most respectfully inscribed by her obliged and obedient servant, The Author." It is not stated in his biography whether or not she helped him publish his book, but he clearly felt some measure of obligation, as above expressed.

Kedaranātha was trying his best to secure employment, and he applied for the post of accountant with a sugar merchant, who attempted to give him some training. The young man was surprised to see the cheating involved: "When I purchased a large quantity of sugar I obtained an [extra] sack of sugar. I noticed this and considered it irreligious to cheat. I therefore informed the merchant..." The merchant advised him that it would be better for him to get a job as a teacher-that business life would be difficult for one of his principles.

Orissa

HIS paternal grandfather sent for Kedaranātha from Chotimangalpur in Orissa. He wrote, "I will not live much longer. I desire to see you immediately. If you come quickly, then I will be able to see you, otherwise it will not be possible." This was in 1858. His mother and wife accompanying him, he set out for Orissa. There were great obstacles on the journey, but when he finally reached the outskirts at

Chotigram his grandfather sent two palanquins with bearers. His grandfather openly wept out of affection when he saw them.

Kedaranātha observed the activities and schedule of his grandfather. He kept many cows and there was plenty of yogurt and ghee always. He also had many animals: peacocks, swans, etc. That elderly gentleman ate nothing at all during the day. At midnight he would eat kacauris (stuffed pastries) full of chilies, or milk cooked with date sugar. He wore the saffron cloth of a *sannyāsī*. During the day he constantly chanted *japa*. Kedaranātha saw him pull cobras out of their holes and kill them with his shoes. He was very strong and did not appear to be ill. According to one of the early biographers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Pandit Satkari Chattopadhyaya, "That gentleman [Kedaranātha's grand-father] had once been a conspicuous figure in the 'city of Palaces' [Calcutta] and retired to a lonely place in Orissa to spend the rest of his life as an ascetic. He could predict the future and knew when he would die. He could commune with supernatural beings." Rājavallabha Datta worshipped Lord Jagannātha and Rādhā Mādhava in his house. He made a horoscope for Kedaranātha and predicted that he would secure a good position at the age of twenty-seven.

Kedaranātha at this time was still seeking employment, and his old mentor and teacher, Iswara Chandra Vidyasagara Mahasaya, wrote a letter of recommendation to assist him. He began teaching in the Kendra District of Orissa. A Doctor Roer, who was Inspector of Schools for South West Bengal, met with him, and after seeing Iswara Chandra Vidyasagara's letter suggested to Kedarandtha that he go to Purī and take the Teacher's Examination. He also promised to help him get a position, so Kedaranātha made plans to go to Purī.

In the meantime, he got news that his grandfather was sick, but when he arrived his grandfather appeared well. However, the old man told him, "Do not leave here for one or two days. My life is coming to an end." On the third day thereafter, his grandfather had a slight fever. He sat upon a bed in the courtyard of his house, leaning against a bolster, and he began to continuously chant the holy name. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recounts: "He called for me and said, 'After my death, do not tarry many days in this place. Whatever work you do by the age of

twenty-seven will be your principal occupation. You will become a great Vaiṣṇava. I give you all my blessings.' Immediately after saying this, his life left him, bursting out from the top of his head. Such an amazing death is rarely seen."

Kedaranātha took care of all funeral arrangements, received a small inheritance and then proceeded to Purī where he took the Teachers' Examination and received a certificate of qualification. This was in May of 1859. He was twenty-one years old. He then attended the Candana Festival in Jagannātha Purī and toured the temples of Orissa, finally returning to his grandfather's house, where his mother and wife greeted him happily. He received a sixth grade teacher's position in Cuttack (in Orissa) at twenty rupees per month, and immediately went there with his wife and mother and took up residence. Expenses were minimal in Orissa, and they began to live more comfortably.

A Mr. Heiley, who was the Assistant Magistrate and School Secretary at Cuttack, befriended Kedaranātha, having heard him in debate and been much impressed by his power of oratory. Kedaranātha studied Ellison's Europe with him and began to read all of the books on philosophy from the Cuttack school library. In March of 1860 he received the position of Headmaster of the Bhadra School for forty-five rupees per month, and so he left Cuttack for Bhadrak where he had a house constructed and brought his family.

His mother had contracted epilepsy, and the disease gradually grew worse. An Orissan *brāhmaṇa* came to Bhadra to recite the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and hearing the news of Kedaranātha's mother's disease, he made a preparation with sandalwood and oil mixed with conch powder and gave it to her. His mother was quickly cured and became very healthy again. Kedaranātha amply rewarded the *brāhmaṇa*, and everyone was satisfied and happy. During his stay in Bhadra, Kedaranātha wrote a book called *Maths of Orissa* which was published in 1860. One of the final requests of his grandfather had been that he tour the temples of Orissa, so when Kedaranātha journeyed to Purī, he visited all of the major temples in Orissa *en route*, keeping a careful record of all that he observed. Sir William Hunter, a reputed British historian, took note of and praised the book in his own work, *Orissa*, which was published in 1872. Noting

the moral and religious nature of Kedaranātha, the historian wrote, "In 1860 a pamphlet was put forth by a native gentleman (Kedar Nath Dutt) who had visited all the larger monasteries of Orissa and who was himself a landholder in that province. With regard to a little monastery in his own estate, the author adopted an even more vigorous procedure. 'I have a small village,' he says, 'in the country of Cuttack, of which I am the proprietor. In that village is a religious house, to which was granted, by my predecessors, a holding of rent-free land. The head of the institution gave up entirely entertaining such men as chanced to seek shelter on a rainy night. This came to my notice; and I administered a severe threat to the head of the house, warning him that his lands would be cruelly resumed if in future complaints of inhospitality were brought to my knowledge.'"

In the same year (1860) his first son, Annada, was born, and on the 18th of December he received a fifth grade teacher's appointment in Midnapur. The climate at Midnapur was very conducive to good health, but Kedaranātha found the spiritual atmosphere disturbed. There was much controversy between the followers of Rammohun Ray and the conservative Hindus. Rammohun Ray was a reformer who repudiated the caste system, who believed that *satī* (the self-immolation of widows) should be outlawed, that much of the Vedic teaching was mythological and that stress should be placed on *jñāna* (empirical knowledge). He rejected the teachings of Lord Caitanya, although he had himself been raised as a Vaiṣṇava. He derived many of his ideas from Western philosophers like Aristotle, Locke, and Hume and from other scriptures of the world. His ideas found some favor with the young Bengali intellectuals but met strong opposition from caste conscious Hindus as well as from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, for he did not believe that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* and doubted the authenticity of many of the *Purāṇas*. His own mother rejected him as a heretic, and many conservative religionists bitterly attacked his ideas, as Rammohun unreasonably attacked Vaiṣṇava thought, not even taking note of the anti-caste-ism in the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Furthermore, he was criticized for accepting the authority of the *Tantras* and Lord Śiva, which severely weakened his claims of critical

objectivity.

Many of his ideas found favor, however, with the intellectual crowd in Calcutta, headed by Kashi Prasad Ghosh and the Tagores. The intellectual youth of Bengal disliked the older generation of conservative Hindus, because they often found themselves censured by them for aping Western liberality and habits. Thus, Vaiṣṇava traditions and ideas were generally out of favor with the new generation. They preferred the ideas of the reformer Rammohun Ray, who was more disposed toward the logic and ideas of Western philosophers. Kedaranātha, however, didn't accept Rammohun's theories. He would sometimes travel to Calcutta for discussions with his old friends and notes: "... the religion of the Brahmos [the philosophy of Rammohun] was not good. I thought that the brotherly philosophy taught by Jesus Christ was best ... the taste [derived from such worship] was due to devotion. I read all the books written by Theodore Parker and others, and books on Unitarianism I got from Calcutta. Because of [such books], my mind was attracted toward the devotion of Jesus. From the time of my childhood I had faith in bhakti. During the time I was in Ulā, hearing Hari-kīrtana produced bliss in me." We see the natural inclination of Kedaranātha taking shape in the crucible of his discussions with the intellectuals of the day. It is wonderful to see how, because of his prodigious intellect and studies, and the Lord's inscrutable plan, his deliberations began to center unerringly on the ultimate philosophical conclusion-*bhakti*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also recalls how a servant of his grandfather chastised some so-called Vaiṣṇavas for catching fish, admonishing them that it was very bad for Vaiṣṇavas to kill other living entities. When Kedaranātha heard these exchanges he immediately could understand the truth of the statements. He had observed the practices of the *śaktas*, who sacrificed animals and ate the meat, from his youth and considered these activities very ignoble. He further recalls seeing in his youth a Vaiṣṇava called Jaga who danced and chanted, crying torrents of tears, in the ecstasy of singing the Holy Name, and he remembered how the Karta-bhāja fakir had cured him. "There was some substance in the Vaiṣṇava religion. There was *bhakti-rasa*, and therefore

I had some faith therein ... When I went to Calcutta I would meet with Baro Dada [Dvijendranath Tagore] and hear a little of the Brahmo *dharma*... but there was a natural aversion towards the Brahmo religion in my mind. I would deliberate and converse a good deal with Dal Saheb [a former teacher], along with other missionaries, and the Christian religion, in comparison to the Brahmo religion, was far superior."

Dal Saheb sent him some other books, and he discussed them at length with him. Kedaranātha recalls, "I developed a feeling for pure *bhakti*, but I did not begin to practice it. While I was at the school in Midnapur I decided that I would obtain and read books on the Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. There was a *jāti* Vaiṣṇava [Vaiṣṇava by birth] *paṇḍita* at the school. I learned from talking to him how Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached the Vaiṣṇava *dharma* in Bengal and that the history and teachings of Caitanya were recorded in the book known as *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I began to search, but I could not secure a copy of the *Caritāmṛta*. I had faith that by reading that book I would achieve happiness, but Vaiṣṇava books were not in print then."

Between 1816-1829 many authentic Vaiṣṇava works, such as *Narottama-vilāsa*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were published in limited editions. But after this, this important work was somehow neglected. Publishing fell into the hands of the printers and publishers of North Calcutta called the "Baratala" publishers. They were aware of the great demand for Vaiṣṇava works in rural areas. They printed many translations of Vaiṣṇava classics on cheap paper and with inferior type, but the translations were very bad and made from notoriously apocryphal manuscripts. To make matters worse, they brought out numerous editions of concocted *sahajiyā* "scriptures", and these works became very popular with the simple-hearted people in the villages. The principal publisher of these books was Benimadhav De of Upper Chitpore Road. The result was that the *sahajiyā* (sentimental) groups and their teachings proliferated and became very popular with the common people, and confusion about the actual teachings of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Gosvāmīs was rampant. This terrible situation was later greatly remedied by the powerful preaching of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda

Ṭhākura and others, and the authentic works with the original commentaries of the *ācāryas* were brought forward once again, especially by the efforts of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Kedaranātha joined a literary society in Midnapur and gradually got many followers and students. This created some feelings of envy amongst members of the Brahma group, and they tried to stir up trouble between Kedaranātha and his supporters. He thus "lived with caution" and took care to surround himself with friends.

Toward the end of 1861 his wife became ill and died, leaving him with a ten month old son. It was a difficult time. He remarks in his biography, "I endured this grief like a warrior according to the Psalm of Life." His mother tried to raise the child, but was old and found it difficult. Kedaranātha was sick with a swelling in his lungs. He prayed to God for help and says that he had conviction at that time in both the formless conception of God and the conception of the spiritual form of God as well, but could not determine how both concepts were simultaneously true. Two months later he remarried. His bride was a girl named Lalitā, the daughter of Ganyamanya Ray from the village of Jakpur. She later came to be known as Śrīmatī Bhāgavatī Devī and was a sincere Vaiṣṇavī, following in the footsteps of her husband. She was of noble character, peaceful and accomplished in all she did. Kedaranātha was criticized by some of his relatives for marrying again so quickly, but he personally concluded that there was no blame attached to it.

After this, Kedaranātha held unsatisfactory positions as tax-collector and clerk in the Collectorate. He returned to Bengal to a place called Bhacchala where in the position of clerk he received a little more in the way of salary, and there, in 1863, he wrote two poems: *Vijana-grāma* (A Deserted Village) and *Sannyāsī*. *Vijana-grāma* was the first work ever written and published in blank verse in the history of the Bengali language and literature. The famous Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Datta is sometimes credited with the invention of Bengali blank verse, but he was not, in fact, the first to use this form. Rather, he got the idea from a greater Datta! Many important literary men praised Kedaranātha's efforts, and the poems were reviewed in the prestigious

Calcutta Review of 1863, Volume 39. What follows are excerpts from that review:

"We have glanced at this little volume of Bengali verse, which we have no hesitation in recommending ... *The Vijana-grāma*, the first poem in this book, is an account of the desolation of the once populous village of Ulā, near Ranaghat, in consequence of the ravages of the late epidemic. It is pleasing in style, and evidently on the model of Goldsmith ... *The Sannyāsī* in two chapters ... reflects much credit on the author. Of the minor poems, the descriptions of spring and the translation from Carlyle are very fair specimens. We hope the author will continue to give his countrymen the benefit of his elegant and unassuming pen, which is quite free from those objectionable licenses of thought and expression which abound in many dramas recently published..."

In the same year he wrote a work in English called *Our Wants* which was in prose and philosophical in nature. There was more conflict between the followers of the Brahmo religion and the Christians. At one point he was asked to mediate, but the result of this attempt was that both groups became furious with him. He then formed his own society, and many of the former Brahmos joined him at his meetings at the Burdwan Public Library. One of the speeches he delivered there, entitled *Soul*, was heard by Mr. W L. Heiley, I.C.S. who helped him greatly from that time on. He offered to find Kedaranātha a good job. He invited Kedaranātha to come to Calcutta and hear a speech at the Dalhousie Institute on the subject of the Centralization of Power. After hearing the lecture, Kedaranātha met his old teacher and friend Dal Saheb and stayed in the home of his good friend Dvijendranath [Baro Dada] for the night. Thereafter, they exchanged letters in the form of poems when Kedaranātha returned to Burdwan.

Deputy Magistrate

KEDARANATHA was next employed as the Head Clerk of the

Judge's Court in Chuadanga for a salary of 150 rupees per month for a year and a half. Thereafter, he was replaced and found himself without employment. In 1864 a daughter was born. While living in Chuadanga, Kedaranātha took the law examination in Burdwan. He got a good recommendation from Mr. Linton. Mr Heiley, his enthusiastic supporter from earlier meetings in Burdwan, wanted to secure him a superior position, not simply a clerical post. Thus he appealed to Sir Ashley Eden and advised his friend, Kedaranātha, to wait in Ranaghat for word on his appointment. On the 9th of February, 1866, Kedaranātha received three offers of employment at once. One was from Mr. Linton for a clerical position. One was from Mr. Heiley, who informed him that he had been appointed Deputy Registrar at Chapra, and one was from the government, dated the 5th of February, which was his appointment letter to the post in Chapra. He was appointed Special Deputy Registrar of Assurances with powers of a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector. He went to meet his benefactor, Mr. Heiley, but he had gone to Orissa, so he set out with some friends and a dog named Tiger and soon arrived in Chapra. His grandfather's prediction was coming true. He was twenty-seven years old.

While in Chapra, he got the chance to visit the Gautamāśrama at Godana. It was here that the famous sage Gautama Ṛṣi lived and promulgated the Vedic science of logic called *nyāya*. Kedaranātha was inspired to organize a large meeting of the townspeople, delivered a speech about Gautama and suggested to them that they organize a school for teaching the *nyāya-śāstras* there. The residents of Chapra became enthused, and although Kedaranātha did not personally become involved in its establishment, a school was founded in Chapra. In 1883 the cornerstone was laid by Sir Rivers Thompson, the then Lt. Governor of Bengal, after whom it was named. In 1866 Kedaranātha also prepared an Urdu translation of the *Manual of the Registration Department* (Balide Registry), which the government was pleased to obtain and circulated throughout the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

Relations improved between Kedaranātha and the people of Chapra. While there, however, he developed a bleeding ulcer and suffered

greatly from pain, diarrhea and vomiting. None of the medical treatments he attempted were effective. He traveled in a weakened condition to take a government service examination, but the outcome was unsuccessful. Thereafter, he went by train to Western India and for thirteen days toured Vrindavan, Mathura, Agra, Prayag, Mrijpur and Kaśi. In his autobiography he very humbly states that at this time his *bhakti* was still mixed with *jñāna*, and therefore he did not experience the pure happiness of *bhakti-rasa* in Vrindavan. He was happy, however, to see the temples, but he felt in retrospect that he had not properly honored the devotees there. In this regard, it is worth bearing in mind the example of Arjuna, who stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that his "illusion [was] dispelled". That "illusion" was not ordinary, although he appeared to act as an ordinary, confused person. The confusion or illusion he underwent was Kṛṣṇa-induced and meant for the instruction of the world. Arjuna is an eternal companion to Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the Ṭhākura, who is the "transcendental energy of Lord Caitanya" is never a mixed devotee, tinged with *jñāna*, who does not know how to respect other devotees. Rather, he is an eternal associate of the Lord who was induced to think and feel that way by the Lord's extraordinary arrangement. Lord Caitanya would reveal the glories of His eternal servant according to His own plan. That revelation was soon to come.

While returning home by train, he met a man who promised to help him by sending him an herbal prescription which would cure his illness. Upon reaching Chapra, he received the prescription but could not find an ingredient called *multāni-hing*, which he needed to complete the formula. His body continued to suffer from colitis and other pains. The Registrar General, Mr. Beverly, visited and encouraged him to study hard for the government examination. He went for the exam in Patna, and upon returning, he found that a daughter named Kadambini had been born to him. In June of 1867 he received the news that he had passed the examination. His ill health continued, and he requested a transfer. Mr. Beverly secured him one, much to the unhappiness of Mr. Holiday, his former supervisor, who liked him very much. He took up his position as Sub Registrar of Assurances of the Districts of Purneah and Kissenganj. The missing herbal ingredient was found for his

prescription, and with careful dieting and taking the herbal medication his health improved. He then received an unexpected letter from Registrar General Beverly announcing that a separate Judicial Department was being organized by the Civil Service, and that he hoped Kedaranātha would join that branch. Kedaranātha was dubious, not knowing what demands would be made of him and how many exams he might have to pass, but received reassurances from L. Dampier of the Bengal Secretariat that he would be very valuable to the state as an executive and judicial officer, and that he need fear no exam.

Preaching Days Begin

THUS, Kedaranātha, in March of 1868, was appointed Deputy Magistrate of Dinajpur. His health improved, and to his delight he found many Vaiṣṇavas residing there under the patronage of the great Zamindar of Dinajpur, Ray Saheb Kamala Lochan, who was a descendant of Rāmānanda Vasu, a great devotee of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Kedaranātha writes: "In Dinajpur the Vaiṣṇava religion was fairly strong due to Ray Kamala Lochan Saheb. There were many renunciates and *gosvāmīs* coming and going there. A few wealthy persons were supporting many assemblies of *brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas*. Respectable gentlemen would regularly come to discuss the Vaiṣṇava *dharma* with me. I had a desire to know what the genuine Vaiṣṇava *dharma* was. I wrote to our agent Pratap Chandra Ray, and he sent a published translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I also bought the book called *Bhakta-mālā*. On my first reading of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* I developed some faith in Śrī Caitanya. On the second reading I understood that there was no *paṇḍita* equal to Śrī Caitanya. Then I had a doubt: being such a learned scholar and having manifested the reality of love of Godhead to such an extent, how is it that He recommends the worship of the improper character of Kṛṣṇa? I was initially amazed at this, and I thought about it deeply. Afterwards, I prayed to the Lord with great humility, 'O Lord! Please let

me understand the mystery of this matter.' The mercy of God is without limit. Seeing my eagerness and humbleness, within a few days He bestowed His mercy upon me and supplied the intelligence by which I could understand. I then understood that the truth of Kṛṣṇa is very deep and confidential and the highest principle of the science of Godhead. From this time on, I knew God as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I made an effort to always speak with renounced Vaiṣṇava *paṇḍitas*, and I came to understand many aspects of the Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. In my very childhood the seed of faith in the Vaiṣṇava religion was planted in my heart, and now it had sprouted. From the beginning I experienced *anurāga*, and it was very wonderful."

Now we see the natural character of Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura beginning to emerge. Kṛṣṇa had covered his spiritual qualities and kept him hidden from the world under the mantle of His *yogamāyā*, but now the Ṭhākura's great mission of reviving Lord Caitanya's Movement was to begin. He states in his autobiography that from the beginning of his contact with the pure teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu he experienced *anurāga*, or spontaneous devotion.

We imagine the scene: the highly intellectual and scholarly philosopher, fully recognizing that he had found the Absolute Truth, brimming with his natural constitutional ecstasy as Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, experiencing feelings of bliss in the privacy of his study. His extraordinary ascension to the higher rungs of *bhakti* was not the gradual evolution of a conditioned soul to the point of spontaneous devotion, but rather the removing of the *yogamāyā* curtain by the Lord Himself and the ushering of His loving servant further onto the stage of the transcendental drama of his life. The pace was quickening: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was enthused by his association with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Their literary incarnations and was exhibiting all the symptoms of a liberated soul.

Kedaranātha concludes his description of this period: "Day and night I liked to read about Kṛṣṇa-tattva." Shortly thereafter, in 1868, out of his ecstatic feeling for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he wrote a Bengali poem on His glories, called *Sac-cid-ānanda-premālaṅkara*. From that time on he became famous as Sad-cid-ānanda, or one who embodies eternity,

knowledge and bliss. In early 1869, he gave a lecture to a large congregation consisting of many prominent men of letters, religion and culture who had come from many parts of India. Some interested Englishmen also attended the meeting. They had all come by the invitation of Khajanji Babu, the president of a prestigious local assembly, who was an officer in the Government of Bengal. At this time, controversy between the Dinajpur followers of Rammohun Ray, the Brahmos, who were mostly schoolmasters, and the town's more conservative Hindus was at its height. The Hindus were attempting to put the Brahmos out of caste (to ostracize them socially). The Brahmos invited the Ṭhākura to their assembly, but he informed them he was not a Brahmo, but rather the servant of the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Hindus then invited him to form an assembly for Hindus. At their first meeting, in 1869, he gave a speech, which later took the form of a book called *The Bhagavat: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics and Its Theology*. In that lecture he openly criticized the sectarianism that characterized the religious strife between the Hindus and Brahmos. He no doubt intended to instruct the angry Hindus, but at the same time he explained the defects of the Brahmos' thinking while simultaneously glorifying the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* great, universal message. The reader can easily make out the great art of the *sādhu* therein, as he cuts the illusion and attachment of conditioned souls, but at the same time presents the truth so palatably, poetically and expertly that all his hearers were pleased rather than offended. In the following excerpt from the published version, the Ṭhākura gently points out the glaring defect of Rammohan Ray's neglect of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

"The *Bhagavat* like all religious works and philosophical performances and writings of great men has suffered from the impudent conduct of useless readers and stupid critics. The former have done so much injury to the work that they have surpassed the latter in their evil consequence. Men of brilliant thoughts have gone through the work in quest of truth and philosophy, but the prejudice which they had already imbibed from its useless readers and their conduct, prevented them from making a candid investigation. Not to say of other people, the great genius of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the sect of Brahmoism,

did not think it worth his while to study this ornament of the religious library. He crossed the gate of the *Vedanta*, as set up by the Māyāvāda construction of Shankaracharya, and preferred to chalk his way out to the unitarian form of the Christian faith, converted into an Indian appearance. Ram Mohan Roy was an able man. He could not be satisfied with the theory of illusion contained in the Māyāvāda philosophy of Shankar. His heart was full of love for Nature. He saw through the eye of his mind that he could not believe in his identity with God. He ran out from the bounds of Shankar to those of the Koran. There even he was not satisfied. He then studied the preeminently beautiful precepts and history of Jesus, first in the English translations and at last in the original Greek, and took shelter under the holy banners of the Jewish Reformer. But Ram Mohan Roy was also a patriot. He wanted to reform his country in the same way as he reformed himself. He knew it fully that truth does not belong exclusively to any individual man or to any nation or particular race. It belongs to God, and man whether in the Poles or on the Equator, has a right to claim it as the property of his Father. On these grounds he claimed the truths inculcated by the Western Saviour as also the property of himself and his countrymen, and thus he established the Samaja of Brahmos independently of what was in his own country in the Beautiful *Bhagavat*." There is a footnote at this point clarifying the source of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's foregoing analysis. It runs as follows: "This is gathered from what Ram Mohan Roy told the public in the prefaces to the three dissertations, which he wrote about the precepts of Jesus as compiled by him from the Gospels and in answer to Dr. Marshman, the Serampore Missionary."

The main text continues, "His noble deeds will certainly procure for him a high position in the history of reformers. But then, to speak the truth, he could have done more if he had commenced his work of reformation from the point where the last reformer in India left it. It is not our business to go further on this subject. Suffice it to say, that the *Bhagavat* did not attract the genius of Ram Mohan Roy. His thought, mighty though it was, unfortunately branched off like the Ranigunj line of the parent Railway, from the barren station of Shankaracharya, and did not attempt for an extension from the Terminus Station of the great

Bhagavat-expounder of Nadia. We do not doubt that the progress of time will correct the error, and by a further extension the branch line will lose itself somewhere in the main line of progress. We expect such attempts in an abler reformer of the followers of Ram Mohan Roy."

In the next section the Ṭhākura recounts his own history as a "sectarian thinker" who ignored the beauty of the *Bhagavat*, and indeed outlines the defective ideas of the Calcutta intelligentsia, among whom were his good friends and associates. Thus, he spared no one, himself included!

"The *Bhagavat* has suffered alike from shallow critics both Indian and foreign. That book has been accursed and denounced by a great number of our young countrymen, who have scarcely read its contents and pondered over the philosophy on which it is founded. It is owing mostly to their having imbibed an unfounded prejudice against it when they were in the school. The *Bhagavat*, as a matter of course, has been held in derision by those teachers, who are generally of an inferior mind and intellect. This prejudice is not easily shaken off when the student grows up unless he candidly studies the book and meditates over on the doctrines of Vaishnavism. We are ourselves witnesses to the fact. When we were in college, reading the philosophical works of the West and exchanging thoughts with the thinkers of the day, we had contracted a hatred towards the *Bhagavat*. That great work seemed like a repository of ideas, scarcely adapted to the nineteenth century, and we hated to hear any argument in its favour. To us then a volume of Channing, Parker, Emerson or Newman had more weight than the whole lots of Vaishnav works. Greedily we poured over the various commentations of the Holy Bible and of the labours of the Tattwa-Bodhini Sabha, containing extracts from the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta*, but no work of the Vaishnavas had any favour with us. But when we advanced in age and our religious sentiment received development, we turned out in a manner Unitarian in our belief and prayed as Jesus prayed in the Garden. Accidentally, we fell in with a work about the Great Chaitanya, and on reading it with some attention in order to settle the historical position of that Mighty Genius of Nadia, we had the opportunity of gathering His explanations of the *Bhagavat*, given to the

wrangling Vedantists of the Benares School. The accidental study created in us a love for all the works which we could find about our Eastern Saviour. We gathered with difficulties the famous *Kurchas* in Sanskrit, written by the disciples of Chaitanya. The explanations that we got of the *Bhagavat* from these sources, were of such a charming character that we procured a copy of the *Bhagavat* complete and studied its texts (difficult of course to those who are not trained up in philosophical thoughts) with the assistance of the famous commentaries of Shreedhar Swami. From such study it is that we have at last gathered the real doctrines of the Vaishnavas. Oh! What a trouble it is to get rid of prejudices gathered in unripe years."

Here the Ṭhākura places himself before his audience (for their benefit) as a product of the prejudices and misconceptions of his time, as many of his listeners were surely just that. He presents himself as a sectarian thinker who has had his eyes opened. The Ṭhākura had been chosen by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and sent to this world as a preacher. And what better person could He have chosen to preach to the intelligentsia of the day than Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura? Here was a person who was fully conversant with all the burning issues of the day, who had a substantial intellectual background and respectable social origins, who was well studied in the major philosophies and languages of the world, and who was a pure devotee of God. He was a recognized, respectable figure, whose opinion would be seriously heard and in whose footsteps others would follow.

The Ṭhākura next takes issue with the sectarian spirit of various religions and urges the audience to become true critics with "...a comprehensive, good, generous, candid, impartial and a sympathetic soul." To his audience, some of whom were interested in putting the Brahmos out of caste, this message must have been hard for them to hear, but the Ṭhākura speaks convincingly:

"As far as we can understand, no enemy of Vaishnavism will find any beauty in the *Bhagavat*. The true critic is a generous judge, void of prejudices and party-spirit. One, who is at heart the follower of Mohammed will certainly find the doctrines of the New Testament to be a forgery by the fallen angel. A Trinitarian Christian, on the other

hand, will denounce the precepts of Mohammed as those of an ambitious reformer. The reason simply is that the critic should be of the same disposition of mind as that of the author, whose merits he is required to judge. Thoughts have different ways. One who is trained up in the thoughts of the Unitarian Society or of that of the Vedant of the Benares School, will scarcely find piety in the faith of the Vaishnavas. An ignorant Vaishnav, on the other hand, whose business is only to beg from door to door in the name of Nityānanda will find no piety in a Christian. This is, because the Vaishnava does not think in the way in which the Christian thinks of his own religion. It may be, that both the Christian and the Vaishnava will utter the same sentiment, but they will never stop their fight with each other only because they have arrived at their common conclusion through different ways of thoughts. Thus a great deal of ungenerousness enters into the arguments of the pious Christians when they pass their imperfect opinion on the religion of the Vaishnavas.

"Subjects of philosophy and theology are like the peaks of large, towering and inaccessible mountains standing in the midst of our planet inviting attention and investigation. Thinkers and men of deep speculation take their observations through the instruments of reason and consciousness. But they take their stand on different points when they carry on their work. These points are positions chalked out by the circumstances of their social and philosophical life, different as they are in the different parts of the world. Plato looked at the peak of the Spiritual question from the West and Vyasa made the observation from the East; so Confucius did it from further East, and Schlegel, Spinoza, Kant and Goethe from further West. These observations were made at different times and by different means, but the conclusion is all the same in as much as the object of observation was one and the same. They all searched after the Great Spirit, the unconditioned Soul of the Universe. They could not but get an insight into it. Their words and expressions are different, but their import is the same. They tried to find out the absolute religion and their labours were crowned with success, for God gives all that He has to His children if they want to have it. It requires a candid, generous, pious and holy heart to feel the beauties of

their conclusions. Party-spirit-that great enemy of truth-will always baffle the attempt of the enquirer, who tries to gather truth from religious works of his own nation, and will make him believe that absolute truth is nowhere except in his old religious book. What better example could be adduced than the fact that the great philosopher of Benares will find no truth in the universal brotherhood of man and the common fatherhood of God? The philosopher, thinking in his own way of thought, can never see the beauty of the Christian faith. The way, in which Christ thought of His own father, was love absolute and so long as the philosopher will not adopt that way of thinking he will ever remain deprived of absolute faith preached by the Western Saviour. In a similar manner the Christian needs adopt the way of thought which the Vedantist pursued, before he can love the conclusions of the philosopher. The critic, therefore, should have a comprehensive, good, generous, candid, impartial and a sympathetic soul."

Both Brahmos and Hindus thus duly chastened for their narrow-mindedness, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura then systematically glorifies the *Bhagavata*, its categories of knowledge: *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*, its universality, its profundity, the mysterious nature of Kṛṣṇa's sports with the gopīs, etc. A few poetic segments are excerpted here, but we urge the reader to peruse the essay in full to experience the incredible genius of the Ṭhākura's presentation.

"The *Bhagavat* is undoubtedly a difficult work and where it does not relate to picturesque descriptions of traditional and poetic life, its literature is stiff and its branches are covered in the garb of an unusual form of Sanskrit poetry. Works on philosophy must necessarily be of this character. Commentations and notes are therefore required to assist us in our study of the book. The best commentator is Sreedhar Swami and the truest interpreter is our great and noble Chaitanyadeva. God bless the spirit of our noble guides for our eternal good.

"These great souls were not mere luminaries like comets appearing in the firmament for a while and disappearing as soon as their mission is done. They are like so many suns shining all along to give light and heat to the succeeding generations. Long time yet to roll on when they will be succeeded by others of their sublime mind, beauty and calibre."

"OUR UNIQUE GUIDE IS VYASA, THE GREAT"

"The texts of Vyasa are still ringing in the ears of all theists as if some great spirit is still singing them from a distance! Badrikasram! What an awful name! The seat of Vyasa and of the selected religion of thought! The pilgrim tells us that the land is cold! How mightily did the genius of Vyasa generate the heat of philosophy in such a perpetually snowy cold region! Not only he heated the locality but sent its serene ray far to the shores of the sea! Like the great Napoleon of the political world, he knocked down empires and kingdoms of old and by-gone philosophy by the mighty stroke of his transcendental thoughts! This is real power!

"Atheistic philosophy of Shankhya, Charbak, the Jains and the Buddhists shuddered with fear at the heroic approach of the spiritual sentiments and creations of the *Bhagavat* philosopher! The army of the atheists was the legions that stood under the banner of the fallen Lucifer; but the pure, holy and spiritual soldiers of Vyasa, sent by his Almighty Father were invincibly fierce to the enemy and destructive to all the unholy and unfounded."

"NATURE OF TRANSCENDENTAL LEELA"

"The nature of transcendental Vraja-leela is liable to be misunderstood by the empiric study of the *Bhagavat*. The limit of empiric reference is reached by the speculations of the *paroksha* method. By the abandonment of empiricism, represented by the *aparoksha* method, the Brahma and Paramatma conceptions are realised. But these also are not objects of worship. We have already seen that the activity of service is possible only on the plane of the *adhokshaja*, which yields the realisation of the Majestic Personality of the Absolute as Sree Narayana. Aprakrita Vraja-leela, the central topic of the *Bhagavat*, is the highest form of *adhokshaja* realisation.

"The dalliances of Sree Krishna in Vraja have a close resemblance to unconventional mundane amour. Sexuality, in all its forms, is an essentially repulsive affair on the mundane plane. It is, therefore, impossible to understand how the corresponding transcendental activity can be the most exquisitely wholesome service of the Absolute. It is, however, possible to be reconciled, to some extent, to the truth of the

narrative of the *Bhagavat* if we are prepared to admit the reasonableness of the doctrine that the mundane world is the unwholesome reflection of the realm of the Absolute, and that this world appears in a scale of values that is the reverse of that which obtains in the reality of which it happens to be the shadow."

Shortly after the occasion of this momentous lecture, the Ṭhākura's wife gave birth to a son, but the boy died a month later. A few days later his wife's father also died. The Ṭhākura withheld news of this additional source of grief from his wife for several days and then informed her in a timely way. She suffered greatly due to these losses, and thereafter Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura began to think of leaving Dinajpur. He was awarded a promotion, and in May of 1869 received three months leave. He traveled to many places of pilgrimage. The people of Dinajpur, who regarded him very highly, lamented his absence. Returning to Dinajpur, he spent two more months there and then transferred to Champaran.

While in Champaran the Ṭhākura observed many persons worshipping a ghost, a powerful *brahma-daitya*, who was living in a Banyan tree. This ghost had the power to influence people's minds, and a local court judge, who was under his spell, repeatedly delivered court judgments which favored some bandits who were propitiating the ghost. One day, a *paṇḍita*, the father of a famous woman scholar, approached the Ṭhākura for alms, and the Ṭhākura engaged him to recite the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* beneath the tree where the ghost resided. After one month, when the reading was completed, the tree fell to the ground and the *brahma-daitya* left. The bandits were irritated, but many townspeople took inspiration from this incident and took up the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The Ṭhākura in Purī

THE Ṭhākura's family was in Ranaghat, and in his absence a son named Radhika Prasad was born. While in Dinajpur he had taken a law examination but had not passed it. In Champaran, however, he studied

law very intently and after taking the examination in Chapra, he asked for a transfer to Purī. He received it, and taking copies of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* with him he duly proceeded there. He describes his going daily for *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha thus: "Every day I went to see Jagannātha at Śrī Mandīra. At the time of *darśana* I remembered the emotions of Śrī Mahāprabhu, and I felt very blissful." For a few months he was alone in Purī, and then, after the *pūjā* season, he brought his family to a brick house he rented there. While staying alone in Purī, in 1871, the Ṭhākura composed a poem in contemplation of the *samādhi* (tomb) of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the great Professor of the Holy Name, the ninth verse of which is especially well-known and is oft quoted by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

On Haridas Samadhi
[A Saragrahi Vaishnava]

*O! Born of Moslem parents, Haridas!
 And trained in youth in Moslem creed,
 Thy noble heart to Vaishnava truth did pass!-
 Thy holy acts thy candour plead!*

*Is there a soul that cannot learn from thee
 That man must give up sect for God? -
 That thoughts of race and sect can ne'er agree
 With what they call Religion broad?*

*Thy love of God and brother soul alone
 Bereft thyself of early friends,-
 Thy softer feelings oft to kindness prone
 Led on thyself for higher ends!!*

*I weep to read that Kazees and their men
 Oft persecuted thee, alas!
 But thou didst nobly pray for th' wicked then!
 For thou wert Vaishnava Haridas!!*

*And God is boundless grace to thee, O man!
United thee to one who came
To save the fallen souls from Evil's plan
Of taking human souls to shame.*

*And he it was who led you all that came
For life eternal,-holy,-pure!
And gave you rest in Heaven's enduring name
And sacred blessings ever sure!*

*Thy body rests upon the sacred sands
Of Swargadwar near the sea,
Oh! Hundreds come to thee from distant lands
T' enjoy a holy, thrilling glee!*

*The waters roar and storming winds assail
Thy ears in vain, Ah! Vaishnava soul!
The charms of Brindaban thy heart regale,
Unknown the wheel of time doth roll!!*

*He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavas die
When thou art living still in sound.
The Vaishnavas die to live and living try
To spread a holy life around!*

*Now let the candid man that seeks to live
Follow thy way on shores of time,
Then posterity sure to him will give
Like one song in simple rhyme!*

It is clear from this wonderful poem that the inspiration the Ṭhākura derived from his arrival in Purī was tremendous, and that his heart was flooded with deep spiritual sentiments as he visited the sites of the sublime pastimes of Lord Caitanya and His eternal associates like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Meanwhile, Mr. Metcalf was so attached to the Ṭhākura's coming to a

place called Matihari, where some of the Ṭhākura's household items were stored, (that place being his first planned residence before he got the opportunity of being posted in Purī), that he would not initially release the Ṭhākura's servant who had come to fetch his effects. Finally, a disappointed Mr. Metcalf relented and let the servant go. We get some idea from this incident just how attractive the character of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was, that whole towns would lament at his departure and that officers of the British government were beginning to fight over him. This is the attractive character of great devotees: that they become dear to everyone, to the gentle and ruffians alike. Of course, the Ṭhākura was an emblem of morality and was very expert in the execution of his duties as well, and for this reason also he was much in demand and completely trusted by the government's officers. The Ṭhākura appears to have generally enjoyed very convivial relations with the British government officials, although this sort of relationship was not universally enjoyed by educated Indians. There were frequent incidents of contemptuous behavior towards them, and Indians often experienced being treated as third-class citizens. When the Ilbert Bill was passed in 1883, and it was decreed that Indian magistrates should be allowed to try Europeans brought before them, the British community was incensed, and the bill was amended so that the jury would have to be all white! Sometimes racist remarks were passed off as jokes, as for example a newspaper advertisement which read: "WANTED Sweepers, Punkah [fan] Coolies, and Bhisties [water carriers] for the residents of Saidpur. None but educated Bengali Babus who have passed the University Entrance Examination need apply. Ex-Deputy Magistrates (Bengali) preferred." However, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura never complained of any such treatment in his autobiography, and it seems clear that his overwhelming competence, intelligence and purity generally defeated even the thought of such odious behavior.

It is also clear that the British Government, who were not unaware of the spiritual significance the Indians placed on Purī, appreciated the Ṭhākura's ability to administer the law and to deal with the religious life of Purī on their behalf without aggravating the local people. From the beginning of the British presence in Orissa they had taken great pains not to disturb the faithful, and the Government thus issued the

following orders to the British officer who took charge of the town in 1803:

"On your arrival in Jagannath you will employ every possible precaution to preserve the respect due to the Pagoda and to the religious prejudices of the Brahmins and pilgrims. You will furnish the Brahmins with such guards as shall afford perfect security to their persons, rites and ceremonials, and to the sanctity of the religious edifices, and you will strictly enjoin those you command to observe your orders on this important subject with the utmost degree of accuracy and vigilance ... You will assure the Brahmins at the Pagoda of Jagannath that they will not be required to pay any other revenue or tribute to the British Government than that which they have hitherto been in the habit of paying to the Maratha Government, and that they will be protected in the exercise of their religious duties."

The Ṭhākura wrote another wonderful poem in 1871 entitled *Saragrahi Vaishnava*, which details the futility of attempts for sensory happiness, the eternality of the soul and the worthy struggle of the soul to achieve pure devotion and transcend material existence:

SARAGRAHI VAISHNAVA

*Alas, for those that spend their days
In festive mirth and joy!
The dazzling deadly liquid forms
Their heart for e'er employ!!*

*The shining bottles charm their eyes
And draw their hearts embrace!
The slaves of wine can never rise
From what we call disgrace!*

*Was man intended to be
A brute in work and heart?
Should man the Lord of all around
From common sense depart?*

*Man's glory is in common sense
Dictating us the grace,
That man is made to live and love
The beauteous Heaven's embrace!*

*The flesh is not our own alas!
The mortal frame a chain;
The soul confined for former wrongs
Should try to rise again!!*

*Why then this childish play in that
Which cannot be our own,
Which falls within a hundred years,
As if a rose ablown!*

*Our life is but a rosy hue
To go ere long to nought!
The soul alone would last for e'er
With good or evil fraught!!*

*How deep the thought of times to be?
How grave the aspect looks?
And wrapt in awe become, Oh! I
When reading Nature's books!*

*Man's life to him a problem dark!
A screen both left and right!
No soul hath come to tell us what
Exists beyond our sight!!*

*But then a voice, how deep and soft,
Within ourselves is left,-
Man! Man! thou art immortal Soul!
Thee Death can never melt!!*

For thee thy Sire on High has kept

*A store of bliss above,
To end of time, thou art Oh! His
Who wants but purest Love.*

*Oh Love! Thy power and spell benign
Now melt my soul to God!
How can my earthly words describe
That feeling soft and broad!!*

*Enjoyment-sorrow,-what but lots
To which the flesh is heir?
The soul that sleeps alone concludes
In them it hath a share!!*

*And then! my friends no more enjoy
Nor weep!for all below;-
The women, wine and flesh of beasts
No love on thee bestow!*

*But thine to love thy brother man
And give thyself to God,
And God doth know your wages fair;
This fact is true and broad!!*

*Forget the past that sleeps, and ne'er
The future dream at all,
But act in times that are with thee
And progress thee shall call!!*

*But tell me not in reasoning cold.
The soul is made alone
By earth's mechanic, lifeless rules
And to destruction prone!*

*My God who gave us life and all
Alone the Soul can kill,*

*Or give it all the joys above
His promise to fulfil!*

*So push on thy onward march O Soul!
Against an evil deed
That stands with soldiers-hate and lust!
A hero be indeed!!*

*Maintain thy post in spirit world
As firmly as you can,
Let never matter push thee down,
O stand heroic man!*

*O Sharagrahi Vaishnab soul!
Thou art an angel fair:
Lead, lead me on to Vrindaban
And spirit's power declare!!*

*There rests my Soul from matter free
Upon my Lover's arms,
Eternal peace and Spirit's love
Are all my chanting charms!!*

This great poem gives further indication of the Ṭhākura's feelings of devotion being stirred by his having the opportunity to live in the *dhāma* of the Lord. He produced an outpouring of intensely devotional writings in 1871, corresponding to his first year in Purī, which marks the dawning of a preaching spirit that is evidenced in an essay called *To Love God*, published in a journal of Tajpur on August 25th, 1871. In this short essay the Ṭhākura analyzes the great commandment of Jesus and compares the precepts of Vaiṣṇavism to it, revealing the further evolution of Christ's teaching promulgated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

"It was Christ Jesus who first said 'Love God with all thy *heart*, with all thy *mind*, with all thy *soul*, and with all thy *strength*, and love man as thy brother.' This is an absolute truth indeed; but different men put

different interpretations to this noble expression. The expressions of all great men are nice but somewhat mysterious-when understood they bring the truth nearest to the heart, otherwise they remain mere *letters* that 'kill.' The reason of the mystery is that men, advanced in their inward approach to the Deity, are in the habit of receiving revelations which are but mysteries to those behind them. The stages of progress are very much the same as the circles of spiritualism which, though not true themselves, explain a great deal about the gradual development of the soul. We have understood some spiritualists to maintain that matter when sublimated converts itself to spirit. This theory is indeed against any inward conviction. Matter is matter, and Spirit is Spirit; one of them cannot form the other. Spirit is certainly of a superior existence; though we cannot fully understand in our present state of material imprisonment, what relation Spirit does exactly bear to matter, space and time. Metaphysics apart, we decide that the human soul rises higher and higher and can understand things of which we have no idea at present. Subject to this important rule, Christ Jesus of Nazareth received and uttered the words quoted above. To readers who are a little above the scale of ordinary men, these expressions of Jesus teach, that man should *love* God with all his *heart*, (meaning the affections of the heart perceivable in all children as opposed to *hate*), with all his *mind*, (meaning the intellect which *knows* as opposed to ignorance of good things) with all his soul, (meaning that principle of the human constitution which worships the Almighty and feels its own immortality) and with all his *strength*, (meaning all *active* work).

