

All Glory to Sri Guru and Gauranga

# HariKatha and Vaishnava Aparadha

*His Divine Grace  
Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj*

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A Taste of Transcendence  
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The Philosophy of Love

*Praying blessings of Srila Gurudeva, Param  
Gurupadpadma and Preceptorial Channel,  
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha paid innumerable  
humble prostrated obeisances to the Lotus Feet of  
his Most Revered Gurudeva Om Vishnupad 108  
Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami  
Maharaj on the occasion of His Birth Centennial  
Celebrations (Nov. 2002 to Nov. 2005).*

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## ❧ *Contents* ❧

Introduction

*Hari Katha certainly bestows eternal peace..... 1*

Who can speak HariKatha?

*One can speak about the glories of Sri Hari after hearing from a bona fide devoteeādaū śravaṇam. Without hearing from a realized soul, nobody can properly perform kirtan-bhakti.*

*Vaishnav Aparadh..... 29*

Offence committed to Vaishnavas

*One who wants eternal welfare should not take the risk of committing offence to Vaishnavas.*

*About the Author*

## Introduction

The present book is a collection of articles written by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, who is the eleventh in the preceptorial line from Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the dearest disciple of Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Om Vishnupada 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, the founder of the Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

Srila Tirtha Maharaja's knowledge of scripture is formidable. He substantiates everything he says with innumerable evidences from all over the Vedic literature. He always preaches fearlessly and never compromises the conclusions of the scriptures for the sake of mundane practicality. His dynamic writings are notable for their degree of sincerity and depth of understanding. His personal traits of affection, humility and surrender to his most beloved Gurudeva, His Divine Grace Nityalilaprabhava Om Vishnupada Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj, are ever present. It is difficult to imagine any heart that would not be moved by his warm words of wisdom.

All those who have had a chance to associate personally with him, are invariably won over by his gentle and affectionate nature, combined with his resolute faith in Guru-Vaishnava-Bhagavan. He is beloved by thousands of devotees throughout the world as the very embodiment of humility and spiritual affection.

In the first article of this book, Puujyapad B.B. Tirtha Goswami Maharaj stresses the importance of hearing and repeating from authoritative sources. *Hari-kathā* or *kṛṣṇa-kathā* means the words spoken by or about Kṛṣṇa, and they are very purifying. One can speak about the glories of Sri Hari after hearing from a bona fide devotee-*ādaḥ śravaṇam*. Without hearing from a realized soul, nobody can properly perform

*kirtan-bhakti*. Example is better than precept. The teachings will be beneficial when they are acted upon. Only by practising oneself can actual eternal benefit can be imparted to others. We can see this from the life of Srila Tirtha Maharaj, as he often says, “As my Divine Master has ordered me, I should speak whatever I have heard from Him and from my superiors, *guruvarga* (the line of teachers in the preceptorial channel). That recitation will purify my mind and take me to the Transcendental Realm. I should not speak to please the worldly people. If I do so, my spiritual life will be spoiled.”

In the second article, Srila Tirtha Maharaj emphasizes on the importance of avoiding offenses at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava. Of all sinful activities, an offense to a pure devotee, or Vaiṣṇava, is the most severe. An offense at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava is so disastrous that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has compared it to a mad elephant that enters a garden and causes great havoc by uprooting many plants and trees. If one is an offender at the lotus feet of a brāhmaṇa or a Vaiṣṇava, his offenses uproot all his auspicious activities. One should therefore very carefully guard against committing vaiṣṇava-aparādha, or offenses at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava.

In conclusion, we would like to sincerely thank all those who have helped to bring this and other books and magazines of the Math to publication by their financial contributions or volunteer work. May the All-Merciful Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga and Sri Sri Radha-Krishna shower Their blessings on them. We humbly pray to the readers of this work to kindly forgive any errors or omissions that may have inadvertently crept into its publication.

Praying for the dust of the pure devotees's lotus feet,  
I remain the servant of the servant of the Vaishnavas,  
Bhakti Sarvasva Niskincana  
Gaur Purnima  
6 March 2004

## *Harikatha Certainly Bestows Eternal Bliss*

Who can speak Harikatha ?

In His instructions, our Most Revered Gurudeva gave special emphasis that a devotee speaker should not only speak with the spirit of delivering a speech, or with the motive to get some worldly name and fame. Instead of that he should perform the highest form of devotion, *kirtan bhakti*, with the soul purpose of satisfaction of Sri Krishna. He should recapitulate whatever he has heard so far from his Guru and pure devotees, or the teachings of authentic scriptures, especially the quintessence of all scriptures Srimad Bhagavatam, with a submissive mood by incessantly praying for the grace of Guru-Vaishnav-Bhagavan. If the votary is sincere in his attempt, he will attain gradual development of pure devotion, and his spiritual life will be successful.

At the beginning the neophytes may have drawback due to previous uncongenial impressions, but he should not be disheartened. There should be zeal in performing forms of devotion. The best form of devotion is Krishna *katha*—especially hearing, chanting and remembering. To obey the orders of Gurudeva or Guruvarga, I am trying to speak *hari-katha* by praying the grace of Guru-Vaishnav-Bhagavan. At present I have developed some physical difficulties due to heart disease. The doctors advised me not to speak much, undertake hectic tours, or participate in *nagar-sankirtan*. Yet I occasionally spoke *hari-katha* on special functions for not less than one hour. For this my well-wishers were worried, and they were always advising me to restrict my movements and speeches. Out of the listeners

one foreign devotee submitted the two following sayings of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Goswami, to encourage me to speak *hari-katha*.

- (1) “Narration of the glories of Hari is actual rest. Just through *hari-katha*, all diligence and troubles will be eradicated. Any activity other than *hari-katha*, even for a moment, actually shows aversion to Sri Krishna. Great and elevated devotees and their devoted followers always narrate the glories of Hari completely. Thus they speak about His name, form, attributes, realm and pastimes, and have no aptitude to do anything else. Engaging in *hari-kirtan* under all circumstances with body, mind and speech certainly leads to salvation (*mukti*), even while living in this body.”
- (2) “To get deliverance from worldly entanglement and the threefold afflictions, there is no other way, no other way, no other way except *hari-katha*. Those who do not engage in *hari-kirtan* will be utterly ruined. *Hari-katha* and *hari-kirtan* are our only resorts. Those who have an intense eagerness to engage in them are our best friends.”

Out of affection, many other devotees were giving pressure to speak less, so that no unwanted incident may occur. Some of the well-wishing devotees even advised me to especially pray for the grace of my Most Revered Gurudeva on the occasion of His centennial function from 2003 till 2005. Who is capable of imparting power to engage in the highest form of bhakti—*hari-katha*. As such I am taking shelter to the Lotusfeet of Gurudeva and other Guruvargas, to make me eligible to perform the highest form of devotion.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami

Prabhupad has repeated the words *hari-katha-kirtan* or *hari-kirtan* several times in these two small paragraphs. He thus placed special emphasis on them. Yet Srila Prabhupad has also stated in His sermons that a professional speaker can never speak *hari-katha*. A professional speaker’s purpose is not for the satisfaction of Hari, but for the acquisition of money. But *hari-katha* (which is identical with Hari) descends only on the tongue of that sincere devotee who has dedicated himself fully for the service of Sri Krishna, and who is serving Sri Krishna at every step, twenty-four hours a day. As such devotee is rarely to be found in this world, *hari-katha* is also scarce. The conclusion is that when there is no actual *hari-katha*, we cannot obtain actual benefit. (*phalena phalekāranam anumiyate*, by the fruit of any action, its cause can be ascertained). Srila Prabhupad has also said: “A stipend holder or a contractor cannot explain the Srimad Bhagavatam. We should refrain from approaching the professional priest and first see whether he devotes his time fully to the Bhagavat or not.”

Srila Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad often used the word *adhokṣaja* to indicate that the Supreme Lord is beyond the comprehension of the gross and subtle sense-organs of the conditioned souls. He has explained the etymological meaning of the word in this way: “*Adhokṣaja* refers to the One Who reserves the right of not being exposed to human senses—either gross or subtle (*adhaḥ kṛtam indriyajajñānam jena saḥ*).” This is substantiated by evidence of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad:

*raso vai saḥ, rasam hyevāyam labdhvānandī bhavati.*

*ko hyevānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt, eṣa hyevānandayati*

Ultimate Reality is *rasa*—absolute bliss. After

attaining absolute bliss, the spirit soul gets happiness. If Ultimate Reality would not have been *ānandaswarūpa*, bliss-incarnate, who else could have demonstrated the manifestation of the body and the impetus of life in it? He certainly gives happiness to all. Here, Ultimate Reality is indicated as He, the masculine aspect of Godhead. Krishna has emphatically said, “I am the only Master and Enjoyer.” Here ‘I’ and ‘He’ denote personality. This has also been substantiated in the Brahma Samhitā by the following verse:

*Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ,  
anādirādirgovindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam.*

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has emphatically instructed to speak *hari-katha*, but again He Himself has imposed conditions of the qualities which must be in the speaker for being entitled to speak *hari-katha*. His forceful words indicate that only realized emancipated souls can speak *hari-katha*, and that no conditioned soul of this world is entitled to do so. So how to reconcile these two emphatic instructions of Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakur?

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu imposed the following condition to His personal associates at Sri Chandrashekhara Acharya Bhavan at Sri Mayapur: ‘Only those who have control over their sense-organs will be allowed to witness My pastimes of dancing in the form of Lakshmi Devi’. All the prominent personal associates who were present at that time in the house of Chandrashekhara Acharya, like Sri Advaitacharya Prabhu, Srivas Pandit and others, expressed their regret that they were not entitled to see the dancing of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the form of Lakshmi Devi, as they felt they had no control over their sense-organs. On hearing this, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu smiled and said that they all would become ‘Mahayajneswar’ and there would be no difficulty for them to see the pastimes.

What teaching we are getting from this pastime of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu? A realized emancipated soul cannot think of himself as competent or qualified in understanding the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Realized souls are naturally humble because of their contact with the Highest Reality. Enslaved jivas or conditioned souls are always in contact with the things of the world over which they can dominate. So vanity and egotism are natural to them. Whenever anybody expressed his vanity in any form, he is not entitled to get the qualification of understanding the eternal transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

Now the problem is: how will the neophytes start bhajan or speak *hari-katha*, the highest form of devotion? Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has given advice in regard to this in his writings as well as his personal life. Whenever He started speaking *hari-katha*, He first took absolute shelter to the preceptorial channel. He has said in His teachings that the transcendental Reality can be understood only through hearing from a bona fide *shuddha bhakta* or *sadguru* (*adhokṣaja vastu sravaṇaika vedyā*). He has given emphasis on *śrauta-vāṇi-kīrtan*—to recapitulate what we have heard from the lips of bona fide *shuddha bhakta* with engrossment of mind. We conditioned souls, who aspire to get enhancement in devotion, are entitled to do *anukīrtan*: after intently hearing *hari-katha* from a bona fide devotee to reproduce it, praying the grace of the Guru and the Vaishnavas.

