

## "My Heartly Blessings"

by Bhudhara das, 1996

Responding to the GBC Position Paper Concerning Srila Narayana Maharaja

*kanthavarodha-romasrubhiih parasparam lapamanah pavayanti kulani prithivim ca*

“Conversing among one another with throats choked, hair standing on end, and tears flowing, the Lord’s intimate servants purify their own followers and the whole world.”

### Purport

“One may ask, Does Narada expect me to also become a great devotee and experience such ecstasy?” The answer is yes, the ecstasy of devotional service is open to all.... We may respond best to a sutra like this by trying to appreciate, at least slightly, the wonderful influence of the great souls who have come to this earth. This will inspire us to seek the association of the servants of the servants of such great souls, to assist them in their mission, and to receive shelter from them against the world of maya.

The symptoms of ecstasy should not be imitated, but it is not wrong to aspire to experience them. In The Nectar of Devotion, Rupa Goswami encourages us to develop a spontaneous attachment for serving the Lord without any desire for profit.... At least on an individual basis every sane person should save himself by coming forward to render service and to hear from Vaishnavas of the calibre Narada describes in this sutra.... If someone is able, by chance, to see face to face a great saintly person like Narada, who is always serene and merciful to everyone, then immediately that conditioned soul becomes liberated. This is exactly like being situated in the full light of the sun; there cannot be any visionary impediment.” [Krishna Book, p. 97]. (70)

### Forward

We hope that this paper will clarify Srila Narayana Maharaja’s position regarding the issues raised in the recent GBC position paper. We have given careful thought to their points and have tried to respond with relevant statements that seek to clarify Srila Narayana Maharaja’s position and thus lessen the confusion raised by the paper and the events surrounding its publication.

This response is long overdue. The cause of the delay was the need for us to give full consideration to the GBC’s paper and then the time it took to craft a response. Secondly, delays were also caused by Maharaja’s busy travel itinerary. We apologise to the Vaishnava community for the delay and hope that our response meets with their approval.

The philosophical issues raised by the GBC paper require reflection and careful reference to our scriptures and the teachings of our acharyas. We appreciate that for many devotees these issues will not be summarily solved by any one paper. This is especially so when the initial discussion in the GBC paper has engendered such strong emotions which almost encourage divisive partisan moods. In reading their paper one has a real sense of the distraction caused by philosophical repartee not based on a spirit of honour seeking to achieve wisdom and understanding. In responding to the GBC paper, then, our primary concern has been to create a dialogue that is honourable and which seeks to achieve understanding in partnership.

This paper will present Srila Narayana Maharaja’s position regarding the statements that appear in that GBC paper, and it is offered in a respectful and humble mood to the larger Vaishnava community with the sincere hope that it will clarify Maharaja’s efforts to serve that community. Despite the many serious allegations within the GBC paper and many lesser communiqués of the same nature, I think that most everyone can recognise that we live in a world of misunderstanding. Our hope is that with honour and honesty we can together subdue the forces that keep our movement from achieving the goals that have been set by our acharyas. Still, it is important that while we tolerate the transgressions of others, that we work vigorously to turn the tide of avidya by establishing what is the correct path set by the acharyas. Hopefully this paper will go some distance to meet those aims.

The task of writing this response has fallen on me, and although it is a privilege to defend Narayana Maharaja and to address the GBC and the larger devotee community, it has also been a challenge that has underscored my shortcomings and deficiencies -- my feeling is that there are many others who are so much more qualified for the task than me. I present the paper with the hope that those superior to me will rise to the occasion and take up the work of open dialogue (on this and other matters) and thus help to foster an environment within the Vaishnava community that is truly conducive to loving exchanges and philosophical discussion.

Many devotees have contributed to this paper; what value there is here comes in a large part from their contributions. My thanks especially to Srimati Sita Devi dasi, Srimati Jadurani dasi and Sriman Navadvipa das. Any errors in content or presentation are mine alone, and I appeal to my learned reader to be kind with me and see first and foremost the spirit of my offering. I have tried to write the paper with the hearts of others in mind, and thus I hope that nothing in the paper offends or disturbs. Lastly, I want to thank all those who have encouraged me along the way.

On the plane journey from Seattle to Newark I sat next to Srila Narayana Maharaja. He spoke to me in a humble way about his experiences in America and how the love and acceptance of so many devotees had made his trip a success, well beyond his expectations. He paused, and then with real feeling told me how the misunderstandings created by the GBC paper did not in any way diminish his affection for the devotees, Iskcon or the GBC. He asked me, "Wherever possible, relay my heartfelt blessings to all." So, in order to honour the sage's spirit of compassion that does not take offence nor give offence, I have titled this paper "My Heartly Blessings".

Lastly, without the grace of Srila Narayana Maharaja and my beloved Guru Srila Prabhupada this effort would not be possible. I petition their loving blessings for this humble and faulty effort. By their grace this offering will help to heal the hurts of this misunderstanding and encourage all Vaishnavas to come and sit in a sangha that celebrates our Chaitanya tree.

I invite all broad-minded Vaishnavas to consider what follows, and in a spirit of honest dialogue explore with Srila Narayana Maharaja and the Vaishnava community the veracity of our presentation, its scriptural content and the conclusions that we draw based on the guidance we have received from His Divine Grace Sripad Bhaktivedanta Srila Narayana Maharaja.

Bhudhara das  
Sri Baladeva-Mahotsava - August 28, 1996  
Bath, England

## Introduction

Despite suggestions to the contrary, Srila Narayana Maharaja continues to stand by his original and truthful statement which he made in May to the GBC representative, and which have been quoted on page one of the GBC "Position Paper". Srila Narayana Maharaja wishes to reiterate that he remains a long-time well-wisher of Iskcon, Iskcon's members and Iskcon's leaders. As a long-time friend and sishya of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Srila Narayana Maharaja remains a staunch supporter of Srila Prabhupada and his mission. Narayana Maharaja has a spotless fifty year long position within the renounced order of life. At this stage of his life he has absolutely no desire for gain and the false safety of men, money and reputation.

Long ago Srila Prabhupada invited Srila Narayana Maharaja to visit and preach in the West, but for various reasons Maharaja was not able to come. This recent trip has been a form of homage to his siksha-guru and an offering of respects to the places of sacred tirtha that Srila Prabhupada established. In pursuit of Srila Prabhupada's request to him, during this tour Srila Narayana Maharaja offered support and encouragement to Srila Prabhupada's disciples. It is a matter of public record that during his visit he spoke of Srila Prabhupada, Iskcon and Iskcon devotees with respect and deference well beyond his position as a senior Vaishnava of good standing.

During his visit he met with a diverse group of senior Srila Prabhupada disciples who, impressed with his openness, honesty, soft heart, shastric learning and encouraging spirit, appreciated his efforts to give them his association. In the hundreds of meetings, public lectures and discussions he held during this tour (all of them taped), Srila Narayana Maharaja impartially encouraged everyone. He continually stressed the importance of Iskcon, of Srila Prabhupada's mission and the centrally important role of Prabhupada's disciples in carrying out that mission. In fact, his visit gave renewed support to many Srila Prabhupada disciples so that they might be spiritually strong to carry on their sadhana and aim for the goals that Srila Prabhupada has established for his movement.

Sadly, in the course of carrying out his tour, Srila Narayana Maharaja's efforts have been misunderstood

and thus misrepresented. This was especially true in the GBC position paper dated June 16, 1996 which was circulated throughout the Iskcon society. The degree of misunderstanding in that paper has taken many by surprise, and it is especially curious how many long-time friends and students of Srila Narayana Maharaja who sit on the GBC have not sought to clarify his position as an Iskcon well-wisher and as a Vaishnava in good standing.

The GBC paper expressed that Srila Narayana Maharaja is not entitled to preach within Iskcon. This prohibition also extends to his preaching to Iskcon members, relations, congregation, life members, etc. which should only be done with "the sanction of the GBC". The paper, moreover, presents a number of unsubstantiated claims about Srila Narayana Maharaja, including misrepresentation of the philosophy of our acharyas as well as inconsistencies and significant differences with the teachings and example of Srila Prabhupada. The GBC presentation questions, by innuendo and supposition, Srila Narayana Maharaja's intent and motivation in both coming to the West to preach and by having given siksha to a number of recognised leaders of Iskcon over the last ten years.

This paper will establish by sound argument and sastric reference that Srila Narayana Maharaja is a bona fide Vaishnava in the line of Srila Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, Jiva Goswami, and Rupa Goswami. It will show that his unsullied spiritual career is beyond question, that he presents the same shastric conclusions as the rest of our beloved acharyas, and that, most importantly, his own behaviour and application of the path of bhakti gives us an example of how to execute their instructions. It will demonstrate that there are effectively no differences between his philosophical presentations and those of Srila Prabhupada, and that he has only offered his siksha to Iskcon in pursuit of the order of his siksha guru, Srila Prabhupada, without any personal motive. It will also show how he is a most desirable preacher who is offering significant support and legitimacy to the broader work of Srila Prabhupada's Iskcon. Whether or not the leaders of Iskcon choose to acknowledge his efforts and honest intent is not important for Srila Narayana Maharaja, for he has no ambition to take anything for his service or to change what Srila Prabhupada has given.

It is his hope, like that of many sincere devotees, that the official position of Iskcon will change in regards to his contribution -- that the leaders of Iskcon will after some time and consideration see his efforts in a more generous and broad-minded light and withdraw the allegations that have been set forth in their paper. We hope that this paper will help towards this understanding.

We will try to elaborate on these issues and address the concerns of the GBC in a manner that is pleasant and informative for the reader. Due to the nature of this subject, a large part of our argument has been the presentation of relevant sastric quotes. However, this paper is already very lengthy, and so we have separated the majority of those references into a section of End Notes. We have done this in order to make the reading of the paper less tedious, and we trust that the reader will reference these End Notes where they want to confirm the basis of our argument.

And lastly, despite the questionable nature of the misunderstanding, we hope that the philosophical discussions herein will be illuminating and uplifting for the reader, and will by their adherence to the siddhanta of previous acharyas, bring real value to the entire Vaishnava community.

### **Siksha guru**

A few comments on the nature and purpose of a siksha guru are important at this point. Although the subject is widely known, it is by dint of circumstance, not always widely understood.

The essential purpose of a siksha guru is to give guidance and support to the sishya (disciple) in the goal of realising the diksha guru's teachings. The siksha guru, by exposition and personal example, supports the teachings of the diksha guru and helps the sishya to mature in his or her service to the diksha guru. The aim and objectives of the siksha and diksha guru are one and the same; they are non-different. The siksha-guru will thus know and understand the inner moods of the diksha-guru and his objectives for his disciple, and true to that spirit, the siksha-guru guides accordingly. In the best case the siksha-guru will be of the same stature and spiritual realisation as the diksha-guru.

In many cases the diksha guru is also the siksha guru, especially when the diksha guru is present and able to give siksha. It is clear in Srila Prabhupada's case that he is fully capable and desirable in all regards to give siksha, as he has demonstrated so well in his writing, lectures, guidance and example.

It may be correctly argued that his physical absence is not a deterrent to taking his siksha, as his books, tapes, videos and instructions so adequately set forth his teachings. Yet, that does not negate the value of siksha from bona fide sources as a support to understanding Srila Prabhupada's instructions. This principle is the foundation for hearing from advanced devotees that Srila Prabhupada established within Iskcon. Any experienced class-goer knows that the value of advanced devotees giving classes is testament to the

principle of siksha.

Who, then, is a qualified siksha guru? Accepted standards in our Iskcon society tell us that anyone who is faithfully following the principles of bhakti-yoga in the line of our guru parampara can speak on subjects consistent with guru, sadhu and shastra. According to the level of knowledge and realised knowledge, the siksha guru can guide the listener to that same level of knowledge and realisation, assuming that the listener ardently hears and implements that knowledge faithfully. The greater the level of knowledge, experience and realisation of the siksha guru, the more desirable is his or her siksha. So we can observe how more qualified speakers draw better class attendance. Good sense then suggests that we hear from advanced devotees. Our scriptures are replete with examples of wise men who sought out wiser men for guidance and enlightenment.

What is the real business of a siksha guru? The bona fide siksha guru helps the disciple to deeply understand his diksha guru, his moods and his purpose. He will help bring the disciple closer in his relationship with the diksha guru. His primary purpose is to thus help the disciple evolve through the progressive stages of Krishna consciousness as outlined by Srila Rupa Goswami and the guru parampara.

### **Srila Narayana Maharaja's siksha and its relevance for Iskcon**

It is clear that there is no dearth of qualified spiritual leaders in Iskcon. The movement has been able to push on for years, despite many serious disruptions, and continues to guide and instruct its followers -- especially newcomers -- to Krishna consciousness. Certainly there is no need to duplicate these efforts by presenting Srila Narayana Maharaja as a replacement for the established gurus of Iskcon, nor more importantly, as a replacement for Srila Prabhupada. This is one of the major misunderstandings surrounding Srila Narayana Maharaja's visit to the West and his siksha to leading devotees in Iskcon. Over and over again, both in public and in private, Srila Narayana Maharaja expresses how his intention is only to support Iskcon and encourage the devotees.

It should be noted here that Iskcon's relationship with Srila Narayana Maharaja as a siksha guru was initiated and developed by leading Iskcon devotees who found his association sweet and supportive of their spiritual advancement. Srila Narayana Maharaja did not canvass; he responded only to the need and request of the devotees. Srila Prabhupada instructed him to help and support his disciples, and thus Maharaja took up this duty in the mood of seva to his own siksha guru.

The desire for advanced association is natural, sensible and consistent with our philosophy; it is the very cornerstone of spiritual progress. It is important to reflect on the need for such association if we are to understand the reasons why leading Iskcon devotees took Srila Narayana Maharaja's siksha and found value in it for many years. A good number of those who visited him were in fact directly involved in the direction and management of Iskcon. Many were the movement's leading sadhus and shashtris. Although the movement is adequately equipped for the development of an individual's spiritual life, those devotees found an opportunity with Srila Narayana Maharaja. It was not a matter of replacement, nor of giving something that was not there already. Rather, in Srila Narayana Maharaja's association those devotees found a support to delve deeper into the meaning of Srila Prabhupada's books and mission. Obviously the need was, and still is, there; otherwise, why did those devotees approach Srila Narayana Maharaja?

There are other conditions which have created a broad interest in Srila Narayana Maharaja's siksha. Of the 4,000 plus people initiated by Srila Prabhupada, barely 10% remain actively working full-time within the official Iskcon structure. Life's demands, personal circumstances and conditions that exist (or existed) within Iskcon, have created a gradual exodus in which many long-time sincere and qualified disciples found themselves facing the challenges of their material and spiritual lives alone, and in many cases, without encouragement or tangible support. Only those who have lived these challenges can understand both the pain and value that has come as a result of those efforts.

Generally speaking, changes within the movement and the day-to-day challenges for those who remained "within the temple" helped to distract the attention of Iskcon spiritual leaders away from those on the "outside". This is common knowledge to both the leaders and those members "on the outside". Although there is no fault for this neglect as it is a matter of circumstance, the needs of the ever-growing devotee community have largely gone unattended. Of course there are a number of exceptions in which concerned sannyasis and leaders have made significant efforts to help the burgeoning outside devotee community. The main point here is that we must recognise the spiritual social condition that has developed over the years, and the unfulfilled desire of older devotees for more association and spiritual support.

In summary, the two factors of the natural need for advanced sadhu-sanga and the growth of external devotee communities have created a condition in which there is a broad desire for quality spiritual association. Taking all this into account it is not difficult to see why Srila Narayana Maharaja, or other advanced devotees, have been approached for siksha.

## Srila Narayana Maharaja's service to Srila Prabhupada and Iskcon

The GBC paper claims that Srila Narayana Maharaja is not a suitable siksha guru for one who follows Srila Prabhupada. We will gradually deal with this argument as the paper progresses, but at this point it may be useful to mention a few of the many factors that show how Srila Narayana Maharaja has been a well-wisher of Iskcon and Srila Prabhupada for a long time. This will be especially useful to those Vaishnavas who have not, as yet, had any direct association with Srila Narayana Maharaja.

Srila Prabhupada and Srila Narayana Maharaja first met in 1947, developing an instant appreciation for each other. Although Srila Prabhupada treated Srila Narayana Maharaja as his equal, Srila Narayana Maharaja always considered Srila Prabhupada to be his senior, accepting him as a siksha guru. This feeling continues to the present day. It is important to pause and reflect on the significance of this particular relationship. It is not merely a casual friendship, nor were they just "mates" in the ashram. In Gaudiya Vaishnava shastra and culture there is no difference between the diksha and siksha gurus; they are both the manifestation of the Supreme Lord for the benefit of the sishya. The acceptance of a siksha guru is as profound as the acceptance of a diksha guru, and this understanding is deeply ingrained in the moods of practising Gaudiya Vaishnavas. In the light of that understanding it can be argued, therefore, that Srila Narayana Maharaja is the first disciple of Srila Prabhupada and is our senior-most Godbrother. In this regard we may also consider the precedent of our own disciplic succession, which is a diksha/siksha line. (1)

After their initial meeting, Srila Narayana Maharaja travelled and preached with Srila Prabhupada throughout India, developing their transcendental friendship as they lived and served together. Srila Narayana Maharaja accompanied Srila Prabhupada to Jansi, and when that temple closed, Srila Prabhupada brought his Mahaprabhu Deity to Srila Narayana Maharaja's temple at Mathura and installed Him there where He resides to this day. There were times when, penniless, Srila Prabhupada went to Srila Narayana Maharaja.

Then, when Srila Prabhupada decided to leave his family home, he shared confidences about the situation to his friend. Srila Narayana Maharaja's response was to encourage him to take sannyasa. When that encouragement was also given by Srila Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Maharaja, Prabhupada accepted the sannyasa order in 1959. Srila Narayana Maharaja prepared Prabhupada's danda and sannyasa cloth for that ceremony, also officiating as the priest for the homa.

When Srila Prabhupada stayed at the Radha-Damodara Mandir, Srila Narayana Maharaja assisted him and preached with him. As Srila Prabhupada engaged in his publishing efforts in Delhi, Srila Narayana Maharaja cooked with him and rendered other personal services. After Srila Prabhupada left India to begin his preaching in the West, he would write to Srila Narayana Maharaja, informing him of the significant happenings (such as the inauguration of Iskcon). In all, Srila Narayana Maharaja received over three hundred letters from Srila Prabhupada, mostly in Hindi and Bengali. (2)

Srila Narayana Maharaja loyally supported Srila Prabhupada throughout the years, not only emotionally as a friend, but also in many practical ways. He shipped Srila Prabhupada the books he had published in India, along with sastric reference texts. Srila Prabhupada asked him to send Iskcon's first set of kartalas, mrdungas and Deities. He had a special rasa with Srila Prabhupada regarding supplying him with pera from Mathura in those early days. In effect, Srila Narayana Maharaja was, especially in Iskcon's early years, Srila Prabhupada's agent and "man-at-hand" as he assisted our Gurudeva with many issues related to his mission in the West and with practical business on the Indian home front.

In 1967, on Srila Prabhupada's first return to India, Srila Narayana Maharaja was the only person to greet him at the airport. At Srila Prabhupada's request, he performed Kirtanananda's sannyasa ceremony. He also trained Srila Prabhupada's few disciples how to preach in India. At that time Srila Prabhupada was meeting with much resistance from the caste goswamis of Vrindavan, and many of Srila Prabhupada's Godbrothers did not accept his disciples as bona fide. They were unable to see beyond the fact that they were Westerners and ex-meat-eaters, and so they would not accept prasadam, or even water, from them. Yet, because Srila Narayana Maharaja knew that Kirtanananda and Acyutananda were disciples of Srila Prabhupada, he ate the prasadam they offered with no hesitation.