"To the inspired, however, more things and better, and sublimer meanings appear beneath these holy words of the Inspired Jesus. He teaches man to *love* God and not to *know, infer, hate, or think* of God. He tell us that man in his *absolute* state is not the *intellect* or the *body* but is the pure Soul itself. The *essence* of the soul is wisdom and its *action* is *love absolute*. The absolute condition of man is his absolute relation to the Deity in pure *love*. Love then alone is the religion of the Soul and consequently of the whole man. The pupil asks here What have I to do with the heart?-my heart loves to see the 'sun to smile', 'to eat the sweetest dish and see a dance'. Jesus profoundly replies, 'Yes, you must

love God with all thy *heart*, your heart now runs to other things than God, but you must, as you train a bad horse, make your feelings run to the loving God.' This is one of the four principles of worship or what they call in *Vaishnava* Literature, *Shanta Rasa*. Then the pupil says, 'My Lord, the intellect takes me elsewhere from God, i.e., it wants to take me to *Positivism*; please instruct me what am I to do?' 'Yes,' replies Jesus, 'you must love God with all your mind, i.e. when you perceive, conceive, remember, imagine and reason, you must not allow yourself to be a dry thinker but must *love*. Love alone can soften the dryness of the intellect. You must develop the intellect on all good and holy things by means of love of truth, spiritual beauty and harmony.' This is the second phase of *Vaishnava* development which passes by the name of *Dashya Rasa*. The pupil then enquires whether the development of the affections and the intellect is quite enough for him. Then says the Lord, 'You must love God with thy soul also, i.e., you must perceive yourself in spiritual communication with the Deity and receive holy revelations in your sublimest hours of worship.' This is called the *Sakhya Rasa* of the Vaishnavas,-the Soul approaching the Deity in holy and fearless service. The disciple apprehends that he will be lost in such a position and will be unable to act. Then the Saviour tells him these words, 'You must love God with all thy strength or will,-you are wrong in concluding that you will lose your active existence-you will get it the more. *Work for God* and *work to God*, proceeding from no interested views but from a holy free will (which is alone the strength of man) and identifying itself with pure love, will fully engross your attention.' This description is of *Bhakti* in general. Then Jesus proceeds to tell us, 'You must love man as thy brother.' From this is inferred the fourth phase of *love* which is a feeling that all men are brothers and God is their common Father. This is *Batsalya Rasa* in its first stage of development.

"*Bhakti* (love) is thus perceived in the very first development of the man in the shape of *heart*, then in the shape of *mind*, then in the shape of *soul* and lastly in the shape of *will*. These shapes do not destroy each other but beautifully harmonize themselves into a pure construction of what we call the spiritual man or the *Ekanta* of *Vaishnava* Literature. But there is another sublimer truth behind the fact which is revealed to

a few that are prepared for it. We mean the spiritual conversion of the Soul into a woman. It is in that sublime and lofty state in which the soul can taste the sweets of an indissoluble marriage with God of Love. The fifth or the highest stage of *Vaishnava* development is *this*, which we call *Madhura Rasa*, and on this alone the most beautiful portion of the *Vaishnava* Literature so ably expatiates. This phase of human life, mysterious as it is, is not attainable by all, nay, we should say, by any but 'God's own.' It is so very beyond the reach of common men that the rationalists and even the ordinary theists cannot understand it, nay, they go so far as to sneer at it as something *unnatural*. Oh God! Reveal Thy most valuable truths to all so that Your own may not be numbered with the fanatics and the crazed and that the whole of mankind may be admitted as 'Your own.'"

The Ṭhākura invokes this beautiful prayer to the Lord: that He will reveal the topmost spiritual fortune to all of humanity and that His devotees may not be misunderstood, but seen as His dearmost servitors. This prayer exemplifies the compassionate mood that characterized Jesus Christ's preaching, the same compassion that was exhibited by Haridāsa Ṭhākura even as he was beaten by the Mohammedans, and the same compassion that Prahlāda Mahārāja exhibited in praying for the deliverance of his murderous, father and all conditioned souls.

The Chastisement of Bisakisen

THE Ṭhākura's whole family came to live in Purī. He mentions in his autobiography that his mother, his wife, Annada, Radhika, Sadu, Kadu and other relations were all staying there and getting the regular *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha. The Commissioner, Mr. T. E. Ravenshaw, was much pleased to get a person of the caliber of the Ṭhākura and asked him to watch over the affairs of the temple of Jagannātha on behalf of the Government. It was due to the exertion of the Ṭhākura that many bad practices at the temple were curbed and the offerings to

the Lord were regulated to extreme punctuality. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was much enlivened by being in Purī, where Lord Caitanya had passed His last eighteen years, and he took every opportunity to visit the sites of Lord Caitanya's final pastimes and to experience the mood of ecstatic separation from Kṛṣṇa, which was ever-present there.

In the first year of the Ṭhākura's stay in Purī, his third son, Kamala Prasad, was born. At this time the Ṭhākura was given the task of quelling the disturbance caused by a mystic yogī who claimed to be an incarnation of Mahā-Viṣṇu. A few details of this story are taken from the autobiography of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and all other details are culled from the biographical notes of Lalita Prasad Thakur, the seventh son of the Ṭhākura, and other biographers. The story is so gripping and dramatic that one may wonder about its veracity. Yet, we know that truth is both stranger and more profound than fiction, and confirmation of the events described below can be had from so many sources that they cannot be denied.

The background of the yogī Bisakisen was that he belonged to a sect called the Atibārī-sampradāya, which was started by a person called Jagannātha dāsa. In the beginning Lord Caitanya had ordered Jagannātha dāsa to be a follower of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but later Jagannātha dāsa gave up pure devotion and took shelter of Māyāvāda philosophy. Mahāprabhu rejected him, and for this reason he was called Atibārī. The Atibārī group was secretive in its practices, and the Ṭhākura states, "This group has many forged books wherein it is written that Caitanya will again appear. Among them, there are some evil-minded people who attempt to imitate Caitanya or Brahmā, and some who imitate Baladeva or Kṛṣṇa. One person known as Bisakisen, a scoundrel who had developed a little yogic power, was thought to be Mahā-Viṣṇu Himself." The yogī established a temple in the jungle near the village of Sharadaipur, and as he exhibited many mystic potencies, numerous people came to serve him. It was 'predicted' in the concocted scriptures of the Atibārīs that there would be a battle on the 14th of Caitra (March-April), and that Mahā-Viṣṇu would then reveal His four-armed form. This news was spread in the villages, and the yogī sent out a circular announcing that Bhagavān Mahā-Viṣṇu, who had descended as

Bisakisen, would deliver India from the hands of the Europeans by killing them all. He also began to exhibit various miracles to impress people. He would sit erect in front of a fire and lean into the flames for some time and then return to an erect position without injury. He could read people's minds, instantly cure diseased persons and manifest fire from his head. To those who lacked knowledge of the various yogic practices, by which *siddhis* (powers) are acquired, these events seemed extraordinary, even Godly. However, to a serious student of the doctrines of yoga, like the Ṭhākura, such powers were simply an insignificant display of material power acquired by austerity, with no real spirituality. Even to this day in India, unscrupulous persons who perform severe penances acquire these magical powers simply to get a large following and exploit their simple-minded followers for material advantages. Their naive followers often become convinced of the divinity of the rascals and worship them as God. Yet, such persons are really no better than 'confidence men' in one of the world's oldest 'con games': tiny conditioned souls masquerade as God and convince other foolish conditioned souls to accept them as such.

Two of the *yogī's* associates posed as the *guṇa-avatāras*, Brahmā and Śiva. Living in the jungle, not far from Bhuvaneswar, he established a temple, using funds that certain of the intimidated kings of Orissa had sent at his request. Some of the kings and villagers even sent women for his pleasure when he announced that he would hold a *rāsa* dance in which he would exhibit his sole supremacy and power over all women. When he actually had sexual relations with the wives of leading citizens of an Orissan town called Bringarpur, it created an outcry among the husbands and other leaders there, and they took their case to the government officials.

Mr. Ravenshaw, the English District Commissioner, was at that time in charge of the Orissan division of the National British-Indian Government. After hearing from the leaders of Bringarpur, he decided to entrust the case to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for a thorough investigation. The case was very sensitive. Bisakisen had gathered a large following of sympathizers, and he was seen as a potential threat to the security of the region, possibly capable of fomenting a local

revolution.

The Ṭhākura set out with the District Superintendent, the Chief of Police and a few constables. In the evening, just at sunset, the Ṭhākura entered the jungle where the *yogī* was staying, near the village of Sharadaipur. He found many people sitting with the *yogī*. Many sick people had come to get cured by him and were glorifying him as an incarnation of God. Upon the arrival of the Ṭhākura, the *yogī* rose from his throne and questioned him, "O babu, I know that you are a Bengali and a Magistrate. Why have you come here on this dark night?"

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura replied, "I have come to see you."

Bisakisen then rejoined, "That being the case, please sit down and hear my teachings. I am Mahā-Viṣṇu. Arising from the ocean of milk, I have come to this place, and very soon I will destroy all the Europeans, including the King of England. I have proclaimed this everywhere."

In his autobiography the Ṭhākura says, "... I went at night to that jungle and spoke at length with Mahā-Viṣṇu, and he revealed his vow to destroy the English Raj."

After saying this, Bisakisen gave the Ṭhākura a piece of palm leaf that had the very thing he had just said written on it in poetic form. Exhibiting his mystic powers, the *yogī* began to describe everything about Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda in detail, mentioning his name, mission, etc. and warned him not to try to interfere with him. He also revealed that he knew full well about the men that the Ṭhākura had brought with him, and were hiding among the trees. The Ṭhākura was not impressed, and he asked the *yogī*, "If you are Mahā-Viṣṇu, then why are you staying in this jungle and not at Purī where Śrī Jagannātha Deva resides?"

The *yogī* replied haughtily, "I am personally the Supreme Lord. There is no God at Purī. That so-called God, Jagannātha, is merely a big slab of wood. Śrī Caitanya was my beloved devotee, and I will again make India the kingdom of the Hindus. For this reason I am living in the jungle. I know that you are an excellent court judge and a good devotee as well. When the Hindu kingdom is again established, I will give you a very good position in the government. I will make you the Governor of the entire state of Orissa."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura then gravely replied, "The tiny living entity can never become God. Rāvaṇa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Śiśupāla, Dantavakra and many others who came under the influence of this arrogant mentality, were all destroyed."

The *yogī*, in order to impress the Ṭhākura with his power, then called before him many people with incurable diseases, and in a moment made them well. One person was suffering with a spear wound. The *yogī* brought him under his control and produced some ashes which he smeared on the wound. Immediately the wounded man was well and free of pain. The Ṭhākura was not moved, correctly seeing the *yogī* as an offender to the Lord, using God-given powers for his own self-aggrandisement. Leaving some spies to watch the *yogī*, the Ṭhākura spent the night in a tent at Sharadaipur. The *yogī* had to be arrested, but first further investigation needed to be made. The next day the Ṭhākura traveled to the villages in the region to gather reports from the people. In some villages he heard praise, but others were angry about the *yogī's* affairs with married women and were anxious that this fever of attraction to the *yogī* might spread to the women of their own villages and result in scandal and humiliation.

Thereafter, the Ṭhākura gave the order to arrest the *yogī*, and seeing his men fearful, he personally led them, bringing with him two police inspectors, a police superintendent and over one-hundred armed policemen. They arrived in the early morning hours. A sacrificial fire was burning in front of Bisakisen and well over a thousand followers were present. Many were offering prayers to the *yogī*. The Ṭhākura and the policemen appeared on the perimeter of the crowd. When the *yogī's* followers saw the red-turbaned policemen, armed with rifles and bayonets, many of them began to flee. News was quickly spread to the villages that the Government had sent an army to arrest the *avatāra* of God! Bisakisen sat observing all of this calmly. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura approached him. There was a short silence. "Babu, what is the meaning of all this?" asked the *yogī* with apparent serenity. "They have come to take you. It is the Governor's order that you should be brought to Purī," replied the Ṭhākura.

The *yogī* replied harshly, "Who is this Governor? I am King, for I am

the Supreme Godhead and master of all the universes. I bow down before no one. Let us see who is able to take me away from this place!"

"If you do not go peacefully, we will be obliged to take you away by force," replied the Ṭhākura sternly.

Becoming enraged, the *yogī* cried, "I order you to immediately leave this place! Let us see who has the power to take me!" Saying this, the *yogī* shook his head violently, whereupon hundreds and hundreds of fiery flames like burning snakes began to fly out of his matted locks. The *yogī's* eyes then became bright red and sparks of fire shot out of them. Seeing this, the police force was terrified and fell back apace.

"Bisakisen!" declared the Ṭhākura, "You may show us as much magic as you like, and we certainly will not forget it. However, you are an offender at the feet of the Supreme Lord. Although you are an insignificant living being, you are proclaiming yourself to be God, but actually you despise God. Furthermore, you are a rebel. You must go to Purī, where you will be judged."

The *yogī* shouted, "I will not go! My power remains, therefore-go away!"

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda ordered four police constables to bring a bullock cart from the nearby village. As they waited for the cart the Ṭhākura preached to the irate *yogī*: "You must give up your deluded mentality and admit your imperfection. Your mystic powers are very insignificant in comparison to the opulences of the Supreme Godhead and the greatness of the Lord's devotees. I request you to correctly understand this just once."

The *yogī* reacted like a trampled snake, "You obviously do not know who I am. If I, just once, ignite the fire of my anger, the three worlds will burn into ashes, but because I am very kind to the universe I am not doing it."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura began to laugh, "*Accha*," he said, "let us now go to Purī. When we get there you can display the fire of your anger." By this time, the bullock cart had arrived. Seeing no way out of his predicament, the *yogī* ascended the cart, but before doing so he announced to the Ṭhākura, "It is the word of the devotee that the

Supreme Lord protects, therefore I am only going to Purī to protect your word that you would bring me there."

On the way to Purī, the Ṭhākura began writing up his judgment of the case to date. As the Ṭhākura wrote, the *yogī* began exhibiting his mystic powers from the back of the cart. The Ṭhākura noted them but remained steadfast. Upon arriving in Purī the *yogī* was placed in solitary confinement until the trial. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura put three-dozen Moslem constables and seventy-two Cuttack policemen in charge of guarding his cell day and night. He then departed to arrest the false Brahmā and Śiva, who later pleaded that they had been coerced into their respective roles by Bisakisen. They were prosecuted by Mr. Taylor, who was the Sub-division Officer at Kodar.

Bisakisen fasted from both food and water and did not sleep at all. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura repeatedly requested him to eat and gave him many valuable spiritual instructions, but Bisakisen would not hear him. During the pre-trial period many Orissan people took up a collection and hired a lawyer to defend Bisakisen in court.

The trial lasted eighteen days. It was held in the district court at Purī. Almost one-thousand of the *yogī's* followers and sympathizers gathered outside the courthouse during the trial, shouting their demands for the *yogī's* release. On the fifth day of the trial, court was adjourned for the day. At the completion of the sixth day's hearings, Bisakisen ominously threatened the Ṭhākura, "Babu, you must immediately desist from prosecuting me or everything you have will be destroyed. Go to your home now and see what disaster is taking place there."

When he arrived at his home, he found his second daughter, seven year old Kadambini, afflicted with some deadly disease and high fever, repeatedly losing consciousness. Loud sounds of lamentation filled the house, but the Ṭhākura did not fail in his determination, for he knew that the Lord would protect him from the insignificant powers of a *yogī*. Many doctors came to attend his daughter, and by eight o'clock in the morning she was well, and playing in the courtyard. The Ṭhākura's wife, Śrīmatī Bhāgavatī Devī, became very anxious for the safety of their children, and she pleaded with her husband to let Bisakisen go before he destroyed their whole family. "Yes, let us all die," the Ṭhākura replied,

"but this rascal must be punished!"

The Ṭhākura recalls the period in his autobiography: All over Purī there were disturbances. At that time the Purī School had a fire, and all of the people suspected him. Also at this time Kadur [a nickname for Kadambini] came down with fever. Bisakisen, by his practice of *yoga*, had by some means attained yogīc powers, and I obtained a lot of evidence against him. For twenty-one days he did not eat or drink even a drop of water, but he did not show any weakness and gave unfailing cures to many people."

On the seventeenth day of the trial, when the court rose for recess, Bisakisen stood up and screamed violently at the Ṭhākura, "Did you see what great calamity occurred at your house the other day? Still you are not coming to your senses! When will you be able to recognize me as the Supreme Lord? The final day of my judgment will be your death! What is the punishment for one who disrespects an *avatāra*? How Death sits on the seat of judgment and gives out his commands, I will see!"

When Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda returned home in the late afternoon of that day, he took off his court clothes, and all of a sudden he felt a sharp pain on the right side of his chest. As the night went on, the pain increased. The Ṭhākura was unshaken in his determination, but it was unclear how he would be able to enter the court in such a condition to give his final judgment. In the morning the severe pain persisted. Finally, by about 10 A.M. he felt a slight subsiding of the pain, and he was ready to write the judgment. He was unable to walk and had to be carried to his palanquin. On that final day a thousand of the *yogī*'s followers again gathered in front of the courthouse and created a terrific din. Inside, the trial ensued. The Ṭhākura's decision was announced: 'Bisakisen is found guilty of political conspiracy against the National British-Indian Government, as well as the State Government of Orissa, and therefore is sentenced to eighteen months of strict imprisonment and hard labor.' When the huge crowd outside received the news of Bisakisen's sentence, they made a tremendous uproar and began to cry in unison, "Injustice! Injustice!"

Bisakisen was being led away from the court, when suddenly the District Medical Officer, Doctor Walters, jumped on the rascal from

behind and cut off his long hair with a large pair of scissors. The English officer had come to know from his studies of *yoga* that *yogīs* often conserve their powers in their hair. As soon as the matted locks of Bisakisen were cut, he fell to the floor devoid of all power and unable to walk. The pain in the body of the Ṭhākura vanished, and the *yogī* was removed from the courtroom on a stretcher. When his followers saw that 'God' had been overcome by having his hair removed, most of them deserted him. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls in his biography: "When his hair was cut, his followers said that he was a cheater and left him."

The Ṭhākura walked home peacefully. Bisakisen was held in the Purī jail for three months and then transferred to the central jail in Medinipur. In 1873, while still in prison, he took poison and died. After the rise of Bisakisen, there were other so-called incarnations. In Yajpur a 'Brahmā' took over Bisakisen's former group and was similarly punished, and in Khandagiri, a 'Balarāma' made his attempt but was also swiftly thwarted. Just as Durvāsā Muni had attempted to punish the pure devotee Ambarīṣa Mahārāja but was himself punished, a similar attempt was made on Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, but by the grace of the Lord he was fully protected and victorious.

The Ṭhākura sent a letter to the editor of a Cuttack newspaper called Progress after the trial of Bisakisen and described the evils of the Atibārī sect, as well as the rise of the other imposter incarnations. The article is so interesting and so devastating a critique that we reproduce it here in full as it appeared in the *Harmonist* in November of 1928:

TO THE EDITOR, PROGRESS

Aug. 18, 1871

Dear Sir,

There is a class of men in Orissa who pass by the name of *Attibaris*. They say that they are Vaishnavas but in fact they are quite opposed to the principles of Vaishnavism. This sect originated with one Jaganath Das who flourished at the time when Mahāprabhu Chaitanya Deva of Nadia entered Purī with a view to propagate the genuine principles of

the Vaishnava creed. Jaganath Das was indeed a man of great acquirements in the Sanskrit language. He translated the *Sreemad Bhagabata* into *Uria* poetry as also the *Bhagabat Geeta*, the most instructive book in the Hindu literature. The translations are, however, free and contain more things than the original works themselves. The *Urias*, [the people of Orissa] especially those who are below the Brahmins, are very fond of reading these translations. As a citizen of Calcutta you might have several times heard the *Uria* bearers reading these translations in their Palkee Addas in the City of Palaces [Calcutta].

Though the translation of the *Bhagabat* by Jaganath Das is generally liked by all classes of the *Urias*, yet there is a special class of men who considered themselves as spiritually led by him. These men are the *Attibaris*. Most of them belong to the lower classes.

The *Attibari* is both a religionist and a politician like the Mohammedan fanatics that go by the name of Wahabees. In religion they occupy a very curious position. They say that they worship One Great God who is without any form whatever. They appear to have no conception about the Spiritual Personality of the Deity, nor do they believe that the human soul lasts in distinction from God after salvation. In fact, they hold a similar idea with the great commentator of the Vedanta Darshana, I mean Sankaracharjea, the leader of the *Adwaitavadis*. But they at the same time believe that the Jaganath in the Temple at Purī is the highest ideal of God. In fact they worship the idol as if it were the unconditioned Deity himself. They do not believe all the Shastras but they attempt to choose principles out of them. They believe, however, that they are the highest class of religionists in the world and the Absolute Truth is alone with them. They several times profess that they are true *Brahmagyanis* and that the present Brahmas are but Christians, the name Brahma being a misnomer with them. The *Attibaris* like the old Roman Catholics in the Middle Ages still receive revelations from the Deity and speak sometimes face to face with him. For this reason every learned *Attibari* is a prophet, and has his *Malika* or a series of revelations. Go to one of them and he will tell you in which year and under which circumstances the world will end! They

sometimes perform some ceremonies of the Yoga philosophy, and attempt to work physical wonders. They are addicted to the smoking of Ganja and taking of opium, and it is when they are under the influence of these intoxicating articles, that they are in the habit of receiving revelations! Most of them are married men living in their own houses and dislike the life of ascetics. They are often very bold and address other people in mysteriously awkward terms. In fact, those of the *Urias* who are intelligent enough to understand matters but have received no good education, turn out *Attibaris*. In whole of Orissa, I believe, there are about 15,000 men of this class! We understand it on very good authority that they have a sort of brotherhood like the Free Masons, amongst themselves, which unites them in a strong affection towards each other. They often keep communication amongst themselves in mysterious expressions and signs, and thus the *Attibaris* at Balasore are often kept informed of what is going on with the *Attibaris* at Purī which is about eight days' journey from the former station.

We would have been led to compare this class of fanatics with Bauls [Bauls] of Bengal, had there not been another characteristic to distinguish them from the latter, I mean the political characteristic of the *Attibaris*. The main object of the class is to bring about some political revolution in the province by means of circulating false rumours in the shape of revelations. Their *Malikas* (as the revelations are called by them) generally declare the period when there will be an incarnation of the Deity to destroy the present ruling authority. By mysterious words they advise their fellow brethren to be ready for the time and eagerly await for the *Avatar*! These circulations are not solely to be attributed to the *ganja* to which they are addicted, but to a desire which they foster in them to enjoy money and women belonging to the credulous fools that live far from the light of education. An *Attibari* is looked upon in the interior as one saint of Heaven to deliver the souls of sinners and to give them worldly aggrandisement when necessary. People sometimes visit them with a view to get rid of chronic diseases and women generally solicit the favour of their giving them children and domestic comfort. The trials of a couple of cases in criminal courts at Purī and Khurda have brought to light a great deal about the doings of

the *Attibari* imposters in the muffosil. The Khurda case has disclosed that one of them turned out to be an incarnation of Balaram and prophesied to the people that he had come to make a political revolution in Orissa, the chosen place of the Deity. By this false rumour he acquired a great reputation and corrupted a number of females belonging to the higher classes of the inhabitants. He was worshipped as a God and was surrounded by thousands as a Raja ruling his own realm. He continued to send out his *Malikas* and to increase the number of fanatics till the Deputy Magistrate, Mr. Taylor, tried him and sent him to imprisonment! The other imposter was working his way near the Temple of Bhubaneswar in a small village not even a mile from the Jaganath Road. He was also being worshipped as an incarnation of Mahavishnu. Females from the surrounding villages came to worship him in the dead of night and he declared his *Mahaprasad* as sacred as that of Jaganath. He continued in this way, till some of the aggrieved Brahmins of Bhubaneswar came to him and asked him the authority under which he was thus acting. He plainly declared to them that the authority of the British Government was about to cease and a Dulbehara of Khurda was to be the ruler for Orissa. All those who would oppose his practice were to suffer in a short time from his divine wrath. This terrified those who came to enquire but the matter was communicated to the authorities by one of them. Babu Kedar Nath, the Deputy Magistrate, was deputed to enquire and submit a report. It was through the exertions of that officer that the imposter was brought to trial and punished!!

It was rumoured that a large number of imposters of this class rose simultaneously in several parts of Orissa, but when they heard of the trials of the two alluded to above, they got afraid and kept silent.

Such is the character of the Attibaris! How horrible they are! We would advise the Cuttack Editors to expose these characters and try to correct them. If they want to be patriotic, they ought to save their motherland from the hands of the Attibaris and Alluks. With all the attempts for improvement, Orissa will never rise till these wicked and designing members of the *Attibari* class are converted into 'Honest Citizens'. [End]

Vaiṣṇava Studies and Two Mahātmās

ŚRĪLA Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura made great strides in his studies at Purī. He describes them in his autobiography: "I appointed Goṇinātha Paṇḍita as my tutuor and with his assistance I first studied the twelve cantos of the *Bhāgavatam* with Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentaries." Two other *paṇḍitas* named Harihara dāsa and Mārkaṇḍeya Mahāpatra, who had studied *nyāya* [logic] and *Vedānta* at Navadvīpa and Benares, studied with him. Being a little weak in grammar, which he had originally studied with Isvara Chandra Vidyasagara and Dvijendranatha Tagore in Calcutta, he resumed his studies and gradually learned to compose in Sanskrit. "After finishing the *Bhāgavata* I made a copy of the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha* [by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī] and read it. Then I copied and read the *Vedānta* commentary, *Govinda-bhāṣya*, written by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Next, I read the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* [by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī]. Then I made a copy of the *Hari-Bhakti-kalpalatikā*." The latter work was an unsigned manuscript found by the Ṭhākura, which he was much impressed by. It was later published by him and thereafter by his son, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

The Ṭhākura also studied *Prameya-ratnāvalī* and other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava classics which he was able to secure from the library of the Rāja in Purī and from the homes of Vaiṣṇava *paṇḍitas*. His study and worship were intense, and he quickly became well-versed in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. He composed a book in Sanskrit called *Datta-kaustubha* in 1874, 104 verses on Vaiṣṇava philosophy with commentary, and he began composing the *ślokas* of *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*, one of his best known works.

While living in Purī, the Ṭhākura formed a society of devotees called the *Bhāgavata-saṁsat*, which held meetings in the Jagannātha-vallabha gardens for the purpose of discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa. These gardens were the former *bhajana* site of Rāmānanda Rāya, the great follower of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Many Vaiṣṇavas and *paṇḍitas* attended the discourses, but one saintly devotee named Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī

refused to join, due to a misunderstanding about the society's function and because the Ṭhākura was not wearing the traditional Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* and Tulasī neck beads. He even requested other Vaiṣṇavas not to attend the meetings, for he did not consider the Ṭhākura to be a real devotee. The Ṭhākura's biographer, Paramānanda Vidyāratna, and others recount the details of this incident. After criticizing the Ṭhākura, the *bābājī* became afflicted with a severe illness. One night in a dream, Lord Jagannātha appeared to him and told him to pray for the mercy of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda if he wanted release from certain death. In the *Gaura-parśada-caritāvalī* by Hari-kṛpa dāsa (a work containing biographical sketches of many great Vaiṣṇavas) it is mentioned that upon awakening, the *bābājī* quickly approached the Ṭhākura's residence and fell at his feet begging forgiveness for his offense. He spoke humbly to the Ṭhākura saying, "I noticed that you never wore Tulasī beads on your neck nor *tilaka* on your forehead, and because of this I disrespected you and have committed an offense. Please forgive me." The Ṭhākura replied, "Bābājī Mahāśaya, what is my crime? The Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* and Tulasī neck beads are given by the *dikṣā-guru*, but so far Mahāprabhu has not sent me a *dikṣā-guru*. I therefore just chant the Holy Name on Tulasī beads. In this situation would it be good to whimsically wear *tilaka* or neck beads?"

The Ṭhākura recounts: "Bābājī Mahāśaya was a *siddha-puruṣa* [a perfected soul], therefore he could understand everything ... he praised me and showed mercy to me. And I became his follower." The Ṭhākura arranged some medicines to help cure the *bābājī* and completely forgave him for any offense. From that time on, Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī had nothing but praise for the Ṭhākura's Vaiṣṇava qualities.

On the way to the *samādhi* of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, near the Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha Temple, was the *bhajana-kutira* (cottage or hut where one worships the Holy Name by constant chanting) of Sanātana Gosvāmī. Some great renunciates regularly met there to chant the holy name. An especially great soul in that gathering, who later associated with Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī, was known as Svarūpa dāsa Bābājī. The Ṭhākura recognized him as a *paramahansa* and often visited him and sought his association. He describes the activities of this saintly person in the following way: "All day he would perform *bhajana* within his small

cottage, and in the evening he would come outside and pay his prostrated obeisances to the Holy Tulasī tree. Then he would loudly chant the Holy Name and sing, dance and cry in ecstasy. At this time many Vaiṣṇavas would come to get his *darśana* [audience]. Some of them would offer him small handfuls of Jagannātha *prasāda*. In order to satisfy his hunger, he would consent to accept it, but he would not accept much. At this time one of the Vaiṣṇavas would read from *Caitanya-bhāgavata* or other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literatures, and he would listen. By 10 PM. he would go into his *kutira* and again start his *bhajana*. In the middle of the night he would go to the shore of the ocean alone, wash his face and take a complete bath. He did this for fear that some Vaiṣṇava would perform some service for him without his knowledge. Since he was blind in both eyes, the question arises: how could he go to the ocean in the middle of the night to take his bath? Only Mahāprabhu knows. There was no doubt that he was a *siddha-puruṣa*, a spiritually perfected soul. He did not have a single material desire. In the evening I would sometimes go to take *darśana* of his lotus feet. He would talk with the people and his speech was very sweet. He instructed me, *kṛṣṇa-nāma bhulibe nā*-'Never forget the name of Kṛṣṇa.'

The Ṭhākura further comments on this period of his life in his autobiography: "While in Purī I made much advancement in devotional service. I became more detached from worldly life. [Any idea I might have had] that worldly progress produces anything of lasting value was gone forever. Almost every evening I would go to the temple to see the Lord, to hear and chant the Holy Name and associate with the devotees... On one side of the Temple was the Mukti Maṇḍap. The *brāhmaṇas* would sit there and give some instruction, but all of them were Māyāvādīs [impersonalists]. When I would pass them my mind would become disturbed [because of the blasphemy they promulgated]. Therefore, I would sit near the Goddess Lakṣmī Mandira or the Mahāprabhu Pāda-padma. When I was sitting there many of the *paṇḍitas* from the Mukti Maṇḍap would come and sit [with me]." This place is in a sub-temple within the walls of the Jagannātha Mandira, and it contains the divine footprints of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Many of the Māyāvādīs became devout Vaiṣṇavas by receiving the association of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at what came to be known as the Bhakti Maṇḍap, where he

lectured on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

One day, while Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda and the Vaiṣṇavas were sitting in the Bhakti Maṇḍap reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Rāja of Purī, along with about fifty of his attendants, burst noisily into the meeting. The Ṭhākura was unable to tolerate the king's disrespectful behavior towards the Vaiṣṇavas and the *Bhāgavatam*. The biographer Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda mentions in his *Śrī Kṣetra* that the Ṭhākura addressed the king as follows: "You have the right to hold the position of kingship over your small kingdom, but the Supreme Lord, Jagannātha Puruṣottama, is the King of all kings. Therefore, it is mandatory that you show respect to His Bhakti Maṇḍap, where His glories are daily sung." Realizing he had behaved badly, the King of Purī bowed down to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas and begged them to forgive his offenses. At various holy places celebrated by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, specifically the Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha Temple, the *samādhi* of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the Siddha Bakula tree and the Gambhīrā (the private apartment of Śrī Caitanya), the Ṭhākura spent long hours absorbed in discussing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and chanting the holy name. He devoted much time to discussion of the scriptures, and he prepared notes on the *Vedānta-sūtra* later used by Śyāmalal Gosvāmī, who published the notes in his edition of the *Vedānta-sūtra* with the commentary of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, *Govinda-bhāṣya*.

The Ṭhākura recalls his stay in Purī with happiness: "Just as the Jagannātha Temple is very lofty and beautiful, so also the service to the Deity was wonderful. To see it was charming to the mind. Daily, from five- to seven-hundred people were present to see the routine festivals like the evening *ārati*, etc. What bliss! Many kinds of pilgrims came from all over India to attend the religious festivals. Seeing that, one's eyes are soothed. O Lalu, [his son, Lalitā Prasad] when you behold all these pastimes with a pure heart, only then can these events be understood. There were many celebrations, like Dola-yātrā, Ratha-yātrā, etc.... Taking many constables ... I made such great exertions to oversee the pilgrims-how can I write of it all? I would make favorable arrangements for the pilgrims to see the Deity and take *prasāda*, and I would hear the people's complaints ... I spent my time in Purī in great happiness, seeing the festivals, acquiring knowledge and devotion. Puruṣottama-kṣetra is

directly Vaikuṅṭha [the spiritual world], what doubt is there?"

In 1874, Bimal Prasad, the fourth son of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, took his birth, and the Ṭhākura mentions that all of the auspicious ceremonies such as *anna-prasana* (first eating of grains) were performed with Jagannātha *prasāda*. Later this son, (as has been documented in *A Ray of Vishnu*, Volume I of this series: *Lives of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*), would come to be known as a Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, the Founder of the Gauḍīya Math and spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Royal Conspiracy

LALITA Prasad Ṭhākura recounts in his biographical notes that an attempt was made on the life of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda by the Rāja of Purī. In 1874, 80,000 rupees were misappropriated from the Jagannātha Temple by the Rāja. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda learned of this and punished the king by obliging him to offer Lord Jagannātha *naivedya* (cooked food) fifty-two times per day. The Rāja's treasury was soon depleted, and in anger, he decided to avenge himself by assassinating the Ṭhākura. The Ṭhākura's position (by this time he had been promoted and given the full powers of a Magistrate with specific responsibility for the Jagannātha Temple) was very strong, and he was popular and famous in the District. Thus, as he would have immediately been arrested, the Rāja could not risk killing him by ordinary means. The king therefore organized a secret fire sacrifice in the inner apartments of the palace with fifty *paṇḍitas* in attendance chanting *mantras*, with the intention of killing the Ṭhākura by mystic influence. Although all of this was conducted with the utmost secrecy, still, information of the king's activities was daily passed to the Ṭhākura by informants. After thirty days of *yajña* (sacrifice), when the last oblation of clarified butter was being poured on the fire, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda was to have died. Instead, at that very moment, the Rāja's dear and only son perished

within the palace. In recalling this period in his autobiography, the Ṭhākura mentions it indirectly: "The king and other persons connected with the temple used to commit many illegal acts. I would go there to prevent all such things, and thus I made enemies of the king and the king's men. Because I was helped by Lord Jagannātha no one was able to harm me in any way."

After five years of service, the Ṭhākura left Jagannātha Purī to settle urgent family business, and he was subsequently posted at different places in Bengal, where he visited various holy pilgrimage sites. During this time his fifth son, Varada Prasad, took birth in Ranaghat. The Ṭhākura went to Calcutta, and there he met his old friend, Mr. Heiley, who was at that time the Inspector General of Jails. Mr. Heiley was very sick and weak but was very affectionate to the Ṭhākura, and he asked him many questions. Thereafter, a kind of tug-of-war took place between different government officials as to where the Ṭhākura would be posted, and, with the help of Mr. Heiley, the Ṭhākura was appointed to Arraria. There the Ṭhākura became ill with a urinary disease, and he took two-month's sick leave. His condition gradually improved. In November of 1877 he transferred to Mahibarekha, near Calcutta, where there were serious problems with police corruption. As usual, he took every opportunity to visit the holy places in the region. He was again transferred, this time to Bhadrak, was promoted to Deputy Magistrate there and continued his duties. While he was resident in Bhadrak, Mr. Robbins wrote him a very affectionate letter from Orissa, practically begging him to return to Purī. On July 11, 1878, the Government issued the Ṭhākura Summary Power and in August transferred him to Narail. In Narail there was a good deal of service for the Ṭhākura, and he became very popular with the townsfolk. Again he took every opportunity to tour the region, and he was met with great affection by all the people, who would serenade him with the Holy Name when he arrived in their villages. In Narail the Ṭhākura had severe fevers on a number of occasions, so he began exclusively drinking green coconut milk instead of water. He quickly regained his health.

Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā and Other Works

IN 1880, while residing in Narail, the Ṭhākura published *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*. This book received high critical acclaim, even from European scholars like Dr. Reinhold Rost, a great Oriental scholar of the day and a famous linguist. He wrote from London on April 16, 1880: "A long and painful illness has prevented me from thanking you earlier for the kind present of your Sree Krishna Samhita. By representing Krishna's character and his worship in a more sublime and transcendent light than has hitherto been the custom to regard him in, you have rendered an essential service to your co-religionists, and no one would have taken more delight in your work than my departed friend Goldstucker, the sincerest and most zealous advocate the Hindus ever had in Europe."

The Ṭhākura also mentions receiving a letter some years later from the famous American 'transcendentalist', Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose works he had earlier studied. The Ṭhākura had felt inspired to send the famous philosopher a copy of his book and got the following response:

10th May 1886, Concord, Massachusetts

Dear Sir, I have received with pleasure the book you so kindly sent me. I am sorry that I do not know the language and cannot read it and can only send my thanks.

R Waldo Emerson.

The *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* contained an eighty-three page introduction in Bengali prose in which Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discussed the philosophy and development of Indian religion from both the historical and geographical perspectives. The *saṁhitā* portion comprised 281 Sanskrit verses divided into ten chapters, which discuss the spiritual world, the energies of God, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, His incarnations, Kṛṣṇa as the original personality of Godhead, and the confidential associates of the Lord. Accompanying the Sanskrit verses were the Ṭhākura's Bengali prose translations and explanations. Concluding the book was a forty-three page resume in which he presented the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in terms of *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*, just as he

had done in his *Bhagavat* lecture, which exactly followed Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's presentation of *Bhāgavata* philosophy in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and Jīva Gosvāmī's presentation in the *Sandarbhās*. In 1880 the Ṭhākura also published a small book of songs, called *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* ('The Desire Tree of Auspiciousness'), which describes spiritual life from the beginning stages up to the highest levels of transcendence. It seems clear from the extremely elevated sentiments expressed by the Ṭhākura therein that his pure devotion had fully manifested at this stage of his life. The book is organized into three major 'branches': (1) *Upadeśa*-Advice. In this section the Ṭhākura describes in nineteen songs the various *anarthas* (unwanted things) that can deviate the practitioner from pure devotional service, beginning with the *anartha* that brought the soul into this world: lust. He exposes all of the impediments in order to prepare the reader for the next stage: (2) *Upalabdhī*-Attainment. This section describes how one must attain, assimilate, realize and apply all of the advice in the first section, and it is further divided into three divisions: (i) *anutāpa*-repentance due to genuine realization; (ii) *nirveda*-detachment from material temptations; (iii) *sambandha-abhidheya-prayojana-vijñāna*-realization in knowledge of one's relationship with the Supreme, realization of practical action in accordance with that relationship, and realization of the ultimate goal of life. (3) *Ucchvāsa*-Spiritual Emotion. This section describes the ecstatic sentiments of a self-realized soul and is divided into four sections: (i) prayers offered by a pure soul in transcendental humility; (ii) prayers which express hankering for devotional service; (iii) confession of the mind with pleading in petition to the Lord; (iv) songs of worship and praise which describe the name, form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord, as well as the devotional mellows exchanged with the Lord. At the end of the book, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura falters in his description, feeling apprehensive about describing the intimate exchanges of a pure soul with the Lord. He takes this feeling of hesitancy as an indication from Kṛṣṇa that such things should not be described to those lacking sufficient advancement to appreciate them, and he ends his songbook there.

This book was very well received and very popular, and one of the Ṭhākura's biographers correctly states: "...it may very truly be termed an

immortal work and stands on the same level as the divine writings of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura." The Ṭhākura reports in his autobiography that the songbook was "received with affection".

While in Narail the Ṭhākura also started his great monthly Vaiṣṇava journal, *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, which was written in Bengali and was meant to educate the learned and influential men of Bengal about the sublime nature of Lord Caitanya's mission and teachings. Seventeen volumes were published over the years which included many articles by the Ṭhākura, and after his departure, his son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, took up the work and printed it in several languages, including an English edition called *The Harmonist*.

Initiation and Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī

THE Ṭhākura was feeling an urgent need to take initiation from some suitable *guru*. He relates: "I had been searching for a suitable *guru* for a long time, but I did not obtain one. I was very unhappy ... I was feeling very anxious, and in a dream Mahāprabhu diminished my unhappiness. In that dream I received a little hint. That very day I became happy. One or two days later Gurudeva wrote a letter to me saying, 'I will soon come and give you *dīkṣā*.' After this, Vipina-vihārī Gosvāmī visited the Ṭhākura at Narail and gave him Vaiṣṇava *dīkṣā*.

