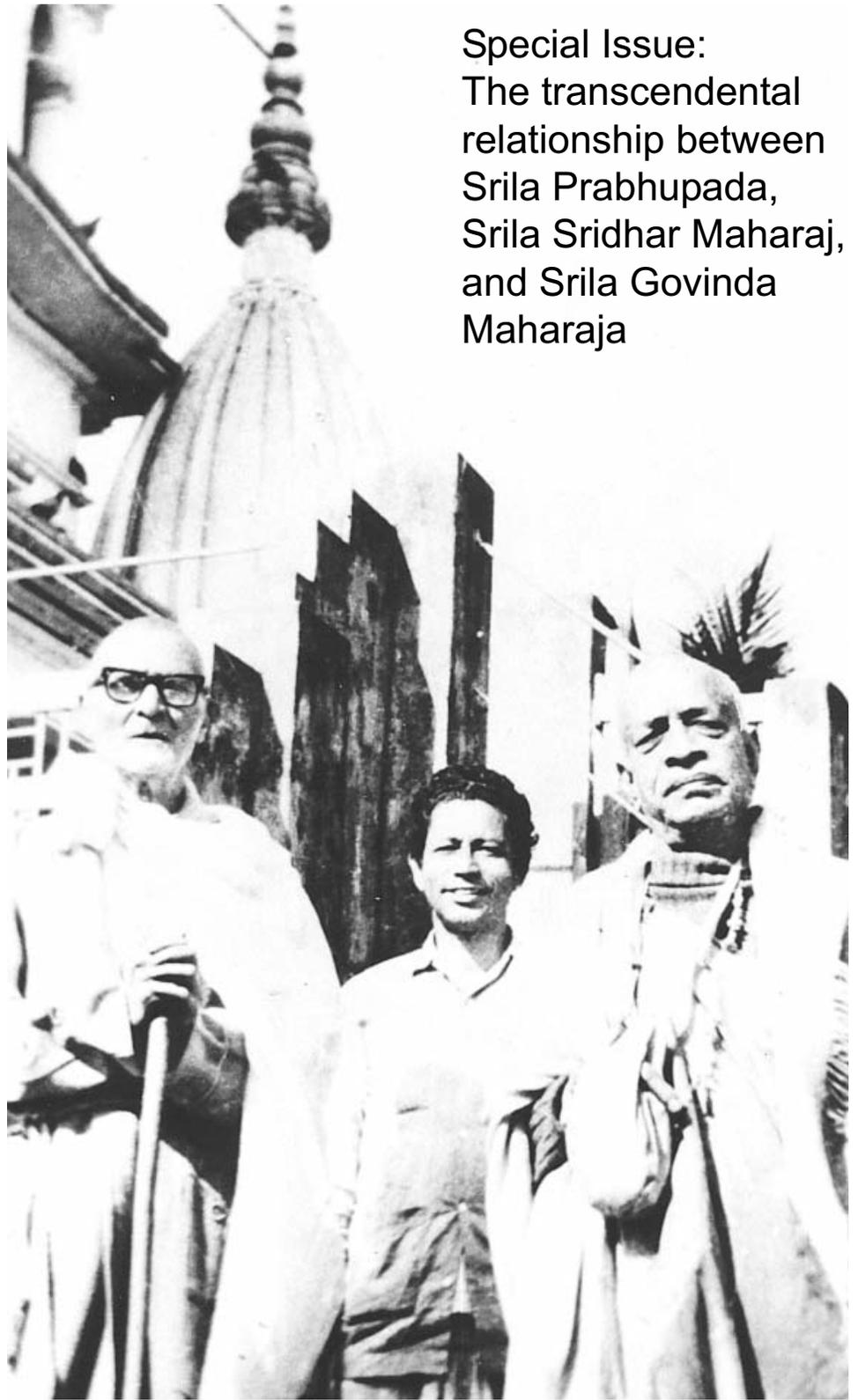


V a i ṣ ṇ a v a Transmission

Volume 1, No. 1 • March/April 1994



Special Issue:
The transcendental
relationship between
Srila Prabhupada,
Srila Sridhar Maharaj,
and Srila Govinda
Maharaja

Contents

Inaugural Reflections

The Guardian of Devotion

Are We Elitists?

Divine Instructions

Service Life Outside The Temple



Sripad B.K. Giri Maharaja & Gokulananda das

Opening Statement

Gokulananda das

October 1993 represented a milestone in the history of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, New York/New Jersey - His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaja came to bestow the mercy of Navadvip Dham to the many fortunate souls residing in the tri-state area. This was the result of more than seven years of struggle undertaken by Sripad Bhakti Kanan Giri Maharaja.

Sripad Giri Maharaja was the first westerner to take the renounced order from Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaja. Soonafter, he returned to America to try to establish something on behalf of Srila Sridhar Maharaja. Years of struggling alone led him to New York, and in spite of heavy opposition from the material energy, Sripad Giri Maharaja has stood firmly in his faith, and the result is the beautiful Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, New Jersey.

Sripad Giri Maharaja is a jewel sent to us by our guru varga. The desire to serve Srila Govinda Maharaja, Srila Sridhar Maharaja, and Srila Prabhupada is keenly present in the consciousness of Sripad Giri Maharaja. Srila Govinda Maharaja has bestowed his full faith and empowerment to Sripad Giri Maharaja as local Acharya.

When I first became interested in Krishna consciousness, I became involved in other organizations, and many unauthorized conclusions. Sripad Bhakti Kanan Giri Maharaja patiently allowed me to grow under his wing, and today I feel much more able to face the future with a more proper scriptural understanding. The siddhanta he represents is strictly in line with Srila Rupa Goswami, as represented by our divine masters. Without him I would not be in the position to write these words. Bereft of his association I would not be initiated by the current world acharya, Srila Govinda Maharaja, nor would I have any hope for my future.

Sripad Giri Maharaja saved me from misconception. Srila Govinda Maharaja has proclaimed far and wide that everybody in this area should attempt to let Giri Maharaja save them. Although these glorifications may burn Sripad Giri Maharaja's ears like fire, still he must appreciate the fact the he is the only hope for any substantial connection to Srila Govinda Maharaja here in this part of the Earth.

Let us all pray that Sripad Giri Maharaja does not leave this area. Without our support he cannot succeed in establishing an East Coast Mission. Let us all unite in a spirit of service to Sri Sri Guru Gauranga and aid Sripad Giri Maharaja in the service of Sri Guru.

Vaishnava Transmission

Senior Editor
Sripad B.K. Giri Maharaja

Editor
Gokulananda das

Production Assistant
B.P. Herman

Design
J. Herman

Special Thanks
Jayanta Rama das
Lila Sundari dasi
Murali Priya dasi
Dayal Chand das

© 1994 by Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math.

This magazine is an offering to Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaja, who is fulfilling the innermost desires of Srila B.R. Sridara Dev Goswami Maharaja and Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada by traveling this Earth planet and presenting the conception of Radha Dasyam in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
883 Cooper Landing Road
Suite 207
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002
(609) 962-0894

Inaugural Reflections

By Swami B.K. Giri

“We love to read a book we have never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it and with such acquirement our curiosity stops. This mode of study prevails amongst a great number of readers who are great men in their own estimation as well as in the estimation of those who are of their own stamp. In fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and statements made by other people. But this is not study. The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention. Students, like satellites, should reflect whatever light they receive from authors and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the Magistrates imprison the convicts in the jail!

Thought is progressive. The author's thought must have progress in the reader in the shape of correction or development. He is the best critic who can show the further development of an old thought; but a mere denouncer is the enemy of progress and consequently of Nature.”

The above quotation from The Bhagavata speech of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is a portion of one of the most eloquent lectures ever given on the subject matter of the Srimad Bhagavatam. I include it here as a reminder to ourselves of the spirit of our newsletter and to invite the reader to join us with an open mind and generous heart.

In the *Vaishnava Transmission* we will present a variety of articles by our predecessor acharyas and the current acharya Srila Bhakti Sundara Govinda Maharaja. We also intend for this newsletter to serve as a forum for the preaching of our Math here in New Jersey. In addition we invite all our Godbrothers, God sisters, devotees and friends to submit relevant articles.

I had an idea to start a newsletter



*Sripad Bhakti Kanan Giri Maharaja
after receiving sannyasa from Srila
Bhakti Raksak Sridhara Dev Goswami
Maharaja in 1981*

several years ago after remembering how happy Srila Sridhara Maharaja was with the efforts of Sripada Mahayogi Maharaja who began the “Maha Mandal World News” newsletter in 1983. Regarding that newsletter Srila Govinda Maharaja wrote “The Maha Mandal World Newsletter arrived here and we were completely taken by surprise. We had a grand festival reading all the news contained therein to Guru Maharaja, and the mood created by that newsletter was more wonderful than words can properly express.”

At that time perhaps, around 1989, I asked Shobhana Krsna Prabhu if he would like to start publishing a newsletter for our Math. He modestly declined expressing himself as unworthy for the

task. I was too busy with other services to do it myself and the project was put on hold. When Sriman Srutasrava prabhu began publishing the Sri Vaishnava Toshani newsletter it created a tremendous wave of enthusiasm among the

Herman respectively. Ben has helped with the typing and transcription of tapes. Joe, who is a professional design consultant, is responsible for the design and layout.

Gokulananda has seen fit to



Sripad B.K. Giri Maharaja with Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaja

devotees. Gokulananda and I were struck by that wave and he suggested publishing a newsletter for our Math. I was overjoyed with the suggestion and now it has begun.

“We are eternally indebted to Bhakti Sudhira Goswami, founder of the Guardian of Devotion Press”

I am extremely grateful for the efforts of Sriman Gokulananda prabhu who has taken upon himself the entire responsibility for publishing the *Vaishnava Transmission*. During the last three years or so he has been the mainstay of our supporters and can always be counted on for any service that’s needed. We are also very appreciative for the assistance of his brother and cousin Ben Herman and Joe

humiliate me with his zealous praise of myself and I, being one to never let a good turn go unpunished, feel the necessity to indict my coconspirators who have given me so much encouragement through the years. We are nothing without our friends and it has been my great fortune to be acquainted with many genuine devotees who have bestowed their mercy upon me.

Touched By Fire

We are eternally indebted to Bhakti Sudhira Goswami founder of the Guardian of Devotion Press and his assistant BV Mahayogi and the many devotees who assisted them. It is impossible to estimate the value to the vaishnava community of Goswami Maharaja’s publication and distribution of the books of Srila Sridhara Maharaja. Anyone fortunate enough to be in his proximity during the production of a book was inescapably touched by the fire of his enthusiasm. In a letter written to Goswami Maharaja in February of 1983 Srila Govinda Maharaja wrote “In one year you have done more seva in favor of Guru Maharaja than I have been able to do in 36 years.” And more recently when

Srila Govinda Maharaja was in New York he said “Goswami Maharaja has done enough for this lifetime”. What more can be said than this?