When, in October of 1969, Srila Narayana Maharaja notified Srila Prabhupada of the departure of Srila Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada responded with "bereavement", deeply expressing the loss of his sannyasa guru. Srila Prabhupada sent a condolence card, with the signatures of his Seattle temple disciples and gave a moving lecture on his relationship with Srila Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Maharaja. (45)

The day before his departure to Goloka in 1977, Srila Prabhupada requested that Srila Narayana Maharaja be brought from Mathura to his bedside at the Krishna Balarama Mandira. In the presence of many of Srila

Prabhupada's Godbrothers and leading disciples, Srila Prabhupada requested Srila Narayana Maharaja to put him in samadhi with his own hands and direct his viraha, or separation festival. At Srila Prabhupada's request, he performed all the Gaudiya Vaishnava rites for the samadhi of a mahabhagavata, including the writing of holy mantras on Srila Prabhupada's body and the placing of Srila Prabhupada in his samadhi. He conducted the entire samadhi ceremony mahotsava, organising everything after Prabhupada's disappearance -- including leading a maha-kirtan, while taking Prabhupada's transcendental body on a palanquin to the major temples of Vrindavan. (It is important to point out that it is customary for a senior disciple to have this privilege, and it shows in many ways the depth of the guru-disciple nature of Maharaja's relationship with Srila Prabhupada.)

During that historic meeting before his departure, Srila Prabhupada asked Srila Narayana Maharaja to sit on his bed. Instead, with humility, Maharaja sat on a nearby chair. Prabhupada then put Srila Narayana Maharaja's hands in his own hands and asked the senior devotees who were present to listen to Srila Narayana Maharaja speak. Maharaja then told Prabhupada's disciples that actually, "Prabhupada is not dying. He will always be with you, and you should not quarrel among yourselves, but help each other serve Prabhupada's mission".

Prabhupada then requested Srila Narayana Maharaja to bring up his disciples in Krishna consciousness after his departure. He told Maharaja that his disciples knew some things, but that there were so many things they did not know, and so he asked Srila Narayana Maharaja to guide them. At that same meeting Maharaja offered, "You are my guru and I will follow your instruction until my last breath."(29)

He has faithfully followed this vow, and has continued to help and serve Iskcon in so many ways. One of his most notable contributions was at the famous Bombay court case in which Iskcon was seriously threatened with substantial losses by Srila Prabhupada's family. On many occasions, and at his own expense and physical discomfort, Srila Narayana Maharaja testified as to the validity and sacredness of Srila Prabhupada's sannyasa vows. He gave much of himself in relating his long-standing personal experiences with Srila Prabhupada and how Prabhupada was a Vaishnava maha-bhagavata sannyasa of the highest order.(3)

This is only a brief summary of the highlights of very deep personal and spiritual relationship that extends over forty-nine years. In the years after Srila Prabhupada's departure, Srila Narayana Maharaja has offered help and encouragement to many Iskcon devotees. He has never had any expectation of reward or recognition. One needs only to consider the deep relationship between him and Prabhupada in order to understand the reason for his coming to the West and his continued support to Iskcon and Iskcon devotees -- despite the misunderstandings that have been created about him. To this day he continues in his support of Iskcon, expects nothing and has no assimilative ambitions hoping to merge his Math with Iskcon.

It has been argued in the GBC paper that Srila Narayana Maharaja is not part of Iskcon. As such the paper contends that he is not a bona fide siksha guru for Iskcon devotees. In order to understand in a balanced way the circumstances around Srila Narayana Maharaja and his relation with Iskcon it is important to acknowledge that Maharaja is not "just another sadhu", but a long-time friend and support to us all. In so many ways he is part of our greater Iskcon family. His life-long example, erudition, renunciation, intimate association with Srila Prabhupada and long-time affiliation with Iskcon makes him a most suitable guide and support for those who want to deepen their commitment to Srila Prabhupada's mission. The greater Iskcon community is large and diverse, and the needs of individual devotees are as equally diverse. Can anyone argue that there is not a real need for more support and encouragement? Taking help from a senior Vaishnava is commanded in all our scriptures, and Srila Narayana Maharaja's pedigree certainly qualifies him to continue to encourage and support Iskcon and its members.

### **The siddhanta of bhakti**

The GBC paper calls into question whether Srila Narayana Maharaja is philosophically consistent with Srila Prabhupada and his teachings. We will now present how Maharaja is following the tenants of Sri Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis, and how he is presenting the same teachings as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and Srila Prabhupada.

Much has been made of Srila Narayana Maharaja's discussions and presentations of raganuga bhakti in the GBC paper. It suggests that discussions of raganuga, although bona fide in that they appear within our scriptures, are not for everyone. The paper suggests that they are only for the most advanced souls, and that in due course (by the faithful practice of vaidhi bhakti) the principles of raganuga will become automatically manifest in the heart of the sincere sadhaka. Further, the paper suggests that it is dangerous for sadhakas to discuss raganuga before one has attained the (undefined) qualification, in that such discussions may lead to a corrupted state of consciousness culminating in the spiritual perversion known as sahajiyism. The paper goes on to erroneously and illogically infer that by dint of Srila Narayana

Maharaja's discourses on raganuga bhakti he is presenting something different than Srila Prabhupada and is thus (by innuendo) potentially within the category of a sahajiyā bhakta. We address these points one by one, beginning with a brief presentation of what is raganuga bhakti according to Srila Prabhupada and the previous acharyas.

### **Raganuga bhakti and vaidhi bhakti**

Vaidhi and raganuga are two distinct forms of sadhana.(4) Raganuga bhakti, like vaidhi bhakti, is part of sadhana bhakti and therefore involves a gradual cultivation in the same way that vaidhi bhakti does. The path of raganuga does not differ in practice from the path of vaidhi. Indeed it is clearly stated by the acharyas that in the execution of raganuga bhakti one must follow strictly all the rules and regulations of vaidhi bhakti if he is to attain his desired goal.

There is an apparent understanding within the GBC paper that by following the path of vaidhi bhakti one will come "automatically" to the stage of raganuga bhakti. But according to Sri Rupa Goswami this is not the case; there is no guarantee that vaidhi will automatically be transformed into raganuga at a certain level of practice. Rupa Goswami describes in *Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu* that bhava bhakti may be attained by advancing through the different stages of sadhana (nistha, ruci, and ashakti), either through vaidhi or raganuga sadhana. Bhava which is attained through vaidhi sadhana is of the nature of aisvarya-jnana and leads to Vaikuntha. Bhava which is attained through raganuga sadhana is of the nature of madhura and leads to Vraja.(58) Although all sadhakas generally start with the practice of vaidhi, their sadhana is converted into raganuga only when their faith and greed awakens for such practices by hearing Hari-katha from advanced Vaishnavas who are situated in the mood of the Lord's eternal associates in Vraja. This is the conclusion of Rupa Goswami and all acharyas in his line.(59)

Thus according to Rupa Goswami, after practising the purifying tenants of vaidhi bhakti there is a point at which one will develop a greed, or deep desire, to enter the mood of Vrindavan. This is an important milestone in the development of one's bhakti. It is the stage at which the goal, or sadhya, is fixed by the sincere desire of the sadhaka. It is thus a conscious, wilful effort to establish the ultimate goal of one's sadhana. It is this stage that is especially relevant for the more mature and experienced devotees within Srila Prabhupada's society.

The GBC paper quotes Srila Prabhupada's famous saying of "first deserve and then desire". There is a point, however, where, according to Sri Rupa Goswami, under the guidance of the spiritual master one comes to deserve and is thus required to fix their goal on either Vaikuntha or Braja. That choice will then cause the practice of one's sadhana to lead to the development of bhava-bhakti in either the Vaikuntha or Braja mood. This is the conclusion of the acharyas who describe how being conscious of the goal enhances one's desire or hankering to enter more deeply into the practice of sadhana. It is logical that knowing the ultimate destination can only be an impetus to develop one's sadhana. To suggest that this is inconsistent with Srila Prabhupada's teachings is erroneous, and we will demonstrate this with reference to Srila Prabhupada's writings as this paper progresses.

Rupa Goswami also describes that prema is of two types: prema developed from bhava through vaidhi and prema developed from bhava through raganuga. Thus it is seen that our sadhya, or goal, determines our sadhana, or practice. Hence, the necessity for clearly discussing sadhya from the outset of our practice of sadhana -- something that Srila Prabhupada did repeatedly in all his books and lectures. If we neglect the favourable directives of our predecessor acharyas who have established the siddhanta for the sampradaya, then we will not achieve the goal which they are pointing out for us. If we claim that Srila Prabhupada differed from this conclusion, or saw no necessity for it, we run the risk of cutting him off from the line of acharyas.

### **Raganuga bhakti is dependent on faith**

The qualification for the practice of raganuga bhakti is an intense greed to follow the moods of Krishna's ragatmika eternal associates in Vraja. Such greed is awakened by hearing from advanced Vaishnavas who are situated in that same mood. One who has developed faith in hearing such topics becomes gradually purified, so that when genuine greed awakens, he may take up the sadhana of raganuga bhakti in earnest, under the guidance of a qualified rasika devotee.

Serving the mission of the spiritual master is a vital part of that process, but, that service is never at the expense of the teachings of the previous acharyas. An acarya can make allowances according to time, place and circumstance, where a student cannot execute the highest standard. Those allowances, however, never compromise the standards set by the previous acharyas, having them always as their goal.

As an acarya Srila Prabhupada gave us some special concessions, especially where without those

concessions preaching would never have begun; yet, these concessions were always consistent with the teachings of the previous acharyas. The number of malas that Prabhupada asked us to chant is a good example. The minimum standard is 64, and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati remarked that one who chants less than 64 is “fallen”. But the concession is there because, as Prabhupada commented, we, “are not capable of chanting 64 rounds, 100,000 names a day. This is not possible”, for us. Yet, in circumstances where a devotee would have a genuine taste for chanting more rounds, Prabhupada did not discourage that, rather he encouraged us to go higher towards the common standard set by the acharyas. Prabhupada once commented, “we are not saying only sixteen rounds, you can chant more if you want...up to sixty-four.”(68)

The principle behind any concessions is the purifying and uplifting potency of spiritual effort in accord with the acharya’s instruction. We may not be able to chant more than sixteen rounds now, but by chanting, our taste will increase and in due course (and by guru’s mercy) we may be able to chant more -- up to sixty-four. If we find ourselves chanting more than sixteen rounds, should we feel that we are deviating from our guru’s instructions? Although the guru may make concessions this does not mean that the disciple should not aspire to achieve a higher standard of service.

One should serve the mission of the spiritual master and at the same time practice the angas of bhakti as we have been recommended to do by Srila Rupa Goswami and all our acharyas following in his line.

It may be said that attraction to raganuga happens spontaneously when greed awakens as a result of hearing about the moods of Krishna’s eternal associates. But the development of that sentiment takes place through the practice of sadhana. If it were not so then raganuga would not be part of sadhana bhakti. Srila Prabhupada quotes Rupa Goswami: “This method is applicable both in the stage of sadhana (spiritual practices executed while in the stage of bondage) and in the stage of sadhya (God realisation), when one is a siddha-purusa, or a spiritually perfect soul.”(5)

### **Rupanuga Vaishnavas**

According to Sri Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami(60) the purpose of Lord Chaitanya’s descent is to taste the internal moods of Srimati Radhika and to distribute bhakti on the platform of spontaneous devotion or raga-marga. To this end Lord Caitanya instructed Rupa Goswami to write books outlining the methods of bhakti on the platform of raga. There can be no doubt, therefore, that to follow Rupa Goswami means to come to the stage of raganuga bhakti.

The assertion made by the GBC paper that Srila Narayana Maharaja claims that only those situated in madhurya-bhava are true rupanuga Vaishnavas, needs to be qualified. Anyone who is following Rupa Goswami’s line of teaching and who is developing an attraction for worshipping Krishna in any one of the moods of Krishna’s eternal associates of Vraja as described in the Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu is known as a raganuga bhakta, and any such devotee may also be known as a rupanuga Vaishnava. This is confirmed by Srila Narayana Maharaja’s own words: “Another name for raganuga-bhakti is rupanuga-bhakti. Without becoming a rupanuga or follower of Sri Rupa Goswami, it is impossible to enter the path of raganuga-bhakti.” (preface to Manah-siksha, page xi)

The term rupanuga literally means “to follow Rupa Goswami”. Therefore, in a general sense, anyone who follows the instructions and practices of Rupa Goswami may be called a rupanuga. A more intimate and exacting definition of rupanuga is one who follows Rupa Goswami in every respect, including the specific internal mood that he has in his service toward Radha and Krishna. One who desires to follow Rupa Goswami in this way will not only be situated in madhurya bhava, but within that madhurya bhava he will have the mood of the manjaris headed by Rupa Manjari.(6) Thus Srila Narayana Maharaja’s explanation that a true rupanuga must be situated in madhurya bhava is consistent with the definition of what exclusive following of Rupa Goswami means. It is not meant to exclude the possibility of those situated in other moods being accepted as followers of Rupa Goswami in a general sense.

Srila Narayana Maharaja does not exactly say that all those raganuga bhaktas who are in madhurya-rasa are rupanuga Vaishnavas. On one hand all the rasas in Goloka Vrindavan are madhurya, “sweet”, because they are devoid of the obstacle to affection called aiswarya, or knowledge of the Lord’s opulence. Madhurya-rasa can also mean conjugal rasa, or sringara-rasa,(61) yet only those who are following Rupa Manjari (externally in the form of Rupa Goswami as a follower of Lord Caitanya, and in his internal form as the maidservant of Radharani) can be called rupanuga Vaishnavas. Those who are following Lalita and Visaka, while raganuga Vaishnavas, are not rupanuga Vaishnavas.

All our Vaishnava acharyas in the line of Lord Caitanya and the Six Goswamis are rupanuga Vaishnavas. All are following the mood and siddhanta of Rupa Goswami. This is evident in their songs and literature. For instance, Bhaktivinoda Thakura calls himself Kamala Manjari, and Srila Prabhupada has said that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura is an associate of one of the manjaris.(62) The pranam mantras chanted



to these two acharyas also confirm that they are rupanuga Vaishnavas.(63) Srila Prabhupada also pointed out that as we develop our Krsna consciousness we will follow one of these specific associates of Srimati Radharani.(7)

Rupa Goswami, the father of the Hare Krishna movement, teaches about all the rasas, but he gives special stress to the conjugal mellow as the highest. So did our own spiritual father, Srila Prabhupada. He often quoted Narottama dasa Thakura, "When will I be eager to read the books of the Six Goswamis...so that I can understand the conjugal love of Radha Krishna?"(8)

Some people doubt that Prabhupada had a raganuga guru, but actually he had the highest of all raganuga gurus -- a rupanuga guru. This is evidenced in the prayers he sang daily to his Guru Maharaja: madhuryojjvala-premadhya-sri-rupanuga-bhaktida: "I offer my humble obeisance's to he who is the embodiment of rupanuga bhakti which is radiant with the conjugal love of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna."(63)

### **Automatic revelation and raganuga bhakti**

In the very beginning of his description of sadhana bhakti in Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu, Srila Rupa Goswami defines sadhana bhakti as that which brings on the manifestation of bhava bhakti.(68) The real practice of bhakti is that by which the goal can be obtained. Therefore, unless one has a clear conception of what the goal is and how it is to be achieved, there can be no proper performance of sadhana.

According to Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu, bhava is a combination of the hladini and samvit potencies, or in other words, the essence of visuddha sattva. It is an eternal phenomena and therefore not generated by any kind of practice. It is revealed in the heart of the devotee who is fully purified by virtue of his or her sadhana practice. It is revealed or transmitted into the heart of the devotee from the hearts of those particular eternal associates of the Lord one is following.

As previously stated, the practice must have a goal, or sadhya, if the sadhaka is to reach his or her desired destination. The concept of an enlightenment different from the sadhakas goal are not upheld in the siddhanta of our parampara.

The word "automatic" has a more accurate application in this regard if used truer to its original meaning, dating back to the ancient Greek word "automatos" which means "acting of one's own will". The word is actually made up of two parts auto, "self", and matos, "acting". Although more recent uses of the word relate to the unconscious workings of machines, the original sense of the word would more easily suggest the original intent of the machine's engineer. Thus it can accurately be said that the "automatic" enlightenment of the sadhaka does come as a result of the expression of one's will into action. This corresponds to the spiritual discipline given by the instructing spiritual masters.

To suggest that a manifestation of enlightened spiritual consciousness can be separated from one's desire is similar to the idea that things, including the universe, are self-manifested and separate from any will. Krishna Himself tells us that He fulfils one's desires according to the nature of one's faith.(9) Logic then dictates that a focus on the goal is a primary and essential aspect to the success and ultimate outcome of one's spiritual efforts. One cannot say therefore that raganuga bhakti "happens automatically" any more than one can say that vaidhi bhakti "happens automatically". Whatever happens is the outcome of aim and effort; no aim - no effort, no result.

We must then practice with the goal in mind -- first the sadhya, then the sadhana. There is a misunderstanding in the GBC paper regarding this aspect of spiritual life, in which it is feared that discussions of raganuga bhakti are anathema to the teachings of Srila Prabhupada. As stated earlier, vaidhi and raganuga are two distinct forms of sadhana, with raganuga not differing in practice from the path of vaidhi.(4)

It is legitimate to be wary of discussions of raganuga where one is dismissive of the practice of principles given by the previous acharyas. There should certainly be concern wherever there is a disregard for the instructions of the parampara. Whether it is within raganuga or vaidhi bhakti, if one purports to be a bhakta but neglects to follow the rules and regulations of shastra, then such bhakti is of the lowest grade.

It is a matter of public record that there is no legitimate reason to be concerned about Srila Narayana Maharaja's good standing in bhakti, nor to his ability to faithfully adhere to the bhakti path as outlined by our acharyas. He is emphatic about following proper standards, and he does not segregate the regulative principles from the practice of bhakti for he knows that vaidhi bhakti in the mode of rules and regulations is an essential and primary part of raganuga bhakti. A disregard for the regulative principles is an aparadha to our acharyas and the Lord, and indeed, when separated from the principles of raganuga bhakti, may create a fertile ground for sahajiyism to develop. But is there anyone who would claim that Srila Narayana Maharaja advocates such a disregard? If so, then that person should personally come forward and let it be known who they are and what is their evidence. It is certainly unjust to infer such things in an anonymous

way and without any evidence to support such a claim. Just like Prabhupada, Srila Narayana Maharaja instructs his disciples very strictly in the regulative principles of Krishna consciousness. He himself is extremely strict, and besides all his preaching, chants sixty-four rounds daily.

Therefore, it is completely appropriate, and in line with the teachings of our predecessor acharyas and Srila Prabhupada, for Srila Narayana Maharaja to encourage sadhakas to focus on the goal of their sadhana. It is in no way introducing a new concept, but rather helping devotees refocus their pursuit in spiritual life. Given the sociological conditions of the movement at the present, at least to some observers, Srila Narayana Maharaja's prompting seems to be most appropriately timed, for many older devotees are looking for encouragement in the deepening of their spiritual commitments. Such a reminder of the , as it helps us in deepening our relationship to our guru. It is not "instead of", but rather "in support of" the commitments we have made long ago.

### **Disclosure of swarupa**

While Srila Narayana Maharaja does discuss the need to understand the goal of bhakti as given by our acharyas, he does not talk about individual swarupa, including his own. Many times he has publicly condemned the misleading actions of sahajiya babajis who give their disciples siddha pranali, or the eternal form the soul has in the spiritual world. Like Srila Prabhupada, he is staunch in his stand against such cheap actions that disturb the fabric of spiritual society.

However, to suggest that there is no example of devotees revealing their eternal swarupa is incorrect. There are a number of examples of Masters in our line who have revealed their eternal relationships with Sri Krishna. (6,7,62,63) This of course is not to be cheaply imitated, for one must be perfectly situated in order to present such realisations. Srila Bhaktivinode describes his own eternal swarupa, "Then I will recognise that it is I, the maidservant named Kamala Manjari, an eternal assistant of Ananga Manjari.... Her touch will suddenly and deeply impart to me the sublime spiritual emotion of spontaneous loving devotion and the intense desire to perform rupanuga bhajana, worship that follows in her own footsteps." (10) This quote is important as it shows that Bhaktivinode Thakura's meditation is expressed in the future tense, thus indicating that it is the applied action of his will towards his sadhya, or spiritual goal.