Vipina-vihārī Gosvāmī was a family descendant of Śrīla Vamśī Vadanānanda Ṭhākura, an associate of Lord Caitanya who was given the charge of caring for Lord Caitanya's mother and wife after the Lord took *sannyāsa*. He was a disciplic descendant in a line coming from Jāhnavā Devī, the wife of Lord Nityānanda. The Ṭhākura has written at the end of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā*:

*vipina-vihārī prabhu mama prabhu-vara
śrī-vamśī-vadanānanda-vamśā-śaśadhara*

"My exalted spiritual master, Vipina-vihārī Prabhu, is the brilliant moon in the family of Śrī Vamśī Vadanānanda

At the end of the Ṭhākura's commentary on Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta he has also written:

vipina-vihārī hari, tāra śakti avatāri
vipina-vihārī prabhu-vara
śrī-guru-goswāmī-rūpe, dekhi more bhava-kūpe,
uddhārilo āpana kiṅkara

"The eminent Vipina-vihārī Prabhu, who is the manifestation of the transcendental energy of Lord Hari, Who sports in the forests of Vraja, has descended in the form of the spiritual preceptor. Seeing me in the dark well of worldly existence, he has delivered this humble servant of his."

In 1881, towards the close of the Ṭhākura's stay in Narail, he felt inspired to go again to Vrindavan, which he had last visited in 1866. He set out on a three-month pilgrimage along with his wife, Lalitā Prasad (then a small child) and two servants. After arriving he began to suffer from fever, and so he prayed to the Lord to relieve him for the duration of his stay in the Dhāma, and afterwards, if He liked, He could again purify him with fever. The fever vanished. While he was in Vrindavan he associated with different *sādhus*. He took *prasādam* at the *kuñja* (garden) of Rūpa dāsa Bābājī, and there he heard the *Daśaślokī* of Nimbarkācārya, the great leader of the disciplic succession coming from Lakṣmī, or Śrī. He also met Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja for the first time. The Bābājī gave many spiritual instructions to the Ṭhākura, and he later became the instructing *guru* of the Ṭhākura and an instrumental figure in the discovery of the birthsite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī divided his time in later years between Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma and Śrī Māyāpura-dhāma, six months in one and six months in the other. He was the spiritual leader of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community in Navadvīpa and a perfectly realized soul. He became increasingly important to the Ṭhākura as a source of spiritual inspiration and direction, and therefore in the listing of our line of disciplic succession as given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he reckons the *śikṣā* link between his father and Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī to be of paramount importance, relegating his *dikṣā* relationship with Vipina-vihārī Gosvāmī to a lesser status by omission. Vipina-vihārī

Gosvāmī initially enjoyed a very sweet relationship with the Ṭhākura, but later he is said to have been neglected by the Ṭhākura due to a disagreement about the position of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. He also assisted the Ṭhākura in his preaching work, but his spiritual advancement was not at the same level as the 'Commander-in-chief of the Vaiṣṇavas', as Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī came to be called by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. [See *Lives of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, Volume III, for the biography of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.]

While traveling in the Dhāma to places like Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Govardhana, etc. the Ṭhākura came to know of a band of dacoits (bandits) called the Kanjhars. Pandit Satkari Chattopadhyaya Siddhanta Bhushan writes: "...These powerful bandits spread all over the roads surrounding that holy place and used to work havoc on innocent pilgrims for the purpose of extorting the last farthing they possessed. We cannot possibly recount how many murders were committed by these brutes to gain their selfish ends as these accounts hardly come to light in facts and figures. It was said that these ruffians had at their back some unscrupulous persons who had the authority and power over the people. It was through his undaunted will and untiring labour for several months that the whole fact was brought to the notice of Government, and a special Commissioner appointed to crush the whole machinery set up by these Kanjhars against the innocent pilgrims. The result was marvelous and the name of the Kanjhars has for ever been extirpated from the earth." In his autobiography the Ṭhākura humbly gives this event a very brief mention: "Going by palanquin I took *darśana* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Govardhana. There I experienced the spitefulness of the Kanjhars, so I made arrangements to put an end to it."

Bhakti Bhavan

DURING the time of his Vrindavan pilgrimage the Ṭhākura also traveled to Lucknow, Ayodhya and Kasi. He then returned to the house he was renting in Calcutta and found the rest of his family in good

health. He wanted to buy a house in Calcutta and he found one to his liking, but was transferred to Jessore, where he suffered from fevers and problems with his eyesight. "The place was exceedingly abominable. Fever took its residence in Jessore [in accordance with my prayer in Vrindavan]. At the same time I had problems with my eyes. From my childhood I was short-sighted. I saw well from the left eye but everything looked blurred from my right eye. At that time there was a tiny spot in my eyes. My short-sightedness had gone, but my vision was hazy and I had some sort of ache in my eyes." He requested and received medical leave. His family wanted to go to Ranaghat, but the Ṭhākura was determined to establish a place in Calcutta for his preaching work. Various medical treatments brought him no relief and he therefore began to treat himself. He found a suitable place for his preaching at 181 Manikatal Street (presently Ramesh Dutt Street), which he would later dub Bhakti Bhavan-the site of many learned discourses, meetings with eminent personalities and the writing of many articles and books. The worship of a Giridhārī-śīlā, which had been given to him by Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, was also to be established. The price of the house was 6,000 rupees. The Ṭhākura had some repairs made and performed *gṛha-yajña* (a ceremony of sanctification) before entering the house. His family, though initially reluctant and dubious about the house, became convinced by seeing it newly renovated and were at last very happy to move into it.

The Ṭhākura got a post in nearby Barasat with the help of Commissioner Peacock, who was very favorably disposed to him. Because of the problem with his eyes, the Ṭhākura received some allopathic treatment and noted a general improvement, but the doctors were insisting that he daily eat fish-heads to improve his eyesight. Finding the idea very painful, he turned to homeopathic treatment and was cured, thus avoiding the nasty advice of the allopaths. In 1881 he stayed in Barasat with his sons Radhika and Kamal. He left his wife at home, and she only came when he became ill and needed care. The Ṭhākura was frequently troubled by fevers and various other maladies throughout his life, but his determination to serve Kṛṣṇa never diminished even slightly. He always accomplished the superhuman work of a spiritual genius, while performing his material duties to the

satisfaction of government officers as well. This must serve as one of the great instructions of his life. Śrīla Prabhupāda once noted the determined activities of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in a lecture:

"Bhaktivinoda wrote about one hundred books-almost. Just imagine: he was a very responsible officer, a magistrate, and he was a *gṛhastha*; he also had many children. Altogether he had ten children, and he had to take care of the children, the office of magistrate and sometimes-he was a very pious and religious man-he was given extra religious work. He was made superintendent of the Temple of Jagannātha, because the government knew that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a very highly advanced religious person, so whenever there was some religious question, he was consulted. So, in spite of all his responsibilities, as an officer, or as a family man with so many children, he executed his family life very nicely-or else he could not have produced a child such as Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. At the same time he served the Supreme Lord in so many ways. That is the beauty. He has written so many books, and in spite of cumbersome duties. That is the beauty of his life ... All this became possible because he was a sincere, faithful servant. To write so many books with so many responsibilities, for an ordinary magistrate, is not possible. But because he was sincere, he got the strength from the Supreme Lord. One does not need to seek strength separately from the Supreme Lord. But if you are sincere, the Supreme will give you sufficient strength."

The Ṭhākura had duties in both Barasat and nearby Naihati, and he experienced much trouble from the many ill-natured townsfolk who, in order to draw attention to themselves, tried to create mischief for him in various ways. He stayed there for two years, but he always felt eager to leave, due to the quarrelsome inhabitants, as well as the constant threat of malaria that was prevalent in the area.

Bankim Chandra and a Flow of Books

DURING his stay in Barasat the Ṭhākura met the famous Bengali

novelist, Bankim Chandra, who had just completed a book on Kṛṣṇa called Kṛṣṇacarita. The author had been greatly influenced by English and French philosophers, although he had much regard for traditional Vaiṣṇavism. Bankim Chandra heard that the Ṭhākura was an authority on Kṛṣṇa, as well as an expert writer, so he wanted to take the opportunity to show him the book. Unfortunately, the book was full of all kinds of Westernized concepts and various mundane speculations. It presented Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary person who had many good qualities. For four days, taking little food or sleep, the Ṭhākura put forward arguments from the scriptures to prove Kṛṣṇa's position as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The author, being much swayed by the conviction and authority of the Ṭhākura's presentation, corrected many of the improprieties in his book and brought them more into line with the transcendental teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The author was subsequently criticized by scholars for presenting Purāṇic histories of Kṛṣṇa's activities as literal facts rather than "pure legends, myths, fables, and traditions". Such criticism may be seen as a kind of certificate of success for the Ṭhākura, whose aim had been to convince Bankim Chandra of just this: that Kṛṣṇa was the Absolute Truth and His transcendental pastimes were literal facts.

At the end of his stay in Barasat the Ṭhākura received some important books from an advocate friend, Babu Sarada Charan Mitra, who later became a Calcutta High Court Justice and, in 1916, wrote the introduction to a biography of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura called *A Glimpse into the Life of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda*. Among the books sent were the commentaries on *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. At the request of his friend, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda took up the task of publishing a good edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā* with the commentary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and his own commentary called *Rasika-rañjana*. This was published in 1886. The popular Bankim Chandra wrote the introduction, expressing his indebtedness to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and impressing upon the Bengali public their good fortune in receiving such a great work. All copies of the book were quickly sold out.

In 1883 the Ṭhākura came across a Sanskrit manuscript called *Nitya-rūpa-saṁsthāpanam* ('Establishing God's Eternal Form') by Pandit

Mohan Gosvāmī Nyāya-ratna, a descendant of Lord Nityānanda, who had written a very scholarly presentation on the title's subject concerning this essential point of Vaiṣṇava theology. The Ṭhākura wrote a review of the book in English for a European journal, so that Westerners might be attracted to the subject matter. He comments: "The object of the book is to prove the eternal spiritual form of the Deity. The subject is certainly not a new one, but in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when science is so deeply engaged in its warfare with popular belief, it looks like a new subject inviting the attention of the public. Amongst the scientific beliefs that have come to India along with the British rule, the metaphysical inference that the Deity has no form has been accepted as one of the most philosophical acquisitions that man has ever obtained. The current of the abstruse idea of a formless Brahma, which has invaded thought and worship in India since the time of Pandit Sankaracarya has, with the existence of the European idea of a formless God, become so much extended, especially in the minds of the youngsters of this country, that if an attempt is made to establish the fact that God has an external form, it is hooted down as an act of stupidity."

The Ṭhākura does not use the word "external" in the above sentence in the sense of "material", but in the sense of an eternal, spiritual form which can, under conditions of spiritual purity, be visualized as distinct from His internal essence. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda cites the scholarly sources of the Pandit: the *Sandarbhas* of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the *Vedānta-sūtra* and the commentaries by the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, as well as the *śruti* and *smṛti*. He lauds the author not only for his scholarship but for his devotional sentiments as well:

"...Not only reasoning of a healthy kind, there is enough of that superior sentiment which is called affection, for things beyond the regions of the senses. The *ślokas* of which the following are translations have created a sort of thrilling sensation in our heart, which we feel unable to express in writing:

*Let crowded sins repeat my trial scenes!
and lead me on from woe to woe!
Care I for that? If love of God alone,*

would bless my heart where'er I go.

*The Holy seat of Love is Vrindavan,
where matter's laws have no domain
Ah! when my panting soul shall find its rest
in that Eternal realm again!*

"There are several of such spiritual effusions which the Materialist and the so-called positivist will scarcely understand. The book under review is replete with unprejudiced discussions about the sastras and considerations of points of pure Bhakti or the spiritual sentiment to God. We fear, however, that the young people and European thinkers will scarcely comprehend the object of the Book. They may put it off to a distant corner of the almira for happy enjoyment of white ants and other insects with the expression that the book is nothing but a repetition of some old rejected arguments of idolatrous nature. The reason why even thoughtful men might be induced to believe [this] is, that with the change of time, phraseology, [the] process of reasoning and the manner of using evidence also change, and the work before us now has not been composed in accordance with the manner of writing which is now in vogue. The old Sanskrit style has been adopted. We, for ourselves, do not attribute this to want of ability in the author, but to his dislike of the modern form of writing. Be that as it may, we shall review the book arranging the arguments in a purely modern style. Let our readers know it for certain that we shall simply reproduce in the modern style the arguments of Prabhu Upendra Mohan Goswami."

The Ṭhākura then proceeds to give a highly logical and brilliant explanation of spiritual form, addressing the various arguments which might be raised by the rational thinker and answering them strongly.

Some excerpts:

"There is one more argument of the rationalist which we shall take time to consider. He naturally questions the possibility of the manifestation in nature of that Supernatural form. We have read in the Hindu scriptures and in the lives of holy men such as Prahlad and Dhruva, that God made His appearance in nature in His form of spirit and acted with men as one of their friends. We are not prepared, in consideration of our

short time and space, to prove that the statements made in the sastras were all historically true, but we must show that the principle taught in these statements is philosophically safe. God is spiritually Almighty and has the power to overcome all conditions of matter, space and time. It is certainly His power and privilege to be aloof from matter in the position of His Sri Vighraha, and at the same time to exist in the universe as its soul. In the exercise of His liberty and sovereignty over matter and space, it is not hard to believe that He may now and then, or at all times, be pleased to make a manifestation in nature, sometimes accepting her rules and sometimes rejecting them at His pleasure. The conclusion is that the universe in general and man in particular can never by a rule enjoy a sight of the All Beautiful in the scene of matter, but God of His own freedom can exhibit Himself in supercession of all rules and prove His dominion over all He created. Man sees Him when he regains his pure spiritual nature, but God shows Himself out of kindness to man whenever He is pleased to do so.

"Holy men to whom God has been pleased to show His spiritual form have often attempted to picture it to their fellow brethren. The picture, whether it be by pencil, chisel, or pen, is always made through the medium of matter, and hence a degree of grossness has all along attended the representations. This emblematic exhibition of spiritual impressions is far from being open to [the] charge of idolatry. Those who rationally conceive the idea of God, and by the assistance of the imagination create an image, are certainly open to the charge. There is one absolute truth at the bottom of this important question. It is this: Nature has indeed a relation to the spirit. What is that relation? As far as we have been instructed by the inner Tutor, we may safely say, that spirit is the perfect model and nature is the copy which is full of imperfections. Draw inferences from the side of nature and press them upon the Deity, they will ever remain gross and imperfect. Draw from the spirit inside and push your impressions at first to the mind and then to the body, you simply spiritualize them both. Here is [the] advent of God on the scene of nature. It is then that the model is to be found represented by the corresponding copy in nature. God's transcendental form also finds its corresponding reflection in nature, and when we worship the Deity, in pure love, in the reflected scenes of Vrindavan.

Here the imagination has no play. It is the soul which sees and makes a description in the corresponding phenomena in nature. The spiritual form thus conveyed to us is none but the eternal form of God. The grossness is simply apparent, but all the actions and consequences are fully spiritual. The man who weeps and dances in felicity when he spiritually sees the beauty of God is certainly translated to the region of spirits for the time and the gross action of his body is but a concomitant manifestation caused by a current of spiritual electricity. Here we find the absolute in the relative, the positive in the negative and spirit in matter. The spiritual form of God is therefore an eternal truth and with all its inward variety, it is one Undivided Unity. What appears to be a contradiction to reason is nothing but the rule of spirit. And the greatest surprise arises when we see full harmony in all these contradictions."

The above is only one among the many arguments advanced by the Ṭhākura in one of the most brilliant of his essays. He proves by logical argument that the eternal form of God is a necessity if the word "theism" is to have any meaning.

In 1884 the Ṭhākura received a transfer to Srirampur, where he lived in a residence beside the court. His sons-Radhika, Kamal and Bimal Prasad stayed with him. In October his mother died, and the Ṭhākura, taking a leave of absence, went to Gayā for the performance of the *śraddha* ceremony. During his stay in Srirampur he got the opportunity to visit the former residence of Lord Nityānanda's great associate, Śrīla Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura, at nearby Saptagram, as well as Abhirāma Ṭhākura's place at Khanakul and the place of Lord Caitanya's great devotee, Vasu Rāmānanda, at Kulinagram.

In 1885 the Ṭhākura organized a press in Calcutta at Bhakti Bhavan called the Caitanya Yantra or Caitanya Press. The *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* was published only occasionally during this period up to 1892, at which time it began to be published regularly.

In 1886 a literary explosion occurred. The Ṭhākura published his *Gītā* with commentaries (previously described), and *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, a philosophical work in Bengali prose based on Lord Caitanya's teachings to Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs as found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The teachings are compared to a flood of nectar and are divided into

eight rainfalls, each rainfall being further divided into downpours. In this work the Ṭhākura fully describes the different kinds of impediments to devotional service, the usefulness of *varṇāśrama-dharma* in the practice of *vaidhi-bhakti*, the specific deviations of many of the so-called Vaiṣṇava sects of the day, etc. etc. This book was very well received. The Ṭhākura also published *Sanmodana-bhāṣyam*, a Sanskrit commentary on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, the *Bhajana-darpaṇa-bhāṣya*, a Bengali commentary on Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's *Manah-śikṣā*, together with a Bengali verse translation of Dāsa Gosvāmī's Sanskrit poem, *Manah-śikṣā*. He also wrote *Daśopaniṣad-cūrṇikā*, a book of Bengali prose on the ten principal *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhāvāvalī*, a compilation of Sanskrit verses on the subject of *rasa* written by different Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, edited by the Ṭhākura with Bengali translations of the verses. He also managed to write a philosophical novel called *Prema-pradīpa* in Bengali prose, and to publish the *Śrī Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* from the *Mahābhārata* with the Sanskrit commentary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa called *Nāmārtha-sudhā*.

Also in 1886, the Ṭhākura established the Śrī Viśva Vaiṣṇava Sabhā, a spiritual society, in Calcutta, and many educated men became his followers. Some of the meetings were held in Sarkar's Lane and several committees were formed with assigned duties in the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To acquaint the public with the functions and aims of the Society, the Ṭhākura published a small booklet called the *Viśva-vaiṣṇava-kalpatavi*. The Viśva-vaiṣṇava-rāja-sabhā was started by the Gosvāmī followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and was described at some length in the previous volume of this series. The Ṭhākura regularly lectured and read from the literature of the Gosvāmīs at the Bhakti Bhavan, and his son, Bimal Prasad, often attended during these years, imbibing the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness from his father and simultaneously learning about the printing that was going on there. The Ṭhākura began work on an edition of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* with his own commentary called *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*. Describing this period in his autobiography, the Ṭhākura notes: "It was a highly intellectual task for me to publish all these books ... Haradhan Datta of Badanganga in Kayapat came to Srirampur and offered a very old manuscript of Śrī

Kṛṣṇa-vijaya-I published that. At that time I established the Caitanya Press, which was operated by Śrī Yukta Prabhu. When I had printed two *khaṇḍas* of the book *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* ... I got a very intense head ailment from all this intellectual work." For some time the Ṭhākura could not work due to dizziness. At the suggestion of some Vaiṣṇavas, he smeared ghee on his head, taking their instruction to be the suggestion of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, as he had, simultaneous to their urging, received some of Jīva Gosvāmī's books. "I prayed to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī that the affliction would not continue. Praying in this vein and applying ghee, my ailment vanished. Again I began to work and read the books [of the Gosvāmīs]."

In 1887 the Ṭhākura traveled to many places in Bengal in search of the *Caitanyopaniṣad*, which is part of the *Atharva Veda*, but found only in very old manuscripts. Few people had even heard of this work, which offered overwhelming evidence of Lord Caitanya's identity as the Supreme Lord and *yuga-avatāra* (the *avatāra* for the present age of Kali). His endeavor was finally brought to the attention of Madhusudan Das, a Vaiṣṇava *paṇḍita*, who possessed an ancient manuscript of the *Atharva Veda*. The *paṇḍita* at once dispatched it to the Ṭhākura from his place in Sambalapur. When the Vaiṣṇava community learned of the Ṭhākura's discovery, they immediately requested him to prepare a Sanskrit commentary. The Ṭhākura agreed and produced *Śrī Caitanya-caraṇāmṛta*. Madhusudan Das assisted by writing a Bengali translation of the verses called *Amṛta-bindu*.

The Ṭhākura was awarded the title 'Bhaktivinoda' during this period of his colossal efforts in preaching and book publication. Śrīpāda Ācārya Kul wrote a letter to the Ṭhākura in Sanskrit awarding him the title, and the Ṭhākura gratefully answered in the same. He comments: "The masters had given the title Bhaktivinoda to me, and this was also the desire of Mahāprabhu..." The title 'Bhaktivinoda' means 'the pastime' or 'pleasure of devotional service', and, taking either or both of these meanings as appropriate, it must be said that the Ṭhākura was the embodiment of one who performs and takes pleasure in the pastimes of devotional service. The Ṭhākura's statement that his being awarded such a title was the desire of Mahāprabhu should not be misunderstood. First of all, it clearly was Mahāprabhu's arrangement, as the scholars had not

been requested by the Ṭhākura that he be given any title. They were inspired to do it from within. What is more, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was pure and able to understand Lord Caitanya's desire, and thus there is no element of speculation or pride in his declaration.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also began to propagate the *Caitanya Pañjikā*, a Vaiṣṇava almanac, and it was by his efforts that the appearance day of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was made a respectfully observed and important fast-day in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava calendar. By lecturing to various societies in Calcutta and elsewhere, the Ṭhākura was profusely distributing the seeds of *bhakti*. He published a detailed account of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's life in the *Hindu Herald*, an English periodical, which was widely read, and the article drew much favorable attention. Thus, along with his earlier title, Sac-cid-ānanda, which was awarded after the publication of *Sac-cid-ānanda-premālaṅkara*, and together with his new title, Bhaktivinoda, he was thenceforward known to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas as Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Discovery of Lord Śrī Caitanya's Birthsite

IN 1887, when the Ṭhākura was forty-nine years old, he began to reflect on his retirement. He revealed his mind in his autobiography: "I recovered fully from my head ailment, and I constantly studied the devotional literatures. Because of associating with devotees I became more renounced. I thought, 'I have spent my days in a futile way. I have not accomplished much. I have not been able to obtain even a little taste of service to Śrī Sac-cid-ānanda-svarūpa Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, I will retire, and taking my pension I will find some little place in the groves of Vraja near the bank of the Yamunā and perform *bhajana* with my friend, Bhaktibhṅga, until the end of my life.'"

The Ṭhākura approached his intimate friend, Śrī Rāmsevak Bhaktibhṅga, for consultation, and they had some heartfelt discussions. At this time the Ṭhākura was composing the *Āmnāya-sūtram*-130

Sanskrit *sūtras* describing the Absolute Truth, with a Bengali commentary called *Laghu-bhāṣya* and a Bengali translation of the *sūtras*. Following the consultations with Bhaktibhṛṅga, the Ṭhākura went to perform some governmental work in Tarakeswar and Bhaktibhṛṅga Prabhu went to Calcutta. The Ṭhākura spent the night in Tarakeswar, and while he slept, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared to him in his dreams and told him: "You will certainly go to Vrindavan, but first there is some service you must perform in Navadvīpa. What will you do about that?" Returning from Tarakeswar, he again consulted his friend who advised him to transfer to Navadvīpa-dhāma. The Ṭhākura requested Mr. Peacock for this transfer, but Mr. Peacock felt that a transfer so soon after coming to Srirampur would be improper. The Ṭhākura was filled with transcendental anxiety. He declined offers thereafter of personal assistantship to the Chief Commissioner of Assam and the office of the Minister of Tiperrah State, both offices carrying tremendous prestige and generous salary. The Ṭhākura then submitted his application for retirement, but the application was not accepted. Finally, he approached Babu Radha Madhava Vasu, who was the Deputy Magistrate of Krishnanagar and worked out a mutual transfer with him—the Krishnanagar post for the Srirampur post. This proposal was submitted to the government, but Mr. Peacock was absent and Mr. Edgar was on duty. The transfer, however, was approved and notification to that effect came on November 15, 1887.

The Ṭhākura was jubilant, but he was then overwhelmed by high fevers. He writes: "How shall I speak of my misfortune? Returning home in joy, I became anxious because a horrible fever came on. It did not subside. Collector Toynebee arrived and expressed a desire to postpone my substitution. But then I thought, 'I'll live or I'll die, but I will go to Krishnanagar.'" The Ṭhākura received sick-leave and proceeded to Navadvīpa. "Thus, in my bed-ridden condition I chose to go. My wife and Mahendra Mama went with me. There was a little difficulty on the way, but in the ecstasy of going to Navadvīpa I felt untroubled." The Ṭhākura began to perform a few minor duties in Krishnanagar, but soon collapsed. A Doctor Russell informed him that if he did not take medicine and a proper convalescence diet he would die. The Ṭhākura had taken only milk for forty-five days. "From time to time I thought,

'Many obstacles are a good sign.'" Doctor Russell prescribed quinine, that chapatis be eaten every day, and other medicines.

During the Christmas break the Ṭhākura took a train to Navadvīpa with his wife. He writes, "Upon arriving there and surveying the land in all four directions, the hairs on my body stood on end." Proceeding to the Rani Dharmasala, the Ṭhākura arranged for an offering to be cooked for Lord Caitanya. He then took grains for the first time in many days and commented: "Since my birth I had not eaten such nectarean food." After this, the Ṭhākura gradually regained his strength and began to come to Navadvīpa every Saturday to search out the site of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's birth. However, most of the local people had little interest in or actual knowledge of the holy sites of Navadvīpa, and the Ṭhākura became a little discouraged. Most of the local inhabitants expressed the opinion that the site of Lord Caitanya's birth was in Navadvīpa, but the Ṭhākura was not convinced. Another theory was that the actual site had been lost under the shifting path of the Ganges. Still not satisfied, he continued to try to establish where the authentic birthplace was located. One Saturday evening, the Ṭhākura was sitting on the roof of the Rani Dharmasala in Navadvīpa with his third son, Kamal Prasad, and a friend who was a clerk. It was 10 o'clock and very dark, as the sky was covered with clouds. The Ṭhākura gives his account: "Across the Gaṅgā, in the northern direction, I saw a large mansion flooded with light. When I asked Kamal [about this], he confirmed that he had seen it also. When I asked the clerk, he said, 'I didn't see anything.' I was utterly amazed by that. When I looked carefully at that area in the morning from the roof of Rani's house, I saw a *tal* [palm] tree located there. Inquiring from others about the place, they said it was known as Ballaldighi, which was near the ruins of the old fort and kingdom of Laksman Sen." Upon inquiring of various persons, the Ṭhākura learned that adjacent to that place was the large pond of King Ballal Sen from which the town got its name, and aside from that there was nothing of importance. The following Saturday he went to Ballaldighi where at night he again had a wonderful vision. He spent the next day wandering all over the site. The elderly locals told him that this was indeed the location of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's birth. They pointed out an extensive mound covered with Tulasī plants as the actual site of His appearance.

In order to substantiate his growing conviction, the Ṭhākura began to conduct an investigation utilizing old manuscripts of the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Bhakti-ratnākara* and Narahari Sarakār Ṭhākura's *Navadvīpa-parikrama-paddhati*, as well as antique maps of the district. In particular, he found an old map from the time of Ganga-Govinda Singh, who was the Naib Diwan of the Kalsa and founder of the Paikpara Raj family which flourished in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The name "Śrī Māyāpura" was found on the map to indicate the site of what became known as Ballaldighi. He ascertained a good deal about the different villages of the area from his research with the manuscripts and maps and from the local villagers as well. He found to his great astonishment that the town on the western banks of the Ganges, now called Navadvīpa, was actually a place of less than one-hundred years standing, and that there were still people living there who declared that in their youth they had moved to the new town from the old site at Ballaldighi. He also found that this town of Navadvīpa could not possibly be the site of Lord Caitanya's appearance, because Lord Caitanya had appeared on the eastern bank of the Ganges. Furthermore, the elderly villagers of Ballaldighi even called the area Māyāpura. Then, while reading the *Bhakti-ratnākara*, the Ṭhākura found the following verse which confirmed his discovery beyond a doubt:

*navadvīpa madhye māyāpura nāme sthān
yathāya janmilen gauracandra bhagavān*

"In the center of Navadvīpa there is a place called Māyāpura. At this place the Supreme Lord, Gauracandra, took His birth." This monumental discovery took place toward the beginning of 1888, and it was a landmark event in the history of Vaiṣṇavism. The site of the divine appearance of Lord Caitanya, after being lost for several generations, was again revealed to the world by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Wishing to confirm it even more resoundingly, the Ṭhākura later requested Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, the head of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community, to come to the site. The aged *bābājī*, who was more than 120 years old at that time, was so weak that he was carried everywhere in a basket by his disciple, Bihārī. Many curious persons accompanied him. He was so old that his eyelids completely

covered his eyes, and they had to be propped open with his hand if he wanted to see someone. When he was brought to the spot discovered by the Ṭhākura, he became overwhelmed with ecstasy and jumped into the air, crying, "*ei to 'nimāi-janma-bhūmi!*" ('This is indeed the birth place of Lord Nimāi!') Thus, by the additional and absolute confirmation of the *paramahansa bābājī* the site was forever certified beyond doubt. Thus, from both an empirical and spiritual point of view, the place of Lord Caitanya's birth was ascertained. Just as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī excavated the lost sites of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, the Ṭhākura discovered this lost site of Gaurāṅga's advent and other pastimes in Navadvīpa. This discovery led to his undertaking further research, and he eventually discovered many of the sites of Lord Caitanya's pastimes and described them in his book *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmyam*, which he wrote in Krishnanagar and published in 1890.

After the discovery of the birthplace of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura spent some time worshipping the Lord there. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's son, Lalitā Prasad, relates that one of the Ṭhākura's sons was suffering from a skin disease, and that Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja told him to lie down at the site of the Lord's birth. The boy did so, and was cured by the next day. Later, when Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī returned to his place of *bhajana* at Kuliya, he requested Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who was eager to render some service to him, to build a solid covered veranda, so that the Vaiṣṇavas who came to see him would have a pleasant place to sit and chant. The Ṭhākura immediately complied with that order, to his guru's full satisfaction.

In Krishnanagar the Ṭhākura's health deteriorated. He was afflicted with severe tonsillitis. He received two month's leave, and during that time he purchased the place where he would write many books and perform hours of *bhajana*: Śrī Surabhi-kuñja. He then traveled with his family by horse and carriage and visited Ulāgrām, the place of his birth and childhood. After visiting his boyhood home, he spoke to the government officer, Mr. Edgar, who had helped him get a post in Krishnanagar, about transferring to a place where he could regain his health. In 1889 he moved to Netrakona, from there to Tangail and from

Tangail to Burdwan. During his stay in Burdwan, the Ṭhākura sometimes suffered from fevers and had difficulty breathing. When he recovered, he resumed his duties. While in Burdwan he performed *kīrtana* with the Vaiṣṇavas of Amalajora, headed by Kṣetra and Vipina Babus and noted their strong devotion to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Ṭhākura composed poems like *Śoka-śātana*, which described in thirteen songs the disappearance of Śrī Śrīvāsa's son during Lord Caitanya's *kīrtana*, and his friends would sing them. All the while he was working on his books, despite all difficulties.

1890 saw the publication of *Āmnāya-sūtram*, a work comprised of 130 Sanskrit *sūtras* describing the Absolute Truth, with his commentary, *Laghu-bhāṣya*, together with Bengali translations of the codes. He also published the *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmyam*, which comprised eighteen chapters written in Bengali verse describing Jīva Gosvāmī's tour of the land of Navadvīpa in the company of Lord Nityānanda. This was called the *Parikramā-khaṇḍa*. A second volume of this work called *Pramāṇa-khaṇḍa* was also published, and it was a collection of Sanskrit verses glorifying the holy land of Navadvīpa, gathered by him from the Vedic literature and arranged in five chapters.

In March and April of that year he got the chance to tour various holy places, including the birthplace of Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, and visiting Godruma-dvīpa he had a picnic with his sons. On May 19th he took *darśana* of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī in Kuliya with great delight.

From Burdwan he was transferred briefly to Raniganj and then back again to Dinajpur in 1891. In 1891 he published his *Bhagavad-gītā* with the Sanskrit commentary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa called *Gītā-bhūṣaṇa*, as well as his own Bengali commentary, *Vidvad-rañjana*.

Preaching the Holy Name

IN August of 1891 the Ṭhākura received approval for a two-year furlough. He wanted to preach the glories of the holy name for the

benefit of humanity. His base for this preaching effort was Godruma-dvīpa, which the Ṭhākura dubbed the Nāma-haṭṭa, 'the market place of the Holy Name'. He traveled with Śrī Rāmsevak Chattopadhyaya Bhaktibhṛṅga, his old friend, as well as Śrī Sītānātha Dāsa Mahāpatra and Śrī Sital Bhṛtya. They chanted in many places, gave lectures and made devotees. The Ṭhākura describes this period with happiness: "At this time in the month of Avin, Ramsevak Babu, Sita Nath and Sital Bhṛitya all took a ship to Ramjivanpur for chanting and lectures ... In many places in Ramjivanpur we chanted and spoke, and we were very happy. From there, we went to Kayapath Badanganja, where we lectured. In that place all of the devotees, *brāhmaṇas* and *paṇḍitas* were pleased. Having stayed thirteen days in that area, and concluding with a lecture program in Ghatal, we returned. We performed *nāma-saṅkīrtana* everywhere. After coming to my house in Calcutta, I proceeded to Surabhi-kuñja and we performed a great deal of *saṅkīrtana* there too." In his lifetime the Ṭhākura established over five-hundred Nāma-haṭṭa *saṅgas* (associations), and in his original Nāma-haṭṭa essay entitled, *Śrī Śrī Godruma-kalpatavi*, he describes the structure of the Nāma-haṭṭa. The spirit of his endeavor exactly matched the mood of Lord Nityānanda, Who was personally ordered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to preach in Bengal. Lord Caitanya directed Him thus:

*śuno śuno nityānanda, śuno haridāsa,
sarvatra āmāra ājñā koro ha prakāśa,
prati ghare ghare giyā koro ei bhikṣā,
bolo kṛṣṇa, bhaja kṛṣṇa, koro kṛṣṇa śikṣā*

"O hear Me, hear Me Nityānanda! Hear Me Haridāsa! Simply disseminate My order everywhere. Go from house to house and beg [the residents as follows]: 'Speak about Kṛṣṇa, worship Kṛṣṇa and teach [others] about Kṛṣṇa.'" [*Caitanya-bhāgavata Madhya-līlā 13.8-9*]

In his Nāma-haṭṭa essay the Ṭhākura always describes himself as the sweeper of the market-place of the Holy Name. In that market-place in Godruma-dvīpa, the storehouse is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the principal trader is Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. The co-principal trader in Bengal is Śrī Advaita Prabhu; in Vṛndāvana, Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs; in Jagannātha Purī, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya. The

store-keepers in Bengal are Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Śrīmātī Viṣṇupriyā and Śrīmātī Jāhnava Ṭhākuraṇī; in Vṛndāvana, Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī; in Jagannātha Purī, Śrī Paramānanda Purī. Following this explanation is a description of the transcendental currency of the market: the various levels of devotion are compared to *paisa* (the smallest denomination), to *annas* (an *anna* equals about six *paisa*) and to silver coins, and *prema* (pure love of God) to the most valuable denomination, the gold coin. The qualifications for membership are also specified, techniques for chanting are detailed, etc. The Ṭhākura then proceeds to describe some of the preaching pastimes of his party of friends:

"5th Aśvin Caitanyābda 406, Monday, the Nāma-haṭṭa sweeper, assistant and flag-bearer [Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, Bhaktibhṛṅga Mahāśaya and Sītānātha] arrived in the town of Ghatal, Midnapur District, after dark. The devotees escorted the Nāma-haṭṭa employees with *saṅkīrtana* to the Hari-sabhā. More than a thousand devotees of the Nāma assembled and engaged in massive *saṅkīrtana*. The next day at sunrise, along with all the devotees of Ramjivanpura, they performed blissful *kīrtana* and inspected the activities of the Nāma-haṭṭa in the *prapaṇnāśrama* [preaching center] of Sriyuta Kunjabihari Paina. More than a thousand devotees assembled, loudly chanting the name of Hari. The Nāma-haṭṭa commander for that area, Śrīyuta Umācaraṇa Vidyāratna warmly welcomed the sweeper, Bhaktivinoda, his assistant, Bhaktibhṛṅga, the devotee, Sītānātha, and the assembled Nāma-haṭṭa employees. The sweeper, Bhaktivinoda, gave a lecture on the glories of the Holy Name.

"The captivating lecture and Vaiṣṇava songs [I had] personally composed filled the assembled devotees with *prema*. Travelling salesmen, Śrīyuta Rāmadāsa Bābājī and Śrīyuta Daracandra Tarkālaṅkāra, satisfied the assembly with sweet lectures. The assembly dispersed three hours after darkness had fallen with loud chanting of Hari and pure Nāma-saṅkīrtana. [This means the assembly engaged in chanting and hearing all day and into the night!]

"7th Asvin, at daybreak, street *saṅkīrtana* went out with a great gathering of Ramjivanpura villagers. The special decorations and *maṅḍapas* [raised platforms] in front of the houses were a wonderful sight to see. Thereafter, the *saṅkīrtana* party went on the main road and,

coming from their homes, the devotees were chanting the name of Hari in great devotion. At one *maṇḍapa* the travelling salesmen [Śrīyuta Rāmadāsa Bābājī and Śrīyuta Daracandra Tarkālaṅkāra] and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explained the glories and the truth of the Name, while from all four sides the village womenfolk raised their voices in ululation. In some places the school children, breaking loose from their teachers' care, and crying 'Haribol!', ran towards the *saṅkīrtana* party. The devotees were feeling mutual bliss. The minds of everyone present were captured by this enchanting scene...

"8th Aśvin, in a massive gathering at Ramjivanpur, all the Nāma-haṭṭa employees did Nāma-kīrtana from house to house. At the houses of Śrīyuta Umeś Chandra Modak, Śrīyuta Ananta Gayen, Śrīyuta Rāmachand Datta, Śrīyuta Śrīnivāsa Rauth and Śrīyuta Ramkalpa Rauth, a great multitude of people received the message of Mahāprabhu. Finally, at the *nātya-śāla* [theater] of Śrī Parvatīnātha Mahādeva, nearly two and a half-thousand persons came together, where the commander glorified Mahāprabhu from the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*. At that time of pure devotional preaching, the sweeper Bhaktivinoda showed the uselessness of the impersonal philosophy. Later, at the *prapaṇnāśrama* of store-keeper Śrīyuta Yadunāth Pal, the Rasika Maṇḍalī performed *kīrtana*.

"9th Aśvin, all the Nāma-haṭṭa workers gathered at Hatipur Devakhand, where nearly three-thousand people assembled at the *nātya-śāla* of Jagajanani Bhadrakali. The travelling salesmen of that place, Śrīyuta Keśava Chandra Chakravarti had made many arrangements with gates and *maṇḍapas*. The villagers took the Nāma-haṭṭa workers with great enthusiasm from the bank of the river to a *paṇḍal* [pavilion-tent]. Along the way, village women, filled with ecstasy, were ululating [an ancient practice which is supposed to generate auspiciousness and lauds heroic enterprises]. Those present will not forget the enchanting scene. At that time everyone lost material consciousness, submerged in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa-prema. After all the devotees were properly seated on the *maṇḍapa*, the following song was sung:

" 'Nityānanda has come to the Marketplace of the Name. Whoever is coming, run quickly. Those two rascals Jagāi and Mādhāi have looted the storehouse and taken all the goods. You will find the partners Advaita

and Sanātana are the storehouse managers. Gadādhara Paṇḍita is the guard. Haridāsa is the watchman. Sañjaya and Śrīdhara are the bearers. Keśava Bhāratī and Vidyāvacaspati are brokers, and Kṛṣṇadāsa and others are managers. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita is the treasurer, and Kedaranātha is the sweeper. The cost of the goods in the store are the nine kinds of devotional service. The gold coin is *prema*. There is no limit. With whatever you have got, buy what you can. There is no shortage, brothers, take as much of the goods as you can. For obtaining love of God, this is the best advice. The message is the nectarean name of the Lord, so let there be no useless strife. Let everyone, whoever he may be, share the same plate.'

"12th Aśvin. Nāma-haṭṭa workers assembled at Bhaktinidhi's Vadan Ganj *prapaṇnāśrama* in the morning. Later at Koyapat Bazaar, nearly four-thousand people came to see the Nāma-haṭṭa workers. The first few minutes were spent in getting the people to be quiet. Bhaktinidhi's lecture was followed by a lecture by Bhaktivinoda on the verse *vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ...* from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. With this verse he destroyed the impersonalist philosophy and established the truth of pure devotion to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa ... During all of these lectures the listeners' hearts were filled with devotional ecstasy, exhibited by frequent applause and crying of 'Hari!' with love-filled enthusiasm."

In these wonderful excerpts we catch a glimpse of the jubilant preaching exploits of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. His activities immediately invoke the original preaching mood of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, on account of which huge crowds wildly chanted the Holy Name in ecstasy. The aforementioned crowds were getting the same opportunity by the pure association and presentation of the eternally liberated associate of the Lord, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. We may also recall how Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura brought the Holy Name to thousands, following in the saintly footsteps of his father. Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda in his turn held huge gatherings in Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay, and Rathayātra (Chariot Parade) celebrations attended by thousands in the West, simply to continue the disciplic succession of ecstatic distribution of the Holy Name, following in the footsteps of his most exalted predecessors. In February of 1892 the Ṭhākura was invited to speak at Krishnanagar

before a large congregation of highly learned men from various parts of Bengal. He gave a lecture concerning his investigation and research into the genuine site of Lord Caitanya's birth. After hearing his powerful presentation, the members of the assembly, who were overwhelmingly impressed by the Ṭhākura's work, pledged their help by agreeing to join a society organized by the Ṭhākura for the restoration, maintenance and development of Old Navadvīpa at Śrī Māyāpura, called Śrī Navadvīpa-Dhāma-Pracāriṇī-Sabhā. The Ṭhākura made the ruling princes of Tipperah the society's hereditary presidents. Europeans were also present at the meeting, and the Ṭhākura recalls the names: Monroe, Wallace and Butler. The Ṭhākura also lectured to other societies and assemblies in the Krishnanagar area.

In March of 1892, accompanied by his Vaiṣṇava friends, the Ṭhākura made a lecture tour of the Basirhat sub-division, located in the northeastern part of West Bengal's Cabbisa Pargana district. He was preaching, chanting and writing constantly during this period. His influence was tremendous. He opened a good number of branches of Nāma-haṭṭa, and everywhere people began to take up the chanting of the holy name. This program was so successful and popular that even after the Ṭhākura ceased his participation, due to the call of government duties, it continued for many years.

After the Basirhat tour, the Ṭhākura took his friend Bhaktibhṛṅga Mahāśaya with him for a tour of Vrindavan. On the way they spent the fast-day, Ekādaśī, with Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. The Ṭhākura reached Vṛndāvana in great ecstasy and undertook a full tour of the Dhāma, visiting Bilvavana, Bhaṇḍīravana, Mānasa-sarovara, Gokula, Madhavana, Talavana, Bāhulavana, Govardhana, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śyāma-kunda-in short, all the places of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes. Upon returning to his Bhakti Bhavan in Calcutta, he continued his preaching activities, giving lectures and readings about the glories of the holy name. Sometimes he was in Godruma, sometimes in Calcutta and sometimes in Krishnanagar.