In this context, I am endeavouring in a feeble way to recapitulate the instructive precepts of our Most Revered Gurudeva His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj, by going through His writings as well as to the extent of my memory of hearing His sermons.

Those who according to their respective eligibility have understood or realized the significance of the teachings of the scriptures and the teachings of great saints, may be broadly classified into two categories

(1) Adhirohadāśrayī or Adhyakṣik

(2) Avarohavadāśrayī or Śaraṇāgata

The first regards the method of ascension or empiricism, while the second regards the method of descent or the process of unconditional surrender.

The Supreme Lord is One as He is Absolute or Infinite. Everything is within Him and subservient to Him. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. He is Saccidānanda, meaning all-Existence, all-Knowledge and all-Bliss. As He is the Cause of all causes and there is no cause of Him, He is self-effulgent. As per evidence of śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad, the Supreme Lord is *asamordha*—Nothing is equal to Him or more than Him. Therefore, the only way of realizing the Supreme Lord is by His grace. Grace descends to a completely surrendered soul. As for example, the self-luminous sun can be seen only through its rays. In a like manner, the self-effulgent Supreme Lord can be realized through His grace. The teachings of the authentic scriptures and the teachings of realized personal associates of the Supreme Lord can be understood by their grace through revelation. His Divine Grace Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, founder of ISKCON, has clarified this as follows: “When one is enlightened with the knowledge by which ignorance is destroyed, than his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime.” (Bhagavad Gītā 5.15.)

Our most revered founder-president Srila Gurudeva,

in His representation in the first edition of the Gītā published from Book department of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, has stated: “The empiricists according to their respective merits and intellectual capacity have interpreted differently about the significance of the Transcendental Holy Words of the Supreme Lord. The pride of the glory of their material wisdom acquired by empiricism (by the process of observation and experiment) will never be able to rescue them from the grip of nescience, and there is no possibility of the readers of their books to go beyond the domain of material realm and to reach the target of attaining actual transcendental theological knowledge.”

The synonym of the English word ‘logic’ of the West is ‘Tarkaśāstra’ or ‘Yuktividyā’, in India. They have ascertained two methods of attaining knowledge, which have their basis in reasoning: the inductive method and deductive method. Whatever finite human beings with finite intellect may ascertain, whether inductive or deductive, is actually in the domain of process of ascension, which in India is called Avarohavāda. Induction refers to inferring of general law from particular instances, while deduction refers to inferring of particular instance from general law. In his book Raja Vidya, His Divine Grace Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj is writing: ‘There are two processes for attaining knowledge: one is inductive and the other is deductive. The deductive method is considered to be more perfect. We may take a premise such as, “All men are mortal,” and no one need discuss how man is mortal. It is generally accepted that this is the case. The deductive conclusion is: “Mr. Johnson is a man; therefore Mr. Johnson is mortal.” But how is the premise that all men are mortal arrived at? Followers of the inductive method wish to arrive at this premise through experiment and observations. We may thus study that this man died and that man died, etc.,

and after seeing that so many men have died we may conclude or generalize that all men are mortal, but there is a major defect in this inductive method, and that is that our experience is limited. We may never have seen a man who is not mortal, but we are judging this on our personal experience, which is finite. Our senses have limited power, and there are so many defects in our conditional state. The inductive process consequently is not always perfect, whereas the deductive process from a source of perfect knowledge is perfect. The Vedic process is such a process.’

In India, there are disciplic successions coming from Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Nimbārka, Viṣṇusvāmī and other great sages. The Vedic literatures are understood through the superior spiritual masters. Arjuna understood the Bhagavad-gītā from Kṛṣṇa, and if we wish to understand it, we have to understand it from Arjuna, not from any other source. If we have any knowledge of Bhagavad-gītā, we have to see how it tallies with the understanding of Arjuna. If we understand Bhagavad-gītā in the same way that Arjuna did, we should know that our understanding is correct. This should be the criteria for our studying of the Bhagavad-gītā. If we actually want to receive benefit from the Bhagavad-gītā, we have to follow this principle. The Bhagavad-gītā is not an ordinary book of knowledge which we can purchase from the market place, read and merely consult a dictionary to understand. This is not possible. If it were, Kṛṣṇa would never have told Arjuna that the science was lost. It is not difficult to understand the necessity of going through the disciplic succession to understand Bhagavad-gītā. If we wish to be a lawyer, an engineer or doctor, we have to receive knowledge from the authoritative lawyers, engineers and doctors. A new lawyer has to become an apprentice of an experienced lawyer, or a young man studying to be a doctor has to become an intern and work with those who are already

licensed practitioners. Our knowledge of a subject cannot be perfectionalized unless we receive it through authoritative sources. This has been acknowledged in the Bhagavad Gita:

“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.”

An evidence in this regard can also be given from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Bhagavan Vāman Deva said to Śukrācārya, the renowned guru of demons: “Your disciple Bali Maharaj is in difficulty, it will be befitting for you to perform yajña for his benefit.” On hearing this, Śukrācārya smiled and replied,

*mantratas tantrataś chidraṁ, deśa-kālārha-vastutaḥ  
sarvaṁ karoti niśchidraṁ, anusankīrtanaṁ tava*

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 8.23.16

“My disciple has seen you and you have graced him by setting your Holy Lotus Feet on his head. He has performed ‘Anusankirtan’, meaning that he has recapitulated about your Name, Form, Attributes, Pastimes, after hearing about these from a bona fide *shuddha-bhakta*. Where is the necessity of performing *karmakāṇḍa yajña*? By utterance of your Holy Name and glories, all defects in the utterance of mantra and tantra (inversion of sequence) and sinister influence of place, time and articles are removed.” *Anusankirtan* means recapitulation of the glories of Supreme Lord, heard through a bona fide preceptorial channel. Here also a condition is imposed, that the hearing should be from a bona fide devotee, not from a professional singer.

In order to establish how to sing the glories of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and how to perform *Harinam*

without offence, it is necessary to remember the teachings of authentic scriptures. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur in His explanation of the first verse of Śikṣāṣṭaka, written by Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, has stated that there are infinite forms of devotion, of which chanting of the Holy Name is the foremost. Nine principal devotional forms are stated by Prahlād Maharaj in the seventh canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Srila Rupa Goswami has given a list of sixty-four kinds of principal devotional forms in his book called *Srī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Supreme Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has given the following five principal forms of devotion: Association of sadhus, chanting of the Holy Name, hearing of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, dwelling in transcendental realm of Mathura Dham, and worship of Deities with firm faith. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has emphatically said that out of these five forms of devotion, Nam-Sankirtan is the best.

*bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti  
'kṛṣṇa-prema', 'kṛṣṇa' dite dhare mahā-śakti  
tāra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana  
niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana  
Srī Caitanya Caritāmṛta— Antya Līla 4.70-71*

“Nine forms of devotion are foremost amid all devotional forms. Krishna has got immense power to bestow Krishna-prema. Again, Nāma Sankīrtan is the best of all forms of devotion. One can get the highest wealth of Krishna-prema by doing Harinam without offences.”

The scriptural evidence of Bṛhad Nārāyaṇa Purāṇa gives triple emphasis that there is no other way except Harinam in Kaliyuga— *'Harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam, kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiṃ anyathā'*. Krishna-dvaipayana Veda Vyas Muni has concluded

his last and highest gift, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, with the following verse:

*nāma-saṅkīrtanam yasya  
sarva-pāpa praṇāśanam  
praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas  
taṁ namāmi hariṁ param  
Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.13.23*

“ I bow down to Supreme Lord Hari, the chanting of Whose Name can eradicate the cause of all sins and taking shelter of whom can completely destroy all miseries.”

The criterion to understand what we are to do and what we are not to do, is stated in the Padma Purāṇa and is also mentioned in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, as well as in *Srī Caitanya Caritāmṛta* (Madhya līlā 22.109):

*smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit  
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

The devotional scriptural prescript is always to remember Vishnu and never to forget Him. There may be hundreds of devotional forms. The purpose of the list of devotional forms, or positive assertions, is to remember Krishna and the purpose of the list of prohibitions, or negative assertions, is never to forget Krishna. Any action which may not be in the list of prescribed devotional forms but makes us remember Krishna is allowed, and any action which may not be in the list of prohibitions but makes us forget Krishna is prohibited. The aspirant should carefully try to understand the implication of the devotional scriptural evidence of Vaiṣṇava-cintāmaṇi, mentioned in *Hari-bhakti-vilās*—

*agha-cchit smaraṇam viṣṇor  
bahv-āyāsenā sādhyate  
oṣṭha-spandana-mātreṇa  
kīrtanam tu tato varam*

“It is extremely difficult for conditioned souls to remember Vishnu, Who can eradicate all sins but by moving the lips. Uttering the Holy Name is uttered it is supremely superior to the devotional practice of remembrance.” The purpose of remembrance will be well-served by uttering the Holy Name.

*Kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra, nāma haite haya sarva-  
jagat-nistāra*

“Krishna appears in the Form of ‘Name’ in Kaliyuga. The whole world will be rescued by Nāma, the Holy Name.”

Before I joined the institution, I had the impression that whatever I learnt in the schools and colleges should be excluded or forgotten because all these teachings were for material benefit and had no connection with spiritualism. In fact, in my life in the family, I had no aptitude to speak to many friends and to recite or speak in any meeting. I used to hear and did not speak. After joining the institution, I had great interest in hearing *hari-katha* from Most Revered Srila Gurudeva and Gurudeva used to take me with Him everywhere at a stretch for a year and He wanted me to write letters as per His dictation. By that I had the opportunity to know many answers of the questions of the aspirants. After one year all of a sudden, He ordered me to speak in a meeting at ‘Sri Shyamananda Gaudiya Math’, in Midnapore (West Bengal). I was perturbed because I had no aptitude and no capacity to speak in the meetings. I thought that delivering speech was not a qualification of worshipping Krishna. If I would have known earlier that the qualification of delivering

speech is also required for Krishna-bhajan, I might not have joined the institution. I became unbalanced on hearing this direct order from Most Revered Gurudeva. Due to spiritual obligation, I had to stand in the meeting and I was incessantly praying for the grace of Nityananda Prabhu to rescue me from this peril. I could remember the first hymn written by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur in ‘Śaraṇāgati’ and explained that for 15 minutes. I was a bit astonished how I could speak. After that Gurumaharaj used to order me on several occasions to speak in the meetings. To remove my doubt, Gurumaharaj, said that aspirants of devotional practice should not have the aptitude to deliver speeches, but they must do *hari-kirtan*, meaning that they should recapitulate what they had heard from Guru and Vaishnavas. The target of speaking should be for satisfaction of Krishna and not for any other ulterior motive. Hari-kirtan is the highest devotional form in Kaliyuga, which is confirmed by Srila Jiva Goswami:

*‘yadyapi anyā bhaktiḥ kalau kartavyā tadā, kīrtanākhyā-  
bhakti-samyogenaiva’*

“Although practice of other devotional forms are proper in Kaliyuga, but it should be done with Kirtan bhakti.”

