



तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्  
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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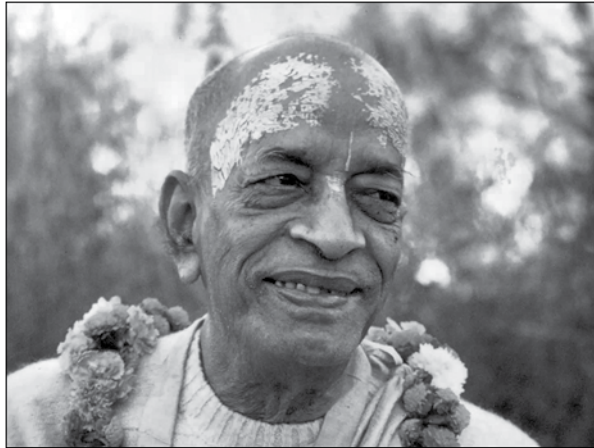
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## GOING BEYOND APPRENTICESHIP

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The more you are engaged in devotional service, the more your senses become pure, or uncovered. And when it is completely uncovered, without any designation, then you are capable to serve Krishna. This is apprenticeship. *Vaidhī-bhakti* — that is apprenticeship. Real *bhakti*, *parā-bhakti*, is *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti*. This *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti* comes after surpassing *vaidhī-bhakti*.

In the material world, if we do not try to make further and further progress in devotional service, if we are simply sticking to the *śāstric* regulation process and do not

try to go beyond that .... *Śāstric* process is also regulation. That is required. Without *śāstric* process you cannot go to that platform. But if we stick to the *śāstric* process only and do not try to improve ourself .... The *śāstric* process is *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, lowest stage of devotional service.

*arcāyām eva haraye yaḥ pūjām śraddhayehate  
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*  
[Bhāg. 11.2.47]

Generally, people come to this temple, they are very devoted to the deity. They offer their respects, flowers and other things, make the regulative process, circumambulate. This is nice beginning. But one has to go above this. One has to know who is actually a *bhakta* ... *na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu*. One has to do good for others. That is *madhyama-adhikāra*.

If I become satisfied merely with these regulative principle for worshiping the deity in the temple and following the regulative principles daily, but I have no other idea, then *sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*. *Prākṛta* means on the material platform. Such a devotee can fall down at any moment because he is on the *prākṛta* stage. *Prākṛta* means this *guṇamayī* [modes of nature], *prakṛti*. It is very strong. Any devotee can fall down if he remains *prākṛta-bhakta*. So he has to raise himself above this as a *madhyama-adhikārī*.

... We are not actually enjoying. We are only enjoying the interaction of the three modes of material nature.

My Guru Maharaja used to say that it is like licking the outside of a bottle of honey. That is not real honey. You have to open the bottle and lick the real honey, then you'll get a taste. That is advancement of spiritual knowledge.

... Therefore, if we do not associate with advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikārī*, if we simply want to remain in the lowest stage of devotional service, then we are not making progress. Then we shall simply enjoy the material field without entering into the spiritual platform. 🌸

— From a lecture in Vrindavan, 12 November 1972.

## NOT AN OBJECT OF OUR VISION

### *Sri Srimad Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja*

Once Srila Prabhupada [Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur] was viewing the deities of Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharvika Giridhari at the Sri Chaitanya Math, standing on the front porch of the temple. The door of that temple is not very wide and Srila Prabhupada did not have his glasses on.

Standing next to him was one of his dear disciples. The disciple thought perhaps Prabhupada could not view the deities very well through the narrow doorway. He said, “Prabhupada, this doorway is not very wide. So it is not possible to view the deities very well from inside.” Hearing this, Prabhupada smiled, and he said for the benefit of all of us, “We should not think of the Supreme Lord as an object of our vision. Instead, we should meditate on the thought of how we can acquire some qualifications so we can become worthy objects of his vision. We should think about whether he wants to see us, and whether he will want to reveal himself to us.” 🌸

— Prabhupada Saraswati Thakura - *The Life and Precepts*. Chapter “A Few Glimpses of the Lotus Feet of Srila Prabhupada”. Remembrance by Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja. Mandala Publishing Group. Eugene, Oregon, USA. 1997.

## CHANT FOR THE PLEASURE OF GURU

### *Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*

**Devotee:** You have said that in *Kali-yuga* there is no such thing as achieving perfection via *sādhana*. So what is the purpose of *sādhana*?

**Gour Govinda Swami:** We have to do some *sādhana* because the guru has told us to do it. We must obey, but we are not dependent on it. We are completely dependent on mercy. What *sādhana* can we do in *kali-yuga*? We have been doing *sādhana* for so many years and what have we attained? So many nasty things are still there. But the guru has told us to do it, so we are doing it.

**Devotee:** So is there any benefit from chanting extra rounds on *Ekādaśī*?

**Gour Govinda Swami:** Yes. If the guru tells you, you have to do it. Unless you execute and obey his order, how can you get the guru's mercy? And that mercy is very powerful.

**Devotee:** In our heart we have to cry for the mercy. We have no qualifications.

**Gour Govinda Swami:** What qualification do we have? We have nothing, being so fallen, most degraded, no good qualities, only bad things and nonsense. Disqualification is our qualification. So what *sādhana* can we do? Although we are doing it, because the guru has told us, we are not dependent on it. We are only dependent on mercy. 🌸


— Lecture in Bhubaneswar. 30 March 1994.

