

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāj

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: ... your full attention, pay your full attention here, then you will be able to know to the finish, and your march from this point will be sincere and satisfactory. Otherwise the *sahajiyā*-ism will enter your heart. Within one leap you will go to get the summit of the hill? That is impossible. So you have to march, but march must be sincere, real, satisfactory, real progress not imitative progress. So that warning is given at every stage of life. "This is the highest for you, give your whole attention to that. Don't be absent-minded and haphazard in your acquisition. Engage yourself fully with this class and the next will come out of its own accord. The next higher will come to you. You attend here, all your energy you invest here and the next will come automatically to you, the higher stage." For that policy it has been told like that.

sayaka vada daya doyam bhavanam manu sarsanam?

Just as when a professor comes to teach a child he will have to take the mentality of a child to teach the child. "Go so far and not much more." But still he will say: "No, know this. This is the final. Give your whole attention to know this, get by heart this. And when that is finished then come forward." In this way by gradual [progress].

Devotee: I'm very much attracted to those people who are Christians in America, to help them make some progress ...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given his decision that *Bhagavad-gītā* was told to Arjuna and Arjuna engaged himself in fighting again. But had it been Uddhava in the position, in the place of Arjuna after hearing the whole of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*,

[*mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja, ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*]

["Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair."] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 18.66]

...he accepted and went away from the war field. Ha, ha. The same *Gītā Upadeśa*, the same advice for Arjuna acted in one way, and for Uddhava it would have acted in another way. After hearing the whole of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *sarva-dharmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ*, Arjuna also told: *tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore mām, niyojayasi keśava. vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena, buddhiṁ mohayasīva me...*

[*jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te, matā buddhir janārdana,
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore mām, niyojayasi keśava.
vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena, buddhiṁ mohayasīva me
tad ekaṁ vada niścītya, yena śreyo 'ham āpnuyām*]

["O Janārdana, O Keśava, if You consider that resolute and determined spiritual intelligence (*vyavasāy-ātmikā-buddhi*) is better than action in goodness and passion, then why do You engage me in the violent activity of warfare?"]

"My intelligence is confused by Your words. They appear to be ambiguous, sometimes supporting action and sometimes supporting knowledge. So please instruct me which of these two paths is most beneficial for me."

[*Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.1-2]

"You say that *jñāna* is better than *karma*. Then why do you want to engage me in this dreadful *karma* in fighting?"

Then Kṛṣṇa told:

na karmaṇām anārambhān, naiṣkarmaṃ puruṣo 'śnute
[*na ca sannyasanād eva, siddhiṃ samadhigacchati*]

["Without performing scripturally enjoined duties, one cannot attain knowledge leading to freedom from action and reaction. How can a person of impure heart obtain perfection by abandoning his prescribed duties?"]

[*Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.4]

... "Here you have got your capacity in the *karma*. You finish this career and then you can aspire to come in the level of *jñāna*, enquiry into the knowledge. *Na karmaṇām anārambhān, naiṣkarmaṃ*, that *naiṣkarmaṃ* to do above all activity is not a very cheap thing. You finish your course of *karma*, then you'll be lifted to the place of *naiṣkarma, jñāna*, and then *bhakti*, in this way. So I say you engage yourself in this present fight. The fight is not recommended for everyone but for you and men of your section."

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

Devotee: There's one book in the Christian tradition about an unknown Christian *bhakta* who is chanting ...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Ke?

Devotee: Guru Mahārāja, when one is preaching to the society at large, how does he know how far to recommend the stage of God realisation that a person should follow?

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Who are you?

Devotee: Parthamitra.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Parthamitra. What does he say?

Devotee: He's saying: "So, you're saying that something is meant for one person, something is meant for another person, so when we preach to people in general how shall we know how to preach?"

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: That should be preached in a general way and they will come according to their inner response. Some will come to attack, to close the meeting. The communist minded, they will say: "No religious preaching is

allowed here. It is all theoretical. You will neglect the concrete world and you make an abstract thing to be everything and the people will suffer. We won't allow it." There is that such also. Beginning from there, there are so many stages. And in a mob you will preach and one who will find response in his inner heart, he will come to you to see. That is, according to the degree of realisation one will come. Birds of the same feather flock together. Inner demand, inner necessity will bring them.

[Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta] Swāmī Mahārāj went there and so many came. How? They are not this Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. But from inner tendency was wandering in this world everyone is gathering some new experience, new taste. Rather, the taste for this outside world is vanishing and inner taste is being awakened, and awakened to the degree of, according to the degree of awakenment one will come to respond to a preacher. In his own layer he will find, 'Oh, after so long, what little urge I found in my heart, I see there is possibility of outlet. There is a plane of that sort to satisfy that ambition and aspiration of mine. There is a chance in the outside so I must connect with him and I shall enquire of that land of my dreams.' In this way they will come. Birds of the same feather flock together. According to the inner taste they will come together and they will go on with their duty in that plain, that stage, 'how from there they can go further, higher position?' In this way, sometimes after rebirth it takes place, and sometimes in the same life one may change his creed and go higher somewhere else.

Devotee: So when one preaches, if the quality that he's preaching is too high he may discourage ...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: May be too high for one and may be too near for another but not too high for all. Then why this conversion is possible? How? So many going to be Mohammedan, Islam. So many going to be Christian. So many going to be Hindu. You, at present not born, all not born Christian. When Christianity first came no one was a Christian before. How the people were attracted to become Christian? There was in their heart the hankering for Christianity.

So, it is there: *brahmāṇḍa brhamite*. When Acyutānanda went to my birth place, one headmaster asked him: "From so near we cannot appreciate the teachings of Śrī Caitanya. How from so far have you come to realise it? You have come from a country so far off to sacrifice your life for the service of Śrī Caitanyadeva, but we are so near but we can't appreciate that."

Acyutānanda answered: *brahmāṇḍa brhamite kona bhāgyavān jīva...*

[*brahmāṇḍa brhamite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*]

["Wandering throughout the material universe, the very fortunate living entity who receives the grace of Guru and Kṛṣṇa receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service." *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 19.151*]

We are to acquire this capacity during the course of our wanderings through different positions in the whole of this creation. We are wandering from this land, that land, this species, that species, and in course of that we gather some *sukṛti*.

Unknown *sukṛti* - *ajñāta-sukṛti*, then *jñāta-sukṛti*. Unknowingly, unconsciously also our energy is spent, utilised for a particular cause and the reaction comes in me. In this way that *sukṛti*. And *sukṛti* developed - *jñāta-sukṛti*, and then *śraddhā*. On the surface the attraction comes to me for a particular truth, of the universal truth. In this way it comes, anywhere. A beast may feel the tendency to serve Kṛṣṇa. In Vṛndāvana it is so. So many trees, beasts, water, everything in the material posing but they have while they're there, they are, they have consciously acquired that position. Or they are eternally holding that position in different poses for the service of Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: There's one book about a Christian *bhakta*. He chants *mālā*, he chants the name of Jesus.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes. Catholics also use the beads, we know.

Devotee: Yes, rosary.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: They may take the name of Christ. They may do.

Devotee: Yes, in Russian Orthodox Church this man was chanting the name of Jesus.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes. He will attain the position of Jesus, at most.

Devotee: But his heart was growing very soft and he was feeling some ecstasy and he was feeling great love for Jesus.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Jesus. That may be. It also may be so that in his perfect growth he may be finished there. Eternal paraphernalia of Jesus, he may remain there, with fullest satisfaction. He's fated to be there.

Devotee: So not every Christian we can come to and attract...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Again by his, when from Brahmāloka it is also possible. It will be difficult because his highest attention, purest attention, he thinks he has attained it. So to remove him a forceful *sādhu* is necessary. It is also possible, not impossible, even from Brahmāloka where everything is nondifferentiated. By the will of God and the powerful will of the devotee, high devotee, they may be raised from the slumber and taken into action. It is possible. Nothing is impossible. But generally he may pass long, long ages there, satisfied. So far, no further. In the space of infinite time, nothing is so much great, so much spacious. Long, long, he may remain holding that position. So many dissolutions and creations will come and go. Any time his slumber may be broken, the possibility is there. From time immemorial this created world is and so many going up, down, up, down. It is infinite. And even in the midst of that some are coming out. A question of infinite.

Suppose the question of Jesus. His position may be considered as eternal. And some time may come when Jesus himself may be converted into Vaiṣṇavism. It is not impossible.

Devotee: Do you not think that Jesus had awareness of Kṛṣṇa, as a person, as the Personality of Godhead?

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes. If most closely detected then we're bound to say that there is some possibility of getting Kṛṣṇa in the life of his infinite way. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Devotees: Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Devotee: I didn't understand.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Jesus is stagnant or progressive? Is he stagnant?

Devotees: No.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Where he has reached, is that finished forever, or he's dynamic?