A Mighty Pen

DURING the time of his two-year preaching furlough, the Ṭhākura produced another literary outpouring. In 1892, he published short excerpts in pamphlet form of an earlier published work called *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*. The pamphlets were based mainly on the portion of the book which deals with the glories of the holy name and they were given titles like *Śrī Hari-nāma*, *Śrī Nāma*, *Śrī Nāma-mahimā*, *Śrī Nāma-pracāra* and *Śrī Nāma-tattva*. These were distributed to the people as part of the Ṭhākura's Nāma-haṭṭa program and were very well received. Also in 1892 the Ṭhākura published a book called *Śrīman Mahāprabhur Śikṣā*, a book of eleven chapters, summarizing Lord Caitanya's philosophy in ten major categories. The first chapter presented the ten categories and the succeeding ten discussed each category individually. There are profuse Sanskrit quotations to substantiate each point, as well as Bengali prose translations and explanations. But in 1893 the real deluge occurred. He wrote *Tattva-viveka* or *Sac-cid-ānandānubhūti*, which was a presentation of the teachings of the greatest Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in relation to the ideas of famous Western and Oriental philosophers. The book comprised forty-eight Sanskrit verses with detailed Bengali commentary on each verse. Then came *Śaraṇāgati*, *Gītā-mālā* and *Gītāvalī*-three small songbooks which perfectly expressed in simple Bengali the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the lofty realizations and sentiments of a self-realized soul. He wrote a Sanskrit poem about Lord Caitanya called *Śrī Godruma-candra-bhajanopadeśa*, two more songbooks, entitled *Baula-saṅgītā* and *Dālāler-gītā*, and a booklet in English entitled *Nāma-bhajana*, about the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. He also wrote a monumental novel called *Jaiva Dharma* which covered the entire spectrum of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava thought and answered almost every conceivable question that an inquisitive and intelligent soul could ever think to ask. He also wrote *Tattva-sūtram*, a book of Sanskrit aphorisms with Sanskrit explanations and Bengali commentary. He thus produced ten significant works-one of them of major proportions-all in one year! And meanwhile he was lecturing, chanting and preaching to whomever he met. We can begin to understand from all this holy activity what *gaura-śakti-svarūpa* really means. He truly was the embodiment of the transcendental energy of Lord Caitanya, for these are not the activities of anyone but an empowered associate of the

Lord. Similarly, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Svāmī Prabhupāda presented seventeen volumes of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, with full commentary, in English, in eighteen months, while spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, personally describing such work as "materially impossible". His immense outpouring can be compared favorably to Śrīla Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's. One empowered soul can only be compared favorably with another. By objective examination a reasonable person can understand that such activities are superhuman and miraculous. Only when one is purely instrumental in Kṛṣṇa's hands, can such perfect literature be composed in an unbroken flow of pure realization.

To get some idea of the flavor of his writings during this period we turn to the song *Dālāler-gītā* ('The Song of the Broker') and the English essay, *Nāma-bhajana*, in which he glorifies the Holy Name-as was his constant practice in preaching to the masses. He was always either chanting the Holy Name or speaking on the chanting of the Holy Name, and we get some clear idea of the level of inspiration and spiritual enthusiasm he was experiencing during this period from the moving poetic excerpts which follow:

Dālāler-gītā ('The Song of the Broker')

[1] I am singing the news of the greatest happy tidings! At the place known as Surabhi-kuñja in Śrī Navadvīpa, a marketplace of the Holy Name has now been opened-and Lord Nityānanda Himself is the Proprietor-in-Chief.

[2] Such wonderful things are going on in that blissful marketplace! Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is selling the pure, unadulterated Holy Name wholesale, merely for the price of one's faith.

[3] Seeing the assembly of devotees eagerly waiting to purchase the Name, Lord Nityānanda examines them all, one by one, to test the degree of their receptivity-and then He sells them the Name individually by bargaining for His price accordingly.

[4] Oh brother, my dear friend! If you really want to purchase this pure Holy Name, then come! Just come with me, for I am now going to meet with that very same Nityānanda Mahājana.

[5] Thus, you will finally be able to purchase the pure Holy Name. I will also take my due commission, and in this way all three of us will fulfill our desires.

[6] Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is so incredibly merciful-taking only one's faith in the Holy Name, He bestows the topmost divine bliss in exchange.

[7] The very second that Nitāi sees a tear welling in someone's eye upon chanting the name of 'Gaura', He instantly gives His support to that person; indeed, He bestows all divine opulences upon him.

[8] He gives that person genuine realization of the pure teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as found in the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. While giving all this inconceivable mercy, He never cares in the least for one's position in relation to caste, material wealth, mundane knowledge or physical ability.

[9] Now, dear brothers, just reject the illusory network of Māyā's entangling snares. If you are a householder, then just remain at your home, if you are renounced, then just live peacefully in the forest-either way, you will experience no more misery.

[10] Now there is no more fear of the terrible Age of Quarrel, for the most merciful Lord Nityānanda gives the Holy Name to anyone and everyone-even the lowest among men.

[11] Bhaktivinoda loudly calls out and advises all, "Except for the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda, there is no other shelter!"

From *Nāma-bhajana*:

"...If by discarding the company of *Asat* or dishonest fellows (*Asat* literally means 'non-existence'; hence those who are unusually attached to the fair-sex and those who are non-devotees of Krishna both are called *Asat*, for things other than Krishna are transitory), one embraces the company of the good or *Sat* (opposite of *Asat*), he ere long gains a firm reliance and then through the stages of *Nistha*, etc. reaches the ladder of *Bhava*. Those whose hearts are crooked will, beyond any doubt, run downstairs to Hell.

"The fortunate ones who earnestly long to ascend the terrace of *Prem*, do sincerely and incessantly chant the Name of Krishna in the company of

Sadhus. They do not have any appetite for any other feature of devotion. When in a short time by the grace of NAMA the heart becomes closely attentive, the fruits of religious forbearance, control over sensual appetites, religious observances, withholding the breath by way of religious austerity, abstract religious contemplation, steady abstraction of the mind and indifference to external impressions are very easily gained without paying the least heed to all these. NAMA alone is a complete suspension of the fleeting mental operations. The more the heart is pellucid, the more diverse pastimes of the Spiritual Kingdom play in it. The flow of the milk of this felicity is so very fast running that no other means can give even the smallest drop of it. Jivas have no other wished-for wealth than the grace of Krishna.

"NAMA is Spiritual, Wisdom, vows, meditation, abnegation, mental quietness, virtue, contrivance-none of these can ever equal Nama. Know it for certain that NAMA is the highest salvation, Nama is the highest end, Nama is the noblest final beatitude, Nama is eternally existing, Nama alone is the supremest devotion, NAMA is the highest intellect, Nama is the best *Priti* [affection] and Nama alone is the brightest remembrance. NAMA is the seed and NAMA is the fruit to Jivas-NAMA is their Lord and NAMA alone is the supremest object of their worship. Nama is their best Preceptor.

"The Vedas have described the spirituality of the Name of Krishna to be the highest truth. 'O Lord! reasonably we have judged Thy Name to be higher than the highest and so do we chant Thy Nama. NAMA-BHAJAN is not bound by any rule-NAMA is beyond all virtuous acts-He is Spiritual-He is virility and lustre in a person. All the Vedas have been manifested from this NAMA. NAMA is bliss, NAMA is *Ananda*. We can excellently be devoted to Him. NAMA is worship and NAMA is to be worshipped; Thy feet are to be held in veneration. Repeatedly we fall prostrate at those Thy lotus-feet and anoint the body with the pollen thereof. In order to lead the soul to its highest stage, devotees mutually discuss on NAMA and sing His glories. They believe Thy Name to be *Chaitanya* in person, and always sing and hear Kirtan which is identical with Thy NAMA (name)-they are purified by it. NAMA alone is *sat* or ever-existing. The essence of the *Vedas* is NAMA, the Absolute Truth, Whose Form is Sat-Chidananda (Sat-ever-existing, Chit-all-knowing,

and *Ananda*-all-bliss). O Vishnu! it is only by the grace of Thy Name that we are capable of offering hymns to Thee. So we should adore and pray to Thy NAMA alone."

In 1893, in the midst of his expansive preaching activity, the Ṭhākura also had the good fortune of getting the association of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, who, accompanied by many Vaiṣṇavas, came to Śrī Māyāpura on pilgrimage and visited the Ṭhākura at Godruma.

Retirement and Expansion of Preaching

IN mid-1893 the Ṭhākura was requested to resume his duties by Sir Henry Cotton, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda wanted to resume his service in Krishnanagar, but he was asked to go to Sasaram where there were riots between Hindus and Moslems. He recalls: "... there was a serious dispute between the Hindus and Moslems over cow slaughter. There had been very good relations between the Hindus and Moslems for many a year, but because of cow slaughter their good relations had ended. The feelings of hostility were mutual and there was constant fighting between them. In the town of Sasaram there were many alleys and lanes, and Moslems and Hindus lived cheek by jowl. Because of this there was plenty of opportunity for disputes. Fighting would develop daily. A certain Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* bought a small piece of land facing my court office, and he endeavoured to build a temple there. The Moslems insisted that the temple could not be built. The *sannyāsī* spoke to me about the matter, and I spoke to the Moslem Serestadara so as to know the thoughts of the local Moslems on this matter. The *sannyāsī* did not wait for the result [of the talks], and he began to build the temple [anyway]. That particular day I was in Nasariganga. Moslems went [to the plot of land] with sticks and swords to fight. The leaders among the Moslems sent a telegram to the government, and the Commissioner was informed that the *sannyāsī* was building the temple over a [Moslem] tomb and that it was being done with the connivance of Hindu officers. Many letters were exchanged

concerning this matter. Being a Hindu officer it was difficult for me to stay in Sasaram [and remain impartial]. I made many attempts to get away from Sasaram. My superior officers gave much help to me, and the government secretaries informed me that there would be a transfer elsewhere at a suitable time."

In the meantime the Ṭhākura was requested to go to Koyath as a matter of urgency: "I came to know that in [Koyath] there was an excellent bull that belonged to a *brāhmaṇa*... the *brāhmaṇa* went to Puruṣottama [Purī], but he did not take the bull. Upon returning, he searched for the bull and [when he could not find it] he concluded that the local butchers had killed and eaten it. The *brāhmaṇa* challenged the Moslem butchers and they replied, 'What of your bull? In the future we will kill five cows in front of everyone on market day! What will the Hindus be able to do when they see this?' Hearing this utterance, the *brāhmaṇa* was enraged and informed all the Hindus. He also wrote to the respectable citizens [of the town] in order to put an end to the cow killing. On the market day almost four-thousand Hindus from all over the region and beyond and carrying missiles and swords, came to the house of the butcher, who fled. They made a slight disturbance but did not see the man and therefore dispersed. By the afternoon the Moslem group had grown, and taking up guns and swords, some of them injured some Hindus. The injured persons had to be sent to hospital. After some delay the police came, but they were not able to do anything. Finally, they saw the Moslems creating a disturbance, but because the fight was not started by the Moslems, but, rather, was started by the Hindus, the Hindus were considered to be at fault... After carefully questioning witnesses from both sides I gave two-year prison sentences to a few Hindu men. Then, after examining the witnesses against the Moslems, I gave two-year prison sentences to some of them. They appealed to the high court against my decision in these two trials, but my decision was upheld." Finally, the Ṭhākura wrote to Sir Henry Cotton and he received a transfer to Nadia. He comments, "The days of my trouble were over. In the month of October I came to Calcutta from Sasaram." The Ṭhākura's work-load was somewhat reduced, and he again contemplated his retirement longingly.

The year was 1894. In Krishnanagar a grand meeting of the Śrī

Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī-sabhā was held and many scholarly men attended. After much discussion it was decided that Deities must be established at the Yogapīṭha (birth site of Lord Gaurāṅga). In October of 1894, at the age of fifty-six, the Ṭhākura decided to retire from government service against the protestations of government authorities and his family. He felt that the greater work of preaching the glories of the Holy Name was urgent and that his government service was a hindrance. He retired to Surabhi-kuñja in Godruma-dvīpa, where he engaged himself fully in preaching, chanting and writing. He revised many of his previous writings, perfecting and refining them. No longer was he distracted by mundane duties.

On December 6, 1894, an article appeared in the *Āmṛta Bazar Patrikā* that describes how, just after the Ṭhākura's retirement from government service, he began going from door to door in Calcutta, begging donations for Lord Caitanya's Temple in Māyāpura in a spirit of perfect humility: "Babu Kedar Nath Dutt, the distinguished Deputy Magistrate, who has just retired from the service, is one of the most active members. Indeed, Babu Kedar Nath has been deputed by the committee to raise subscription in Calcutta and elsewhere and is determined to go from house to house, if necessary, and beg a rupee from each Hindu gentleman for the noble purpose. If Babu Kedar Nath Dutt, therefore, really sticks to his resolution of going round with a bag in hand, we hope, no Hindu gentleman, whose house may be honoured by the presence of such a devout bhakta as Babu Kedar Nath, will send him away without contributing his mite, however humble it may be, to the Gaur Vishnupriya Temple Fund."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura thus honored the houses of many persons, even persons who had formerly been opposed to him for one reason or another. His efforts served as inspiration for many other workers and before long sufficient funds had been taken up to erect a temple in Māyāpura. While the foundation of the temple was being dug, a Deity of Adhokṣaja Viṣṇu was found. By referring to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava scriptures, the Ṭhākura determined that this Deity was the very Deity worshiped by owned and Śrī Jagannātha Miśra, the father of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This discovery confirmed the authenticity of the site from yet another point of view: archeological!

On March 21, 1895, on Gaura Pūrṇimā, the anniversary of Śrī Gaurāṅga's birth, an enormous installation ceremony and *saṅkīrtana* festival was held. Thousands of visitors attended, and the festival was compared by many participants to the famous Kheturi festival of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura which he organized 450 years ago to unite all the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recalls: "...there was an enormous Śrī Mūrti installation festival and uncountable participants attended ... there was Manoharasari *kīrtana* ... and *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, all with great bliss ... envy had previously arisen from the inhabitants of present-day Navadvīpa over the finding of old Navadvīpa. There had been some talk and a storm of abusive words for the worshipers of Gaurāṅga. But for those who have offered their lives to the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga, why would they be intimidated by the talk of wicked people? Not listening to the talk of the worldly-minded and envious, the devotees arranged to build a temple and worship the Lord." The Ṭhākura installed Deities of Lord Caitanya and His consort, Śrīmātī Viṣṇupriyā, and everything was conducted with great pomp. The birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was officially commemorated and its true identity and importance was dramatically revealed to thousands of people. Thousands of Vaiṣṇavas from all parts of India were present and took part in the ecstatic chanting, dancing and feasting. Most of the learned *paṇḍitas* of Navadvīpa, after hearing the exhaustive evidence uncovered by the Ṭhākura, finally admitted that this was indeed the place of Lord Caitanya's appearance.

After this momentous celebration, the Ṭhākura traveled to Tripura, a mountainous state, where Vīracandra Deva Mahārāja, who was devoted to Lord Viṣṇu, was king. The Ṭhākura traveled there at the king's invitation in July of 1896, and for four days he preached about the glories of the Holy Name to the people there. On the first day he spoke about the eternal principles of devotion and the spiritual form of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. His lecture was filled with deep philosophical analysis and many quotations from the Vedic literature, unknown even to the many *paṇḍitas* and learned gentlemen in attendance. Upon hearing his talk, they became stunned with amazement at the erudition and deep realizations of the liberated *paramahansa*. Many were able to grasp for the first time the transcendent nature of pure devotional

service and the chanting of the Holy Names. For the next two days, the Ṭhākura enlivened both the royal family and the general public by continuously speaking on Lord Caitanya's sublime pastimes. Returning from Tripura to his work with the Nāma-haṭṭa in Godruma-dvīpa, the Ṭhākura toured all of the villages in the vicinity of Calcutta and Kumara Hatta, chanting the Holy Name and distributing the teachings of Lord Caitanya. From the time of his retirement in 1894 until 1896 there was another incredible outpouring of preaching, writing and publication work. In 1894 he published *Vedārka-dīdhiti*, a Sanskrit commentary on *Śrī Īśopaniṣad*, along with a commentary by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and other commentaries as well. He also published *Tattva-muktāvalī* or *Māyavāda Śata-dūṣaṇī*, a book by Madhvācārya refuting the philosophy of Śāṅkarācārya, with a prose Bengali translation. In 1895 the Ṭhākura was in full stride with the publication of his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*, his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; *Hari-bhakti-kalpa-latikā*, a Sanskrit work about pure devotion by an unknown author and edited by the Ṭhākura; *Ṣoḍaśa Grantha*, sixteen small essays on Vaiṣṇavism by Śrī Vallabhācārya; *Śrī Gaurāṅga-stava-kalpataru*, a twelve verse poem in Sanskrit from Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's *Stavāvalī*; *Manah-santoṣaṇī* a Bengali translation of a Sanskrit work by Śrī Pradyumna Miśra; *Mukunda-mālā-stotram*, by King Kulakṣekhara, who was one of the twelve Alvars of South India; *Śrī Lakṣmī-carita* by Guṇarāja Khān, the author of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vijaya*; four *nāma-stotras* from the *Nārada Pañcarātra*, and *Śrīman Mahāprabhor Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotram*, an eleven verse Sanskrit poem on the eight-fold daily pastimes of Lord Caitanya by an unknown author.

His Preaching Reaches the Western World

EIGHTEEN-NINETY-SIX was the momentous year in which the Ṭhākura reached out to the West with his *Śrī Gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-stotram*, a book containing 104 Sanskrit verses and a condensed

description of the pastimes and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as found in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The book began with a forty-seven page introduction in English prose entitled-*Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: His Life and Precepts*. This introduction summarizes the contents of the book's Sanskrit verses and is one of the most concisely worded, sublime descriptions of Lord Caitanya's life and teachings ever written. It is condensed nectar. Accompanying the Sanskrit verses was a Sanskrit commentary entitled *Vikāśinī Tīkā* by the renowned *paṇḍita* of Navadvīpa, Mahā-mahopādhyāya Śitikaṇṭha Vācaspati.

The above-mentioned work was sent to various universities and intellectuals in different parts of the world, and it was, in part, a reply to the American philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had expressed his regret in not being able to read the Sanskrit of the Ṭhākura's *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*. Here was something the Westerners could easily read and profit from, and the book found its way into many of the major educational institutions in both hemispheres. As a matter of fact, it was discovered many years later by one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples in McGill University in Montreal.

1896 was also the year of Śrīla Prabhupāda's birth, which he noted in his dedication to the Ṭhākura of his book *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*: "Dedicated to The Sacred Service of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura Who Initiated The Teachings of Lord Caitanya in The Western World (McGill University, Canada) in 1896 The Year Of My Birth". By some spiritual coincidence, the two events occurred in the same year, and Śrīla Prabhupāda did not discount, but rather noted, the spiritual significance. Furthermore, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had predicted the day that Westerners would also embrace the teachings of Lord Caitanya. In one of his articles written for *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* and published in 1885, he had not only predicted it, but prayed for it and invoked it, in the same mood as Advaita Ācārya praying for Lord Caitanya's descent: "Lord Caitanya did not advent Himself to liberate only a few men of India. Rather, His main objective was to emancipate all living entities of all countries throughout the entire universe and preach the Eternal Religion. Lord Caitanya says in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*: 'In every town, country and village, My name will be sung.'

There is no doubt that this unquestionable order will come to pass ... Very soon the unparalleled path of Harināma-saṅkīrtana will be propagated all over the world. Already we are seeing the symptoms ... Oh, for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, German and American people will take up banners, *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* and raise *kīrtana* through their streets and towns. When will that day come? Oh, for the day when the fair-skinned men from their side will raise up the chanting of '*jaya śacīnandana, jaya śacīnandana ki jaya*' and join with the Bengali devotees. When will that day be? On such a day they will say, 'Our dear Brothers, we have taken shelter of the ocean of Lord Caitanya's Love; kindly embrace us.' When will that day come? That day will witness the holy transcendental ecstasy of the Vaiṣṇava-dharma to be the only *dharma*, and all the sects and religions will flow like rivers into the ocean of Vaiṣṇava-dharma. When will that day come?"

And then he penned another amazing prediction, which can be applied to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, but also, most certainly, to Śrīla Prabhupāda: "A personality will soon appear to preach the teachings of Lord Caitanya and move unrestrictedly over the whole world with His message." Śrīla Prabhupāda naturally credited Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with this feat, as in his purports to the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: "In the same order as Kardama Muni, about one hundred years ago, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda also wanted to beget a child who could preach the philosophy and teachings of Lord Caitanya to the fullest extent. By his prayers to the Lord he had as his child Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who at the present moment is preaching the philosophy of Lord Caitanya throughout the entire world through his bona fide disciples." (S.B. 3.22.19) On the other hand, the personality who actually repeatedly circled the globe, who moved "unrestrictedly over the whole world" was undoubtedly Śrīla Prabhupāda. Both understandings are correct. It was Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, for Prabhupāda has stated that he was never separated from the order of his spiritual master for a moment. In the form of his instruction Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued to preach.

And most certainly that great figure, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose prayers brought such a wealth of association to the impoverished world

in the form of his son and in the form of his son's foremost disciple, also accompanied them in his *śikṣā* form, thus nourishing the effort at every step.

During a video-taped conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Los Angeles, Viṣṇujana Swami remarked: "Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said he was leaving this world with his work unfinished." Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "So let us finish it. We are descendants of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. It was kept unfinished so that we should get the chance to finish it. That's his mercy. He could have finished immediately. He's Vaiṣṇava. He's all-powerful..." And thus, there remains a great spiritual legacy of preaching and service for all those who contact the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the disciplic succession of these spiritual titans.

In *Shree Chaitanya Mahāprabhu His Life and Precepts*, the Ṭhākura first summarizes the life of the Lord, and he then discusses His precepts. That portion begins as follows:

"Chaitanya teaches us in the first place that the rational attributes of men are not capable of approaching the Divine sphere of spirit. Jukti [yukti], as he styles reason, is quite incompetent in such a matter. *Ruchi* as he styles the religious sentiment in man, even in a very small quantity, has the power to comprehend it. It is inspiration which can alone give light to spiritual matters. Inspirations coming down from Heaven through purified and blessed souls have exhibited themselves in the form of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas*, together with their explanatory notes, the Purans, are, therefore, the only evidence in matters of spirit and are eternal in nature. *Vedic* truths should, therefore, be accepted as the only truth in higher matter. Reason, while sincerely helping the inspired truth, may be accepted as auxiliary evidence. The *Vedas* teach us according to Chaitanya, nine principal doctrines, that is:

- (1) Hari (the Almighty) is one without a second.
- (2) He is always vested with infinite power.
- (3) He is [the] ocean of *Rasa*.
- (4) The soul is His *Vibhinnangsha* or separated part.
- (5) Certain souls are engrossed by *Prakriti* or His illusory energy.
- (6) Certain souls are released from the grasp of *Prakriti*.

- (7) All spiritual and material phenomena are *Vedaved-prakash* of Hari, the Almighty.
- (8) Bhakti is the only means of attaining the final object of spiritual existence.
- (9) Prem in Krishna is alone the final object of spiritual existence."

With these nine points introduced, the Ṭhākura elaborates on each point, bearing in mind the various cultural and philosophical prejudices of a Western audience. For example, regarding the realization of God as Kṛṣṇa, Who exhibits His Vṛndāvana-līlā, as the first point (!) to be understood, the Ṭhākura naturally realizes the difficulty this will create for the uninitiated. Therefore, he writes:

"The material senses of man cannot approach Him. It is the spirit in man which can see Him direct and commune with Him. The soul fettered in matter, has from its own degradation lost its right to see Krishna and His spiritual *lila* in the spiritual world, but Krishna out of His own Supreme Power and prerogative may appear with all His Brindaban *lila* before the eyes of all men. The rational man can hardly conceive and believe Krishna and His *lila*. As his spiritual essence improves, he sees Him and loves Him with all his heart. In our small compass, we can hardly treat this subject fully and exhaustively. We, therefore, leave this point to our readers with these words. 'Give up the shackles of matter slowly. Cultivate your spirit inwards. Give up prejudices which you have acquired from the so-called rational thinkers who deny the existence of spirit. Be humble in yourself and learn to respect those who work towards spiritual attainments. Do these with your heart, mind and strength in the company of spiritual people alone, and you will see Krishna in no time. Krishna is not an imaginary Being nor [do] you have a right to think that He is a material phenomenon fancied to be the Supreme Being by the fools. Krishna is not understood by the process of distinguishing the subjective from the objective, nor He is to be accepted as an imposition on the people set up by designing men. Krishna is eternal, spiritually true, reflected on the human soul when relieved of all pressure of gross matter and is the subject of love which proceeds from the soul. Accept Him as such and you will see Him in your soul's eye. Words fail to describe that Transcendental Being. The

highest, best and most spiritual ideal of the Divinity is in Krishna. To bring arguments against Him is simply to deceive one's self and deprive himself of the blessings that God has kept in store for man. Hence, all descriptions of His name, person, attributes and *lila* should be accepted spiritually, giving up the material portion which words must necessarily convey."

The authority, conviction and straight-forwardness with which the Ṭhākura speaks is recognizably the hallmark of the *paramparā* (disciplic succession) of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When speaking of almost inconceivably sublime and rarified spiritual knowledge and experience, preachers like the Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda present these topics in a matter-of-fact way, kicking out rationalistic preconceptions and prejudices and stating what they know beyond doubt to be true. It is clearly desirable to surrender to a spiritual master who has actually seen the truth and can speak of the Absolute with such conclusive authority and conviction.

The Ṭhākura, in addressing the third point, i.e. that Lord Hari is the ocean of *rasa*-urges the reader not to think that the activities of Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world have been imagined in the light of our experience of the activities of ordinary persons in the material world. He writes: "The *chit-jagat* [spiritual universe] is the model of the *mayik-jagat* [material universe] but they are not identical. We must guard ourselves against the idea, that man has imagined *chit-jagat* from an experience of the *mayik-jagat*. This idea is pantheistic and it may also be styled atheistic. Reason, not spiritualized, has a tendency to create such a doubt, but one who has a wish to enjoy spiritual love must give it up as misleading. The eternal *rasa* of Krishna exists spiritually in *chit-jagat*. To us who are in the nether world there is a screen which intervenes between our eyes and the great spiritual scene of Krishna *lila*. When by the grace of Krishna that screen is drawn up, we have the privilege to see it, and again when it pleases the Almighty to drop the screen the great Brindaban *lila* disappears. Taste the subject and your conviction will be the same as mine. Brethren! Do not give up such an important subject without due and liberal examination." Next the Ṭhākura addresses the controversial idea of transmigration in discussing the fourth point, i.e. 'The soul is His *vibinnangsha* or separated part.' He

wastes little time in dispensing with opposition to this important idea, which is central to understanding the eternal nature of the soul.

"It must be understood that Mahāprabhu believed in the very liberal theory of transmigration of the soul. Certain readers may reject the idea on the ground that certain forms of faith do not support that theory. It is not liberal to reject a theory because it is in antagonism with the dogmas of certain sectarian creeds. Indeed it is a matter which reason cannot dare to meddle with. Candidly examining, we do not see any strong reason to disbelieve the theory of transmigration. On the other hand, our unprejudiced mind is inclined to stand for it. The belief that the human soul has only one trial in life is evidently illiberal, unjust and contrary to the belief that God is all good. When our spiritual sentiment supports the theory and the Vedas, the receptacles of inspirations, have taught us the fact of continual existence of the soul in different stages of creation, we cannot but give up the idea of disbelieving in the theory of transmigration of the soul. However educated and scientific a man may be, he is always liable to a creeping error. That which holds good regarding a man holds good also regarding a nation or a sect."

In his discussion of the soul, the Ṭhākura also addresses the famous conundrum concerning the chronology of the living entities' creation and captivation by the material world. He quickly disposes with the matter, saying:

"Please avoid the misleading question, 'when were these *Jivas* created and enthralled?' The *Mayik* time has no existence in spiritual history because it has its commencement after the enthrallment of *Jivas* in matter and you cannot, therefore, employ *Mayik* chronology in matters like these."

In discussing the fifth point, i.e. 'Certain souls are engrossed by *Prakṛiti* or illusory energy,' the Ṭhākura shatters the theory that there is anything enjoyable in the material world, and he uses the analogy of the prison-house to clarify matters:

"In fact, *Māya* is in charge of God's house of correction. Those *Jivas* who in abusing their free will, forget that they were eternal servants of the Deity and thought of enjoying for themselves, were grasped by *Māya* for their penal servitude and correction ... The fallen souls travel from body to body with their *linga-deha* [subtle body] doing *Karma* or *Vikarma*,

rising up to the heavens and again coming down at the exhaustion of their virtues, going down to hell and after suffering punishment again rising up to the platform of work. Thus the state of the fallen souls is deplorable in the extreme. There they enjoy and suffer massacre and murder, and go on in this state sometimes smiling as princes and sometimes ruining as sufferers. The world is therefore a prison or a house of correction and not a place for enjoyment as some people assert." In discussing the sixth point, i.e. 'Certain souls are released from the grasp of *Prakriti*'-the Ṭhākura explains how this is only possible by meeting an elevated Vaiṣṇava, and acquiring *śraddhā*, or faith, in the process of *bhakti* (devotion to the Godhead, Kṛṣṇa).

"When a man comes in contact with a Vaishnava, whose heart has been melted by *Haribhakti-rasa*, it is then that he loves to imbibe the sweet principle of *Bhakti* by following in his holy foot-steps, by constant study of *Krishna-Bhakti*. He slowly washes off his *Mayik* condition and in the end obtaining his real nature, he enjoys the sweetest unalloyed *rasa* which is the ultimatum of the soul. *Satsanga* or the company of the spiritual people is the only means to obtain the ultimate object of man. *Bhakti* is a principle which comes from soul to soul and like electricity or magnetism in gross matter, it conducts itself from one congenial soul to another."

In discussing the seventh point, i.e. 'All spiritual and material phenomena are *Achintya-Bhedabhed-prakash* of Hari, the Almighty'-the Ṭhākura explains that to understand the simultaneous distinction and nondistinction of the *jīva* and God is no easy matter, but that the theories of Śaṅkarācārya are erroneous. Some of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's analysis is hard to grasp, but when carefully studied, it shows itself to be a brilliant, *sūtra*-like defeat of the basic principles of *Māyāvāda* (theory of the One Supreme Soul deluding Himself that He is many individual souls).

"Metaphysical discussions are perfectly useless. The Vedas go sometimes to establish that *Jiva* is distinct from the Deity, and sometimes that *Jiva* is the same as the Deity. In fact, the Vedas always tell the truth. *Jiva* is simultaneously distinct from and identical with God. This is not understood by the rationalist. Hence it must be said that in exercise of His powers beyond human comprehension God is distinct from *Jiva* and

the world, and again identical with them at all times. The Vedanta teaches us the *Sakti-parinamvad* [doctrine of modification of God's energies] and not the erroneous *Vivartavad* of Shankaracharya ... Shankar in order to avoid *Brahma-parinam* i.e., transformation of the Godhead into the world, establishes that Vyas teaches us *Vivartavad* which is this, that God undergoes no change whatever, but it is *Maya* which covers a part of the Deity, (just as a pot encloses a part of the firmament) creates the world; or that God is reflected on *avidya* or ignorance, while in fact nothing else than God has yet come to existence. These are worthless and abstruse arguments. It is plain that the *Vedanta* teaches us that God is unchangeable and is never subject to modifications. His power alone creates *Jiva* and the material world by its own *parinam* (modification). The example is in the action of the Alchemist's stone the power of which comes in the form of gold while the stone remains unchanged. Thus *Chit-shakti* [spiritual potency] goes in the form of the *chit-jagat* [spiritual universe] with all its particularities of eternal *rasa* and *Jiva shakti* goes in the form of innumerable *Jivas*, some staying in *Vaikuntha* as *parshadas* or angels and others moving in this world in various shapes and forms and under very different circumstances. *Maya-shakti* [illusory potency] creates numerous worlds for the habitations and entertainments of the fallen souls. *Vivartavad* is no doubt an error and is quite opposed to the teachings of the Vedas. Now '*Sakti-parinamvad*' alone is true and supports the facts that spiritual love is eternal. If *Vivartavad* were true the natural consequence would be to declare spiritual love to be a temporary principle."

In discussing the eighth point of the doctrine of Lord Caitanya, i.e. '*Bhakti* is the only means of attaining the final object of spiritual existence'-the Ṭhākura immediately discusses Deity [Śrī Mūrti] worship, because it is this feature of the science of *bhakti*: worshipping God in a personal, apparently material feature, which is essential to the execution of *bhakti*. But this process, so important for one's advancement and development of real attachment to God, also arouses fear in those who mistake it for idolatry. Recognizing the fears and irrationality of sectarian thinkers with respect to this topic, he brings into play all of his considerable logic, charm, wit and deep realization of the various philosophies and religions of the world in stating his case. Anyone who

wishes to place this controversial topic before a Western audience would do well to study the Ṭhākura's presentation, for with his background of study of the *Bible*, the *Koran* and the thoughts of the Western and Eastern philosophers, he was more than prepared for all forms of doubt, skepticism or suspicion:

"There are some who start at the theory of worshipping *Srimurti*! 'Oh,' they say, 'It is idolatry to worship *Srimurti*. *Srimurti* is an idol framed by an artist and introduced by no other than Beelzebub himself.

Worshipping such an object would rouse the jealousy of God and limit His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence!' We would tell them, Brethren! candidly understand the question and do not allow yourself to be misled by sectarian dogmas. God is not jealous, as He is without a second. Beelzebub or Satan is no other than an object of imagination or the subject of an allegory. An allegorical or imaginary being should not be allowed to act an obstacle to *Bhakti*. Those who believe God to be impersonal, simply identify Him with some power or attribute in nature, though in fact He is above nature, her laws and rules. His holy wish is law and it would be sacrilege to confine His unlimited excellence by identifying Him with such attributes as omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience,-attributes which may exist in created objects such as time, space &c. His excellence consists in having in Him mutually contradicting powers and attributes ruled by His Supernatural Self. He is identical with His All-beautiful person, having such powers as omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence the like of which cannot be found elsewhere. His holy and perfect person exists eternally in the spiritual world and at the same time existing in every created object and place in all its fullness. This idea excels all other ideas of the Deity.

Mahaprabhu rejects idolatry as well, but considers *Srimurti* worship to be the only unexceptionable means of spiritual culture. It has been shewn that God is personal and All-beautiful. Sages like Vyasa and others have seen that beauty in their souls' eyes. They have left us descriptions. Of course word carries grossness of matter. But truth still is perceivable in those descriptions. According to those descriptions one delineates a *Srimurti* and sees the great God of our heart there with intense pleasure. Brethren! is that wrong or sinful? Those who say that God has no form either material or spiritual and again imagine a false form for worship

are certainly idolatrous. But those who see the spiritual form of the Deity in their souls' eyes, carry that impression as far as possible to the mind and then frame an emblem for the satisfaction of the material eye for continual study of the higher feeling, are by no means idolatrous. While seeing a *Srimurti* do not even see the image itself but see the spiritual model of the image and you are a pure theist. Idolatry and *Srimurti*-worship are two different things; but my brethren! you simply confound one with the other out of hastiness. To tell you the truth, *Srimurti*-worship is the only true worship of the Deity, without which you cannot sufficiently cultivate your religious feelings. The world attracts you through your senses and as long as you do not see God in the objects of your senses, you live in an awkward position which scarcely helps you in procuring you your spiritual elevation. Place a *Srimurti* in your house. Think that God Almighty is the guardian of the house. The food that you take is His *Prasad* [mercy]. The flower and scents are also His *Prasad*. The eye, the ear, the nose, the touch and the tongue all have a spiritual culture. You do it with a holy heart and God will know it and judge you by your sincerity. Satan and Beelzebub will have nothing to do with you in that matter! All sorts of worship are based on the principle of *Srimurti*. Look into the history of religion and you will come to this noble truth. The Semitic idea of a patriarchal God both in the pre-Christian period of Judaism and post-Christian period of Christianity and Mohammedanism is nothing but a limited idea of *Srimurti*. The monarchic idea of a Jove amongst the Greeks and of an Indra amongst the Aryan *Karmakandis* [adherents of the fruitive creed] is also a distant view of the same principle. The idea of a force and *Jotirmaya Brahma* of the meditators and a formless energy of the *Shaktas* is also a very faint view of the *Srimurti*. In fact the principle of *Srimurti* is the truth itself differently exhibited in different people according to their different phases of thought. Even Jaimini and Comte who are not prepared to accept a creating God, have prescribed certain phases of the *Srimurti* simply because they have been impelled by some inward action from the soul! Then again we meet with people who have adopted the Cross, the *Shalgram shila*, the *lingam* and such-like emblems as indicators of the inward idea of *Srimurti*. Furthermore, if the Divine compassion, love and justice could be portrayed by the pencil and

expressed by the chisel why should not the personal beauty of the Deity embracing all other attributes be portrayed in poetry or in picture or expressed by the chisel for the benefit of man? If words could impress thoughts, the watch could indicate time and sign could tell us a history, why should not the picture or figure bring associations of higher thoughts and feelings with regard to the transcendental beauty of the Divine Personage?

"*Srimurti* worshippers are divided into two classes, the ideal and the physical. Those of the physical school are entitled from their circumstances of life and state of the mind to establish temple institutions. Those who are by circumstances and position entitled to worship the *Srimurti* in mind have, with due deference to the temple institutions, a tendency to worship usually by *srajan* [*śravaṇa*-hearing] and *kirtan*, and their church is universal and independent of caste and colour. Mahaprabhu prefers this latter class and shews their worship in His *Shikshastak*, printed as an appendix to this book. Worship then without intermission with a feeling of resignation and in a very short time you will be blessed with *prem*."

In discussing the concluding and 9th point, i.e. 'Prem in God is the final object of spiritual existence,' the Ṭhākura details the various *bhavas* (symptoms of ecstasy) and introduces *prema* (ecstatic love) in the form of the five eternal *rasas* (relationships) with Kṛṣṇa as the highest attainment of the soul. He cautions his readers not to confound material *rasa* with spiritual *rasa*:

"We have [a] perverted picture of this noble *rasa* in human life, as human life in the thralldom of *maya* is but [a] perverted reflection of the spiritual life. When the soul alone acts towards its proper object, the spiritual hero Krishna, the *rasa* is pure; when the mind and the senses act upon a wrong object, *rasa* is degraded and becomes hateable. The perverted *rasa* gives clue to the idea of the noble spiritual *rasa* to man in general; hence these arguments and descriptions have been attempted in words which correspond with words directly meaning the features of the perverted *rasa*. We ask our readers to take care to make a nice distinction between spirit and gross matter otherwise a fall is inevitable." The Ṭhākura then summarizes his entire message in the space of a paragraph and gives some final words of advice to his readers:

"To summarise man in his present state has three different principles in him,-(i) one *sthul* principle or gross matter composing his body, (ii) the *linga* principle or sublimated matter appearing in the form of mind, attention, rationality and the perverted *ego* by which one confounds oneself with the material world. This state has been caused by the influence of *maya* or the illusory energy with the object of correcting the soul in his wrong intention to enjoy, in consequence of forgetfulness of his nature as God's servant. (iii) Man in fact is solely independent of *maya* and her connection. The only way to get rid of the present difficulty is the influence of pure *bhakti* imbibed from a true *Bhakta*. *Bhakti* as a means, elevates the man up to the All-Beautiful *Krishna* and again, as an end, maintains him with eternal *Krishna-prem*.

"While located in the *mayic* world man must live peacefully with the object of cultivating the spirit. In his society he must lead a pure life, avoid sins and do as much good as he can to his brother man. He must be himself humble bearing difficulties of life with heroism, must not brag of any goodness or grandeur he has and must treat every one with [the] respect due to him. Marriage with a view to peaceful and virtuous life and with a view to procreate servants of the Lord is a good institution for a *Vaishnav*. Spiritual cultivation is the main object of life. Do everything that helps it and abstain from doing anything which thwarts the cultivation of the spirit. Have a strong faith that *Krishna alone* protects you and *none else*. Admit him as your only guardian. Do everything which you know that *Krishna* wishes you to do and never think that you do a thing independent of the holy wish of *Krishna*. Do all that you do with humility. Always remember that you are a sojourner in this world and you must be prepared for your own home. Do your duties and cultivate *bhakti* as a means to obtain the great end of life, *Krishna-priti*. Employ your body, mind and spirit in the service of the Deity. In all your actions, worship your Great Lord."

In his final advice, it is significant that the Ṭhākura mentions the principle of humility twice and gives special emphasis to the idea of seeing oneself always under the exclusive protection and shelter of Kṛṣṇa. This paragraph is perfect counsel for all who would progress in the spiritual line. Finally, the Ṭhākura expresses his own humility and eagerness to assist any sincere soul by making the offer of further

instruction to those who are interested:

"Noble readers! Pardon us for intruding on you with these pages. As servants of Chaitanya, it was our duty to propagate His supreme teachings and in doing a duty we are entitled to pardon for any trouble we have given you. We are natives of Bengal and in couching our words in a foreign language we might have been liable to mistakes for which you will please forgive us.

"In conclusion, we beg to say that we should be glad to reply to any questions which our brethren would like to address us on these important subjects. We feel great interest in trying to help our friends to seek in the way to Spiritual love."

The Ṭhākura thus made his historic appeal to the West and correctly foresaw the future expansion of Lord Caitanya's Movement. The understanding which the Ṭhākura had of the Western intellectuals of his time was remarkable. In his preaching he anticipated many of their arguments and doubts and resolved them with powerful logic, persuasive conviction and scriptural knowledge. This small but powerful essay was the beginning of a spiritual revolution which would spread throughout the world in the near future. By the pure desire of the Ṭhākura, his great son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and his son's great disciple, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, were sent by Kṛṣṇa to assist in the fulfillment of his great aspiration.

In that same year of 1896, the Ṭhākura also published two works which explained the five main elements of the philosophy of Rāmānujācārya at length; one which he authored, called *Śrī Rāmānuja-upadeśa*, and the other, by Śrī Pillai Lokācārya, called *Artha-pañcakara*.

The Ṭhākura's *Śrī-Gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotram*, containing the Life and Precepts essay, was favorably reviewed by a number of scholars. One review appeared in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of London with the following remarks:

"Under the title of Sri Gauranga Lila Smarana Mangal Stotram, the well-known Vaishnava, Sri Kedar Nath Bhakti-Vinode, M.R.A.S., has published a poem in Sanskrit on the life and teachings of Chaitanya. It is accompanied by a commentary, also in Sanskrit, in which the subject further elucidated is preceded by an introduction of 63 pages in English, in which the doctrines taught by Chaitanya. are set out in somewhat full

detail; this position and more especially as against Shankar and the Advaita Vedantists, is explained at length. The little volume will add to our knowledge of this remarkable reformer and we "press our thanks to Bhakti-Vinode for giving it to us in English and Sanskrit, rather than in Bengali, in which language it must necessarily have remained a closed book to European students of the religious life in India."

Another Western scholar, named R.W Frazer, who had spent time in Madras, wrote this appreciation:

"Five hundred years have passed away since the time Chaitanya spread a faith in the saving grace of Krishna throughout the land. Nevertheless, down to the present day, the same spirit that inspired Chaitanya continues still to dwell among his followers.

"In an interesting account of the life and precepts of Chaitanya lately published by his devout and aged follower, Sri Kedarnath Dutt Bhakti-Vinod, it can be read how this spirit preserves its vitality undiminished amid the changes that are sweeping over the land. This exponent of the hopes of the present followers of the teachings of Chaitanya declares his firm faith, that from a devoted love to Krishna, a love like that of a girl for a loved one, shown by constant repetition of his name, by ecstatic raptures, singing, calm contemplation and fervour, a movement will yet take place to draw to the future church of the world 'all classes of men, without distinction of caste or clan to the highest cultivation of the spirit.' This church it appears, will extend all over the world, and take the place of all sectarian churches, which exclude outsiders from the precincts of the mosque, church or temple.

