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gaudīya-vedāntācārya

Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu





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Highlights

• [Dedicated to Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan](#)

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• [Differences Between Madhva and the Gaudiyas](#)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

• [Who Was Baladev Vidyabhushan?](#)

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

• [Gopinath Acharya Became Baladev Vidyabhushan](#)

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

• [Glorification of Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan](#)

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

• [Aratika Song for Radha Krishna](#)

Baladev Das

• [Baladev Vidyabhushan's Conclusion](#)

From the Govinda-bhasya commentary on Vedānta-sūtra



DEDICATED TO SRILA BALADEV VIDYABHUSHAN



His Divine Grace

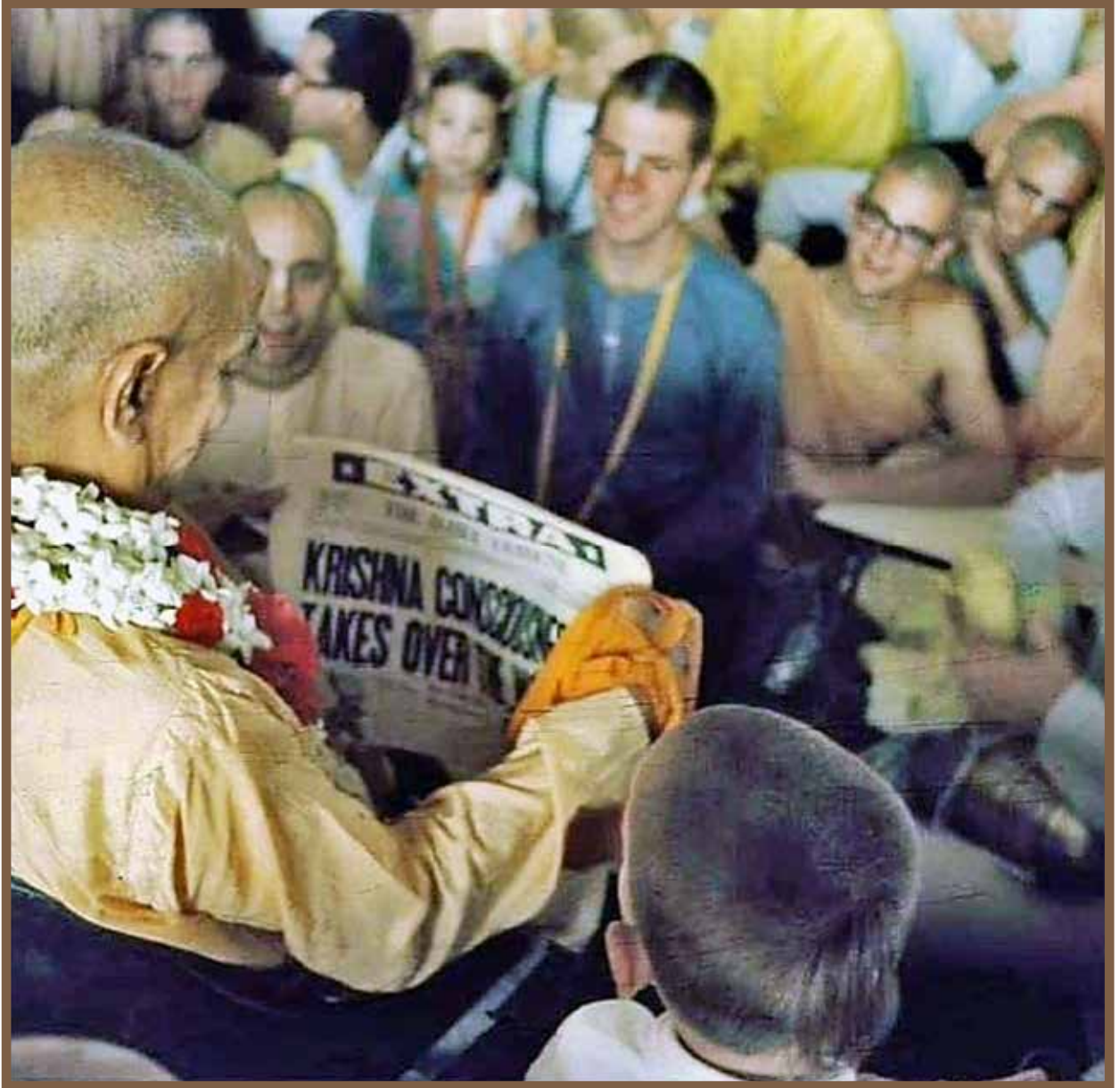
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

To Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan who presented so nicely the Govinda-bhāṣya commentary on Vedānta philosophy. (Dedication of Bhagavad-gītā As It Is)

Vyasadev is explaining Vedānta-sūtra in his book, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Bhāṣyam brahma-sūtrāṇām — Sri Vyasadev says, “Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the real commentary, bhāṣya, on Vedānta-sūtra.” Therefore, the Goswamis and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas did not write any commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra because they accept Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as the natural commentary. But, when the objection was raised in Jaipur that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas had no commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, at that time, Baladev Vidyabhushan, he wrote Govinda-bhāṣya on Vedānta-sūtra. (Lecture in Vrindavan, 5 November 1972.) 🌸



Cover: Vintage painting of Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan by an unknown artist.



Unknown photographer

Devotees offer Srila Prabhupada a simulated newspaper

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MADHVA AND THE GAUDIYAS



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

In his commentary on Sri Jiva Goswami's *Tattva-sandarbha*, Srimad Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu, who is known as the *Gaudiya Vaishnava Vedantācārya*, has pointed out four differences with the South Indian *Vaiṣṇava* followers of Madhvacharya in these words:

bhaktānām viprāṇām eva mokṣaḥ, devāḥ bhakteṣu mukhyāḥ, viriñcasyaiva sāyujyam, lakṣmyā jīva-koṭivam ity evaṁ mata-viśeṣaḥ dakṣiṇādi-deśeti tena gauḍe 'pi mādhavendrādayas tad upaśiṣyāḥ katicid babhūvur ity arthaḥ.

Sri Vidyabhushan Prabhu has found the following four teachings in the philosophy of Madhvacharya to be unacceptable to the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*: Only a Brahmin devotee is eligible for liberation, the demigods are the foremost devotees, Lord Brahma attains *sāyujya-mukti* (merging in Brahman), and Lakshmidēvi is included among the *jīvas*. Nevertheless, Sri Madhavendra Puri and a number of others in Bengal became followers of

Unknown photographer.



At the end of his manifest pastimes, Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan served the deity of Shyamasundar in Vrindavan

Madhvacharya's *prema-bhakti* line. (From chapter two of *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava*.)

