

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

82.05.12.C_82.05.13.A

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...then Īśvara Purī by his own hand he cleansed his stools etc.

[*Īśvara-purī gosāñi kare śrīpāda-sevana*], *svahaste karena mala-mūtrādi mārjana*

[“Īśvara Purī, the spiritual master of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, performed service to Mādhavendra Purī, cleaning up his stool and urine with his own hand.”] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 8.28*]

For Mādhavendra Purī, Īśvara Purī did this. But he’s above this *arcana kāṇḍa*, worshipping the Deity, he has passed that stage.

*arcayam eva haraye, pūjām yaḥ śraddhāyehate
na tad-bhaktesu cānyeṣu, sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

[“A devotee who faithfully worships the Deity, but does not properly respect the Vaiṣṇavas or the people in general is called a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position of devotional service.”] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 11.2.47*]

Apparently with garland, with *chandan*, with flowers, offering *bhoga*, *arcana*, that is, I’m not going to minimise, to undermine that. That is necessary. But to serve Guru, Vaiṣṇava, in a practical way, that will fetch more value. *Madhyama adhikārī* will try for that. Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Svahaste karena mala-mūtrādi mārjana*. And he’s Guru of Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu took *mantram* from Īśvara Purī, and Īśvara Purī’s practice was such that when his Guru was disappearing, at that time he did with his own hands. It has been praised like anything, by the devotees. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa. So approach a thing from a lower stage and to be connected in the real service should be distinction, and we must know that.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Gaura Hari bol. Gaura Hari bol.
Nitāi Gaura Hari bol. Nitāi Gaura Hari bol. Nitāi Gaura Hari bol.

The elephant devotee, the Gajarāja, in his previous life, there was a long fight between one elephant and one crocodile, or in some *kalpa* with the crocodile and tortoise. Anyhow there was a fight, perhaps for a long time a fight. The elephant was tired, because in the water, that is the natural place for the crocodile, and the elephant he tries to take up to the land, and he’s taking in the water. A long fight. The elephant was disappointed and began to cry. “O Lord, please protect me, save me.”

And Kṛṣṇa went and cut off the crocodile, re-leaved this devotee, elephant.

We are given to understand, who is this elephant. In his previous life, he was a king, in Southern India, Andhradesh. And he, when he was engaged in worshipping his own Deity, at that time some information came to him that Mahārṣi Agastya has come here as a guest.

He thought that, “I am engaged in serving my Deity, worshipping my Deity. I should not leave this and go out to receive Agastya.” So, and also, “Agastya is a devotee and a *yogī* of higher type. If he’s displeased, then he may do much mischief in the kingdom.”

So knowingly, he represent himself as he had not heard, in this way, *stabdha*, *stabdhi buta*. As if he can’t hear, he posed in such a way that he can’t hear. Then he finished his worship and then came out, saw Agastya. “Oh.” The necessary deception, make arrangements, all these things.

Because he was in that mood at that time, *stabdhi buta*, he was imitating a stage of body which is not attending outside things, *stabdhi buta*. Not smart, not attending outside, that is the general attitude of an elephant. So, for this crime, the next birth he had to become that elephant. But he was a devotee, he was saved, but it is mentioned that he had to become elephant in his next birth, because he played the part of an elephant at that time, when it was required that he should leave the *arcana* and go and receive the devotee. He should have left the *arcana* of the Deity and gone to receive the devotee. The

deity is here in the doll, and the deity is there. Doll conception, that is Deity conception and there is Deity in the heart of the devotee, but that is higher conception.

When I came to Gauḍīya Maṭha, I was from Calcutta from my quarter I was visiting. I asked one *brahmacārī*, “The Śrī Mūrti of Mahāprabhu in a very living posture, it is Dāru Mūrti or _____ [?] or what is it?”

He got excited and told, “*Sākṣāt Mahāprabhu*; Mahāprabhu Himself. Don’t take it as wood or earth or anything. Mahāprabhu Himself is there.”

I put a question: “If Mahāprabhu Himself is there, then who will be best among you, your Gurudeva, why he’s not here with Mahāprabhu? He’s staying on the first floor in another room and Mahāprabhu Himself is left here in the outer room? What’s the cause?”