As I mentioned previously Sriman Srutasrava prabhu has been a great inspiration to us with his publication of “Sri Vaishnava Toshani”. Every issue is one we anxiously await and we are never disappointed. Following the tradition of the vaishnava acharyas he has mercifully left some service for us to do by publishing “Sri Vaishnava Toshani” on a bimonthly basis. Although we could not hope to compete with the beautiful presentation of “Vaishnava Toshani” we will fill in the months it is not published with our own bimonthly *Vaishnava Transmission*.

Aggressive Mercy

His Holiness Sripad Bhakti Ananda Sagar Maharaja, acharya of the London Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, is forever immersed in the translation and publication of what must seem to be an endless list of requests from Srila Govinda Maharaja. With what Srila Bhaktisiddhanta termed “aggressive mercy”, Sripada Sagar Maharaja is untiringly writing, preaching, and translating the Gaudiya Siddhanta for the benefit of all. Abandoning any hint of false prestige he is always ready to do the needful to accomplish this end.

Sripada Bhakti Pavana Janardan Maharaja, acharya of the Santa Cruz Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram, and Sripada Bhakti Kusham Ashram Maharaja acharya of his temples in Mexico, are my good friends and, just as importantly, my good advisors. Srila Govinda Maharaja has often expressed his confidence in the siddhanta of Janardan Maharaja and has remarked about Ashram Maharaja “He is a pure devotee.”

Sriman Yudhamanyu Seva Vikram prabhu was among the first to give his wholehearted support of my idea to approach Srila Sridhara Maharaja for sannyasa in 1981. Soon after that he began a collection program for Srila

Sridhara Maharaja. Since that time he has been a constant example of humility, service, and dedication to Srila Sridhara Maharaja, Srila Govinda Maharaja, and Sri Chaitanya Saraswata Math. Srila Sridhara Maharaja said “he has a noble heart”, and gave him the title Seva Vikram (One who serves with valor). In a general way it may be thought that a wife will tend to be a distraction from one’s devotional life. In the case of Yudhamanyu, however, we can only think that “behind every successful man is a woman”, that is his wife Srimati Jivana devi. Her nature is very auspicious. Always cheerful and embarrassingly humble she is always eager to serve the devotees.

Astonishing

Sriman Rshabhadeva prabhu, Sriman Sri Govinda prabhu and Sriman Brishakapi prabhu were among the very first to be energized by Srila Sridhara Maharaja’s preaching. When Goswami Maharaja brought the first videos tapes of Srila Sridhara Maharaja to America we took them to the home of Brishakapi and Sureswari who invited other devotees to come and see the tapes with us. When Brishakapi, Sri Govinda and Rshabhadeva saw and heard Srila Sridhara Maharaja they became so excited and happy that I was astonished. I felt ashamed of myself that I could not feel such emotion. But it was not just emotion, Rshabhadeva and his wife Kumkum and Sri Govinda and his wife Srilekha continue to show us the line of dedication to Sri Sri Guru Gauranga. Unfortunately for us Brishakapi prabhu left this world several years ago but Sureswari devi remains as an example of service to guru and vaishnava.

Sriman Hasyapriya prabhu cannot find fault with anyone, is a natural peace maker and a tireless worker. Srila Govinda Maharaja said it would not have been possible to get the new property for the Santa Cruz Ashram without him. He has given countless hours of his time helping myself and

our Math here in New Jersey and I would be lost without his help. Swarnangi, Hasyapriya’s wife, works almost transparently behind the scenes. Sometimes she is teaching the devotee’s children, sometimes working at Gauranga’s Restaurant, or using her artistic talents to enhance the beauty of the setting for Srila Govinda Maharaja’s preaching program. In so many ways she is giving her support to the preaching effort.

**“It is by the
causeless
mercy
of our Divine
Masters that I
have made
such auspicious
and affectionate
acquaintances.”**

Sriman Sarva Bhavana prabhu and Srimati Dikshavati devi became so enthusiastic about the preaching of Srila Sridhara Maharaja that they moved from Los Angeles to San Jose to be near the temple there. Sarva Bhavana has always been energetic to assist in publishing the books of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math. There is a long list of titles he is credited with helping to produce. He was invaluable in helping me publish Life and Precepts. For many years Dikshavati has arranged for spots and helped organize the fund raising for the Christmas marathon in San Jose.

Although we have briefly mentioned Srutasrava’s contributions we cannot forget his better half, Srimati Sanatani devi. I have known her since about 1976 when she came to Dallas, Texas. She was quickly enlisted as the leader of the ladies sankirtan party and was highly respected as a book dis-

tributor and collector. She is very sober in her thinking and acts as one of the Governing Board members of the Santa Cruz Temple.

All of these devotees possess innumerable good qualities and qualifications of which I have only mentioned a few to illustrate the manner in which they have provided encouragement for myself and all the devotees of Sri Sri Guru Gauranga. I have mentioned here only a few of my friends and well wishers. It is by the causeless mercy of our Divine Masters, Srila Prabhupada, Srila Sridhara Maharaja, and Srila Govinda Maharaja that I have made such auspicious and affectionate acquaintances in my life. All the devotees helping to maintain Srila Sridhara Maharaja’s Maths in India, especially the stalwart disciples of Srila Sridhara Maharaja such as Sriman Hari Charan brahmacari, Sripada Aranya Maharaja, Sripada Damodara Maharaja, Sripada Tirtha Maharaja, Sriman Rasabdhi, Sriman Purnananda, Sriman Mahananda and many others, are always in my memory as perfect examples of devotion in the line of Srila Sridhara Maharaja.

There are devotees in other countries also, in Europe, South America, Mexico, Australia and elsewhere that are carrying on the missionary activities of Chaitanya Saraswat Math as their life and soul and thereby enlivening us all.

Here in the New York/New Jersey area there are several devotees assisting our Math and they will be mentioned in future issues in relation to their different services.

There are many more devotees both here and abroad that I have not mentioned by name, such as Ramai prabhu and Sriman Mathuranatha, Bimala devi, and Lalita devi, but are no less important contributors engaged in a variety of services. I pray that all of these devotees will continue to bestow their mercy upon me.

The Guardian of Devotion

The transcendental relationship between
Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhara Maharaja.

Written by Bhakti Sudhir Goswami. Published in 1985

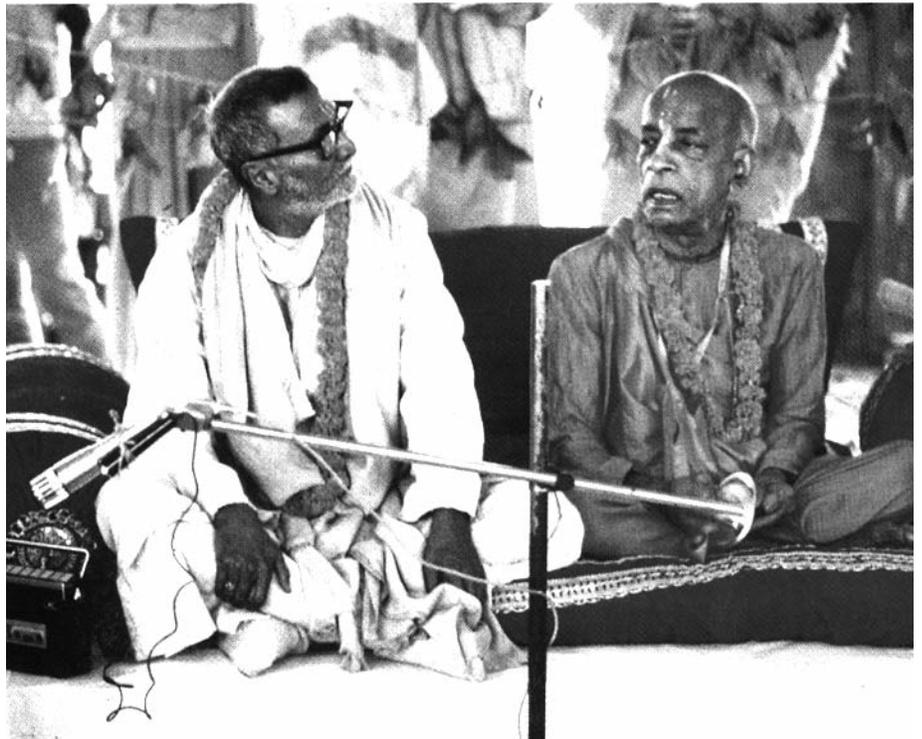
Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja first met sometime in the year 1930 in Allahabad, India. In a taped conversation recorded in a 1973 meeting at Sridhara Maharaja's Math at Navadvipa Dhama, Bhaktivedanta Swami recalls, "So, we are very fortunate to hear His Divine Grace, Om Visnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacarya Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Maharaja. By age and by experience, in both ways, he is senior to me. I was fortunate to have his association since a very long time, perhaps in 1930, something like that. At that time, he did not accept sannyasa...Maharaja, I think you remember the incident when you went to Allahabad? On that auspicious occasion, we were connected. There is a long story, it will take time, but I had the opportunity of associating with Sridhara Maharaja for several years. Krsna and Prabhupada liked him to prepare me."

"Sridhara Maharaja lived in my house for many years, so naturally, we had very intimate talks and he was my good advisor. I took his advices, instructions, very seriously because from the very beginning I know that he is a pure Vaisnava, a pure devotee, and I wanted to associate with him and tried to help him also. Our relationship is very intimate."

Herein we find the history of a tran-

scendental relationship between these two pure devotees of the Lord. Addressing Sridhara Maharaja as "His Divine Grace" and Om Visnupada—forms of address for one regarded as a spiritual master—Bhaktivedanta Swami has transcended the norms of social etiquette and superficial formality. Intimately associating together for a concentrated period of over five years, often for five to seven hours daily, Bhaktivedanta Swami considered that

"Krsna and Prabhupada liked him to prepare me" for his future expansive missionary activities in the Western world. While remembering their intimate talks, specifically in regard to Bhagavad-gita, Sridhara Maharaja recalls the depth in penetration of their discussions. "Once while discussing the verse *dadami buddhi yogam tam yena mam upayanti te*[BG.10.10]"I give them the understanding by which they can come to Me.]" I submitted to him



Srila Sridhar Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada in Mayapur 1973

that here, upayanti is indicative of parakiya rasa [paramour relationship]. On this point he agreed with me, saying, “Yes, at this point there cannot be anything but the parakiya rasa of Vraja. The conclusion of Bhagavad-gita must come to this.”