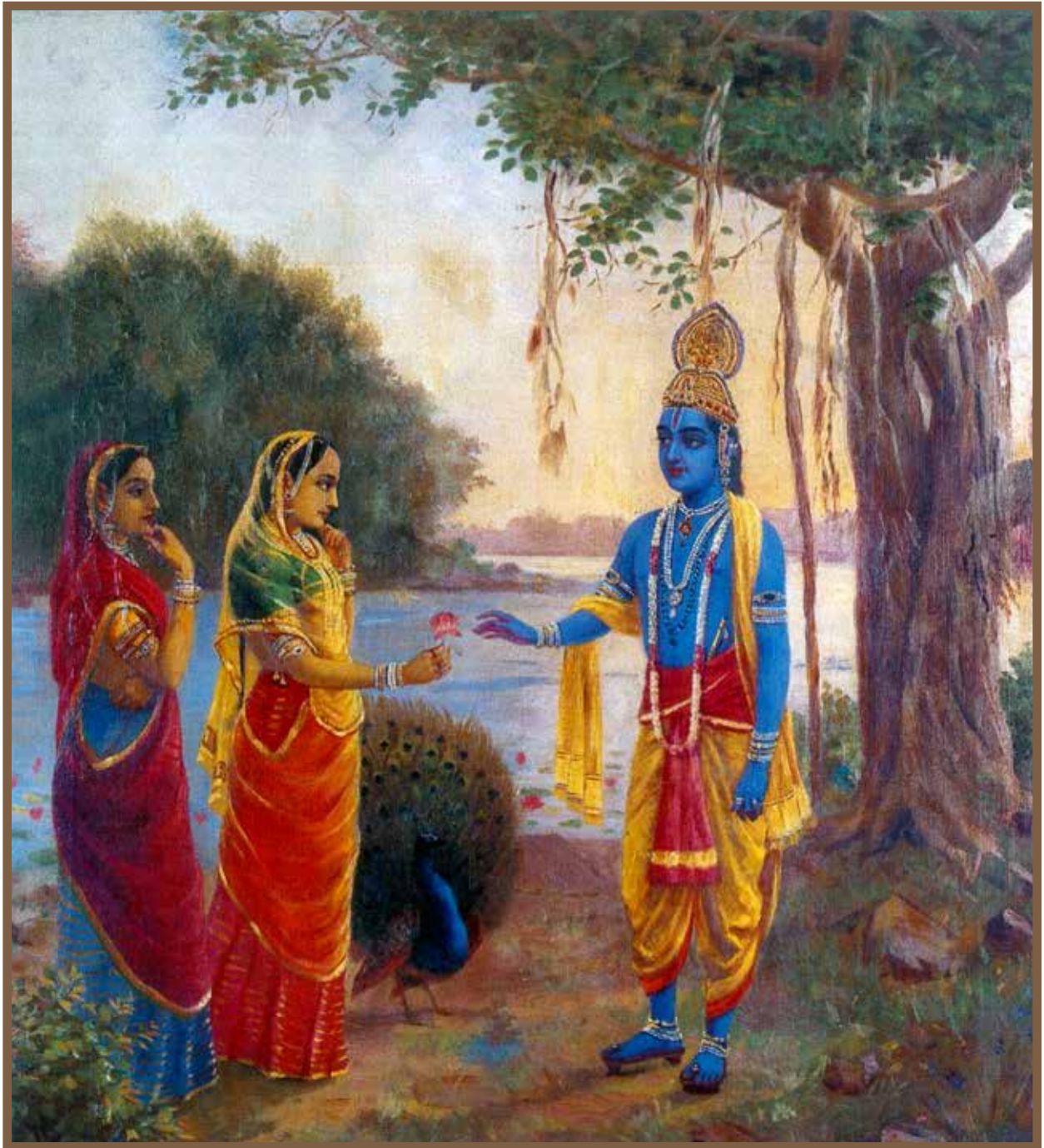
Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur was the *śikṣā-guru* [instructing spiritual master] of Baladev Vidyabhushan, to whom he taught the precepts of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Jagannatha Das Babaji was a very prominent *ācārya* after Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan and was the beloved *śikṣā-guru* of Sri Bhaktivinode Thakur. Bhaktivinode Thakur's intimate friend and associate was the eminent *mahā-bhāgavata* Sri Gaurakishore Das Babaji, whose sole joy was found in *hari-bhajana*. (From an article titled, "Śrī Guru Paramparā")

Among the seven famous temples in Sridham Vrindavan, Sri Shyamasundar comes after Sri Govinda, Sri Gopinath, and Sri Madana-mohan. At the last stage of his manifest pastimes, *Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya* Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu served Sri Shyamasundar in Sridham Vrindavan. Sripad Baladev Vidyabhushan was the fourth descendant of the goswami family of Sri Gopivallabha Pura. In other words, Sri Rasikananda Prabhu's son and disciple was Sri Radhananda Deva. Sri Radhananda's son and disciple was Sri

Nayananda Deva. From Sri Nayananda Deva a *vaiṣṇava* Brahmin from Kanyakubja named Sri Radha Damodar Das took initiation. This Sri Radha Damodar Das was Sripad Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu's *pañcarātrika* initiating spiritual master.

Vidyabhushan Prabhu wrote an *Upaniṣad* commentary. Forty-one years ago, with a desire to publish Sripad Baladev's *Upaniṣad* commentaries, I wrote Srila Vishwambharananda Deva Goswami to kindly collect those commentaries for me. At that time, he wrote to Sri Shyamasundar temple and was informed that the *Upaniṣad* commentaries had been immersed in the Yamuna because they were too old. So other than his commentary on the *Īsopaniṣad*, no other of the *vedāntācārya's* commentaries can be found. Srimad Bhaktivinode Thakur published the *Īsopaniṣad* after personally writing a commentary to accompany the commentary of Sri Baladev.

Just as Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur protected the prestige of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma* by appearing as a *Gauḍīyācārya* — the fourth successor of Srila Narottama Thakur Mahasay, so Sripad Baladev Vidyabhushan



Painting by Ravi Raja Varma. Late 1800s.

Radha and Krishna meet under a tree on the bank of the Yamuna

Prabhu protected the *Gauḍīya sampradāya* as the first *Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya* by appearing as the fifth descendant of Sri Shyamananda Prabhu. (From a lecture in Belihal, Midnapur. 10 February 1925 (during *Gauḍa-maṇḍala-parikramā*). Printed in *Śrī Vaktṛtāvalī*, part one.) 🍃

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WHO WAS BALADEV VIDYABHUSHAN?



Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

Who was Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan? What is the difference between the teachings of Srila Jiva Goswami and the teachings of Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan?

Unknown artist. Deccan school. C. 18th century.



Radha and Krishna playing a game on a terrace

Vidyabhushan Mahasay was a special star in the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*. Nobody after the Six Goswamis has done the amount of service that he did for this *sampradāya*. From this, we can clearly understand that he was one of the eternal associates of Srīman Mahāprabhu. One *vaiṣṇava* book mentions that Sri Gopinath Mishra, an associate of Sri Chaitanya, was an incarnation of Brahma. Gopinath Mishra directly heard Mahāprabhu explain the Absolute Truth to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Later, Sri Gopinath Mishra appeared as Baladev Vidyabhushan, the commentator of *Brahma-sampradāya*. The words of the *vaiṣṇavas* are always true, and this fact appears to be correct.