Devotees: The Christians say he has full knowledge.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: So he's stagnant there, finally fixed? Jesus' position. The Bishops, who says his position is final, or progressive life? Dynamic or static? Final? That position he holds or he can make further progress. And Jesus only barred from making any progress? What do you say? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Is he a member in the dynamic world or stagnant? So infinite is such. The infinite we are going to deal with, that is ludicrous for us that we want to deal with the infinite. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotees: What form of Kṛṣṇa was Christ ...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Why Kṛṣṇa is considered to be absolute? You are to enquire about that in a scientific way. Step by step, step by step. You go on reading, what I told, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhita* and *Bṛhat-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, it is already translated. Very minutely you try to follow the advice that is given, instructions, given in *Bṛhat-Bhāgavatāmṛta*. The development in theism, the theism as in dynamic character.

Devotees: One question he's asking: "Is there a method to preach the presence of the soul in the lower species?"

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: I don't follow.

Devotees: The Christians, they do not accept, generally, they do not accept that there is soul in animals and lower species, so how to preach about that?

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: [God?] did not care to bring them within that program to embarrass those persons. They cannot do but eating on vegetables and the animal species. So, at this point, they're not to be embarrassed by all these questions. Let them begin the theistic life eliminating those possibilities of reaction. Then again when they will feel about them they will be given that sort of

instalment. That there is also life and not less qualified than the human position, but in course of this revolutionary movement they're thrown into such condition as a result of their own *karma*.

tamasar bhavu rupena vestitar karma hetuna?

Wherever there is life, the soul is there within. It is a common thing. But Jesus thought it would be, the ideal of Jesus thought it would be impossible for them to adjust to such a degree with the environment. "Let them begin the culture of theism." Then gradually it will be, if such instruction will be given that, "You must adjust with your neighbour with generosity, liberally."

There is also not only *ātmā*, soul, but God is also there, everywhere. They are feeling pain and pleasure, happiness. In an animal it is of course quite clear that when they're killed they feel pain. So there is life, that vibration of pain there. Consciousness is there and soul is a unit of consciousness, pure.

To whom they preached, they're not so much qualified as to extend their knowledge so far. They're not prepared for so much sacrifice in their practices. So those who are not prepared to such extent, Christianity given by him. Everything ordained from the same common centre. So Christianity has got also its necessity. Islam has got also its necessity, because it has got some room in this universe. Not unnecessary but relative position, not absolute. And what is the question, the position of the Absolute Truth when we are to enquire? Then we come to India where they have dealt very extensively with all possible conceptions of religion and then ultimately come to the conclusion by which *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has been given. So many variegated natures of theological conceptions found in India. A part of that is not present anywhere in the world, as much as theological culture was in India of different shades of life. But ultimately *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has been given to be the highest. How? That we are to understand, to follow. Very minutely you are to follow that *Bṛhat-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, and more in a present modern form in *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhita* by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and *Caitanya Śikṣāmṛtam*. *Bhāgavatāmṛta* is already translated into English I know, from Māyāpur perhaps, *Bṛhat-Bhāgavatāmṛta*.

Devotee: I read that.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: You read that, but you read more closely, more scrutinisingly you read that until and unless you find satisfaction to the answer to all your enquiries. So repeat, repeat, repeat. Read, read and read it. The gradation is there of *sambhanda-jñāna*, how one is from a particular position, how he's forced to make his progress in a particular direction. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: I asked one question the other day but I did not fully understand the answer. It was about the soul going into animal species. And if there is no recollection of why he is suffering then how can he benefit? Say he has robbed someone, hurt someone, then he is punished but he does not remember why he is being punished, all he knows is he is suffering.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: In what stage to make him unconscious necessary for the doctors? When a doctor deals with the patient, when does he feel that the patient should be made unconscious?

Devotee: When it is too painful for the patient.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: So there is a necessity of unconsciousness in ones benefit of life, a necessity of being unconsciousness. So a man, a dacoit is imprisoned and put under chain when his movements will be detrimental to him. Then his position is confined in the cell and chained. So to take out the independence of voluntary action, sometimes it is necessary. The voluntary action should be taken away from him and by suffering his previous reactions may be relieved and then again given voluntary action. Voluntary will has occurred so much misdeed and reaction for him that for the time being it is necessary that voluntary will, will be stopped. And he will be allowed to suffer his previous actions of his previous sins. Then again some freedom will be given to him so that he may take the real course, the course which is peaceful for him. As long as a drunkard when he's expected to do some mischief to the environment he should be confined, and when that madness of drinking gone then he will be left again for free action. Do you follow?