Then he was a little calm, seeing this naughty question. He came to try to make me understand that he’s also in the near of Mahāprabhu there. “In his heart, there is Mahāprabhu. Here is also Mahāprabhu, and there in heart he’s also living by the side of Mahāprabhu. But the Mahāprabhu within his heart is superior than Mahāprabhu here, for the others.”

I got some clue. “Yes, it may be.” I was silenced. So,

tomara hrdoye sada govinda-visrama, govinda kahena, bhakta seva ram [mora vaisnava parana]

[“Your heart is always the resting place of Lord Govinda, and Lord Govinda says the Vaiṣṇavas are always in My heart.”] [From Narottama dasa Ṭhākura’s *Prarthana*] [*Gauḍīya Kaṅṭhahāra*, 3.40]

So *īśvare tad-adhīn, prākṛta bhakta*. *Arcayam eva haraye, pūjām yaḥ śraddhāyehate*, the beginner, the primary *bhakta*, he has reverence more for a Deity. And not for Vaiṣṇava, so much. Because he thinks, “He is a man. And there may be some devotion, that is also in me, I am also worshipping the Deity.” *Arcayam eva haraye, pūjām yaḥ śraddhāyehate, na tad-bhakteṣu*. But not so much particular about the devotees. *Sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*. He’s more accustomed with the material aspect of things.

*īśvare tad-adhīneṣu, bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitri-kṛpopekṣa, yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

[“The devotee in the intermediate stage of devotional service is called a *madhyama-adhikārī*. He loves the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to the innocent and disregards the envious.”] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.2.46]

But a higher, middle class, *īśvare prema*, and in His devotee the friendship, *īśvare tad-adhīneṣu, prema-maitri*. And *kṛpa*, ordinary mass, he will show kindness by talking about the Lord, and who is unfriendly, he will be indifferent to him. So, when we have got particular care for the devotee, here there’s the living presence of the Lord. Not so much acute in the Deity, but here in the heart of a devotee there is more valuable representation. When we’ll be able to appreciate, we will come to the middle class. That *cetan*, the nearest approach towards the Lord, when we will find in the conscious area, the Vaikuṅṭha, the nearer.

Rāmānuja says, *para, vyūha, vaibhava, antaryāmī, and arcana*. These five expressions of the Lord. Para, Nārāyaṇa. *Vyūha*, on His sides to help His activity. *Vaibhava*, Matsya, Kūrma, that come down here. *Antaryāmī*, in every heart. And *arca*, the lowest extension of Him in the material world. And from there He recruits towards, from matter, through matter, He recruits them to the highest conscious area, *viśuddha-sattva* area.

Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa. There is a question why Rūpa, Sanātana, the *bhajan* and *arcana*, there is some distinction, *bhajan* and *arcana*. Rūpa, Sanātana installed also, but they are not of the lower type of devotee. *Arcayam eva haraye*. They dealt with higher things, but they also installed Govinda, Madana Mohan, Gopinātha.

That question came to Prabhupāda. “They are engaged in *bhajan* not in *arcana*. We should understand the difference between *arcana* and *bhajan*. *Arcana* of a lower type, *bhajan* direct, *sākṣāt*. They are not seeing the *arca*, the symbol of Mahāprabhu, symbol of Kṛṣṇa, but directly in contact. No barrier between, in the same plane, in Vṛndāvana their dealings are all living.

Madana Mohana says, “Sanātana, I can’t eat what you offer without salt.”

“Oh, You want me to feed You salt, You have come only for that? All right, you say, some salt.”

“No, no, Sanātana, I can’t eat without a little ghee.”

“Then why have You come to a beggar? You had good feeding there. Why did You come here to trouble me? Where shall I get ghee and these things?”

In this way, the transaction is going.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. What’s the time?

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: Nine twenty two.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari.
Nitāi Gaura Hari bol. Nitāi Gaura Hari bol.

Akṣayananda Mahārāja: Then Mahārāja, the question of why they established the *arcana* when they are already in *bhajan*? What was replied in that way?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Was ordered by Mahāprabhu, “Do these services there.” Four or five things was ordered to Sanātana Goswāmī. *Śrī Mūrti pūjā, prakāśa, śāstra, tīrtha-uddhāra, sadācāra pravartana*.

kṛṣṇa-bhakti, kṛṣṇaprema-sevā-pravartana / lupta-tīrtha-uddhāra, āra vairāgya-śikṣaṇa

[“You will also have to explain Kṛṣṇa’s devotional service, establish centres for cultivation of love of Kṛṣṇa, excavate lost places of pilgrimage, and teach people how to adopt the renounced order.”]