Some foolish people say that the philosophy of Vidyabhushan is more modern than the philosophy of the Goswamis. We have carefully checked this and found that there is no difference whatsoever between the philosophy of Sri Baladev and Sri Jiva Goswami. The only difference is that (to protect the gravity of the commentaries of Sri Jiva Goswami) Sri Baladev has used more sophisticated and intellectual words. Still, he did not change the philosophy at all. Both of them stated the same conclusion regarding

the Absolute Truth and the processes of worship. (Originally from a Bengali article in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 9.10. Translation quoted in *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava* 4.24.)

How did the commentaries on *Vedānta* develop and who discovered the science of *mādhurya-rasa*?

After collecting Baudhayana's commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, Sri Ramanuja, who was an incarnation of Sankarshan, wrote his own commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* known as *Śrī-bhāṣya*. The science of *mādhurya-rasa* was not revealed in that commentary, and therefore Srīmad Govindadeva ordered Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan to reveal that science for the inquisitive devotees. At a place near Jaipur, Baladev Vidyabhushan, a surrendered devotee of Sri Chaitanyadeva, engaged in studying Vedic literature and wrote a commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* known as *Govinda-bhāṣya*. (Originally from a Bengali article in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 8.1. Translation quoted in *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava* 35.6.)

Is there a commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* based on the conclusion of *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy?

Unfortunately, the commentaries and Bengali translations of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* that have been



Painting by Sital Chandra Bandyopadhyay, 1932

Krishna speaking Bhagavad-gītā to Arjuna



Sri Sri Radha Krishna

published to date are mostly composed by monists. Commentaries or translations based on pure devotional service are rarely published. The commentaries of Shankaracharya and Anandagiri are full of monistic conclusions. Sridhar Swami's commentary is not based on the philosophy of monism, but it has a scent of the sectarian philosophy of *śuddhādvaita-vāda*. Sri Madhusudan Saraswati's commentary is full of statements nourishing devotional service, but the conclusion is not beneficial. Sri Ramanuja Swami's commentary is fully based on devotional service, but unless a commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* that is full of the teachings of Sri Gauranga Mahāprabhu's *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy is published in our country, the happiness of those who relish pure devotional service does not increase.

We have therefore carefully published the *Bhagavad-gītā* with the Bengali translation called *Rasika-rañjana* according to the commentary written by Sri Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur. He was a follower of Sri Gauranga,

a great teacher, and the crest jewel among all devotees. Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan also wrote a commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* based on the teachings of Srīman Mahāprabhu. Although Baladev's commentary is philosophical, Chakravarti Mahasay's commentary is not only philosophical, but also full of the mellows of love of God. Particularly, Chakravarti Mahasay's commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is particularly well known and respected. Chakravarti Mahasay's philosophy is simple and his Sanskrit language is sublime. (From Bhaktivinoda's translation of *Bhagavad-gītā* quoted in *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāñi Vaibhava* 37.8.)

What was the purpose of and inspiration behind composing the *Vidvad-rañjana* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*?

Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan wrote a commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* and removed the cloud of *Māyāvāda*, which covered the moonlike nectarean truth of *Bhagavad-gītā*. By the mercy of the *Pañca-tattva*, he wrote his commentary and made everyone happy.



AI art.

Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan

According to his commentary, I, the most insignificant Bhaktivinoda, wrote a nectarean commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*. After offering my respectful obeisances at the feet of the pure devotees, I wrote and named this commentary *Vidvad-rañjana*. Sri Adwaita Prabhu is an authority on *Bhagavad-gītā*, so I offer my respectful obeisances unto him. May he place his lotus feet on the head of this servant and fulfill my desire by empowering me. Out of compassion for the living entities of the world, Sri Adwaita Prabhu brought Gaura Hari here and taught everyone the essence of *Bhagavad-gītā*. There is no doubt that if I receive Sri Adwaita Prabhu's mercy, I will cross beyond the ocean

of spiritual truth. O Sri Gaura! O Nityananda! O Adwaita, the abode of love of God! O Lakshmi! O Vishnupriya! O Gadadhar! O Jahnava! O Vamsivadananda! O Rupa! O Sanatan! O Swarup! O Ramananda! O Srivas! O Sridhara! I am most poor and fallen; therefore, by your mercy alone this foolish person can achieve perfection. Please destroy all obstacles, reveal all truths to me, and give me the strength to write this commentary. (Originally from Bhaktivinoda's *Maṅgalācaraṇa* of his *Vidvad-rañjana-bhāṣya*, commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*, quoted in *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava* 37.9.) 🍀

— *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava*. Compiled by and with questions from Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinoda. Translated by Sri Bhumipati Das. Published by Sri Iswara Das and Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2002.



When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu fainted in the Jagannath Mandir in Puri. He was brought to the home of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. At that time his devotees including Gopinath Acharya all went there.

**GOPINATH ACHARYA
BECAME BALADEV
VIDYABHUSHAN**



From Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya,
Parikrama-khaṇḍa chapter 4.52-67

Sri Nityananda Prabhu's Order to Sri Jiva

tomā-prati ājñā ei vārāṇasī giyā
vācaspati nikaṭete vedānta paḍiyā

“My order to you is this: Go to Varanasi and study
Vedānta under Sri Madhusudan Vachaspati [4]. (verse 52)

ekebāre jāha tathā haite vṛndāvana
tathā kṛpā karibena rūpa-sanātana

“From there go straight to Vrindavan, where you
will receive the mercy of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan. (53)

rūpera anuga ha'ye yugala-bhajana
kara tathā vedāntādi śāstra-ālāpana

“Under the guidance of Sri Rupa, worship the
Divine Couple Sri Radha-Krishna and deliberate upon
the Vedānta and other śāstras. (54)

**Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the genuine
commentary on Vedāntasūtra**

bhāgavata-śāstra haya sarva-śāstra sāra
vedānta-sūtrera bhāṣya karaha pracāra

“You should preach that the spotless mahāpurāṇa
Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (composed by Krishna-dwaipayana
Sri Vedavyasa, the author of Vedānta-sūtra) is the
essence of all holy scriptures and the genuine
commentary on Vedānta-sūtra. (55)

sārvabhaume kṛpā kari' gaurāṅga śrī-hari
brahma-sūtra vyākhyā kaila bhāgavata dhari'

“You know already that while bestowing his mercy
upon Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Sri Gaurahari
explained Śrī Brahma-sūtra [Vedānta-sūtra] according
to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. (56)

sei vidyā sārvabhauma śrī-madhusūdana
śikhāila kṣetra-dhāme parama yatane

“Sarvabhauma carefully taught this knowledge to
Sri Madhusudan Vachaspati in Sri Jagannath Puri. (57)

sei madhu-vācaspati prabhu-ājñā pe'ye
āche vārāṇasī dhāme dekha tumi je'ye



Painting by Kartick Biswas. Part of the “Bengali School” of the early 20th century.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu shows his six armed form to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya at his home in Puri