Devotee: I think the expression is 'sleeping it off.'

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: That 'Why confined?' The possibility of free action is taken away forcibly. Ignorance given, ignorance given, and he's to suffer the consequence of his previous action, and when that's finished, then again work. A man is making business in a black way, then he's put under lock and key, and some punishment. And then after he suffers the punishment he's again allowed to begin his business. For his previous disservice in the society he's punished and his business stopped. Then again after some suffering then he may be expected to learn that he was doing wrong, then he's allowed again to start his business. He's punished and business stopped for his previous malbusiness. I'm not clear? Do you understand what I want to say? Why the knowledge taken away and ignorance given to the party? The offending party, his last punishment is to take away his freedom because thereby his freedom he will go in the wrong way, wrong way, to take out the freedom from him because he's moving towards the wrong direction.

Devotee: But he cannot remember.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: That is one side. Another side is that he will have to suffer the consequence of his past action so his progress should be stopped and he must suffer the consequence of his past action and then he will be again let free. A man, a dacoit is doing wrong so he must be kept in custody and all his movement stopped. Then by punishment he's supposed to have some knowledge, then he will again be let free. This is quite reasonable. His zone of action is snatched away.

Devotee: Also, the point is that Kṛṣṇa doesn't forget.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Freedom is being misused so that is taken away.

Devotee: Sometimes in the *Bhāgavatam* of Kapila, and I think you quoted Jīva Goswāmī, he says sometimes, rarely, in the womb of the mother the soul may have the recollection of his past one hundred births.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Jīva Goswāmī has cleared that, that not all the time in the womb, but the particular child who is conscious of God in the womb, when he comes out, with this link he may go on further.

Devotee: But there is some recollection there of his one hundred births.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: That is not universal, but particular case. That is particular case.

Devotee: I'm just giving the example where in a case one may remember his past births.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes. One hundred births, and he prays to the Lord: "I have done many things wrong. If I come in connection with the world this time I shall try my best to make progress towards You." These things. In a diseased man, a man living, sometimes he finds God consciousness very pure in him, and sometimes filthy conceptions comes in him. Not continuous pure mentality we can find in ourselves that is found in the higher level. In the general human being, average human being, sometimes they think themselves pure in the mind, and sometimes think of the filthy things in the mind, coming, *satya*, *raja*, *tama*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* also when *satya-guṇa* is increasing he finds himself in some way. Then *tamo-guṇa* feels this to be lazy, and *nidra*, a sleep. And *raja-guṇa*, he feels that much energy in him. Then *raja-guṇa* is predominating in him. And *satya-guṇa*, a peaceful nature for enquiry of the truth. In our present life there are so many moments which may connect with *satya-guṇa*, sometimes *raja-guṇa*, and sometimes *tamo-guṇa*. *Nidra-vasya*, this is *tamo-guṇa*. And to find too much energy for a particular programme, that is *raja-guṇa*. And sometimes a peaceful mind wants to enquire about the creation. And sober things, that is *satya-guṇa*.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nitāi Gaura Hari bol! Ha, ha, ha. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari.

End of side A, Start of side B, 21.11.82

Devotee: Do you know the story of the *yogī* Visvaksena? And they say that that *yogī* took his birth as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī. Do you know the story of the *yogī* Visvaksena?

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: I know. This statement, from where have they got? Where they have got this news, from where? What is the evidence?

Devotee: Sometimes they say that in Bhaktivinoda's diary. This is a quote from Lalitā Prasād, in the diary of Bhaktivinoda he says that, this.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Never. Their diary and the book is published by Lalitā Prasād, it is with Dāmodara Mahārāj. I have gone through that. No trace of that, that he will take birth in Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house. Not like that, nothing of the kind.

Devotee: No proof?

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Nothing mentioned about that.

Devotee: In letters?

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: No. We don't find any letters that he will take birth in the house of, in the family of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, never mentioned there. Nowhere any mention of such. This is the first time I'm hearing. It was not discussed any time anywhere, only first time I hear from you.

Devotee: This story, you've never heard it before?

Devotee: No.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: My connection is fifty-five years with this Gauḍīya Math, and I've never heard such a story, I'm certain.