One can speak about the glories of Sri Hari after hearing from a bona fide devotee—*ādau śravaṇam*. Without hearing from a realized soul, nobody can properly perform *kīrtan-bhakti*. In the explanation of the verse of Gītā (4.34), *tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā, upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has interpreted *Praṇipāt* (or *Śaraṇāgati*) as follows: “ One who hears hari katha intently from shuddha bhakta, actually has submitted to Supreme

Lord Sri Hari.” Even in the highest Transcendental Realm Goloka Vrindavana, the foremost devotees (*gopis*) relish the sweetness of the Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes of Sri Krishna, always afresh. Narration and also hearing of the glories of Sri Krishna never becomes stale. That transcendental sweetness of Sri Krishna always remains afresh and new. Entrance to that Transcendental Realm is only through hearing. Here in this world, sound is the finest element, but in Transcendental Realm sound is the first appearance of getting contact of the Transcendental Reality. That transcendental sound is designated as *Śabda brahman*, which is completely distinct from material sound. Sound emanating from material egos is material sound, but sound emanating from transcendental ego is transcendental sound.

In the material sound of this world, sound and the thing indicated by the sound are different. As for example, by uttering the word ‘water’, one cannot quench his thirst. The ‘water’ word is different from ‘water’ thing. But in Transcendental Realm, Transcendental Sound is identical with Transcendental Reality. This Transcendental Sound descends. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur in His explanation of the first verse of Śikṣāṣṭaka, has written at the beginning of His writing— ‘Sri Kṛṣṇa Kīrtanāya Namaḥ’. Worldly people cannot understand the implication of these words. We can make obeisance to a person, how one can bow down to ‘Kṛṣṇa Kīrtana’? ‘Sri Kṛṣṇāya Namaḥ’, ‘Sri Rāmāya Namaḥ’, ‘Sri Nārāyaṇāya Namaḥ’ are easy to understand but ‘Sri Kṛṣṇa Kīrtanāya Namaḥ’ seems to be absurd. Here Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur indicates by His words that ‘Krishna Kirtan’ and ‘Krishna’ are both are identical. One who has this realization is entitled to do Kṛṣṇa-Nāma. Just after that, in the explanation of the above verse, He has written: *Srī Kṛṣṇa Sankīrtanakārī Gurudevera jaya hauk*, meaning: “I pray for

the grace of guru, who can actually utter the Name of Krishna.” According to Him, the Name and Named are identical. In the third line, Saraswati Goswami Thakur writes *Srī Kṛṣṇa Sankīrtana Vighraha Gaurāṅga Māhāprabhur jaya hauk*, meaning: “I pray for the grace of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhū, Whose *vighraha* (Form) is identical with Krishna-*sankīrtan*.” By these three expressions at the beginning, Saraswati Goswami Thakur has explained everything. Hence submission to a bona fide guru or a bona fide *shuddha bhakta* signifies hearing of the glories of Krishna from them. We are to hear from such realized souls who can speak *hari-katha*. Others are not entitled to speak *hari-katha*.

According to Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhū, the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the quintessence of all scriptures and the highest authentic scriptural evidence in support of His message of All-embracing and All-accommodating Transcendental Divine Love. Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Veda Vyas Muni is universally regarded as Guru by all schools of thought of Sanatan Dharma in India. He himself has stated in his own writing Garuḍa Purāṇa:

*artho 'yam brahma-sūtrāṇām bhāratārtha-vinirṇayah,  
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau vedārtha-paribṛmhitah'*

“Srimad Bhāgavatam is the meaning of the Brahma Sūtras. The significance of Mahābhārata and the world-famous Gītā is to be understood in the light of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. The Bhāgavatam is the commentary of Kāma Gāyatrī. The import of the teachings of the four Vedas is retained and expanded in Bhāgavatam.”

Devotees are also well acquainted with the biography of Veda Vyas Muni in which he made the pastimes of not getting Eternal Bliss by expanding the Vedas, writing Vedānta, the eighteen Purāṇas, the Mahābhārata and the

Bhagavad Gītā. He prayed for the grace of his gurudeva Narada Goswami and went to Badrinarayan, a historical place by the side of river Saraswati. Narada Goswami appeared and advised him to sing the glories of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna for His satisfaction. He taught Veda Vyas Muni the ‘Caturloki Bhāgavat’. By the grace of his Guru, the transcendental glories of Sri Krishna were revealed in his heart and he wrote Srimad Bhāgavatam consisting of 12 cantos and 18,000 verses, and received the highest objective— Eternal Bliss.

Veda Vyas Muni narrated the glories of Sri Krishna first to his disciple-son Sri Sukadeva Goswami. Actually, the first sitting of the Bhāgavatam was at Badrinarayan, where the speaker was Veda Vyas Muni and listener was only one: Sukadeva Goswami. Badrinarayan is Vaikuntha Dham. So the place of speaking and hearing was holy and completely calm and serene. The second sitting of the Bhāgavatam was at Sukartal by the side of the bank of the Ganges—still now quiet and secluded. At Sukartal, the speaker was Sukadeva Goswami and listeners were many prominent *rishi-munis* and kings of India. There was pin-drop silence. No disturbance of the hubbub of the worldly people. Parikshit Maharaj, being cursed by a Brahmin, went to Sukartal to get advice of the *rishi-munis*. The sages advised different paths. Parikshit Maharaj was puzzled and took shelter to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna to show him the actual path for eternal welfare. Subsequently, Sukadeva Goswami set his holy footprints there and advised him to only hear Bhāgavatam—Krishna-katha. Parikshit Maharaj was attracted by his spiritual personality, heard him for seven days continuously, without taking food, water and rest. We have to carefully note about the selection of the place for *hari-katha*. The third and last sitting of the Bhāgavatam was at Naimisaranya, where sixty thousand rishis heard the

Bhāgavatam from Suta Goswami. Here also the place selected was holy, calm and serene and there was pin-drop silence. Supreme Lord Sri Krishna in the form of Guru (Baladeva Prabhu) taught one lesson here. Lomaharshan Suta Goswami started speaking the Bhāgavatam, but Baladeva Prabhu punished him for his vanity and replaced him by his son Uggrasrava Suta Goswami.

Sri Baladeva Prabhu has a direct connection with the living beings of the cosmos. As such he has natural affection for all, especially for human beings who have been given discriminating power to understand good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. The human birth is befitting for worship of Sri Krishna. Baladeva Prabhu is the All-pervading Function-Holder of the Personal Godhead Sri Krishna, and also is the Prime Source of the All-embracing, All-pervading, All-extending Energy as depicted by Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakur. Sri Krishna in the Form of Baladeva Prabhu engages the conditioned souls in His service. A special excellent characteristic of Vishnu is that even if a person who is hostile to Divinity is killed by Vishnu, he will get deliverance. Out of affection, Baladeva Prabhu regulates and loves the conditioned souls of the universe. Baladeva Prabhu accepts five Forms: Maha Sankarshan, Karanabdhisayi Mahavishnu, Garbhodakshayi, Kshirodaksayi and Shesa. He has appeared as Nityananda Prabhu in Gaur-lila. So for worship of Sri Krishna, the grace of Baladeva Prabhu /Nityananda Prabhu is essential.

In our extensive previous aforesaid discussion, it has been delineated by reasoning and authentic scriptural evidence that the Supreme Lord can only descend to a completely bona fide surrendered soul. No conditioned soul can know the glories of the Unchallengeable Truth by His own efforts through the process of ascension. Unsubmissive

strivers can know nothing about the Supreme Lord and therefore they are incompetent to speak *hari-katha*. I must therefore try to recapitulate whatever I heard from my Most Revered Gurudeva for my own spiritual benefit. Gurumaharaj often used to say that one who knows Krishna (or perceives Krishna by realization) can speak about Him. How can one who has no realization of Krishna speak about Him? As the Supreme Lord is Absolute, His glories are infinite. His transcendental glories will be revealed to the hearts of the bona fide votaries according to the degrees of submission. Degrees of submission to God are ad-infinitum, so revelations of the glories of Divinity will also be ad-infinitum. No votary can sing the glories of Supreme Lord completely. Realization of the incompleteness of the narration of the glories of Sri Krishna will always exist in the heart of a bona fide votary. A sincere devotee will always have the taste of the sweetness of Sri Krishna afresh, it will never become stale. Devotees, according to their degrees of devotion or submission will be entitled to speak to that extent about the glories, Name, Form, Attributes, Personal Associates and Pastimes of Sri Krishna. Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to give a simple instance for clarification of understanding. There is a person bearing a particular name, say 'Rambabu'. The person who has never seen him, never come in contact with him, cannot speak anything about him. The person who has seen him externally, he can speak to some extent about external denominations, like his appearance, his dress and the like. But the person who has come closer to him by way of a master-servant relation will be able to speak about him much more than the person who has seen him from a distance. But between master and servant, due to gravity of reverence the relation is such that both cannot exchange their hearts freely. Love in this relation is restricted by inferiority and superiority complex,

and therefore hampers unrestrained outpouring of thoughts and affection. A servant can speak much more than the indifferent and unconcerned person. Whereas a bosom friend can have entrance into the secret thoughts of Rambabu because of reliance. The friend can know the inner heart and speak about it. Parental love is even more intense than a friendship relation. Especially the mother rears up the child, so her affection for the child is great. She knows many more secret matters of the child than a friend, she even knows any kind of private bodily defects which are not known to others. The mother always thinks of the child as incompetent and inferior, so her intensity of love is much more than a friend. In spite of this tremendous affection, there exists a kind of reservation of heart between parents and child, even between mother and child. Intensity of love between a chaste wife and a chaste husband is the highest, because no portion of the heart of the chaste wife is concealed from her husband and vice versa. The chaste wife's service is unrestricted. She serves with all her sense-organs. As the chaste wife dedicates herself totally for the service of her husband, the chaste husband is compelled to dedicate himself fully for his devoted wife. This is natural. This has been corroborated by scriptural evidence:—

*mayi nirbaddha-hṛdayāḥ  
sādhavaḥ sama-darśanāḥ  
vaśe kurvanti mām bhaktyā  
sat-striyaḥ sat-patim yathā*

Srīmad Bhāgavatm 9.4.66

Supreme Lord Narayana spoke to Durvasa Rishi, "Sadhus, who have one-pointed devotion to Me, have equal vision to all. As a chaste wife by her desireless pure love subdues her chaste husband, a pure devotee by his causeless devotion subdues Me."