A Pure Vaisnava

Recognizing Sridhara Maharaja as “a pure Vaisnava, a pure devotee” since the beginning of their relationship, Bhaktivedanta Swami most highly valued his instructions and advice. He would often consult with him regarding the spiritual significance of his failing business and family relationships.

“The Bombay Guadiya Math was established by Sridhara Maharaja and myself.”

— Bhaktivedanta Swami

An example of how Bhaktivedanta Swami tried to help Sridhara Maharaja in his preaching work is seen in his appreciating Sridhara Maharaja’s uncanny ability for extracting the essence of the scriptures. He helped to finance the publication of Sridhara Maharaja’s original Sanskrit-Bengali work entitled Prapanna-jivanamrta: The Nectar of Surrender. The book, as well as containing original Sanskrit verses composed by Sridhara Maharaja, is a compilation of verses from various Vaisnava scriptures such as Srimad-Bhagavatam, and includes excerpts from the works of Rupa Goswami. It is divided according to the six divisions of surrender.

Constantly associating, whether in

Allahabad, Calcutta, or other parts of India, Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhara Maharaja’s relationship continually developed. Bhaktivedanta Swami continues to recall their meeting:

“In my householder life I had opened an office in Bombay for our business. The Bombay Guadiya Math was established by Sridhara Maharaja and myself. We made two parties for begging, collecting alms. Sridhara Maharaja, myself and Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaja. So, I took them to my chemist friends and I collected about five hundred rupees. Sridhara Maharaja would speak, I would introduce, and

Goswami Maharaja would canvass.”

In the Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta, Satsvarupa dasa Goswami writes, “Abhay would often accompany Sridhara Maharaja and his assistants at preaching programs, where he would play the mrdanga. And when Sridhara Maharaja fell ill, Abhay led the other devotees on preaching engagements, performing kirtana, playing mrdanga, and giving lectures on the Bhagavatam.”

A Dumbfounded Sanyassi

While still in Bombay, Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhara Maharaja were the receiving party for a



Srila Sridhara Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada at Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Gaudiya Math sannyasi upon his return from Europe. Although dismayed by his changed appearance which was missing the tridanda of a Gaudiya sannyasi, the sikha of a Vaisnava, as well as the traditional robes, they still eagerly inquired in regard to the preaching field in the West. The Sannyasi remarked, "They ask questions that cannot be answered." Concerned, Bhaktivedanta Swami inquired further as to the nature of those questions. One after another Sridhara Maharaja answered them all. At last, the sannyasi was left dumbfounded and Bhaktivedanta Swami boldly declared, "Today, Europe has been defeated by Asia!"

**Bhaktisiddhanta
Saraswati:**
"Now I am satisfied that although I may go, at least one man remains behind who can represent my conclusions."

During the lifetime of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, Sridhara Maharaja once composed a poem describing the ontological positions of Bhaktivinoda Thakura and the line of disciplic succession stemming from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura was so pleased with the poem's ontological depth and its happy style that he remarked, "Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written this through him. Now I am satisfied that although I may go, at least one man remains behind who can represent my conclusions." In further appreciation of Sridhara Maharaja's



"I consider him [Bhaktivedanta Swami] to be sakyavesa avatar."

writings, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura informed the editors of the Gaudiya Math's periodicals, "If you include articles written by Sridhara Maharaja, the quality of your publication will be greatly improved."

Gaudiya Math Breakdown

After the disappearance of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, the Gaudiya Matha gradually diverged. With full knowledge of the events surrounding the disintegration of the

Gaudiya Math, Bhaktivedanta Swami told his disciples in the same 1973 conversation, "Our relationship is very intimate. After the breakdown of the Gaudiya Math, I wanted to organize another organization, making Sridhara Maharaja the head."

Reciprocating the appreciation, Sridhara Maharaja advised the leaders of the Gaudiya Sangha to confer the title "Bhaktivedanta" upon the then Abhay Caran. Later, his sannyasa-guru, Sripada Bhakti Prajnana Kesava

Maharaja, one of the seniormost disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, and the first sannyasa-disciple of Sridhara Maharaja, gave sannyasa to Abbhay Caran, retaining the title “Bhaktivedanta,” and conferring the sannyasa name “Swami”.

First Vyasa-Puja

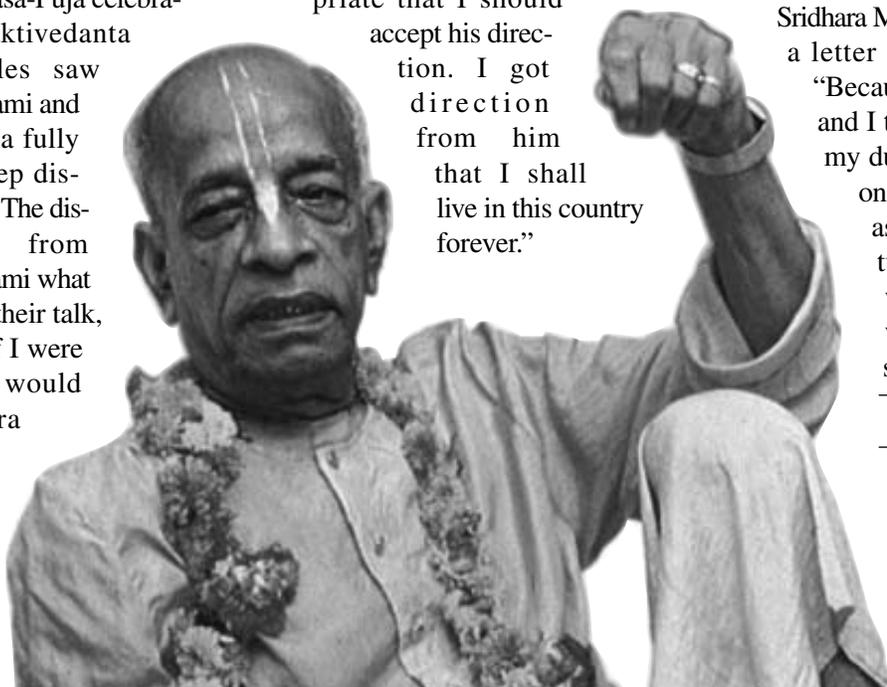
Additionally, when Bhaktivedanta Swami returned to India in October of 1967, after his successful preaching initiative in America, he stayed with Sridhara Maharaja in Navadwipa, and observed his Vyasa-puja celebration. At that time, Bhaktivedanta Swami wrote a letter to a disciple saying, “Yesterday, we have all come to Nabadwipa dhama. This place is an establishment of one of my Godbrothers. It is a very nice and extensive place, and my Godbrother B.R. Sridhara Maharaja has spared one entire house for our stay. He has also agreed to cooperate with our society. We shall observe his birthday celebration, and the brahmacharis shall learn how to celebrate the spiritual master’s birthday.” Shortly afterwards, Bhaktivedanta Swami asked Sridhara Maharaja to be the president of his newly formed society—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

During the Vyasa-Puja celebration, one of Bhaktivedanta Swami’s disciples saw Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhara Maharaja fully absorbed in a deep discussion in Bengali. The disciple inquired from Bhaktivedanta Swami what was the nature of their talk, and he replied, “If I were to tell you, you would faint. Sridhara Maharaja has very high realizations.”

“There is no difference between the shelter-giving Supreme Lord and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters.”

That Bhaktivedanta Swami continually regarded Sridhara Maharaja as his advisor throughout his life is clear in the following letter written by him to one of Sridhara Maharaja’s disciples, Sripad Govinda Maharaja. Concerned about his failing health, he had written Sridhara Maharaja asking whether he should continue living in the United States or return to India to live his last days in Vrndavana. After receiving Sridhara Maharaja’s reply, he wrote, “What Sripada Sridhara Maharaja has directed, I take it on my head. He is my always well-wisher. After the departure of Prabhupada it is appropriate that I should

accept his direction. I got direction from him that I shall live in this country forever.”



Big Preaching

Sometimes it is said that one’s preaching contribution can be judged according to the number of temples established, devotees converted, and books published and distributed. Sridhara Maharaja travelled and preached extensively all over India, personally accompanying Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura for many years. Nearly fifty years ago, he established the Sri Chaitanya Saraswata Math on the banks of the Ganges in Nabadwipa Dhama, which is now a thriving institution. His followers have established temples in major cities throughout the world. His Sanskrit and Bengali writings have been appreciated by both scholars and devotees for their originality, depth of realization, and happy poetic style. Published and widely distributed throughout the world, they are now available in English, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, German, French, and are being translated into other languages.

Throughout his life, Bhaktivedanta Swami always maintained the highest respect and confidence in Sridhara Maharaja. He considered that whenever it was not possible for his disciples to proceed directly under his guidance, that they should take direction from Sridhara Maharaja. He once wrote in a letter to one of his students, “Because you are my disciple, and I think, a sincere soul, it is my duty to refer you to someone who is competent to act as a siksa-guru. For spiritual advancement of life, we must go to someone who is actually practicing spiritual life.”

Get Serious

So, if you are actually serious to take instructions from a siksa-guru, I can refer you to the one who is the most highly competent of all my

godbrothers. This is B.R. Sridhara Maharaja, whom I consider to be even my siksa-guru, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have by his association. So, if you are serious about the advancement of your spiritual life, I will advise you to go to Sridhara Maharaja. It will be very good for your spiritual benefit, and I will feel that you are safe. When I was in India with the others, we lived with Sridhara Maharaja. You can also make arrangements for your other Godbrothers to go there in the future. So, live peacefully with Sridhara Maharaja, and thereby you will be spiritually enlightened.”

He’s My Guru!

In this passage, Bhaktivedanta Swami describes Sridhara Maharaja as “the most competent of all my Godbrothers,” “someone competent to act as siksa-guru,” and in an astounding statement, he declares, “I consider Sridhara Maharaja to be my siksa-guru, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have from his association!”

What Bhaktivedanta Swami means by siksa-guru is best explained in his own words. In his purports to the Adi-lila of Caitanya-caritamṛta, he states: “One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kaviraja Goswami states that there are two kinds of instructing spiritual masters. One is the liberated person fully absorbed in meditation in devotional service and the other is he who invokes the disciple’s spiritual consciousness by means of relevant instructions. There is no difference between the shelter-giving

Supreme Lord and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. If one foolishly discriminates between them, he commits an offense in the discharge of devotional service.”(CC.Adi 1.47)

“The highest thing has been taken down to the lowest position so extensively.”