"The spirit that is to animate this new church is to be founded on the principle that 'spiritual cultivation is the main object of life. Do everything that keeps it and abstain from doing anything which thwarts the cultivation of spirit.' A devoted love of Krishna is to be the guiding light, as preached by Chaitanya. 'Have a strong faith that Krishna alone protects you and none else. Admit Him as your only guardian. Do everything which you know Krishna wishes you to do and never think that you do a thing independent of the holy wish of Krishna. Do all that you do with humility. Always remember that you are a sojourner in the world, and you must be prepared for your own home.'" (from *A Literary History of India* pp. 349-51)

Preaching and Publishing Until the Last

During the rainy season of 1896, at the request of the Mahārāja of Tripura, who had earlier invited the Ṭhākura to preach in his kingdom, the dauntless preacher spent several days preaching in Darjeeling and Karsiyam. In 1897 the Ṭhākura traveled and preached in many villages and towns, such as Medinipur and Sauri, spreading Śrī Caitanya's message and delivering the people of Bengal from the darkness of materialism and atheistic philosophy. The Ṭhākura experienced great spiritual bliss and satisfaction in his preaching efforts, and 1897 also saw the publication of the fifth chapter of *Brahma-saṁhitā*, published and edited by him, along with the original Sanskrit, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Sanskrit commentary and Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's own Bengali introduction, Bengali prose translation and Bengali commentary called *Prakāśinī*.

The Ṭhākura's association with the famous Śīśir Kumar Ghosh has been documented by Paramānanda Vidyāratna and in a scholarly book called *Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal* by Dr. Ramakanta Chakravarti. Śīśir Kumar Ghosh (1840-1911) was a famous journalist, the founder and editor of the *Amrita BazarPatrika* and formerly a Brahmo (a follower of Rammohan Ray). He had great respect and reverence for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, having read some of his books, such as *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhita*. Being very attracted to the purity of the Ṭhākura, he initiated a correspondence with him. He came to consider the Ṭhākura to be on the level of the Six Gosvāmīs, and in fact, he once wrote to him: "I have not seen the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, but I consider you to be the seventh Gosvāmī." He published a book about the life of Lord Caitanya in English called *Lord Gauranga or Salvation for All* in 1897, being inspired by the Ṭhākura's book *Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu-His Life and Precepts*. He wrote biographies of Lord Caitanya's followers and published an edition of the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. He also preached the glories of the holy name in the Calcutta area and many villages in Bengal, being inspired again by the Ṭhākura's example. His Vaiṣṇava

journal, *Śrī Viṣṇu Priyā O Ānanda Bazar Patrikā* was published under the editorship of the Ṭhākura on a fortnightly basis starting in 1890. Later it became a monthly. The Ṭhākura severed his links with the magazine in 1899, because he felt the journal was indulging in *prajalpa* (idle or useless talk) by mixing Vaiṣṇavism with the news of secular politics. Śiśir Kumar was a nationalist, and he could not restrain himself from mixing in his views, which were very much opposed to the British Raj. The Ṭhākura, on the other hand, being firmly situated in transcendence, could understand the futility of such indulgences and understood that the pressing need in human society was God consciousness. Men were spiritually all brothers. The business of dividing into camps of friends and enemies on the basis of the bodily conception of life had little to do with the Reality he was interested in communicating to the public.

During the years of 1898 and 1899, the Ṭhākura was fully absorbed in preaching, book publishing and *bhajana*. In 1898 the great work called *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* by Śrīla Līlāśuka Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura was published by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with the original Sanskrit, the *Bāla-bodhini-ṭikā* commentary of the older brother of Kavi Karṇapura, Caitanya Dāsa Gosvāmī, a final summary, and Bengali prose translations of the verses. In the same year he wrote a commentary on the *Upadeśāmṛta* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. He published an edition of *Bhagavad-gītā* with the commentary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, and *Śrī Goloka-māhātmyam*, the second *khaṇḍa* of Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛtam*, with the original Sanskrit, and his own Bengali translations of the verses.

In 1899 the Sanskrit classic of Śrīla Narahari Sarakāra called, *Śrī Bhajanāmṛta* was brought to light and translated into Bengali by the Ṭhākura. And in the same year, the highly elevated 168 verse work called *Śrī Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga*, which describes the sites of Navadvīpa from the point of view of a fully realized soul, was presented. These places are not described as geographical or historical entities of this world, but rather as *īśodyāna* or the 'transcendental garden of the Supreme Lord'. In this work the Ṭhākura revealed that his *svarūpa*, his spiritual identity, was Kamala-mañjarī, the eternal assistant of Anaṅga-mañjarī. In his *Śrī Śrī Radha-Kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, Śrīla Rūpa

Gosvāmī explains that Anaṅga-mañjarī is one of the *vara*, or supermost *gopīs*, and sister to Śrīmātī Rādhārāṇī. Lord Balarāma's two wives were Śrīmātī Vāruṇī-devī and Śrīmātī Revatī-devī, and they appeared as wives of Lord Nityānanda as Śrīmātī Vasudhā-devī and Śrīmātī Jāhnavī-devī. This is explained in the *Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* of Śrīla Kavi-karṇapūra. Both Vasudhā-devī and Jāhnavī-devī are considered to be incarnations of Anaṅga-mañjarī. This means that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the eternal assistant of the eternal consort of Lord Nityānanda. Thus, it becomes clear why Godruma-dvīpa, and particularly Śvānanda-sukhada-kuñja, where Lord Nityānanda inaugurated his preaching in Bengal—the marketplace of the Holy Name, was the especially dear site of worship for Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda.

Bhakti Kuti and Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja

AT the turn of the century Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was inspired to return to Jagannātha Purī, the site of the final pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who had recently been initiated by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, stayed there in his association as a *naiṣṭhika brahmacārī*. He was performing *bhajana* in the renounced mood of his *gurus* at the Gandharvikā Giridhārī Maṭha, which was located just near the *samādhi* of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. In order to facilitate his son's worship the Ṭhākura had the temple repaired and cleaned. Daily, [as has been described in the first volume of this series, *A Ray of Vishnu*] they gave lectures, and the Ṭhākura established a place of *bhajana* a short distance from the ocean, also near the *samādhi* of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, which he called Bhakti Kuti. Later, when there was severe controversy arising from the attempt of the Ṭhākura and Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to correct the deviations of Rādhāramaṇa Caraṇa dāsa Bābājī, the Ṭhākura instructed his son to perform his *bhajana* in Māyāpura.

A devotee named Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī, who later became the disciple of the Ṭhākura, stayed in Purī as an assistant and became very dear to Śrīla

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He continued to serve him up to the last moment of the Ṭhākura's life, and, feeling intense separation from his master, gave up his own life a year later. His *samādhi* is found just next to the Ṭhākura's in Godruma-dvīpa. At Bhakti Kuti the Ṭhākura performed his *bhajana* in solitude. His biographers state that occasionally some impious rascals tried to disturb him, but Kṛṣṇa protected him in every respect. A number of sincere persons also came there to see him, however, and they were inspired and saved by his association and blessings, which he readily gave them.

The Ṭhākura stayed in Purī for some time, but he eventually returned to his place in Godruma-Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, where he continued to chant and to translate and write books. In 1900 one of his most important works, *Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, was published. It presented the teachings of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura about the Holy Name and other important aspects of spiritual practice, as collected from various Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literatures. It was divided into fifteen chapters and composed in Bengali verse form. In 1901 he published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā*. In this important book, the Ṭhākura presents a study of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in twenty chapters, arranging its principal verses so as to illustrate the divisions of *sambandha* (the soul's relationship with God), *abhidheya* (the means for reviving that relationship) and *prayojana* (the ultimate goal of life). The Sanskrit verses were accompanied by Bengali prose translations and explanations by the Ṭhākura. The *Bhāgavatam* is compared to the sun and each chapter is considered to be an individual ray of *Bhāgavata* sunlight. In his concluding remarks Śrīla Bhaktivinoda describes how he came to write the book as he did: "How I was inspired to compile this work is a mystery which I felt improper to disclose as it might constitute spiritual conceit. Subsequently, I realised that it would be a slight against my spiritual master which might stand as an obstacle on the path of my spiritual progress, and therefore, without any shame, I record the fact that, while under the benediction of my guru ... I was meditating deeply upon the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* one day, when in a vision Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, the intimate adherent of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, instructed me to compile the verses of the *Bhāgavata* in accordance with the principles of *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana* as set forth by Śrī Caitanya, so

that the book could be read with an easy understanding and with happiness by the devotees of the Lord. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara further guided me by giving me a wonderful explanation of the first verse of the *Bhāgavata*, and he also showed me how I was to explain the verses in the light of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy." In the same year the Ṭhākura published an edition of *Padma Purāṇa*, as well as the *San̄kalpa-kalpadruma* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, with Bengali prose translations by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda.

In 1902 he brought out a supplement to *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* called *Bhajana-rahasya*. It was arranged in eight chapters, and the chanting of each chapter is to be observed in correspondence with each three hour period of the twenty-four hour day. Each chapter corresponds also to one verse of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭakam* and deals with one of the eight steps in the gradual development of Kṛṣṇa-bhajana as is enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. All the chapters are filled with scriptural quotations explaining the philosophy and practice of worshipping Kṛṣṇa. Each Sanskrit verse is accompanied by the Ṭhākura's Bengali translation in both prose and verse. This was one of his last major works, and it can be observed that the subject matter of the Ṭhākura grew increasingly more elevated and esoteric as time passed. It is clear that his daily existential experience was on the same level as that of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

In 1904 he published *Sat-kṛiyā-sāra-dīpikā*, a Sanskrit work by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī on the *saṁskāras* (purificatory rites) and other practices pertinent to both Vaiṣṇava *gṛhasthas* and renunciates. He gave his own Bengali translations as well. In 1906 he published the Bengali verse classic *Prema-vivarta*, a book by Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, the incarnation of Satyabhāmā, who explained his loving mood with Lord Caitanya and the glories of the Holy Name.

The last known work of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was called *Śrī Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam*, ('Twelve Verses Of Self-Imposed Regulative Principles') written in 1907. The Sanskrit *stava* was modeled after the famous *stava* of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī called *Sva-niyama-daśakam*, which was comprised of ten verses of self-imposed vows. This work was a final statement of the Ṭhākura's, an illuminating set of instructions regarding preparation for the spiritual realm of existence, and his

expressed determination not to budge from the path established by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

[1]

"Birth after birth, let me be attached to the following, come what may-1) to my spiritual master; 2) to Lord Śrī Gaurāṅga; 3) to the topics of pure devotional service as instructed by Him; 4) to the holy places of pilgrimage, which are all blooming with sanctity due to His performance of pastimes therein; 5) to my *dīkṣā-mantra*; 6) to the holy name of Śrī Hari; 7) to the beloved associates of the Lord; 8) to the holy days associated with Lord Hari; 9) to those persons who follow in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī; and 10) to the scriptures enunciated by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

[2]

"Within the forest of Vṛndā, which is gloriously rich in the treasure of *madhūrya-rasa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personification of spiritual mellows, gives transcendental bliss to Śrī Rādhikā, who is the topmost manifestation of His divine potencies and the personified form of the supreme mellow of love-in-separation. This same Lord Kṛṣṇa is identical to the son of Mother Śacī, who resides in Gauḍa-deśa [Bengal] and teaches the process for rendering His own devotional service. May this Śacī-nandana be my Supreme Master birth after birth.

[3]

"Let not renunciation be fit for my acceptance if it does not give rise to loving devotion. And let not knowledge appeal to me at all if it does not admit to the individuality of the Lord and the *jīvas*. I have no desire at all to practice the eight-fold *yoga* process. None of these are productive of the happiness of serving Lord Hari such as His confidential worship is. Therefore, let such abundant, confidential service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa be mine.

[4]

"May I always dwell in a humble cottage at the root of a desire tree in the holy abode of Śrī Śacīsūna [Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu] and there perform

devotional service as is practiced in Vraja. Let me never dwell in any other place, even if it be fit for the happy residence of the most enlightened persons, nor even in a palace furnished with all the rich trappings of sovereignty.

[5]

"I have no attachment at all for the caste divisions of society [*varṇas*] and I certainly do not identify with any of the social orders of life [*āśramas*]. I have not the least fondness for religion or for sinful life in this world. Instead, I desire to perform whatever duties are required for the maintenance of my body of dull matter-so long as they facilitate my performance of pure devotional service.

[6]

"My austere vow is devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Hari. Thus I have chosen to cultivate the following in myself: great humility, simplicity, tolerance in all circumstances, respect for others, and compassion. Those transcendental activities alone are mine which are recommended by devotees of the lotus feet of the Lord, and which are found described in books that are full of the imperishable character and pastimes of Śrī Caitanya.

[7]

"I have no longing for residence in the kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha, nor for sense gratification or material works. I will never cherish the desire for attaining impersonal liberation, even for a second. There are, moreover, pastimes of Śrī Hari that are purifying [for the conditioned souls]-yet they are different from the bliss experienced in Vraja, and being devoid of any relationship with Śrī Rādhikā, they give me no happiness at all.

[8]

"I disown wife, daughters, sons, mother and all my friends if they have no genuine attachment for Lord Hari, for His devotees or for His devotional service. It is a great blunder even to accept foodstuffs prepared by such non-devotional, materialistic sense-gratifiers. How will the perfection of my *Hari-bhajana* ever come about if I remain in their

association?

[9]

"Some persons have utterly rejected the evil company of those who are blinded by mundane logic, those who are addicted to the fleeting pleasures of the dull material body, those who turn their faces against Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and those who are fond of the inferior concept of impersonal liberation. However, being swollen with excessive pride, they worship Govinda without Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī being present. Therefore, I vow that I will never go near such as these-not even for a second.

[10]

"I shall pass my life eating only *prasāda* food grains and milk products, wearing only cloth that was offered to the Deity, and using only utensils sanctified by the Lord's service; I will thus remain aloof from material sense gratification. Living in a place sacred to Rādhā, worshiping the Divine Couple with a blissful mind, I will in time give up my body at the soles of the devotees' lotus feet, who are themselves serving the lotus feet of the Divine Couple.

[11]

"Daily I will take the nectar that has washed the feet of one who is expert at grasping the instructions of the Son of Śacī, and who incessantly adores the most worshipable Personality and the enjoyer of mellows with Kṛṣṇa-Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, within the forest of Vraja. I will carry it on my head with a restrained mind, and drinking it with great bliss, I will then offer my prostrations unto him.

[12]

"My constitutional tendency is one of servitude to Lord Hari and will be, a long time yet to come. Due to the deluding power of Mahāmāyā, however, I have fallen into the ocean of misery. I will rise above [this world of suffering] by daily following my self-imposed regulations with determination. May my only guide be the mercy of the Vaiṣṇava, which destroys illusion.

[13]

"This *Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam* was written by someone about his personal mode of performing *bhajana*. Whosoever studies this *stava* with resolute faith, offering his mind unto the beautiful forms of the Divine Couple, assuredly attains his residence in Śrī Vraja-dhāma and following behind his own *mañjarī-guru*, he renders all kinds of service for the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa."

Though incapable of commenting on such topics with any degree of competence, the author feels compelled to at least state his appreciation of the valuable, nectarean instructions and amazing blessings given by His Divine Grace Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in the *Śrī Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam*, his final message to this world. All glories to Śrī Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura!

Yet there is more to be told. The Ṭhākura's son, Lalitā Prasad Ṭhākura, in his biographical notes, tells the story of Sir William Duke. In 1908, just three months before the Ṭhākura adopted the order of *paramahansa*, one of his sons, who at the time was working at the Writers' Building in Calcutta, came home one day and informed his father that Sir William Duke, Chief Secretary of Bengal, was in Calcutta. The Ṭhākura had previously worked with this gentleman as a magistrate. The next day the Ṭhākura made an appointment to meet him and went down to the Writers' Building. Sir William met him just outside the building and escorted him to his office with folded hands. "My dear Kedaranātha," he said, "when you were District Magistrate, I wanted to take you out of office. I thought that if there were many men as qualified as you in Bengal, then the English would have to leave." Sir William used to read the judgments that the Ṭhākura passed in his court cases and was amazed at the great wisdom they reflected. On several occasions he visited the Ṭhākura at his home and observed how he was absorbed in his writing of *Śrī Caitanya-Śikṣāmṛta*. The Ṭhākura's wife used to feed him a lunch of *purī*, *lucī* and sweets whenever he came. He was astounded at the constant activity of the Ṭhākura. He then admitted that he had considered the Ṭhākura's extraordinary abilities a threat to British control. But now he begged the Ṭhākura's forgiveness. The English custom was that when a man grows old, he would approach

everyone he had ever offended and beg their pardon so that he could pass away peacefully. After hearing Sir William Duke's apology, the Ṭhākura replied, I considered you to be a good friend and well-wisher all along." The Ṭhākura admitted later to being astonished that this man had wanted to do him harm, but he was so pleased by his repentant attitude that he gave him all his blessings.

Acceptance of Bābājī-veṣa

SUNDARĀNANDA Vidyāvinoda has described how Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gave up household life and accepted initiation into the renounced order from Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. One day in 1908 the Ṭhākura followed the Bābājī as he went from the Ṭhākura's house in Godruma-dvīpa to the boat *ghāṭa*, where he would cross the Ganges and go to Navadvīpa. As he followed him, the Ṭhākura repeatedly asked him to give him initiation into the renounced order of life as a *bābājī*. Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī felt that he was very fallen and unqualified, seeing the Ṭhākura as his spiritual master, and thus, with great humility, he refused to become the Ṭhākura's *veṣa guru*. Soon after this, the Bābājī, by mystic intuition, could understand that the Ṭhākura was very determined and was coming to Navadvīpa to ask him again. In order to avoid him, the elderly Bābājī went to the house of a prostitute, near a marketplace in Navadvīpa, and sat on her veranda for a while. He reasoned that if he had gone anywhere else, including the Ganges, he would have been discovered by the Ṭhākura, but he would never be found in the house of a prostitute, for the Ṭhākura would never enter such a place.

Meanwhile, the Ṭhākura, not finding Bābājī Mahārāja, could understand his uneasiness, and so he returned to Godruma. Bābājī Mahārāja then came out of hiding and went to the Rādhā-ramaṇa Gardens where he began to laugh uproariously. When questioned by a devotee who was present as to why he was laughing so much, he replied, "Today I have outwitted Kedaranātha Babu. I sat in that *mātājī*'s house over there and

not being able to find me, Kedaranātha Babu returned home." A few days later, the Ṭhākura sent one of his sons to Navadvīpa to bring Bābājī Mahārāja to Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja. The Bābājī agreed to come, and after a few days' stay, he consented to initiate the Ṭhākura as a *bābājī*. According to Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's direction, the Ṭhākura, in his presence, put on the old loin cloth and *bahirvāsa* (begging apron) of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, his *śikṣā-guru*, who had departed from the world some years earlier. By his verbal consent and his physical presence as a witness, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja became the *veṣa guru* of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura followed the example of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who took the renounced order of life in the presence and with the consent of Lord Caitanya by putting on the old white cloth of Tapan Miśra. In this way everything was done wonderfully, following the historical Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava precedent. After this, the Ṭhākura continued his chanting and writing, sometimes living in Godruma-dvīpa and sometimes in Calcutta at the Bhakti Bhavan.

Last Days

AFTER taking to the renounced order of life, the Ṭhākura accepted some disciples, and one of them, Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī, continued to serve him as he had in Jagannātha Purī. Feeling a strong desire to be fully absorbed in the spiritual plane, the Ṭhākura shut himself up in Bhakti Bhavan in the year 1910, so that he could remain uninterruptedly engaged in the divine service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Feigning paralysis before the eyes of common people, he entered into a state of total *samādhi* (spiritual trance).

On June 23, 1914, the sun began its southern course. It was the same day that Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the incarnation of Śrīmātī Rādhārāṇī, had left the world some 450 years before. Precisely at noon, the Ṭhākura entered the eternal pastimes of the Lord, far beyond the vision of the conditioned souls of this world.

The Ṭhākura's *samādhi* ceremony was delayed until the sun began its northern course. At that time his last remains (his ashes) were taken from the Bhakti Bhavan and brought to his home in Godruma-dvīpa. There they were placed in a silver urn and buried in the midst of a huge *kīrtana* and festival held in his honor by his disciples and friends. Hundreds took part, and his direct presence was experienced by everyone. Truly, the Ṭhākura's great stanza composed in glorification of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura applies to him:

*He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavs die
When thou art living still in sound.
The Vaishnavs die to live and living try
To spread a holy life around!*

Summary of Life and Qualities

THE Ṭhākura's biographers have summarized his life and accomplishments in various ways, each of them exhibiting keen appreciations of various aspects of the character and accomplishments of this *mahā-bhāgavata*, our beloved *ācārya*.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda gives a summary appreciation of the Ṭhākura in a transcription of a lecture given, according to the text itself, on Gaura Pūrṇimā in 1969.

"It was the desire of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to spread the life and precepts of Lord Caitanya in the western countries. So with this in view of publishing the book *Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, His Life and Precepts*-he sent copies to various universities' libraries, and one of the copies was found in the McGill University in Montreal. After seventy-two years, this book was found in the library by one of our students, and he brought it to me. From a materialistic point of view, I was born in a different family, and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura belonged to a different family, and my spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, happened to be the fifth son of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Although at

home Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was actually the spiritual master of my spiritual master, still he recommended Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, when he was a young man about eighteen years old, that, 'You go to Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābāji and become initiated by him.'

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a magistrate and my Guru Mahārāja belonged to a very respectable family, so he narrated the story before us ... when he was recommended to be initiated by Gaura Kiśora Bābāji Mahārāja. This Gaura Kiśora Bābāji Mahārāja used to respect Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as his guide, therefore we take it [that in our] disciplic succession that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura guided Gaura Kiśora Bābāji Mahārāja, and Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja initiated my spiritual master. Therefore, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is accepted as the spiritual master of the spiritual master of my spiritual master. He is in the fourth generation, grandman spiritual master.

"So, Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Saṅkīrtana Movement, which Bhaktivinoda desired in 1896, and somehow or other, coincidentally, I do not know what was his desire, I was also born in that year. And, by Kṛṣṇa's desire, I came to the disciplic succession: [to] Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and he asked me to go to the Western countries and preach Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings. The spiritual line of understanding is different from the materialistic point of view. The idea is that I was born in a different family and Guru Mahārāja was born in a different family. Bhaktivinoda was at that time a magistrate, a government servant. By Lord Caitanya's desire we have come in the same line of disciplic succession. What was taught by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in 1896, that these teachings of Lord Caitanya should be spread in the Western countries, by chance or coincidence, it is now happening. We should take it for granted that whatever is happening at the present moment by my humble endeavor, it is all the grace of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Therefore, on this auspicious ceremony of Lord Caitanya's Appearance Day, it will be greatly beneficial for us to hear from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura what he wrote seventy-two years before, and after seventy-two years, being a humble servant in that line, I am trying to distribute [his teachings]. There is a spiritual coincidence, and we should take advantage of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's book.

"Practically, this Caitanya Movement was-of course Lord Caitanya

inaugurated this Movement five hundred years ago, and after that, so many pseudo-Caitanyites depreciated the whole thing-but the Caitanya Movement in its pure form, as it is, was restarted by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura ... We should take it that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the origin of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in its pure form.

"Bhaktivinoda wrote [almost] one hundred books ... Just imagine-he was a very responsible officer, a magistrate, and he was *gṛhastha*; [he] also had many children. Altogether he had ten children, and he had to take care of children, the office of magistrate and extra religious work. He was made superintendent of the Temple of Jagannātha, because the government knew that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a very highly advanced religious person. Whenever there was some religious question he was consulted. In spite of all his responsibilities, as officer, or as family man with so many children, he executed his family life very nicely or else he could not have produced a child such as Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. At the same time he served the Supreme Lord in so many ways. That is the beauty. He has written so many books and in spite of cumbersome duties. That is the beauty of his life ... he would come from the office in the evening and take his meals and go to bed. That was his program. And he'd sleep from eight to twelve at night, four hours, and then get up and write books until morning. That was his program.

"In this way, he wrote hundreds of books, some published, some in the course of [being] published. All this became possible because he was a sincere, faithful servant. To write so many books with so many responsibilities, for an ordinary magistrate is not possible. But because he was sincere, he got the strength from the Supreme Lord. One does not need to seek strength separate from the Supreme Lord. But if you are sincere the Supreme will give you sufficient strength. Actually, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura brought my Guru Mahārāja [to this world to be] his son. He prayed to Lord Caitanya that, 'Your preaching and teachings have been so much depreciated, it is not [in] my power to correct them.' He prayed to Lord Caitanya, and after his prayer Lord Caitanya sent my Guru Mahārāja as his son. And he took up the matter very seriously." This delightful summary of the Ṭhākura's life by Śrīla Prabhupāda certifies a very important point for our understanding: that the pure cult

of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had been lost for all practical purposes, and that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura re-established the whole thing almost single-handedly. He also points out that it was the desire of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda that the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Movement would spread all over the world. He thus credits this desire of the Ṭhākura and Lord Caitanya as resulting in the appearance of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Prabhupāda's own subsequent linking with the line of disciplic succession. Thus, the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is a result of the desire and grace of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, as substantiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the above statements. Prabhupāda also puts special stress on how the Ṭhākura was given empowerment or strength by the Lord to write transcendental literatures for the benefit of the world. We see how Śrīla Prabhupāda also followed wonderfully in this line, executing the austerities of early rising for the composition of transcendental literature. He poignantly states with respect to the Ṭhākura's literary accomplishments that he accomplished so much "despite cumbersome duties" and that this was "the beauty of his life." In a biography of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura written by Bhakti Kusum Sraman Mahārāja, he identifies three major areas of the Ṭhākura's achievements: first, his books and writings in various languages dealing with the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as found in the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the revealed scriptures; second, the discovery of the Lord's actual birthplace; third, the innovations he introduced for the purpose of preaching the teachings of Lord Caitanya and the Six Gosvāmīs throughout the world. Beyond this, the Ṭhākura established the Deities of Lord Caitanya and Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā at Māyāpura, and in Godruma-dvīpa, his place of *bhajana*, he established and worshiped the Deities of Gaura-Gadādhara. He also personally preached about pure Kṛṣṇa-bhakti, and his activities demonstrated his limitless enthusiasm and determination for broadcasting Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. These characteristics are all indications of his being an eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Ṭhākura was dedicated to the principle of truth from his childhood. His firm sense of responsibility in carrying out his duties, his ideal example of householder life, his eagerness to spend every moment possible cultivating and studying the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his

punishing of the so-called *avatāra*, Bisakisen, despite severe opposition, his checking the murderous activities of the Kanjhar thieves in Vṛndāvana, his association with and affection for those who were dedicated to the worship of Kṛṣṇa, and his visiting of various villages for spreading the message of Lord Gaurāṅga both before and after his government retirement—all of these examples were meant for the edification and inspiration of all sincere and intelligent persons.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā* 22.75 Lord Caitanya tells Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī:

*sarva mahā-guṇa-gaṇa vaiṣṇava-śarīre
kṛṣṇa-bhakte kṛṣṇera guṇa sakali sañcare*

"A Vaiṣṇava is one who has developed all good transcendental qualities. All the good qualities of Kṛṣṇa gradually develop in Kṛṣṇa's devotee." Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the personification of this verse. The twenty-six qualities of a pure Vaiṣṇava are mentioned in the same chapter of *Madhya-līlā* cited above, texts 78-80:

*kṛpālu, akṛta-droha, satya-sāra sama
nidoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu, śucī, akiñcana
sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
akāma, anīha, sthira, vijita-ṣaḍ-guṇa
mita-bhuk; apramatta, mānada, amāni
gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi, dakṣa, mauni*

"Devotees are always merciful, humble, truthful, equal to all, faultless, magnanimous, mild and clean. They are without material possessions, and they perform welfare work for everyone. They are peaceful, surrendered to Kṛṣṇa and desireless. They are indifferent to material acquisitions and are fixed in devotional service. They completely control the six bad qualities—lust, anger, greed and so forth. They eat only as much as required, and they are not inebriated. They are respectful, grave, compassionate and without false prestige. They are friendly, poetic, expert and silent."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has discussed these twenty-six qualities at length in his introduction to Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's *Jaiva Dharma*. He mentions there that the Ṭhākura displayed all of these

qualities of a pure Vaiṣṇava and that the most directly perceived was his eagerness to remain always fixed in the devotional service of the Lord, without wasting a single moment. The Calcutta High Court Judge, Sarada Charan Mitra, a friend of the Ṭhākura who supplied him with valuable old manuscripts, remarked in the 1916 introduction to the biography-*A Glimpse into the Life of Thakur Bhakti Vinode*: "I knew Thakur Bhaktivinode intimately-as a friend and a relation. Even under pressure of official work as a Magistrate in charge of a heavy subdivision, he could find time for devotional contemplation and work, and whenever I met him, our talk would turn in a few moments to the subject of Bhakti and Dwaitadwaitavad and the saintly work that they lay before him. Service of God is the only thing he longed for and service under Government, however honourable, was to him a clog."

His Daily Schedule

LALITA Prasad Ṭhākura, in his notes on his father's life, describes the Ṭhākura's daily schedule while he was staying in Jagannātha Purī. He was never idle, being always engaged in the service of the Lord. Between 7:30 and 8:00 P.M. he would go to bed. He would then rise just before 10:00 P.M., light his oil lamp and write books until 4:00 A.M. Then he would again rest for a maximum of half an hour. At 4:30 A.M. he would wash his hands and face, sit down and chant on his beads. He never showed his beads to anyone but would chant on them constantly as time permitted. At 7:00 A.M. he answered all correspondence, at 7:30 A.M. read various religious and philosophical works, and at 8:30 A.M. he received visitors, if any, or else continued to read until 9:30. At that time he would walk back and forth on the veranda of his house, contemplating different religious questions and solving them in his mind. Sometimes he would solve them aloud as if preaching to some unseen guest. He would rest briefly from 9:30 A.M. to 9:45 A.M., then take bath and breakfast, which usually consisted of a half-quart of milk, two chapatis and some fruit.

At 9:55 A.M. the Ṭhākura would don his uniform and leave for court in his carriage. As a Magistrate he wore a coat and pants. On his neck were six strands of large *Tulasī* beads. He was resolute in his court decisions and would decide a case immediately, not tolerating any humbug. He did his business and left. He shaved his head monthly and never cared what anyone thought of it.

The lawyers and Englishmen were astounded by the Ṭhākura's capacity for work. At 10:00 A.M. court began. He would hear between thirty and fifty cases per day, yet he finished by 1:00 P.M. What took other Magistrates one-half hour, he finished in five minutes. He took another two minutes to write the judgment in detail. Some of his British superiors became envious and tried to discourage him, but he was not affected. At 1:00 P.M. he went home, refreshed himself and then returned to work from 2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Every evening after his court duties, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura would translate some Sanskrit religious work into Bengali by dictating it to a secretary. Then there was an evening bath and meal, consisting of a little rice, two chapatis and another half-quart of milk.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura worked with a pocket watch, so that everything he did was on schedule. Despite his heavy domestic and official responsibilities, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's every moment was embellished with an intense desire to render service to the Lord.

His Character

IN A *Glimpse into the Life of Thakur Bhakti-vinode* Pandit Satkari Chattopaddhyaya Siddhanta Bhusan, who was commissioned by the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Memorial Committee to write a short biography of the Ṭhākura in 1916, has written glowingly of the Vaiṣṇava character of the Ṭhākura. He explained that Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda was so charitably disposed that no one ever went away from his home disheartened, and he who once called on him was sure to meet him again with a smiling face. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda befriended men regardless of

their rank, a phenomenon especially visible when he widely preached the Holy Name. He never bore any grudges, and those who were jealous of him or attempted to impede him in his spiritual mission were, in the long run, ashamed of their conduct and often came begging his pardon, which he never refused. His sense of universal brotherhood made him the friend of all, and he was always eager for the benefit of all. Whoever contacted him was immeasurably benefitted. The Ṭhākura was never proud, and his amiable disposition was a characteristic feature of his life. He never uttered a word that would injure another's feelings, and he never chastised anyone unless he was perfectly confident that he had the right to do so for that person's welfare. On the other hand, whoever received a warning from him always felt himself purified by the experience. He did not possess the least shadow of vanity, although he was honored and respected throughout Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. His profound knowledge of philosophy endeared him to the educated, and his devout *bhakti* made him the friend of both the gentle and the ruffians.

As a government official he was always taken into confidence by the British officials, and he was consequently well-acquainted with the reasoning behind government decisions. He had witnessed the hard days of the Great Mutiny, and while he was in office he assisted in quelling many disturbances. The biographer writes, "His administrative ability was marked even by the ruling chief of Tipperah, His Highness Mahārāja Birchandra Manikya Bahadur, and his son, H. H. Mahārāja Radha Kishore Varma Manikya Bahadur always esteemed his counsels and respected him as a friend and an honorary advisor of the state. The Government of Bengal also on more than one occasion wanted to vest him with honours and titles, but he humbly declined the same each time on the ground that such honours would, instead of doing him good, stand against his holy mission. Even so late as 1897, when the plague raged furiously in the heart of Calcutta, his advice was valued and adopted by Sir John Woodburn."

Commenting further on the extraordinary morality of the Ṭhākura, Pandit Siddhanta Bhusan writes, "Never was a man found more strict in the observance of the moral duties than our Thakur. From his very infancy till his last day he was a great advocate of truth and never

allowed his associates to deviate from the path of duty, which he himself observed with more than strict accuracy. He avoided companies whenever he had the least suspicion of evil motives in them and never harboured them so long they did not come to repentance. He had to encounter unpleasantness on many occasions; in the execution of public duty under the Government, by refusing to accept any present from any person ... He was above corruption. He never supported the least shadow of immorality and never crossed the threshold of any place which he knew to be immoral. He had a great dislike for theatres as these were places where public women were brought in to take part in the play. He knew that common people, who cared little for religion and who had generally happy-go-lucky days to spend were apt to go astray in the broad wilderness of the world if he himself refrained from showing them the proper way by his own example. Example is better than precept and so his absolute distaste for anything immoral helped many good souls to open their eyes and also persons already in confusion to correct themselves. When the well-known dramatist, Girish Chandra Ghosh, came to request him for presiding over the gathering on the opening day of his well-known play *Chaitanya Lila*, he had to politely decline the offer."

In this regard, Dr. Ramakanta Chakravarti explains that a Calcutta stage artiste and *demi-monde* (a woman with a scandalous reputation) named Śrīmatī Binodini was to play the role of Lord Caitanya. The famous priest of Kālī, Ramakrishna, attended as the guest of honor instead. Although the play was very popular and well-received, we see that the Ṭhākura would not lend his dignity and authority to such a mundane presentation.

Pandit Siddhanta Bhusan continues, "He was a complete abstainer and a perfect teetotaler and never chewed even a betel ... The word 'debt' was, as it were, unknown to him and he was very prompt in making payments. He was always true to his word and punctuality was at all times specially observed in him." The Ṭhākura was always courageous and acted for the welfare of everyone. He kept his personal needs to a bare minimum and led the simplest of lives, avoiding the indulgences of worldly men.

His Writing

BHAKTIVINODA Ṭhākura was an expert linguist, conversant with English, Urdu, Persian, Oriya, Bengali and Sanskrit. He had a taste for history and a keen mind for research. He was a voracious reader of the *Purāṇas* and other Vedic texts, as well as the writings of numerous ancient and modern European authors. He could cite passages from scriptures such as the *Bible* and the *Koran* on appropriate occasions. His habit was to uncover every facet of whatever subject matter he examined, and this thoroughness of endeavor never faltered. He was, above all, a self-realized soul whose numerous writings will inspire people for centuries to come. From the age of twelve, when he wrote *Hati-kathā* and *Śumbha-Niśumbha-yuddha*, until his final days, his pen was never idle.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disciple, Śrī Bhakti Pradip Tirtha, has written in his book, *Thakur Bhaktivinode*: "His writings have made the sacred teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu fully available to every modern reader and in a form which carries irresistible conviction and devotion. For this reason the works of Thakur Bhaktivinode require to be translated into all the languages of the world. The Thakur has written in a comparative manner so as to bring the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu into relationship with almost every school of thought prevalent in the world, and his writings give us the full revelation of spirit and divinity to the fullest measure that is possible to be conveyed by the instrument of human speech."

The Ṭhākura composed hundreds of poems and songs, combining the deep, transcendental emotions of their author with a wealth of Vaiṣṇava philosophy. The world has inherited from him many wonderful books on Lord Caitanya's teachings. At every step of his life the Ṭhākura displayed a transparent godliness, a godliness evident in every page of his books. In his books he has clearly delineated the distinction between genuine transcendentalists and pretenders in order to thwart the pseudo-devotees who dress as Vaiṣṇavas with the aim of filling their

stomachs or indulging their senses. His clear signaling of this difference between genuine Vaiṣṇavas and bogus pretenders (also a theme of his son, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and his son's guru, Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābāji) awakened the intelligentsia of India, who had become cynical due to the so-called spiritualists, and caused them to appreciate the beauty of Lord Caitanya's precepts. The Ṭhākura was seen (and rightly so) as a God-sent pioneer of the Movement for re-establishing unalloyed devotion to God, for he exhibited the real meaning of Lord Caitanya's doctrines by his preaching and exemplary behavior.

He always stressed that the *jīva* cannot realize his spiritual nature unless he whole-heartedly surrenders himself to an authentic spiritual master for guidance. He taught true renunciation by engaging all that he possessed in the service of Kṛṣṇa. He radically opposed the bogus caste system, which judged a person's worth by his birth. With full scriptural support, he insisted that one's social position is to be determined by *guṇa* and *karma*-by one's quality and work. He vigorously denounced the doctrines of salvationists and elevationists for their being against the principle of pure devotion. He thereby made significant inroads toward the reformation of the materialistic mentality of many of his countrymen.

His Predictions

HE proposed that all contending theories and religions could be unified through the scientific teachings of Lord Caitanya, for the universal religion of all souls is devotional service to the Supreme Lord. It was his specific desire that the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu be spread all over the world. In his monthly Vaiṣṇava journal *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* he wrote, "Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not descend with His associates to deliver a certain number of human beings in the land of India, but rather His purpose was to deliver and uplift all living beings in all countries of the world by practicing the eternal religion of all souls." He quoted from the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

*pr̥thivī-parjanta jata āche deśa-grāma
sarvatra sañcāra hoibek mora nāma*

"My name will be preached in all the countries and towns that exist throughout the world." (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya 4.126*)
He then prayerfully invoked the Lord and expressed this heartfelt desire: "There are many kinds of religion in the world, and among all of them the highest development of religion is the congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's divine names. Of this there is no doubt. Alas! When will that day come when all greatly fortunate souls in countries such as England, France, Russia, Prussia and America will take up banners, kettle drums, *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* and thus cause the ecstatic waves of Harināma-kīrtana and the singing of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Holy Name to rise in the streets of their towns and cities? O when will that day come, when pure and transcendental Vaiṣṇava-prema will be the only religion of all souls and all tiny sectarian religions will meet in the unlimited and universal religion of Vaiṣṇavism as rivers merge into the great ocean? O when will that day come?"
Advaita Ācārya invoked the descent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for the salvation of the souls of this age, and along with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Kali-yuga *avatāra* Who is forever prepared to distribute His mercy, descended the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa. In the same way, the great, eternal associates of the Lord have descended to keep the mercy of the great current of *kīrtana* flowing strongly. The earnest entreaties of those great souls, who invoke the mercy of the Lord with every breath, bring inconceivable shelter to those lost in the darkness of material existence. When Śrīla Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura offered to accept all the sins of all the souls in the universe if they could be delivered by the Lord, Śrī Caitanya told him: "Whatever a pure devotee wants from his master, Lord Kṛṣṇa doubtlessly grants because He has no other duty other than to fulfill the desire of his devotee. If you desire the deliverance of all living entities within the universe, then all of them can be delivered even without your undergoing the tribulations of sinful activities. Kṛṣṇa is not incapable, for He has all potencies. Why would He induce you to suffer the sinful reactions of other living entities? Whosoever's welfare you desire immediately becomes a Vaiṣṇava, and

Kṛṣṇa delivers all Vaiṣṇavas from the reactions of their past sinful activities ... Because of your honest desire, all living entities within the universe will be delivered, for Kṛṣṇa does not have to do anything to deliver all the living entities of the universe." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* Chapter 15, 165-171)

In answer to the prayers of Śrīla Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the great personifications of compassion and mercy: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, came to fulfill his desires. By the power of his pure desires and the identical pure desires of his son and his son's disciple, as well as the desire of all the pure followers of the Lord, the universe will surely be delivered. Billions of souls will go back to Godhead by the mercy of these pure Vaiṣṇavas. Such is the power of one who is as good as God!

Appendices

Excerpts from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Letters

I requested Satyabrata (Moskowitz) to publish Lord Caitanya's Teachings which is ready with Satsvarupa. Thakur Bhaktivinode's book Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu may be printed in thousands and distributed... [67-11-1 to Rayarama. Note: The references following quotations correspond to the numbering system employed in the five volume book: *Letters From Śrīla Prabhupāda*.]