This world is the perverted reflection of the Highest Transcendental Spiritual Realm— Sri Goloka Vrindavana. All actual delightful love-relations exist with Supreme Lord Sri Krishna in Goloka Vrindavana. That which is the highest in the Transcendental Spiritual Realm, is the lowest here and that which is the lowest in Goloka Vrindavana, is the highest in this world. This world is the outcome of the Lord's material energy consisting of three primal qualities— Sattvaḥ, Rajaḥ and Tamaḥ. The reflection of the Transcendental Realm in this material world is reverse. An illustration can be given here for convenience of understanding. The reflected form of a tree which is near a pond is observed upside-down. In a like manner, the Transcendental Realm when reflected in the material energy is seen as reverse.

The soul is a minute particle of consciousness. Having the qualities of thinking, feeling and willing, the soul is an eternal servant of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. The conditioned soul has three aspects: the gross physical body, the subtle astral body and the real self. The Gross body is composed of earth, water, fire, air and ether and the subtle body consists of mind, intelligence and perverted ego. These two bodies are the outcome of the material energy (*apara* potency) of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, and the real self is the outcome of the superior energy (*para* potency, according to the scriptural evidence of the Gītā. Sri Krishna is the owner of the material energy and the superior energy. He is thus the owner of the gross body, the subtle body as well as the soul. As my energy remains for me and serves me, likewise the Lord's energy or parts of His energy will remain for Him and serve Him. When the conditioned spirit-soul, by the misuse of his relative independence, becomes averse to Sri Krishna and does not want to serve Him, he gets a non-eternal relation of master and servant in this world where separation

grief is inevitable. When the spirit soul does not want to serve Krishna in delightful friendship relation, he will be hurled down in this world and get a non-eternal friendship relation. When he does not want to love Krishna as son, he will get a non-eternal son. Lastly, when he does not want to serve Krishna as husband, he will get a non-eternal consortherhood of love in the material world. As much attachment we shall have for non-eternal relations, so much will be the separation grief.

As per degree of dedication to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and His personal associates, so much will be the revelation of the transcendental sweet glories of Sri Krishna and His associates in the hearts of the bona fide devotees. Unsubmissive non-devotees have absolutely no jurisdiction to enter into it. This has been amply discussed earlier. Our most revered Gurudeva, occasionally used to say in his sermons: "There is disparity in the degrees of dedication amongst devotees. Therefore there exist so much degrees of revelation of the glories of the Divinity. Dhruva and Prahlad both perceived God by realization. But Prahlad's realization of Divinity is superior to Dhruva's realization. Dhruva's devotion was at first actuated by desire to get more property than his father, but after seeing Nārāyaṇa, Dhruva's desire for getting more property than his father disappeared. Prahlad's devotion however was without any material motive from the beginning. As Prahlad's dedication is more than Dhruva's, his attainment or realization of Divinity is superior to Dhruva. Again, Prahlad and Hanuman both are bona fide devotees. But Hanuman's dedication is supremely superior to Prahlad because Prahlad had no scope to get opportunity to devote himself to serve his object of worship Sri Narasimha Deva directly, because of the hostile environment. He could only engage in *smaran bhakti* (practice of meditation). Hanuman however had the scope of

carrying out the orders of his beloved eternal Master Sri Ramchandra and to serve Him in various ways. Hanuman had the opportunity to devote his intellect, mind, words and sense-organs for the service of Sri Ramchandra, while Prahlad had no such scope. Hence Hanuman's dedication or contact with Sri Ramchandra is definitely much more than Prahlad. So Hanuman's attainment of Divinity is higher than Prahlad's. Further, if it is considered without prejudice, the Pandava's (especially Arjuna's) domination and control over their object of worship Sri Krishna is definitely superior to Hanuman's. Hanuman can never imagine that he can direct his Eternal Master, but Arjuna ordered Krishna to place the chariot in the middle of the two warring groups so that he could see the warriors of the rival opponents. The Supreme Lord, being subdued by the devotion of Arjuna, serves Arjuna as a driver. Therefore Arjuna's attainment of Sri Krishna is definitely more than Hanuman.

Sri Krishna made the pastimes of being born in the 'Yadu dynasty' or 'Yadav family'. The Yadavas are closely connected with Sri Krishna and unhesitatingly sport with Him like playmates, climbing up and down each others back and shoulder. Due to the unrestricted mixing with Sri Krishna they are more fortunate and blessed than other devotees like the Pandavas. Amongst the Yadavas, Uddhav is foremost. Uddhav Maharaj is the disciple of Brihaspati, chief-advisor of the Yadavas and dearest bosom friend of Sri Krishna.

In reply to the question of Uddhav how dear a devotee is to Him, Sri Krishna's stated:

*na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ  
na ca śaṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavān  
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.15*

'How can I say how dear a devotee is to Me? Even my son Brahma, who originated from Me, is not as dear to Me as My devotee.' On hearing this, Uddhav was astonished and perplexed. Sri Krishna again reiterated, "O Uddhav, why are you so stupefied? Even Shiva, who has emerged from Me, is not so dear to Me as a devotee. Don't be bewildered, even My brother Baladeva, My consort Lakshmi Devi, or my Own Self are not so much attractive to Me than the attraction of the pure devotion of a pure devotee." Uddhav was thunderstruck on hearing this and asked, "Who is that devotee?" Sri Krishna said smiling, "O Uddhav, you are my dearest and none else."

Uddhav was happy on hearing Sri Krishna's high impression about him and a sense of pride appeared in his mind. One special characteristic nature of Supreme Lord is to humble anybody's pride or self-esteem. Understanding the inner thought of Uddhav, Sri Krishna politely divulged His heart's desire to Sri Uddhav in this way: "There are some devotees affectionately inclined to Me in Sri Vrajadham. My parents, the *gopas* (milkmen) and *gopis* (milkwomen), have been spending their time with grief due to their long separation from Me. You should go there soon to console them by giving them the news of my well-being." Submissively obeying the order of Sri Krishna, Sri Uddhav departed from Dwaraka by chariot and reached Sri Vrajadham in the evening. At that time cows were returning from the grazing ground, and by the treading of the cows the area was enveloped with dust. The *gopis* could not see the chariot, but by their singing of the glories of Sri Balaram and Sri Krishna and lighting of lamps in the evening, Vrajadham's blooming sweetness was manifested.

On his arrival at Sri Vrajadham, Sri Uddhav first came in contact with Sri Nanda Maharaj at Nanda-Bhavan.

Sri Nanda Maharaj received Sri Uddhav cordially, understanding him as non-different from Vāsudev-Kṛṣṇa. He entertained him sumptuously with good dishes. After that both went to bed to sleep in the night, lying down side by side. Nanda Maharaj had the opportunity to speak his heart to Uddhav. Actually there was an outburst of intense grief due to the long separation from his beloved child Krishna, and he was profusely weeping all the time. He expressed his perturbation of heart in this way— “O Uddhav! I am very anxious to know the well-being of Sri Vasudev, Sri Devaki Devi and their son Krishna, and whether Krishna remembers us, His playmates, His bosom friends, Gokul Mahaban and Giriraj Govardhan. We feel horripilated by thinking how Krishna saved us from awful calamities such as a forest-fire, storms, inundation, many dreadful demons. We become nonplussed when we see the sweet footprints of Krishna everywhere in Vrajamandal. As Krishna and Balaram are children, we become motionless by thinking how they could fight against the evil king Kamsa, the formidable wrestlers Chanur and Mustik and the dreadful gigantic mad elephant Kabalayapir. Now we sometimes feel what Sri Garga Rishi has said, that the Supreme Lord has appeared as Krishna and Balaram, may be true.” Nanda Maharaj’s voice was choked and he could not speak. Tears were flowing down from his eyes and milk was oozing out from the breasts of mother Yashoda Devi out of tremendous affection for the child Krishna. Uddhav was overwhelmed with delight by seeing the extraordinary parental affection of Nanda and Yashoda. Uddhav narrates the glories of Nanda Maharaj with these words—

*yuvām ślāghyatamau nūnam dehināmihamānada  
nārāyaṇe ’khila-gurau yatkr̥tā matirīdṛśī  
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.46.30*

‘Such affectionately inclined sagacity is revealed in you for Narayana-Krishna, Who is Guru of the whole universe. Therefore both of you have become the most revered of all living beings, and are the object of worship for all.’

That whole night Nanda Maharaj and Uddhav spent with Krishna-katha. When next morning after sunrise the *gopis* saw a chariot at the gate of Vraja, they became panicky, thinking it to be Akru’s chariot. As the complexion, yellow loin cloth, lotus eyes and figure of Krishna and Uddhav were completely identical, the *gopis* thought Krishna had come. Being overwhelmed with joy they immediately reported this good news to the foremost *gopi*, Srimati Radhika. Radhika removed their wrong notion by saying, “If Krishna would have come, various symptoms would have been manifested in me. I think some great devotee of Krishna has come, and I have the aptitude to adore him as a devotee.” Later on after inquiry, the *gopis* understood that Uddhav had come from Dwaraka as per direction of Krishna.

The *gopis* directly approached Sri Uddhav and requested him to go with them to a secluded place, far away from Nandagram, so that they could speak to him without any hesitation. They wanted to avoid any outburst of their long suppressed separation grief for Krishna before the senior *gopas* and *gopis*. Uddhav agreed to their proposal and went to a secluded forest, well known amongst devotees as ‘Uddhav-Kewari’ or ‘Uddho-Kriya’. All the *gopis* surrounded Uddhav and divulged their tremendous agony for their long estrangement from Krishna with appalling eyes, speaking to him in plaintive voices and with heartrending words. Upon seeing the extreme separation grief of the *gopis*, who were deliriously singing the glories of Krishna with sweet voices, Uddhav was utterly stupefied by the unfathomable deep love

of the *gopis*. He then submitted his prayer to be born as herb, shrub or creeper and thus be blessed with the dust of the lotus feet of *gopis*:

*āsāmaho carāṇa-reṇu-juṣāmahaṃ syām  
vrndāvane kimāpi gulma-latauṣadhīnām  
yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-pathamca hitvā  
bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhirvimṛgyām*  
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.47.61

“Alas! May I have the good fortune to be born in Vrindavana Dham as shrub, creeper or herb, which are blessed with the opportunity of serving the lotus feet of the most sanctified *gopis*. The *gopis* have renounced their beloved kinsmen, who are difficult to be disowned, and they even abandoned the virtuous path as enjoined by the Vedas, for the sake of worshipping the lotus feet of Mukunda, which are cherished by emancipated saints.”

*vande nanda-vraja-strīṇām pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ  
yāsām hari-kathodgītām punāti bhuvana-trayam*  
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.47.63

Uddhav Maharaj, being thoroughly moved by the unblemished perfect devotion of the *gopis*, has sung in adoration: “I continuously narrate the glories of the dust particles of the lotus feet of the *gopis*, (I have no audacity to sing about the glories of the lotus feet of the milkwomen of Vrajadham, I can only sing about the glories of the devotees blessed by the *gopis*, i.e., the dust particles of their own lotus feet), because their *hari-katha* can sanctify the three worlds.” The purport of this verse is that the *gopis* and their own personal associates have dedicated themselves completely to Sri Krishna and His entourage, and as such they actually know the glories of Sri Radha-Krishna and can speak about Them.