### **Seva Kunja painting by Srimati Jadurani**

The GBC paper repeated a gross misunderstanding, based on hearsay only, that in a painting he commissioned Srimati Jadurani to do, Srila Narayana Maharaja has revealed his nitya-svarupa. The painting was indeed commissioned by him, not for the purpose of revealing his nitya-lila, but rather to glorify the Supreme Lord's pastimes. Nor did he ever instruct any of his disciples or followers to meditate on him in any of the forms depicted in the painting. The paintings were merely an external expression of his inner mood of service to Sri Sri Radha Krishna.

In discussions with Jadurani prabhu she revealed that Maharaja guided her on the details of the painting, from which she drew her own conclusions. This then became part of her meditation on Radha and Krsna as she created the painting. Whilst making this painting she disclosed some of these meditations to other devotees. These were then erroneously misconstrued as being meditations sanctioned by Srila Narayana Maharaja, and implicit statements by him regarding his nitya-svarupa. But, as is the case with most of this controversy, confusion and a "Chinese Whispers" situation has generated this misunderstanding.

If Jadurani had within her mind a particular conception that one of the figures was Srila Narayana Maharaja's form in the spiritual world, this is her own internal meditation. As stated above, there is no harm in meditating on the guru as an intimate servant of Srimati Radhika. Indeed, such a meditation is most conducive to spiritual progress and the prayer we sing each morning for mangalarotika confirms this. (34)

Bhaktivinode Thakura also advises devotees to meditate like this. "At that time one comes to know of his eternal constitutional identity from a raganuga guru. Equipped with this understanding and being desirous of taking up appropriate services and sadhana, the spiritual aspirant should first take shelter of the lotus feet of such a guru, perceiving him in his eternal spiritual form as a manjari." (11) He has also written, "It is, therefore, fully appropriate to consider Sri Gurudeva as a priya sakhi of Srimati Radhika." (12)

### **Rasika guru**

The GBC paper also poses the question as to why Srila Prabhupada did not practice raganuga bhakti under the direction of a rasika guru. The simple and obvious answer to this statement is that he did. As we have demonstrated above, his own blessed diksha guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, was indeed a bona fide rasika guru. (62,63)

The paper further questions why Srila Prabhupada did not, in his last days, specifically mention accepting a rasika guru. Again, with all due respect, this is a somewhat sophomoric inquiry, when the subject matter is so clearly presented all throughout his books.

### **Intimate topics**

The GBC paper brings up the question of what exactly are suitable subject matters for a sadhaka to hear and discuss. In *Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu*, which was one of the first books Srila Prabhupada translated as *Nectar of Devotion*, Srila Rupa Goswami spends more than eighty percent of the book defining what is sadhya, or the goal. He discusses what is bhava, what is prema, what is rasa, how those rasas are developed, what are the symptoms of ecstasy and how they manifest, illustrating all with examples. Srila Rupa Goswami thought it necessary to describe all of this just to give the sadhakas a clear idea of what they are striving for. Without this our practice will be vague and it will not be real sadhana bhakti. Srila Prabhupada, interestingly enough, has termed this book as the law book for all sadhakas.

Srila Narayana Maharaja does discuss these topics in his classes because they are essential to one's progress along the path. He does not discuss intimate details of Radha and Krishna's confidential pastimes. He does give general descriptions of lilas in all the different rasas (just as Rupa Goswami has done in *Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu*) to illustrate points of tattva. If such discussions are forbidden to general sadhakas, then has Rupa Goswami made a great blunder in devoting eighty percent of his book to such topics? It would then be also strange that Srila Prabhupada would pick this book as one of the first to translate for his neophyte disciples.

Wherever Srila Narayana Maharaja has travelled in the West, and throughout India as well, he discourses on the same subjects as Prabhupada. Just like Prabhupada, Srila Narayana Maharaja has said that without the Gita and other such books, one cannot understand Krishna at all. In the hundreds of classes he has given on his recent Western tour he has been defeating mayavada and atheistic philosophies, and proving that Krishna is God. He talks on *Bhagavad-gita*, *Nectar of Devotion*, *Nectar of Instruction*, *Krishna book*, *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-caritamrta*, almost always using Srila Prabhupada's books. In San Francisco Srila Narayana Maharaja elaborately spoke for days on the ten offences to the Holy Name and how one can avoid them. So we are hard pressed to understand why there is any misunderstanding that he only speaks Tenth Canto rasa-lila katha.

### **Who is fit to hear topics of rasa and lila?**

A distinction must be made between qualification to hear topics which describe the higher stages of bhakti and discussions of confidential lilas. As described above, topics related to sadhya or the perfectional stages of bhakti and how they are attained through the progressive development of sadhana are essential in order to give focus to our practice of bhakti. This is confirmed in all the books of the Goswamis and the acharyas following in their line, including Srila Prabhupada. The basic qualification for hearing such topics is faith in the speaker and the subject matter.

This is explained in the following statement of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura in his commentary on S.B. 10.33.39: "Consequently, in the heart of the sadhakas who firmly believe in the statements of the sastra, faith arises by hearing rasa-lila and other narration. Only in the hearts of such faithful devotees does prema manifest its influence as a result of hearing lila-katha. Thereafter, lust and all evils present within the heart of the devotee are destroyed to the root."

Those who are lacking even this faith should not hear such topics; such persons are better off holding to the position in which they feel comfortable. Indeed, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura has explained how human nature is such that we tend to dismiss that practice that is beyond our own conception and reach, adhering always to our familiar position. He says, "the vaidhi bhakti disregards ragatmika bhakti."(13)

Confidential descriptions of Radha-Krishna lila, such as those found in *Govinda-lilamrta* and *Krishna Bhavanamrta*, and meditation on such topics as a method of sadhana is not recommended for persons who are still plagued with anarthas. Srila Narayana Maharaja does not discuss such topics in general classes, nor does he recommend meditation on such pastimes for unqualified persons.

This is confirmed by his own words in his commentary on *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-bindu*, page 125: "But one should always bear in mind that not everyone has the eligibility to perform Yugala-seva by meditating in this way on Their supramundane, daily pastimes. This practice must be concealed very diligently. One should not disclose these pastimes to ineligible persons. Until genuine greed to enter into the raga-marga arises in the heart of the jiva bound by matter, this subject should be kept hidden from him. One remains ineligible to hear the confidential pastimes of Sri Yugala which are saturated with rasa as long as the conception of the transcendental nature of the Lord's name, form, qualities and pastimes has not

implanted itself in the heart.”

The GBC paper suggests that senior devotees of Iskcon went to Srila Narayana Maharaja to gain an unauthorised entry into raganuga bhakti practices. For the public record it must be stated that for several years those devotees had already immersed themselves in the topics of raganuga, having been influenced by the publications of Sriman Kushakrta and Dasaratha Suta prabhus, and having taken association or influence from various Radha-kunda babajis. In some cases they had already approached, independently, highly confidential works such as Ujvala Nilamani and others. We do not mean to find fault with those devotees, and it is intelligent of them to have approached a qualified sadhu in order that they might not entertain a wrong siddhanta from their studies. But we only wish to point out that it was Iskcon devotees (in some cases, leaders of the society) who initiated the discussions by approaching Srila Narayana Maharaja, asking him to explain the Goswami's intimate books to them. In the mood of an older Vaishnava, he sought to merely clarify various points for them, and, at their request, to help them find the relevance of the books they were studying.

Srila Narayana Maharaja spoke to them from the commentaries and teachings of Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, Rupa Goswami and Ragunatha Goswami. But, because the nature of their own questions and conversations with Srila Narayana Maharaja were on rasa-tattva, they may have concluded that this is the way he speaks with everyone who takes his siksa.

On rare occasions, in highly elevated circles in Mathura and Vrindavan, Srila Narayana Maharaja does discuss more elevated topics. There is certainly no need to tell an elevated Mathura vasi or Brajabasi that he is not his body, or that he should stop eating eggs and meat; these things are already understood by such persons. But for general devotees and non devotee audiences, his katha is always on the basic elements of Krsna consciousness.

### **Qualification for hearing rasa-katha**

There are over thirty places in Prabhupada's books where he discusses the qualifications for hearing rasa-lila. Prabhupada does not write that one cannot hear rasa-lila until he is liberated, but that he cannot properly understand it until he is liberated. He also has written that one cannot understand the holy name until he is liberated -- but still we chant; he says that we cannot understand that we are not the body until we are liberated -- but still we read Bhagavad-gita to understand this.

There are at least six chapters in Krishna Book all about Krishna and the gopis. In Chapter Thirty-two, Prabhupada quotes Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura's commentary that a conditioned soul must hear with faith about rasa-lila from self-realised souls. "If one actually hears rasa-lila, he will become completely freed from lusty desire of sex life and elevated to the highest level of spiritual understanding."(14) It is thus an offence to the acharyas not to hear these pastimes from the mouths of pure devotees.

If we think that these topics are not for us, then why do they appear with such regularity in all of Srila Prabhupada books? Not only are they in the Tenth Canto, but they also appear prominently in the Nectar of Devotion, Caitanya-caritamrta and Teachings of Lord Caitanya, which are replete with topics of Sri Sri Radha Krishna gopi-lila. The admonition that one should not jump up to the subject matter, but approach it step-by-step, does not negate the value of hearing the subject, but rather it requires that we understand these subjects within the essential context of Sri Krishna as Parabrahman Bhagavan, while practising the rules and regulations of our sadhana-bhakti. The danger of hearing these subjects out of that context is that we will take the divine lila cheaply, perceiving it from within a material framework.

### **What is sahajiya?**

Sahajism is thinking that in the conditioned state one can experience the rasa of one's choice by imitating that rasa with one's material body. In his commentary on Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-bindu, page 126, Srila Narayana Maharaja has written: "The fundamental conclusion is that only upon obtaining the aforementioned eligibility can the sadhaka undertake the discipline of raganuga-bhakti. By following this method of sadhana while still plagued with anarthas and without the appearance of genuine greed, the opposite effect will be produced....Some persons, distorting the meaning of the instruction that one should perform bhajana according to the residents of Vraja, consider themselves as Lalita, Visakha, or others. Although males, they adopt a female dress and perform bhajana making themselves out to be sakhis. By such practice they destroy themselves and others. They think, I am Lalita, I am Visakha.' This leads to ahangrahopasana of the mayavadis. Such persons become offenders at the feet of Lalita and Visakha and fall down to a most dreadful hell."(15)

Both Srila Prabhupada and Srila Narayana Maharaja condemn the practice of siddha-pranali or giving the details and methods of one's eternal relationship with Krishna to persons who are still plagued with

anarthas. Like Prabhupada, Srila Narayana Maharaja condemns the Radha-kunda sahajiya babajis who falsely think that they can give siddha-deha to conditioned souls.(16) Srila Narayana Maharaja neither gives siddha-pranali, nor does he encourage devotees to think about their eternal swarupa. This is clear from his statement in Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-bindu (page 132): "Because the practice of smarana is predominant in raganuga-bhakti, some persons, prior to the actual appearance of raga within the heart, make a deceitful display of solitary bhajana while still plagued with anarthas. They consider themselves as raganuga-bhaktas and thus begin to practice remembrance of asta-kaliya-lila. But to display the exclusive devotion that is described in the sruti-smrti-puranadi verse is for them the cause of great disturbance. Some ineligible persons who are entangled in anarthas obtain so-called siddha-pranali by going here and there, and by imitation, they begin to consider themselves fit to conduct the practice of raganuga-bhakti. But without the appearance of genuine greed, they cannot obtain qualification by pretentious means."

Prabhupada's comments on the so-called "Gopi-bhava Club" of 1976 have nothing to do with what Srila Narayana Maharaja teaches. It is purported, that the devotees involved at that time, not having proper guidance, were desiring to become gopis in the mood of Lalita and Vishaka and were not following any authorised process.

Both Srila Narayana Maharaja and Prabhupada follow the teachings of the Six Goswamis, who teach us how to follow the Lord's associates in Vrindavan. Srila Narayana Maharaja, a pure servant of the followers of Rupa and Ragunatha (as was Srila Prabhupada) has taught (just as Prabhupada taught) that all our Gaudiya Vaisnava acharyas in their spiritual forms are followers of Rupa Manjari and Rati Manjari, and who thus prefer to serve Radharani rather than have a direct relationship themselves with Krishna. This is not sahajism.(17)

### **"New" Sanskrit terms**

Srila Prabhupada's books are full of the subjects of raganuga bhakti, rupanuga bhaktas, madhurya-rasa, rasika bhaktas and other related topics. It may be true that in our society the specific study of these subjects is not common practice, in fact one tends to broach them with a good deal of caution. But the fact is that they form the core of our philosophy and the history of our Gaudiya Vaishnava line dating back to Rupa, Ragunatha and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The issue of siddhanta that is raised in the GBC paper is thus in many ways a blessing, in that it encourages us to take a fresh look at Prabhupada's books. Going more deeply into his books will help us understand how these subjects have been there all along, and how their understanding is central to our sadhana.

Language is a paradox, in that it is a symbolic representation of a subject, and thus it has observable limitations imposed upon it when it comes to translation. As anyone who speaks a foreign language knows, in every culture there are terms and concepts for which there are no exact equivalents. This is especially so for many of the Sanskrit and Bengali terms used to express the rarefied subject of devotion. Srila Prabhupada was faced with a daunting challenge when he attempted to explain these subjects in a language that has no natural construct for their expression, and to an audience who was completely new to them.

Prabhupada ingeniously conveyed these subtle concepts to us, using familiar English words in new ways. Had we understood Sanskrit, or even Bengali, he would have most likely used the same vocabulary used by Narayana Maharaja.

Until quite recently, Srila Narayana Maharaja's audiences have been predominantly Hindi or Bengali speakers, and so he is accustomed to use the Sanskrit terms. With careful observation we will find that they are speaking of the very same subject matter in the same way, but in different styles of speech. This is in fact not a bad thing, since what becomes common to our ear may encourage a lazy approach to the subject matter. Is it not, for example, refreshing and illuminating to read the diversity of style in the writings of Bhaktivinode, Bhaktisiddhanta or Bhaktivedanta? Do we not deepen our appreciation by hearing the same subject matter expressed in unique ways that demand our attention and reflection? The discourse offered by Srila Narayana Maharaja gives us the chance to explore the terms used by Prabhupada and our acharyas in familiar ways, yet with unique expression.

### **Rasika devotee**

One of these "new" terms is rasika bhakta. There is nothing inherently harmful in the word rasika. Krishna is known as rasika-sekhara, or "the foremost enjoyer of loving exchanges".(18) The word "rasika" means "knower and realiser of the rasas" and it applies to both Krishna and to His pure devotees. All self-realised spiritual masters in our line of disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya are rasika bhaktas because they have all realised their relationship with Krishna.(19) Prabhupada explains in his books and lectures that there are four types of rasika bhaktas -- neutral, servant, friend, parent and conjugal lover.(64)

Sometimes the word "rasika" is translated by Prabhupada as "liberated soul".(20) Everywhere in his books and lectures Prabhupada discusses the need to serve and hear from such liberated souls, and in all, there are over nineteen references to the word "rasika" in Prabhupada's books. There are thousands of other places where he uses the word in its English equivalent.(21)

### **Raganuga bhakti**

Srila Narayana Maharaja is not introducing anything new; raganuga bhakti is essential in understanding Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

According to Caitanya Caritamrta Adi 4 15-16, Lord Caitanya appeared in this world specifically to give raga marga or, in other words, raganuga bhakti, the path by which one attains raga bhakti (braja bhakti). Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 4.16 states: "The Lord's desire to appear was born from two reasons: He wanted to taste the sweet essence of the mellows of love of God (Radharani's love) and to propagate devotional service in the world on the platform of spontaneous love [the original Bengali says "raga marga bhakti"]. Thus He is known as supremely jubilant and the most merciful of all."

In Chapter 4 of the Adi lila Prabhupada comments on Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami's explanation of the three reasons for Mahaprabhu appearance. The primary reason was to "relish the position of Srimati Radharani" as the object rather than the subject of Her love; the second reason was to "understand the transcendental mellow of Himself" or His own unique sweetness; and the third reason was to enjoy the bliss tasted by Radharani. Prabhupada comments, "Lord Caitanya appeared to fulfil these confidential desires and also to preach the special significance of chanting Hare Krishna, and to answer the call of Advaita Prabhu. These were secondary reasons." Lord Caitanya thus established ragamarga, and Rupa Goswami elaborately explained it for the devotee community. The core essence of our philosophy, thus, is based on the ragamarga that our acharyas distribute beginning with sadhana bhakti.(22)

Prabhupada states there that by Lord Chaitanya's coming in this way "Lord Sri Krishna wants to make it known to all conditioned souls that He is more attracted to raga bhakti than to vaidhi bhakti or devotional service under scheduled regulations". In the purport to text 21 Prabhupada writes that "vaidhi bhakti" means mixed devotional service or devotional service mixed with material desires. He explains that "bhakti" means Vaikuntha bhakti, while suddha bhakti is devotional service which is only found in Goloka Vrindavan. Lord Caitanya came to bring conditioned souls to suddha bhakti. Prabhupada explains in the same purport that if one's vaidhi bhakti becomes flawless, he can go to Vaikuntha; but only by raganuga bhakti can one be promoted to Krishna loka.(23)

According to Prabhupada's translation and purport the only price for unalloyed devotional service is the intense greed to have spontaneous service.(69) This is coincidentally the definition of raganuga bhakti. The word sukriti, pious activities, means activities of vaidhi bhakti. If it was mundane pious activities that Prabhupada meant to say, the original text would have said "sukarma" and not "sukriti". Without this greed hundreds and thousands of lives of spiritual pious activity or regulative services or preaching, or arcana cannot give us that absorption in the mellows of pure devotion. That greed is awakened only by association with and guidance of pure ragatmika (or raganuga) bhaktas, or those who already have that greed. Prabhupada has told us that to follow this "is the essence of all instruction in the matter of devotional service".(24)

Raga bhakti is performed by those already situated in their relationship with Krishna in Goloka Vrindavan, particularly in the relationship of friend, parent or lover. The path to raga bhakti is called raganuga bhakti, and the exact definition of raganuga bhakti is given in Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 22.149: "The original inhabitants of Vrindavan are attached to Krishna spontaneously in devotional service. Nothing can compare to such spontaneous devotional service, which is called ragatmika bhakti. When a devotee follows in the footsteps of the devotees of Vrindavan, his devotional service is called raganuga bhakti".

Prabhupada writes that by continually doing devotional service one gradually develops a natural inclination for bhakti, and that this is called raganuga. He says, "Another part of sadhana-bhakti is called raganuga. Raganuga refers to the point at which, by following the regulative principles, one becomes a little more attached to Krishna and executes devotional service out of natural love."(25)

In Nectar of Devotion Chapter 16, Prabhupada writes that "raganuga devotees are those who want to follow the footsteps of the eternal associates of Krishna. There is a gradual development of the ambition to become like a particular devotee, and this activity is called raganuga." The spiritual master brings his disciple to raganuga bhakti before he can come to the stage of perfection. Srila Narayana Maharaja is humbly assisting Prabhupada by illuminating his purports and teaching devotees how to gradually come to raganuga bhakti.