"So far as reading is concerned you may read any one of the books you have mentioned-Introduction to Srimad Bhagavatam, Professor Sanyal's book, Srila Bhaktivinode's book Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Life and Precepts or English translation of Sri Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta. Best thing is to take any one of the abovementioned books and finish it, from beginning to end. You can do that with Srila Bhaktivinode's book, that would be very nice." [68-3-15 to Mahapurusa]

"The statements of Thakur Bhaktivinode are as good as scriptures

because he is a liberated person. Generally the spiritual master comes from the group of such eternal associates of the Lord; but anyone who follows the principles of such ever-liberated persons is as good as one in the above-mentioned group. The gurus from nature's study are accepted as such on the principle that an elevated person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not accept anyone as a disciple, but he accepts everyone as expansion of his guru. That is very high position, called mahabhagavata. Just like Radharani sometimes thinks a subordinate of hers as her teacher, to understand devotion of Kṛṣṇa. A person who is liberated acharya and guru cannot commit any mistake..." [68-4-18 to Janardana] "...I am so pleased upon you that you are showing the example of an ideal householder. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was also a householder, but he lived in such perfect Kṛṣṇa consciousness that he is better than many sannyasis like us. So far as I am concerned, I could not live like Bhaktivinode Thakur because I was disgusted with my family members and I was obliged to give up my family life ... we take it for granted that we have dedicated our life for Kṛṣṇa's service in three ways, namely, in our body, in our mind, and in our words. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur has sung in a poetry that 'my mind, my body and my home is surrendered unto You'. So a grhastha or householder like you, you are also tridandi [a renunciate]." [68-8-35 to Rupanuga]

"So you should try to understand these principles of married life and use your discretion. You should not imitate great personalities like Bhaktivinode Thakur, but you must follow His footprints. But it is not always possible to have the same success as great personalities like Bhaktivinode Thakur achieved. So in all circumstances you should try to follow the footprints of authorities but never to imitate them." [68-9-24 to Satsvarupa]

"So it is not slavish when one agrees to become the slave of Kṛṣṇa and His representative, [because] this is the liberated position, liberated from being slave to the senses. Yes, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur said, 'My dear Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, spiritual master, let me become your dog, and I shall remain at your door, and I shall guard against any nonsense persons trying to enter, and whatever food you will give me, I shall eat, and I shall remain as your dog.'" [68-11-14 to Sivananda]

"Thank you very much for your endeavor and all blessings of Thakur

Bhaktivinode and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati will be bestowed upon you because you are trying to push on their lifelong mission. Thakur Bhaktivinode, in the year of my birth, first attempted to introduce these missionary activities in McGill University and the same attempt is being renovated by your combined efforts. I am sure that Lord Caitanya and His eternal Associates, Bhaktivinode Thakur and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, will be pleased to bestow their mercy upon you. Please try to continue this attempt and I am sure you shall be successful." [68-11-47 to Hayagriva]

"...I expressed my desire that during the ceremony a special home for the EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN BRAHMACARIS MAY BE ESTABLISHED AT MAYAPUR. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and Srila Prabhupada desired that such American and European devotees may live at Mayapur for studies of Sri Caitanya philosophy, and now the time is ripe when many American, European and Japanese students working as my disciples are ready to go there for this purpose... [Referring to a disheartening letter from a God-brother:] This is most discouraging and against the will of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur. I therefore request you to give me a plot of land within the precincts of Sri Caitanya Math to construct a suitable building for my European and American students ... who may go in numbers to visit the site of the birthplace of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." [69-2-20 to B. V. Tirtha Maharaja]

"Thakur Bhaktivinode was not official Spiritual Master of Gour Kishore dasa Babaji Maharaja. Gour Kishore dasa Babaji Maharaja was already renounced order, Paramahansa, but Thakur Bhaktivinode, while He was even playing the part of a householder, was treated by Gour Kishore dasa Babaji Maharaja 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, siksa-guru and diksa-guru. So officially Bhaktivinode Thakur was like siksa-guru of Gour Kishore dasa Babaji Maharaja." [69-5-1 to Dayananda]

"NB: Enclosed is a few nice poems by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur which you may hand over to Mandali Bhadra for translation into German and to be submitted for publication in German Back To Godhead." [69-5-25 to Ananda]

"Regarding New Vrindaban, immediately there is no program for investing in New Vrindaban until Hayagriva transfers the property in the society's name. But there is another program: Bhaktivinode Thakur desired that American disciples would come to Mayapur to take advantage of the birthplace of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu." [69-7-30 to Brahmananda]

"So far as the quotation from Srila Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur you have cited, that is quite all right. In this age, chanting of this Hare Kṛṣṇa Mantra is the prime business of the devotee, and preaching of this Hare Kṛṣṇa Mantra by outdoor Sankirtana and propagation of literature is our more important business. Side by side, Deity worship is recommended, but when there is a question of accepting one of them, we shall prefer to accept chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa Mantra first." [69-9-6 to Hamsadutta]

"Achyutananda should be encouraged to do this translating work. He is translating poems of Bhaktivinode Thakur, and that is very nice." [69-10-34 to Brahmananda]

"...so far as initiating disciples is concerned, anyone who is qualified can do this. For example, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was householder and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was staunch brahmacari, yet they both were qualified for initiating disciples." [69-11-3 to Kṛṣṇa devī]

"Generally, if one can remain a brahmacari, it is very convenient, and from brahmacari one can take sannyasa. But in this age of Kali, Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur recommends that it is better to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness as a householder." [69-11-4 to Mandali Bhadrā]

"I am especially interested in the land which I asked from you within the vicinity of Chaitanya Math. This is in pursuance of the desire of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and Srila Prabhupada. It is not for my personal use or satisfaction of personal whims." [69-12-12 to B.V Tirtha Maharaja]

"Regarding the song by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, the transliteration is as follows:

*manasa deha geḥa yo kichu mora
arpilun tua pade nandakisora
maravi rakhavi yo iccha tohara
nitya dasa prati tua adhikara*

"The translation is 'My mind, my body, my home, or whatever I have got in my possession I surrender unto Your Lotus Feet, O my dear Lord, Son of Nanda Maharaja (Krsna). Now if you like, you can kill me, or if you like you can give me protection. Whatever you like you can do. I am your eternal servitor. You have got every right to deal with me in any way as you please.'" [69-12-20 to Nandakisora]

"Regarding Mayapur land, practically my jurisdiction of preaching work is covered mostly in these Western countries; and because Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur wanted it that the American and European devotees should come to Mayapur, therefore I am trying for it. If you kindly help me in this connection it will be a great assistance." [70-1-32 to Madhava Maharaja]

"...Maya is covering all the material energies. Therefore one who is materially advanced, covered with riches, covered with learning, covered with fame or covered with any material opulences, is understood to be covered by Maya. Srila Bhaktivinode says, jada vidya saba mayar baibhava-'The material opulences are expansions of Maya's influence [70-31 to Bhagavan]

"Now everything is there and you are also experienced, therefore go on opening branches as many as possible and preach Sankirtana Movement to your best capacity. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur entrusted the responsibility to my Guru Maharaja, and He also in His turn empowered us to do the work. Similarly, I am requesting you, all my European and American students, to spread this movement city to city and village to village and make all people of the world happy." [70-3-24 to Hamsadutta]

"...Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur said that materialistic knowledge is another expansion of the influence of Maya. The result of material education is that the living entity forgets his own identification and takes to the business of a particular type of body which is given to him by the grace of Maya." [70-5-37 to Hayagriva]

"You have asked [for] some specific mantra; there is no other greater mantra than Hare Krsna. Srila Bhaktivinode says, 'When I chant Radha Krsna or Hare Krsna all my dangers are gone immediately.' So which other mantra can be more effective than Hare Krsna?" [70-5-42 to Upendra]

"Our Temple is meant for our men, and we may have our own

discussions amongst ourselves, no outsider needed. It is definitely concluded that we have not got to learn anything from any outsider beyond the jurisdiction of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Our philosophy is established on sound ground of the conclusion arrived at by Vyasadeva down to Jiva Gosvami, Visvanatha Cakravarti, Bhaktivinode Thakur, etc." [70-5-45 to Tamal Kṛṣṇa Maharaja]

"Wherever we may be, if we are engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service, that is our success. Bhaktivinode Thakur [has] sung, praying to the Lord, that he would prefer to take His birth as an ant in the house of a devotee than to take birth as powerful as Brahma without any devotional service." [70-11-53 to Gargamuni]

"...So far, until now, my God-brothers have regularly not cooperated with me and [yet] by the grace of my Spiritual Master, things are still going ahead. ... it is the desire of Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura to preach the Caitanya cult all over the world and in 1875 he predicted that someone would come very soon who would individually preach this cult all over the world. So if his benediction is there and my Guru Maharaja's blessings are there, we can go ahead without any impediment but all of us must be very sincere and serious." [71-2-31 to Jayapataka Maharaja]

"Our acarya Bhaktivinode Thakur was the perfect householder and we should take his example. What a nice householder He was and what nice children he produced; one of them is my Guru Maharaja. That is the example. So follow it and become successful in Kṛṣṇa consciousness." [71-6-15 to Svarupa]

[In reference to Mayapur:] "Regarding your proposal of a Rathayatra festival as Bhaktivinode Thakur suggested, you may kindly send me a note telling in which book the above statement is. I shall be very glad to see the article you have written in this connection and if it is ready please send it to me immediately." [71-8-7 to Acyutananda]

"...Whenever our men go to visit Lalita Prasad Thakur they must take some presentation, cash or kind, worth not less than Rs. 50/- at least. Some nice presentation should always be given. Not that you go empty-handed. It is customary to make a presentation to the Deity and Spiritual Master. Lalita Prasad Thakur is son of Bhaktivinode Thakur and younger brother of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati so he is considered my spiritual master." [71-9-8 to Jayapataka Maharaja]

"I am very anxious to know whether we are going to have our Mayapur function? I want very much to hold this function this year with all of my students, and I ask you to kindly serve me by making this possible. It is a very important day and it will be a great service to Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and to His son Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur." [72-1-19 to Jayapataka Maharaja]

"The whole day spent at your Temple on Thursday was so pleasant and happy that all my disciples felt celestial blessings in your association. Personally, I am so much encouraged by you, that I appreciate this as the blessings of Bhaktivinode Thakur through his living representative. [72-3-3 to His Divine Grace Lalita Prasad Thakur]

"You can write, but one cannot take it very seriously. If any Vaiṣṇava is writing song about Kṛṣṇa, that should be from one who himself has realized Kṛṣṇa, just like our great saints and ācāryas like Madhvacarya, Ramanujacarya, Rupa Gosvami, Six Gosvamins, Bilvamangala, Bhaktivinode Thakur, like that. They are self-realized souls, therefore if they write something-a song about Kṛṣṇa, that is perfectly from the transcendental platform, without any tinge of mundane influence or nonsense imagination. Unless someone comes in the category of these great leading Vaiṣṇava personalities, his manufacturing some songs will be misleading to himself and to others. And unless his writing of poems and songs can be accepted as gospel, as Vedas or the Absolute Truth, such writing is diverting the attention from the subject matter only and should not be regarded very seriously... No one should write songs of Kṛṣṇa unless he is self realized soul, that will spoil the value of the whole thing." [72-3-9 to Billy Reyburne]

[Referring to a plan to help develop the birthplace of Thakur Bhaktivinode:] "So far as our relationship is concerned, even though we keep independent of one another, there will be no misunderstanding, because the central point is Bhaktivinode Thakur. Our only ambition is that the birthsite of Bhaktivinode Thakur must be gorgeous and attractive so that people may come to see it from all parts of the world. Bhaktivinode Thākur is no longer localized. His holy name is being expanded along with Lord Caitanya's. So let them understand this point. They are occupying the place for more than 50 years and none of their men could fulfill the desire of Bhaktivinode Thakur in the matter of

preaching in foreign countries... I can understand also that Lalita Prasad Thakur is very much favourable in giving us the concession but his assistants may be hesitating unnecessarily." [72-5-42 to Jayapataka Maharaja]

"Now you be in charge of our Mayapur Center. Practically speaking you were my first disciple, and I think it is Bhaktivinode's desire that my first disciple shall go to Bengal and revive Krsna Consciousness there." [72-6-4 to Acyutananda]

"...I have just now got a letter from Achyutananda Maharaja from Mayapur, and his plan is to photograph all of the original manuscripts of Bhaktivinode Thakur which are held by his son, Lalita Prasad Thakur, in Birnagar. This is very, very important work, so I think you are just the right man for going there with Achyutananda to make photos of each and every page of the old manuscripts as they are in very bad condition." [72-6-27 letter to Yadubara]

"Yes, that is nice, you may continue to photograph all of the manuscripts of Bhaktivinode Thakur and other great ācāryas in our Vaiṣṇava line, but for now do not photograph any of Lalita Prasad's manuscripts. When I go there I shall see. First of all let us see Bhaktivinode Thakur's works, then we shall see further." [72-7-42 to Yadubara]

"Regarding Bhaktivinode Thakur's manuscripts, immediately we do not have any program for printing them. You keep them carefully and when I return I shall consider the matter. The translating work can be done both by Ramananda and Niranjana in Benares." [72-8-3]

"Regarding your questions, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur never took formal sannyasa. He was babaji, living in seclusion away from wife and family as Paramahansa. One can have as many children as Bhaktivinode Thakur as long as one is as good as Bhaktivinode Thakur." [72-14-14 to Candravali]

"So always think of the Lotus Feet of Sri Krsna and you will find no difficulties in executing the tasks allotted to you by Krsna. Bhaktivinode Thakur used to say all difficult tasks he had to execute for Krsna were considered as great pleasure for him." [73-8-31 to Satsvarupa]

"...I understand that in the past you were visiting Lalit Prasadji and that you may also be planning to continue to visit him when you return to India. This is not approved by me and I request you not to go to see him

any more. He holds a grudge against my Guru Maharaja and even if it is transcendental it will gradually appear mundane in our eyes. Whatever is to be learned of the teachings of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur can be learned from our books. There is no need whatsoever for any outside instruction." [73-12-40 to Guru Krpa and Yasodanandan Maharajas]

"Your good family has great interest in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and especially your grandfather Mahatma Sisir Kumar Ghose was a great friend of Bhaktivinode Thakur. So we are coming down in disciplic succession from Bhaktivinode Thakur and you are coming in family succession from Mahatma Sisir Kumar Ghose, so if we combine together in preaching the message of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, it will be a great benediction to human society for the mitigation of all kinds of problems of material existence." [74-3-9 to Tarun Kanti Babu]

"You complain that as a householder it is very difficult. Especially you want to preach. There are examples of great preachers who were householders, such as Bhaktivinode Thakur, although we cannot hope to imitate him." [74-4-17 to Raghunatha]

"Bhaktivinode Thākura has sung: 'Kṛṣṇa sei tomara, kṛṣṇa dite para, tomara sakati ache. Ami ta'kangala, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa boli, dhai tava pache pache.' 'Kṛṣṇa is yours and you have the power to give Him to anyone you wish. I am poor and wretched and running behind you shouting, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!' Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, no one can catch Him, but if someone follows the parampara, He agrees to be captured." [76-8-7 to Residents of New Dvaraka]

"...You may use Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur's translation of the Siksastakam..." [76-9-68 to Pancaratna]

"I am in due receipt of your letter dated Nov. 30, 1976, accompanied by your translation of Srila Bhaktivinode's songs. Thank you very much. You have done nicely." [76-12-35 to Jayasacinandana]

**Excerpts from the Books of His Divine Grace A.C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

1. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta

THE direct disciple of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī was Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, who accepted Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī as his servitor. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura accepted Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, who initiated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who in turn initiated Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Om Viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the divine master of our humble self. (Cc. **Adi** Ch. 1, introduction)

We should be prepared to do anything and everything to please the Lord, even at the risk of violating the Vedic principles or ethical laws. That is the standard of love of Godhead ... Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura warns us in this connection that we should not mistakenly think that the idea of giving up everything implies the renunciation of duties necessary in relation to the body and mind. Even such duties are not sense gratification if they are undertaken in a spirit of service to Kṛṣṇa. (Cc. **Adi** 4.170 purport)

In this verse the words *tomāra prabhāve* ("Your influence") are very important. Unless one is spiritually advanced he cannot influence an audience. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung, *śuddha-bhakata-caraṇa-reṇu, bhajana-anukūla*: "Unless one associates with a pure devotee he cannot be influenced to understand devotional service." (Cc. **Adi** 7.105 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains, "In the *Vedānta-sūtra* of Śrīla Vyāsadeva it is definitely stated that all cosmic manifestations result from transformations of various energies of the Lord. Śaṅkarācārya, however, not accepting the energy of the Lord, thinks that it is the Lord who is transformed. He has taken many clear statements from the Vedic literature and twisted them to try to prove that if the Lord, or the Absolute Truth, were transformed, His oneness would be disturbed. Thus he has accused Śrīla Vyāsadeva of being mistaken. In developing his philosophy of monism, therefore, he has established *vivarta-vāda*, or the Māyāvāda theory of illusion." (Cc. **Adi** 7.121 purport)

... Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura warns against artificial displays of the bodily symptoms called *aṣṭa-sāttvika-vikāra*. That is also another offense. One should seriously and sincerely continue to chant the Pañca-tattva names *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara*

śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda. All these *ācāryas* will bestow their causeless mercy upon a devotee and gradually purify his heart. When he is actually purified, automatically he will experience ecstasy in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. (Cc. **Adi** 8 introduction)

At present, however, by the grace of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His cult is being propagated all over the world, and it is most probable that in the future history of Lord Caitanya's movement, Europeans, Americans, Canadians, Australians, South Americans, Asians and people from all over the world will be celebrated as devotees of Lord Caitanya. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has already constructed a big temple at Māyāpur, Navadvīpa, which is being visited by devotees from all parts of the world, as foretold by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and anticipated by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. (Cc. **Adi** 10.122 purport)

Therefore, we do not belong to any faction. But because the two parties, busy dividing the material assets of the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution, stopped the preaching work, we took up the mission of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to preach the Cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world, under the protection of all the predecessor *ācāryas*, and we find that our humble attempt has been successful. (Cc. **Adi** 12.8 purport)

In this connection, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* gives this short note: "Śrī Advaita Ācārya is one of the important trunks of the *bhakti-kalpataru*, or desire tree of devotional service. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as a gardener, poured water on the root of the *bhakti* tree and thus nourished all its trunks and branches. But nevertheless, under the spell of *māyā*, the most unfortunate condition of a living entity, some of the branches, not accepting the gardener who poured water on them, considered the trunk the only cause of the great *bhakti-kalpataru*. In other words, the branches or descendants of Advaita Ācārya who considered Advaita Ācārya the original cause of the devotional creeper, and who thus neglected or disobeyed the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, deprived themselves of the effect of being watered and thus dried up and died. It is further to be understood that not only the misguided descendants of Advaita Ācārya but anyone who has no connection with Caitanya Mahāprabhu-even if

he is independently a great *sannyāsī*, learned scholar or ascetic-is like a dead branch of a tree." This analysis by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, supporting the statements of Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, depicts the position of the present so-called Hindu religion, which, being predominantly conducted by the Māyāvāda philosophy, has become a hodgepodge institution of various concocted ideas. (Cc. **Adi** 12.73 purport)

A jealous person in the dress of a Vaiṣṇava is not at all happy to see the success of another Vaiṣṇava in receiving the Lord's mercy.

Unfortunately in this age of Kali there are many mundane persons in the dress of Vaiṣṇavas, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has described them as disciples of Kali. He says, *kali-celā*. He indicates that there is another Vaiṣṇava, a pseudo-Vaiṣṇava with *tilaka* on his nose and *kunti* beads around his neck. Such a pseudo-Vaiṣṇava associates with money and women and is jealous of successful Vaiṣṇavas. Although passing for a Vaiṣṇava, his only business is earning money in the dress of a Vaiṣṇava. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura therefore says that such a pseudo-Vaiṣṇava is not a Vaiṣṇava at all but a disciple of Kali-yuga. A disciple of Kali cannot become an *ācārya* by the decision of some high court. Mundane votes have no jurisdiction to elect a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*. A Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* is self-effulgent, and there is no need for any court judgment. A false *ācārya* may try to override a Vaiṣṇava by a high-court decision, but Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that he is nothing but a disciple of Kali-yuga. (Cc. **Madhya** 1.220 purport)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu warned all His followers not to become independent or impudent. Unfortunately, after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, many *apa-sampradāyas* (so-called followers) invented many ways not approved by the *ācāryas*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has described them as: the *āula*, *bāula*, *karṭtābhajā*, *neḍā*, *daraveśa*, *sāni sahajiyā*, *sakhībhekī*, *smārta*, *jāta-gosāñī*, *ativāḍi*, *cūḍādhāri* and *gaurāṅga-nāgarī*. The *āula-sampradāya*, *bāula-sampradāya* and others invented their own ways of understanding Lord Caitanya's philosophy without following in the footsteps of the *ācāryas*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself indicates herein that all such attempts would simply spoil the spirit of His cult. (Cc. **Madhya** 1.271 purport)
In this connection, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that Śrī Caitanya

Mahāprabhu accepted the *sannyāsa* order and recommended the determination of the Avantīpura *bhikṣu* to engage in the service of Mukunda. He accepted the *brāhmaṇa*'s version due to his determination to serve Mukunda. The *sannyāsī* dress is actually an attraction for material formality. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not like such formality, but He wanted the essence of it-service to Mukunda. Such determination in any condition is *parātma-niṣṭhā*. That is required. The conclusion is that the *sannyāsa* order depends not on the dress but the determination to serve Mukunda. (Cc. **Madhya** 3.8 purport)

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura annotates that this Gopāla Deity was originally installed by Vajra, the grandson of Kṛṣṇa. Mādhavendra Purī rediscovered Gopāla and established Him on top of Govardhana Hill. This Gopāla Deity is still situated at Nāthadvāra and is under the management of descendants of Vallabhācārya. The worship of the Deity is very luxurious, and one who goes there can purchase varieties of *prasāda* by paying a small price. (Cc. **Madhya** 4.1 purport)

In our disciplic line we have the example of a perfect householder *paramahansa*-Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In his book *Śaraṇāgati*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura stated: *ye dina gṛhe, bhajana dekhi'*, *gṛhete goloka bhāya* (*Śaraṇāgati* 31.6). Whenever a householder glorifies the Supreme Lord in his home, his activities are immediately transformed into the activities of Goloka Vṛndāvana, spiritual activities taking place in the Goloka Vṛndāvana planet of Kṛṣṇa. (Cc. **Madhya** 7.69 purport)

In his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains that this spiritual potency is the essence of the pleasure potency and the eternity potency. By these two potencies, one is empowered with devotional service. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, or His representative, the unalloyed devotee, can mercifully bestow these combined potencies upon any man. Being thus endowed with such potencies, one can become an unalloyed devotee of the Lord. Anyone favored by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was empowered with this *bhakti-śakti*. Thus the Lord's followers were able to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness effectively by divine grace. (Cc. **Madhya** 7.99 purport)

This is the beginning of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's description of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's transcendental body. This description is based on the book known as *Premambhoja-maranda* by Śrī Raghunātha dāsa

Gosvāmī. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī's descriptions in verses 165-181 are based on this book. A translation of the original Sanskrit as described by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura reads as follows:

"The love of the *gopīs* for Kṛṣṇa is full of transcendental ecstasy. It appears to be a brilliant jewel, and enlightened by such a transcendental jewel, Rādhārāṇī's body is further perfumed and decorated with *kuṅkuma*. In the morning Her body is bathed in the nectar of compassion, in the afternoon in the nectar of youth, and in the evening in the nectar of luster itself. In this way the bathing is performed, and Her body becomes as brilliant as the *cintāmaṇi* jewel. Her dress is composed of various kinds of silken garments, which may be compared to Her natural shyness. Her beauty is more and more enhanced, being decorated with *kuṅkuma*, which is compared to beauty itself, and with blackish musk, which is compared to conjugal love. Thus Her body is decorated with different colors. The *kuṅkuma* is red, and the musk is black. Her ornaments embody the natural symptoms of ecstasy-trembling, tears, jubilation, stunning, perspiration, faltering of the voice, bodily redness, madness and dullness. In this way the entire body is bedecked with these nine different jewels. Over and above this, the beauty of Her body is enhanced by Her transcendental qualities, which hang as a flower garland on Her body. The ecstasy of love for Kṛṣṇa is known as *dhīrā* and *adhīrā*, sober and restless. Such ecstasy constitutes the covering of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's body, and it is adorned by camphor. Her transcendental anger toward Kṛṣṇa is embodied as the arrangement of the hair on Her head, and the *tilaka* of Her great fortune shines on Her beautiful forehead. The earrings of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, as well as the hearing of His name and fame. Her lips are always reddish due to the betel nut of ecstatic affection for Kṛṣṇa. The black ointment around Her eyes is Her tricky behavior with Kṛṣṇa brought about by love. Her joking with Kṛṣṇa and gentle smiling is the camphor with which She is perfumed. She sleeps in Her room with the aroma of pride, and when She lies down in Her bed, the transcendental variety of Her loving ecstasies is like a jeweled locket in the midst of Her necklace of separation. Her transcendental breasts are covered by Her sari in the form of affection and anger toward Kṛṣṇa. She has a stringed instrument known as a *kacchapī-vīṇā*, which is the fame and fortune

that actually dries up the faces and breasts of the other *gopīs*. She always keeps Her hands on the shoulder of Her *gopī* friend, who is compared to Her youthful beauty, and although She is highly qualified with so many spiritual assets, She is nonetheless affected by the Cupid known as Kṛṣṇa. Thus She is defeated. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī offers his respectful obeisances to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, taking a straw in his mouth. Indeed, he prays, 'O Gandharvikā, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, just as Lord Kṛṣṇa never rejects a surrendered soul, please don't reject me.' (Cc. Madhya 8.166 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura suggests that during the time of enjoyment, the attachment might be compared to Cupid himself. However, during the period of separation, Cupid becomes a messenger of highly elevated love. This is called *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*. When there is a separation, enjoyment itself acts like a messenger, and that messenger was addressed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as a friend. The essence of this transaction is simple: loving affairs are as relishable during separation as during enjoyment. When Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was fully absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa, She mistook a black *tamāla* tree for Kṛṣṇa and embraced it. Such a mistake is called *prema-vivarta-vilāsa*. (Cc. Madhya 8.194 purport)

In his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states: "Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the creeper of love of Godhead, and the *gopīs* are exactly like twigs, flowers and leaves. When water is sprinkled on the creeper, the twigs, flowers and leaves indirectly receive the benefits of the creeper itself. However, water sprinkled directly on the twigs, leaves and flowers is not as effective as water sprinkled on the creeper's root. The *gopīs* are not as pleased when they directly mix with Kṛṣṇa as when they serve to unite Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī with Kṛṣṇa. Their transcendental pleasure lies in uniting Them." (Cc. Madhya 8.210 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states that according to the Buddhist cult there are two ways of understanding philosophy. One is called *hīnāyana*, and the other is called *mahāyana*. Along this path, there are nine principles. (1) The creation is eternal; therefore there is no need to accept a creator. (2) This cosmic manifestation is false. (3) "I am" is the truth. (4) There is a repetition of birth and death. (5) Lord Buddha is the only source of understanding the truth. (6) The principle of *nirvāṇa*, or annihilation, is the ultimate goal. (7) The philosophy of Buddha is the

only philosophical path. (8) The *Vedas* are compiled by human beings. (9) Pious activities, showing mercy to others and so on are advised. [There follows a refutation of these principles.] (**Cc. Madhya** 9.49 purport) This is the process of surrender. As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sings:

*mānasa, deha, geḥa, yo kichu mora
arpiluṅ tuyā pade nanda-kiśora!*

(*Śaraṇāgati*)

When one surrenders unto the lotus feet of the Lord, he does so with everything in his possession—his house, his body, his mind and whatever else he possesses. If there is any obstruction to this surrendering process, one should immediately give it up without attachment. If one can surrender with all his family members, there is no need to take *sannyāsa*. However, if the surrendering process is hampered by so-called family members, one should immediately give them up to complete the surrendering process. (**Cc. Madhya** 10.55 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments that serving Vaiṣṇavas is most important for householders. Whether a Vaiṣṇava is properly initiated or not is not a subject for consideration. One may be initiated and yet contaminated by the Māyāvāda philosophy, but a person who chants the holy name of the Lord offenselessly will not be so contaminated. A properly initiated Vaiṣṇava may be imperfect, but one who chants the holy name of the Lord offenselessly is all-perfect. Although he may apparently be a neophyte, he still has to be considered a pure unalloyed Vaiṣṇava. It is the duty of the householder to offer respects to such an unalloyed Vaiṣṇava. This is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's instruction. (**Cc. Madhya** 15.111 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in clarifying verses 171-179 [Lord Caitanya's talks with Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura], states that the meaning of these stanzas is very simple but that the purport is a little difficult to understand. Generally, conditioned souls forget Kṛṣṇa when they are enticed by the material, external energy. Consequently they are called *kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha*—bereft of their relationship with Kṛṣṇa. When such a living entity comes under the jurisdiction of the material energy, he is sent into one of the innumerable material universes created by the

material energy to give a chance to conditioned souls to enjoy their desires in the material world. Being very eager to enjoy the fruits of their activities, conditioned souls become involved in the actions and reactions of material life. Consequently one has to enjoy and suffer the results of *karma*. However, if a conditioned soul becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, the *karma* of his pious and impious activities is completely destroyed. Simply by becoming a devotee, one is bereft of all the reactions of *karma*. Similarly, simply by the desire of a devotee, a conditioned soul can attain liberation and transcend the results of *karma*. If everyone is liberated in this way, one may conclude that according to the sweet will of the devotee, the material world exists or does not exist. Ultimately, however, it is not the sweet will of the devotee but the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who, if He so desires, can completely annihilate the material creation. There is no loss on His part. The owner of millions of cows does not consider the loss of one she-goat. Similarly, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of both material and spiritual universes. The material world constitutes only one-fourth of His creative energy. If, according to the desire of the devotee, the Lord completely destroys the creation, He is so opulent that He will not mind the loss. (Cc. Madhya 15.179 purport)

When one takes *kṣetra-sannyāsa*, he leaves his household life and goes to a place of pilgrimage devoted to Lord Viṣṇu. Such places include Puruṣottama (Jagannātha Purī), Navadvīpa-dhāma and Mathurā-dhāma. The *kṣetra-sannyāsī* lives in these places alone or with his family. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura considers *kṣetra-sannyāsa* to be the preferable *vānaprastha* situation in this age of Kali. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya lived in this way, and he has been called a *kṣetra-sannyāsī*-that is, a *sannyāsī* living in Jagannātha Purī. (Cc. Madhya 16.130 purport)

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states that during the Mohammedan reign in Bengal, there was a secretariat entitled *viśvāsa-khānā*. The office of *viśvāsa-khānā* was a secretariat office in which only the most reliable people were employed. They were elected from the *kāyastha* community, a community that is still very expert in managing business and government affairs. The secretariat, or *viśvāsa-khānā*, is generally a very reliable and faithful servant. Whenever some confidential service was needed, these officers were employed. (Cc. Madhya 16.175 purport)

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and later Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura of Calcutta always engaged in *nāma-bhajana* and certainly did not live anywhere but Vṛndāvana. Presently, the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement throughout the world live in materially opulent cities, such as London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Moscow, Zurich and Stockholm. However, we are satisfied with following in the footsteps of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and other *ācāryas*. Because we live in the temples of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and continuously hold *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*-the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa-we consequently live in Vṛndāvana and nowhere else. We are also following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by attempting to construct a temple in Vṛndāvana for our disciples throughout the world to visit. (Cc. Madhya 16.281 purport)

A *kṛṣṇa-bhakta* has no desire for his own personal benefit. He is completely protected by the Supreme. *Avaśya rakṣibe kṛṣṇa viśvāsa pālana*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that he is desireless because Kṛṣṇa will give him protection in all circumstances. It is not that he expects any assistance from Kṛṣṇa; he simply depends on Kṛṣṇa just as a child depends on his parents. The child does not know how to expect service from his parents, but he is always protected nevertheless. This is called *niṣkāma* (desirelessness). (Cc. Madhya 19.149 purport)

In his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states that *anubhāva* can be divided into thirteen categories: (1) dancing, (2) rolling on the ground, (3) singing, (4) yelling, (5) jumping, (6) making loud noises, (7) yawning, (8) heavy breathing, (9) not caring for public opinion, (10) discharging saliva, (11) roaring laughter, (12) unsteadiness and (13) hiccupping. These are the symptoms of *anubhāva*. (Cc. Madhya 19.180 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mentions that the qualities of beauty, humility, mercy, merit, patience and expert intelligence are brilliant qualities, and when they are exhibited in the person of Nārāyaṇa, one should know that they are bestowed upon Nārāyaṇa by Kṛṣṇa. Good behavior, mildness and magnanimity are found only in Kṛṣṇa. Only Kṛṣṇa performs welfare activities for the whole world. (Cc. Madhya

21.121 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains this point. Is this *bhāgya* (fortune) the result of an accident or something else? In the scriptures, devotional service and pious activity are considered fortunate. Pious activities can be divided into three categories-pious activities that awaken one's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness are called *bhakty-unmukhī sukṛti*. Pious activities that bestow material opulence are called *bhogonmukhī*, and pious activities that enable the living entity to merge into the existence of the Supreme are called *mokṣonmukhī*. These last two awards of pious activity are not actually fortunate. Pious activities are fortunate when they help one become Kṛṣṇa conscious. The good fortune of *bhakty-unmukhī* is attainable only when one comes in contact with a devotee. By associating with a devotee willingly or unwillingly, one advances in devotional service, and thus one's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness is awakened. (Cc. **Madhya** 22.45 purport)

This verse is from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.47). Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that one who has full love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead and who maintains a good friendship with the Lord's devotees is always callous to those who envy Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's devotees. Such a person is to be considered an intermediate devotee. He becomes a first-class devotee when, in the course of advancing in devotional service, he feels an intimate relationship with all living entities, seeing them as part and parcel of the Supreme Person. (Cc. **Madhya** 22.74 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura summarizes the growth of love of Godhead as a gradual process. A person becomes interested in devotional service by some good fortune. Eventually he becomes interested in pure devotional service without material contamination. At that point, a person wants to associate with devotees. As a result of this association, he becomes more and more interested in discharging devotional service and hearing and chanting. The more one is interested in hearing and chanting, the more he is purified of material contamination. Liberation from material contamination is called *anartha-nivṛtti*, indicating a diminishing of unwanted things. This is the test of development in devotional service. If one actually develops the devotional attitude, he must be freed from the material contamination of illicit sex, intoxication, gambling and meat-eating. These are the preliminary

symptoms. When one is freed from all material contamination, his firm faith awakens in devotional service. When firm faith is developed, a taste arises, and by that taste, one becomes attached to devotional service. When this attachment intensifies, the seed of love of Kṛṣṇa fructifies. This position is called *prīti* or *rati* (affection) or *bhāva* (emotion). When *rati* intensifies, it is called love of Godhead. This love of Godhead is actually life's highest perfection and the reservoir of all pleasure.

... In this way one becomes firmly fixed and gradually develops a taste for devotional service. The more the taste grows, the more one desires to render service to the Lord. In this way one becomes attached to a particular mellow in the Lord's service-*śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā*, and *madhura*. As a result of such attachment, *bhāva* develops. *Bhāva-bhakti* is the platform of purified goodness. By such purified goodness, one's heart melts in devotional service. *Bhāva-bhakti* is the first seed of love of Godhead. This emotional stage is there before one attains pure love. When that emotional stage intensifies, it is called *prema-bhakti*, or transcendental love of Godhead. (Cc. **Madhya** 23.13 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given the following summary of verses 107-111. Transcendentalists on the path of philosophical speculation can be divided into two categories-the pure worshiper of impersonal Brahman and he who wishes to merge into the existence of impersonal Brahman. When one is fully absorbed in the thought that one is not different from the Supreme Absolute Truth, one is said to be a worshiper of the impersonal Brahman. The impersonal worshipers of Brahman can again be divided into three categories-(1) *sādhaka*, those who are nearing perfect execution of the process of Brahman realization; (2) those who are fully absorbed in meditation on Brahman; and (3) those who are on the *brahma-bhūta* platform and have no relationship with material existence. Even though the worshiper of impersonal Brahman can be highly advanced, he cannot attain liberation without discharging devotional service. Anyone who has realized himself as spirit soul can engage in devotional service. This is the verdict of *Bhagavad-gītā*:

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā

*na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktim labhate parām*

"One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and is fully joyful. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me." (Bg. 18.54)

To attain the platform of pure devotional service, one has to become spiritually pure and attain the *brahma-bhūta* platform, which is beyond material anxiety and material discrimination. When one approaches pure devotional service after realizing Brahman, one becomes attracted by pure devotional service. At such a time, by rendering devotional service, one gets a spiritual body with purified senses.

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

When one's senses are pure, one can render loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. A pure devotee can only remember Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities. Remembering them, he fully engages in the loving service of the Lord. (Cc. **Madhya** 24.111 purport)

When a touchstone touches iron, it turns iron to gold. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said that the position of a Vaiṣṇava can be tested by seeing how good a touchstone he is—that is, by seeing how many Vaiṣṇavas he has made during his life. A Vaiṣṇava should be a touchstone so that he can convert others to Vaiṣṇavism by his preaching, even though people may be fallen like [a] hunter. (Cc. **Madhya** 24.277 purport)

In his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura confirms that one has to learn from a bona fide spiritual master about religious principles, economic development, sense gratification and ultimately liberation. These are the four divisions of regulated life, but they are subjected to the material platform. On the spiritual platform, the four principles are *jñāna*, *viñāna*, *tad-aṅga* and *tad-rahasya*. Rules,

regulations and restrictions are on the material platform, but on the spiritual platform one has to be equipped with transcendental knowledge, which is above the principles of religious rituals. Mundane religious activity is known as *smārta-viddhi*, but transcendental devotional service is called *gosvāmī-viddhi*. Unfortunately many so-called *gosvāmīs* are on the platform of *smārta-viddhi*, yet they try to pass as *gosvāmī-viddhi* and thus the people are cheated. (Cc. Madhya 25.121 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has therefore sung, *tumi ta' ṭhākura, tomāra kukkura, balīya jānaha more* (Śaraṇāgati 19). He thus offers to become the dog of a Vaiṣṇava. There are many other instances in which the pet animal of a Vaiṣṇava was delivered back home to Vaikuṅṭhaloka, back to Godhead. Such is the benefit of somehow or other becoming the favorite of a Vaiṣṇava. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also sung, *kīṭa-janma ha-u yathā tuyā dāsa* (Śaraṇāgati 11). There is no harm in taking birth again and again. Our only desire should be to take birth under the care of a Vaiṣṇava. (Cc. Antya 1.24 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains the Gaura-gopāla *mantra* in his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*. Worshipers of Śrī Gaurasundara accept the four syllables *gau-ra-aṅ-ga* as the Gaura *mantra*, but pure worshipers of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa accept the four syllables *rā-dhā kṛṣ-ṇa* as the Gaura-gopāla *mantra*. However, Vaiṣṇavas consider Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu nondifferent from Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya*). Therefore one who chants the *mantra* Gaurāṅga and one who chants the names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are on the same level. (Cc. Antya 2.31 purport)

A Vaiṣṇava should study the commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* written by the four *sampradāya-ācāryas*, namely Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī and Nimbārka, for these commentaries are based upon the philosophy that the Lord is the master and that all living entities are His eternal servants. One interested in studying Vedānta philosophy properly must study these commentaries, especially if he is a Vaiṣṇava. These commentaries are always adored by Vaiṣṇavas. The commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is elaborately given in the *Ādi-līlā*, Chapter Seven, text 101. The Māyāvāda commentary *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* is like poison for a Vaiṣṇava. It should not be touched at all. Śrīla

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura remarks that even a *mahā-bhāgavata*, or highly elevated devotee who has surrendered himself unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, sometimes falls down from pure devotional service if he hears the Māyāvāda philosophy of *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*. This commentary should therefore be shunned by all Vaiṣṇavas. (Cc. Antya 2.95 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura remarks that after one adopts the renounced order and accepts the dress of either a *sannyāsī* or *bābājī*, if he entertains the idea of sense gratification, especially in relationship with a woman, the only atonement is to commit suicide in the confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā. Only by such atonement can his sinful life be purified. If such a person is thus punished, it is possible for him to attain the shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Without such punishment, however, the shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is very difficult to regain. (Cc. Antya 2.166)

A devotee on the topmost platform of devotional service always humbly thinks that he is not rendering any devotional service. He thinks that he is poor in devotional service and that his body is material. On the other hand, those known as the *sahajiyās* foolishly think that their material bodies are transcendental. Because of this, they are always bereft of the association of pure devotees, and thus they cannot behave like Vaiṣṇavas. Observing the defects of the *sahajiyās*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung as follows in his book *Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru*:

*āmi ta'vaiṣṇava, e-buddhi ha-ile
amāni nā haba āmi
pratiṣṭhāśā āsi', hṛdaya dūṣibe
ha-iba niraya-gāmī
nije śreṣṭha jāni', ucchiṣṭādi-dāne
habe abhimāna bhāra
tāi śiṣya tava, thākiyā sarvadā
nā la-iba pūjā kāra*

"If I think I am a Vaiṣṇava, I shall look forward to receiving respect from others. And if the desire for fame and reputation pollute my heart, certainly I shall go to hell. By giving others the remnants of my food, I shall consider myself superior and shall be burdened with the weight of false pride. Therefore, always remaining your surrendered disciple, I

shall not accept worship from anyone else." (Cc. **Antya 4.173** purport)
As stated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* some people, usually very rich men, dress like Vaiṣṇavas and give charity to *brāhmaṇas*. They are also attached to Deity worship, but because of their attachment to material enjoyment, they cannot be pure Vaiṣṇavas. *Anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*. The pure Vaiṣṇava has no desire for material enjoyment. That is the basic qualification of a pure Vaiṣṇava. (Cc. **Antya 6.198** purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says in his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* that when a man and woman are married, they beget children and are thus entangled in family life. Talk concerning such family life is called *grāmya-kathā*. A person in the renounced order never indulges in either hearing or talking about such subjects. He should not eat palatable dishes, since that is unfit for a person in the renounced order. He should show all respect to others, but should not expect respect for himself. In this way, one should chant the holy name of the Lord and think of how to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. (Cc. **Antya 6.237** purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that there are three varieties of invitations-those in the mode of goodness, those in passion and those in ignorance. An invitation accepted from a pure devotee is in the mode of goodness, an invitation from a person who is pious but materially attached is in the mode of passion, and an invitation accepted from a person who is materially very sinful is in the mode of ignorance. (Cc. **Antya 6.279** purport)

At Puruṣottama-kṣetra, or Jagannātha Purī, there is a temple of Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha. If one goes from there to the sea, he can discover the tomb of Haridāsa Ṭhākura still existing ... At the same place three Deities of Nityānanda, Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Advaita Prabhu were established about one hundred years ago ... Near this temple and the tomb of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura constructed a small house, called Bhakti-kuṭī. (Cc. **Antya 11.101** purport)

In his *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura advises that one avoid remaining in Vṛndāvana for a very long time. As the saying goes, "Familiarity breeds contempt." If one stays in Vṛndāvana for many days, he may fail to maintain proper respect for its inhabitants.