In conclusion, it will be inspiring if we can remember the inconceivable wonderful love for Krishna of the *gopis*, stated briefly as follows. Our revered spiritual masters used to narrate one topic as an illustration to understand the highest pre-eminence of the *gopis*. Once, Sri Krishna displayed the pastime of having a severe headache in His palace at Dwaraka. At that time Sri Narada Muni came to meet Krishna and was perplexed to hear about His headache. Narada never heard of such a thing before and was at a loss to ascertain what to do. Witnessing restlessness of his beloved Master, Narad asked Krishna, “O beloved Master, You are the Supreme Lord, You are omniscient, so please tell me the remedy of the disease of Your headache.” Krishna replied, “There is one panacea for getting recovery from this headache. If you can bring the dust of the feet of a devotee and apply that to my head, I shall be cured.”

Narada Muni was contemplating, ‘I am a devotee, but how can I give the dust of my feet on the head of my Most Revered Supreme Lord. If I do this, I shall go to inferno.’ Thus he went to Satyabhama, Rukmini and the other sixteen thousand one hundred six consorts of Krishna to ask for the dust of their feet. However, no queen of Krishna agreed to give the dust of their feet. How can a chaste wife allow the dust of her feet to be applied to the head of her object of worship, her husband? They all chastised Narada for this impossible proposal. When Narada, with frustration of heart, returned to the palace to meet Sri Krishna, Krishna made the pastimes of being more restless. Seeing this Narada became confounded. To console Narada, Krishna said, “O Narada, there are some devotees in Vrajadham, who have love for me. If you go there and ask for foot-dust, they will give you. Don’t be worried.”

When Narada reached Vrajadham on Krishna’s

advice, all of Krishna’s personal associates surrounded him with eagerness to know about the well-being of Krishna. Perceiving the extreme anxiety and worries of the *gopis*, Narada remained silent. After being repeatedly asked, Narada finally said: “Krishna had serious headache.” On hearing this some of the *gopis* fainted. Some other *gopis* said with great regret: “When Krishna is ill, why have you come here leaving Him behind?” Then Narada replied that Krishna assured him that if he could get the dust of the feet of a devotee to be put on His head, Krishna would recover from His headache. The *gopis* immediately retorted and said, “O Naradji, you are a devotee, you could have given the dust of your feet, and there were so many queens in Dwaraka, they could have given.” Narada said, “How can a servant put the dust of his feet on the head of his Master? How can the wives of Krishna put the dust of their feet on the head of their respected husband?” The *gopis* were irritated by Narada’s reply and said: “Ah! So long you have given trouble to Krishna unnecessarily. You can take dust of our feet as much as you want and immediately go there to put it on the head of Sri Krishna. If by our foot-dust Krishna gets relief, we are ready to embrace the condemnation of hell for eternity.”

This, then, is the extraordinary specialty of *gopi-prema*. The *gopis* do not consider their own difficulty, but want the satisfaction of Krishna alone.

## *Vaishnav Aparadh*

Offence committed to Vaishnavas

Two devotees of Barasat (Calcutta) recently revealed their mental agony to the revered President Acharya of the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, after having gone through some harmful and heart-rending writings. In the book under discussion, there were instants of vilification of our Siksha Gurus?prominent and dear personal associates of Nityalilapraavishta Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. This vilification is extremely detrimental to the eternal devotional welfare of the votaries. As the purpose of their appeal, the devotees stated that they found it to be necessary to take immediate steps and to raise an objection to such trend of thought, for the eternal benefit of all sincere aspirants on the path of pure devotion. Under these circumstances, I shall try to remember the authentic scriptural instructions as taught by our Guruvarga, in order to purify my mind for the attainment of eternal devotional welfare—the objective as directed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

It will be relevant here to quote a terse saying from Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami’s own writing, ‘Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita’, regarding Sri Raghunath Bhatta Goswami, a personal associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who was one of the prominent six Goswamis and the son of Sri Tapan Misra of East Bengal.

grāmya-vārtā nā śune, nā kahe jihvāya  
kṛṣṇa-kathā-pūjādite aṣṭa-prahara yāya  
vaiṣṇavera nindya-karma nāhi pāḍe kāṇe  
sabe kṛṣṇa bhajana kare,—ei-mātra jāne  
Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Antya, 13/132-133

It is to be understood that Sri Raghunath Bhatta Goswami never heard or spoke *gramyavarta*, which Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has explained as follows. (vide Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, 6/236). *Gramya* denotes domestic married family life, in which one always thinks about non-eternal relations towards wife and children. It also denotes material benefits. Gossiping about such worldly marital relations or material benefits is called *gramyavarta*. It is not befitting for an anchorite or a Vaishnava to engage in this.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has elaborated on this in the first two verses of his commentary on Upadeshamrita, written by Srila Rupa Goswami. There he mentions that any discussion except for *Harikatha* is fruitless idle talk. The desire for engaging one's words only for the satisfaction of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna will positively stop the speaking of idle words. Sri Raghunath Bhatta Goswami engaged his whole time everyday in speaking about and worshipping Krishna. In his commentary, Srila Saraswati Thakur has stated thus: "Two categories of condemnable actions, namely that action by which one loses the qualification as a Vaishnava (i.e. aversion to worship Krishna) and illicit connection with women, are quite reverse to pure Vaishnavism. It is the duty of a Vaishnav-acharya to try his best to protect Vaishnavas who have taken his shelter, so that they can be rescued from the above two abominable practices. Sri Raghunath Bhatta Goswami did not play the pastimes of a *madhyam-adhikari* Vaishnava (the second higher stage of a Vaishnava), of rescuing conditioned souls who have no faith and are of abominable character. Sri Raghunath Bhatta Goswami is a Vaishnava of the highest order, or *uttam* Bhagavat, because he sees that all are worshipping Krishna. Whether persons accept it or not accept it, all are eternal servants of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. If anybody does not admit this, he will be

ruined by his contempt."

The actual perception of a topmost Vaishnava is that all are worshipping Krishna, either with a direct relation or an indirect relation, but that he himself is not worshipping properly. This sort of humbleness exists in him always. The conception of an egoistic aspirant with ulterior desires is just the reverse. He thinks only he is sincerely worshipping, while others are not. He has this false vanity due to the influence of nescience, and as a result he is committing offence to Vaishnavas in the name of *Haribhajan* (worship of God).

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ  
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ  
Srimad Bhagavatam 11/2/45

'He is certainly the highest Bhagavat (sincerest true devotee), who perceives the appearance of his object of worship (God) in every living being (or his all-pervading divine service mood in all beings) and the existence of all living beings in his beloved Lord.'

sthāvara-jaṅgama dekhe, nā dekhe tāra mūrṭi  
sarvatra sphuraye tāra iṣṭa-deva-mūrṭi  
(Pāṭhāntar)— sarvatra haya tāra iṣṭa-deva-sphūrṭi  
Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 8/273

'Transcendental Divine Love of realized devotees is such that whatever they behold, whether immobile objects or mobile living beings, they see the manifestation of the divine relation of Krishna everywhere, without seeing their outside external forms.'

vaiṣṇavera guṇa-grāhī, nā dekhaye doṣa,  
kāya-mano-vākye kare vaiṣṇava-santoṣa  
Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Adi, 8/62

Pandit Haridas, disciple of Sri Ananta Acharya (disciple of Sri Gadadhar Pandit Goswami), is the munificent and love-incarnate form of Krishna and is also a descent of Sudevi (one of the dearest eight sakhis) always sees qualities in Vaishnavas and never their defects. His life is completely dedicated to the service of Vaishnavas by body, mind and words.

One blessed devotee has written the extraordinary glories of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. The hymn written by him is adored by all disciples of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. The hymn reads as follows: 'I have heard from the lotus lips of the saints and the Guru that conditioned souls can be rescued by singing the glories of vaishnavas.' His human life is successful if he can realize the significance of the above pithy saying. Vaishnav creed is 'Paramhansa Dharma'.

śrīmad-bhāgavatam purāṇam amalāṁ yad vaiṣṇavānām priyam  
yasmin pāramahasyam ekam amalāṁ jñānam param gīyate  
Srimad Bhagavatam 12/13/18

The Srimad Bhagavatam is the holiest amongst all the eighteen ancient Puranas written by Sri Krishna Davipayan Veda Vyas Muni. The Bhagavat is adored by all Vaishnavas, because pure spiritual knowledge is narrated in there. A swan has the capacity to extract milk from a mixture of milk and water. As a Vaishnav is considered to be a *paramhansa*, (the best amongst all swans), he can extract the essential good qualities of persons by giving up their unnecessary worthless faults. Conditioned souls on the other hand, being enveloped by the three primal qualities of the illusory energy of Supreme Lord (*sattva*, *raja* and *tama*), have got no capacity to see good qualities. They only see defects. As long as they are not competent to understand the superiority of the Vaishnav or the Guru, there is no

possibility of their coming in contact with them.

The Gaudiya Sampradaya is also known as Narottam Parivar. It is therefore relevant to go through the teachings of Srila Narottam Thakur. He has written in his collection of prayers called *prarthana*:

ki rūpe pāibo sevā mūi durācāra  
śrī-gurū-vaiṣṇave rati nā haila āmāra  
aṣeṣa māyāte mana magana haila  
vaiṣṇavete leśamātra rati nā janmila

“As I am indulging in abominable practices, how can I get the service of Sri Guru and the Vaishnavas and intent absorption of mind to them. I am submerged in the boundless ocean of Maya, the Lord’s illusory energy. I do not have an iota of love for the Vaishnavas.” Srila Narottam Thakur has indicated here that the person who has got no capacity to understand the superiority of a Vaishnava or Guru, is condemned as abominable in nature and is an enslaved jiva. There is no possibility for these persons to come in contact with the Guru and the Vaishnava due to the absence of understanding their superiority. One who considers himself as superior, always perceives others inferior to him. As such he will always be in contact with material things which are devoid of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Only a fortunate person who has previous impressions of eternal good deeds, can get the association of pure devotees or bonafide *sadhus*.

The Lord’s grace always comes through a pure devotee. Our most revered Gurudeva used to say: “Bhagavan is certainly gracious to the person who is graced by His devotee.”

\*Madhukari :— Rice, wheat, food articles collected by begging from door to door like the bee gathering honey from flower to flower.

aham bhakta-parādhīno hy asvatantra iva dvija  
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah  
Srimad Bhagavatam 9/4/63

Supreme Lord Narayana said to Durvasa Rishi, “I am subjugated by my devotee. Although I am completely independent, O twice born Brahmin, I have become dependent on my *bhakta* by his devotion. Devout saints have conquered and occupied my heart completely. And persons related to my devotees are also dear to Me.”