In Nectar of Instruction, Text 8, Prabhupada quotes Caitanya Caritamrta, that as one executes vaidhi

bhakti he will gradually come to raganuga bhakti, and from that stage he comes to ragabhakti, or pure love of God in any rasa. After describing dasya, sakhya and vatsalya-rasa, Prabhupada says that one can also become like Radharani's serving maids, manjaris like Rupa manjari and Rati manjari. He concludes this purport by saying that to come to raganuga bhakti under the guidance of ragatmika bhaktas is the essence of all instruction in the matter of devotional service. (24)

Prabhupada also explains that the sixty-four limbs, or categories of devotional service which are described in Nectar of Devotion, are meant to bring us to raganuga bhakti. By executing raganuga bhakti under the guidance of a pure rasika bhakta, in any of the rasas, one can attain the same post when he is perfected. (26)

Prabhupada has said that "real bhakti is raganuga bhakti. This raganuga bhakti comes after surpassing the vaidhi bhakti progress in devotional service, and if we simply stick to shastric regulative processes and do not try to go beyond that then... shastric process also regulation, that is required. Without shastric process you cannot go to that platform. But if we stick to the shastric process only and do not try to improve ourself... The shastric process is kanistha-adhikari, lowest stage of devotional service." [the ellipsis are on folio] (71) Prabhupada has often told us that raganuga bhakti is our aim. (72)

So Srila Narayana Maharaja is not giving anything new; it is only the old wine in a new bottle. He is simply pointing out what Prabhupada wanted us to understand. Both Prabhupada and Srila Narayana Maharaja teach that one should not imitate the raganuga devotees like the sahajiyas and become debauches, but that we should try to understand raganuga and gradually approach this stage by following the bona fide self-realised diksa and siksha gurus. Like Prabhupada, Srila Narayana Maharaja says that raganuga is not for public preaching, and like Prabhupada, he does not preach about it in public. Both of them show discretion in the discussion of these topics, as they speak about it only to select audiences.

It is Srila Narayana Maharaja's opinion that, in general, devotees who have practised sadhana bhakti for twenty years or more are qualified to at least discuss the preliminary aspects of this topic.

### **Confidentiality**

When Srila Narayana Maharaja discussed the Goswami literature with Iskcon devotees in the early 1990s, he commented that the nature of the topics were confidential, and that it was thus incumbent upon the listener to approach the topics in a deeply reverential mood. It is a misunderstanding to interpret this caution to his audience as if the topic was a secret meant only for the ears of a few individuals. He was rather instructing on the mood that one should take in approaching the subject.

As we have explained already, the leading Iskcon devotees who took this siksha from Srila Narayana Maharaja approached him to discuss these "confidential" subject matters. They specifically requested him to explain Vilapa Kusum Anjali to them. Srila Narayana Maharaja has said that he has never given discourses on this book to anyone else, even to those in his own Math or institution. But he agreed to discuss this book with the Iskcon devotees because so many of them were repeatedly approaching him and enquiring on the different topics contained in the book. They explained that the book had been translated into English by Iskcon devotees and was now freely available for them to read. These leading devotees were also aware that some devotees had been approaching Radha Kunda babajis with their enquiries, and so in order to stop this trend, they wanted to hear the bona fide siddhanta from a bona fide source. Srila Narayana Maharaja understood that their motive was that they would hear from him and then be able to repeat the correct understandings to other devotees.

The GBC paper mis-reports the alarm in the Gaudiya Math about Narayana Maharaja speaking on such confidential topics. The concern within the Math stemmed not from the discussions per se, but rather that Maharaja was having the discussions with "Westerners".

When writing Caitanya-caritamrta Krsnadasa Kaviraja had a similar quandary over whether or not to speak of all the confidential aspects of Lord Chaitanya's lila. He concluded that he had to tell his readers of them. "All these conclusions are unfit to disclose in public. But if they are not disclosed, no one will understand them. Therefore I shall mention them, revealing only their essence, so that loving devotees will understand them but fools will not....For fear of them I do not wish to speak, but if they do not understand, then what can be happier in all the three worlds?" (27)

### **Controversy and Allegations**

In this next section we will deal specifically with allegations, or points of controversy, raised by the GBC paper. We humbly ask the reader to consider the following as the expressed position of Srila Narayana Maharaja on all of these issues, and the author of this paper takes full responsibility for the content and presentation of the material. Any faults are solely his, and not Srila Narayana Maharaja's.

Before look at each controversial it may be helpful to highlight the nature of their presentation and how it was logically structured.

### **The method and manner of the GBC paper's argument**

It is important for us to comment on the presentation of the GBC paper, and its numerous logical and presentation flaws. Its notable lack of open-mindedness is couched in language that uses innuendo, inference and unsubstantiated supposition to practically brow-beat the reader to its forgone conclusions. It appears to lack a generosity of spirit. It would have been more effective if it had presented its arguments with a view to allow the reader to exercise their own philosophical faculties, and thus draw their own conclusion regarding the issues presented. Instead, the paper uses a high-handed ecclesiastical mode of presentation to lead the reader to conclusions which are unsubstantiated. If we are working in a spiritual society that is based on guru, sadhu and shastra, it would be more appealing and attractive if such argument were presented in a spirit of dialogue that seeks to convince more than demand.

For instance, the title of the paper, "Keeping Faith with Srila Prabhupada" already predisposes the reader to an understanding that coming to a conclusion other than that which is presented in the paper is tantamount to heresy. We have demonstrated that supporting Srila Narayana Maharaja and taking his siksha does not mean that a devotee has rejected Srila Prabhupada. Scare-mongering with inflammatory statements may affect young devotees who lack experience or philosophical skills, but for veterans of the movement this kind of "Them vs. Us" paranoia does not convince.

Another fault within the GBC paper is that, although very specific allegations have been made about Srila Narayana Maharaja, none of the assertions have not been credited to any person. In any circle, what to speak of in a spiritual discourse, it is unacceptable for allegations to be made without reference to or knowledge of the accuser. One example of this is the claim within the paper that Srila Narayana Maharaja discusses "intimate" topics indiscriminately with new devotees in attendance. Yet nowhere within the paper is the name of the person who makes this claim disclosed, or what are the circumstances of his witness. If any of us were challenged in court by an anonymous accuser, would not our counsel cry, "Foul"? It is customary within free countries that when one is accused their accuser must publicly step forward and face his accused. May we know who will take credit for this allegation and others?

The GBC paper is riddled with instances of faulty logic. An example of this is at the end of page 11 where it is insinuated that Srila Narayana Maharaja is a prakrita sahajiya, or that those who would follow him run the risk of becoming one. The logic in that argument runs something along the lines of: the gopi-bhava club in LA discussed raganuga bhakti; Srila Narayana Maharaja gives discourses on the tenets of raganuga; therefore, Srila Narayana Maharaja is a "gopi-bhava-club sahajiya". Yet, the arguments we have presented in this paper show that discussions of raganuga do not, ipso facto, imply spiritual perversion - but rather, discussions of raganuga form the core of the Goswami's teachings and are an essential part of our spiritual doctrines. While the GBC paper makes an obligatory nod to the precedent set by the acharyas in discussing raganuga, they then warn that such discussions are dangerous if engaged in prematurely. Unfortunately, they fail to point out that Srila Narayana Maharaja is a stalwart in warning against premature or unauthorised discussion of these topics, and that he too preaches in the same spirit of Srila Prabhupada of first deserve and then desire. It is clear that he is explaining, just as Prabhupada did, how one attains the qualification to deserve, and the steps to deepen one's spiritual advancement.

Another example of the faulty logic within the GBC paper is where they suggest that Srila Narayana Maharaja is not suitable association, by dint of his affiliation with the Gaudiya Math. The structure of their argument is: Srila Prabhupada warned against associating with his Godbrothers; his Godbrothers run the Gaudiya Math; Srila Narayana Maharaja is a member of the Gaudiya Math; thus the danger is that by associating with Srila Narayana Maharaja we run the risk of significantly modifying the Iskcon legacy. But in our response to their paper we have illustrated how Srila Narayana Maharaja is a well wisher of Iskcon and that he is completely faithful to the teachings of Rupa and Ragunatha, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja and His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. It also does not logically follow that since Prabhupada has pointed out the errors of some of his Godbrothers, that it means that all persons affiliated with their institutions are at fault.

The same logic could be used in regards to Iskcon. Are all the followers of Iskcon and Srila Prabhupada guilty of the crimes that have been committed by a few bad leaders? We think not.

Within our institution we acknowledge that the transfer of knowledge requires a mood of submission and respect. If one approaches a teacher in a challenging mood, they are unlikely to gain the understanding offered by the teacher. If I approach the Moon to discover its spots, then all I will see is its "imperfections"; but a poet or lover approaching the Moon will see nothing but its unparalleled beauty. So without at least some initial respect there cannot be meaningful dialogue. And although there may be



exchanges of arguments and salvos of slokas, there will be no deepening of wisdom. This correct mood of approach cannot be legislated; it must naturally come from the heart, then the right effect will be achieved. In this paper we have tried to show that the Moon of Vaishnava association is illuminating and uplifting. For our hearts and minds to be touched by its cooling rays, our approach should be respectful and without rancour.

## **The Controversial Points**

### **Alleged criticism of Iskcon**

Srila Narayana Maharaja is the well wisher of Iskcon. Neither privately nor publicly has he criticised Iskcon, Iskcon leadership or Iskcon policies. It is true that Srila Narayana Maharaja has expressed disappointment over the way old friends have recently treated him, or stood by mute while others have treated him badly. But there is no grudge or hard feeling on his part. At the end of his US tour he clearly expressed his undying support of Iskcon and Iskcon devotees. He asked this writer to relay his heartfelt blessings to them all. He asked me to “Please tell them that despite the misunderstanding I do not take any offence at what has happened. Please offer them all my heartfelt blessings.”

Throughout Maharaja’s Western tour he was given edicts by various GBC representatives that if he visited Iskcon temples at any time other than that which they had offered as being suitable, he was demonstrating to them that he had “no faith in the GBC or in Iskcon leadership”. He certainly does have faith in the existence of the GBC and in their position as Iskcon’s ecclesiastical authority invested by Srila Prabhupada. And he does not condone Iskcon members rebelling against that authority. However, he is not under their jurisdiction, and his decision to visit a temple during the time of Deity greeting and guru-puja (and at a time designated for public viewing) was not an expression of his rebellion, but rather his own preference to see the temples while worship was going on and a desire to offer worship to his siksha guru, Srila Prabhupada. How his personal preference can be construed as a vote of no-confidence is a mystery to this writer, particularly so since he was personally and extensively involved in communicating to GBC members before-hand that Maharaja’s visit was one of worship and not one of politics. This writer witnessed on a number of occasions how the momentum of this collective suspicion sadly perverted the representation of Narayana Maharaja’s respect and co-operation to the Vaishnava community. This writer is yet hopeful that with pause and reflection our leaders will in the future make representations truer to the pure actions of visiting sadhus.

Despite much provocation encountered on his trip to the West, Srila Narayana Maharaja showed a consummate tolerance and patience, and was always ready to honour the GBC and Iskcon. Contrary to other statements in the GBC’s paper, Srila Narayana Maharaja has no interest to interfere in the workings of Iskcon. As previously stated he sees himself only as Iskcon’s well-wisher. Over and over again Srila Narayana Maharaja has expressed his deepest respect for Iskcon and the devotees’ efforts to execute devotional service. He also sincerely hopes that with time this misunderstanding will be resolved harmoniously.

### **Alleged criticism of Srila Prabhupada**

We have shown clearly in the foregoing sections that Srila Narayana Maharaja considers himself to be a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. There are numerous public statements to this effect over the years, and a number of Iskcon publications give credence to his loyalty to Srila Prabhupada. He has the deepest respect for Srila Prabhupada and would not tolerate even the slightest aspersion to His Divine Grace.

Srila Narayana Maharaja gives lengthy classes on the dangers of finding fault “with anyone”, what to speak of a pure devotee. Those devotees who have had the pleasure of meeting him will attest to his soft, gentle and respectful behaviour. The GBC paper’s assertion that Srila Narayana Maharaja’s praise includes implicit criticism is almost insidious. It suggests a most convoluted understanding of how a real sadhu behaves. In political forums such deceitful behaviour may be common place, but they are anathema to the principles of bhakti. Their dark nature has no place in the heart of a genuine sadhu. We would ask our readers to carefully consider the validity of such a statement, and call on the GBC spokesperson to publicly recant such an unseemly allegation.

In regards to the now infamous transcription of the taped conversation with Srila Narayana Maharaja where he supposedly suggests that Srila Prabhupada was a bhakta of Mahavishnu, it must be made clear that just the opposite happened. In the conversation Srila Narayana Maharaja asked his audience a rhetorical question, “So, that means that Srila Prabhupada was a devotee of Maha Vishnu?” When that statement became transferred to paper, it remained the same, but lost its rhetorical and questioning tone. Thus it appeared that he was making a statement about Srila Prabhupada’s status as a bhakta when in fact he was assuring Srila Prabhupada’s disciples that their guru’s mission was that of giving Krsna-

prema with the holy name. He was differentiating this as Lord Chaitanya's special mission, for nama bhajan is given in other yugas by Maha Vishnu, whilst the ability to couple the name with prema remains the special reserve of Mahaprabhu.

Anyone who knows the trials of learning and speaking a new language, will be sympathetic to the challenges and frustrations that come in attempting to communicate subtleties in that new language. Just to ensure that Srila Narayana Maharaja did not intend to imply otherwise, the author of this paper questioned him on the statement. His response was vehement in that he never meant to say anything other than Srila Prabhupada is an intimate servant of Sri Sri Radha Damodara.

Another criticism has been levelled at Srila Narayana Maharaja for apparently failing to mention Srila Prabhupada as part of the disciplic succession in lecture he gave. The author does not have the transcription of that lecture to hand, but he can assure the reader that while it is true that listing of the disciplic succession given by Maharaja ended before mentioning Srila Prabhupada, in his next statement he confirms, "and your guru is the same." Srila Narayana Maharaja has referred to Srila Prabhupada in terms such as "the single most important preacher", "a shastric giant", "a champion of Mahaprabhu", and the like. It is erroneous to conclude that he would couch his criticism of his dear friend and guru in covert terminology. Is it perhaps prudent for us to consider that if we are looking for faults we will find them?

### **Is Srila Prabhupada's preaching somehow incomplete?**

Common sense tells us that Srila Prabhupada's mission is hardly complete. Srila Prabhupada himself has described how each acarya leaves work for his successors to do. Have we been successful in implementing all of Srila Prabhupada's plans and instructions for the spreading of Krishna consciousness? There is certainly much left to do. Otherwise why do we continue to collect lakhs and lakhs, sell books, make devotees or build temples?

For anyone to make such a statement is not a criticism of Srila Prabhupada, but a call to action for his followers. It is plainly and simply an encouragement, and does not imply any imperfection in Srila Prabhupada's efforts. What Srila Prabhupada has given is perfect and complete -- whole and unparalleled. Prabhupada did complete his mission, he accomplished what he set out to do; but his mission is still unfolding. It is dynamic and spiritual, alive and ever-fresh.

There is no truth to the statements that Srila Narayana Maharaja claims that Prabhupada's work or teachings are rudimentary. This allegation is offensive to both Narayana Maharaja and Prabhupada. Maharaja is encouraging us in our missionary work and showing that it is time to harvest what Srila Prabhupada has sown. Srila Narayana Maharaja agrees that Krishna gave Prabhupada a "special intelligence" that he might preach Krishna consciousness around the world. He honours that intelligence and offers obeisances to it, for it is none other than a manifestation of the Supreme Lord's mercy. That mercy is still there, and although we can not imitate Prabhupada, we can also aspire to express our intelligence in a spirit of service. "Special intelligence" is not exclusionary, it invites action by the inspiration it gives.

Srila Narayana Maharaja is asking us to look at how we can go deeper into Srila Prabhupada's books and teachings, how we can complete his teachings within ourselves. Basically he is doing what any sadhu would do, which is to question, encourage and cajole us to move forward with the gifts that have been given by Srila Prabhupada.

It is erroneous, and again dark minded, to suggest that such questioning amounts to a carefully contrived plan by Srila Narayana Maharaja to position himself as a successor to Srila Prabhupada. Such statements do not deserve the time it takes to answer them, but for the sake of Srila Narayana Maharaja's reputation, we must state on his behalf that he is not interested in any empire building in any shape or form. Srila Narayana Maharaja does not desire to, nor could he ever, replace Srila Prabhupada for any members of Iskcon.

### **Prabhupada gave everything in his books**

Srila Narayana Maharaja is adamant that Prabhupada did write everything in his books. The process of realising all the things deeply presented in his books is a process that is helped with siksha and sadhu sanga. Everything is there in Srila Prabhupada's books, either exoterically or esoterically, even discussion of raganuga bhakti. It is a matter of effort, time, faith and grace for it all to be revealed to the individual.

Srila Narayana Maharaja cites the example of parents who keep funds in a deposit trust account until the young child comes of age and can appreciate what is there. He equates this with the gifts that a guru leaves in trust for his disciple which are most effectively given through sadhusanga when the disciple is a little mature.

Some devotees question the wisdom of approaching anyone other than Srila Prabhupada for siksa. However, this is not consistent with the instructions of guru, sadhu and shastra. In SB. 3.4.4 Uddhava (speaking of Sri Krishna) tells Vidura, “Thus He who desired to destroy His family told me previously to go to Badarikashrama”. And in the purport Srila Prabhupada comments, “Uddhava...was advised to proceed to Badarikashrama because there he could associate with the devotees of Nara-Narayana, and in their association of devotional service he could increase his eagerness for chanting, hearing, knowledge and detachment”. So here we can see an example of the Lord Himself making arrangements for his mahabhagavata bhakta Uddhava to have good association in His absence. Uddhava was considered to be the top-most devotee of the Lord. Therefore, sadhusanga should be sought in all conditions. It is thus specious to argue that such association is not needed or desirable. If that were the case, then of what use are spiritual societies such as Iskcon? Is it not rather the fact that we are admonished to seek out the most advanced association possible, an uttama adhikari who is realised in scripture and who can help us in our service to Sri Gurudeva?(70)

## Re-initiation

There is no truth to the rumour that Srila Narayana Maharaja “re-initiates” anyone; nor can any cases be publicly put forth that substantiate this claim. Srila Narayana Maharaja has stated publicly and privately that he is not interested in re-initiating anyone. To his knowledge he has not re-initiated anyone who has been initiated by an Iskcon guru in good standing, neither has he given first or second initiation to anyone in this situation, neither has he given initiation to any disciple of a guru from the Gaudiya Math.

It is a matter of public record that many disciples of fallen Iskcon gurus over the years have petitioned Srila Narayana Maharaja for initiation. Yet Maharaja’s repeated response to them has always been that they should seek out a guru within Iskcon. Even when devotees who had lost their faith in Iskcon’s spiritual masters after losing one, two or even three gurus, went to him for shelter, Maharaja would try his best to again revive their faith in Iskcon. If unfortunately they did not find any one they could take shelter of, then Narayana Maharaja would simply encourage them to take shelter of Srila Prabhupada. At all times Srila Narayana Maharaja has encourage abiding faith in Srila Prabhupada and his mission to all Iskcon devotees and has always told them to keep within the shelter of Iskcon.

Srila Narayana Maharaja would never, ever, re-initiate any disciple of Srila Prabhupada. Much has been made of the Brijabasi nicknames that Srila Narayana Maharaja uses for a few devotees with whom he has had long standing relationships. The GBC paper interprets this as a sign of some disrespect for Srila Prabhupada, and protests that it is a veiled “initiation”. In doing so they read too much into an innocent and affectionate expression. It is no more than a friendly exchange between what Srila Narayana Maharaja calls his Godsisters and Godbrothers (i.e. Srila Prabhupada disciples).

That many devotees who are not his disciples address him as “Gurudeva” is also nothing to be alarmed about. Srila Narayana Maharaja desires to serve his siksha guru Srila Prabhupada by helping the devotees and thus he gives his association and guidance to many. As Srila Prabhupada states, “siksha guru is not less than diksha guru”. Both are Krishna’s representatives.(28) And, as demonstrated by the many Brijabasi residents who also address him as “Gurudeva”, we can surmise that it is a natural and customary form of address for a sadhu one considers as a siksha guru.