[*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 4.80*]

These four things were ordered by Mahāprabhu to Sanātana to do this. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Bhāratī Mahārāja: Mahārāja, you once told the story, how after you took *Gāyatrī* initiation there was some question asked to you as to what was the difference before you took and afterwards.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I don’t follow what you say.

Bhāratī Mahārāja: Bengali (?) _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Vasudeva Prabhu asked me, “What you were, and now what you are?”

I told, “I was a *brāhmaṇa*, now I have become a Vaiṣṇava.”

He cut his tongue with the tip. “No, you are on the path of becoming servant of the Vaiṣṇava. You have begun, you are given admission to become the servant of a Vaiṣṇava. So to become Vaiṣṇava is not so easy, it is high and high. And you were a *brāhmaṇa* in the consideration of the body consideration, generally, but now you are given, you have been given admission to work in the path of becoming a servant of a Vaiṣṇava, *daīva brāhmaṇa*. And bodily consideration is *asura brāhmaṇa*, considered only by body, ‘I am *brāhmaṇa*,’ that is.

*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke, sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij, janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ*

[“One who identifies his self as the inert body composed of mucus, bile and air, who assumes his wife and family are permanently his own, who thinks an earthen image or the land of his birth is

worshippable, or who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there, but who never identifies himself with, feels kinship with, worships or even visits those who are wise in spiritual truth — such a person is no better than a cow or an ass.”] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.84.13]

Who identifies himself with the body, he’s not a normal *sādhu*. I’m not the body. Of course it is mentioned in the scriptures, here and there, and he admitted that there has also been some recognition but if not antagonistic to Vaiṣṇava. But when opposing Vaiṣṇava, then he should be considered to be *asura*. Otherwise, some recognition there, *bhosura kula*, in the line of *bhosura*.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nitai Gaura Hari bol! Nitai Gaura Hari bol. Nitai Gaura Hari bol.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, could you describe the details of the birth of Kṛṣṇa, the appearance, the actual birth of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Ha, ha. On the whole, it is something like imitation; what we conceive by our material senses, it is nothing of that type. A spiritual body, coming, showing, imitating the physical birth. This is an imitation, show, all spiritual, just like a drama, a play.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Kṛṣṇa appeared as a child with four arms, helmet? Kṛṣṇa appeared in full ornament, with four arms as a baby?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. When He came out, at that time they did not note, but when their eyes were attracted to Him first, they found four arms and with so many ornaments. And by His will, that iron gate was opened, and the Yamunā in the rainy season, that was shallow, one jackal showing the path through that flooded Yamunā, and Vasudeva walking through the water of the Yamunā. All this is impossible from the physical standpoint, material standpoint. So, His will is like that. Physically, materially, all these things inconceivable, impossible. And then when he came back, the gate was again closed as previous. So all supernatural. Supernatural things were done there. Not any particular material process that He came. Still, imitating material process as far as possible.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: We have a painting, even within ISKCON, that seems to misrepresent *Bhāgavatam* that full, mature Viṣṇu form is shown, and baby at the feet.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What does he say?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Sometimes in the painting, in the picture, it’s shown that the Viṣṇu Mūrti, fully grown, and then a baby Kṛṣṇa, at the same time, in the picture represented, it seems to be wrong. Vidagdha-Mādhava says.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: The mature Viṣṇu form, rather than the four-armed baby form.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: He thinks that the _____ [?] should be in the form of a baby, not full grown Viṣṇu. Is that correct or not?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: But when Vasudeva saw on the side of Devakī, he saw Him as four handed full grown Viṣṇu with ornaments, all decorated, and began His praise with hymns. And also in that Viṣṇu Mūrti, He advised Vasudeva, “Do this, and this, and this, and this.” Then He became *prākṛta sisu* [?] ordinary baby. When Vasudeva first saw, he saw *catur-bhuja* Viṣṇu. Then He gave some advice to Vasudeva, and finishing His advice He became as an ordinary child, and Vasudeva carried out His orders, took Him, the child, to Nandalaya, Gokula.