Although it may be said that Bhaktivedanta Swami encouraged his godbrothers in general, no one anywhere can produce a similar statement of endorsement. The fact is that Bhaktivedanta Swami possessed the highest respect and appreciation for Sridhara Maharaja, and Sridhara Maharaja is unparalleled in his understanding and admiration of Bhaktivedanta Swami, as evidenced in the following eulogy:

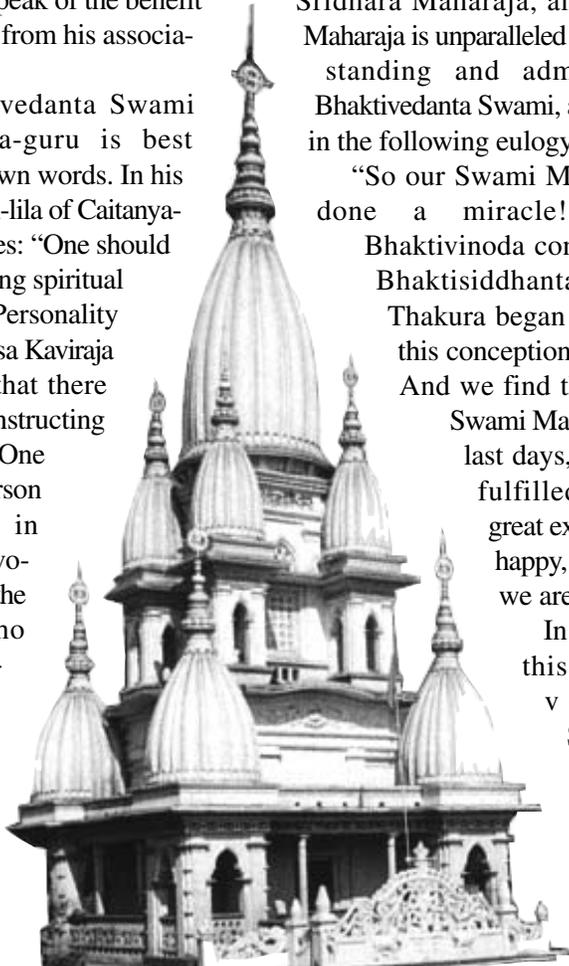
“So our Swami Maharaja has done a miracle! Thakura Bhaktivinoda conceived and Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura began to translate this conception into action. And we find that through Swami Maharaja, in his last days, it has been fulfilled to such a great extent. We are happy, we are glad, we are proud!”

In response to this, Bhaktivedanta Swami with great humility, his voice choked with emotion

tion, tearfully replied, “So, by guru and Vaisnava, whatever position I have got it is by guru’s mercy and the blessings of the Vaisnavas. Otherwise, how I may have? So, I wish that Sridhara Maharaja may bestow his blessings as he was doing always, and may guru maharaja help me so I can do some service. By his grace it has become successful. I have no credit. I do not know how things are happening, because I am not at all qualified: chadiya vaisnava seva, nistara payeche keba. [Without serving an ideal Vaisnava who can be delivered from the clutches of maya?]”

Saktyavesa Avatara

And after the disappearance of Bhaktivedanta Swami, Sridhara Maharaja declared, “I consider him to be saktyavesa avatara, and it is confirmed in his writings on his spiritual journey through the Atlantic. How he landed there in America, and the nature of his beginning the movement, his intense degree of dedication to Kṛṣṇa and dependence, and how much he made himself empty of any other desire than the order of his gurudeva—quite empty that Kṛṣṇa came down to help him, and it is corroborated that Kṛṣṇa worked on his behalf. In his poem, Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa, we find him pleading with Kṛṣṇa, “My dear Brother, Your good fortune will come to You only when Srimati Radharani becomes pleased with You.” Seeing his gurudeva Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati as Radharani’s delegation and his order as Her divine service, he humbly submitted that he did not feel himself worthy or fit to discharge the divine service, so he enlisted Kṛṣṇa in the service of his guru. He had completely dedicated himself to the purpose, he was so earnest in his prayer to Kṛṣṇa that he may discharge the duty that he has been given by his guru maharaja, that divine force, power, came down to help him. Otherwise, it is impossible. It is not a thing of the ordinary level that anyone will do, but the highest thing has been taken down to the lowest position so extensively. It





"I consider Sridhara Maharaja be my siksa-guru."

cannot but be the divine power, embodied and in a great intensity and magnitude! So, saktavesa-avatara, I cannot but take him to be so."

Implicit Faith

With such appreciation, there should be little doubt why Bhaktivedanta Swami had implicit faith in Sridhara Maharaja. He had even heard directly from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura of the exceptional qualifications of Sridhara Maharaja. In their last known recorded meeting in 1977, just prior to Bhaktivedanta Swami's leaving this mortal world, we find him imploring Sridhara Maharaja to take up residence in his temple in Sridhama Mayapura.

The conversation that ensues is a transcript of their taped conversation of March 1977.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: I do not know for how long I will be able to carry on. So, I came to see Sridhara Maharaja.

Devotee: If you all go away, then the world will become dark.

Sridhara Maharaja: [to Bhaktivedanta Swami] It is so wonderful that the will of the Lord becomes manifest through someone.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: I want very much, Maharaja, that you come and stay at Mayapura. Because Prabhupada always desired that you preach. He told me quite a few times, "Why don't you pull him out?" [both laugh.] You know,

I also tried to some extent before, but somehow or other it did not work out.

Now, why don't you come and stay at Mayapura? Srila Prabhupada told me also, "Sridhara Maharaja is one of the finest preachers." I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Mayapura, people are coming from all over the world. Why don't you come and stay there? If you just agree, then whatever kind of building you want, I will arrange it for you. They are trying to build a house for me. So both of use will stay there. And whenever you want, you can come here to your math.

"I do not know for how long I will be able to carry on. So, I came to see Sridhara Maharaja."

— Bhaktivedanta Swami

Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, as long as I am alive to fulfill Prabhupada's desire.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: This is my earnest desire. Since you could not go around the world and preach, at least stay there and people will come to you. I shall make that arrangement. If you stay, then it will be helpful to me also. Sometimes I need to consult with someone but there is no one. There is no one that I can consult. I feel this deficiency very greatly.

Devotee: If he stays in Mayapura, then, all kinds of people will get to hear from him.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: Yes.

Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, people from all kinds of cultural backgrounds will come there.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: Yes, and they are already coming. And in that house I will make arrangements for an elevator so that you won't have to go through the difficulty of walking up and down the stairs. You won't even have to move a step yourself. I'll make arrangements for a car and a lift. My disciples are telling me that they will build a house for me. So, both of us will stay in that house. Most of the time I am travelling around, so if you are there, then they can get some guidance. So, Maharaja, please, give me the order and I will make all the arrangements for you. That Planetarium [The "Temple of Understanding"] also will be built under your direction. My idea is to combine the Indian culture and the American money—the lame man and the blind man policy. I tell them also that this will be beneficial for the world.

Final Meeting

Here, in their final meeting, Bhaktivedanta Swami prophetically refers to his imminent disappearance and reveals that it is in this connection that he has come to see Sridhar Maharaja. In friendly jesting, they discuss Sridhara Maharaja's reticence regarding large-scale preaching work. Of himself, Sridhara Maharaja has remarked, "I did not want to become a big person. That is not my nature. I did not want to move around with many people. I am just satisfied with whatever I have. My spiritual thinking is my life. The conclusions of the scriptures, the advices of the mahajanas, to relish them and practice them and to discuss them in a small confidential circle, that is the main goal of my life." In the Ninth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhaktivedanta Swami, quoting Dhruva Maharaja, writes: "My dear Lord, I am fully satisfied with whatever you have given me. I have nothing else to ask from You, for I am fully satisfied to be engaged in Your service." This is the mentality of a pure devotee who does not want anything material or spir-

itual from the Personality of Godhead. Our Krsna consciousness movement is therefore called krsna-bhavanamrta-sangha, the association of persons who are simply interested in thoughts of Krsna.

Bhaktivedanta Swami advised his senior disciples that in his absence, to consult higher authority, Sridhara Maharaja.

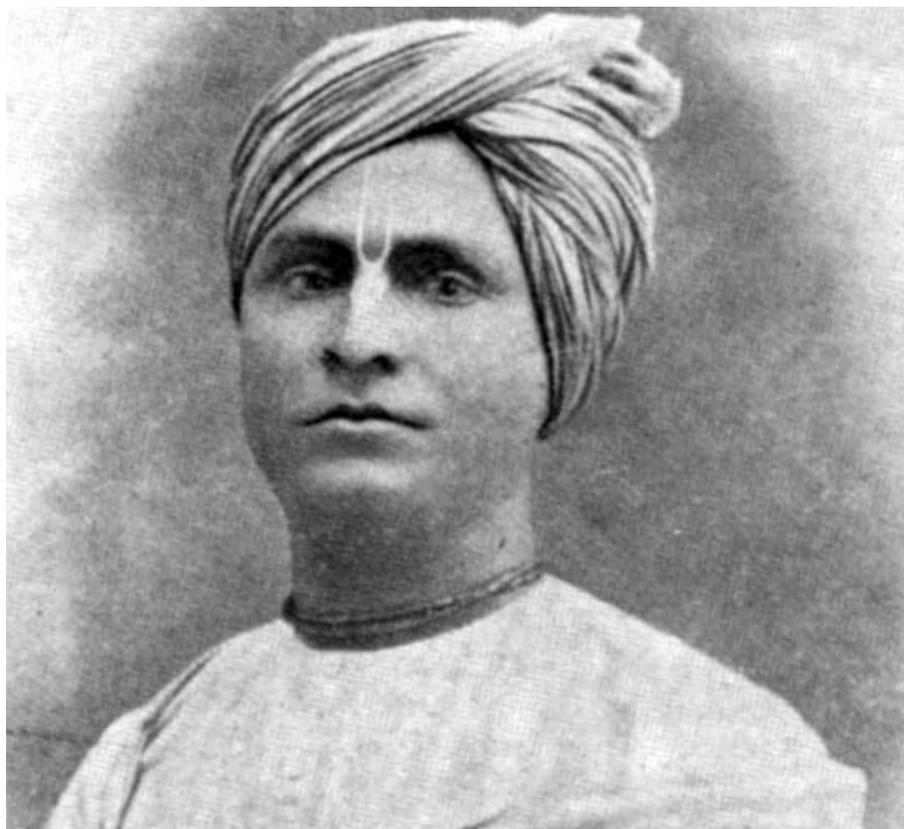
Bhaktivedanta Swami testifies to his having personally heard Bahktisiddhanta Saraswati mark the high qual-

ifications of Sridhara Maharaja, whom he had once requested to go to the West. In this regard, Sridhara Maharaja once remarked, "My guru maharaja wanted me to go to the West for preaching, but I don't consider myself a fit person to preach in the West. Because, you see, I can't follow your intonation.