In giving siksha to Iskcon devotees Srila Narayana Maharaja has sometimes explained the meaning of the maha-mantra or the Gayatri mantra, even to devotees who have taken brahminical initiation from Srila Prabhupada. This has been done in a supportive mood, and can not in any way be called initiation. Sometimes, when asked, he has chanted on the beads of Srila Prabhupada’s disciples who have lost their original beads. But this is merely to sanctify them so that the devotee’s attention to japa will be increased, and is in no way taken as any sort of initiation.

The standards that Srila Narayana Maharaja sets for initiation are more stringent than those which are normally demanded in Iskcon. His official request to brahminically initiated devotees is that they chant a minimum of thirty-two rounds of japa mala a day.

It is false to claim that Srila Narayana Maharaja is initiating indiscriminately and without careful instruction to his disciples. Most of the people that he has initiated on this Western trip were recommended to him by a senior devotee and Maharaja took great care to ensure that the potential disciple was following the rules and regulations of sadhana-bhakti. Generally speaking Maharaja follows the same guidelines as Iskcon; and as Srila Prabhupada did, he initiates those whom he feels are qualified and it is in all cases not done capriciously. A pure devotee cannot be second-guessed on his actions, as he is able to see into the heart of the disciple and act accordingly.

The writer acknowledges that in some cases it may be conceivable that devotees previously affiliated with Iskcon have taken initiation from Maharaja, although in all his research this writer was not able to find

even one. It must be emphasised that if such an initiation took place, that it was most definitely not intentional on Maharaja's part, nor as a result of a wilful disrespect to Iskcon or Iskcon gurus, but rather as a result of incomplete information being provided by the initiates. The writer questioned Srila Narayana Maharaja on this topic and he restated his assertion that he has not, and will never, initiate devotees of existing gurus. Additionally, the writer observed throughout the US tour how Maharaja always first asked potential initiates if they had any relationship with Iskcon. Srila Narayana Maharaja humbly asks that the devotees take his honest statements about these issues to their hearts.

### **Preaching and bhajana**

The GBC paper insinuates that Srila Narayana Maharaja is not a preacher. To read that paper one would think that he has come from nowhere, with the express purpose of usurping the remnants of Srila Prabhupada's preaching. This is most blatantly untrue. Srila Narayana Maharaja has a substantial track record of preaching within India where he is widely respected and is often the guest of honour in the sanga of holy men. Thousands and thousands of devotees have taken shelter and inspiration from him. He has written scores of books, given countless lectures, and conducted nearly fifty Braja Mandala parikramas. His recent Western tour was by the invitation and arrangement of his many Western disciples and friends.

It is sometimes argued that Srila Narayana Maharaja had no right to come to the West and preach now, for he did not come when Srila Prabhupada requested him to join him in New York in the 1960s. But this is a rather specious and simplistic argument, since Srila Narayana Maharaja was dutifully serving his Guru Maharaja at that time. His response to Srila Prabhupada's invitation was that he would join him when the service to his guru allowed him to go. This is quite a reasonable response.

Let us consider this practically. If any of us were called on right now to go and help with a Godbrother's mission somewhere else in the world, how many of us would be able to do so with ease? Is it fair of us to criticise Srila Narayana Maharaja, suggesting that he should have dropped all his other seva for such a request from his friend? In fact, within our own society we have a few examples of disciples who were unable to implement a preaching order from Prabhupada for various personal reasons.

It is also nothing new that Srila Narayana Maharaja has extended his preaching field to Iskcon devotees. Various members of our society have sought his counsel in Mathura for the last two decades. His motive, then as now, is to help us, and it is a process that Sri Krishna recommends.(30) The theme of Srila Narayana Maharaja's preaching to Iskcon devotees is to simply encourage us to excel in our bhajana and to take what we have learned from our holy master to others. By his words and his own deeds he demonstrates how bhajana and preaching are not mutually exclusive, but rather supportive of each other.

Another misunderstanding that has been attributed to Srila Narayana Maharaja by uninformed hearsay is that his discussions of raganuga bhakti somehow preclude or invalidate the importance of preaching. This is a distortion of the truth, for he recommends immersion in the Lord's pastimes so that we can preach from a platform of realisation based on our own internal development. This will ensure our preaching efforts for many years, as it has with Srila Narayana Maharaja.

Some devotees question the need for discussing raganuga bhakti, since Srila Prabhupada has told us that one who gives his life to Lord Chaitanya's mission is a follower of Rupa and Ragunatha. This is certainly true -- but what exactly is Lord Chaitanya's mission? Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 3.4 states (and this verse is quoted twenty-six times in Prabhupada's books): "Lord Caitanya descended in this age of Kali by His causeless mercy to give what no other incarnation has ever given before: the most elevated mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love".

Srila Narayana Maharaja surely believes in preaching. He acknowledges that serving the mission is an essential qualification to enter raga-marga. He discusses raganuga bhakti to help us understand the proper siddhanta of our disciplic succession. In doing he supports our advancement in Krishna consciousness, knowing that the end result is preaching that will naturally bear more fruit.

The GBC paper insinuates that Srila Narayana Maharaja's siksha that stresses the central, and a priori importance of our own advancement in spiritual life, will lead us away from "the progressive advancement of the sankirtana movement". Of all the false remarks in the GBC paper this one is the most misleading. Srila Narayana Maharaja stresses the importance of our own spiritual advancement so that we can indeed be strong, dynamic and enduring preachers in the sankirtana movement. Like Srila Prabhupada, he says that it is important to know what we are preaching. And like Srila Prabhupada he questions how we can effectively preach and sell books if we don't know what is inside them. Srila Narayana Maharaja over and over instructs us, "Read Srila Prabhupada's books, and go deep into them -- all the treasure is there". This is not a new instruction, as any older disciple of Srila Prabhupada will tell you that Prabhupada would often ask if the devotees were reading his books. (31)

By rendering devotional service one will surely get a taste for hearing and chanting. But that hearing and chanting is a seva in itself, and central to our development. Ask any long-time effective book distributor the secret to their success, and invariably they will tell you the same thing: “read the books, prabhu.” It is obvious that being deeply convinced of our philosophy and having deep realisations through hearing, chanting, sadhu sanga and the grace of guru is the best way to ensure the progressive advancement of the sankirtana movement. Do we know of any other method besides this? Indeed, Srila Prabhupada has given us the same agenda as Narayana Maharaja. “We are not trying to give others. We are trying ourselves also, how to get that bhava. That is the perfection of life.” (Bombay lecture January 11, 1975)

### “Non-rasika topics”

It has been claimed that Srila Narayana Maharaja has “no taste for Bhagavad-gita”. This is a distortion and misrepresentation of the fact. If it is true, then it is surely incongruous why he makes so many references to the Gita in his lectures, why he has spent many of the last months translating Srila Visvanath Chakravarty Thakura’s commentaries on the Bhagavad-gita from Bengali to Hindi (also adding his own commentaries to the sacred text), and why it appears that he lives by the Gita.

In his public preaching he references any bona fide shastra that may be relevant according to the time, place and circumstance. He has a tremendous desire that all the world understand Gita, and has said on numerous occasions that without knowledge of the Gita one can have no understanding of Krishna. While speaking to Indian audiences he frequently quotes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and he often speaks of Rama-lila, Dwarka-lila, Vishnu-lila, or any lila related to Sri Bhagavan. Like any devotee, Srila Narayana Maharaja has a real taste for anything Krishna.

If Srila Narayana Maharaja has ever made a statement implying that he has no taste (since we have not been told to whom he made this statement so we cannot verify for certain that indeed it was ever made), then what he simply would have meant by that was that he had no taste in serving Krishna with any motive of salvation or in order to obtain relief from material miseries. He only has taste for serving Krishna for Krishna’s pleasure; he has taste for serving Krishna in spontaneous devotion. Is this not also the aim of the Krishna conscious movement as Prabhupada taught us?

The Srimad-Bhagavatam explains how different devotees have natural inclinations to worship the Lord according to their taste for service, so there is nothing deviant about Srila Narayana Maharaja’s leanings. Our own Srila Prabhupada also had his own personal devotional preferences. For instance, why did he sing “Jaya Radha Madhava” before every Bhagavatam class instead of another bhajan?

### Srila Prabhupada’s nitya-lila

Srila Narayana Maharaja first spoke about Srila Prabhupada’s spiritual identity when some of Prabhupada’s disciples suggested to him their conjecture that, based on different statements Prabhupada had made, that he was in sakhya-rasa. Around that same time some devotees were even questioning whether they should approach a siksha guru who was situated in madhurya-rasa in order to become eligible to develop that particular type of spiritual mood.

Srila Narayana Maharaja, however, sought to clarify our misconception. Substantiating his view by reference to shastra, argument, logic and precedence, he explained to these disciples that our Srila Prabhupada is a maha-bhagavata rasika devotee, and can thus only possibly have a most intimate relation with Sri Sri Yugala Kishor. Using only the most general terms, he has presented that Prabhupada is in madhurya-rasa. He has shown us that this is what is normally understood regarding the acharyas in our line. This is confirmed by Srila Prabhupada in his purport to Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 1.46: “Guru is either servant of Radha or a manifestation of Nityananda.”

There is an additional criticism of Srila Narayana Maharaja that he hints at his spiritual identity while Srila Prabhupada did not. In reality, Srila Narayana Maharaja does not hint at his nitya-svarupa any more than Srila Prabhupada did. What Srila Narayana Maharaja has suggested is how we might appreciate what hints Srila Prabhupada has given us about his nitya-lila. But it is to be understood that this appreciation must always be within context of the understanding of the previous acharyas and the teachings of Srila Prabhupada.

For instance, the “Prayer to the Six Goswamis” was a favourite of Prabhupada’s and often as he sung it tears would come to his eyes. In this song every verse describes how the Goswamis were constantly externally preaching and at the same time internally absorbed in the mood of the gopis. Srila Prabhupada always called himself a follower of the Six Goswamis. Indeed, in the first sentence of the Preface to the Nectar of Devotion he wrote that the Krishna conscious movement is conducted under the supervision of Rupa Goswami.

Another favourite song of Srila Prabhupada's was "nitai pada kamala...". When explaining the meaning of that song to us Prabhupada has said that the aim of the Krishna consciousness movement is to enable us to approach Radha-Krishna and associate with the Lord "in His sublime pleasure dance". (32) In many other places (in his books and lectures) Prabhupada repeats that the aim of the Krishna consciousness movement is to enter the rasa dance and serve Radha and Krishna. (38)

Prabhupada has explained to us that the spiritual master is in the line of Rupa Goswami and is always considered either one of the confidential associates of Srimati Radharani or a manifested representation of Lord Nityananda Prabhu. (33) Prabhupada taught us to sing to him each morning a description of how the spiritual master was intimately engaged in assisting the confidential pastimes of Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan. (34) Under his direction we prayed each morning to Srimati Tulasi-devi that we might become a follower of the cowherd damsels of Vraja. (65)

Approaching the gopis for their blessings to be able to enter into these confidential pastimes is also not a foreign concept to Srila Prabhupada. Throughout his books he has taught us that this is process for gaining admittance into the Goloka realm. (35) Srila Prabhupada's own sannyasa mantra, which he daily chanted and which he gave to his sannyasa disciples, is in fact a gopi mantra, that is, it is a mantra for obtaining gopi-bhava.

In Iskcon's Arcana Padati book (on Deity worship) there are several authorised prayers which for the last twenty years Iskcon pujaris have been reciting to the gopi forms of the previous acharyas. (36)

Although one should not speculate on the nature and position of the spiritual master, it is clear by these (and hundreds of other examples) how our Srila Prabhupada was absorbed as an intimate associate of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. If he is not in that position, then how is it possible that he has affected so many souls with the desire to serve Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan? What is important to understand is that Srila Narayana Maharaja has not revealed anything that is not already there in Srila Prabhupada's writings. He only elaborates on what may be found in his books, and such expositions are consistent to the letter with the rigid principles set forth by Srila Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and Srila Rupa Goswami. It should be noted that although Srila Narayana Maharaja has spoken briefly on the subject, he does not condone discussions of this type and has done so only to bring some needed light to our siddhanta. He agrees with the GBC that discussions regarding the eternal identity of the spiritual master are for qualified persons and not suitable for public discussion.

### Similarities or differences

The GBC position paper has claimed that Srila Narayana Maharaja's realisations are at variance with Srila Prabhupada. The author of this paper is bewildered as to how the GBC have concluded this. All the evidence that has been presented for examination (i.e., Srila Narayana Maharaja's books, his lectures, his personal demeanour) clearly shows us that he is not saying anything new; and that he is perfectly within the same line of Gaudiya Vaishnavism as our beloved Srila Prabhupada. A careful review of Srila Narayana Maharaja's books and tapes will confirm this for anyone. He is as fully in the line of the previous acharyas, of Rupa and Ragunatha Goswamis, as is Srila Prabhupada. There is nothing unique in his presentation, and, like Prabhupada, he is faithful to the parampara.

But the GBC paper chooses to focus on the (alleged) differences between Srila Narayana Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada. It suggests that such differences are dangerous to the welfare of Iskcon and to the individual devotees who associate with him. We have tried to show that the only differences between the two of these venerable devotees are the ones we would normally expect in the expression of one's natural spiritual individuality. Srila Narayana Maharaja or his followers have never claimed that he and Prabhupada are the same, or that he can in any way claim entitlement to the Iskcon kingdom.

There are, however, many similarities that we hope with the passage of time will come to be appreciated and celebrated. We have mentioned many of these already in the paper, and we invite devotees to see for themselves, to use their critical faculties to examine and judge whether the brouhaha really has any substance. As one twenty-seven-year veteran of Iskcon and staunch Prabhupada-man (37) said, "Once you meet him and hear him, the only question left is, What is the big deal all about?"

It is the belief of the writers of this paper and the many bhaktas we spoke with during Maharaja's recent tour that the time is ripe for our beloved Iskcon to soften its approach to older, more experienced and bona fide Vaishnavas, such as Srila Narayana Maharaja and Srila Puri Maharaja, see the commonality that exists between us and them, and take heart in their association. We should learn from our own history (perhaps reflecting on how Iskcon dealt with Srila Sridhara Maharaja), and send a message to the world that harmony has its birth place in the Vaishnava heart.

## **Confusion within Iskcon**

The GBC's position paper suggests that Srila Narayana Maharaja somehow wants to "modify" Srila Prabhupada's legacy. This is so misleading that in non-ecclesiastical circles it would be considered slanderous. The writers of this paper and many other hundreds and thousands of devotees around the world, including senior disciples of Srila Prabhupada, would humbly ask the writers of the GBC paper to step forward and present their case in person and in public. There is no validity to this claim whatsoever which seems ill-thought at best. How is it that the GBC paper can presume to comment on the intentions and inner mood of a very advanced senior Vaishnava?

Srila Narayana Maharaja has by his words and actions shown himself to be true to Srila Prabhupada's teachings and purpose. He is chagrined over the deprecations presented in the GBC paper. This point, that Srila Narayana Maharaja is scheming to change or usurp the legacy of Srila Prabhupada, is unjust and needs redressing by the sober leaders of Iskcon who know by experience the quality of Maharaja's character.

We have demonstrated that Srila Narayana Maharaja's teachings are in line with those of the Gaudiya Vaisnava guru-parampara, and thus, consonant with the teachings of Srila Prabhupada. So the claim that listening to his teachings can cause a devotee to become confused is not valid. Yet, this was one of the major issues raised by the GBC paper and voiced by GBC members in temples of cities visited by Maharaja. Iskcon devotees were warned that they should not hear from Srila Narayana Maharaja lest they become confused. The author of this paper is confused as to what sort of things it is feared that devotees will become confused about.

It seems absurd to suggest that it is a deliberate intention of Srila Narayana Maharaja to create confusion within Srila Prabhupada's Iskcon society. Equally so to think that he has scheduled his visit to the West (either knowingly or unknowingly) to upset the status quo within the body of devotees, their faith in the GBC, or their understanding of Srila Prabhupada.

If confusion has arisen as a result of his tour, then it arises from fallacious perceptions regarding the intentions of his visit. Much of this confusion could have easily been avoided if the GBC had simply honoured as honest Maharaja's original statements regarding the purpose of his visit to the West. By insinuating that his stated purposes were some sort of "cover" for a more sinister motive, Iskcon's leaders have caused the naturally soft-hearted devotees to become confused. This is particularly problematic when their paper calls into question the spotless character of a saintly person. Yet, in spite of such confusion amongst the devotees, wherever Srila Narayana Maharaja visited and met with them, he has helped to create calm and understanding by patiently listening, tolerating the misunderstandings, and continually assuring them that his position is exactly as he stated to Bir Krsna Maharaja prior to his visit.

## **Protecting the integrity of Srila Prabhupada**

It is the duty of the disciple to explain and substantiate the teachings of his guru. Disciples who are not fully conversant with all the conclusions of sastra, and who thus may not be able to fully understand the teachings of the acarya, may out of feelings of fidelity to his instruction actually misrepresent his teachings. On the other hand, one who is learned will feel pained to see such incorrect conclusions presented as siddhanta. This sentiment in Srila Narayana Maharaja motivates him to speak out on certain issues, to present the proper understanding in order to uphold the reputation and teachings of the acarya and the parampara. Otherwise, in learned circles, others less sympathetic to our guru's teachings may use the errors of our presentation to discredit Srila Prabhupada. Srila Narayana Maharaja's advice in these matters is not criticism of Prabhupada, as is sometimes misunderstood, but it is simply the concern of an elder guardian contributing his wisdom for our best interests. Like all of us, Srila Narayana Maharaja simply wants to protect the integrity of Prabhupada's legacy and the teachings of the parampara.

Srila Narayana Maharaja knows the siddhanta of our parampara. We have also shown how he knows the teachings and the mood of Srila Prabhupada. If members of Iskcon, or his own Math for that matter, have incorrect philosophical conclusions, then Maharaja feels it incumbent on him as a senior devotee to present the correct siddhanta.

This was his mood in responding to the GBC's letter questioning the Tulasi Ramayana. And in fact, the response Iskcon is receiving from Srila Narayana Maharaja's clarification of our misunderstanding of Srila Prabhupada's position on this demonstrates how many Vaisnavas throughout the world have harboured doubts about Prabhupada because Iskcon's stand on this issue was at variance with the general Vaisnava understanding. Now, by showing clearly that Srila Prabhupada never considered Tulasi das as anything less than a Vaisnava, those doubts have been erased.

So, whatever the issue, it is Srila Narayana Maharaja's vow to Prabhupada that he would help us. And

despite acceptance or rejection, like a sadhu, he must present what he knows to be the correct conclusion. We may at times find this challenging, but his mood is not to challenge but to help and support us in our mission. Srila Prabhupada suggested that we approach senior Vaishnavas such as Srila Sridhara Maharaja and Srila Narayana Maharaja for this very purpose.

### **The fall of the jiva**

The “jiva issue” is still a highly contentious one within Iskcon. And, although the GBC have produced their “definitive” stance on it, there are still some very credible Iskcon devotees who remain unconvinced. So to vilify Srila Narayana Maharaja for being on one side or the other is hardly reasonable.

For the record, Srila Narayana Maharaja preaches that the jiva is eternally part and parcel of Krishna and that devotional service is eternally present in the heart of the jiva. But he clarifies that it is in its dormant, or potential state, as much as mustard oil is always and potentially present in a mustard seed. (39)

Certainly this issue is a complex one, and as Prabhupada said, one can only compare it to the logic of the moon “coming through” the tree branches, although, of course, the moon cannot be within the trees as it is far away in the sky. Our understanding of the intricacies of this material world is so poor that we can only perceive shadow understandings of those things beyond our senses. We have included some of the evidence Srila Narayana Maharaja uses to substantiate this understanding in the End Notes. (40)

What has been clearly shown by Srila Narayana Maharaja is that both he and Prabhupada have complete faith in the abode in the Lord and the Lord’s eternal associates residing there. It is their opinion that only *uttama* adhikaris can live there -- and they never fall down.