There is no doubt the *bhakta* is dear to Bhagavan, for even the relations of a *bhakta* are also dear to Him. The person who possesses actual devotion to Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakur will certainly have love for his own personal associates. Pure devotees have natural love and respect to those who are serving Guru-Vaishnav-Bhagavan as per direction of the personal associates of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. In this context, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s pastimes and teachings as narrated in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita should be especially pursued. Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami has elaborately narrated about this in the Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya Lila, Chapter 15.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, being cordially invited by Vasudeva Sarvabhauma, set His holy footprints at His house and displayed the wonderful pastimes of honoring various good preparations of food offered to Sri Krishna. The wife of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya cooked the food. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya’s daughter’s name is ‘Sathi’ and his son-in-law is ‘Sri Amogh’. Sri Amogh had the nature of vilifying others.

Vasudeva Sarvabhaum’s submission of prayer to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu— Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 15/242-250:—

“You have taken heaps of rice in Govardhan Puja. In comparison to that it is only a morsel of rice. You are God, I am only an insignificant contemptible *jiva*. Kindly accept a morsel of ‘Madhukari’\*.” Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu smiled upon hearing this and took His seat to eat. Bhattacharya cheerfully offered Jagannath Prasad. At that time Amogh, the dignified yet critical son-in-law of Bhattacharya, came there with the desire to see Mahaprabhu eating, but could not enter because Bhattacharya was guarding the gate with stick. When Bhattacharya’s attention was diverted for offering *prasad* Amogh entered, and started criticizing after seeing heaps of rice with the remark: “Ten persons can appease their hunger with this food, so why only one *sannyasi* is taking so much?” On hearing this Bhattacharya turned his face and saw Amogh. Being apprehended, Amogh fled. Bhattacharya hastily rushed to beat Amogh but could not catch him.

Vasudeva Sarvabhaum and his wife became very much disappointed and dejected on hearing the vilification of Mahaprabhu by their son-in-law. The mother of Sathi, while slapping on her head and chest, said: “Let my daughter become a widow.” Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur in his commentary explained in detail the severe consequences of vilification of Vaishnavas with evidence of authentic scriptures. On seeing the dejection of Vasudeva Sarvabhaum and his wife, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu pacified them and then completed taking *prasad*. Vasudeva Sarvabhaum and his wife submitted to the Lotus Feet of Mahaprabhu and prayed to Him to forgive them. Amogh fled and remained confined in a secret place that night. He had an attack of Cholera next day and was bedridden. Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya was pleased to hear about the evil consequence of *aparadh*. Amogh was on the verge of death. Bhattacharya uttered two verses from Mahabharata and the Bhagavatam as

evidence:—

āyuh śriyaṁ yaśo dharma lokān āśiṣa eva ca  
hanti śreyāṁsi sarvāṇi puṁso mahad-atikramah  
Srimad Bhagavatam 10/4/46

Lifetime, wealth, fame, righteousness, benefits here in this world and also hereafter in higher worlds, benediction— all virtues and well-beings of human beings are destroyed by transgression of great saints.

sahaje nirmala ei 'brāhmaṇa'-hr̥daya  
kṛṣṇera vasite ei yogya-sthāna haya  
'mātsarya'-caṇḍāla kene ihān vasāile  
parama pavitra sthāna apavitra kaile

\*\*\*

uṭhaha, amogha, tumi lao kṛṣṇa-nāma  
acire tomāre kṛpā karibe bhagavān  
śuni' 'kṛṣṇa' 'kṛṣṇa' bali' amogha uṭhilā  
premonmāde matta hañā nācite lāgilā

Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 15/274-275, 277-278

On hearing from Gopinath Acharya (the brother-in-law of Vasudeva Sarvabhaum) that Vasudeva Sarvabhaum and his wife had abstained from taking food and that their son-in-law Amogh was on death-bed, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu rushed to the house of Bhattacharya, and while touching the chest of Amogh said: “A Brahmin’s heart is naturally sacred, as it is the fit place for Krishna’s abode. Why have you imbibed in your heart this most abominable malice, and thereby spoiled your pure heart? O Amogh, rise and chant the Holy Name Krishna. All obstacles will be removed.” On hearing this, Amogh arose, and while uttering the holy Name of Krishna started dancing engrossed in ecstasy.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu smiled on seeing the unusual strange divine ecstatic feelings of Amogh. Out of extreme repentance for the offence committed by him, Amogh slapped his cheeks again and again. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu assured that due to His relation with Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, Amogh also deserved to get His compassion.

sārvabhauma-gr̥he dāsa-dāsī, ye kukkura  
seha mora priya, anya jana rahu dūra  
Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 15/284

“Sarvabhaum is so dear to me that even his servant, maid servant and dog of his house are also dear to me, not to speak of any other relation.”

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has stated in his commentary of the above mentioned evidence: “Amogh committed offence by censuring Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He was attacked with the disease of Cholera due to his offence and was about to die. Amogh could not get the scope of removing his offence as he was severely bedridden. Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya and his wife were very dear to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Due to that close relation, He forgave the offence of Amogh, and without punishing rescued him from death and bestowed Krishna Bhakti. Sarvabhaum’s wife had deep love for Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. As Amogh was related with Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya as his son-in-law, he was an object of affection and love. If Amogh is not forgiven for his offence, indirectly it will be considered a kind of punishment to Vasudeva Sarvabhaum and his wife, because they will grief to see if something bad is happening to a person they love. For this reason, by forgiving him Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has manifested His Super-Excellence, Super-Gravity and Super-Munificence.

Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has written about four kinds of offences in the second period of devotional practice in the book ‘Sri Bhajan Rahasya’ compiled by him.

kṛṣṇa nāma svarūpeṣu tadiya citkaṇeṣu ca  
jñeyā budhaganer nityam aparādhāścaturvidhāḥ

These are: (1) offence to the holy Name of Krishna (*Namaparadh*); (2) offence to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna (*Seva-aparadh*); (3) offence to the Lotus Feet of a devotee; (other than devotees) even unjust act to individual spirit soul is also considered offense.

We have heard from our Guruvarga that an unjust act committed to Vishnu or a Vaishnava is considered an offense, and that misdeed done to other living beings is sin. The glow of the Holy Name (*Namabhas*) can destroy sins of millions of births, as in the case of Sri Ajamila, but if anybody commits offence to Vishnu and Vaishnavas, his utterance of the Holy Name is not *Namabhas*. Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has mentioned that cruel behaviour to any individual spirit soul is also *aparadh*. What is the significance of it? Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakur has given his reply to this question in his above mentioned commentary. We should be careful. While going to punish a guilty person, we should see that it does not incur punishment to a devotee. One who wants eternal welfare should be very careful in his behaviour with the Guruvarga or a devotee. A pure devotee has no hostile adverse mentality, personal grudge or dissatisfaction to anybody. A devotee always thinks in case misbehaviour is done to him by somebody, it is the consequence of his own misdeed. He does not blame the person. But the Supreme Lord never tolerates oppression or unjust act inflicted upon a devotee. If anybody out of personal grudge always speaks about the weak-points or defects of others, those defects will surely rebound to the speaker. Anti-devotional and

abominable practices are to be condemned, but it is not good to personally attack anybody out of animosity. There will be reaction of such hostile action and the result will be harmful. Bonafide *sadhus* have no grudge against anybody in this world, but they condemn anti-devotional practices, so that all can achieve the highest good of pure devotion for everyone’s benefit. Our Most Revered Srila Gurudeva often used to say: “The means is justified by the end.” Genuineness of means is justified by the genuineness of the end. If the end is bad, the means will be bad and the fruits of all efforts will end in frustration.

**The greatest hurdle of devotional practice is Vaishnav aparadh**

yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hātī mātā  
upāde vā chiṇḍe, tāra śukhi’ yāya pātā  
Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 19/156

“Vaishnav aparadhā— like a must elephant (elephant in a state of frenzy). Hati-mata— Intense anti-devotional contemptuous mood or vaishnav aparadh in the shape of disregard of Guru—this offence certainly will destroy the bhakti-creeper.” Also vide Chaitanya Charitamrita, Adi, 8/24, ‘Gururavajna’ (disregard of Guru)— To be envious to bonafide Guru who has ontological true knowledge of Holy Name, considering him as a worldly mortal person.

— Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakur

satām nindā nāmnaḥ paramam aparādham vitanute  
yataḥ khyātim yātam katham u sahate tad vigarihām  
Padmapurana

“The vilification of *sadhus* is considered to be the greatest offence to the Holy Name. As the glory of the Holy

Name Krishna is expanded through the *sadhus*, who are fully devoted to the chanting of the Holy Name, how *Nama-prabhu* can tolerate the vilification of such *sadhus*?

In the Gita Sri Krishna has emphatically assured that a sincere soul who wants eternal benefit, can never be condemned to adversity.

Bhagavan said—

pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate  
na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd durgatim tāta gacchati  
Bhagavad Gita, 6/40

Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has analysed the significance of this verse as follows: “O Arjuna, an aspirant who practices Yoga, whether in this world or in the higher worlds, will never be ruined. In fact, a true worshipper of the practice of yoga, which bestows eternal welfare, will never be condemned to distress. The fundamental point is this. Human beings are classified into two groups, *Avidha*, meaning unjust and disapproved by authentic scriptures, and *Vaidha*, meaning just. Those persons who are only after sense-gratification and are not controlled by any regulation are like unregulated beasts. Uncontrolled persons, whether they are civilized or uncivilized, stupid or learned, weak or strong, always act like the beasts. There is no possibility of getting any benefit by their actions. Regulated human beings are of three categories, *karmi*, *jnani* and *bhakta*. *Karmis* can be classified into two groups, *sakam-karmi* and *niskam-karmi*. The group of *sakam-karmis* are hankering after very insignificant pleasures, i.e., they are desirous of non-eternal enjoyments. They may attain heaven or worldly ameliorations, but all these pleasures are non-eternal. Therefore, that which is considered beneficial for them cannot be attained. After getting deliverance from worldly

bondage, eternal bliss is the ultimate object to be attained by human beings. When that eternal bliss is not the objective of our endeavor, then that endeavor is fruitless.

kāma, prema,—doṅhākāra vibhinna lakṣaṇa  
lauha āra hema yaiche svarūpe vilakṣaṇa  
ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā—tāre bali ‘kāma’  
kṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare ‘prema’ nāma

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ataeva kāma-preme bahuta antara  
kāma—*andha-tamaḥ*, prema—*nirmala bhāskara*  
Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Adi, 4/164-165, 171

Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has written in his commentary *Amrit-pravaha Bhasya*: “Desire with the purpose of one’s own enjoyments is called *kama*. Desire for manpower, desire for a son, desire for wealth and the like, such desires are prescribed in the Vedas. All these definitely denote popular religious custom such as modesty, patience, salvation and the like. Fulfilment of one’s own pleasure, love for one’s own family members, disciplinary guidance of family members, scolding and reverence mixed with awe and submission—surely these desires emerge out of impetus for fulfillment of one’s own apparent non-eternal interest. But actually all the desires originating from the conception of the real self, devoted to the knowledge that ‘I am eternal servant of Krishna’, can be accepted as desire for the propitiation of Sri Krishna. All other desires emerging out of the misconception of self, posing ‘I am the enjoyer of the fruits of my own actions’ are born out of lust.