Unconvertable

So, in this way, I told that if you order, I must go, but I don't think that I am fit to preach in the West. Anyhow, it was stopped, and Goswami Maharaja was sent to the West." When Sridhara Maharaja had been selected, one of his godbrothers came to him and revealed the reason why Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura had chosen him to preach in the West. This godbrother explained, "Do you know why Prabhupada wanted you to be sent to the West? He said, 'Because you can't be converted.'"

And just twenty-four hours before his departure from this mortal world, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura called for his beloved disciple Sridhara



Srila Sridhara Maharaja circa 1930

Maharaja, and asked him to sing the song of Narottama dasa Thakura: Sri-rupa-manjari-pada (the lotus feet of Rupa Manjari are my treasure). Sridhara Maharaja recalls: “So I did, hesitatingly. My nature is always hesitating, pushing back. Then, Kunja Babu asked me to stop. I was not a good singer, so as soon as he suggested, I stopped. Then, Kunja Babu asked Puri Maharaja of Kalna, ‘You sing.’ So he began. Then, Srila Prabhupada was a little disturbed. ‘I don’t like to hear the sweet tune of the song,’ he said. Then, he stopped, and I had to begin again with sri rupa manjari pada, sei mora sampada. He wanted me to sing that song. That is the fulfillment of life of everyone of us, to be rupanuga- followers of Sri Rupa.”

Mystic Transmission

Senior godbrothers who witnessed this exchange have described it as a “mystic transmission” in which Sridhara Maharaja was given admittance into the eternal entourage of Sri Rupa Manjari. Sridhara Maharaja’s humble vision, however, is that he was posted as the gatekeeper, the guardian of devotion (bhakti-rakshaka), to protect the storehouse of conclusive truths about the full-fledged theistic conception of Sri Krsna, as given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Bhaktivedanta Swami says, “I want to take you everywhere.”

Further expressing his appreciation for Sridhara Maharaja’s “high realizations” in Krsna consciousness, Bhaktivedanta Swami says, “I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Mayapura, people are coming from all over the world. Why don’t you stay there?” Sometimes it is wondered why Sridhara Maharaja appar-



Bhakti Rakshak-Guardian of Devotion

ently did not take up Bhaktivedanta Swami’s offer. Sridhara Maharaja explains, “I said, ‘Of course I shall try to help you. Sometimes I shall go and stay there with you.’ But I really did not think at the time that I shall survive him.”

Finally, Bhaktivedanta Swami refers to “that planetarium.” Sridhara Maharaja is very fond of Sanatana Goswami’s most famous work, the Brhad-bhagavatamrtam, in which devotees, devotional service, and Krsna are described very scientifically. On the basis of this transcendental literature, Sridhara Maharaja had contemplated an elaborate preaching exhibition, showing graphically, with the use of dioramas depicting the varieties of material and spiritual planetary systems, how the ultimate spiritual destination is Krsna’s own abode, Goloka Vrndavana. Due to insufficient funds, Sridhara Maharaja humbly submitted his idea to Bhaktivedanta Swami, who approved, saying, “It will be built under your direction.”

And just prior to his departure from this mortal world, Bhaktivedanta Swami advised his senior disciples that in his absence, when the necessity arose to consult higher authority, that they should consult Sridhara Maharaja. In conclusion, we humbly submit that the transcendental relationship between Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhara Maharaja be viewed and respected in terms of their eternal spiritual positions, and long-standing appreciation and affection for one another.

The Protector

Since the departure of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the “Guardian of Devotion,” His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja, has repeatedly protected the teachings of the disciplic succession from perversion and misrepresentation as he has done for more than half a century, and has come to be recognized as a jagad-guru or world-acarya.

Are We Elitists?

Originally published in Sri Vaisnava Toshani

By Sripad B.P. Janardan Maharaja

I have often indicated that as a community we have experienced three great influences in our lives. As Srila Govinda Maharaj noted, all the devotees in the western countries have a relationship with Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It is only because of his mercy that we know of Krsna consciousness, and because of his sacrifice and his preaching, our future is bright.

“Someday Srila Guru Maharaj’s contributions will be sung and glorified by the Vaisnava community for posterity.”

Literally, he is the eternal spiritual master of us all. And we feel very fortunate to have come in contact with Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj. In the Sri Chaitanya-Caritamrta, we find that there is a special presentation of the conclusions of the Sastra, particularly those of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, that provide us with the



Sripad B.P. Janardan Maharaja

understanding and siddhanta of the line of the followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Rupa Goswami. There Srila Krsnadas Kaviraj Goswami reveals the heart and the teachings of Mahaprabhu as no one else has done. For that reason, the Chaitanya-Caritamrta stands supreme among all Vaisnava literature.

Amplified

Srila Sridhar Maharaj has a special unique position that was recognized by Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami, by his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, and by his many advanced godbrothers.

Srila Guru Maharaj has the ability

to present those wonderful conclusions so necessary for an understanding of the devotional line, to amplify them according to his deep comprehension, to illustrate them with original and lucid examples, and to present them in a poetic manner. Someday Srila Guru Maharaj’s contributions will be sung and glorified by the Vaisnava community for posterity. Srila Kaviraj Goswami has described Mahaprabhu as a golden mountain rolling in the dust. It was Srila Guru Maharaj who described Mahaprabhu as a golden volcano, spewing forth golden lava, divine love, in the form of the Siksastaka. Just as Srila Kaviraj Goswami’s conclusions are the only means of knowing the real purport and deep mysteries of the line of Mahaprabhu, only Srila Guru Maharaj’s perceptions and guidance will provide us with the necessary understandings to continue our progressive march towards Divinity.

Then there is the person of Srila Govinda Maharaj himself, who is the heir apparent to Srila Guru Maharaj. But he is more than that, if such a thing is possible. He has Srila Guru Maharaj eternally in his heart, and Srila Guru Maharaj transparently speaks through Srila Govinda Maharaj, especially since their two personalities are so intimately interwoven. And also Srila Govinda Maharaj is his own man, in the sense that he has his own personality and



Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaja watching over the storehouse of Krsna Bhakti.

something to add. In particular, his desire to give to others, his magnanimity and his personal sacrifice, are singular and remind everyone of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

No Minimization Here

Sometimes people think that we are minimizing the position of Srila Prabhupada because we talk so much of Srila Sridhar Maharaj and of Srila Govinda Maharaj. In this respect I would like to make one observation. Having been a disciple of Srila Prabhupad for so many years, it is natural that my whole training and whatever I may know, I have received from him. As a small child is trained by his father, and learns how to walk in this world by him, and who always has before his tender eyes the affectionate example of his father, so I have learned everything from my Srila Prabhupad. If in the course of speaking, especially before the public, if I do not always acknowledge that everything I am saying I have received from Srila Prabhupad, it is only because it is implicitly understood. Nor do I find in the lectures of Srila Prabhupad that he continually repeated, “My Gurudeva said this. And my Gurudeva did that.” But still we know that what he presented, he learned from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. But why then do we so often refer to Srila Guru Maharaj by name? We do so because there are certain unique contributions of Srila Guru Maharaj that have been given to us so that we may advance. Aptly called hid-

den treasures by some, they are like so many shining jewels. Just as in Mahaprabhu’s verse, *trnad api sunicena*, we find shining jewels that dissipate the darkness with their splendor, Srila Guru Maharaj has given conclusions that illuminate our entire existence. They are so singular and unique, to not credit their author would be worse than plagiarism.

**“We should see
what it really
means to follow
Srila
Prabhupada.”**

It would be, using Guru Maharaj’s own example, to use him as an inquiry or information counter, to pocket those answers, and do some dishonest business with them. Before I came to the line of Srila Guru Maharaj I had read his literature and gave a lecture based on his conclusions. I found that so many devotees were very enthusiastic, having heard those examples, and were enlivened. But I myself felt that it was unfortunate to feel so constrained that I could not mention Srila Guru Maharaj by name in that assembly because of some misunderstandings.

And there were many devotees who did feel inspired by Srila Guru Maharaj and who wanted to continue their service

in the mission of Srila Prabhupada with that inspiration, but were not allowed to remain within the institution and continue peacefully with their service. Then the argument as to why those persons are not serving the mission of Srila Prabhupada is ludicrous. What are they to do now, abandon their service to Srila Guru Maharaj? And in our own heart, we are still serving the mission of Srila Prabhupada.

Mere Storytellers

Sometimes people want to hear specifically about Srila Prabhupada, his pastimes, knowing that I have spent some time in his association. I know there are many persons who are adept in repeating those pastimes, who can go on for hours reminiscing and telling anecdotes. But I personally have a problem with that. First of all, I remember Srila Prabhupad’s own words, where he says that a Vaisnava is not a storyteller. Also I feel that Srila Prabhupad should not become an object of our enjoyment, thereby depersonalizing him and rendering him something akin to a caricature. I am not saying that occurs when we sincerely glorify him. But too often, the endless stories and nectar incidents do not give much illumination of Srila Prabhupada, but do show their authors’ need to be in the spotlight.

Since I have mentioned this point before, please forgive me if I state it here a little stronger.



Srila Sridhar Maharaja inspecting the first English edition of Sri Prapannajivanamritam with Srila Govinda Maharaja.

In this day and age, when there are many devotees called Prabhupadananda Das, Prabhupada Pranath Das, and so many variations on the theme, we should see what it really means to follow Srila Prabhupada. In this community, we have many disciples of Srila Prabhupada. They have been following him for years. I see them as dedicated to the service of his lotus feet. When I hear others say that this community minimizes the importance of Srila Prabhupada, it infuriates me and also makes me very unhappy. It infuriates me because I see such remarks as offenses committed at the lotus feet of so many wonderful Vaisnavas who are direct disciples of Srila Prabhupada and who are sincerely following the inner inspiration of their hearts. And it saddens me that such incomprehension exists that somebody is so foolish as to think that he glorifies Srila Prabhupada and holds him in a higher position by denigrating his own disciples.

Not For Everyone

Which brings me to the title of this article, are we elitists? We have been especially asked by Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj to represent the line of

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math. That is a big responsibility. That responsibility has not been given to everyone who has had contact with Srila Sridhar Maharaj and Srila Govinda Maharaj. There are those who have been inspired by them, but who do not represent their line. Many sannyasis are preaching and presenting their own mission, or their own inspiration. But they are not representing the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat line.

The Center

In the Sri Prapannajivanamrtam, Srila Guru Maharaj notes that our relationship with a person will be seen by what relationship that person has with the Center, and what relationship the Center has with that person. Of what importance is the Center for that person? And of what importance is that person for the Center? Many of the persons who have felt inspiration from the teachings of Srila Guru Maharaj and Srila Govinda Maharaj are appreciated and seen as friends. But not all do service for the Math. Not all have shown that dedication.