### **Names of Deities**

Srila Narayana Maharaja has on occasion expressed his concern with the names of some of the Deities in Iskcon temples. Again, his criticism is not directed at Srila Prabhupada, but is rather in the mood of safeguarding Prabhupada’s legacy and the integrity of the teachings of Sri Rupa and Sanatana.

Srila Narayana Maharaja has stated that the name Radha-Partha Sarathi is *rasabhasa* because Srimati Radhika never leaves Vrindavan. She is attracted to Sri Krishna only in His original *svayam-rupa* feature which can be found only in Vrindavan; she is not attracted to Dwarkadisa-Krishna or Krishna on the battlefield of Kuruksetra. When Srimati Radhika (in a partial manifestation) left Vrindavan to go to Kuruksetra, She was not satisfied to see Krishna dressed like a king; it was not complementary to her loving moods for Krishna. Although Krishna, Dwarkadisa, and even Narayana, are one by *tattva*, they are different by virtue of *rasa*. (41)

Since Radha in Her original form never leaves Vrindavan, and since Krishna can never be addressed as Partha-Sarathi in Vrindavan, the combination of these names contradicts the principles of *rasa*. Prabhupada has written that improper combinations of names constitute *rasabhasa*: “In the spiritual world one cannot use the name of Krishna in the place of Rukmini-ramana or Narayana. If one does so out of a poor fund of knowledge, his mellow with the Lord becomes spiritually faulty and is called *rasabhasa*, an overlapping of transcendental mellows. The advanced devotee who has actually realised the transcendental features of the Lord will not commit the mistake of creating a *rasabhasa* situation by using one name for another. Because of the influence of Kali-yuga, there is much *rasabhasa* in the name of extravagance and liberal-mindedness. Such fanaticism is not very much appreciated by pure devotees.” (42)

According to Srila Narayana Maharaja, Prabhupada never intended the Delhi Deities to be called Radha-Partha-Sarathi. In the early 70’s when Srila Narayana Maharaja heard Their name, he asked Srila Prabhupada why he had done that. Prabhupada answered that he had never given Them such a name, as that would have been a contradiction to his own books.

As far as the names Rukmini-Dwarkadisha are concerned, although they are bona fide names, they are inferior in *tattva* to Radha-Krishna. Our goal is to serve Radha-Krishna in Vraja and not Rukmini-Dwarkadisha in Dwaraka. When Prabhupada performed the *prana-prathistha* (installation) ceremony for “Rukmini-Dwarkadisha” in Los Angeles in 1968, he named the Deities “Radha-Krishna”, and then later he went to India. When he returned he found that one disciple had changed the name. Prabhupada became disturbed and said, “Krishna has a peacock feather and flute. He is the son of Nanda. Why have you changed the name?” The argument was given that since the Los Angeles temple was opulent, and thus attractive to many people, the names of the Deities should reflect that opulence, to which Srila Prabhupada replied that Sri Sri Radha Krishna are supremely opulent. Shortly thereafter Prabhupada again went to India, but despite his objection, the devotees still kept the name as Rukmini-Dwarkadisha. (66)



We appreciate that this is a particularly delicate subject, and it is hoped that the reader will consider how important a subject it is for Srila Narayana Maharaja to even bring the matter up. So many devotees have worshipped the Deities with these names and become lovingly attached to calling Them by these names. Thus Srila Narayana Maharaja has not capriciously presented the matter to the body of devotees. Regardless of circumstance however, the subject is one that deserves careful consideration from the point of view of our siddhanta and its presentation to present and future devotees.

### **Srila Puri Maharaja**

The GBC paper sought to validate its claims with a spurious quote from Srila Puri Maharaja, who purportedly questioned Srila Narayana Maharaja's preaching on raganuga bhakti. Aside from the bad form shown in quoting a Godbrother of Srila Prabhupada and member of the Gaudiya Math to discredit another member of the Gaudiya Math, the quote remains at best misleading.

On hearing the allegation, a number of devotees, including disciples of Srila Puri Maharaja, were upset that such a venerable Vaishnava could be used in this way. Some of the devotees approached Puri Maharaja in Navadvipa at the beginning of July for clarification on the matter. He said, "The Iskcon devotees came to me and asked several questions. And based on their questions I answered in a particular way. And now they are using it against me by using my words against Srila Narayana Maharaja. Why are they doing that? Srila Narayana Maharaja is a bona fide preacher in our line. We are very happy that he is going to the West, and devotees should follow him. He is a rasika Vaisnava."(67)

The writers of this paper, and many other devotees who know about this issue, feel that in sober Vaishnava social circles such a misrepresentation is best addressed by some form of apology, to both Srila Narayana Maharaja and to Srila Puri Maharaja.

### **The Gaudiya Math, Iskcon and the greater mission**

Iskcon's policy that its members should respect all senior Gaudiya Vaisnava members, but not associate intimately with them, is a kind of oxymoron and has no shastric validity. Wherever does it state that we should honour senior advanced Vaisnavas by avoiding their association? The GBC paper claims that Srila Narayana Maharaja is undesirable association because of his affiliation with the Gaudiya Math. We ask the reader to consider the validity of this argument, especially in regards to Maharaja both for his background and for the fact that his Guru-Maharaja left the fractious group of the Gaudiya Math to found a Math that has a flawless history and which Srila Prabhupada was associated with in so many ways.

We have presented to the reader how Srila Narayana Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada were close friends and confidants, and we have shown by many examples how that relationship transcended institutional boundaries in a mood of mutual support for preaching Krishna consciousness. We have also shown how that relationship lasted the test of time throughout all of Srila Prabhupada's prakat-naralila. The spirit of their relationship is an example of how Vaishnavas can work together, in love, trust and mutual respect, to address the dire spiritual needs of our present world. At this point it may be useful to pause and consider the unique character of our Gaudiya Vaishnava line and what it potentially represents as a pan-global beacon of hope.

Our learned reader will no doubt have a deep appreciation for the universal nature of our philosophy and its potential applicability within the broadest cultural, ethnic and national spectrums. Lord Chaitanya's mission supersedes boundaries of caste, creed, institution or other materially based designations. Our movement is first and foremost non-sectarian, as it presents the broadest conception of the Absolute Truth. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission undid so many of the then prevailing cultural and ecclesiastical limits unjustly imposed on the people. In doing so he was careful to uphold the central tenets while realigning their religious trend with the essence of what religion is all about. In so many ways He showed how to transcend crippling institutional limitations, while simultaneously ensuring that those institutions found a purified purpose within His overall preaching schemes. His compassion was all-encompassing. One need look only at the history of what Islam meant to the followers of Vedic culture, and then consider Mahaprabhu's generosity in his dealings with Muslims. The examples are numerous.

Our blessed acharyas in the line of Mahaprabhu continued his legacy by showing how function must supersede form. As Srila Prabhupada has said in his Nectar of Devotion, all rules and regulations are subservient to the one rule -- always remember Krishna, and never forget Him. The lives of our acharyas and of our dear Srila Prabhupada are examples of this principle in action. The focus on function over form to foster an awareness of Krishna in the minds of the general populace is the basis of our Gaudiya-line's non-sectarian legacy.

Srila Bhaktivinode is the paragon of this virtue, and Srila Prabhupada its abundant distributor. Srila

Bhaktivinode fought against “tyranny in the realm of thought” and stood against sectarianism throughout his life, calling it “our greatest enemy”. Sectarianism is loathsome, in part because it is small-minded and limiting. Our spiritual legacy coming from Mahaprabhu is global and universal in scope; we are a preaching movement concerned with the value of every soul. Our history is full of sacrifices that illustrate that concern. And Srila Prabhupada was very clear in describing the broad-minded spirit of Gaudiya Vaishnavism to his audiences. “The aim of Iskcon is not to found a new religious sect, but to invoke the living entity's dormant love of God, and thus provide the human society of all faiths with a common platform of clear theistic knowledge and practice.”(43)

It is then sad that the GBC paper has chosen to portray Srila Narayana Maharaja's visit to the West with a “cup-half-full” point of view. Rather than seeing the supportive and complementary nature of Srila Narayana Maharaja's mood and efforts, their reaction has been one of suspicion and defensiveness. Rather than celebrating the arrival of a long-time supporter who has lived a life true to our highest ideals, the paper concentrates on small differences that in the balance are not differences of substance. It is a common institutional reaction, and understandable from that point of view. However, our masters and philosophy ask something different.

Iskcon does have a history with the Gaudiya Math; some of it is good and some of it not. While we do not want to digress into a review of the history of relations between the two institutions, it may be helpful to reference some of the positive aspects of the relationship. This may also lead to a more full understanding of a history that can not be summarily discounted by reference to misunderstandings of the past. It is easy to create catch-phrases that lump the non-familiar into convenient undesirable categories, but in the case of bona fide Vaishnavas we may run the risk of losing opportunities for preaching and supportive spiritual discourse. More importantly we may risk offensive mentalities if we fail to recognise that bona fide Vaishnava societies exist outside of Iskcon.(44)

It is not accurate to say that Srila Prabhupada's relations with his Godbrothers was all bad, nor was his mood one of criticism or neglect of his relations with the Gaudiya Math. Srila Prabhupada enjoyed a number of positive relations with his Godbrothers, one of which was Srila Narayana Maharaja's Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhaktiprajnana Keshava Maharaja.(45) From the early days of his mission until his last, Srila Prabhupada encouraged co-operation with his Godbrothers.(46) “I am sure if Gaudiya Mission and I combine together, it will be very nice thing to preach the cult of Lord Caitanya all over the world.”

Srila Prabhupada describes Iskcon as eternal, because it is a branch of Lord Chaitanya's eternal tree of bhakti.(47) The Krishna conscious movement is passing down from one Manu to another, as it is a branch of Lord Chaitanya's tree of devotion.(48) Thus the Six Goswamis are part of Iskcon, as is Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Srila Narottama dasa Thakura, Srila Visvanath das Cakravarti Thakura, Narada Muni, Lord Brahma -- indeed, all of our acharyas are part of Iskcon. From that point of view Iskcon is also a branch of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's Gaudiya Math. While criticising its failings, Srila Prabhupada never rejected the Gaudiya Math, for it was his holy master's mission. This is not to say that the different branches will not have their unique qualities, or their differences, but in the light of the above statements it is much more in the spirit of Gaudiya Vaishnavism to celebrate the commonalities.

It is true that on more than one occasion Prabhupada instructed some of his disciples not to associate with some of his Godbrothers, but this was not, as is commonly thought, a blanket edict that precluded any association whatsoever. There are many cases where Srila Prabhupada expressed his pleasure with such association.(49) And in some cases he even instructed disciples to seek out the association of his Godbrothers.(50)

In the case of Srila Narayana Maharaja, in Srila Prabhupada's last few days, in front of a number of leading disciples, he actually requested him to give guidance and encouragement to his disciples. At that time Srila Narayana Maharaja gave his solemn oath of unflinching, selfless support. He said, “Whatever instructions you give me, I will follow them with absolute sincerity. I consider you my guru.”(29)

If some of his Godbrothers were envious, then Srila Prabhupada safeguarded his mission and his young disciples by restricting association. This was especially the case where the inexperienced or philosophically naive disciples could have been adversely affected or confused by differences of opinion. Where Srila Prabhupada criticised his Godbrothers he was acting as acarya, teaching and showing by example what was incorrect behaviour and how to correct it. Yet, in all cases his actions were always relative to *desa-kala-patra*, and there is a significant risk in neglecting to understand his instructions within the context in which they were given.

Some argument may be made that Srila Prabhupada's positive instructions occurred in the early days. Yet, even in his last days Srila Prabhupada was hopeful of co-operative dealings. It is well known how in his last days when speaking with Srila Narayana Maharaja he asked all his Godbrothers, “forgive me for my

mistakes”.(51)

At that same time Srila Prabhupada also instructed his leading disciples to create a trust that would support and encourage the preaching activities of his Godbrothers. He said that Iskcon should fund the trust. The purpose of the trust as dictated by Srila Prabhupada was, “In keeping with the spirit of the previous acharyas’ vision of Gaudiya-Madhva sampradaya, to cement relations with all the sister temples of Gaudiya-Madhva sampradaya under one banner, to solidify preaching the message of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, as desired by His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada and Srila Thakura Bhaktivinode and all the previous acharyas in this line.” (Vrindavan 29/10/77) Furthermore, as a sign of his intent, Srila Prabhupada appointed two of his Godbothers -- Madhava Maharaja and Madhusudana Maharaja -- to the five man Board of Trustees of the Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust.

There are several recorded conversations that illustrate Srila Prabhupada’s strong desire to make the trust happen. In one he gives his approval for the printing of books for his Godbrothers.(52) This is his tacit acceptance of their activities and preaching qualifications, and by definition implies his willingness for his Godbrothers’ bona fide siksha to be available to all. It is fair to say, that such a gesture is, in principle, a vote of confidence based on his willingness to find commonality.

The principle point we would like to stress here is that all this can only be understood in a balanced way, when the instruction from Srila Prabhupada is understood within the context in which it is given. Just as Srila Prabhupada would instruct some to remain householders while others he initiated as sannyasis, whereas with both he instructed to be always Krishna conscious. The primary principle of advancement is association that leads to a deepening of our Krishna consciousness. It is simplistic to think that the same action can be applied in different circumstances to give the same result. Srila Prabhupada often modified his instructions according to the time, place and circumstance.(53)

The issue here is how one understands the mood of the guru and applies the spirit of his instruction. Srila Prabhupada may have advised some disciples not to associate with Godbrothers who were envious, but logically, does that imply that all his Godbrothers are envious? A similar logic when applied to Iskcon may lead one to believe that since our history has many disappointments with our leaders, that then all Iskcon leaders are a disappointment. Common sense and good faith dictate otherwise.

Srila Prabhupada tried to create bridges. He encouraged us to find ways to work together to get results. He showed how to find the things we have in common, in our efforts to serve Krishna. He admonished us that despite differences, efforts must be made: “Please therefore try to be sympathetic with any person even if they differ. The only qualification we have to scrutinise is if one is acting in Krishna Consciousness as far as one is able to do it.”(54)

It may be argued that the Gaudiya Math did not fully implement the order of their guru Maharaja.(55) This was caused, apparently, by their lack of co-operation and their neglect of keeping the bigger preaching mission in mind. These troubles are common to any institution, where personal or vested interest may find good opportunity. But is it sensible for us to find fault with the Gaudiya Math? Our own mission has also certainly seen hard times, and it is unlikely that we can freely cast the first stone. What is important is that we all exercise compassion and understanding when it comes to the preaching efforts of the devotees of the Lord.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati warns us against projecting party views and sectarian or institutional concerns onto pure devotees or their preaching efforts: “Those whose judgement is made of mundane stuff, being unable to enter into the spirit of the all-loving controversies among pure devotees, due to their own want of unalloyed devotion, are apt to impute to the devotees their own defects of partisanship and opposing views.” (Sri Brahma-samhita, p.72)

Prabhupada tells us the standard of devotee he expected within his movement: “This Krsna consciousness movement is a transcendental science, and there is no room for jealousy. This movement is meant for the Paramahansas who are completely free from all jealousy (paramam nirmatsaranam).” (NOI, text 6 purport)

And there are numerous quotes supporting Srila Prabhupada’s non-sectarian perspective on preaching. “There’s no question of our being some sectarian group.”(56) And, “Krsna consciousness is not a sectarian religious movement. Rather, it is meant for all-embracing welfare activities for the world.”(57)

It may be sensible to suggest that this is now a time for review and possible renewal. Is it that we have grown comfortable in what is merely a simplistic view of reality? More importantly, how much do our personal needs or fears contribute to an outdated mode of behaviour? Must we continue to label whole groups of people (devotees) whom we do not really know as “dangerous” or “suspicious”? By these arguments we do not suggest a merger of institutions or some dramatic change of leadership of Iskcon. No. All we are saying is that in the mood of Vaishnava etiquette we should honour and respect our long-time

well-wishers. The world needs as much Krishna consciousness as is possible, and any support that can be given to any preacher in any circumstance is a glorious contribution.

Knowing what we know now, would we really have our Srila Prabhupada struggle through the hard years in New York, because that is what history demands? How many times have we meditated on helping in what ever way possible?

The rapid advancement of the Kali-yuga, and the increase of the skills of Kali's minions, demand our vigilance and self-reflection -- are we keeping pace with the times and are we meeting the challenge? Most importantly, our ability to meet these challenges is based love and trust - the very principles on which our movement was founded. This is Srila Prabhupada truest spirit and it seems the most difficult to implement. One of the great skills of Kali and his agents is the creation of dissension and distrust. If we fight amongst ourselves, if we spend precious energy in defensive posturing against each other, then we will certainly be distracted from the central aim of stemming the tide of avidya and we will thus be disempowered as a potent spiritual and social force.

A soft hearted bhakta joins our movement trusting implicitly in his fellow Vaishnavas and eager to do what is necessary to serve the mission. All of us came in that same mood. Should we not together examine how it is that we have grown to become so distrustful? How is it that we have become so suspicious of practically everyone's motives, including those of Srila Narayana Maharaja? The title of the GBC paper suggests we can best keep faith with Srila Prabhupada by increasing our love and trust of each other. Can we find again that spiritual innocence that has in the past been the spark of life to our preaching movement? Is it not a good starting point to believe that someone of Srila Narayana Maharaja's stature is what he says he is - a well-wisher to us all?

If we can find that spark we will again be able to overlook the differences and celebrate the things we share in common. This will bring new levels of effective preaching. Whether it is a Godbrother of Srila Prabhupada or one of his estranged disciples, what better way to celebrate his centennial than to rise above sectarian fear, and come together in mutual respect to teach Krishna consciousness far and wide following his order and example.

There is now a great opportunity to work supportively for the spreading of Krishna consciousness throughout the world. As the GBC paper says, there are millions of persons who need Krishna consciousness. Can we not consider the value of co-operative efforts and mutual support as a potent form of preaching? In the age of Kali, the age of quarrel, can we not find a way to be at peace with each other in Krishna's service? Non-devotees struggle daily to find co-operation and agreement, but often fail in their attempts when they can not find a common interest. Srila Prabhupada always preached that when Krishna is in the centre then all things are reconciled. Even when there may be different points of view, when Krishna occupies the central role of our purpose then consensus is achieved.

All of us, especially those of us who work in the world, know that large projects require the involvement and co-operation of many persons and organisations. To build a bridge one needs engineers, welders, shippers, workmen, managers, financiers, insurers, etc. As in any project there will be points of contention and misunderstanding. But when the focus is on the completion of the bridge, everything is seen within the larger perspective. Taking a "cup-half-full" approach is more productive and more rewarding. It is a trait of successful persons and organisations.

### **Iskcon's responsibility to its members**

In spite of having doubts and reservations about Srila Narayana Maharaja, many senior devotees who have met him during his Western tour applied their own discrimination and did not let the GBC's edicts prevent them from taking association. As a result they have received tremendous inspiration and encouragement from him. Rather than having their faith in Srila Prabhupada be somehow "shaken", they feel their relationship with Srila Prabhupada to be deepened and enhanced by Srila Narayana Maharaja's association. They have experienced that he has genuine love and concern for them as persons. They don't feel that he is speaking anything inconsistent with Prabhupada's teachings; rather, they find that by virtue of his spiritual advancement and learning, his sensitivity to the individual and his selfless generosity, he is in the true spirit of Prabhupada's mission.