## GAURAKISHORE DAS BABAJI AND THE RATHA-YATRA

### *Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada*

*Srila Gaurakishore Das Babaji Maharaja left this world on the auspicious day of Utthāna Ekādaśī on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1915. From 1916 to 1917, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur wrote a series of articles about his spiritual master titled “Āmāra Prabhura Kathā”, that he published in the Bengali Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī magazine. The following is a translation of a story he told therein about Srila Gaurakishore.*

Several books were always kept near Srila Gaurakishore Das Babaji Maharaja in his ashram, such as the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and



**Nāma-tattva**

### HALLMARK OF THE TOPMOST DEVOTEES

*Skanda Purāṇa*

*mahā-bhāgavatā nityam kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam*

In *Kali-yuga*, the *mahā-bhāgavatas* [most elevated devotees] are engaged constantly in proclaiming the glories of the Lord.

— Quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.459.






Photo by Arjun Bhattacharya

## Ratha-yātrā in Jagannath Puri Dham

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Many times, persons would come and ask questions to him from these books, which Srila Gaurakishore would very expertly answer with the conclusions of devotional service. Babaji Maharaja liked to hear the pastimes of Prahlad Maharaja again and again. He would also repeat those pastimes many times. Sometimes Srila Gaurakishore would read Srila Narottam Das Thakur's books *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-cāndrikā* and then he would explain their meanings. Persons would come and read these different books to him, but it was only Gaurakishore Das Babaji who could properly explain their meanings.

On the day before a large local *Ratha-yātrā* festival, Srila Gaurakishore Babaji called the residents of a nearby ashrama and asked, "Will all of you go tomorrow and attend the *Ratha-yātrā*? There will be a large festival with a big chariot at the Paramatalla in Nabadwip. After the festival everyone will go to the house of a famous landowner who is sponsoring a big feast. There will be many sweets such as *rasgullās*, and flat rice with yoghurt."

In this way, Srila Gaurakishore repeatedly told different persons about the *Ratha-yātrā* festival which would happen the following day. All of those devotees thought that Srila Babaji Maharaja was giving them permission to attend the function.

On the day of the *Ratha-yātrā*, everyone assembled to go to the festival. Because they had all gone, there was

no one to read from any of the books in his ashram that day. Srila Gaurakishore sat alone in his hut and began to laugh very sweetly. After some time, he came outside and said, "Today I have found life again! Everyone has gone. Those who are offenders to the holy name have left the association of devotees and the chanting of Hare Krishna and have gone to see the *Ratha-yātrā* festival where there are many beautiful young women and other sense objects. Many persons act the roles as *vaiṣṇavas* when in the association of pure devotees, but in actuality they flow down in the current of other desires."

Srila Babaji Maharaja then began to loudly chant the glories of the holy name of the Lord. The persons who went to the *Ratha-yātrā* festival later came to see Babaji Maharaja. Srila Babaji Maharaja gravely sat there and said nothing to anyone.

\* \* \*

One should not misunderstand the mood of Srila Gaurakishore Das Babaji, and his disciple Srila Bhaktisiddhanta who presented this story. There is certainly nothing wrong with observing the festival of *Ratha-yātrā*. It is an important festival for the pleasure of the Lord. Our *ācāryas* have recommended the observance of *Ratha-yātrā* as being beneficial for bhakti. It was observed regularly by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and enthusiastically inaugurated world-wide by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

The fault that Srila Gaurakishore saw in the devotees described in the story was in their attitude towards the practice of bhakti. They were more interested in their own enjoyment, albeit spiritual, than they were in associating with the exalted devotee Gaurakishore Das Babaji.

As described by Lord Kapiladev in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.29.9):

*viṣayān abhisandhāya yaśa aiśvaryaṃ eva vā  
arcādāv arcayed yo mām pṛthag-bhāvaḥ sa rājasah*

The worship of deities in the temple by a separatist, with a motive for material enjoyment, fame, and opulence, is devotion in the mode of passion.

In his commentary on this verse, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada explains what is a “separatist” in devotion:

Mixed devotees, or devotees in the modes of passion and ignorance, think that the interest of the Supreme Lord is supplying the orders of the devotee and the interest of such devotees is to draw from the Lord as much as possible for their sense gratification. This is the separatist mentality.... When the so-called devotee desires material enjoyment, without reference to the interest of the Supreme Lord, or he wants to become famous or opulent by utilizing the mercy or grace of the Supreme Lord, he is in the mode of passion.



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Observing the practices of bhakti, such as hearing and chanting as well as attending, organizing, or supporting devotional festivals of the Lord, are important for advancing in devotion and are needed for spreading the movement of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. However, as prescribed by Srila Rupa Goswami in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11), to get the full benefit of them, those practices should be *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* — done for the pleasure of guru and Krishna, not for our own personal sense enjoyment. 🙏 — MD

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## THE CULMINATION OF ALL GOOD FORTUNE

### Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta 2.99 of Sri Bilvamangal Thakur

*yajñair ījimahe dhanam dadimahe pātreṣu nūnam vyaṃ  
vṛddhān bhejimahe tapaś cakṛmahe janmāntare duścaram  
yenāsmākam abhūd ananya-sulabhā bhaktir bhava-dveṣiṇī  
cāñūra-dviṣi bhakta-kalmaṣa-muṣi śreyah-puṣi śrī-juṣi*

[In our past lives] we must have certainly worshiped the gods through various Vedic sacrifices, given profuse charity to deserving recipients, served the elderly learned saintly souls, and executed severe austerities. As a result of all these activities executed in our past lives we effortlessly obtained in this life the gift of bhakti — the destroyer of material existence. Such bhakti for Krishna, who is the remover of the sins of his devotees, the enemy of Chanur, the bestower of all good fortune, and the Supreme Lord served by Sri Radha, is certainly not obtainable by any other means for anyone. 🙏

— Translated from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira ([www.granthamandira.com](http://www.granthamandira.com))