“On the order of the Lord, this same Madhusudan Vachaspati now lives in Varanasi. You should go there and meet him. (58)

Sri Madhusudan Vachaspati’s Identity

*bāhye teṅha sampradāyī vaidāntika haya
śāṅkarī sanmyāsī tāra nikaṭe paḍaya*

*krame-krame sanmyāsī-gaṇera kṛpā kari
gaurāṅgera vyākhyā śikṣā deya sūtra dhari’*

“Externally Madhusudan Vachaspati is a traditional Vedāntist who teaches sanmyāsīs of the Shankar sampradāya. However, at the appropriate time [when they have developed faith] he gives mercy to them by conveying the meaning of the sūtras in accordance with Sri Gaurāṅga Mahaprabhu’s explanations. (59-60)

*prthaka bhāṣyera ebe nāhi prayojana
bhāḡavate kaya sūtra-bhāṣyete gaṇana*

“Now there is no need to write a separate commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra because all the sūtras are truly explained in Śrīmad Bhāḡavatam. (61)

*kāle jabe bhāṣyera ha-ibe prayojana
śrī-govinda-bhāṣya’ tabe ha’be prakāṭana*

“When there will be a need for a commentary, Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya will manifest itself. (62)

*sārvabhauma-samparke sei gopinātha
śunila prabhura bhāṣya sārvabhauma-sātha*

“Because Gopinath [Acharya] is related to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, he also heard the commentary from Sri Mahaprabhu’s mouth [when Mahaprabhu explained it to Sarvabhauma]. (63)

Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu is Sri Gopinath Acharya

*kāle teṅha prabhura icchāya janma la’ye
baladeva-deśe jā’be jayapura-jaye*

“At the appropriate time, by the desire of the Lord, he [Gopinath Acharya] will take birth as Baladev [Vidyabhushan] and will conquer Jaipur. (64)

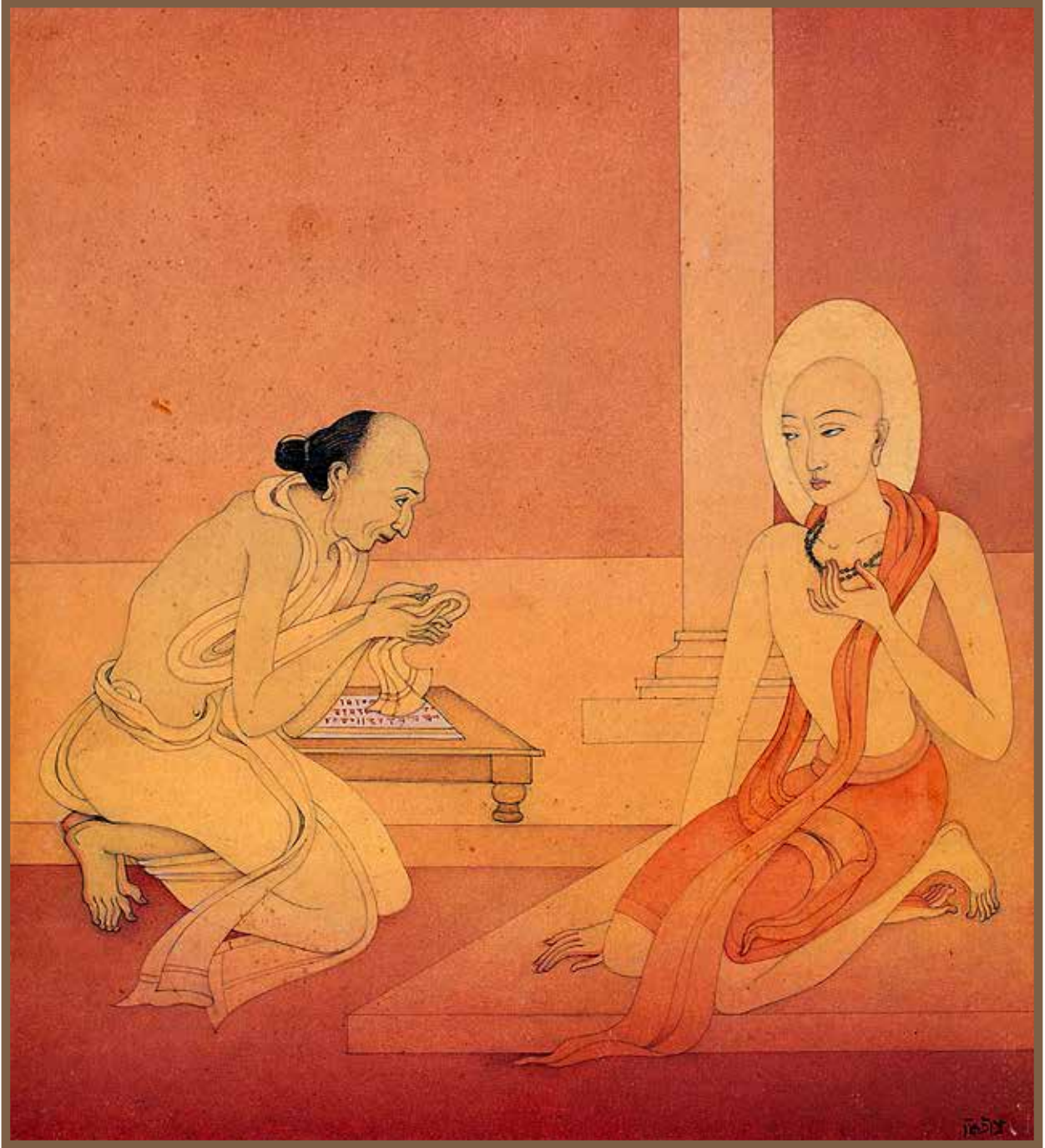
*tathā śrī-govinda bale bhāṣya prakāṣiyā
sevibe gaurāṅga-pada jīve nistāriyā*

“He will go there, reveal the commentary named Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya, and liberate the jīvas by manifesting service to Sri Gaurāṅga Mahaprabhu’s lotus feet[5]. (65)

*ei saba gūḍha kathā rūpa-sanātana
sakala kahibe tomā-prati dui-jana*

“The two brothers, Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan, will tell you all these confidential topics in detail.” (66)

Painting by By Kshitindranath Majumdar. C. 1915.



Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya offering prayers to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

*nityānanda-vākya śuni' śrī-jīva-gosāi
kāṅḍiyā loṭāya bhūme saṁjñā āra nāi*

Hearing the words of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Jiva Goswami started weeping and rolled on the ground. He then fell unconscious. (67) 🍀

Notes

[4] Sri Madhusudan Vachaspati was Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's disciple. He studied all the commentaries of *Vedānta-sūtra*, such as *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya* and Ramanuja's *Śrī-*

bhāṣya, under Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. In particular, he studied the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* that Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya heard from Sriman Mahaprabhu Gaurahari. Sriman Mahaprabhu ordered Vachaspati to live in Kashi and teach. Vyasatirtha, of the Sri Madhva *sampradāya*, composed a small book named *Maṇi-mañjarī* in order to refute the *advaitavāda* philosophy. Upon reading this book, the *advaitavādīs*, or *māyāvādīs*, became bewildered and disturbed. At this time, they surrendered to Sri Madhusudan Vachaspati and after being repeatedly petitioned by them, Sri Madhusudan Vachaspati



Photo by Madhavananda Das

Vintage painting of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya that used to be on the wall of his home in Puri

composed the treatise *Advaita-siddhi*. In this well-known book, he tried to refute the arguments against *māyāvāda* presented in *Mañi-mañjarī*. However, Vachaspati was unable to give a satisfactory rebuttal to the sound reason and logic presented therein.

[5] The deity of Srīman Mahāprabhu served and worshiped by Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu is still present today at the Sri Radha-Gopinath temple in Jaipur.

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GLORIFICATION OF SRILA BALADEV VIDYABHUSHAN

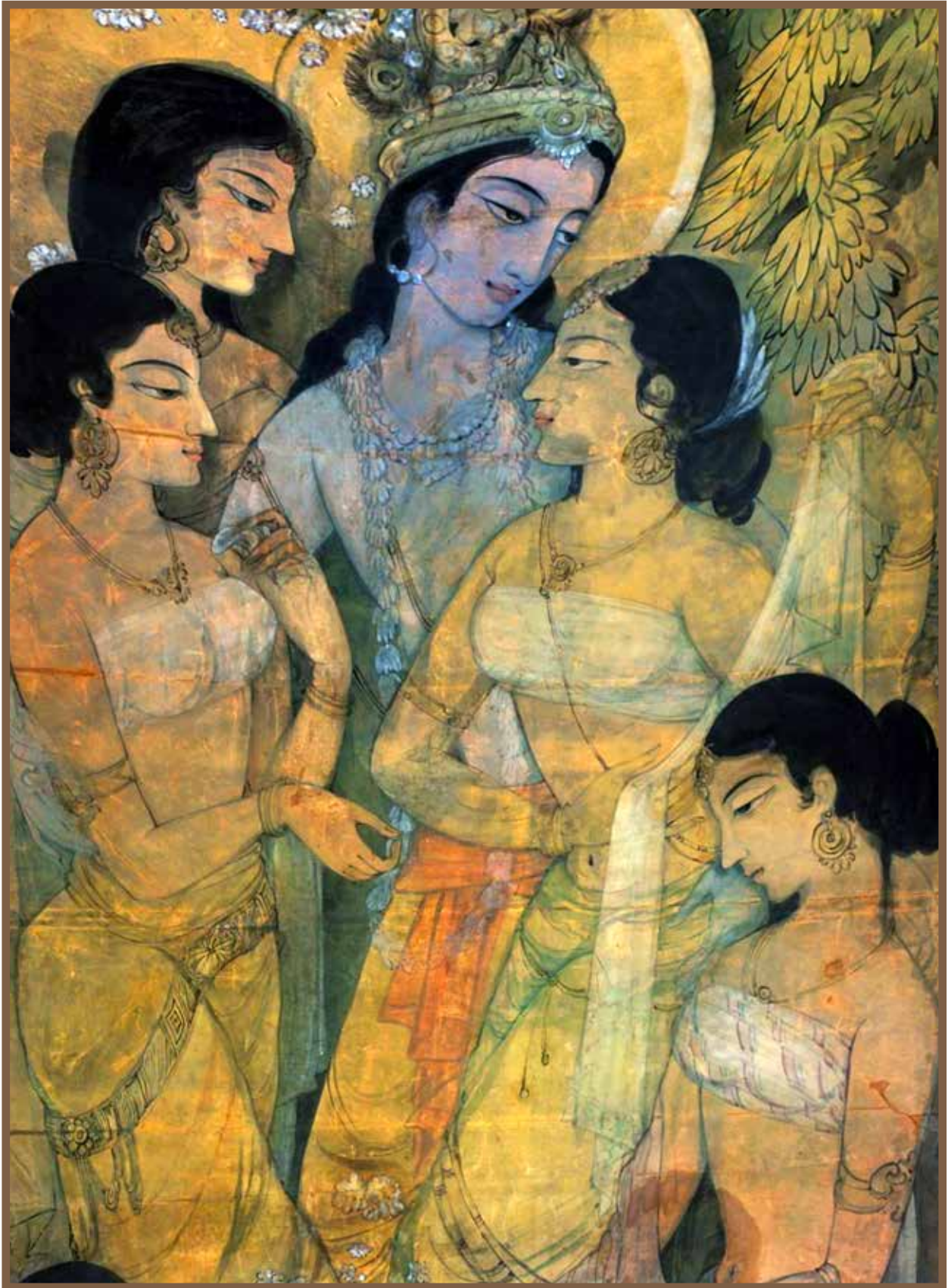


Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Today is the disappearance day of Sri Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu who kept the prestige of the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya* by writing the *Govinda-bhāṣya* commentary of *Vedānta-sūtra*. Srīla Prabhupada has dedicated his *Gītā* to Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu.

vaiṣṇava guṇa-gāna karile jīvera trāṇa
śunīāchi sādhu guru mukhe

I have heard from *sādhu gurus*, if you glorify *vaiṣṇavas* and get their mercy, all auspiciousness will come to you. You will develop pure *bhakti*, *suddha bhakti*, very easily you will go home, back to Godhead. Therefore we should glorify the *vaiṣṇavas* on such auspicious occasions.



Painting by Ram Gopal Vijayvargiya. 1930

Krishna with the gopis



Photo by Madhavananda Das

Vintage painting of Lord Narasimhadev that used to be on the wall of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's home in Puri

Baladev Vidyabhushan was a pure devotee, *mahābhāgavata*, *bhāgavatottama*, *niṣkiñcana-bhakta*. He was the embodiment of *ṭṛṇād api sunīcena* — no pride. He was freed from all sorts of desires. He had no desire for material enjoyment, no desire for material liberation. *bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi* — he was *niṣkarmatā*, his only prayer was, “Please give me unalloyed devotion.”

He was such a *niṣkiñcana-bhakta* [a devotee who has nothing to do with this material world], he never mentioned anywhere the name of his father, mother or what family lineage he belonged to. Therefore, the correct date when he was born is not known. We do know that he was born in Odisha in the Balasore district where the famous temple of Kshir Chora Gopinath is in Remuna. He was born in a village near Remuna.