When these devotees have come into Maharaja's association, instead of being convinced that the GBC have made the right decision they find that their Godbrother's approach to the situation is untenable. Thus, rather than assisting the older members of this society in engendering more faith and trust in their leadership, the GBC's decision regarding Maharaja is backfiring and may act to further estrange the valuable assets of senior men from the inner organisation of Iskcon. It has been communicated that there is concern that if the GBC were to recant on their decision regarding Maharaja that they would somehow lose face with the greater society of devotees. This of course does not account for the natural generosity

of the devotional heart, for honestly acknowledging such an error would in fact deepen our faith in their ability to lead us. In short, we appreciate that mistakes can be made, and we do not confuse spiritual purity and integrity with total infallibility -- thus owning the error would only raise them in our esteem.

The GBC, either as individuals or as a body, do not claim infallibility. History has demonstrated that past decisions have been reversed when new evidence is uncovered or implementation proves faulty. Many of the present GBC body were taking Srila Narayana Maharaja's siksha for years. Sadly many very senior and sincere devotees have been publicly embarrassed by a so-called penance for having taken Maharaja's association, including a ban from the Holy Dhama -- and other restrictions that have no justification in our philosophy or spiritual culture. Vrindavan-Vilasini dasi, Gudakesha das and Jadurani dasi stood in opposition to such abuse and as a result they have been virtually "banned" from the Iskcon. Sita devi voiced her concerns on this situation, and she was "banned" from participation on COM. The pressure of an institutional and social death may force many devotees to toe-the-line, but it does not convince the heart that these strong actions are warranted under any condition. The loss of such knowledgeable and trustworthy devotees is lamentable and avoidable with the much needed review of the veracity of this particular edict.

There is so much good within Iskcon, and it has the potential to continue to spread Gaudiya Vaishnavism throughout the world. But, like any organisation it runs the risk of becoming ineffective if it fails to address the needs of its members. To avoid this there is a need to co-operatively construct solutions that invite and inspire the many devotees who wait in the wings for a sign that their participation is welcome and valued. This is facilitated by a trust in the good hearts of the devotees.

The primary aim of our movement is to address the spiritual needs of the individual. The organisation would lose its relevance if the value of the individual is lost, in that the organisation is only an amalgam of individuals - strong only as they are strong. Thus institutions prosper in the truest sense, when their members prosper. From that point of view institutional concerns are secondary. It is a real challenge to live with the kind of intellectual tension this demands. One writer said that "the sign of genius is the ability to simultaneously hold two opposing thoughts in one's mind". This requires a reconciliation of thought that is only supported by constant self-assessment. Again, a demanding but necessary task. Thus to fulfil its mission our Iskcon must reflect on how well it is meeting the needs of the hundreds (and thousands) of Western Gaudiya Vaishnavas who are not part of its corporate structure. Rather than see them as separate from Iskcon and as "competition", there is a substantial opportunity to embrace them as potent, knowledgeable and willing allies.

## Conclusion

Considering Srila Narayana Maharaja's faultless spiritual career, his continual support to Iskcon and its devotees, and his long standing friendship and discipleship with Srila Prabhupada, it is unclear why the GBC has taken such inappropriate and, as many say, "offensive" position towards him. We began this paper with a call for a sober review of the facts and for a non-prejudicial consideration of the circumstances surrounding this whole affair. We have taken a position of not condemning the GBC, nor the devotees who have implemented their instructions; but rather we have sought to question, sometimes strongly, the validity of their position and actions. We want to keep the door open for dialogue and understanding, and we seek to foster co-operation among Vaishnavas that is not split along party lines or institutional concerns, but is in the mood of Bhaktivinode -- broad-minded and supportive of all Gaudiya Vaishnava preaching efforts. We do not want to create further schism, isolationism or more feelings of guilt and remorse. In the "best case" scenario we would like for everyone to be able to save face - and do the right thing. We want to encourage a redressing of the injustices that have been summarily meted out to our long-term friend and well-wisher, our older cousin Godbrother, Srila Narayana Maharaja.

In many ways the need for preaching Krishna consciousness has never been greater, and there are significant opportunities for us if we are able to rise above petty distinctions and work hand in hand. Srila Narayana Maharaja is an opportunity for Iskcon. He is a senior Vaishnava of considerable experience, and he is competent to offer encouragement and support to all of us. This does not mean that he desires to take a position within Iskcon, or intends to undermine the workings of Iskcon, or in any way demean the all-important global preaching work of Iskcon. If we can be excited when a new bhakta joins our ranks, or when a professor praises Srila Prabhupada's books and becomes a well wisher, or when a wealthy heiress contributes goodly sums for the building of a temple, can we not be equally encouraged when someone of Srila Narayana Maharaja's stature takes an interest in our spiritual growth?

As we all know, the challenges to preaching are many. We have a milestone in Srila Prabhupada's Centennial year that encourages reflection and review. How effective are we in spreading Krishna consciousness? Are we doing all that we can, and are we doing it all? Can we do it all? Does working with other Vaishnavas mean that we somehow lose our identities as disciples and servants of Prabhupada? Or is

it an opportunity to grow in strength and numbers by recognising the value of complementary efforts by others? We recognise the value of Inter-Faith efforts; can we not consider that there might also be some gain from Intra-Faith dialogue? We all enjoy visiting the Holy Dhama and its many places of spiritual interest. The great majority of these places are not run by Iskcon, but by other Vaishnava associations. Do we feel threatened when we are invited to take darshan of their Deities, or offered their prasadam? No. We feel happy that a kindred spirit acknowledges our interest in the Vaishnava culture; and we are in fact encouraged by their acceptance.

Perhaps we have forgotten how in Iskcon's early days we were not accepted in the Holy Dhama, and in some places we are still discriminated against. The author of this paper was with Prabhupada when he admonished the mahants of Puri that, "Jagannatha means Lord of the whole universe." Prabhupada encouraged them to rise above caste distinctions and allow our devotees to worship the Deities there. Sadly, in the case of Puri this has not happened. By Prabhupada's blessing and the mercy of Mahaprabhu, Iskcon has been established as a bona fide society of Vaishnavas actively preaching in the world. But now that we are secure, will we also turn others away? We need to be on guard that we too do not succumb to a neo-caste system in which we exult privilege over the spiritual need of the people.

Srila Narayana Maharaja has in so many ways addressed our spiritual need, and for all of us he is a golden opportunity. He can never replace Prabhupada, nor does he want to, but he can deepen our appreciation and understanding of Prabhupada and his teachings. Taking siksa from him is not heresy or disloyalty to Prabhupada -- it is proof of our abiding faith in Prabhupada and a contribution on our part to build a society in which the whole world can live. In the early days many of us used to think that such a society meant a "sameness of being", a homogeneity of personality; but now that we have matured somewhat, we can acknowledge how difference is one of the beautiful things within both this material world and the spiritual world. We don't all have to be exactly the same; we only have to share the centre (which is Krishna), and in doing so celebrate our individual and collective uniqueness.

It may be useful to think of what you, the reader, would do if you found yourself as the centre of such a controversy, where despite your best efforts you are misunderstood and rejected. Maybe it has happened to you. Where would you find support and understanding? Would you be able to count on others to stand up on your behalf and be counted? It can be a frightful thing to take a stand, especially on behalf of another.

But, our spiritual lives are strengthened by right action. We have a responsibility to act. If your heart has been touched by the spirit of our presentation we ask you to lend your voice to the dialogue we hope to create. We fully appreciate that there may be many things in this paper with which you may take exception -- but the issue of giving (or withholding) the benefit of the doubt in regards to a senior Vaishnava is too important for our society and ourselves. We have faith that all the members of our society want to create an atmosphere conducive to free speech and dialogue, for they know that is essential to our society's growth.

If you feel there is value in an effort to create such an atmosphere, then we would humbly suggest you take some action. Communicate this to our GBC Secretariat. Please contact him, by letter, phone, fax or email, and lend your voice to this issue. The appropriateness of the GBC's dealings with Srila Narayana Maharaja should be reviewed, and a letter of reconciliation on behalf of our society should be drafted to him. You may personally have suggestions on how the society can address other issues. If so, then please, by all means voice them. Each one of us has a responsibility to the society; where it fails, we fail. Silence ensures failure.

Readers of this paper are also welcome to communicate with its author, who thanks you for investing your valuable time in reading it.

Bhudhara dasa can be reached at: 5 Miles Building, George St., Bath, BA1 2QS, UK; email: 100135.236@compuserve.com

Bir Krishna Maharaja can be reached at: 70324.1511@compuserve.com

---

#### End Notes

1. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura is the siksa disciple of Jaganath das Babaji. Yet Srila Prabhupada still writes that Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura was Jagannatha dasa Babaji's diksha disciple. This is because Bhaktivinode Thakura fully followed the mood and siddhanta of Jagannatha dasa Babaji, and thus he was next in line. Similarly, Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji, in the line of

disciplic succession from Bhaktivinode Thakura, was his siksa disciple and never received formal initiation from him. When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura wrote this list, he was criticised by others, who complained to Bhaktivinode Thakura that their own diksa guru was not included. But Bhaktivinode Thakura upheld Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's understanding, that this is the "Gaurangera niji bamsa" Gauranga's own spiritual family. This is called maha bhagavata parampara, and it also includes guru parampara, or sishya parampara.

2. Srila Narayana Maharaja in good faith loaned these letters to Iskcon as his contribution towards building the Srila Prabhupada archives and for the official biography written by Satsvarupa Maharaja. Unfortunately they have all been lost (perhaps burnt in a fire) while in the care of Iskcon.

3. An argument of the litigants was that, due to his personal history of being a businessman, Srila Prabhupada was not truly a sannyasi. Thus they were claiming that Iskcon was not a mission but a family business which rightfully belonged to his family.

4. "Another part of sadhana-bhakti is called raganuga. Raganuga refers to the point at which, by following the regulative principles, one becomes a little more attached to Krishna and executes devotional service out of natural love." (Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 2 "The First Stages of Devotion")

5. "When one makes Vrindavan his residence, he should take shelter of an advanced devotee there. In this way one should always think of Krishna and His pastimes. Again Srila Rupa Goswami states in Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu (1.2.295):

seva sadhaka-rupena  
siddha-rupena catra hi  
tad-bhava-lipsuna karya  
vraja-lokanusaratah

`In the transcendental realm of Vraja one should serve the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, with a feeling similar to that of His associates, and one should place himself under the direct guidance of a particular associate of Krishna and should follow in his footsteps. This method is applicable both in the stage of sadhana (spiritual practices executed while in the stage of bondage) and in the stage of sadhya (God realisation), when one is a siddha-purusa, or a spiritually perfect soul.' "Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has commented as follows upon this verse: `One who has not yet developed interest in Krishna consciousness should give up all material motives and train his mind by following the progressive regulative principles, namely chanting and remembering Krishna and His name, form, quality, pastimes, and so forth. In this way, after developing a taste for such things, one should try to live in Vrindavan and pass his time constantly remembering Krishna's name, fame, pastimes and qualities under the direction and protection of an expert devotee. This is the sum and substance of all instruction regarding the cultivation of devotional service." (Nectar of Instruction, Text Eight, purport)

6. "Rupa Goswami's eternal rasa is conjugal love. He is Rupa Manjari in the spiritual world." (letter to Rupanuga, 1968)

7. "And in madhurya-rasa, characterised by conjugal love, one can become like Srimati Radharani, or Her lady friends such as Lalita and Her serving maids (manjaris) like Rupa and Rati." (Nectar of Devotion, Text Nine, purport) It should be noted that Ragunatha dasa Goswami is Rati Manjari.

8. "rupa raghunatha pade hoibe akuti: When shall I be very much eager to read the books left by the Six Goswamis?" ... One has to learn of the conjugal loving affairs of Radha-Krsna through the teachings of these Six Goswamis. Narottama dasa Thakura directs us not to try to understand the conjugal love of Radha-Krsna by our own endeavour. We should try to understand this yugala-pirity, conjugal love, under the direction of the Goswamis. " (December 29, 1968, purport to Narottama dasa Thakura's song, Lalasamayi Prarthana)

9. "Abandoning all meritorious performances serve Me with faith. The realization will correspond to the nature of one's faith. The people of the world act ceaselessly in pursuance of some ideal. By meditating on Me by means of those deeds one will obtain devotion

characterized by love in the shape of the supreme service.” (Brahma-samhita 5.61)

Srila Prabhupada uses the word automatically when he says “A Krsna conscious person, however, being always situated in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, automatically becomes the controller of the senses.” (Bhagavad-gita 4.29, purport) In this case the “automatic” is not achieved without the primary endeavour for Krishna consciousness; controlled senses are the by-product of the effort which, by its very nature, demands a conscious need for sense control.

The desire, or will, of the sadhaka is always operative in creating the “automatic” approach of the pure devotee. “A serious personality can thus achieve the highest perfection of meeting the Lord and attain his objective simply by being guided by a pure devotee, who automatically approaches by dint of one’s serious determination to meet the Lord by all means.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.7.8)

Automatically does not imply unconscious. In the Mahabharata, Durvasa Muni gave a benediction to the adolescent Srimati Kunti devi that she would marry a great King and have powerful children. This would happen automatically by his blessing, yet the blessing brought her to the process by which the boon could be realised. She thus had to be educated, married and render service to the husband before seeing the birth of her children.

Sometimes scripture says that even by unconsciously performing devotional service one automatically gets perfection. Prabhupada said, “You simply chant the holy name of the Lord. Then everything will come to you automatically by and by.” (Bhagavad-gita 2.59-69, New York, April 29, 1966)

In other parts of our scripture it is stated that chanting or serving automatically brings perfection. And Srila Prabhupada explains that the various perfections and qualities that come from the execution of Krishna consciousness do not require separate endeavour (as in the case of the yogi or jnani) because the nature and quality of the bhakta’s endeavour is superior by dint of his objective. (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 20.120, Bombay, November 12, 1975)

Again, this is realised not by some sleight of hand, but by the creation of auspiciousness that ultimately leads to a blessed association who guides one on how to properly execute devotional service. It is not that one can mindlessly or unconsciously continue to perform auspicious acts and thus be admitted to the highest perfectional stage of bhakti. Ajnata-sukriti -- or auspicious acts unconsciously performed by their nature result in the creation of auspicious consciousness culminating in auspicious association or sadhu sanga.

If we remember that auto or “self” and matos or “acting” means the conscious expression of one’s will, we may then appreciate that the gradual steps of bhakti will be realised in the association of bona fide devotees as a result of one’s desire and efforts to achieve the realisation of that desire.

10. “During that unconscious state of samadhi, in a divine vision of my own personal revelation, a wondrous figure will appear performing her constitutional service. Then I will recognise that it is I, the maidservant named Kamala Manjari, an eternal assistant of Ananga Manjari. Sri Ananga Manjari is the goddess of my heart. Hopefully, she will show great mercy and introduce me to our own group-leader (Sri Lalita Sakhi). Then she will give me the service of preparing celestial camphor and will reveal to me the confidential pastimes of the Divine Pair. We will go near Sri Pulina and see the Rasa Mandala, the spotlessly pure circular arena where Gopendra-nandana Sri Krishna, surrounded by a hundred million gopis, enjoys the pastime of dancing with Sri Radhika, the predominating Goddess of the great dance. Thus He is stealing the hearts of all created beings. The sheer splendour of such artistically amorous dancing does not exist anywhere within the three worlds! By great fortune, whoever is able to see it becomes deeply plunged into it that very moment. By the power of such fortune, if someone actually attains the trance of viewing this divine dance in their own samadhi, they will never be able to give up the pure joy of that astounding sight!



"I will not be able to describe the magnificence of that sight to behold! I will lock it in my heart and perpetually gaze upon it. Living in my own grove, while cultivating that vision within my heart, I will constantly render devotional service under the direction of the sakhis. Ananga Manjari Sakhi, the younger sister of Sri Radhika, will show great mercy and personally escort me around the Dhama. To the west of the Rasa Mandala we shall visit Sri Dhira Samira (where the gentle breeze blows), and a little further off see the huge banyan tree called Vamsi Vata and the wide bank of the divine river Jamuna. Being questioned by Sri Rupa Manjari, my mistress Ananga Manjari will reply, 'This new dasi will be engaged in Lalita Sakhi's service. Her name is Kamala Manjari, and she is very devoted to Sri Gauranga. Please be merciful now and give her entrance into the flow of spontaneous devotional service to our Lordships.' Hearing this statement of my mistress, Sri Rupa Manjari will lightly touch my body with her hand of mercy. Her touch will suddenly and deeply impart to me the sublime spiritual emotion of spontaneous loving devotion and the intense desire to perform rupanuga bhajana, worship that follows in her own footsteps." (Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, Navadvipa Bhava Taranga, slokas 147-154)

11. "If a person is greatly fortunate, rati which is steeped in the mood of Braja may be awakened in him by the causeless mercy of Bhagavan or His devotee. At that time one comes to know of his eternal constitutional identity from a raganuga guru. Equipped with this understanding and being desirous of taking up appropriate services and sadhana, the spiritual aspirant should first take shelter of the lotus feet of such a guru, perceiving him in his eternal spiritual form as a manjari. He should then engage in bhajan and sadhana with heart and soul. By continuous practice of sadhana and bhajan, he will obtain the service of one of the sakhis of Srimati Radhika by the mercy of his manjari guru. By continued service unto that sakhi and by receiving her mercy, one will obtain the direct darshan of Brindaban-iswari Srimati Radhika. Finally, by Her mercy, one will be able to serve Sri Yugala in Their divine lila." (Bhaktivinode Thakura's commentary on Sri Manah-Siksha, Sloka 10)

12. "Devotees should think, 'Sri Krishna, Who is an ocean of mercy, has sent His very dear associate as my guru deva in order to deliver me.' It is, therefore, fully appropriate to consider Sri Gurudeva as a priya sakhi of Srimati Radhika." (Bhaktivinode Thakura's commentary on Sri Manah-Siksha, Sloka Two)

13. "It is the natural inclination of jiva to climb the higher step from the step in which he is at present situated. But according to that nature he should not climb the higher step hurriedly or untimely. That is to say that first of all he will have to keep his feet firm in one step and then rise to the next one. For this reason, the merit regarding constancy for step has been explained. When you will get right to set your foot on another step, you should then only leave your previous constancy. The desire to cling to one step is a superstition arising out of earnestness in inferior convention. According to that superstition the lowest class disregards the moral life without faith in God, the moralist without faith in God disregards the moralist believing in imaginary God, and the moralist with faith in personal God disregards devotion and at last the vaidhi bhakti disregards Ragatmika bhakti. According to this superstition, many of the persons professing Varnasram dharma do not praise vaidhi bhakti. But this cannot cause any harm to devotion, yet this only shows their misfortune. Persons seated on the higher steps naturally long for the welfare of men lying in the lower steps, but so long they are not fortunate, they have no desire to reach the higher step by leaving their former constancy." (Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, Sri Caitanya Siksamtam, Chapter 3, part 4)

14. "Sukadeva Goswami concludes this episode of rasa-lila by pointing out that if a person hears from the right source the pastimes of Krishna, who is Vishnu Himself, and the gopis, who are expansions of His energy, then he will be relieved from the most dangerous type of disease, namely lust. If one actually hears rasa-lila, he will become completely freed from lusty desire of sex life and elevated to the highest level of spiritual understanding. Generally, because they hear from Mayavadis and they themselves are Mayavadis, people become more and more implicated in sex life. The conditioned soul should hear the rasa-lila dance from an authorised spiritual master and be trained by him so that he can understand the whole situation; thus one can be elevated to the highest standard of spiritual life; otherwise one will be implicated. Material lust is a kind of heart disease, and to cure the material heart disease of the conditioned soul, it is recommended that one should hear, but not from the

impersonalist rascals. If one hears from the right sources with right understanding, then his situation will be different.