Therefore those who have not attained the stage of spontaneous love for

Kṛṣṇa should not live in Vṛndāvana very long. It is better for them to make short visits. (Cc. Antya 13.39 purport)

Commenting on the word *parama-vaiṣṇava*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that anyone who desires to merge into the existence of the Lord cannot be a pure Vaiṣṇava, but because Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa was a great devotee of Lord Rāmacandra, he was almost a Vaiṣṇava. In those days, no one could distinguish between a pure Vaiṣṇava and a pseudo Vaiṣṇava. Therefore Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa was known as a Vaiṣṇava because he worshiped Lord Rāmacandra. (CC Antya 13.92 purport) Many other methods of worshiping Caitanya Mahāprabhu have also been introduced, but they have all been rejected by stalwart devotees like Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The groups practicing such unauthorized worship have been listed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

bhajā, neḍā, daraveśa, sāñi
sahajiyā, sakhībhekī, smārta, jāta-gosāñi
ativāḍī-cūḍādhāri, gaurāṅga-nāgarī

Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī witnessed Caitanya Mahāprabhu's activities firsthand, and they recorded them in two notebooks. Therefore, without reference to these notebooks, one cannot understand the activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Anyone inventing some new method for worshiping Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is certainly unable to understand the Lord's pastimes, for he is bereft of the real process of approaching the Lord. (Cc. Antya 14.7 purport)

2. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Many devotees of Lord Caitanya like ... Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Kavikarṇapūra, Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and in this later age within two hundred years, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Śyamānanda Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and at last Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (our spiritual master) and many other great and renowned scholars and devotees of the Lord have prepared voluminous

books and literatures on the life and precepts of the Lord. Such literatures are all based on the *śāstras* like the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and other histories and authentic literatures approved by the recognized *ācāryas*. They are unique in composition and unrivaled in presentation, and they are full of transcendental knowledge. Unfortunately the people of the world are still ignorant of them, but when these literatures which are mostly in Sanskrit and Bengali, come to light the world and when they are presented before thinking people, then India's glory and the message of love will overflow this morbid world, which is vainly searching after peace and prosperity by various illusory methods not approved by the *ācāryas* in the chain of disciplic succession. (SB introduction vol. 1) Our spiritual master, who also took his birth in a Vaiṣṇava family, got all inspirations from his great Vaiṣṇava father, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. That is the way of all lucky Vaiṣṇava families ... The life history of many such devotees is almost the same because there is always symmetry between the early lives of all great devotees of the Lord. (SB 2.3.15 purport)

Thus one who is actually in the confidence of a pure devotee like Nārada or Śukadeva Gosvāmī and thus is empowered by one's spiritual master, as Nārada was by Brahmāji, can not only deliver himself from the clutches of *māyā*, or illusion, but can deliver the whole world by his pure and empowered devotional strength ... A true representative of the Lord like Nārada, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya, the six Gosvāmīs and later Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, etc. can deliver all people by their empowered devotional service. (SB 2.8.5 purport)

Kardama Muni desired to beget a child who would be a ray of the Supreme Personality of Godhead ... Great householders pray to God to send His representative so that there may be an auspicious movement in human society ... In the same order as Kardama Muni, about one hundred years ago, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda also wanted to beget a child who could preach the philosophy and teachings of Lord Caitanya to the fullest extent. By his prayers to the Lord he had as his child Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who at the present moment is preaching the philosophy of Lord Caitanya throughout the

entire world through his bona fide disciples. (SB 3.22.19 purport)
As expressed in a song by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, Lord Caitanya says, *jīva jāga, jīva jāga*. The Lord asks every sleeping living entity to get up and engage in devotional service so that his mission in this human form of life may be fulfilled. This awakening voice comes through the mouth of a pure devotee. A pure devotee always engages in the service of the Lord, taking shelter of His lotus feet, and therefore he has a direct connection with the saffron mercy-particles that are strewn over the lotus feet of the Lord. Although when a pure devotee speaks the articulation of his voice may resemble the sound of this material sky, the voice is spiritually very powerful because it touches the particles of saffron dust on the lotus feet of the Lord. As soon as a sleeping living entity hears the powerful voice emanating from the mouth of a pure devotee, he immediately remembers his eternal relationship with the Lord, although up until that moment he had forgotten everything. For a conditioned soul, therefore, it is very important to hear from the mouth of a pure devotee, who is fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Lord without any material desire, speculative knowledge or contamination of the modes of material nature. (SB 4.20.25 purport)

The living entity within the body can struggle up to the limit of a hundred years with good luck, but after that it is not possible to prolong the struggle. Thus the living entity submits and falls victim. In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung: *vṛddha kāla āola saba sukha bhāgala*. When one becomes old, it becomes impossible to enjoy material happiness. Generally, people think that religion and piety come at the end of life, and at this time one generally becomes meditative and take to some so-called yogic process to relax in the name of meditation. Meditation, however, is simply a farce for those who have enjoyed life in sense gratification. (SB 4.27.17 purport)

Among Vaiṣṇavas there may be some difference of opinion due to everyone's personal identity, but despite all personal differences, the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness must go on. We can see that under the instruction of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja began preaching the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in an organized way within the past hundred years. The disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja are all

Godbrothers, and although there are some differences of opinion, and although we are not acting conjointly, every one of us is spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement according to his own capacity and producing many disciples to spread it all over the world. As far as we are concerned, we have already started the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, and many thousands of Europeans and Americans have joined this movement. Indeed, it is spreading like wildfire. The cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, based on the nine principles of devotional service (*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam/ arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*), will never be stopped. (SB 4.28.31 purport)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a responsible officer and a householder, yet his service to the cause of expanding the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is unique ... The devotees in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement move within this material world, but because their senses are fully engaged in the service of the Lord, they are always aloof from the material world. They are always living in a transcendental position. (SB 5.1.17 purport)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in the land of Bhārata-varṣa, specifically in Bengal, in the district of Nadia, where Navadvīpa is situated. It is therefore to be concluded, as stated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, that within this universe, this earth is the best planet, and on this planet the land of Bhārata-varṣa is the best; in the land of Bhārata-varṣa, Bengal is still better, in Bengal, the district of Nadia is still better, and in Nadia the best place is Navadvīpa because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared there to inaugurate the performance of the sacrifice of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. (SB 5.19.24 purport)
 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung:

*nārada muni, bājāy vīṇā
 'rādhikā-ramaṇa'-nāme
 nāma amani, udita haya,
 bhakata-gītā-sāme*

*amiya-dhārā, bariṣe ghana,
 śravaṇa-yugale giyā*

*bhakata jana, saghane nāce,
bhoriyā āpana hiyā*

*mādhurī-pūra, āsava paśi',
mātāya jagata-jane
keho vā kānde, keho vā nāce,
keho māte mane mane*

*pañca-vadana, nārade dhorī',
premera saghana rol
kamalāsana, nāciyā bole,
'bolo bolo hari bolo'*

*sahasrānana, parama-sukhe,
'hari hari' boli' gāya
nāma-prabhāve, mātilo viśva,
nāma-rasa sabe pāya*

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma, rasane sphuri',
purā'la āmār āśa
śrī-rūpa-pade, yācaye ihā,
bhakativinoda-dāsa*

The purport of this song is that Nārada Muni, the great soul, plays a stringed instrument called a *vīṇā*, vibrating the sound *rādhikā-ramaṇa*, which is another name for Kṛṣṇa. As soon as he strokes the strings, all the devotees begin responding, making a very beautiful vibration. Accompanied by the stringed instrument, the singing seems like a shower of nectar, all the devotees dance in ecstasy to the fullest extent of their satisfaction. While dancing, they appear madly intoxicated with ecstasy, as if drinking the beverage called *mādhurī-pūra*. Some of them cry, some of them dance, and some of them, although unable to dance publicly, dance within their hearts. Lord Śiva embraces Nārada Muni and begins talking in an ecstatic voice, and seeing Lord Śiva dancing with Nārada, Lord Brahmā also joins, saying, "All of you kindly chant 'Hari bol! Hari bol!'" ...In this way, by the influence of the

transcendental vibration of the holy name of God, the whole universe becomes ecstatic. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "When the universe becomes ecstatic, my desire is satisfied. I therefore pray unto the lotus feet of Rūpa Gosvāmī that this chanting of *harer nāma* may go on nicely like this." (SB 6.5.22 purport)

The mind is always agitated by acceptance and rejection, which are compared to mental waves that are constantly tossing. The living entity is floating in the waves of material existence because of his forgetfulness. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has therefore sung in his *Gītāvalī: miche māyāra vaṣe, yāccha bhese', khāccha hābuḍubu, bhāi*. "My dear mind, under the influence of *māyā* you are being carried away by the waves of rejection and acceptance. Simply take shelter of Kṛṣṇa." *Jīva kṛṣṇa-dāsa, ei vīśvāsa, karle ta' āra duḥkha nāi*: if we simply regard the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa as our ultimate shelter, we shall be saved from all these waves of *māyā*, which are variously exhibited as mental and sensual activities and the agitation of rejection and acceptance. (SB 7.15.53 purport)

Bali Mahārāja, having been perfectly educated in devotional service by his grandfather Prahlāda Mahārāja, knew how things are to be done. He was never to be misguided by anyone, even by a person who happened to be his so-called spiritual master. This is the sign of full surrender.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said:

*mārabi rākhabi-yo icchā tohārā
nitya-dāsa-ṭṛati tuyā adhikārā*

When one surrenders to Lord Viṣṇu, one must be prepared to abide by His orders in all circumstances, whether He kills one or gives one protection. Lord Viṣṇu must be worshiped in all circumstances. (SB 8.20.11 purport)

This is the influence of a pure devotee. If there is one pure devotee, his association can create hundreds and thousands of pure devotees. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said that a Vaiṣṇava is meritorious in proportion to the number of devotees he has created. A Vaiṣṇava becomes superior not simply by jugglery of words but by the number of devotees he has created for the Lord. (SB 9.21.18 purport)

The easiest way to attain spiritual elevation, to be liberated from this material world, and to go back home, back to Godhead, is recommended

by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: *kṛṣṇera saṁsāra kara chāḍi' anācāra*. One should give up all sinful activities and remain in the family of Kṛṣṇa. Then one's liberation is guaranteed. (SB 10.6.40 purport)

3. Other Books of Śrīla Prabhupāda

We have many experiences in the past of Māyāvādī rascals' deluding their followers by posing themselves as Kṛṣṇa in order to enjoy *rāsa-līlā*. In many instances they were checked by the government, arrested and punished. In Orissa, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda also punished a so-called incarnation of Viṣṇu who was imitating *rāsa-līlā* with young girls. There were many complaints against him. At that time, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was magistrate, and the government deputed him to deal with that rascal, and he punished him very severely. (Kṛṣṇa Ch. 32)

Full self-surrender, therefore, means not only surrendering one's self as spirit soul, but also surrendering one's mind and body to the service of the Lord. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung a nice song in this connection. While offering himself as a fully surrendered soul, he said, "My mind, my household affairs, my body, whatever is in my possession, my dear Lord, I offer to you for Your service. Now You can do with them as You like. You are the supreme possessor of everything, so if You like You can kill me, or if You like You can give me protection. All authority belongs to You. I have nothing to claim as My own." (*Nectar of Devotion* Ch. 11)

In this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advises the devotee to be intelligent enough to distinguish between the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, *madhyama-adhikārī* and *uttama-adhikārī*. The devotee should also know his own position and should not try to imitate a devotee situated on a higher platform. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given some practical hints to the effect that an *uttama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava can be recognized by his ability to convert many fallen souls to Vaiṣṇavism. One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikārī*. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikārī* as a

spiritual master. (Nectar of Instruction Text 5, page 58)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in this connection that Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the most select place for those interested in advancing their devotional service in the wake of the lady friends (*sakhīs*) and confidential serving maids (*mañjarīs*) of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Living entities who are eager to return home to the transcendental kingdom of God, Goloka Vṛndāvana, by means of attaining their spiritual bodies (*siddha-deha*) should live at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, take shelter of the confidential serving maids of Śrī Rādhā and under their direction engage constantly in Her service. This is the most exalted method for those engaged in devotional service under the protection of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. (Nectar of Instruction Text 11, pages 90-91)

Excerpt from a Lecture

"If we are at all interested in spiritual science, we must follow the Vedic instruction as given through the disciplic succession. By worshiping the Lord and the *ācārya* one can gain spiritual knowledge. So on this day we should adore and worship Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, because in the modern age he reintroduced the disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya. Two hundred years after Lord Caitanya's disappearance, the disciplic succession had deteriorated, and Bhaktivinoda reestablished the purity of this movement. So our adoration, worship of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura should be so that he may bless us to make peaceful progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; for simply by the blessings of the *ācāryas*, we can make rapid advancement." (London 9/23/69)

The Literary Works of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda (1838-1914)

1849 *Ulā-caṇḍi-māhātmya*—Bengali verses about the glories of the Ulā-caṇḍi deity of Birnagar.

1850 *Hari-kathā* (Topics of Lord Hari)—a poem in Bengali.

1850 *Līlā-kīrtana* (Glorification of the Lord's Pastimes)—a poem in

- Bengali.
- 1851 *Śumbha-Niśumbha-yuddha*—(The Battle with Śumbha and Niśumbha) Bengali verses about the battle between Durgā and two demons named Śumbha and Niśumbha.
- 1855 Contributions of articles to various periodicals and magazines commenced from this year.
- 1857 *Poriade/Part One*—a poem in classical English about the wanderings of Porus, who fought Alexander the Great in the pre-Christian era.
- 1858 *Poriade/Part Two*—the second of a planned twelve parts, but was never completed. Still, these two volumes are an epic composition.
- 1860 *Maths of Orissa*—English prose about the various temples, monasteries and holy shrines in Orissa which were visited by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda.
- 1863 *Vijana-grāma* (The Deserted Village)—Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's description of his return to the beautiful village of Ulā (his birthplace). To his horror he finds the population of the town practically wiped out by cholera. Composed in unmetered, rhyming Bengali poetry.
- 1863 *Sannyāsī*—a Bengali poem.
- 1863 *Our Wants*—English prose.
- 1866 *Balide Registry*—a manual of the Government Registration Department translated by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda into Urdu.
- 1866 *Speech on Gautama*—a lecture in English about Gautama Muni and the philosophy of *nyāya* (logic) delivered in Chapra in the state of Bihar.
- 1868 *Sac-cid-ānanda-premālaṅkara* (Decorations of pure ecstatic love comprising eternity, knowledge and bliss)—a poem in Bengali on the glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Ṭhākura composed this after reading *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* for the first time, which greatly enhanced his enthusiasm for spreading Lord Caitanya's mission.
- 1869 *The Bhagavat: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics, and Its Theology*—a lecture in English on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, delivered at Dinajpur in West Bengal. Some topics covered are: what the

- Bhāgavatam* really is, how Lord Caitanya preached the *Bhāgavatam*, the three great truths of absolute religion (*sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*), *māyā* as a *śakti* of the omnipotent Lord, the duty of man to God, the superiority of the *Bhāgavatam* in synthesizing all sorts of theistic worship and in the cultivation of *bhakti*.
- 1870 *Garbha-stotra-vyākhyā* or *Sambandha-tattva-candrikā*—commentary in Bengali prose on the Garbha-stotra from the second chapter of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Prayers by the Demigods for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Womb).
- 1871 *Reflections*-a poem in English.
- 1871 *Ṭhākura Haridāsa*—Ten English verses about the disappearance of Nāmācārya Haridāsa Ṭhākura, which are engraved on the *samādhi* tomb of Haridāsa by the seashore at Jagannātha Purī.
- 1871 *The Temple of Jagannātha at Purī*—an English prose essay describing the history of the establishment of the great temple in Purī, Orissa. This piece also addresses the hypocrisy of temple priests as opposed to sincere devotional worship in pure love of God.
- 1871 *The Ākharās in Purī*—English critical expose on certain monasteries in Jagannātha Purī. Apparently these places were kept by temple priests for meetings where intoxication and other questionable activities were indulged in.
- 1871 *The Personality of Godhead*—English prose.
- 1871 *Sāragrāhī* (The Who Grasps the Essence)—a 22 verse English poem describing the mood of a devotee who knows how to extract the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness from anywhere and anything.
- 1871 *A Beacon Light*-English prose.
- 1871 *To Love God*—a short English article describing *bhakti* as the religion of the soul. The article is based on Christ Jesus' teaching, "Love God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and love man as thy brother."
- 1871 *The Attibaris of Orissa*—a letter to the editors of the Progress, exposing a questionable sect of pseudo Vaiṣṇavas popular in Orissa.

- 1871 *The Marriage System of Bengal*—an English pamphlet detailing Hindu marriage customs and their deplorable forms. He gives historical outlines of various types of traditional marriages and expresses sympathy for the women subjected to the inhumane marital practices of certain groups in Bengal.
- 1872 *Vedāntādhikaraṇa-mālā*—a compilation of Sanskrit verses on *Vedānta* philosophy, with the Ṭhākura's own Bengali translations and explanations.
- 1874 *Datta-kaustubham-104* Sanskrit verses on philosophy composed by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with his own Sanskrit commentary.
- 1876 *Datta-varṁśa-mālā* (A Garland for the Datta Family)—Sanskrit verses giving a genealogical description of the Datta family of Bali Samaj. Since he was born Kedarnath Datta, this is a description of the Ṭhākura's own family tree.
- 1878 *Bauddha-vijaya-kāvyaṃ* (Poems on the Defeat of Buddhism)—Sanskrit verses defeating the atheistic philosophy of Buddhism.
- 1880 *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṃhitā* (A Compendium on Śrī Kṛṣṇa)—an amazing and revolutionary treatise on the science of Lord Kṛṣṇa, His pastimes and His devotees. This book contains an 83-page introduction in which Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda discusses the philosophy and development of Indian religion from an historical and geographical viewpoint. Then, in the actual *Samhitā* portion of the book, he has composed 281 Sanskrit verses and divided them into ten chapters which deal with descriptions of the spiritual world, the multifarious energies of the Lord, His incarnations, astonishing aspects of His pastimes, descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa's removing specific demonic obstacles in order for His devotees to attain the mood of Vraja, and a detailed analysis of the character of one who has attained Kṛṣṇa's association, etc. Accompanying the Sanskrit verses are Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's Bengali prose translations and explanations. The book closes with a 50-page conclusion in which religious philosophy is discussed in terms of the principles of *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*. The Ṭhākura explains that all of his unique conclusions were revealed to him while in a deep spiritual trance.
- 1881 *Kalyāṇa Kalpa-taru* (The Desire-Tree of Auspiciousness)—a

- songbook of 63 Bengali songs describing a desire-tree that the Ṭhākura brought directly from the spiritual world. Its trunk is divided into three branches called 1) *Upadeśa* (spiritual advice), 2) *Upalabdhi* (attainment of realization of the advice), and 3) *Ucchvāsa* (resultant overflowing spiritual emotions). In these enthralling devotional songs, the Ṭhākura gives a first-hand account of the transcendental emotions that come into play as the natural result of committing one's life and soul to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi. Then he describes the final result of receiving the mercy of Lord Caitanya-entrance into the confidential daily pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. This songbook became popular immediately upon its publication, and its songs were sung by devotees with great enthusiasm.
- 1881 *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* (That Which Pleases the Saintly Persons)—this was a monthly periodical in Bengali which the Ṭhākura began to publish and edit from the year 1881. There are 17 volumes extant.
- 1883 Review of the Sanskrit book *Nitya-rūpa-saṁsthāpanam* (Proof of the Lord's Eternal Form)—this book was composed in Sanskrit by Pandit Upendra Mohan Gosvāmī Nyāya-ratna, and it gives many sound arguments culled from many scriptures to prove the eternal nature of the Lord's Deity form. The Ṭhākura presents an English summary in a contemporary format outlining some of the main points, urging his readers to read the book in the original Sanskrit.
- 1885 *Viśva-vaiṣṇava-kalpa-tavi* (The Desire-Tree of the International Vaiṣṇavas)—a small booklet published in order to acquaint the public with the functions and aims of a spiritual society the Ṭhākura organized in Calcutta, called the *Śrī Viśva Vaiṣṇava Sabhā* (The International Association of Vaiṣṇavas).
- 1886 *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (The Song of God)—the most famous of classical Sanskrit religious texts; the Ṭhākura published a rare manuscript of it that included the Sanskrit commentary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura entitled *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* (That Which Showers the Intrinsic Meaning). The Ṭhākura wrote an elaborate introduction in Bengali, and for each Sanskrit verse of the *Gītā* he composed his own Bengali translation-commentary entitled *Rasika-rañjana* (That Which Pleases the Relishers of

- Mellows).
- 1886 *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* (The Nectarean Teachings of Śrī Caitanya)—a philosophical work in Bengali prose which is meant to show exactly how the teachings of Lord Caitanya are to be applied in the modern world. This includes the perfectly non-envious bridging of the gap between all the world's religions. These teachings, based on Lord Caitanya's instructions to Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs as found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, are just like a shower of pure nectar, and therefore the book is divided into eight "showers", and each of these is sub-divided into "downpours". The eight "showers" are 1) Ascertainment of the Topmost Religion; 2) Secondary Duties, or Religious Activities; 3) Primary Duties, or Regulative Devotional Service; 4) Discussions on Spontaneous Devotional Service; 5) Discussions on Ecstatic Devotional Service; 6) Discussions on Devotional Service in Pure Love of God; 7) Discussions on Transcendental Mellow; and 8) Conclusion.
- 1886 *Sanmodana-bhāṣyam* (The Commentary That Gives Great Pleasure)—a very exhaustive Sanskrit commentary on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's eight verses of instruction named *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. The Ṭhākura also includes a Bengali song for each verse that expands on Lord Caitanya's devotional moods.
- 1886 *Bhajana-darpaṇa-bhāṣya* (A Commentary Which Mirrors Devotional Worship)—a Sanskrit commentary on Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's twelve-verse Sanskrit prayer entitled *Manaḥ-Śikṣā* (Instructions To the Mind). The Ṭhākura also included his Bengali song translation cum commentary of each verse, which are meant to be sung regularly by devotees.
- 1886 *Daśopaniṣad-cūrṇikā* (A Particle of Dust From Ten *Upaniṣads*)—a book of Bengali prose containing essential information gleaned from ten principal *Upaniṣads* (out of 108).
- 1886 *Bhāvāvalī* (A Series of Ecstasies)—Sanskrit verses on the subject of *rasa* written by different *ācāryas* of the highest order, compiled by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda and published along with his own Bengali song translations of the verses.
- 1886 *Prema-pradīpa* (A Lamplight on Divine Love)—a philosophical

- novel written in Bengali prose. The basic plot is that three men from Calcutta travel to Vṛndāvana in order to meet a Vaiṣṇava (who is also a mystic *yogī*), with the intention of learning the transcendental science from him. Two of the men (who were impersonalists) gradually develop faith in devotion unto the Supreme Lord, whereas the third gets misled by the mystic *yoga* process, thus denying himself the rare treasure of ecstatic love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. The book is composed in ten chapters, called "rays of light".
- 1886 *Śrī Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotram* (The Hymn of One Thousand Names of Lord Viṣṇu)—originally part of the *Mahābhārata*, this prayer was published by the Ṭhākura along with the Sanskrit commentary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa entitled *Nāmārtha-sudhā* (The Nectar of the Meaning of the Holy Names).
- 1887 *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vijaya* (Lord Kṛṣṇa's Victory)—a famous Bengali verse epic, written in a simple style, on the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Composed in the early 1470's by Mālādhara Vasu (Guṇarāja Khān). This book was one of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's favorite books. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with his own introduction in Bengali.
- 1887 *Śrī Caitanyopaniṣad* (of the *Atharva Veda*)—an Upaniṣadic treatise in Sanskrit dealing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appearance as the great preacher of love of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. These nineteen verses were edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with his own concise Sanskrit commentary, *Śrī Caitanya-caraṇāmṛta* (The Nectar of the Lotus Feet of Lord Caitanya), and Madhusūdana Dāsa's Bengali translation of the original Sanskrit verses called *Amṛta-bindu* (A Drop of Nectar).
- 1888 *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā* (A Garland of Vaiṣṇavite Conclusions)—a Bengali prose work that summarizes all the basic tenets of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. The Ṭhākura intended this book to be read by the general public, therefore it is composed in simple, straightforward language. Some topics covered are, acceptance of a bona fide spiritual master, chanting of the holy names without offenses, regular practice of *kīrtana*, etc.; the first chapter is in the form of questions and answers.

- 1890 *Āmnāya-sūtram* (The Codes of Vedic Knowledge)—a classical Sanskrit composition based largely on the *Upanisads*, presented as 130 aphorisms, with a short commentary on each aphorism in Sanskrit comprising quotes from various ancient scriptures. He also gives his own Bengali translation called the *Laghu-bhāṣya* (Brief Explanation). This work elucidates the principle truths of Vaiṣṇava philosophy as enshrined in the *Vedas* by means of pithy statements of transcendental facts, the 130 aphorisms being divided into sixteen extremely concise and irrefutable chapters, covering—the Lord as Energetic, His spiritual energies, His abode, His external energy, the individual souls, the phases of existence of the *jīvas*, the means of attaining the ultimate goal of life, devotion in practice, ridding oneself of evils, performing transcendental *bhajana*, attaining the goal of life, devotional ecstasy, etc. etc.
- 1890 *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmyam* (The Glories of the Abode of Navadvīpa) *Parikramā-khaṇḍa* (The Canto Describing the Tour)—Eighteen chapters of Bengali verse in which the Ṭhākura describes the complete tour of the land of Navadvīpa as traversed by Lord Nityānanda. Taking with Him Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Lord Nityānanda Prabhu points out all the different places of pilgrimage and tells the stories behind all those sacred spots.
- 1890 *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmyam* (The Glories of the Abode of Navadvīpa) *Pramāṇa-khaṇḍa* (The Canto Describing the Scriptural Evidence)—Five chapters of amazing quotes from many different Vedic scriptures, *Purāṇas* and *Saṁhitās* that glorify the holy land of Navadvīpa.
- 1890 *Siddhānta-darpaṇam* (The Mirror of Truth)—a philosophical Sanskrit work by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with his own Bengali prose translations. The Ṭhākura liked this book because it establishes, by quoting from many scriptures, that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the crown jewel of all the *Puranas*.
- 1891 *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (The Song of God)—edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's Sanskrit commentary, *Gītā-bhūṣana* (A Decoration of the *Gītā*),

- and his own Bengali translation-commentary called *Vidvadrañjana* (That Which Pleases the Wise).
- 1891 *Śrī Godruma Kalpatavi* (The Desire-tree of the Island of Godruma)—collected Bengali essays describing the Ṭhākura's program of Nāma-haṭṭa, or the Market Place of the Holy Name. He describes the personnel of the marketplace, how the holy names are purchased, various officers of the market, qualifications of the participants, and descriptions of his actual preaching activities.
- 1892 *Śrī Hari-nāma* (The Holy Name of Lord Hari)—the second chapter of *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, excerpted and published in pamphlet form. This was used for public distribution by the Ṭhākura in connection with his program of Nāma-haṭṭa (the Marketplace of the Holy Name). This pamphlet describes the transcendental glories of the holy names, as quoted from various scriptures, as well as explanations of these quotes as given by various *ācāryas*. It also lists and expounds on the ten offenses against the chanting of the holy names.
- 1892 *Śrī Nāma* (The Holy Name)—the third chapter of *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, excerpted and published in pamphlet form, also used by the Ṭhākura for distribution during his public Nāma-haṭṭa programs. This work begins with a short introduction, then it has 100 names of Lord Caitanya arranged in eight songs meant to be sung in *kīrtana*, followed by three more songs on Lord Caitanya's glories. Finally, there is a Bengali prose essay entitled "*Śrī Śrī Godruma-candra's Order*", which expounds on the order that Lord Caitanya gave to all His devotees (as described in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 13)-*bolo kṛṣṇa, bhaja kṛṣṇa, koro kṛṣṇa-śikṣā*—"Going to each and every house, just beg like this—chant 'Kṛṣṇa', worship Kṛṣṇa and follow Kṛṣṇa's instructions!" Thereafter, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda quotes from the seventh chapter of the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in which Nārada Muni tells Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra the thirty good qualities that are properly manifest in religious persons.
- 1892 *Śrī Nāma-tattva-śikṣāṣṭaka* (Eight Verses of Instruction Regarding the Truth of the Holy Name of the Lord)—the fourth chapter of

- Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, similarly excerpted by the Ṭhākura and published as a pamphlet. This chapter systematically presents each of the eight verses of instruction written by Lord Caitanya, called *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. First is the original Sanskrit verse, then Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Bengali prose translation, then his expanded Bengali song. After presenting all eight verses in this manner, the Ṭhākura then concludes with several more songs of instructions to the people, begging them to instill within their hearts these nectarean teachings of Lord Caitanya.
- 1892 *Śrī Nāma-mahimā* (The Glories of the Holy Name)—the fifth chapter of *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, printed as above in pamphlet form. After a brief introduction, the Ṭhākura presents an eight-verse Sanskrit prayer composed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī called *Śrī Nāmāṣṭakam*, which concisely describes the glories of the holy name of the Lord. Accompanying each verse is the Ṭhākura's Bengali prose translation as well as an expanded Bengali song. Then he concludes with three more songs which glorify many names of Lord Kṛṣṇa, including two *Nāma-haṭṭa* songs describing how Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda distributed these names (*yaśomati-nandana, boro sukher khabor gāi; doyāl nitai-caitanya bole nāch re āmār man*).
- 1892 *Śrī Nāma-pracāra* (The Preaching of the Holy Name)—the sixth chapter of *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, printed as above in pamphlet form. First, the Ṭhākura presents his Bengali song: *nadīyā godrume nityānanda mahājana*, giving an elaborate prose purport for each of the four verses. Then, he presents eleven more songs he composed for the general public to sing in *kīrtana* and *bhajana*, containing the gist of Lord Caitanya's teachings.
- 1892 *Śrīman Mahāprabhur Śikṣā*—a book written by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in eleven chapters. In the first chapter, he summarizes Śrī Caitanya's philosophy in ten categories (*daśa-mūla*). Then the following ten chapters fully explain each category individually. All philosophical conclusions are supported with profuse scriptural quotations in Sanskrit, which are accompanied by Bengali prose translations and explanations.
- 1893 *Tattva-viveka* (Discriminations of Various Truths)—sub-titled

Sac-cid-ānandānubhūti (Realizations of Eternity, Knowledge and Bliss). In this book, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda discusses the different precepts of Śrī Caitanya as compared to the ideas of other philosophers, both Oriental and Western. He mentions the Greek philosophers Leucippus, Democritus, Plato and Aristotle; Diderot and Lamettrie of France; Lucretius of Italy; Von Holbach of Germany; Yangchoo of China; Charvaka of India; and Englishmen Mill, Lewis, Paine, Carlyle, Bentham, Combe, etc. The book is composed of 48 Sanskrit verses, each with an exhaustive Bengali commentary. The First Realization, of 33 verses, is entitled "Realization of Eternity"; and the Second Realization, of 15 verses, is entitled "Realization of Eternal Consciousness".

- 1893 *Śoka-śātana* (The Dispelling of Grief)—a small booklet of 13 Bengali songs, which the Ṭhākura composed between 1888 and 1890. These songs were meant to be sung by the general public, as they describe an incident in Lord Caitanya's life punctuated by important teachings of basic transcendental truths. This pastime was mentioned briefly by Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura in his *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, and the Ṭhākura expands the description. The basic story runs as follows: Once, during an all-night *kīrtana* performed by the Lord in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's courtyard, one of the five sons of Śrīvāsa suddenly died within the house due to some disease. All of the household ladies began to cry very loudly in lamentation, which was heard by Śrīvāsa as he was chanting and dancing with Lord Caitanya in the courtyard. Entering the house, Śrīvāsa pacified the distressed ladies with sweet spiritual instructions and then returned to the *kīrtana* as if nothing had happened. In the morning the *kīrtana* finally stopped, and Lord Caitanya inquired if anything was wrong in the house, for He sensed that something was amiss. Being informed of the fate of the boy, the Lord became afflicted with loving separation and asked that the body be brought out into the courtyard. The Lord called the departed *jīva* soul back into the body, and when questioned by the Lord the boy spoke many transcendental truths. Afterwards, Lord Caitanya, accompanied by all the devotees, celebrated the

- funeral ceremony of the boy in great ecstasy, being joined by the personified Ganges River, Śrī Jahnavī Devī herself.
- 1893 *Śaraṇāgati* (The Attainment of Shelter)—a Bengali songbook comprising 50 nectarean songs about the process of pure, devoted surrender unto the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This book has become very famous, and its songs are sung daily in hundreds of temples in India and around the world. It is based on the six processes of surrender mentioned by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. The book is divided as follows: the first part of 32 songs describes the moods of a devotee as he systematically follows the six stages of surrender; then there are 13 songs called *Bhajana-lālasā*, or "Eagerness for Worship"; then three songs called *Siddha-lālasā*, or "Eagerness for Perfection"; and finally, at the very end of *Śaraṇāgati*, the Ṭhākura concludes the book with two important songs: *Vijñapti* or "Confessions" in which he longs for the day when he will be engaged body, mind and words in activities of pure devotional service; and lastly *Śrī Nāma-mahātmyā*, or "The Glories of the Holy Name". This song describes the powerful effects of the holy names of the Lord, and how the holy name takes the devotee back to Godhead. (Note: the second section of 13 songs entitled *Bhajana-lālasā* or "Eagerness for Worship", are Bengali songs based on the Sanskrit verses of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, or *The Nectar of Instruction*).
- 1893 *Gītāvalī* (A Series of Songs)—a Bengali songbook of 73 nectarean songs which are meant to be sung regularly by devotees. Indeed, many of these songs are part of the daily devotional practice of devotees all over the world. This book begins with two *Aruṇodaya Kīrtanas*, or songs to be sung at dawn, when the first reddish tint is seen over the horizon; then there are four *āratī* songs, to be sung while worshipping the Deities on the altar; then six songs describe the devotional moods of honoring the Lord's food remnants (*prasāda*); then eight songs praise the glories of *Nagar kīrtana*, or the chanting of the Lord's holy names while in procession through a town; then eleven songs list over 100 names of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; then thirteen songs list 120 names of Lord Kṛṣṇa; five more songs describe the glories of Kṛṣṇa's many holy names;

five songs ascertain the ultimate goal of life (*Sreyo Nirṇaya*); two songs instruct the dull mind how to worship the Lord properly; eight songs are based on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Sanskrit prayer, *Nāmaṣṭaka* (Eight Prayers about the Name); eight songs praise the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (*Śrī Rādhāṣṭaka*); eight more songs are based on the eight prayers of instruction written by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu called *Śikṣāṣṭaka*; one song of intense, eager longing for the highest spiritual perfection is called *Siddha Lālasā*; and finally, there is a Sanskrit song composed by the Ṭhākura in twenty verses called *Śrī Śrī Godruma-candra Bhajanopadeśa* (Instructions for the Worship of Lord Caitanya, the Moon of Godruma).

1893 *Gītā-mālā* (A Garland of Songs)—a Bengali songbook of 80 nectarean songs arranged in five chapters: 1) *Yamunā-bhāvāvalī* describes in 27 songs the mellow ecstasies of *śanta* and *dāsyā-rāsa* as it is revealed in the famous prayer *Stotra-ratna* by Śrī Yamunācārya; 2) *Kārpaṇya-pañjikā* is a diary of humble longings for eternal service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, as revealed in a prayer from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's book *Stava-mālā*; 3) *Śoka-śātana* gives a detailed description in thirteen songs of a particular pastime of Lord Caitanya in which He revives the dead son of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura; 4) *Rūpānuga-bhajana-darpaṇa* is a scientific devotional treatise which analyzes the spiritual functioning of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The moods presented herein concisely express the Ṭhākura's realizations of the truths explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. This chapter also describes practices required to allow one entrance into the Lord's eternal pastimes; 5) *Siddha-lālasā* is a ten song description of the longing for achieving an eternal spiritual name, dress, body and specific service in the eternal realm of Goloka Vṛndāvana.

1893 *Baula-saṅgītā* (Songs of the Mad Wandering Saint)—a collection of twelve songs in Bengali verse. The Ṭhākura saw that Indian society of the day had been overrun by many different groups of pretentious so-called devotees; indeed, they used to wander around the countryside singing bogus songs and begging. They were

known as "Baula", or transcendental madmen. However, the Ṭhākura saw them as false devotees and wrote these twelve songs in order that the common people learn the difference between the false Baulas and the real Baulas. The language and dialect of these songs is just like the common street talk of the period, and the Ṭhākura even signed the songs "Canda Baula"-he assumed a Baula name just so people would accept them! These songs each describe the various forms of cheating Baulas, exposing their hypocrisy, and finally propose the correct way for following Lord Caitanya according to authorized devotional principles.

- 1893 *Dālāler Gītā* (The Song of the Broker)—a song in Bengali verse that describes how Lord Nityānanda has opened up The Marketplace of the Holy Name at Surabhi-kuñja, which was the Ṭhākura's headquarters on the island of Godruma in Navadvīpa. He says that Nityānanda is selling the Name for the price of faith, and he urges his fellow countrymen to purchase these transcendental goods.
- 1893 *Nāma-bhajana* (The Worship of the Holy Name)—a small booklet in English prose on the divine name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He thoroughly discusses the goal of Kṛṣṇa-prema as reached by pure chanting; quoting from various scriptures, he establishes the inconceivable glories of the name; analyzing the process of worshiping the holy name, he proves that the name is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa on earth; then finally, he presents the various stages of devotion that are manifest to a soul who is on his way back home to Godhead.
- 1893 *Jaiva Dharma* (The Constitutional Religion of the Soul)—a philosophical novel written in Bengali prose. Most of the book is presented as a dialogue of questions and answers between the various characters. The main character is Śrī Prema dāsa Bābājī, who is known as a *paramahansa*, or a topmost swan-like devotee of the Lord. One day the Bābājī is approached by a *sannyāsī* who is himself very well-versed in the revealed scriptures but has thus far subscribed to the impersonal conception of the absolute. The *sannyāsī* asks many questions, and the Bābājī gives the conclusive answers thereby convincing the *sannyāsī* of the superexcellence of the personal theism of the Vaiṣṇavas. Other characters are

gradually introduced into the novel, and various philosophical discussions take place. This is a very thorough work, touching on practically every major topic of devotional discussion, and the Ṭhākura has quoted profusely from scripture to support his conclusions. Complete in forty chapters, this book has been composed in the vernacular so that even persons without Sanskrit training can glean the essence of the revealed scriptures. Some topics covered extensively are, the eternal nature of the soul, the truth of bodily castes, proper conduct in domestic life, historical perspective of eternal religion, methods of the soul's release from material bondage, spontaneous devotional service, the truth of the holy name of the Lord, avoiding offenses unto the name, true name vs. semblance of name, etc. The last fifteen chapters of *Jaiiva Dharma* treat the subject of transcendental *rasa* very elaborately. Two sincere devotees named Vijaya Kumāra and Vraja-nātha approach Prema dāsa Bābājī with many questions, and together they discuss the nature of ecstatic symptoms, divine emotions, affection for the Lord in neutrality, servitude, friendship, etc. Vijaya-kumāra, who wishes to be further instructed in the conjugal mellow, is directed by Premadāsa Bābājī to Purī and the lotus feet of Guru Gosvāmī, a disciple of Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. From him he learns about Kṛṣṇa's role as the Supreme Hero, Rādhā's role as the Supreme Heroine, Rādhā's girlfriends, stimulants for ecstatic love, the Lord's pastimes conducted through eight periods of the day, varieties of enjoyments shared by the Divine Couple, etc. The book ends with a description of how the two devotees Vraja-nātha and Vijaya attain the ultimate goal of life—they take the teachings of their preceptors to heart, give up all worldly attachments and simply worship the Lord within their heart of hearts all throughout their days and nights—Vraja-nātha on the banks of the Ganges in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and Vijaya-kumāra in a secluded cottage near the Purī seashore. Following along the Lord's daily pastimes, they remain absorbed in ecstatic love for Him until they drop their mortal frames and happily return back to Godhead.

1893 *Tattva-sūtram* (Aphorisms of the Truth)—composed in fifty

- Sanskrit aphorisms divided into five chapters, the Ṭhākura gives a Sanskrit commentary on each verse, plus an elaborate Bengali commentary. The five divisions are 1) The Supreme Lord as the Absolute Truth; 2) The meaning of cit-the cognitive principle; 3) The meaning of acit-the temporary material manifestation; 4) The Relationship Between the Lord and His parts and parcels; and 5) The Concusive Truth Regarding Devotional Principles. All the conclusions presented in this book are backed up by profuse quotations from the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Nārada-pañcarātra*, and many other scriptures.
- 1894** *Vedārka-dīdhiti* (A Ray of the Sun of the Vedas)—a Sanskrit commentary on the *Īśopaniṣad* found in the *Vājasaneyya Saṁhitā* portion of the *Sukla Yajur Veda*. This commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was published along with the Sanskrit explanation of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa called *Īśopaniṣad-bhāṣyam* (An Explanation of *Īśopaniṣad*). Also included were the Sanskrit notes of the Ṭhākura's friend, Śrīyukta Śyāmalāl Gosvāmī Siddhānta Vacāspati, entitled *Īśopaniṣad Bhāṣya-rahasya-vivṛti* (The Purport of the Inner Secrets of the Explanation of *Īśopaniṣad*), plus Syāmalāl Gosvāmī's Bengali clarification of the *Īśopaniṣad* called *Siddhāntānuvāda* (Translation of the Truth).
- 1894** *Tattva-muktāvalī* (A Pearl Necklace of Truths) subtitled *Māyāvāda Sata-dūṣaṇi* (A Hundred Refutations of the Impersonalists)—119 Sanskrit verses composed by Śrīpāda Madhvācārya which refute the impersonal Advaita, Vedānta philosophy as spread all over India by Śaṅkarācārya. These verses are at times amusing, as they pierce the shroud of Māyāvādī misconceptions with amazing, common-sense logic. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had it published with his own Bengali prose translations of each verse. Śrī Madhvācārya has composed this book in such a way that anyone who reads it will never fall victim to the fallacy of the Lord's so-called impersonal nature. By citing various scriptures, by offering sensible conclusions and by employing an incredulous form of common sense, Śrī Madhvācārya positively establishes the Lord's eternal personal identity.

- 1895 *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* (The Commentary that Flows with Nectar)—a Bengali commentary on Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The Ṭhākura begins and ends this commentary with devotional Bengali lyrics, and the body of the commentary is composed in prose. At the beginning of each of the 62 chapters of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, he has included chapter summaries, and in the course of the text, he has quoted both ancient scriptures and commentaries by recent *ācāryas*.
- 1895 *Hari-bhakti-kalpa-latikā* (The Desire Creeper of Devotion to Lord Hari)—a Sanskrit work on pure devotion by an unknown author. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the Sanskrit text only. He found a manuscript of this book when he was living in Jagannātha Purī. Although the author was unknown, the Ṭhākura appreciated the pure devotional mood of the text. The book is like a creeper of devotion, and this creeper is subsequently divided into thirteen sections called "clusters". Describing the nine processes of devotional service, headed by hearing, chanting, remembering, etc., the book concludes with a detailed description of the character of a devotee who has attained transcendence by these means.
- 1895 *Ṣoḍaśa Grantha* (Sixteen Books)—a collection of sixteen small Sanskrit works written by Śrī Vallabhācārya, a prominent *ācārya* who lived during Lord Caitanya's time. Edited and published by the Ṭhākura with the original Sanskrit text only.
- 1895 *Śrī Gaurāṅga-stava-kalpataru* (A Desire-tree Prayer to Lord Gaurāṅga)—a twelve verse poem in Sanskrit from Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's book *Stavāvalī*. Edited and published by the Ṭhākura with the Sanskrit text only. This prayer describes Lord Caitanya's inconceivable ecstatic bodily transformations that were manifested in His later years at Jagannātha Purī. The author begs that the vision of these ecstatic transformations perpetually awakens in his heart.
- 1895 *Manaḥ-santoṣaṇī* (That Which Pleases The Mind)—a Bengali verse translation of a Sanskrit work called *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyodayāvalī* by Pradyumna Miśra, a relative of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The author of this translation, Śrī Jagajjīvan Miśra,

is the eighth descendant of Paramānanda Miśra, the older brother of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's father, Jagannātha Miśra. This work was edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the original text only.