Some say he was born in the 17th or 18th century. At a very tender age he became expert in *vyākaraṇa*, *kāvya*, *alankāra*, and *nyāya śāstra*. Then he travelled to many holy places of pilgrimage, *tirtha-grāma*. At that time he went to Srila Madhvacharya’s Math in Udupi, South India. He stayed there for some time

with the *Tattva-vādīs* and became expert in *tattva-vāda-siddhānta*. Then he began travelling again and preaching those teachings in different places in India.

In the course of his travels, he came back to Odisha. At that time, by good fortune he met the grand disciple of Rasikananda Thakur, named Pandit Radha Damodara Goswami. He spent some days with him and Radha Damodar Goswami spoke to him about the wonderfully merciful, wonderfully magnanimous, wonderfully munificent incarnation Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In this way, hearing from Radha Damodar Goswami he learned *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava siddhānta* and became very attracted toward Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

After a few days he took initiation from Radha Damodara Goswami, and under his guidance studied Srila Jiva Goswami’s *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*. Then, taking permission from Radha Damodar Goswami, Baladev went to Vrindavan to further study *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava siddhānta*. There, he met Srimad Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur and began studying under his guidance.



Radha Krishna and the gopis in Vrja

Seeing the humility, good character, and devotional attitude of Baladev Vidyabhushan, Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur became very much pleased with him and with much pleasure taught him Mahaprabhu's *tattva* of *acintya-bhedābheda*. Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu then started preaching *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava siddhānta*.

At that time in King Jaisingha's court in Jaipur Rajasthan, the *Ramanuja-sampradāya Vaiṣṇavas* threatened the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*. They said this *sampradāya* is not bonafide because they have no *bhāṣya*, no commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*, and therefore they should not be accepted as a bona fide *sampradāya*. They further said that because of this the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* cannot offer worship to Govindaji, and that service should be handed over to the *Śrī Vaiṣṇava* devotees. That is their point, because these *Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas* they have no *bhāṣya*, *Vedānta-sūtra bhāṣya*, so they should not be recognized as a bona fide *sampradāya*. They raised this question.

Maharaja Jaisingh was a disciple of the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*. When he heard about the conflict he immediately sent a message to Vrindavan

to Srila Vishwanatha Chakravarti Thakur and inquired whether the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya* had a *Vedānta-bhāṣya* or not. He asked, if there was one to please send it to Jaipur so that it could be presented before the *Śrī Sampradāya* pandits.

At that time Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur was very old. It was impossible for him to go to Jaipur, so he sent his disciple-student Baladev Vidyabhushan, "You go." Because Baladev Vidyabhushan was expert in all *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* philosophy and he knew the *tattva-vādī* philosophy of Madhvacharya. He was very expert and knew all philosophies.

So Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu went to that great assembly of pandits, and in the court of the king of Jaipur there was a great debate with them — *tarka-yuddha* — a fight over *siddhānta*. But Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu was such a great learned scholar and so proficient in all these philosophies that they could not stand before him.

Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu said that Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is *sampradāya-pravartaka* — propounder of the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*. Mahaprabhu accepted a Isvara Puri as guru from



Unknown photographer

Srila Rupa Goswami's deities of Sri Sri Radha Govinda in Jaipur

the *Brahma-madhva-sampradāya*. From that day the “*gauḍīya*” word is added to it — *Brahma-madhva-gauḍīya-sampradāya*. However, the *Brahma-madhva-sampradāya* are *tattva-vādīs*, their philosophy is somewhat different from *Gauḍīyas*. Madhvacharya’s philosophy is *śuddha-dvaita-vāda*, he never accepts any *advaita-vāda*, impersonalism. Madhvacharya is very strong because he is *vāyu-avatāra* — incarnation of the wind god. Hanumanji and Bhimasena are also *vāyu-putra* — sons of the wind god. Madhvacharya is the third incarnation. The first incarnation is Hanumanji, the second incarnation Bhimasena, and the third incarnation Madhvacharya. They are *vāyu-avatāra*. Madhva’s body was also very strong and stout. He forcefully preached *dvaita-vāda*, completely cutting off *advaita-vāda*. No element of *advaita-vāda* is found in Madhvacharya’s philosophy, *śuddha-dvaita-vāda*. You might have seen his figure, strong and stout figure raising hand and saying two, not one. That is *dvaita-vāda*.

Yet, complete *dvaita-vāda* is not correct, nor is complete *advaita-vāda* correct philosophically. The other *vaiṣṇava ācāryas* are Ramanujacharya, Vishnu

Swami, and Nimbarka. Ramanujacharya is the *Śrī Sampradāya ācārya*. Vishnuswami is the *Rudra sampradāya ācārya* and Nimbarka is the *Kumāra-sampradāya ācārya*.

*ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti catvāraḥ sampradāyinaḥ
śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakā vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ
catvāras te kalau bhāvīyā hy utkale puruṣottamāt*

“Unless one is initiated by a bona-fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, the mantra he might have received is without any effect. For this reason, four *vaiṣṇava* disciplic successions, inaugurated by Lakshmi-devi, Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, and Sanaka-kumar, will appear in the holy place of Jagannath Puri in Odisha and purify the entire earth during the age of Kali.”

Baladev Vidyabhushan has included this verse from the *Padma Purāṇa* in his book *Prameya-ratnāvalī*. In Kali-yuga, only four *sampradāyas* are bona fide: The *Śrī, Brahmā, Rudra,* and *Sanakā*. Ramanuja is the *ācārya* of the *Śrī Sampradāya* coming from Laksmiji, therefore it is also known as the *Rāmānuja-sampradāya*. The *Brahma-sampradāya ācārya* is Madhva, the *Rudra-sampradāya*



Union after separation

ācārya is Vishnuswami and the Kumarā-sampradāya ācārya is Nimbarka. Ramanujacharya appeared in the 12th century, Madhvacharya appeared in the 13th century, while the dates of the appearance of Nimbarka, and Vishnuswami are not clearly ascertained.

So Vishnuswami's philosophy is *śuddhādvaita*. Sankaracarya's philosophy is known as *advaita* or *kevala-advaita*. Ramanujacharya's philosophy is *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*. Nimbarkacarya's philosophy is *dvaitādvaita-vāda*, and Madhva's philosophy is *śuddha-dvaita-vāda*. You will find in the philosophy of three of these four ācāryas — Ramanuja's philosophy, Vishnuswami's philosophy and Nimbarka's philosophy, that there is a touch of *advaita* with *dvaita*. But in Madhvacharya's philosophy there is no touch of *advaita*. He completely cut off *advaita*, he gave *śuddha-dvaita-vāda*. So although these four are all *vaiṣṇava ācāryas*, there is still a little difference in them between *dvaita* and *advaita*.

Mahaprabhu took the essence from these four philosophies and gave this most sublime philosophy *acintya-bhedābheda-vāda*. He showed that complete *dvaita-vāda* is not correct, and complete *advaita-vāda* is also not correct.

Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu became expert in this *acintya-bhedābheda-vāda*. He told the pandits in Jaipur, "Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

is the propounder of the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*. He has accepted *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, so what is need is there of a separate commentary? The compiler of *Vedānta-sūtra* is Srila Vyasadeva. He gave the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* which is *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. So what is the need of a separate *bhāṣya*, commentary?" He put forward this logic and said that in his *Sat-sandarbha*, Srila Jiva Goswami has accepted the *Bhāgavatam* as the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.

But these *Śrī Sampradāya* pandits, they did not accept his points. They raised objection. "No, no. Every *sampradāya* has its separate *bhāṣya*. Unless you have your separate *bhāṣya* your *sampradāya* should not be recognized as a bona fide *sampradāya*." In the king's court they told this Jaisingh, "They cannot be accepted." At last Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu said, "Alright, give me a few days' time and I'll present the *bhāṣya* commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* for the *Gauḍīya vaiṣṇava sampradāya*."

Baladev Vidyabhushan was a pure devotee, *premi bhakta*. Feeling great pain and distress in his heart, he went to the temple of Govindaji in Jaipur. Offering his *daṇḍavat-praṇāmās* to Govinda, he began to cry and told him everything.



Unknown artist.

Krishna feeling separation from Srimati Radharani

That night, Govindaji appeared in a dream before Baladev Vidyabhushan and said, “You write a commentary. Whatever commentary you write I will accept it. No one can deny it when Govindaji accepts.”

Govindaji empowered Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu to write a commentary. Govindaji wrote through him, *kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana* — “Without being empowered by Krishna, one cannot preach.” (Cc. antya 7.11): An ordinary human being cannot do it unless *kṛṣṇa-sakti* does it through them. Getting this order in a dream, Baladev Vidyabhushan

Prabhu became very happy and got spiritual strength. Then, meditating on the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Govindaji, he started writing the commentary. He completed it after a few days and named it *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya*. It is the *bhāṣya* of the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*. At the end of the commentary, he wrote:

*vidyā-rūpaṁ bhūṣaṇaṁ me pradāya
khyātiṁ ninye tena yo mām udāraḥ
śrī-govindaḥ svapna-nirdiṣṭa-bhāṣyo
rādhā-bandhur bandhurāṅgam sa jīyāt*

All glories to the graceful and handsome Lord Govinda, who is the dear friend of Sri Radha,



Govindaji wrote the commentary through Baladev Vidyabhushan

who kindly gave me the name Vidyabhushan, and who spoke this commentary to me in a dream.

The meaning is, “Govindaji showered his causeless mercy on such a *dīna*, fallen *jīva* like myself, and ordered me in the dream to write. It is he who wrote this *bhāṣya*. I am not the writer. Govindaji wrote through me. Let this *bhāṣya* be accepted by pandits of all *sampradāyas*. Govindaji has accepted it, so nobody can deny it. Let that Govindaji, who is the *prāna-bandhu*, dear friend, of Srimati Radharani, be glorified.”

That *bhāṣya* became famous. When he wrote that commentary the society of pandits awarded him with the title Vidyabhushan. From that day onwards he was known as Baladev Vidyabhushan.

He took this *bhāṣya-grantha* to the assembly at the king’s court. When the Ramanuja pandits who were raising objection saw the commentary, they became

amazed. “Oh, such nice a *bhāṣya*.” Then everyone recognized the *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-sampradāya* as being bona fide. The king, Raja Jaisingh, and all the *Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas* became very, very happy, and all awarded Baladev with the title, “Vidyabhushan”.

The assembly was held in 1628 *Śakabdha* (1706 CE) in Jaipur in a place named Golta. Raja Jaisingh, the king of Jaipur, declared in that assembly that Govindaji’s *ārati* will first be offered by *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*. All the pandits of the *Śrī Sampradāya* accepted defeat from Baladev Vidyabhushan. Then they requested him, “Please accept us as your disciples.” But Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu was so humble. He said, “No. Please excuse me, I cannot accept you as my disciples because you are members of the *Śrī Sampradāya*, a bona-fide *vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*. How can I accept you? It would be a great offense.” He was so humble.



Painting by Dhriti Devi Dasi

The divine love of Sri Sri Radha Krishna

At the end of his book named *Vedānta-syamantaka*, he has written a prayer to his guru:

*rādhā-di-dāmodara nāma vibhratā
viprāṇa vedāntamayaḥ syamantakaḥ
śrī rādhikāye viniveditomayā,
tasyāḥ pramodaṁ sa tanotu sarvadā*

“The name of my dear guru is Srimad Radha Damodar. It is because of inspiration from him that I was able to write this book, *Vedānta-syamantaka*. Otherwise I could not have written this. This book speaks about Srimati Radharani, so I offer it at the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani. By my guru Radha Damodar’s mercy, I could write this thing. May this *Vedānta-syamantaka* give pleasure to my guru and Srimati Radharani!”

Baladev Vidyabhushan Prabhu, is also known as Govinda Sasa. He had two famous disciples, Sri Uddhava Das, and Sri Nandan Mishra. Baladev Vidyabhushan disappeared in the year 1686 – 1764 CE — on this *tithi*. 🍀

— From a lecture in Towaco U.S.A. 8 June 1995. Transcribed by Gunacuda Devi Dasi.



Unknown photographer

Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan's samādhi behind the temple of Radha Shyamasundar in Vrindavan



A wall mural of Sri Sri Radha Krishna at the Nandini Math in Jagannath Puri

ARATIKA SONG FOR RADHA KRISHNA



By Baladev Das

In his book, A History of Brajbuli Literature, the scholar Sukumar Sen comments on this song: "There is a single poem (in Brajbuli) by Baladev Das in Pada-kalpa-taru. The poet seems to have been the famous Neo-Vaishnava philosopher at Vrindavan, Baladev Vidyabhushan. Baladev was a contemporary of Vishwanath Chakravartin, and according to some, he was a disciple of Vishwanath. Baladev's Govinda-bhāṣya on the Vedānta-sūtras must remain as a monumental work. This commentary defends the dvaita-ādvaita-vāda or acintya-bhedābheda theory of Bengal Vaishnavism against the attack of the pure advaita school of orthodox Vedantism."

jaya jaya maṅgala-ārati duhūr-ki
śyāma-gorī-chavi ūṭhata jhalaki

All glories, all glories to the auspicious evening ārati of the divine couple! Their dark and brilliant complexions glisten.

nava-ghane janu thira bijurī virāje
tāhe mani-abharaṇa aṅga-hi sāje

Their forms shine like a steady flash of lightning on a dark new cloud. Jewel ornaments adorn their limbs.

kare la-i dīpāvali hema-thāli
ārati karata-hi lalitā āli

Taking a golden plate with a lamp, Lalita performs the ārati ceremony

saba-huñ sakhī-gaṇa maṅgala gāoye
koi kara-tāli dei koi bājāoye

While playing karatals and other instruments their lady companions are singing auspicious songs.

koi koi sahacari mana-hi harikhe
duhuñ-ka aṅga para kusuma barikhe

Others, with joyous hearts are showering flowers on the couple.

iha rasa kahata-hiñ baladeva-dāse
duhu-rūpa-mādhurī hera-ite āse

Baladev Das describes this scene and prays to be blessed with a vision of the divine couple. 🍌

— Translated from: <https://rb.gy/5bg8mv>



Radha Krishna with the cows of Vrindavan

BALADEV VIDYABHUSHAN'S CONCLUSION



The following is the last verse of the Vedānta-sūtra along with the Govinda-bhāṣya commentary by Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan.

anāvṛtṭiḥ śabdād anāvṛtṭiḥ śabdāt

an — without; āvṛtṭiḥ — return; śabdāt — because of the scriptures.