Naturally, when we try to represent the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, we try to be as accommodating as possible. But that does not mean we can

accommodate everything so as to present ourselves as ecumenical.

There are many things which were not done in Srila Prabhupada's time, which he would not have permitted, which are done today by persons who think of themselves as innovative. We try to shun those innovations, even at the risk of being criticized by some. And sometimes there are individuals who try to combine ideas of Srila Prabhupada, Srila Guru Maharaj, or Srila Govinda Maharaj, and their own, and what they produce is a hodgepodge, or as Srila Govinda Maharaj describes it: khicuri.

**“A little
knowledge
is a dangerous
thing.”**

Since we are trying to represent the integrity of the Sri Caitanya Saraswat line, we feel reluctant to say *jay* to anything. Srila Prabhupada gave the example that many persons would come to him and say, “Swami, you are all right.” Srila Prabhupada replied that they expected to hear from him in return, “Yes, you are all right too.” But he said that he could not say that and had to often reply, “Yes, I'm all right. But you are not all right; you are not all right at all.”

Higher Realities

But I don't believe that makes us elitists. Srila Guru Maharaj has given us the warning that elementary education should not go in rebellion of the secondary education. By that remark, nobody is relegated to the level of primary education. Still it is an axiomatic truth that there are higher realities. And one should not try to judge those higher realities by his own limited experience or his scant knowledge. One should always respect higher education. Otherwise one will fall prey to the old pitfall that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

A letter from Srila Prabhupada to Srila Govinda Maharaja

December 16, 1955

His Holiness Sripad
Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj
Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
Kolergunj P.O. Nabadwip,
Dist. Nadia (West Bengal)

My dear Sripad Govinda Maharaj:

This morning I received two copies of your 'Gaudiya Darshan' and I was very glad to see its appearance. When I was at Mathura I heard from Shripad Keshava Maharaj that His Holiness Shripad Shridhar Maharaja is going to publish 'Gaudiya Darshan' and today I find it actually in hand. I cannot but offer my congratulations to your Holiness. Because I know if anything has been done it is due to your energy. I can understand now why Shripad Shridhar Maharaja bestowed all his mercy upon you. He rightly found in you some dormant energy for future action and we can see that it is now fructifying duly.

I have read with great interest your articles especially the one which is named as 'Chalar Pathe'. It is not only very amusing but also instructive. Simple dry philosophical arguments will not be appealing nowadays to people in general. They will like to read such articles as written by you with greater relish. In this article I can find out that you have really some parts and in time you can become a great transcendental humorist in the art of journalism. You have complete mercy of your Divine master and you can depend on his blessings for your future improvement. I sincerely wish you all success- undoubtedly you are in the highest order of Varnasrama Dharma but we cannot forget that you belong to the category of our affectionate sons. We cannot forget all such filial love for you and when we see that you are improving in all respects it gladdens our heart. I have just written a letter to Shripad Goswami Maharaj and in that letter the following statements have been carried to him. The wordings are as follows: "This day we have received two copies of Gaudiya Darshan from Shripad Shridhar Maharaj's Math at Nabadwip. The starting is very good and I quite appreciated the endeavor of Shripad Maharaja, although very late. It is better late than never. He has a very good assistant in the young Govinda Maharaja and I think it is a good attempt."

Your poem on Vasita is also good. All these show that you have good tact and may God help you more and more. Shripad Shridhar Maharaj's article on Gaudiya Darshan is philosophical and if he so desires I can get it translated into English by myself and get it published in the Shri Sajjanatoshani Patrika. I understand that Shripad Maharaj is out on pilgrimage and you can let me know his opinion when he comes back or earlier according to your convenience.

Hope you are well. Brindaban wanted to live with me and so he has come here from Calcutta just a few before. Where is Madhusudan Maharaj? Please convey my dandabats to all of the Vaisnavas. With my regards for you all.

Yours Affectionately,

A.C. Bhaktivedanta



Divine Instructions

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Goswami Maharaj

In this exchange, His Divine Grace Srila Govinda Maharaja makes the distinction between true service and lip service and the importance of a proper devotional mood. This is an excerpt from a passage which first appeared in *Divine Guidance*, published by

Everything depends on the mood of the devotee. Someone may go for collection, someone else may cook, another may clean, but everything depends on the individual's mood whether it will be karma or bhakti. If someone will follow his Guru's instructions in a surrendered mood, it will be bhakti, otherwise it will be pious karma. If anyone will follow the instructions of the Scriptures and Guru he will always receive a good result, but that is not necessarily bhakti. It is a big difficulty for everyone if they are not conscious of their purpose. Srila Guru Maharaj always emphasised the word 'consciousness'—everything is living within consciousness.

The result depends on the devotee's mental position. So first he must try to cleanse his heart. Krsna said in *Bhagavad-gita*:

*yat karosi yad asnasi, yaj juhosi
dadasi yat*

*yat tapasyasi kaunteya, tat kurusva
mad arpanam*

Krsna has clarified everything for us and given us a very easy way:





Srila Govinda Maharaja, always situated at the lotus feet of Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Dev Goswami Maharaja. Photo circa 1960

“Everything you do, and everything you want to do—whether eating, sacrificing, going anywhere, etc.—connect everything with Me, then that will be bhakti.” First it is necessary to finalize what our need is, and what is the process to achieve it. If we need bhakti-yoga to Krsna, and if we do not want to stay within the illusory environment, and if we feel the necessity to go to the transcendental world—our own home—then with full heart we must try to achieve that. We shall try to search out that place where it is available and whole-heartedly try to follow the instructions we receive there. This is the main thing for everyone, but circumstances can take us in many ways

and to many places. We must try to proceed steadily within our track and not allow ourselves to go out of the track. This is our necessity.

Devotee: Maharaj, I have a question. When Srila Prabhupada left the world, many of his disciples in the name of exclusive worship of him went on with their devotional service, but they made many mistakes and their service sometimes went in a wrong way. Later, many persons in the name of exclusive worship of Srila Guru Maharaj also made many mistakes and sometimes their actions went in a wrong way.

So, I want to know from you, what does it mean to serve the uttama-

adhikari devotee? Why do those persons make such mistakes, and how can we properly understand the correct position?

Srila Govinda Maharaja: It is in some way coming from one’s fortune. One who has good fortune will not leave his track. What he received from his Gurudeva, he will try to follow, and his endeavour will always be within the proper track.

Your question is good for everyone: after Srila Swami Maharaj left, why have some of his devotees gone out from their track? Also after Srila Guru Maharaj, some are going out of track. But why?

**It is necessary
for the devotees
to know very
clearly what
they want to
practice**

It depends upon their sukrti—their spiritual fortune. We see that they served Srila Swami Maharaj or they served Srila Guru Maharaj, but actually they did not get the proper way, the real service connection. At that time, however, by the influence of Srila Guru Maharaj and Srila Swami Maharaj that shortcoming was covered. The disciples did many activities enthusiastically but they actually did not know what devotional service is. When Gurudeva disappeared, his influence of covering the shortcoming in the disciples also withdrew with him. At that time some of the devotees got back their previous subtle position, and they became confused. Ultimately it depends upon their own karma, their good fortune, and also the quality of their practicing life—these three will contribute towards a good result.

It is necessary for the devotees to

know very clearly what they want to practice, then they will not go off the track—and in that also their own good fortune and good activities are necessary, otherwise they will not reach their goal. We must be able to recognize what is what. It is a fact that even when Krsna was present, not everyone could understand Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sisupala and Dantavakra had the chance to be with Krsna but they could not understand who He was. Also many saw Krsna on the battlefield of Kuruksetra, but they did not understand that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So some fortune must work behind ‘seeing’.

Maya Strikes Back

After Srila Swami Maharaj left, the illusory environment came with more force. When Krsna left from this mundane world, at that time also the illusory environment again asserted itself strongly. Whenever a great soul disappears, some disturbance is caused by the illusory environment and it tries to catch and conquer the heart of the weak devotees—not only the weak devotees, but the good workers also. It will try to conquer them. But those who are fully surrendered to their Guru will not be captured by that illusion, and those who are good followers will also not fall into that illusion. Those who are not settled within their own track will easily leave their position, and to some degree this has happened.

We can live with a sadhu and take his association, but we may not get real sadhu-sanga merely by living with him. Bugs may live in the bed of a sadhu, lice may even be so close to him that they live in his hair and take his blood, but they are not engaged in sadhu-sanga! So, the unfortunate souls leave the track. Otherwise the true path is a very easy thing.

One instruction Srila Guru Maharaj used to always give me when I first came to him was: “What I shall instruct, you will follow, and what your mind



*Srila Govinda Maharaja preaching in New York —
The siddhanta of Srila Sridhara Maharaja, and the preaching mood of Srila Prabhupada*

will say, you don’t follow.” But I thought; “My mind is not always giving me bad advice, sometimes it is giving good suggestions to me.” But Srila Guru Maharaj told me not to follow even what I thought was the good advice of my mind. “That means you must fully depend upon me. My need is that you must fully depend upon me.” Srila Guru Maharaj said in this way, “What does your mind tell you? You think it sometimes says good advice and it sometimes says bad. But you are not to follow even the apparently good advice. If you take the association of your mind, you must give some return to him; therefore it is not necessary to take association of your mind, instead take my instruction for yourself.”

It is a very easy instruction but we

cannot always follow it, therefore we receive some trouble. When we forget Srila Guru Maharaj’s order we receive much trouble. Behind this, two things are acting: one is fortune, and the other is our activity. Good fortune is necessary, and that comes through seva. Good fortune grows through seva. One who can do real seva will receive a good result. However, one who does ‘seva’ but is always thinking about his own interest must be ignored by bhakti, and bhakti will not go to him. He may live so long and stay for many years in the Gaudiya Mission, but he may not get that bhakti.

Disturbance Everywhere

There are many examples not only in the Gaudiya Mission, but such disturbances can be seen everywhere in

history. It is present in Christianity, in Mohammedanism, etc. And in Hinduism there are many channels: Sri Ramanuja, Sankaracharya, etc.

“What our Guru gave is sufficient; it is not necessary to take advice from others.”

There is a famous story of how one day Ramanujacharya’s sannyasi disciples quarrelled over something which appeared very big, but actually was very small. It was a very small matter, but they quarrelled fiercely. Someone had moved around the clothes the sannyasis were to wear. One of them became very disturbed and a quarrel began. Ramanuja then showed through the example of a grhastha devotee how one should serve his Guru. In the Scriptures we can see this and many other examples. Sankaracharya also showed a similar example.