Devotee: They say that he took his birth as Bhaktisiddhanta to destroy the teachings of ...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: It is impossible. That *yogīs* temperament and our Guru Mahārāj's temperament are quite opposite. Completely different. Lalitā Prasād was working under our Guru Mahārāj in the beginning, in Yoga-Pith and in Godruma. But when Kuñja Bābu [the name previously used by Śrīpād Bhakti Vilās Tīrtha Mahārāj] came, the Tīrtha Mahārāj, Bhakti Vilās, his management was more acceptable to our Guru Mahārāj than Lalitā Prasād's assistance. Lalitā Prasād could not tolerate the presence of Kuñja Bihārī in the management, so he left gradually. And also of Vinod Bābu, Keśava Mahārāj. Keśava Mahārāj and Kuñja Bābu, when they began to manage in the beginning of the mission, Lalitā Prasād could not tolerate, he left the Yoga-Pith, and Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *samādhi*, and he went away.

And Prabhupāda [Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī Ṭhākura], our Guru Mahārāj's preaching campaign, that was gradually gaining ground, and forcibly it is going on and he could not tolerate, he retired, he left. In the beginning he was under Prabhupāda...

Devotee: He's saying he had a position in the management in the beginning. He was working under Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta. Then Kuñja Bihārī came, Tīrtha Mahārāj, and he was an expert manager. So Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta favoured his management, so then he [Lalitā Prasād] kind of lost position and gradually withdrew.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: He could not tolerate the management of Kuñja Bābu and Vinod Bihārī [Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāj] and had to retire.

Devotee: But such a great amount of envy to make up such stories. I don't understand such envy.

Devotee: He's saying: "Why would he say such stories about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta?"

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes, when he went away he did not like Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī Ṭhākura because he preached in a different way, not in the garb of these *bābājīs*. His way of preaching was of a different type which other disciples of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the section we call *sahajiyā*, and they were the masters of the Vaiṣṇava society at that time, they could not give any recognition to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī because his fashion was of another nature.

Just as I heard from Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu. He was first in the opposite camp, then came to Guru Mahārāja and took initiation there. I heard from him that Prabhupāda [Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī Ṭhākura], after taking *sannyāsa*, he went to Vṛndāvana, to visit. And Paramānanda and Kuñja Bābu, they were clad in European dress, and Prabhupāda took red cloth of a *sannyāsī*, went to visit Vṛndāvana. The *sahajiyā* section, they say: *rakta-vastra 'vaiṣṇavera' parite nā yuyāya...*

[*rakta-vastra 'vaiṣṇavera' parite nā yuyāya
kona pravāsīre dimu, ki kāya uhāya?*]

["This saffron cloth is unfit for a Vaisnava to wear; therefore I have no use for it. I shall give it to a stranger." *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 13.61*]

Sanātana Goswāmī's statement in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The Vaiṣṇava should not take this, *rakta vastra*, means red cloth, there is a saying. And Prabhupāda took *sannyāsa*, and not red but saffron cloth, *sannyāsa* as Mahāprabhu told. And two of his disciples they were clad with European dress. When he went to Vṛndāvana they began to criticise: "What is this? One should enter Vṛndāvana in a very poor dress and mostly humble style they go to Vṛndāvana. And that gentleman puffed up with the pride that he's a scholar, he's a preacher, he's taking the role of Mahāprabhu and not of Rūpa and Sanātana. He's going to Vṛndāvana. And what is this that the *brahmacārīs* along with him, those two disciples, they must have some red cloth or white cloth, but they took European dress and visited."

One Paṇḍita, Govinda Paṇḍita, Śaṅkar Tīrtha, who gave as a chairman, the first reception to Swāmī Mahārāj here in Navadvīpa I arranged that. He flatly admitted one day in a meeting: "That we first criticised Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, that he's ignoring the past, and ignoring the present Vaiṣṇava section. He's taking a new course of his preaching. But it was our fault now I realise."

Weekly he had a paper, *Adivasi* [?] And in many places, they have all criticised our Guru Mahārāj. "He's a man of modern type. He's leaves the old things, fashion, leaving respect for that." In this way, and that gentleman, that Paṇḍita, Govinda Śaṅkar Tīrtha, in a meeting he clearly told that: "We could not

understand him. That he's meant, he has come for world propaganda and to take such policy as he's to conquer the whole world, and not only confined to our own cell and going on with the *japam* etc. The other type, he's sent from the higher order, higher sphere, to propagate this Vaiṣṇava *dharma* of Mahāprabhu in a novel way so that it may be acceptable by the public at large. Especially his aim was to convert the Westerners. So he took such and he presented European dress."