Self-interest is the criterion of conditioned souls to determine what is dear and what is not dear. For the reason of a wrong criterion of self-interest, conditioned souls are burning in the forest fire of this material world. Clashing is

inevitable where there are many centers of interest. There will be no clashing provided that love for the Absolute Reality Sri Krishna becomes the centre of interest. This will also bestow positive good, namely a love-relation to all living-beings. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has taught this cultivation of pure love for Sri Krishna and love for all in relation to Him. This is the real teaching of the Vedas. Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami has indicated it very clearly in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 20/124:-

*veda-sāstra kahe—‘sambandha’, ‘abhidheya’, ‘prayojana’  
‘kṛṣṇa’—prāpya sambandha, ‘bhakti’—prāptyera  
sādhana  
abhidheya-nāma ‘bhakti’, ‘prema’—prayojana  
puruṣārtha-śiromaṇi prema mahā-dhana*

“The Vedas have taught three themes: *Sambandha* (Relation), *Abhidheya* (Means) and *Prayojan* (End). Our relation with Krishna is that he is the Ultimate Object to be attained. The means for attaining the object is *bhakti*, and the ultimate end is pure transcendental divine love—the highest objective and highest wealth.”

Sriman Mahaprabhu has instructed in the third verse of his teachings of Śikṣāṣṭakam to chant the Holy Name of Hari after achieving four qualities:

*trṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā  
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

Excerpt from commentary of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur ‘Sanmodan Bhasya’—

*niraparādhena harināma kṛtaṁ viṣyaviraktijanita dānyam  
nirmatsaratālanḁṛtā dayā,  
mithyābhimāna sūnyatā sarveṣāṁ yathāyogyā sammānanā  
caitāni lakṣṇāni*

Utterance of Harinam without offences will be possible after acquiring these four qualities: humbleness due to indifference to material objects, compassion devoid of envy, thoroughly void of false ego and giving due respect to all. Being adorned with these four qualities, utterance of Holy Name of Krishna will bestow the highest objective. This is the teaching of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has given his exposition in his commentary of Śikṣāṣṭaka: “The consideration of the third verse of Śikṣāṣṭaka is important for bestowing knowledge, so that we cannot commit offence and there is no apprehension of *Namabhas* (glow of the Holy Name) while doing *Harinam*. One whose mind is not inclined to Sri Krishna and is frenzied for worldly enjoyments, can never realize his insignificance. One who has the vanity of the enjoyer-ego cannot be humble. Also, there cannot be endurance in him who has the vanity of being the enjoyer. An enjoyer is never capable of giving up his material ego and desire for worldly name and fame. An enjoyer of the objects of sense-organs can never have the willingness to give respect to another enjoyer of this world. Only a Vaishnava who has dedicated his life for worship of Krishna is humbler than blade of grass, more forbearing than tree, indifferent for his own name and fame, yet always eager to give respect to others.” Srila Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, with unwavering firmness, has used the word ‘never’ to indicate that a person who has misconception of self can never be adorned with the aforesaid four qualities. The teachings of Śikṣāṣṭaka written by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are to be practiced by sincere votaries for their eternal welfare and not for only giving instructions to others. A person who is sincerely practicing in his own life will automatically inspire others through his example.

Our Most Revered Gurudeva very often used to instruct us to be very cautious regarding Vaishnava *aparadh* (committing offence to Vaishnavas). Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the most munificent form of Godhead, did not even tolerate the offence committed by Sachi Devi, what to speak of any other person. One who wants eternal welfare should not take the risk of committing offence to Vaishnavas. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not agree to bestow *Premabhakti* to mother Sachi Devi, in spite of the repeated prayers of Srivas Pandit. Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur, author of Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat, has narrated the prayer of Srivas Pandit in the Madhyakhanda of that book:

(Prarthana— Prayer of Srivas)  
savāra jīvana āi jagatera mātā  
māyā chaḍi prabhu — se sarvajananī  
putra sthāne māyera ki aparādha gaṇi  
yadi vā vaiṣṇva sthāne thāke aparādha  
tathāpiha khaṇḍāiyā karaha prāsād”  
prabhu bole — “upadeśa kahite se pari  
vaiṣṇva aparādha āmi khaṇḍāite nāri  
je-vaiṣṇva-sthāne aparādha haya yā’ra  
durvāsāra aparādha ambarīṣa sthāne  
tumi jāna, tāra kṣya haila kemane  
nāḍāra sthānete āche tā’na aparādha  
nāḍā kṣamilei haya premera prasāda  
advaita-carāṇa dhūli loile mātḥāya  
hoibeka prema-bhakti āmāra ājñāya  
Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat, Madhya, 22/29-36

“Saci Devi is the life of all and the mother of the universe. O beloved Master! Kindly bestow her *bhakti* by giving up *māya*. As You are her son, she is the mother of all. How can a mother commit offence to her son? If there be any committal of offence of her to any Vaishnava, please grace

her by absolving that *aparadh*. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu replied: ‘I can give her instruction, but I cannot remove her Vaishnava *aparadh*. If any offence is committed to a Vaishnava, certainly when that Vaishnava will forgive, it can be removed. You know well how Durvasa Rishi was released from his offence to Ambarish Maharaj. Mother has committed offence to Advaita-Acharya. Provided Advaita-Acharya forgives her, she can get *prem-prasad*, the grace of pure devotion. After taking the dust of the lotus feet of Advaita-Acharya and putting it on her head, she will get *prema-bhakti* by my order of consent.”

On hearing this order, all the devotees approached Advait-Acharya and prayed to him for mother Sachi Devi. Hearing this prayer, Advait-Acharya was shocked and became unconscious. Taking advantage of this opportunity, mother Sachi Devi adorned her head with the dust of the holy feet of Advait-Acharya. Mahaprabhu smiled and offered *prema* to mother by forgiving her offence.

Generally it is seen that the Supreme Lord fulfils the desires of a pure devotee. But here, in spite of the repeated special requests of Srivas Pandit, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu showed His firmness for the submission of prayer of Sachi Mata to Advait-Acharya to forgive her offence. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has warned all by His firmness of not giving *prema* unless offences to the Vaishnava are removed.

aikhane se viṣṇubhakti hoila tomara  
advaitera sthāne aparādha nāhi āra  
śrīmukhera anugraha ṣuniyā vacana  
‘jaya-jaya-hari’ dhvani-hoila takhana  
jananīra lakṣye śikṣāgurū bhagavān  
karāyena vaiṣṇavāparādha sāvadhāna  
śūlapāṇi-sama yadi vaiṣṇavere ninde  
tathāpiha naśa pāya— kahe sāstravṛnde

Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat, Madhya 22/52-55

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said: “Now you have devotion to Vishnu, your offence to Advaita-Acharya is removed.” Hearing this grace from the Lotus Lips of Mahaprabhu, all the devotees applauded by uttering “Jaya Jaya Hari” out of happiness. Playing the pastimes of *shiksha* Guru, the Lord has warned others through His mother for not committing Vaishnava *aparadh*. Even if a person like Sulapani (Mahadeva) censures a Vaishnava, he will be certainly destroyed—all scriptures substantiate this. ‘

*hari-sthāne aparādhe tāre harinām  
tomā sthāne aparādhe nāhika eḍāna*  
Prarthana’ of Narottam Thakur (46)—

“Harinam can rescue one’s committal of offence to Hari, but offence to the Vaishnava cannot be gotten rid of by doing Harinam.”

*brajendra-nandana yei, śacī-suta hoilo sei,  
balarāma hoilo nitāi  
dīna-hīna yata chilo, hari-nāme uddhāriilo,  
tāra śākṣī jagāi mādhai*  
Prarthana’ of Narottam Thakur (4)—

“Brajendranandan has appeared as the son of Saci, and Balaram has become Nityananda. They rescued all wretched and lowly conditioned souls by distributing Harinam. Jagai and Madhai can be cited as witness of it.”

Brajendranandan Krishna, appearing as Most Munificent Form of Godhead, Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, and Balaram, appearing as Grace-incarnate and Most Merciful Nityananda, have not only rescued the fallen souls, but also bestowed them the highest Transcendental Divine Love, which is extremely rare to be achieved. Without killing

the demons, Gaur-Nityananda have killed the demoniac spirit in them. The pastimes of wrath of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu are also for the eternal welfare of all enslaved *jivas*. Committal of offence to a Mahabhagavat is so serious that those who knowingly or unknowingly corroborate in this will receive the serious and harmful consequence. Evidence of this is found in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Antya lila, 3rd Chapter. One condemned brahmin Ramchandra Khan sent a harlot to the forest of Benapol to tarnish the holy character of Namacharya Haridas Thakur. That harlot was rescued by the grace of Haridas Thakur. Sri Nityananda Prabhu was enraged for that abominable heinous act of Ramchandra Khan and punished him and all persons related to him, whether directly or indirectly connected.

*jāti-dhana-jana khānera sakala la-ila  
bahu-dina paryanta grāma ujāda rahila  
mahāntera apamāna ye deśa-grāme haya  
eka janāra doṣe saba deśa ujādaya*  
Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Antya, 3/162-163

“The family dignity, wealth and manpower of Ramchandra Khan, everything was ruined. For a long time that village remained depopulated. Hostile action inflicted upon a true saint in any country or any village will be disastrous. For the committal of fault of one person, the whole area will suffer.”

When a person affected by leprosy, due to his offence to Srivas Pandit, approached Sriman Mahaprabhu and surrendered to His Lotus Feet, Mahaprabhu directed that leper to go to Srivas Pandit to forgive him for the offence.

*kāntā phuṭe jei mukhe, sei mukhe jāya  
pāye kāntā phuṭile ki skandhe bāhirāya*

*ei kahilāun tora nistāra-upāya  
śrīvāsa paṇḍita kṣamile se dukha jāye*

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*yateka anartha haya vaiṣṇava nindāya  
āpane kahile ei śrīvaikunṭharāya  
tathāpiha vaiṣṇavere ninde yei jana  
ta'ra śāstā āche śrīcaitanya-nārāyaṇa*  
Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat, Antya, 4/380-381, 386-387

Mahaprabhu's personal instruction: "When a thorn penetrates into a point in the feet, it will come out from that very point. Can a thorn pricking into the foot come out from the shoulder? I say, this is the only way to get rescue. If Srivas Pandit forgives you, this suffering will be removed. The Supreme Lord of Vaikuntha Himself has stated everything about the evil consequence of vilification of Vaishnavas. If anybody reproaches a Vaishnava in spite of this, his chastener will be Sri Chaitanya-Narayana."