Actually, our spiritual journey depends upon clear consciousness. One who has some clear consciousness from his Guru will not leave the track; otherwise everyone has some possibility of deviating.

What’s The Big Idea?

It is necessary to stay within the proper line of knowledge. We must have the conviction “We shall follow our Guru blindly.” We hear from many places that, ‘What our Guru gave is sufficient; it is not necessary to take advice from others.’ And it is mainly very true. If I have no big idea, and no big, wide vision, then I must follow my Gurudeva in a very simple way. Sometimes that will work very nicely, but it is not always true—because if a Guru will say one thing, or give one

advice, then there is no doubt that if there are five disciples, each will take it in a slightly different way. Each of their minds will play upon that idea in a slightly different manner, so they will understand it in five ways. Maybe in the beginning they were not very different from each other, but whatever small differences exist will become more prominent as it comes down through three or four generations. By that time it may even become completely separate from Sri Gurudeva’s conception. Srimad Bhagavatam has mentioned:

evam prakrti-vaicitryat bhidyante matayo-nrnam

paramparyyena kesancit pasanda-matayo pare

Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis

Srila Guru Maharaj has given a very good example of this: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. When Guru gives some knowledge, that is the thesis, but when that knowledge has come out from Gurudeva, an antithesis must also come out from some other quarter. With the thesis, the antithesis will also grow, side by side. And synthesis comes when both will come into harmony. The synthesis then becomes established as the thesis, and again an antithesis

will grow to oppose it. In this way, if five disciples hear from one Guru, five kinds of ideas will grow. Their ideas also depend upon their sukrti. If they do not go off the track we can say they have good sukrti, and that sukrti comes through their service. Therefore Srila Guru Maharaj said, “What I shall instruct, you follow that, and what your mind will say, don’t follow it!”

Put That Book Down!

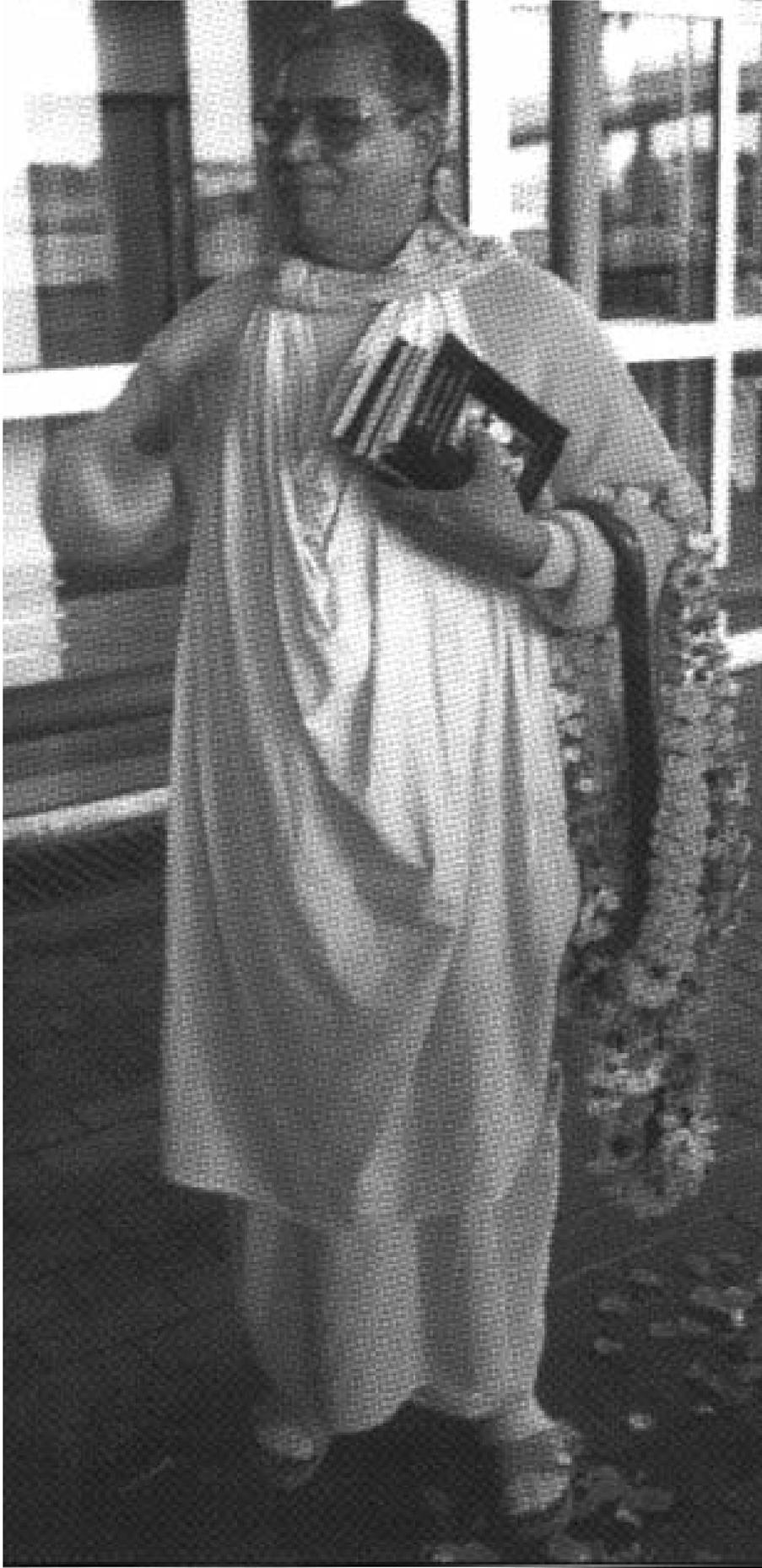
It was for this reason that Srila Guru Maharaj did not recommend us to read many things. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur also discouraged much reading. Also, especially for those in the Math, there is no excess time for reading. Our time is all service time. There is no excess time in our hand, so how shall we try to earn ‘other knowledge’ and how can we spend our time for collecting that knowledge?

Someone is studying in Sanskrit, someone in Bengali, someone else is studying in English—and spending time. They are showing a post-dated cheque, that “After getting that knowledge I shall serve!” But before that it is possible you may die, so why don’t you think like that? Therefore Srila Guru Maharaj did not give us the chance to study.

At first Srila Guru Maharaj did give



Left to right: Sripad B.A. Sagar Maharaja, Srila B.S. Govinda Maharaja, Sripad B.K. Giri Maharaja at Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math New York/New Jersey.



some chance to me because I was unqualified. Srila Guru Maharaj gave me some opportunity to study, but when some proper knowledge came to me, then Srila Guru Maharaj said it was sufficient: “It is not necessary to read more, now you do seva.”

**“I read Sri
Brahma-samhi-
ta only a few
years ago but I
joined over
forty-five years
ago!”**

We tried to do seva- as much as possible, heart and soul, and we have seen that gradually everything is revealing itself in our heart. We are not trying to collect knowledge from the Scriptures. I read Sri Brahma-samhita only a few years ago but I joined over forty-five years ago! It was just during the last days of Srila Guru Maharaj that I read Brahma-samhita.

One day I put the question to Srila Guru Maharaj: “Maharaj, in which way does the jiva-soul come out from the Tatastha-sakti?” I heard the reply many times, but I could not catch it, so I again questioned Srila Guru Maharaj: “The creation of the world, and the creation of the jivas—in which way does it happen, Maharaj? Again please explain this to me.”

Read It and See

Srila Guru Maharaj said, “Oh-oh, have you not read Brahma-samhita?” I replied, “No, Guru Maharaj, I have not read it.” I knew many slokas from Brahma-samhita, having heard them from Srila Guru Maharaj, but I had not read the book. Then Srila Guru Maharaj said, “Read it and you will see the answer to your question very clearly

explained there in the first section.” He also gave a brief explanation.

The Middle Position

That question was very difficult. The jīva-soul is transcendental, but the Maya-sakti produces material things. Her activity is always within the material world but the jīva is transcendental, and Kṛṣṇa is transcendental. So in which way can the transcendental and material combine together to produce the creation? That was the question. But Srīla Guru Maharaj replied with this sloka: tal-lingam bhagavan sambhuh. Kṛṣṇa throws the vision, and prakṛti is impregnated— mayadhak-sena prakṛtiḥ, suyate sa-caracaram (Bg. 9.10). And in the middle position, that ‘throwing’ is done by Sambhu. That is his position.

Srīla Guru Maharaj instructed, “Read Brahma-saṁhita, you will be able to see everything explained there.” And when I read Brahma-saṁhita I was surprised to see: “Oh, all knowledge is inside this book, but I did not read it before. The whole of the knowledge that Srīla Guru Maharaj is giving us—everything is contained here.” Then the idea came to me that we must try to publish this Sri Brahma-saṁhita and we shall distribute it to everyone.

Actually, Srīla Guru Maharaj emphasised service to Guru and the Vaisnavas, and by their mercy that knowledge will reveal itself in our heart. We can say that now we know something of the news of the transcendental world. ‘Know’ means ‘feel.’ We can say we have some feeling, and by following the process you must also get those feelings.

Feelings

I believe that everyone has some feelings, otherwise they cannot come in this line, especially in the Math of Srīla Guru Maharaj—the line of Srīla Guru Maharaj. The devotees have feelings, but perhaps they cannot always feel them clearly. Feelings must sometimes come to all of you, otherwise it is not

possible to remain in this devotional track. But the main thing in the teachings of Srīla Guru Maharaj is to serve the Vaisnavas, and to follow your Guru; in this way you will get everything.

Many disciples of Srīla Swami Maharaj lived within his Mission. When they came in the line of Srīman Mahāprabhu they were very fortunate no doubt, but later their activities sometimes caused them much trouble. Sometimes they did not know what was what and sometimes they did not receive guidelines directly from their Guru. They had heard some things, but not others, so they lost the proper devotional temperament, and what they were doing began to go in the chamber of karma, but not in the chamber of seva. In that way they thought, “We are satisfied. This is transcendental knowledge!”—easily some of them were cheated by Maya.

One who always thinks: “There exists more than this, and I need that,” and who always tries to search for it and try to get it, such a person will not be cheated.

I am ISKCON

In the time of Srīla Swami Maharaj, everything went on under his influence, and at that time very few could understand what their actual position was. He told: “I am ISKCON; you follow me,” and they tried to follow him but they did not know which part they should follow, this part or that part? As his mission became larger, the devotees’ mood of service was not always steady. It was a great difficulty for many of them. Sometimes they were very sad, sometimes very enthusiastic—many stages are there. The different stages a devotee goes through are given in the Scriptures: utsahamayi, ghanatarala, byurabikalpa, visayasangara, niyama-ksama, tarangarangini.