In the beginning I had some little doubts that why Guru Mahārāj he's in some European style? The old *sādhus* of India did not have so much arrangement for the bathroom, for the lavatory, all these things, anyhow they managed. But He is accustomed to go to bathroom and sanitary latrine. Guru Mahārāj himself one day told when he was a guardian tutor in Tripura, Tripura Mahārāja boy, he was the guardian to him. Guru Mahārāj's second elder brother was the Dewain of Tripura State. And Guru Mahārāj was a guardian tutor of the prince, he passed some days, and to teach the boy some English one lady tutor was engaged. That lady tutor wrote a letter to England to some of her friends, "That here I have found a Bengali gentleman who, though he has not visited Europe, but he has got peculiar taste for, very common, very appeal to the European, I find." I heard it with my own ear from Guru Mahārāj: "That lady wrote to her friend, who was the guardian tutor to teach English to the prince of Tripura, she wrote a letter there. That here I have found a Bengali gentleman who has got European taste." Ha, ha, ha, ha.

So, that sort of taste created a slight disturbance in me, in the beginning, because I am accustomed with the orthodox fashion of the *brāhmaṇas* and the *paṇḍitas* and the *sannyāsins*. I come from such family. So only ontology of him attracted me and not any grandeur. In spite of his European fashion I had to submit to him for the great ontology what he could represent, and of an original way, not anything like taken in memory, only swallowing and reproducing, vomiting. His philosophy was not of a vomiting character, he read somewhere and vomiting it, not like that, but in an original, natural type. The philosophy came from his mouth of the highest type and in the line of Mahāprabhu and dealing very extraordinary reverence to the creed. The *Gītā*, *Bhāgavatam*, with very particular attention and reverence and respect he used to do.

And he did not care for anyone, however stalwart he may be of the present type. All the scholars, all the *sādhus*, he did not care for anyone. Only one, Vamsi dāsa Bābājī, he was an aloof man who did not enter society. He had recognition only for Vamsi dāsa Bābājī.

And he went to Vṛndāvana and he told: "Going to Vṛndāvana, visiting so many *sādhus*," with his hand he stroked his forehead, "I came to Vṛndāvana, such the holiest place, but my luck is so bad that I could not find a single Vaiṣṇava here." That was his standard. "Not a single Vaiṣṇava I found in the whole of Vṛndāvana area. My loss is very high." That was his standard of what Vaiṣṇavaism is.

And also, analysing and met so many *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas and so many things. That attracted us, that cancelled this present Vaiṣṇava because the society, especially the *brāhmaṇas*, they had abhorrence for the so-called Vaiṣṇava society, and the Goswāmīs also, for their practice. Both, Goswāmīs and they abhorred them. But I had some special regard for Mahāprabhu, going through His advice and character, practices, teachings and practices. I had to make much

struggle to come from the position which we hold in the society, to Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. Only the highest ontological aspect, and give his thought, not an artificial but natural. That attracted me and so on. He did not care for the *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas or so-called Goswāmīs. He hated them. That was our experience. And we are attracted by the exclusive devotion towards *Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā*, what is Vaiṣṇavaism preached by Mahāprabhu. Wholesale, wholesale, people could not estimate how, length and breadth. So extraordinary and such earnestness to preach that, that is incalculable. The earnestness to preach the doctrine of *Bhāgavatam* and Mahāprabhu in the purest form. Too much earnestness, most intense earnestness. He was up to anything for this. So much intense earnestness to preach the doctrine and doctrine also of the purest type eliminating everything.

prithi vite yata katha dharma nam chole

What of this Lalitā Prasād and others? Single-handed he challenged the whole world, all the doctrines in the religious path, defeating them successfully. And with reason, he was practical with his faith. And at least fifty-five years I am holding that and not only that I am, it is daily corroborated by the *śāstra* and by the thoughts, relative thoughts, is daily being corroborated, extended, what he did is alright. ...did not care a fig for other's opinions.

Devotee: I guess there are two schools of how to spread Mahāprabhu's movement and Guru Mahārāj's ...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: This was his special nature. What Mahāprabhu came to give us that is very, very, very high. And we shall pose ourselves to serve it from a little lower level, and never to try to come in the same plane, then it will vanish.

Devotee: I can appreciate the quality of compassion to want to go out and preach.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Oh.