Bhāratī Mahārāja: Mahārāja, doesn’t Viśvanātha Cakravartī comment that two Kṛṣṇas appeared at the same time?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, in Yaśodā, in Yaśodā, one Kṛṣṇa, and one male baby, and one female baby, by the side of Yaśodā. Vasudeva could not detect that. Vasudeva as soon as he placed according to the previous advice the baby nearby Yaśodā, Yaśodā's baby absorbed this Vasudeva baby. And Vasudeva only saw the female baby and he took her and gave her by the side of Devakī and then everything was closed as it was previously.

Then intimation went to the gatekeepers, the watchmen, they then came into consciousness and they heard that the newborn baby is crying. They gave information to Kāṁsa at once.

Kāṁsa came, and he found that is this is a girl. "Then why this is so? A male child must be born to kill me. Then what is this? The gods also speak lies? What is this?"

Asked Vasudeva, "Give explanation why this girl, what should I do? You see it with your own eyes."

Then anyhow, he took the girl, and as he did previously, he with the legs he took by hand and thrust on the stone. And the girl slipped from his hand and went up in the sky and told, "Who will kill you, He's growing in Gokula." With these words she disappeared. Astabhuja Mūrti. Katyayana, astabhuja Mūrti, she disappeared. Then what to do? Kāṁsa, then he engaged many spies to find out the newborn babies, wherever to be found in Vṛndāvana.

The first, Pūtānā, she went and did her service and that was the effect, in this way. Agha, Baka and others they're privately engaged in trying to kill Kṛṣṇa and they're all failures.

Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari. Nitāi Gaura Hari bol! So I like to stop here.

Devotee: Jaya Om Viṣṇu-Pāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja kī jaya!

...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: He was a *gr̥hastha*, but he had a certificate from Mahāprabhu, that he was master of his senses to the extreme degree.

Once a *brāhmaṇa* named Pradyumna Miśra came to Mahāprabhu and asked that, "I would like to hear Kṛṣṇa *kathā* from Your lips."

Mahāprabhu told, "I do not know any Kṛṣṇa *kathā*, but Rāmānanda knows. You go to him and hear about Kṛṣṇa. Take My name, then perhaps he will talk with you. You are a *brāhmaṇa*, he's a *sūdra* by caste."

So, he was hesitating, but what to do? He went, and he saw, sat for some time there, and came back and reported to Mahāprabhu.

Mahāprabhu asked, "Have you heard Kṛṣṇa *kathā* from him?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I saw him engaged in some matter which is not very well, so I sat for some time and came back."

"What did you see?"

He saw, he's giving training to some *deva-dāsīs*. *Deva-dāsī* means who are generally devoted to Jagannātha, from their young age they do not marry. And sometimes their character also may not be good, generally. They are known as *deva-dāsīs*. So Rāmānanda was seen to train the *deva-dāsīs* in a very objectionable way.

"How the *deva-dāsīs* will go before Jagannātha and dance and chant. Seeing how their posture, gestures, their look enticing, all these things. And so much so, for such training, he touches their private parts also. So, seeing all these things, I had no regard for him, and waited for some time, saw him busily in that matter, I came away."

"Don't undermine Rāmānanda. He's master of his senses. He has not a tinge of lust in Him. Even we feel trouble for sense disturbance within us, but Rāmānanda has got no such trouble. But Rāmānanda has no such trouble. Only such stage can be attained we know through *śāstra*, scripture, the *Bhāgavata*." Mahāprabhu came to say.

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ, śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam, hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

[“One who hears with firm faith the supra-mundane amorous affairs of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, as described by a pure devotee of the Lord, soon becomes freed from mundane lust and achieves divine love of Kṛṣṇa.”] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.33.39] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā*, 5.48]

From the scripture only we can understand that such stage can be attained, it is possible to be above the sense pleasure of the mundane.

[*sarvajña munira vākya — śāstra-‘paramāṇa’] āmā-sabā jīvera haya śāstra-dvārā ‘jñāna’*

[“The Vedic literatures composed by the omniscient Mahāmuni Vyāsadeva are evidence of all spiritual existence. Only through these revealed scriptures can all conditioned souls attain knowledge.”] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, 20.353]

“Direct experience,” Mahāprabhu says, “But only through scripture, we can know that there is a stage when a man may be above all these difficulties, all these gross attachments. Bodily he may be engaged, but his heart may be elsewhere, the man may be elsewhere, it is possible, *vikṛīḍitam*.