Being asked by a repentant Brahmin, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu prescribed a complete and lasting expiation to him, in all respects of the offence committed to Vaishnavas: one should always and uninterruptedly sing the glories of Vishnu and the Vaishnavas, thereby totally giving up Their vilification:—

*śuna dvija, viṣa kariye mukhe bhakṣaṇa  
sei mukhe kari yabe amṛta grahaṇa  
viṣa haya jīrṇa, deha hayata amara  
amṛta-prabhāve ebe śuna se uttara*

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*je mukhe karilā tumi vaiṣṇava-nindana  
sei mukhe kara' tumi vaiṣṇava-vandana  
kṛṣṇa-yaśa-parānanda-amṛte tomāra*

*nindā-viṣa jata saba kariba saṁhāra*  
Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat, Antya, 3/449-450, 453-455

"O Dvija, hear Me! When embrosia is taken in by a mouth that has swallowed poison, the poison is consumed and the body becomes immortal. Similarly, when by the mouth that vilified the Vaishnavas you sing their glories, all venoms of vilification will be destroyed by the influence of the transcendental bliss and fame of Krishna."

Sri Devananda Pandit of Kulia received deliverance for committal of offence to Srivas Pandit by the ascendancy of his complete dedication to the service of Sri Vakresvar Pandit.

In the case of apparent wrangles and differences of opinions amongst Vaishnavas, when outside persons enter into their wrangles, thereby vilifying Vaishnavas supporting one side and opposing the other side and vice-versa, both will be certainly destroyed.

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\*Premabhakti-candrikā (2)

*'kāma' kṛṣṇakarmārpane, 'krodha' bhaktadveṣi jane,  
'lobha' sādhu-saṅga harikathā  
'moha' iṣṭa lābha bine, 'mada' kṛṣṇa guṇagāne  
niyukta kariba yathā tathā*

There are six cardinal passions that are counted as the vices of human beings. Srila Narottam Thakur advised application of these vices for the service of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna to conquer their ill influence, except for envy or malice. Let there be strong desire to devote all actions for the service of Sri Krishna. Anger is to be applied against the persons hostile to devotees, greed should be for association of bonafide *sadhus* and to hear *hari-katha*, infatuation should not be for loss of worldly wealth or relation, but should be for not being able to get the highest objective: *krishna-prema*. Madness (*mada*) or extreme desire should be for singing the glories of Sri Krishna. Foes will become friends when they are engaged for the service of Sri Krishna.

*vaiṣṇave vaiṣṇave je dekhaha gālāgālī  
paramārthe nahe, ithe kṛṣṇa kutuhālī  
styabhāmā-rukmiṇīye gala-gālī jena  
paramārtha eka tānā, dekhi bhinna hena  
ei mata vaiṣṇave vaiṣṇave bhinna nāi  
bhinna karāyena raṅga caitanyagosāi  
ethe jei eka vaiṣṇavera pakṣa haya  
anya vaiṣṇavera ninde, sei jāya kṣaya*  
Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat, Antya, 4/388-390

“The observance of any reviling amongst Vaishnavas has no actual existence. By their quarrelling Krishna is curiously delighted. Whatever is seen as altercation between Satyabhama and Rukmini is for satisfaction of Krishna, but apparently it is seen different. In this way there is no difference between Vaishnavas. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu makes this difference to taste joyful fun. By seeing these joyful pastimes, if anybody takes the side of one Vaishnava and reproaches another, he will be ruined.”

Srila Rupa Goswami has directed us in the beginning of his Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu to practise ten forms of devotion out of sixty-four kinds. Of these ten prohibitions, he has indicated the tenth prohibition thus: *Kṛṣṇa tadbhakta vidveṣa-vinindādyā-sahiṣṇutā kṛṣṇasya tadbhaktānām ca vidveṣa vinindādīnām sahiṣṇutā asahana-svabhāvatvam*. The meaning of this is that we should not tolerate vilification towards Krishna and Krishna Bhakta. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur has also stressed this in the twentieth chapter of his Jaiva Dharma.

The following statement was once made by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Goswami Prabhupad: “If a person of inferior status speaks about a higher subject matter beyond his jurisdiction, a sensible person will always laugh at it without giving it any importance—this assertion is

absolutely true. Therefore, if the editors of Sri Gaudiya and Nadia-prakash remain silent and take no action in spite of seeing a person’s tendency to disrespect Vaishnava-Gurus, it will be a great setback for the aforesaid editors from their faithful service that the Gurus delegated to them. Every Bhagavat or Vaishnava is extremely tolerant, but one can never forgive such harmful evil person who is disregarding one’s Gurus. For this reason, our eternal Gurudeva Srila Narottam Thakur has sung in a very loud voice: *Krodha bhakta dveshijane*, “Use anger to those who are hostile to devotees.” It is proper to engage anger to those who are envious of devotees. We know as servants of the Vaishnavas that to tolerate disregard to the Guru is not only a sin, but an offence that leads to spiritual fall. If by this the whole world goes against us, we shall be ready even to tolerate that.”

At the beginning of this article, as per submission of two devotees to discuss the subject— Vaishnava Aparadh, to remove their mental agony to get released from Vaishnava Aparadh, the subject has been discussed elaborately. But if discussion of scriptural instructions and messages of Mahabhagavat Vaishnavas only end in academic discussions for advising others and not for practising these in their own lives, they will not bestow actual benefit. Example is better than precept. The teachings will be beneficial when those are acted upon. Only by practising actual eternal benefit can be imparted. It is due to want of ideal persons to practise the teachings that anti-devotional evil thoughts are spreading. Thus Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, accepting the Form and mode of worship of the highest pure devotee Srimati Radharani, appeared as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to preach through His personal example.

*āpani karimu bhakta-bhāva aṅgīkāre  
āpani ācari’ bhakti śikhāimu sabār*

*āpane nā kaile dharma śikhāna nā yāya  
ei ta' siddhānta gītā-bhāgavate gāya*

Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Adi, 3/20-21

“I shall accept the mood of a devotee and shall teach devotion to all by practice. Without practice, righteousness cannot be taught. This devotional conclusion is proclaimed in the Gita and the Bhagavat.”

Prahlad Maharaj and Ambarish Maharaj, even remaining as household devotees, have shown the ideal of Mahabhagavat Vaishnavas. All the 26 principal characteristics of Mahabhagavat devotees are completely manifested in them. External wearing of the dress of a *sadhu* does not indicate a *sadhu* if reverse qualities are observed in him. Preaching without practical life has no value. In writing the preface of Jaiva Dharma, Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakur has narrated 26 special characteristics of the Mahabhagavat Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur. Of these, one special characteristic is *Akritadroha*— non-evil behaviour. In spite of harassment and hostile behaviour inflicted on him, he did not counteract those misbehaviours. Those who are always engrossed in the deep thought of Sri Hari, Who is endowed with the absolute perfection of tranquillity and steadiness, how is it possible for them to be restless or to have the aptitude to retaliate? By the fruit, the cause can be ascertained. A genuine *sadhu* does not give importance to harassment inflicted upon him— he thinks he is reaping the fruits of his own actions. He does not blame anybody for his own distress. On the other hand, if any harm is unknowingly done to any other person by him, he regrets and repents for this. Sri Krishna has said in the Bhagavad Gita (2/47)—

*‘Karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana’*

“Conditioned souls are entitled to do any action, but they have got no hold over the fruits.”

The Supreme Lord is the regulator of the fruits of actions. When the Lord is the regulator of the fruits of actions, it is out of extreme ignorance that enslaved *jivas* altercate and quarrel for the bad consequence of their evil actions and blame others. I vividly remember when I first joined Sree Gaudiya Math Institution, that the Annual Meeting of Sri Navadvip Dham Pracharini Sabha was held at Sri Yogapitha, Srimandir, Sri Mayapur, on Gaur-Purnima Tithi. At that time, as per direction of our Guruvarga, one Vaishnava was engaged to sing the glories of another. I think this system of engaging one neophyte beginner to sing the glories of another Vaishnava is to be introduced again for achieving gradual development in *Shuddha Bhakti*.

## *About the Author*

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tīrtha Gosvāmī Mahārāja is the foremost spiritual leader of the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates in the world today. He is the dearly beloved disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is in turn the equally beloved disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tīrtha Gosvāmī Mahārāja appeared in 1924 in Assam, India, on Rāma-Navami, the most auspicious appearance day of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in His form as Lord Rāmacandra. Having been brought up in a pious environment, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja developed a strong inclination to search for the ultimate goal of life, which led him to take up the study of philosophy at Calcutta University. While studying at the university, he came in contact with his spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and immediately became attracted by his transcendental, powerful personality. After completing his Masters Degree in Philosophy in 1947, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja wholeheartedly and unreservedly dedicated his life to the service of his spiritual master.

His service attitude was so exemplary that Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja soon established him as the secretary of the devotional institution known as Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, which has over twenty *āśramas* (monasteries) in India alone. He was awarded *sannyāsa*, the order of renunciation, in 1961. Eventually, Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja, seeing his disciple's degree of dedication and sincerity combined with a practical mind, selected him as his worthy successor. After the disappearance of his beloved spiritual

master Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja in 1979, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja was appointed as President-Ācārya of the Maṭha. He has received the fortunate blessings and great affection of many of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's prominent followers, such as Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Promode Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Hridaya Van Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Akiñcana Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Kumud Sant Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and many others.

For the last five decades, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja has been engaged in the propagation of the all-embracing doctrine of transcendental Divine Love of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to counter the present trend of violence and cruelty, and to bring about unity of hearts among all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. "Example is better than precept" is his way of preaching. Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja is known for not deviating even one inch outside of the four corners of the prescripts of the Holy Scriptures. His Divine Grace is a renowned authority on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy and is beloved by thousands of devotees throughout the world as the very embodiment of humility and spiritual affection.

Now at the age of 80, inspired by the grace of his Gurudeva, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja is always on the move, going from town to village in India and abroad, propagating the divine message of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

At the behest of his beloved *śikṣā-guru* (instructing preceptor) His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Promode Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja is preaching the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu throughout the world, beginning with an America Tour in 1997.

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tīrtha Gosvāmī Mahārāja is the present President-Ācārya of the Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha devotional institution and the Founder of GOKUL (Global Organisation of Kṛṣṇacaitanya's Universal Love). He also serves as president of the World Vaiṣṇava Association (WVA).

His Divine Grace has authored numerous articles and books of a profoundly spiritual nature in several Indian languages, as well as in English. To date, his books in English include *Śuddha Bhakti*, *Sages of Ancient India*, *A Taste of Transcendence*, *Śrī Caitanya: His Life and Associates*, *The Holy life of Śrīla B. D. Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja*, *Guru Tattva*, *Affectionately Yours*, and the present book, *Hari Kathā and Vaiṣṇava Aparādha*.