Devotee: And I saw that in my Guru Mahārāj and I had respect for that. But in my own feelings, I was with ISKCON for so many years and then I left, partially because I wanted to understand if there was any truth in the stories, partially because I had lost faith. I was thinking, why has my Guru Mahārāj appointed such materialistic men, like demons, stone-hearted demons, to such prominent positions? So I had a crisis within my own heart and I had to go away. And then I questioned so much that I asked myself whether I even believe there is a God. Such depth of questioning I went within my own heart. And gradually I came to accept there is God and that *bhakti* is the most powerful force in this world and in the spiritual world. So I can appreciate. But to perfectly honest after so many years, I can understand that love, or *bhakti*, is such a powerful force, but I have not had any great realisation that Kṛṣṇa is God. I've not had any mystical revelation and I think I need that very much in order to be a good teacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And one thing I want to ask of

you is I wanted to know of your own spiritual revelation, your own vision of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: What does he say?

Devotees: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Devotee: He says that ...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: He wants to know my realisations about Kṛṣṇa?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: There is another side. I learned it from Guru Mahārāj.

Once, a *zamindar* [landlord] came to see Prabhupāda. Our Goswāmī Mahārāj took him, and he told, we are in a meeting in Calcutta *utsava* time. The *zamindar* told: "I have got some private talk with you." He pressed, and it was arranged. He was a respectable man. "Come." It was arranged and at night when it was dark and the candle was on the street. It was arranged, two chairs were given far away and Guru Mahārāj and that *zamindar* took their seat side by side.

In the darkness I hid myself there at their back. "What the talk will be?" Then that *zamindar*, taking his head nearer to Guru Mahārāj said: "Have you seen Kṛṣṇa?" He's putting this question. "Have you seen Kṛṣṇa?" The answer I very eagerly, anxiously waiting the answer. I was also a newcomer at that time.

Then Guru Mahārāj said: "That will be of what good to you if I say I have seen Kṛṣṇa and if you can't feel that, then what will be, what good will you derive from that? And if I say I did not see, I can't see, then what will be the effect on you for that? You rather try to know what is Kṛṣṇa and how to see Him. That is necessary for you. Otherwise a bogus man he will cheat you 'that I have seen Kṛṣṇa.' You do not know what is Kṛṣṇa, so anyone will cheat you saying 'that I have seen Kṛṣṇa.' It is such and such and you will be deceived. So try to know how we can know Kṛṣṇa and what is His conception as given in the authentic scriptures. That is necessary for you. And not by giving some answer I or anyone may cheat you 'that I have seen Kṛṣṇa.'

Devotee: But in your stage of life...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: ...and that is being done in many places.

When I came here in a cottage first, then I found one *brāhmaṇa* boy who took the dress of a *sakhī* and lived in that locality. And as a *sakhī* he's dealing with the others and ordinary people they revered him much, 'Sakhī, he's seeing Kṛṣṇa, he's talking with Him.' So I saw much reverence for that gentleman in *sakhī* dress. Then one day, I'm a *sādhu*, they do not come here leaving the cottage, anyhow, one day he came to me. So many people they're talking of him but I don't give any importance to that. One day he himself came with the dress of a *sakhī*, and came to talk 'that I have seen Kṛṣṇa' in this way, that way.

I replied, We are not persons to believe you. We are persons of Gauḍīya Maṭh, members of Gauḍīya Maṭh, we know what is Kṛṣṇa and who can see Him and

how to do it. We have got some idea. So you are a bogus man, you are preaching and you are cheating the public saying that you have seen Kṛṣṇa.

"No, no. I have seen Kṛṣṇa. Not only myself, I have shown Kṛṣṇa on the tamarind tree on the other side of the Ganges and there are so many evidences there, so many men saw Kṛṣṇa. I showed Him."

Why are you cheating yourself. I am told that you are a *brāhmaṇa* boy and coming in contact with these *śuddha sahajiyā* Vaiṣṇavas you have again come to such a stage. 'You see Kṛṣṇa.' Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen by these eyes. *Adhokṣaja*. We have learned something, consulted, and we have read some *sāstra*, *Veda*, *Upaniṣad*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā*, all these things we have gone through. So don't deceive your own self. You know your self how you are. You are still a slave of your senses. You have got your lust, the anger, the this and that, so many things you feel, and I also know that. And you are simply not only deceiving the foolish persons, but what is more dangerous, you are deceiving your own self. Very strongly I put it.