No return, because of the scriptures. No return, because of the scriptures.

Purport by Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan

A devotee who faithfully worships and serves the Supreme Lord and then goes to the Lord's spiritual world, never returns. How is that known? The sūtra explains, “śabdāt” (because of the scriptures). In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (4.15.6) it is said:

etena pratipadyamānā imāṃ mānavam āvartam nāvartante
“Those who enter the spiritual world never return to the world of men.”

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (4.15.1) it is said:

sa khalv eva vartayan yāvad āyusam brahmalokam abhisampadyate. na ca punar avartate.

“Leaving this life, he enters the spiritual world. He never returns.”

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.15 and 16) Krishna declares:

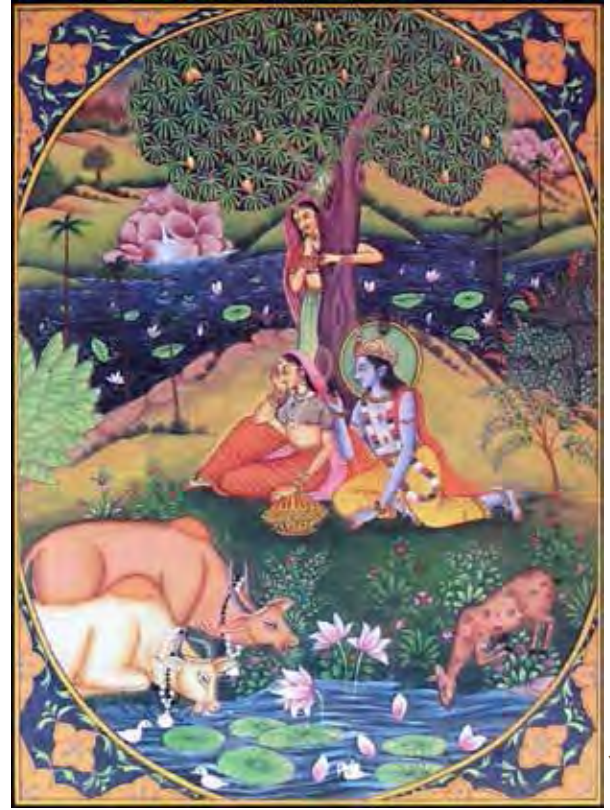
mām upetya punar janma duḥkhālayam aśāsvatam nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ samsiddhiṃ paramām gatāḥ

“After attaining me, the great souls, who are yogīs in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection.

ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate

“From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.”

Here someone may express the following fear: Lord Hari is all-powerful, the master of all, perhaps at some



Unknown artist

The divine abode of Vrindavan

point in time he may throw the liberated soul out of the spiritual world. Or perhaps the liberated soul may at some time voluntarily leave the spiritual world.

There is no need to fear in this way, for Lord Krishna has explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.17):

priyo hi jñānino tv artham ahaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ

“Of these, the wise one who is in full knowledge in union with me through devotional service is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is very dear to me.”

Lord Krishna also declares in *Bhāgavatam* (9.4.68):

sādhavo hṛdayaṃ mahyaṃ sādḥūnām hṛdayaṃ tv aham

“The pure devotee is always in the core of my heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee.”



Unknown photographer

Train stop for Vrindavan circa 1950

My devotees do not know anything else but me, and I do not know anyone else but them.”

In these words the mutual love of the Lord and his devotee is described.

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.4.65) Lord Krishna declares:

*ye dārāgara-putrāptān prāṇān vittam imān param
hitvā mān śaraṇān yātāḥ kathān tāms tyaktum utsahe*

“Since pure devotees give up their homes, wives, children, relatives, riches, and even their lives simply to serve me, without any material improvement in this life or in the next, how can I give up such devotees at any time?”

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.8.6) it is also said:

*dhautātmā puruṣaḥ kṛṣṇa-pāda-mūlān na muñcati
mukta-sarva-parikleśaḥ panthāḥ sva-śaraṇān yathā*

“A pure devotee of the Lord whose heart has once been cleansed by the process of devotional service never relinquishes the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, for they fully satisfy him, as a traveler is satisfied at home after a troubled journey.”

In this way the scriptures explain that the Supreme Personality of Godhead will never abandon his devotee and the devotee will always ardently love the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is always truthful and his desires are always at once fulfilled. He is an ocean of love for they who take shelter of him. He washes away

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the ignorance that made his devotees turn from him. Once he brings back to himself his dear devotees, who are his parts and parcels, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will not again let them go.

In the same way the individual soul, who had been searching for happiness and who finally has turned from the pathetic, wretched, pale reflection of happiness he had for many births sought in the material world in many ways, and who now, by the mercy of the bona-fide spiritual master has understood the truth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, of whom he is a part and parcel, who now has no desire apart from the Supreme Lord, who is now purely engaged in devotional service to the Supreme Lord, and who has now attained the Supreme Lord, whose spiritual form is filled with limitless bliss, and who is the merciful friend and master, will never desire to leave such a Lord. In this way the truth is understood from the scriptures. This truth is understood only by taking shelter of the scriptures. The words of the *sūtra* are repeated to indicate the conclusion of the book. 🌸

— Baladev Vidyabhushan. *Śrī Govinda Bhāṣya*, Commentary on *Vedānta Sūtra*. English translation by Kusakratha Das. The Kṛṣṇa Institute. Los Angeles.

GLORIOUS GOKUL

From *Srīla Baladev Vidyabhushan's*
Aiśvarya-kādambinī 1.8

*śrī-gokule harir asau vraja-nātha-sūnuḥ
śrī-carcite bahu-sakho 'sti sa-bhṛtya-vargaḥ
śrī-rādhikā-priya-sakhībhīr adhīśvarīyaṁ
saṁsevate sva-sadrśībhīr ananya-vṛttiḥ*

In Gokul, a place desired by Lakshmi, the son of Nanda resides with many friends and servants. There Radha, the supreme ruler, completely devoted to Krishna, is served with by *priya-sakhīs* similar in nature to her.

— *Aiśvarya kādambinī*. English translation by Bhanu Swami. Bhanu Swami Books. Chennai. 2018.