- 1895 *Mukunda-mālā-stotram* (A Garland of Prayers to Lord Mukunda)—a devotional Sanskrit work from South India by one of the twelve Ālvārs, King Kulaśekhara. Edited and published by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with the Sanskrit text only. Composed in 62 verses, the prayer glorifies the Lord's transcendental position, begging for eternal menial service at His lotus feet.
- 1895 *Śrī Lakṣmī-carita* (The Life and Character of the Goddess of Fortune)—a short work in Bengali verse by Śrī Mālādhara Vasu (Guṇarāja Khān), the renowned author of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vijaya* (the first Bengali book). Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the original text only.
- 1895 *Bāla-Kṛṣṇa-sahasra-nāma* (A Thousand Names of Baby Kṛṣṇa), *Gopāla-sahasra-nāma* (A Thousand Names of Cowherd Boy Kṛṣṇa), *Kṛṣṇāṣṭottara-śata-nāma* (108 Names of Kṛṣṇa), *Rādhikā-sahasra-nāma* (A Thousand Names of Śrīmātī Rādhārāṇī)—four different *nāma-stotras* excerpted from the *Nārada Pañcarātra*. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the Sanskrit text only. He printed this nectarean little book for devotees who liked to chant these verses as a regular daily practice.
- 1895 *Śrīman Mahāprabhor Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotram* (The Auspicious Prayer for Remembrance of Lord Caitanya's Pastimes During Eight-portions-of-the-day)—an eleven verse Sanskrit poem on the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya by an unknown author. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the Sanskrit text only. This prayer is intended to facilitate the daily worship of devotees who follow Lord Caitanya's pastimes as He relishes Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes during eight periods of the day.
- 1896 *Śrī Gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotram* (The Auspicious Prayer for Remembrance of Lord Caitanya's Pastimes)—104 Sanskrit verses giving a condensed description of all the pastimes

and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that are found in Śrī *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* and Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The Ṭhākura composed this book to fulfill the requests of devotees who asked for something they could chant every day for Lord Caitanya's glorification. At the beginning of the book he included a 47 page introduction in English prose entitled *Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: His Life and Precepts*. This introduction summarizes the contents of the book's Sanskrit verses. Accompanying the Sanskrit verses is a Sanskrit commentary entitled *Vikāśinī Ṭikā* by the renowned *paṇḍita* of Navadvīpa, Mahā-mahopādhyāya Sitikaṇṭha Vācaspati. It was this book which introduced the glories of Lord Caitanya to the Western world for the first time in the auspicious year of the birth of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

- 1896 *Śrī Rāmānuja-upadeśa* (The Teachings of Rāmānuja)—Sanskrit verses explaining the philosophy of Rāmānujācārya, with Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's own Bengali translation.
- 1896 *Artha-pañcaka* (Five Meanings)—Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's explanatory notes in Bengali on Śrī Pillai Lokācārya's famous book of the same name in which five principle points of Rāmānuja's philosophy are explained at length.
- 1896 *Sva-likhita Jīvanī* (Autobiography)—This book is a 200 page Bengali prose letter which the Ṭhākura wrote to his son, Lalitā Prasad Datta, in response to a request for details of his father's personal life. Lalitā Prasad had the book published so that those who knew and loved his father could read and relish it. The Ṭhākura warned in the beginning of the letter that no one should misuse this information, a warning that was repeated in the publisher's preface. The work is an intimate revelation of the Ṭhākura's mind, covering such topics as: the time and place of his birth, early childhood remembrances, descriptions of his grandparents, the prosperity and happiness of the people of Ulā, stories of his schooldays, boyhood mischief, early religious revelations, college studies, the deaths of his father and several siblings, his studies of world religions, his lectures in Calcutta, how he began to write books, his first trip to Vṛndāvana, his enthusiasm for hearing the glories of Lord Caitanya, his studies of

the Gosvāmīs' literature in Jagannātha Purī while serving as chief magistrate there, his chastisement of false devotees, the births of his many sons and daughters, his composing of many devotional literatures in English, Sanskrit and Bengali, the shifting of his headquarters back to Calcutta and eventually to the island of Godruma in Nadiya, his preaching the glories of the holy name in public by various means, his discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace and founding of a temple there in Māyāpura, etc.

1897 *Brahma-saṁhitā*, 5th Chapter (A Collection of Verses by Lord Brahmā)—this book was discovered by Lord Caitanya on His travels in South India, and it is Lord Brahmā's personal account of his birth, his penances and his realization of the spiritual world. In the ninth chapter of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta's Madhya-līlā*, Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the following summary of the book's contents: "The *Brahma-saṁhitā* is a very important scripture. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu acquired the Fifth Chapter from the Ādi-keśava temple. In that Fifth Chapter, the philosophical conclusion of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* (simultaneous oneness and difference) is presented. The chapter also presents methods of devotional service, the eighteen-syllable Vedic hymn, discourses on the soul, the Supersoul and fruitive activity, an explanation of *kāma-gāyatrī*, *kāma-bīja* and the original MahāViṣṇu, and a specific description of the spiritual world, specifically Goloka Vṛndāvana. *Brahma-saṁhitā* also explains the demigod Gaṇeśa, the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the origin of the Gāyatrī *mantra*, the form of Govinda and His transcendental position and abode, the living entities, the highest goal, the goddess Durgā, the meaning of austerity, the five gross elements, love of Godhead, impersonal Brahman, the initiation of Lord Brahmā, and the vision of transcendental love enabling one to see the Lord. The steps of devotional service are also explained. The mind, *yoga-nidrā*, the goddess of fortune, devotional service in spontaneous ecstasy, incarnations beginning with Lord Rāmacandra, Deities, the conditioned soul and its duties, the truth about Lord Viṣṇu, prayers, Vedic hymns, Lord Śiva, Vedic literature, personalism and impersonalism, good behavior and many other subjects are also

discussed. There is also a description of the sun and the universal forms of the Lord. All these subjects are conclusively explained in a nutshell in this *Brahma-saṁhitā*." Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the original Sanskrit verses, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary and the Ṭhākura's own Bengali introduction, Bengali prose translations and Bengali commentary called *Prakāśinī* (That Which Illuminates).

1898 *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* (Nectar for the Ears of Śrī Kṛṣṇa)—a famous Sanskrit book of nectarean prayers and revelations on Kṛṣṇa's conjugal pastimes written by Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura (Līlāśuka). Published and edited by the Ṭhākura with the original Sanskrit verses, the Sanskrit commentary by Caitanya dāsa Gosvāmī (the older brother of Kavi Karṇapura) called *Bāla-bodhinī Ṭikā* and the Ṭhākura's own introduction, final summary and Bengali prose translations of the verses. In the ninth chapter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta's Madhya-līlā*, Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: "This book was composed by Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura in 112 verses. There are two or three other books bearing the same name, and there are also two commentaries on Bilvamaṅgala's book. One commentary was written by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and the other by Caitanya dāsa Gosvāmī." In the verses of the section quoted, Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī has written in verses 305-309: "The *brāhmaṇa* community there was composed of pure devotees, who regularly studied a book entitled *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, which was composed by Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very pleased to hear the book *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, and with great eagerness He had it copied and took it with Him. There is no comparison to *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* in the three worlds. By studying this book, one is elevated to the knowledge of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. One who constantly reads *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* can fully understand the beauty and melodious taste of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* and *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* were two books that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu considered to be most valuable jewels. Therefore He took them with Him on His return trip."

1898 *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti* (The Explanation That Showers Ambrosia)—

- Bengali commentary on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Upadeśāmṛta* (The Nectar of Instruction). The Ṭhākura published this book with Rūpa Gosvāmī's original eleven Sanskrit verses accompanied by his own Bengali prose explanations.
- 1898 *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (The Song of God)—edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the Sanskrit commentary *Dvaita-bhāṣyam* (Explanation According to Dvaitavāda) by Śrīpāda Madhvācārya.
- 1898 *Śrī-Goloka-mahātmyam* (The Glories of Goloka Vṛndāvana)—the second canto of Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-bhagavatāmṛta* edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with the original Sanskrit text and his own Bengali translations of the verses. This book describes in seven chapters the travels of a devotee named Śrī Gopa-kumāra. In searching for the supreme truth this devotee is led on an incredible journey throughout all the higher planetary systems of the material universe as well as those of the spiritual world. The various Deities of Vaikuṅṭha successively direct him higher and higher until he finally reaches Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's abode in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the topmost spiritual planet, where he sports in ecstasy with Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys.
- 1899 *The Hindu Idols*—a thirty-two page English letter written to the Tract Society of Calcutta. Apparently they had published an article in their periodical entitled "Professor Max Muller on Durgā", in which Kali, Durgā and Śiva were slandered from the Christian viewpoint. Thus, the Ṭhākura wrote this exhaustive response, quoting from the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* on the true identity of the personalities in question. He concludes by assuming the proper Christian attitude of universal love, which is devoid of sectarian dogmatism and humbly begs the gentlemen of the Tract Society to give up their philosophical inconsistencies.
- 1899 *Śrī Bhajanāmṛta* (The Nectar of Worship)—a treatise on pure devotion to the Supreme Lord in Sanskrit prose by Śrīla Narahari Sarakara Ṭhākura, a contemporary and intimate associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with his own Bengali translation.
- 1899 *Śrī Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga* (A Wave of the Ecstatic Moods of

Navadvīpa)—168 Bengali verses describing the different transcendental places in the 32 square mile area of Navadvīpa as seen through the perfected devotional eyes of a God-realized soul. In this book Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda does not see the land of Navadvīpa as a mundane historical place but rather as the *īśodyāna* (transcendental garden) of Lord Caitanya. The Ṭhākura describes various pastimes that Lord Caitanya enjoys on different islands at different times of the day in the transcendental realm. At the conclusion of this divine vision, he falls unconscious and attains the *samādhi* of full realization of his own eternal form as a *gopī*. Some of Śrīmātī Rādhārāṇī's personal maidservants take him by the hand and engage him in eternal personal service to the Divine Couple. Returning to consciousness he remains absorbed as the servant of the servant of Lord Caitanya.

1900 *Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi* (The Touchstone of the Name of Hari)—divided into fifteen chapters and composed in Bengali verse form, this book is an account of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's teachings on the holy name. It is actually a conversation between Lord Caitanya and Haridāsa Ṭhākura—the Lord asks questions about the glories of the holy name, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura gives extensive answers. The first three chapters describe the inconceivable glories of the holy name, acceptance of the holy name, and chanting the holy name free of impersonalist misconceptions. The fourth through thirteenth chapters elaborate on the ten offenses against pure chanting, and the last two chapters describe 32 offenses to be avoided in the execution of pure devotional service, as well as a nectarean discussion on the process of practicing such devotion culminating in self-realization in pure ecstatic love of Godhead.

1901 *Śrīmad Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā* (A Garland of Rays of the Bhāgavata Sun)—in this book Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has taken all of the principal verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and arranged them in twenty chapters, called "rays". The Sanskrit verses are accompanied by Bengali prose translations and explanations by the Ṭhākura. The *Bhāgavatam* is compared to the brilliant sun, and therefore each particular chapter, or ray of *Bhāgavata*

- sunlight, expounds upon an aspect of *Bhāgavata* philosophy in three major divisions: *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*.
- 1901 *Padma Purāṇa*—edited and published by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with the 55,000 verse Sanskrit text only. At the time, there were many conflicting manuscripts of the *Padma Purāṇa* available in the libraries, and many were incomplete. The Ṭhākura then did extensive research to compile one truly complete manuscript of this huge, ancient scripture. This became the definitive edition for scholars and devotees alike.
- 1901 *San̄kalpa-kalpadruma* (The Desire-tree of Solemn Vows)—a book of Sanskrit verses on the divine pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with his own Bengali prose translations. These 104 verses are the prayer of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself, begging for eternal service as Her humble maidservant. In the course of this prayer, the author describes the ecstatic daily pastimes of the Divine Couple, and in this description he appeals to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī for the benediction of specific personal services. Expressing determined resolutions for attaining this service, he finally appeals to other personal maidservants, inhabitants and features of Vṛndāvana, and even his own mind, asking all for the fulfillment of his desires.
- 1902 *Bhajana-rahasya* (Secrets of Divine Worship)—compiled by the Ṭhākura as a supplement to his *Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi*, this *Bhajana-rahasya* is arranged in eight chapters and the chanting of each chapter is to be observed in correspondence with each three hour period of the twenty-four hour day. Each chapter corresponds to one verse of Śrī Caitanya's *Śikṣāṣṭakam* and deals with one of the eight steps in the gradual development of Kṛṣṇa-bhajana, as it was enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. All the chapters are filled with scriptural citations in Sanskrit, uniquely explaining the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa-bhajana and its practice. Each Sanskrit verse is accompanied by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's own Bengali translation in both prose and verse.
- 1904 *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* (Lamplight on the Essence of Rituals to be

- Performed by Devotees) with the appendix *Samskāra-dīpikā* (Illuminations on Purificatory Ceremonies)-a Sanskrit work extracted from *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī on the philosophy and ritualistic practice of Vedic *samskāra* ceremonies (rites of purification) for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava householders. It also contains the ritualistic codes and institutes for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava mendicants. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda with his own Bengali prose translation.
- 1906 *Prema-vivarta* (An Error of Love)—a book by Jagadānanda Paṇḍita in Bengali verse on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy of divine love and the holy name. Edited and published by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, this book describes the unique flavor of apparently contrary love that was shared between Lord Caitanya and his devotee Jagadānanda Paṇḍita. Also treated are many other subjects such as the glories of the Lord's devotees, different types of engagements of different types of devotees, and an exposition on the secret mysteries of the holy name.
- 1907 *Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam* (Twelve Verses of Self-Imposed Vows)—this is the last literary work of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura before he shut himself up in his beach-front cottage at Jagannātha Purī. There he worshiped the Lord whole-heartedly, keeping in mind the regulative principles he outlined for himself in this *Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam*. This prayer follows the mood of a prayer by Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī entitled *Sva-niyama-daśakam* (Ten Verses of Self-imposed Vows), and is similarly meant to be chanted and meditated on as a regular daily function. Some topics treated by the Ṭhākura are his objects of devotion birth after birth, rejection of things unfavorable for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's eternal service, acceptance of favorable practices and devotional qualities, how to live simply and perform *Vraja-bhajana*, repulsion by things that are disconnected from Śrī Rādhikā, the avoidance of so-called devotees who proudly neglect Śrī Rādhikā, the worship of the lotus feet of Her pure devotee, and finally-firm determination to transcend *māyā* by reading this prayer every day. The prayer ends with a thirteenth verse which assures the reader of attaining the eternal benediction of eternal service to the

Divine Couple as a result of reading or reciting this offering. Although the Sanskrit verses and Bengali prose translations were completed by the Ṭhākura, he never finished a Bengali prose commentary on his last work, these *Twelve Verses of Self-imposed Vows*

The following works of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura do not have specific dates of publication:

Navadvīpa-śatakam (A Hundred Verses Glorifying the Land of Navadvīpa)—this is a book composed by Śrīla Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatī, one of Lord Caitanya's direct disciples. The work describes the land of Navadvīpa, which is the sporting ground of Lord Caitanya, in all of its majestic splendor and glory. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda translated this book into Bengali verses for easy reading by simple devotees and published it in a small pocket-sized booklet so that it could be carried around even by wandering *sādhus*. This little volume was thus much appreciated by many persons. In this book, Śrīla Sarasvatīpāda elaborates on the *svarūpa* (or spiritual form) of the Lord's abode, the Lord's mood as He sports therein, the mood of a devotee who is desirous of entering this abode, the rejection of unfavorable material obstacles, and a strongly resolute determination to attain the supreme goal.

Daśa-mūlā-niryāsa (The Extract of the Ten Principles)—a Bengali prose essay which explains a single Sanskrit verse composed by the Ṭhākura. This verse summarizes Lord Caitanya's philosophy as having ten root principles. The Ṭhākura elaborately explains each principle.

Śrī Viṣṇu Priyā O Ānanda Bazar Patrikā—a monthly Vaiṣṇava journal in Bengali edited by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and published by his friend Sisir Kumar Ghosh. This periodical was very popular in the Vaiṣṇava community because it contained many nectarean extracts from the scriptures, plus informative articles written by the Ṭhākura and his devotional associates.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa-carita—a biography of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa written by the Ṭhākura in Bengali prose.

Vedānta-sūtra—this classic Vedic philosophy book written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva was published by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's friend, Śrī Śyāmalāl Gosvāmī, along with the *Govinda-bhāṣya* of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and the explanatory notes of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

This is not a complete list of the literary works of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; it is merely a partial list of the most outstanding and influential publications. This list was compiled by Daśaratha-suta dāsa.

Glossary

A

Ācārya-realized spiritual teacher who imparts the precepts of the Vedic scriptures through word and deed, and who teaches his disciples how to conduct themselves according to those precepts. *Ācārya* may also refer to any sort of teacher. When the word is applied to a *sampradāya*, however, then the term *sampradāya-ācārya* takes on special significance. This refers to a fully self-realized person who has founded a *sampradāya* and whose teachings are most prominent in that line.

ārati-a ceremony in which one worships the Deity (the Icon) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by offering Him incense, a lamp with ghee-soaked wicks and a lamp containing camphor, water in a conchshell, a fine cloth and a peacock-feather and yak-tail wisk.

āśrama-a residence where spiritual activities are cultivated, or a particular order of society in which spiritual realization is the goal.

Atibārī-sampradāya-bogus disciplic succession coming from an Orissan named Jagannātha dāsa, who was a contemporary of Lord Caitanya. Initially, he was a follower of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but he later rejected him.

B

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa-Born in the 18th century in the Baleswar district of Orissa, he was initially a learned scholar of the Madhva-sampradāya. He was converted to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and became the ardent follower of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. He is especially renowned for his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* called *Govinda-bhāṣya*.

Ballal Sen-King of Bengal in the 12th century. He was the son of King Vijaya Sen, the founder of Navadvīpa. Ballal Sen's son was Laksman Sen, the sponsor of Jayadeva Gosvāmī, the author of *Gītā-govinda*. *Bhagavad-gītā*-a seven-hundred verse record of a conversation between Lord Kṛṣṇa and His disciple, Arjuna, from the *Bhīṣma Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* of Veda Vyāsa. The conversation took place between two armies minutes before the start of an immense fratricidal battle. Kṛṣṇa teaches the science of the Absolute Truth to the despondent Arjuna, and it contains the essence of all Vedic wisdom.

bhajana-this term generally to indicates the service and worship of the Supreme Lord executed by Vaiṣṇavas from the neophytes up to those who are fully God-realized. The main form that this service takes is the hearing and chanting of the holy name. Otherwise, the term refers to the singing of devotional songs about Kṛṣṇa, usually accompanied by musical instruments.

Bhajana-kutira-a small hut or cottage where a Vaiṣṇava performs his *bhajana*.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-one of the principal works on the science of *bhakti-yoga*, written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, a confidential associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. All of its conclusions are elaborately supported by reference to the Vedic literatures.

Bhuvaneswar-a holy place in the district of Purī, Orissa, that is sacred to Lord Śiva and that was visited by Lord Caitanya. It is glorified in detail in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

Birnagar-a town just south of Krishnanagar in the West Bengal district of Nadia. In ancient times the Ganges flowed past this town making it a prosperous river port. Once, the prince Srimanta Sandagar was sailing his fleet of ships up the Ganges to Birnagar and a violent storm arose. To save himself and his fleet, he prayed to Ulācaṇḍī, a wife of Lord Śiva. The fleet was saved, and the prince instituted her worship at this site. The town of Birnagar was thus also known as Ulā-grāma, the birthplace

of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda.

brahmacārī-in the Vedic social order, the student class who strictly accept the vow of celibacy, in the case of *brāhmaṇas*, up to the age of 25, at which time they may marry or continue the life of celibacy.

brāhmaṇa-the head of the Vedic social body, one who acted as a priest, teacher, intellectual or political advisor. They were expected to be knowers of Brahman or the Absolute Truth.

Brahman-a word frequently used in the *Upaniṣads* to denote the Supreme Spirit (God), the tiny individual spirit soul or the all-pervading impersonal effulgence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

C

Candana-yātrā-a twenty-one day festival held throughout India in the summer season. During Candana-yātrā devotees anoint the Deities of the Lord with cooling sandalwood paste.

Carlyle, Thomas (1795-1881)-a Scottish historian and social critic who was an important philosophical moralist of the early Victorian age. He was opposed to empiricism, mechanism and materialism.

Channing, William Ellery (1780-1842)-an American theologian, founder of the Unitarian movement in New England. He believed in both rationality and mysticism. He concluded that in order for man to have a relationship with God He must be a person.

chapati-a small, round unleavened bread made from whole wheat flour that is a staple throughout North India.

D

darśana-a verbal noun meaning the act of beholding or seeing. It also translates as 'audience'. When one goes to the temple of the Lord to have His audience and to behold Him, one is said to "have the Lord's *darśana*". Another meaning of *darśana* is "philosophy".

dhōti-a long cotton cloth, traditionally worn by Indian men, that covers the lower half of the body.

dharmasala-buildings usually found in holy places in India which provide free or cheap rooming for pilgrims and mendicants.

Durgā-the goddess empowered by the Supreme Lord to preside over the material nature and bewilder the souls situated there into misconceiving

themselves to be their material bodies and enjoyers and controllers of the mundane creation. She is very powerful, superceded only by Lord Viṣṇu Himself, and is the external manifestation of the Lord's internal potency, Yoga-māyā. Once a fallen soul takes to the path of God consciousness, she continues to offer various material allurements so as to test his sincerity and determination to serve the Lord. Once the Lord accepts the struggling soul she can no longer influence that soul and it is thus liberated.

dvaitādvaita-vada-the *Vedānta* philosophy taught by Nimbarkācārya. This philosophy posits a simultaneous oneness and difference between the tiny spirit souls and the Supreme Lord. Later, Lord Caitanya gave further development to this idea as *acintya-bhedābheda-vāda*.

E

Ekādaśī-the eleventh lunar days after the new moon day and the full moon day of the lunar month. Directly presided over by Lord Hari, Ekādaśī is a holy fast day for Vaiṣṇavas.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1882)-an American poet, lecturer and essayist who was the leading member of the Transcendentalists, a group of New England idealists. His view was an eclectic one, and he was much influenced by his studies of Vedic thought.

G

Gauḍīya Math-a Vaiṣṇava institution, originally with 64 temples in India and elsewhere, founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for propagating the sacred teachings of Lord Caitanya throughout India and the world. It was first established in 1918 as the Śrī Bhaktivinoda Āsana. In 1919 he re-established it as the Viśva-vaiṣṇava-rāja-sabhā, an institution originally established by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and re-instituted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The organization ultimately came to be known as the Gauḍīya Math. Its influence waned after the passing of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-specifically, a Vaiṣṇava born in Bengal, or, more generally, any Vaiṣṇava who follows the pure teachings of Lord Caitanya.

Gayā-a famous holy place on the bank of the Phalgu River in the state of

Bihar, where many pilgrims go to offer worship on behalf of their forefathers. The imprint of the lotus feet of the Lord are enshrined there, and it was there that Lord Caitanya met and was initiated by Īśvara Purī.

Gāyatrī mantra-a particular type of Sanskrit *mantra* composed in the Vedic meter known as *gāyatrī*. *Brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* chant these *mantras* at sunrise, noon and sunset to attain the transcendental platform.

Giridhārī (Govardhana)-śilā-stones from Govardhana Hill in Vṛndāvana. Worship of these stones was inaugurated by Lord Caitanya and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. On the basis of statements from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Lord Caitanya established the non-difference of Govardhana Hill and Kṛṣṇa. By such worship Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī got the direct *darśana* of the Lord.

Goldsmith, Oliver (1730-1774)-an Anglo-Irish author who was famed as an essayist, poet, novelist, playwright, biographer and historian. One of his major poems is "The Deserted Village".

Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī-one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, born at the beginning of the 16th century near Śrī Rangam in South India. He met Lord Caitanya as a child when the Lord stayed with his father, Vyenkata Bhaṭṭa, during the four-month rainy season. On the order of Lord Caitanya he journeyed to Vṛndāvana to join the other Gosvāmīs. While on pilgrimage he obtained twelve *śālagrāma-śilās*. Later, a Dāmodara *śilā* manifested Himself as the beautiful Rādhā-ramaṇa Deity, Who is worshiped to this day with great *eclat*. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa assisted Sanātana Gosvāmī in his writing.

gopīs-the cowherd girls of Vraja, who are generally the counterparts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *hlādinī-śakti*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. They assist Her as maidservants in her conjugal pastimes with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

H

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa-the ritual and devotional practices of the Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya, codified into twenty chapters by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. The work represents extensive scriptural research and includes a Sanskrit commentary

written by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī called *Dig-darśiṇī Ṭikā*.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura-although born in a Muslim family, he was a confidential associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He was so absorbed in the nectar of the Holy Name that he chanted day and night, and it was his regular practice to chant 300,000 names of the Lord daily. The Muslim government and caste-conscious Hindus attempted to persecute him, but all of their efforts failed, as he was under the direct protection of the Lord.

J

Jagannātha-a particular Deity form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, seemingly fashioned from wood and brightly painted, which has been worshipped for many centuries in Jagannātha Purī. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu used to daily visit Lord Jagannātha and see Him in a mood of intense separation, in the mood of Rādhārāṇī, who was parted from her beloved Kṛṣṇa most of her days.

Janmāṣṭami-the eighth lunar day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhadra (August-September). It is the day that Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in Mathurā.

Jīva Gosvāmī-one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana and the nephew of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. His father, Anupama, died when the boy was very young. He grew up absorbed in the worship of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Lord Caitanya instructed him in a dream to proceed to Navadvīpa, and there he toured that sacred place in the association of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. He then went to Benares to study Sanskrit, and from there to Vṛndāvana to be under the shelter of his uncles. He became a disciple of Rūpa Gosvāmī and wrote eighteen major works on Vaiṣṇava philosophy, comprising more than 400,000 verses. He is considered by many philosophers and Sanskritists to be the greatest scholar who ever lived.

K

Kali-the fourth age in the cosmic cycle of four ages. The age of Kali is symptomized by great moral degradation and irreligion. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the age is personified as an evil black man who tries to kill a helpless cow and bull. The four legs of the cow represent the four

principles of religiosity-namely, truth, cleanliness, mercy and austerity. The bull represents religion itself.

Kāśī-the Purāṇic name of the modern city of Benares in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is a holy place especially for the followers of Lord Śiva and is a center of learning. This was the site of Lord Caitanya's famous conversion of the leading impersonalist scholar of the day, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī.

Khetari-birthplace and residence of the great Vaiṣṇava Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and site of a magnificent festival and Deity installation in which thousands of devotees took part, located in the West Bengal district of Rajasahi.

kīrtana-narrating or singing the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His Holy Names.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī-author of the immortal *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, considered the greatest work on the life and philosophy of Lord Caitanya. He composed it in his nineties, despite bodily infirmity. This book is especially revered by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. He was ordered by Lord Nityānanda in a dream to go to Vmdāvana where he studied the Gosvāmī literature under the direction of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

Krishnanagar-a town that is the government headquarters of a sub-division of the West Bengal district of Nadia. It is about ten miles east of Śrī Māyāpura.

L

Laksman Sen-King of Bengal in the 12th century. His grandfather, Vijaya Sen, founded the city of Navadvīpa in 1063 on the eastern bank of the Ganges. Laksman Sen was crowned king in 1178, and he made Navadvīpa his capital. The ruins of his kingdom can still be found in the villages of Bamanpukur and Māyāpura. He was a great patron of learning and sponsored the famous Jayadeva Gosvāmī, author of *Gītā-govinda*.

Lakṣmī-the goddess of fortune and the eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who resides in the unlimited spiritual realm of Vaikuṅṭha.

M

Madhvācārya-the founder of the *dvaita* school of *Vedānta* philosophy. He wrote a number of works which refuted the impersonal philosophy of

Śaṅkarācārya. He appeared in the 13th century in Uḍipī, in South India. He took *sannyāsa* at the age of twelve, traveled all over India and had the personal *darśana* of Śrīla Vyāsadeva in the Himalayan abode of Badarikāśrama and presented his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* before that venerable sage. He also received a *śālagrāma-śilā* called Aṣṭamūrti from Vyāsa. He was very powerful both physically and intellectually, and was considered to be an incarnation of Vāyu, the wind god.

Mahābhārata-an ancient, Sanskrit, epic history composed by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, the literary incarnation of Godhead, in 100,000 verses. The essence of all Vedic philosophy, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is a part of this great work. *Mahābhārata* is a history of the earth from its creation to the great war fought between the Kuru and Pāṇḍava factions of the Kaurava dynasty, which took place about five thousand years ago. The battle was waged to determine who would be the emperor of the world: the saintly Yudhiṣṭhīra, a Vaiṣṇava king, or the evil-minded Duryodhana, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

mahā-mantra-Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare is the great *mantra* composed of the principal names of Godhead in their vocative forms. This *mahā-mantra* is found in the *Purāṇas* and *Upaniṣads* and is specifically recommended for chanting in this age of Kali as the only means of God realization. Lord Caitanya personally designated it as the *mahā-mantra* and practically demonstrated the effects of the chanting. **math**-(pronounced mutt) a monastery or temple where Deities are installed and worshipped and where festivals are observed. The residence of a number of holy persons.

Mathurā-the sacred city where Lord Kṛṣṇa displayed His pastimes after leaving Vṛndāvana. It is also the name of the district where Vraja (Vṛndāvana) is located.

māyāvādi-one who propounds the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya, which basically holds that God is featureless and impersonal, that devotion to a personal Godhead is false, the material creation of the Lord is also false, and the ultimate goal of life is to become existentially one with the all-pervading, impersonal Absolute.

N

Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura-a renowned Vaiṣṇava saint who is famous for his composition of devotional songs. He appeared in the 16th century in Khetari, in the West Bengal district of Rajasahi, just north of Nadia. He was devoted to Lord Caitanya from birth. His father was a king and dedicated to Lord Nityānanda. Narottama went to Vṛndāvana and became the initiated disciple of Lokanātha Gosvāmī. He studied under Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and preached widely throughout India, making many thousands of disciples.

nāma-saṅkīrtana-congregational singing of the Holy Names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, usually accompanied by hand cymbals (kartāls) and clay *mṛdaṅga* drums. Lord Caitanya and the Vedic literatures recommend this *saṅkīrtana* as the most effective means of God-realization in the present age of Kali.

Navadvīpa-the topmost holy place, ninety miles north of Calcutta. In the 15th and 16th centuries the city became the greatest center of Sanskrit learning in all of India. Lord Caitanya, the *yuga-avatāra*, appeared there in the late 15th century and propagated the chanting of the Holy Names all over India. His appearance made Navadvīpa the crest jewel of all holy places in the present age.

Newman, John Henry (1801-1890)-an English cardinal who became one of the most outstanding European religious thinkers and essayists of the 19th century. He spent his life defending Christian truth against various forms of so-called rationalism.

nyāya-śāstra-the Sanskrit literary works, written by the ancient ṛṣi Gautama Muni and his followers, that teach the philosophical science of logic. *Nyāya* (or dialectics) was founded by Gautama and is one of the six major schools of Indian philosophy.

P

paṇḍita-a scholar learned in Vedic literature, not only academically but also by dint of spiritual realization. Though this is the proper definition of the word, the term is also loosely applied to any scholar.

paramahansa bābājī-one who is on the highest platform of spiritual asceticism and who has given up all social and caste designations. The only designation maintained by him is that of being a tiny servant of the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Prayāga (modern Allahabad)-a very sacred place, mentioned in the *Purāṇas*, situated at the confluence of the holy Ganges, Yamunā and Sarasvatī Rivers. Every year thousands of pilgrims come to bathe in the holy waters. It was here that Lord Caitanya instructed Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī for ten days.

Pretsila Hill-a hill about 540 feet high, located five miles northwest of Gayā in the state of Bihar. Pilgrims perform the *śraddha* ceremony there. A long flight of steps which leads to the summit and temple was constructed in 1774 by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's ancestor Madan Mohan Dutt.

Purāṇas (histories)-ancient Sanskrit religious texts compiled about five thousand years ago in India by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the literary incarnation of Godhead. There are eighteen principal *Purāṇas*, and they each discuss ten primary subject matters: 1) the primary creation, 2) the secondary creation, 3) the planetary systems, 4) protection and maintenance by the *avatāras*, 5) the Manus, 6) dynasties of great kings, 7) noble character and activities of great kings, 8) dissolution of the universe and liberation of the living entity, 9) the *jīva* (the spirit soul), 10) the Supreme Lord.

R

Rādhā-kuṇḍa-a sacred pond near Govardhana Hill in Vraja that was created by Rādhārāṇī and her *gopī* companions. It is supreme among all the holy places in Vraja and the most exalted holy place for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. The eight major Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava temples of Vṛndāvana also exist at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, as well as the *bhajana-kutiras* of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. This is the site of the most intimate loving affairs of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and the waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are considered non-different from Rādhā and productive of love of Godhead.

Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī-one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. He appeared in 1506 as the son of Tapana Miśra. He first met Lord Caitanya in Benares when the Lord stayed at his father's home for two months. He rendered direct service to the Lord and received His mercy. After the demise of his parents, he went to Purī and associated with the Lord, cooking for Him and taking His remnants. He was especially well-known for his sweetly singing the *Bhāgavatam* to different tunes, his super-

excellent cooking and his never hearing, or speaking about, either worldly topics or criticism of Vaiṣṇavas. On the order of the Lord, he proceeded to Vṛndāvana and associated there with the other Gosvāmīs. He did not write books. His disciples assisted with the construction of the Govindajī Temple for Rūpa Gosvāmī's Deity. He disappeared in 1580 at the age of seventy-four.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī-one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. He appeared in 1495. He was the son of the fabulously wealthy Govardhana Majumdāra, the younger brother of the then Zamindar Hiraṇya Majumdāra in the village of Krishnapura in West Bengal. His forefathers were Vaiṣṇavas, and when he was a boy he got the association and blessings of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. He was mad with the desire to join Lord Caitanya in Jagannātha Purī, but every time he ran away from home his parents would have him captured and brought back. Finally, he was successful. He received the mercy of Lord Caitanya and served for many years as the assistant of Svarūpa Dāmodara. He was thus known as the Raghu of Svarūpa. Later, he was sent to Vṛndāvana and lived in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, performing severe austerities. In his later years he subsisted on just a few drops of buttermilk each day. He wrote important texts on devotion, his only concern being the chanting of the Holy Name. He ascended in 1571 at the age of 76.

Rāmacandra-the eighteenth incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the killer of the ten-headed demon king, Rāvaṇa. Rāma was exiled to the forest on the order of His father. His wife Sītā was kidnapped by Rāvaṇa, but by employing a huge army of monkeys, who were the powerful and intelligent offspring of demigods, He regained his wife in battle, and eventually His ancestral kingdom too. This great epic is recounted in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Rana Ghat-a town in the West Bengal district of Nadia, just south of Navadvīpa on the railway to Calcutta. Rana Ghat is the government headquarters of the Rana Ghat subdivision of the Nadia district. It covers an area of about two-and-a-half square miles. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's family lived here at different times.

Ratha-yātrā-literally "the journey of the chariots", a traditional Vaiṣṇava festival held every year at Jagannātha Purī in Orissa. In Purī the devotees place the immense Deity forms of Jagannātha, Baladeva and

Subhadrā on three towering cars, each having sixteen wheels. Thousands of people pull these cars to the Guṇḍica temple, where Lord Jagannātha abides for seven days, after which there is a return Ratha-yātrā to the Jagannātha Temple. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates gathered every year to observe this celebration with a massive festival of *saṅkīrtana*. This great celebration of Ratha-yātrā is now being held all over the world by the arrangement of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Rūpa Gosvāmī—one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. He extensively researched the scriptures and established the philosophy taught by Lord Caitanya on an unshakable foundation. Thus, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are known as Rūpānugas, followers of Rūpa Gosvāmī. He is also known as the *rasācārya*, or the teacher of devotional mellows, as exemplified by his book, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. It is the duty and the aspiration of every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava to become his servant and follow his path. *samādhi*—total absorption of the mind and senses in thoughts of the Supreme Godhead and service to Him. The word *samādhi* also refers to the tomb where a great soul's body is laid after his departure from this world.

S

Sanātana Gosvāmī—one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. He was the older brother of Rūpa Gosvāmī and was accepted by Rūpa Gosvāmī as his spiritual master. He and Rūpa Gosvāmī were both ministers in the Mohammedan court in Gauḍa, but renounced everything for the service of Lord Caitanya. The two brothers were ordered by Śrī Caitanya to write books establishing the philosophy of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and to excavate the

holy places in Vṛndāvana.

Śaṅkara—an incarnation of Lord Śiva who appeared in South India at the end of the 7th century A.D. to re-establish the authority of the Vedic scriptures. He did this at a time when India was under the sway of Buddhism, whose tenets deny the authority of the *Vedas*. He took *sannyāsa* at a very tender age and wrote commentaries establishing an impersonal philosophy similar to Buddhism, substituting Brahman (Spirit) for the void. He traveled all over India defeating the great

scholars of the day and converting them to his doctrine of Māyāvāda, the *advaita* interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta*. He left the world at the age of 33.

sannyāsa-the fourth stage of life in the Vedic system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. It is the order of ascetics who travel and constantly preach the message of Godhead for the benefit of all. The *sannyāsī* has no other purpose in life but to serve and please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and he acts as the *guru* for the other divisions of society.

Santipur-a village in the Rana Ghat subdivision of the West Bengal district of Nadia. It is famous as the home of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, the associate of Lord Caitanya and incarnation of Mahā-Viṣṇu. It is close to Māyāpura.

śāstra-the revealed scriptures, obeyed by all those who follow the Vedic teachings. *Śās* means "to regulate and direct" and *tra* means "an instrument".

Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā-six Sanskrit works on Vaiṣṇava philosophy by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. These works present the entire philosophy and theology of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in a systematic form. The six *Sandarbhās* are as follows: *Tattva-sandarbhā*, *Bhāgavata-sandarbhā*, *Paramātmā-sandarbhā*, *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā*, *Bhakti-sandarbhā* and *Prīti-sandarbhā*. The *Prīti-sandarbhā* is also called *Bhāgavata-sandarbhā*, as it is an exposition on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The first four *Sandarbhās* are devoted to *sambandha-tattva*, which establishes Kṛṣṇa as the highest Deity and the most exclusive object of worship. The *Bhakti-sandarbhā* deals with *abhidheya-tattva*, which is *bhakti* (devotion to Kṛṣṇa), and the *Prīti-sandarbhā* is concerned with *prajoyana-tattva*, pure love of Godhead.

Śiva-the *guṇa-avatāra* who is the superintendent of the mode of ignorance and who takes charge of destroying the universe at the time of annihilation. He is confused by some with the Supreme Lord.

Six Gosvāmīs-see Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.

smārta-the popular name for followers of the *Vedas* who are overly attached to elevation and salvation. They are very careful about the letter, but often not the spirit, of scriptural injunctions, confounding the mundane with the spiritual. They are very fond of the *smṛti-śāstras* and

are thus known as *smārtas*.

Śrīdhara Svāmī-the original commentator on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Though a resident of Benares and a *sannyāsī* of Śaṅkara's Māyāvāda school of philosophy, he taught pure Vaiṣṇava philosophy. He was a devotee of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, and his works were highly regarded by Lord Caitanya, especially his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gloss, *Bhavartha-dīpikā*. The Lord commented that anyone who wanted to write a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* must follow the commentary of Śrīdhara Svāmī.

Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura-was the incarnation of Śrī Nārada Muni in Lord Caitanya's pastimes. His courtyard served as the birthplace of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement, and his altar was the site of the *mahā-prakāśa* pastime (twenty-one hours of ecstatic manifestation) of Śrī Caitanya.

Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī-the incarnation of the *gopī* Viśakhā. He served as the secretary and intimate associate of Lord Caitanya at Purī and used to ease the pain of the Lord's feelings of separation by reciting appropriate verses and singing devotional songs.

Śyāmānanda Gosvāmī (1535-1631)-one of the great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* who lived in Vṛndāvana after the time of Śrī Caitanya. He received the direct mercy of Rādhārāṇī in Vṛndāvana, was tutored in the *Bhakti-śāstras* by Jīva Gosvāmī and delivered countless souls, especially in Orissa. He was initiated by Hṛdāya Caitanya dāsa and got the name Duhkhi Kṛṣṇadāsa, but later he was called Śyāmānanda by Jīva Gosvāmī, who noted his attraction for the Deity Śyāmasundara.

T

Theodore Parker (1810-1860)-an American Unitarian clergyman and social reformer who promoted the anti-slavery cause.

Ṭoṭa Gopinātha Temple-a temple in Jagannātha Purī housing a Deity which was found by Lord Caitanya and given to Gadādhara Prabhu to worship. He also gave Gadādhara a place to live in the garden of Yameśvara, where the temple was later built. Gadādhara Prabhu stayed there for the duration of his life, absorbing himself in the service of Lord Caitanya and Gopinātha.

Tripura-a large district on the far eastern side of Bengal, just south of

the Śrī Haṭṭa (Sylhet) area of Assam. In olden times Tripura was part of Bengal. The kings of Tripura had a long-standing relationship with Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda and later with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

U

United Provinces of Agra and Oudh-the present Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

Upaniṣads-one-hundred and eight Sanskrit treatises that embody the philosophy of the *Vedas*. Considered the crest jewels of the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads* are found in the *Aranyaka* and *Brāhmaṇa* portions of the *Vedas*. They are theistic and contain the realizations and teachings of great sages of antiquity.

V

Vaikuṅṭha-literally, "place of no anxiety", i.e. the kingdom of God. Beyond the material universes are spiritual planets where Lord Nārāyaṇa, the expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, resides in unimaginable spiritual majesty. These planets are called Vaikuṅṭha planets.

Vaiṣṇava-a servant of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, or any of Kṛṣṇa's many expansions.

Vedas-the four *Samhitās* (*R̥g*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*) and the 108 *Upaniṣads*. The word *veda* literally means "knowledge", and thus in a wider sense it refers to the whole body of Indian Sanskrit religious literature that is in harmony with the philosophical conclusions found in the original four Vedic *Samhitās* and *Upaniṣads*. The message of the transcendental realm that has come down to this phenomenal world through the medium of sound is known as the *Veda*. Being the very words of Godhead Himself, the *Vedas* have existed from eternity. Lord Kṛṣṇa originally revealed the *Vedas* to Brahmā, the first soul to appear in the realm of physical nature, and by him they were subsequently made available to other souls through the channel of spiritual disciplic succession.

Vedānta-sūtra-a book of codes, or aphorisms, by Śrī Vyāsadeva dealing with the Absolute Truth. The philosophy of the Absolute Truth, which

finds implicit expression in the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, was put into a systematic and more explicit form in the *Vedānta-sūtra*. All apparent contradictory statements of the vast literature of the *Vedas* are resolved by the great Vyāsa in this work. In this work there are four divisions: 1) reconciliation of all scriptures; 2) the consistent reconciliation of apparently conflicting hymns; 3) the means or process of attaining the goal (spiritual realization); and 4) the object (or desired fruit) achieved by the spiritual process. The *Vedānta-sūtra* establishes that Godhead exists, that devotion is the means of realizing transcendental love for Godhead, and that this love is the final object of man's endeavors. This book is the textbook of all theistic philosophy, and, as such, many commentators have elaborated on the significance of its conclusions. **Viṣṇu**-a plenary expansion of the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Viṣṇu supervises the maintenance of the created universe. He is worshiped by all the demigods and sages, and described throughout the *Vedas* as the summum bonum of all knowledge-the Absolute Truth.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura-a great *ācārya* in the Caitanya school of Vaiṣṇavism and the most prominent *ācārya* after Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura. On the order of his guru he went to Vṛndāvana and by his life's end he had composed twenty-four valuable books on the science of *bhakti*. He established the Gokulānanda Temple. In his final years he lived at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Vraja-the 168-square-mile (84 *krośa*) area in the district of Mathurā where five thousand years ago Lord Kṛṣṇa displayed His pastimes. It is the principal holy place of pilgrimage for all Vaiṣṇavas. It is said in the *śāstras* that Vraja is the essence and sum total of all holy places.

Vṛndāvana-one of the twelve forests of Vraja where many of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes took place and where He grew up. It is His personal spiritual abode descended to the earthly plane. It is situated on the Western bank of the river Yamunā.

Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura-the incarnation of Vedavyāsa in Lord Caitanya's pastimes and the author of *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, one of the earliest biographies of Lord Caitanya, in which he especially describes Caitanya Mahāprabhu's early pastimes.

Y

Yamunā-the divine river flowing through Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa sports in this river, and it plays an important part in His pastimes. The personification of the Yamunā River, known as Kālindī, is the daughter of the sun god and the sister of Yamarāja, the god of death. She is also called Yamī. In Kṛṣṇa-līlā she became one of Kṛṣṇa's queens at Dvārakā.