And he got some impression and some day within that female dress and kept hair also like the female, was shaved, clear shaved, came to me. "Now, please enlist me amongst your disciples." At that time I began a little reluctantly, one or two actions, one or two disciples. Then there was another Godbrother with me, "No, no. You have accepted him as disciple. He will not be able to stand here, he'll go back again and he will be a blaspheme to our mission." So I flatly refused him, that I'm not going to accept you as disciple.

So, so many things. *Adhokṣaja*, He cannot be seen and if it is seen coming down it is very, very rare. Coming down from the spiritual sphere to the mental sphere and becomes so much strong that when eyes open overflowed can see Him. And when He withdraws nothing remains. So it is not so easy. There are so many stages - *ādaḥ śraddhā*, *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*, *anartha-nivṛttiḥ*, *bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti*, *prema-bhakti* - the stages are there, mathematical calculation we can trace in one man by measuring by computer, this philosophical computer, that how much progress is there. Has he got *śraddhā* proper? He will say: "Oh, Śiva is also, Śiva, Kṛṣṇa, Kali, Śakti - all God, all equal." And that man will say 'I have seen Kṛṣṇa.' So there is the standard, measurement, criterion is there in what stage one will see Kṛṣṇa. And when one has seen Kṛṣṇa what will be the after effect? One who has seen Kṛṣṇa, the after behaviour, conduct, after that what will be there? All these things to be considered.

But the *sahajiyā*, we hate them, they're born offenders who take Kṛṣṇa to the lower level. Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, Sanātana Goswāmī has given the gradation. Jīva Goswāmī by what stage eliminating, eliminating, elimination, elimination of so many things within our area of knowledge. We are to go to that side. It is not very easy, easy affair.

Devotee: That's why I'm asking you, because I would not ask anyone if they saw Kṛṣṇa. But I'm seeing your quality of heart and so many years of sincere service to Kṛṣṇa. That is why I'm asking you.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes. I will also say that I have not yet seen Kṛṣṇa but I am in the way in search of Kṛṣṇa. I have not got Him, not seen Him, but I am in the search of Kṛṣṇa and I feel that I am on the path of real search. And whatever told, or whatever seen or said, that in the path these things will be, I have some sort of experience of that, that in the real path of Kṛṣṇa I am, so far I can guess.

But I have not the audacity to say that I have seen Kṛṣṇa, I am in *līlā* with Him, all these things. I revere, and I don't want also to have it so cheaply. Cheap Kṛṣṇa I don't want, this market Kṛṣṇa I do not want. I want as guided by my Guru Mahārāj to have that Kṛṣṇa. In this birth or in hundreds of births after, does not matter. This is my ideal. I'm not going to deceive anyone by any statement but I think I am in the path. By the grace of *guru-varga* I am in the path. That I can say.

Devotee: Mahārāj, sometimes in the songs of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, or Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, like sometimes Bhaktivinoda says: "I am a resident of Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja." And he's speaking as if he is in *līlā*.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes. That may be, we may think that is the ideal he has described after. His highest idea is that. He's doing it in his ideal life.

Devotee: Imagination?

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Not imagination. It is reality, not imagination, reality.

Devotee: But at that point he had already...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Seeing from afar, a little distant, something like that.

Devotee: So at that point he had access.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: But feeling within his inner heart he's describing. And sometimes he says: "Suddenly I had a flash, I saw, and then when I went to mark it particularly, it vanished." Something like that.

Devotee: I have not had any flashes.

Devotee: He wants to have a flash. Bhargava, he wants such a flash.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: If He is gracious you may get it, His mercy.

Devotee: I need so desperately. I had one flash before I became devotee...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Don't try easy marketing or you will be cheated. Pray, make yourself ready to pay more and more price, more and more price. Don't finish the market, or then you'll be losers. Why? The Absolute, we're after the Absolute, and the Absolute can never be finished. Then we say that we are seeking the Absolute but practically we think that we want to be masters of the Absolute. It is impossible...

Devotee: Yes, there are strong material desires.

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: That sort of activation should be crushed, that is to be nipped in the bud. In His search, die. Die to live, not treat miserly. Try to give yourself, and how. Then as much as you will be ready to sacrifice yourself and

can successfully do it, then automatically you will find yourself in some other plane.

Devotee: I was sacrificing for many years...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: As a subject and making Him object, you will be able to make Him prisoner, don't think like that. Try to become His prisoner.

Devotee: I was serving with that mood for some years...

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Within your subjectivity you can have any contact with Him. Wholesale to be dissolved and your new self will come out and you will find all around Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And then sometimes Kṛṣṇa may be pleased to give you the proper picture...

End of recording, 21.11.82

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