And only one Rāmānanda, he’s of such type. There may not be Rāmānandas in big numbers. Only one Rāmānanda, he has got such stage he has acquired, because he’s well-versed in that feeling, that sentiment, that realization which is necessary in the service of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. His heart is completely dedicated for the cause of Kṛṣṇa. No selfish existence, no existence of any self interest there. All Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all Kṛṣṇa’s satisfaction. Whatever it may be, He is doing it for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. Wholly emptied, vacant, and devoted to the cause of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. So don’t think ill of him, again go there.”

Then Pradyumna Miśra again went there.

And Rāmānanda began, “Oh, in that day, I could not oblige you. You have come to hear Kṛṣṇa *kathā*, how fortunate I am.”

In this way he began. And in the morning he began, and it came to be afternoon, but still he’s mad in talking about Kṛṣṇa. He does not know, no bathing, no feeding, nothing of the type. He’s madly going on with Kṛṣṇa *kathā*. Then when it was very, very late, his servants came, twice, thrice, in this way, to ask him to take bath, and to take food, and anyhow he had to leave the talk and go on.

Then Pradyumna Miśra came, “Yes I have heard, my heart is full hearing Kṛṣṇa *kathā* from Raya Rāmānanda.”

[*‘bhakti’, ‘prema’, ‘tattva’ kahe rāye kari’ ‘vaktā’] āpani pradyumna-miśra-saha haya ‘śrotā’*

[“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached about devotional service, ecstatic love and the Absolute Truth by making Rāmānanda Rāya, a *grhastha* born in a low family, the speaker. Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, the exalted *brāhmaṇa-sannyāsī*, and Pradyumna Miśra, the purified *brāhmaṇa*, both became the hearers of Rāmānanda Rāya.”] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā*, 5.85]

He Himself heard from Rāmānanda, Mahāprabhu, and Pradyumna Miśra also. He said to hear from Rāmānanda Rāya. “Rāmānanda, he knows what is Kṛṣṇa.”

Mahāprabhu told that, “What I have heard from Rāmānanda I taught that to Rūpa, Sanātana. I got it from Rāmānanda Rāya.”

It is also mentioned that Mahāprabhu He took *dīkṣā* in general from Īśvara Purī. For preaching purpose He took *sannyāsa* from Keśava Bhāratī. And for entrance into Vraja *līlā* He had His *dīkṣā* from Rāmānanda Rāya. He used to give respect to Rāmānanda Rāya. Rāmānanda Rāya did not think, of course none of them, neither Keśava Bhāratī, nor Īśvara Purī, nor Rāmānanda Rāya, they thought themselves as Guru. But it is seen that Mahāprabhu is dealing with Rāmānanda Rāya with some respect. Respectful dealings with Rāmānanda Rāya. It is mentioned also in their talk.

sakhī vinā ei līlā puṣṭa nāhi haya, sakhī līlā vistāriyā, sakhī āsvādaya

[“Without the *gopīs*, these pastimes between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa cannot be nourished. Only by their cooperation are such pastimes broadcast. It is their business to taste the mellows.”] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 8.203]

If one wants to enter into this Vraja *rasa*, then it is required that he will go to a *sakhī* in *mādhurya rasa*. They’re masters of the situation. The whole storehouse of this *mādhurya līlā* is in the hand of the *sakhīs*, they can give it to others. So *guru rūpa sakhī* in *mādhurya rasa*, the Guru is seen in the form and the spirit of a *sakhī* of Rādhārāṇī. And Rāmānanda Rāya was Viśākhā Sakhī, and Mahāprabhu says in the last,

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya, / yei kṛṣṇa-tattva vettā sei guru haya.

[“Whether a person is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, or a *śūdra*, if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa, he is to be accepted as Guru.”] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 8.128]

Here is a hint.

“Why do you shrink away, that I am learning so much from you? You, *yei kṛṣṇa-tattva vettā*, you are well versed in the affairs of Kṛṣṇa, so you are Guru. I am hearing from you...

.....