In the beginning the practitioners feel much enthusiasm and do many types of service, but later their service mood goes flat. Then some wave may come in their mind and by that wave

some mood of Suspicion arises. After that comes some connection with the plane of mundane enjoyment, and, side by side with it, a connection with the transcendental world. They then become somewhat confused. Crossing that stage, first nistha, steadiness, and then ruci, taste, comes and they gain more strength. At that stage all hindrances go behind them and they can proceed steadily. These stages of devotion are explained in the Scriptures.

It’s Not Always Seva

So, we may feel or see outwardly that someone may be doing seva, service, but it is not always actual service. Seva gives more seva, so why is more seva not coming? Seeing the symptoms, we can say that some were not doing actual seva, therefore after the disappearance of Srīla Swami Maharaj and Srīla Guru Maharaj they underwent some difficulty.

We must be conscious, therefore, about our position and about our service, then we will not be deviated from our position. But even if some deviation does come, if we are sincere we can emerge from that position also.

*bhumau skhalita padanam bhimir
evavalambanam*

*tvayi jataparadhanam, tvam eva
saranam prabho*

When a baby tries to walk, he sometimes falls down on the ground, but by taking help from the ground, again he tries, and after a few days he can walk very easily. Not only that, but after growing up more he will be able to run very fast. He gets everything; but first he must try, otherwise he will not gain anything.

When we live within this body, there is the possibility of deviation everywhere. Deviation will not come to attack us if we do not listen to the demands of our mental and physical bodies—otherwise, deviation is possible for everyone.

Service Life Outside the Temple

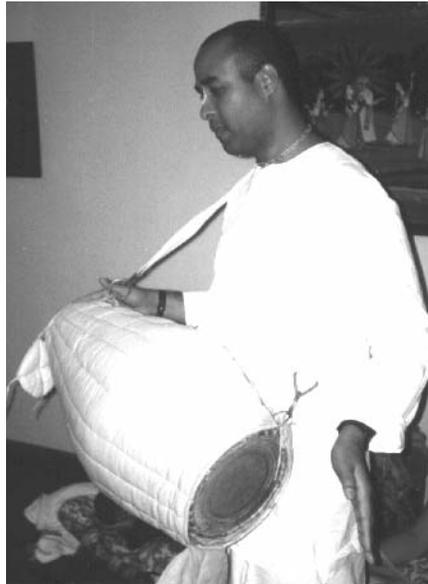
By Dayal Chand das

We have all heard that connection with Gurudeva is manifest through one's seva and Vaisnava association. Yet, devotees in general misunderstand what is real service and glorification to their Gurudeva.

In the recently published Divine Guidance, Srila Govinda Maharaja states (p.8), "Where there is no Guru present but other Vaisnavas are there, service to the Vaisnava will also go to the Guru." Surprisingly, many aspirants have some misconceptions about the importance of service to the Guru's representatives and local Maths. These devotees think that sending money to Navadwip is the only real service. But their donations, although appreciated, can't give them the nourishment of direct sadhu sanga.

Pious Karmma

The Guru's instructions are meant to help the disciple correct his faults and clear up his misconceptions. Srila Govinda Maharaja says in Divine Guidance (p.8), "It is necessary to follow Gurudeva as perfectly as possible. 'Follow' means that his order is sufficient for me: "Do this and you'll be satisfied." Srila Govinda Maharaja goes on to say (p.10), "If someone will follow his Guru's instructions in a sur-



Sriman Dayal Chand das

rendered mood, it will be bhakti, otherwise it will be pious karmma." Traditionally, the average disciple lived in the temple of his Guru, where he received constant attention and correction. Today, the average disciple lives outside of the temple, and has little chance of getting personalized instruction from his Gurudeva. That is why Gurudeva establishes branches of his Math in remote areas. Without sadhu sanga and sadhu seva the disciple cannot make advancement in the science of Krishna consciousness.

Therefore, the local Math should be the focal point for the disciple living away from the main Math of his Gurudeva.

"The neophyte devotees...are very expert in arguing though they have no sense of advanced devotional service..."

Srila Govinda Maharaja in one lecture said that we are interested in Vaisnavism, which means Guru Vaisnava seva sanga. For those of us working and living outside the walls of the temple, our service usually takes the form of monetary service donations, and weekend excursions where we can associate with the local Acharya and do a little direct service to the Math, and the other devotees.

We are mainly neophyte devotees and we need bonafide guidance. One of

the greatest faults of the neophyte devotees is neglecting the directives of the more spiritually connected leaders due to false ego or laziness. In one purport Srila Prabhupada relates Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura's description of these neophytes as *Krsna-name*, or initiated devotees engaged in chanting (Chaitanya Charitamrita: Madhya-lila, Chapter 2, Text 93).

“Wherever the Guru or his representative is, service should be done faithfully and steadily.”

In this purport Srila Prabhupada says, “According to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, there are three kinds of devotees known as bhajana-vijna (experts in devotional service, bhajana-sila (devotees engaged in devotional service), and Krsna-name (initiated devotees engaged in chanting.”

The Next Level

Herein lies the distinction between initiated devotees engaged in chanting (Krsna-name) and devotees engaged in devotional service to their Guru (bhajana-sila), as well as those experts in devotional service (bhajana-vijna). Being initiated and engaging in chanting is not bhajana-sila, it is Krsna-name, and those with that mentality must take guidance from senior men in order to advance to the next level of bhajan-sila, or actually doing some devotional service. In the same purport Srila Prabhupada elaborates on the mentality of these neophyte devotees by quoting Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami, who said, “The neophyte devotees...are very expert in arguing though they have no sense of advanced devotional service, (they) think themselves very advanced

because they imitate some smarta-brahman.”

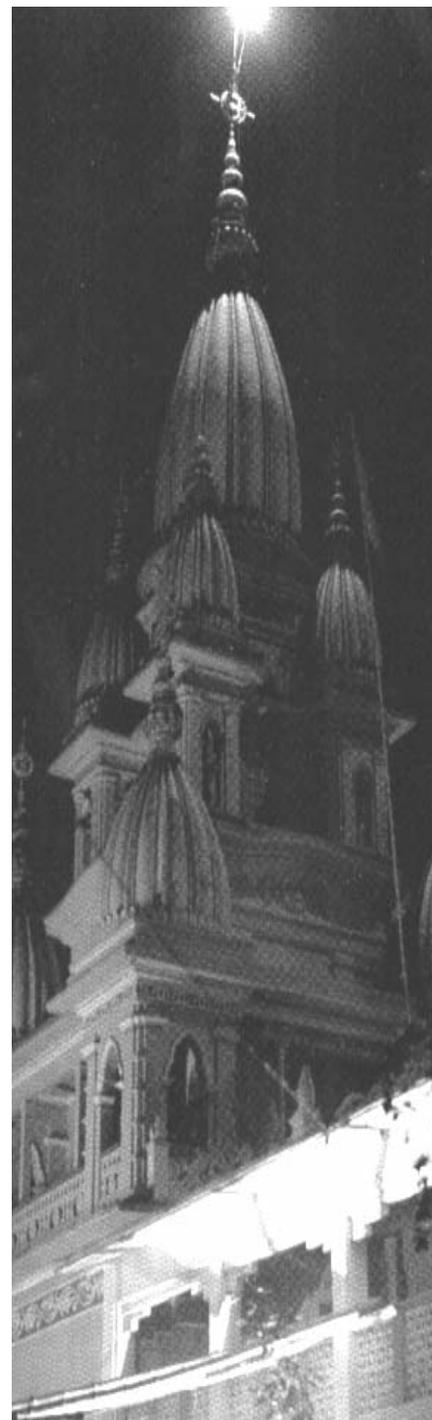
I have personally seen how some devotees are continuing with the wrong idea that Sri Krishna will provide everything without any effort coming from our side. The soul's nature is meant to be active, and Vaisnavism means directing the soul's activity to the Central Good. Srila Govinda Maharaja says in Divine Guidance (p.15), “We tried to do seva as much as possible, heart and soul, and we have seen that gradually everything is revealing itself in our heart.” If disciples follow their Guru and begin serving his representatives and local Maths they will always be eager to contribute by rendering service. This will become a lifetime commitment for these devotees, no matter what happens in their private lives.

The First Directive

Gurudeva is coming to the local Math so that we can benefit from his darshan and also have the opportunity to render a little personal service. Association and service are the criterion of the progressive devotional life. Whenever Gurudeva gives initiation he personally encourages disciples and friends to help the mission by serving the local Acharya and Math. Wherever the Guru or his representative is, service should be done faithfully and steadily. The higher conception of service can be developed in our heart if we avoid bad association and follow the directives of our Guru and local Acharya. Srila Govinda Maharaja in Divine Guidance (p.12) relates Srila Sridhar Maharaja's first instruction to him in his youth, “What I shall instruct, you will follow, and what your mind will say, you don't follow.” This is the conception that brings us the quickest progress in our devotional lives.

Therefore, aloofness from the local Math and the local Acharya may cut us off from real sadhu sanga and seva. This will impede the development of true humility and tolerance in our hearts. Without true humility and tolerance, we

cannot give honor to others. In fact, aloof from our local Math, our weak minds will carry us away, simply because we won't follow the clear order of Gurudeva. There is much seva to be done, and Sripad Giri Maharaja needs our help. Let's get to work in the service of Sri Sri Guru Gauranga!



Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math —
More than just a building.

Divine Bookshelf

Books available through mail order

Srimad Bhagavad Gita: Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute	\$24.95
Prapanna Jivanamritam (Progressive Immortality of the Soul)	\$17.95
Subjective Evolution of Consciousness	\$16.95
Loving Search for the Lost Servant	\$12.95
Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion Volume I	\$11.95
Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion Volume II	\$11.95
Sri Brahma Samhita.....	\$9.95
Navadwip	\$9.95
Search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful	\$8.95
Sri Guru and His Grace.....	\$8.95
Golden Volcano of Divine Love	\$8.95
Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: His Life and Precepts.....	\$7.95
Benedictine Tree	\$6.95
Divine Guidance	\$4.95
Holy Engagement	\$4.95
Navadwip Bhava Taranga	\$3.95
Sri Chaitanya Saraswati	\$3.95
Dignity of the Divine Servitor	\$3.95
Golden Reflections	\$3.95
Divine Message for the Devotees	\$3.95
Sri Vaisnava Toshani (back issues)	\$1.95

Order Form

I would like to order the following books _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____

Telephone _____

Add 15% of your total order for postage and handling (\$2.00 minimum). Mail this form with your order to:

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math • 883 Cooper Landing Road • Suite 207 • Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08002 • (609) 962-0894