“Sukadeva Goswami has used the word *sraddhanvita* for one who is trained in the spiritual life. *Sraddha*, or faith, is the beginning. One who has developed his faith in Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Spirit Soul, can both describe and hear. Sukadeva also uses the word *anusnuyat*. One must hear from disciplic succession. *Anu* means following, or *anu* means always. So one must always follow the disciplic succession and not hear from any stray professional reciter, *Mayavadi* or ordinary man. *Anusnuyat* means that one must hear from an authorised person who is in the disciplic succession and is always engaged in Krishna consciousness. When a person wants to hear in this way, then the effect will be sure. By hearing *rasa-lila*, one will be elevated to the highest position of spiritual life.” (Krishna Book, Chapter 32, p.222)

15. Consider this almost-identical sentiment expressed by Srila Prabhupada in Teachings of Lord Caitanya Chapter 31: “There are many pseudo-devotees, claiming to belong to Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s sect, who artificially dress themselves as the damsels of Vraja, and this is not approved by advanced spiritualists or advanced students of devotional service. Such people dress the outward material body because they foolishly confuse the body with the soul....If one wrongly thinks that the material body is as perfect as the spiritual body and begins to imitate the damsels of Vrindavan, he becomes infested with the *Mayavadi* impersonal philosophy.”

16. “The mood of the *gopis*’ pursuit is called *siddha-deha*. This word indicates the pure spiritual body which is beyond the senses, mind and intelligence. *Siddha-deha* is the purified soul who is just suitable to serve the Supreme Lord. No one can serve the Supreme Lord as His associate without being situated in his pure spiritual identity. That identity is completely free from all material contamination.” (Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter 31)

17. “Even Srila Jiva Goswami, the most authoritative *acarya* in the Gaudiya sampradaya, has condemned these imitators. The process of transcendental realisation is to follow in the footsteps of the associates of the Supreme Lord; therefore if one thinks himself to be a direct associate of the Supreme Lord, he is condemned. According to authorised Vaishnava principles, one should follow a particular devotee, and not think of himself as Krishna’s associate”. (Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter 31)

18. See Caitanya Caritamrta *Adi-lila* 4.16, 4.103, 7.7 and *Madhya-lila* 14.155, 15.140.

19. In Caitanya Caritamrta *Madhya-lila* Prabhupada quotes *Srimad Bhagavatam* 1.1.19 and explains that a *rasika* devotee is “*rasa-jnanam*” knower of *rasa* or one who enjoys association with Krishna (relishes hearing his pastimes at every moment). This verse is a request by the sages of *Naimisaranya* to *Suta Goswami* to speak *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

In Caitanya Caritamrta *Madhya-lila* 7.152, Prabhupada quotes Srila Krishna das Kaviraja who says that *Ramananda Raya* is a *rasika bhakta*. Krishna das Thakura accepts *Ramananda Raya* as his *siksha guru*, as does Prabhupada, and we also accept him as such. So Prabhupada is always teaching us to accept *rasika* devotees as our *diksa* and *siksha gurus*.

20. *nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam suka mukhad amrta-drava-samyutam pibata bhagavatam rasam alayam muhur aho 'rasika' bhuvibhavukah*  
“O expert and thoughtful men, relish *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Sri Sukadeva Goswami. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls.” (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 1.1.3)

21. Krishna das Kaviraja says that Lord Caitanya is Krishna who came to this world primarily to taste the glories of *Radharani*’s love for him (*Caitanya-caritamrta*, *Adi-lila* 4.230). There the word “*rasika*” is used for Krishna. In the next verse Krishna das Kaviraja says that on one hand this confidential reason for the Lord’s descent should not be disclosed in public, but if it is not, then no one will understand it. In the next verse he says that *rasika* (translated by

Prabhupada as "loving") devotees will understand it, but fools will not. Finally, in the purport of the next verse Prabhupada explains that a rasika devotee is one who has captured Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda within his heart, and therefore such a devotee becomes blissful to hear this description of the Lord's mission.

22. In the introduction to Chapter 4 Prabhupada writes: "In this chapter of the epic Caitanya-caritamṛta, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswami has stressed that Lord Caitanya appeared for three principle purposes of His own. The first purpose was to relish the position of Srimatī Rādhārānī, who is the prime reciprocator of transcendental love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of transcendental loving transactions with Srimatī Rādhārānī. The subject of those loving transactions is the Lord Himself, and Rādhārānī is the object. Thus the subject, the Lord, wanted to relish the loving mellow in the position of the object, Rādhārānī. "The second reason for His appearance was to understand the transcendental mellow of Himself. Lord Kṛṣṇa is all sweetness. Rādhārānī's attraction for Kṛṣṇa is sublime, and to experience that attraction and understand the transcendental sweetness of Himself, He accepted the mentality of Rādhārānī. "The third reason that Lord Caitanya appeared was to enjoy the bliss tasted by Rādhārānī. The Lord thought that undoubtedly Rādhārānī enjoyed His company and He enjoyed the company of Rādhārānī, but the exchange of transcendental mellow between the spiritual couple was more pleasing to Srimatī Rādhārānī than to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rādhārānī felt more transcendental pleasure in the company of Kṛṣṇa than He could understand without taking Her position, but for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to enjoy in the position of Srimatī Rādhārānī was impossible because that position was completely foreign to Him. Kṛṣṇa is the transcendental male, and Rādhārānī is the transcendental female. Therefore, to know the transcendental pleasure of loving Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself appeared as Lord Caitanya, accepting the emotions and bodily lustre of Srimatī Rādhārānī. "Lord Caitanya appeared to fulfil these confidential desires and also to preach the Special significance of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, and to answer the call of Advaita Prabhū. These were secondary reasons."

23. kṛṣṇa bhakti rasa bhavita matih  
kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate  
tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam  
janma koti sukrtair na labhyate

"Pure devotional service in Krishna consciousness cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price -- that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay".  
(Ramananda Raya in Caitanya-caritamṛta Madhya-līlā 8.70)

24. Nectar of Instruction, text 8, purport

25. "Now this sadhana-bhakti or practice of devotional service may also be divided into two parts. The first part is called service according to regulative principles: one has to follow these different regulative principles by the order of the spiritual master or on the strength of authoritative scriptures, and there can be no question of refusal. That is called vaidhi, or regulated. One has to do it without argument. Another part of sadhana-bhakti is called raganuga. raganuga refers to the point at which, by following the regulative principles, one becomes a little more attached to Krishna and executes devotional service out of natural love....Rupa Goswami defines the first part of devotional practice, or vaidhi-bhakti, as follows: When there is no attachment or no spontaneous loving service to the Lord, and one is engaged in the service of the Lord simply out of obedience to the order of the spiritual master or in pursuance of the scriptures, such obligatory service called vaidhi-bhakti." (lecture on Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 2 "First Stages of Devotion", given in Calcutta January 25, 1973)

26. "There are 64 categories of devotional service, by performance of which one can rise to the gopis' stage of unconditional devotion. Affection for Krishna on the level of the gopis is called raganuga, Spontaneous love. When one enters into a Spontaneous loving affair with Krishna, there is no need to follow the Vedic rules and regulations. There are various kinds of personal devotees of Lord Krishna in the transcendental abode. For example, there are servants of Krishna like Raktaka and Patraka and friends of Krishna just like Sridama and Sudama. There are also parents of Krishna, just like Nanda and Yasoda, who are also engaged

in the service of Krishna according to their respective transcendental emotions. One who desires to enter into the supreme abode of Krishna can take shelter of one of such transcendental servitors. Then, through the execution of loving service, one can attain transcendental affection for Krishna. In other words, the devotee in this material world who executes loving service in pursuance of the activities of those eternal associates with Krishna also attains the same post when he is perfected. One cannot attain that position simply by following the regulative principles. Rather, one must seriously follow the principles of the gopis". (Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter 31)

27. "All these conclusions are unfit to disclose in public. But if they are not disclosed, no one will understand them. Therefore I shall mention them, revealing only their essence, so that loving devotees will understand them but fools will not. Anyone who has captured Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Lord Nityananda Prabhu in his heart will become blissful by hearing all these transcendental conclusions. All these conclusions are like the newly grown twigs of a mango tree; they are always pleasing to the devotees, who in this way resemble cuckoo birds. The camel-like non-devotees cannot enter into these topics. Therefore there is special jubilation in my heart. For fear of them I do not wish to speak, but if they do not understand, then what can be happier in all the three worlds? Therefore after offering obeisances to the devotees, for their satisfaction I shall speak without hesitating." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila Chapter 4, 231-237)

28. "The spiritual master may be more than one. The spiritual master who instructs the disciple about spiritual matters is called siksa-guru, and the spiritual master who initiates the disciple is called diksa-guru. Both of them are My representatives. There may be many spiritual masters who instruct, but the initiator spiritual master is one. A human being who takes advantage of these spiritual masters and, receiving proper knowledge from them, crosses the ocean of material existence is to be understood as having properly utilized his human form of life." (Krsna Book, chapter 80)

29. "Whatever instructions you give me," Srila Narayana Maharaja said, "I will follow them with absolute sincerity. I consider you my guru." (Srila Prabhupada Lilamrta Vol. 6, p.399-401)

30. ya idam paramam guhyam  
mad-bhaktesv abhidhasyati  
bhaktim mayi param krtva  
mam evaisyaty asamSayah

"For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me." (Bhagavad-gita 18.68)

31. "You have to see that our book distributors are also reading my books and following all the regulative principles, then it is all right selling in public in that way." (letter to Jagadisa, June 25, 1974)

"Regarding your questions. I have already answered the most important question. How to please Krishna?"--by following all the regulative principle that I have given you, chanting 16 rounds and reading my books scrutinizingly. Everyone must do these things, otherwise they cannot understand Krishna Consciousness." (letter to Adi-kesava, Bombay, January 16, 1975)

32. "This Krsna consciousness movement is for approaching Radha-Krsna, to be associated with the Supreme Lord in His sublime pleasure dance. That is the aim of Krsna consciousness." (purport to Nitai-Pada-Kamala, Los Angeles, December 21, 1968)

33. See purport of Caitanya Caritamrta Adi-lila 46

34. nikunja yuno rati-keli siddhyai ya yalibhir yuktir upeksaniya  
tatrati daksyad ati vallabhasya vande guroh sri caranaravinde

"The spiritual master is very dear because he is expert at assisting the gopis who, at different times make different tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Radha and Krishna's conjugal loving pastimes within the groves of Vrindavan. I offer my most humble obeisance's unto the

lotus feet of such a spiritual master." (Sri Guruvastakam, verse 6)

35. "Without the help of the gopis, one cannot enter into these pastimes. Only he who worships the Lord in the ecstasy of the gopis, following in their footsteps, can engage in the service of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna in the bushes of Vrindavan. Only then can one understand the conjugal love between Radha and Krishna. There is no other procedure for understanding." (Ramananda Raya in Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 8.204-205)

36. radha sa mukha sansaktim sakhi-sanga-nivasanam  
tam aham satatam vande madhavashraya vigraham  
"I forever worship my guru, who, in the form as an exalted sakhi, is happily immersed in the company of Srimati Radhika and the other sakhis." (Arcana Padati)

37. This was a devotee in the Badger community.

38. "That is Krsna consciousness movement. We are trying to change the consciousness of the people so that this preparation will help him to get exactly a body like Krsna in next life, and he may dance with Krsna in rasa dance. That is our propaganda." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.1.15, London, July 30, 1971)

39. "In further reference to your question about the form of the spirit soul of the conditioned living entity, there is a spiritual form always, but it develops fully only when the living entity goes back to Vaikuntha. This form develops according to the desire of the living entity. Until this perfectional stage is reached, the form is lying dormant like the form of the tree is lying dormant in the seed." (letter to Rupanuga, August 8, 1969)

40. In Krishna Book, Chapter 28, Prabhupada writes, "Mature devotees, who have completely executed Krishna consciousness, are immediately transferred to the universe where Krishna is appearing. In that universe the devotees get their first opportunity to associate with Krishna personally and directly."

Prabhupada often quotes Lord Chaitanya's opinion that "aradyo bhagavan tad dhama Vrindavanam -- Vrindavan is non-different from Krishna and is as worshipping as Him". Therefore there can be no maya, no material desire, no envy in Vrindavan. So no resident of that place, no associate of Krishna could fall into maya and thus fall from there. SB 1.1.1. states: dharmnasvena sada nirasta kuhakam satyam param dhimahi. I therefore meditate on Him, Lord Sri Krishna, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world.' The conclusion is that no one falls from the spiritual world, or Vaikuntha planet, for it is the eternal abode." (SB 3.16.26 purport)

In speaking on this issue Srila Narayana Maharaja quotes from the two main parts of Srimad-Bhagavatam which deal with the story of Jaya and Vijaya. There Prabhupada writes that Jaya and Vijaya wanted to fulfil the desire of Lord Narayana to enjoy in a rasa, or a chivalrous mood. So in order to fulfil Jaya and Vijaya's desire to please Him, the Lord called for yoga-maya to arrange the pastime. Prabhupada concludes both these sections by saying that the associates of the Lord, who all have sat-cit-ananda bodies can never fall down from Vaikuntha.

"The bodies of the inhabitants of Vaikuntha are completely spiritual, having nothing to do with the material body, senses or life air. Therefore, kindly explain how associates of the Personality of Godhead were cursed to descend in material bodies like ordinary persons." PURPORT

"Therefore it is to be understood that when Jaya and Vijaya descended to this material world, they came because there was something to be done for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Otherwise it is a fact that no one falls from Vaikuntha." (SB 7.1.35)

"From Vedic scriptures it is understood that sometimes even Brahma and Indra fall down, but a devotee in the transcendental abode of the Lord never falls." (SB 3.15.48 Purport)

“This ordinary living being is of two kinds—nitya-baddha or nitya-mukta. One is eternally conditioned and the other eternally liberated. The eternally liberated living being; are in the Vaikuntha jagat, the spiritual world, and they never fall into the material world.” (SB 5.11.12 Purport)

“Pure devotional service is so spiritually relishable that a devotee becomes automatically uninterested in material enjoyment. That is the sign of perfection in progressive devotional service. A pure devotee continuously remembers the lotus feet of Lord Sri Krishna and does not forget Him even for a moment, not even in exchange for all the opulence of the three worlds.” (SB 1.5.19 purport)

“Sometimes it is asked how the living entity falls down from the spiritual world to the material world. Here is the answer. Unless one is elevated to the Vaikuntha planets, directly in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is prone to fall down, either from the impersonal Brahman realisation or from an ecstatic trance of meditation.” (SB 3.25.29 purport)

“The living entities are divided into two categories—the eternally liberated and eternally conditioned. Those who are ever-liberated never come in contact with maya, the external energy. The ever-conditioned are always under the clutches of the external energy. This is described in Bhagavad-gita: This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome.’ (Bg. 7.14). The nitya-baddhas are always conditioned by the external energy, and the nitya-muktas never come in contact with the external energy.” (Madhya-lila 22.14-15 purport)

“False devotees, lacking the conclusion of transcendental knowledge, think that artificially shedding tears will deliver them. Similarly, other false devotees think that studying books of the previous acaryas is inadvisable, like studying dry empiric philosophies. Srila Jiva Goswami following the previous acaryas, has inculcated the conclusions of the scriptures in the six theses called the Sat-Sandarbhās. False devotees who have very little knowledge of such conclusions fail to achieve pure devotion for want of zeal in accepting the favourable directions for devotional service given by self-realised devotees. Such false devotees are like impersonalists, who also consider devotional service no better than ordinary fruitive actions.” (Adi-lila 2.117 Purport)

“The mature devotees, who have completely executed Krishna consciousness, are immediately transferred to the universe where Krishna is appearing. In that universe the devotees get their first opportunity to associate with Krishna personally and directly.” (Krishna Book, Chapter 28, Releasing Nanda Maharaja from the clutches of Varuna, p. 186)

“Maharaja Yudhisthira inquired: What kind of great curse could affect even liberated Vishnu-bhaktas, and what sort of person could curse even the Lord's associates? For unflinching devotees of the Lord to fall again to this material world is impossible. I cannot believe this. PURPORT

In Bhagavad-gita(8.16) the Lord clearly states, mam upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate: one who is purified of material contamination and returns home, back to Godhead, does not return to this material world. Elsewhere in Bhagavad-gita(4.9) Krishna says: One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.’ Srila Yudhisthira, therefore, was surprised that a pure devotee could return to this material world. This is certainly a very important question.” (SB 7.1.34)

“The bodies of the inhabitants of Vaikuntha are completely spiritual, having nothing to do with the material body, senses or life air. Therefore, kindly explain how associates of the Personality of Godhead were cursed to descend in material bodies like ordinary persons. PURPORT

Therefore it is to be understood that when Jaya and Vijaya descended to this material world, they came because there was something to be done for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Otherwise it is a fact that no one falls from Vaikuntha.” (SB 7.1.35)

srisa-krsna-svarupayah  
rasenotkrsyate krsna-  
rupam esa rasa-sthithih

“According to transcendental realization, there is no difference between the forms of Narayana and Krsna. Yet in Krsna there is a special transcendental attraction due to the conjugal mellow, and consequently He surpasses Narayana. This is the conclusion of transcendental mellows.” (Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.2.59, quoted in Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 9.117,146)

42. “A devotee of the Personality of Godhead Narayana cannot actually understand the transcendental attractive features of Krishna. On the other hand, the devotee of Krishna who is attached to the sublime attractive feature of the Lord does not consider Narayana very important. When the gopis sometimes saw Krishna in the form of Narayana, they were not very attracted to Him. The gopis never addressed Krishna as Rukmini-ramana. Krishna’s devotees in Vrindavan address Him as Radharamana, Nandanandana and Yasodanandana, but not as Vasudeva-nandana or Devaki-nandana. Although according to the material conception, Narayana, Rukmini-ramana and Krishna are one and the same, in the spiritual world one cannot use the name of Krishna in the place of Rukmini-ramana or Narayana. If one does so out of a poor fund of knowledge, his mellow with the Lord becomes spiritually faulty and is called rasabhasa, an overlapping of transcendental mellows. The advanced devotee who has actually realised the transcendental features of the Lord will not commit the mistake of creating a rasabhasa situation by using one name for another. Because of the influence of Kali-yuga, there is much rasabhasa in the name of extravagance and liberal-mindedness. Such fanaticism is not very much appreciated by pure devotees.” (Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 8.90, purport)

43. “Iskcon (the International Society of Krishna Consciousness) is a non-lucrative organisation, whose purpose is to promote the well-being of human society by drawing its attention to God. We are a non-sectarian society, and our members include people from Christian, Jewish and Moslem as well as Hindu faiths. The aim of Iskcon is not to found a new religious sect, but to invoke the living entity’s dormant love of God, and thus provide the human society of all faiths with a common platform of clear theistic knowledge and practice. Members of Iskcon may retain their own respective religious faiths, as Iskcon is meant to establish a clear, practical common formulation of the common ideal of all theists, and to defeat the unnecessary dogmatic wranglings that now divide and invalidate the theistic camp. This common ideal of theism is to develop love of God.” (Srla Prabhupada, letter 24/8/68)

“There are many societies and associations of pure devotees, and if someone with just a little faith begins to associate with such societies, his advancement to pure devotional service is rapid.” (Nectar of Devotion, Chapter Nineteen, p.14)

45. “So I am feeling now very much obliged to my, this Godbrother, that he carried out the wish of my spiritual master and forced me to accept this sannyasa order. So this Godbrother, His Holiness Kesava Maharaja, is no more. He has entered Krishna’s abode. So I wish to pass a resolution of bereavement and send them. So I have composed one verse also in this connection in Sanskrit. So you all present, you sign this. I shall send it tomorrow. The verse I have composed, it is in Sanskrit. Vairagya-vidya-nija-bhakti-yogam. This Krsna consciousness is vairagya-vidya. Vairagya-vidya means to become detestful to this material world. That is called vairagya-vidya. And that is possible simply by this bhakti-yoga. Vairagya-vidya-nija-bhakti-yogam apayayan mam. So this... Just like medicine. The child is afraid of taking medicine. That also I have experienced. In my childhood, when I became ill, I was very stubborn. I won’t accept any medicine. So my mother used to force medicine within my mouth with a spoon. I was so obstinate. So anyway, similarly, I did not want to accept this sannyasa order, but this Godbrother forced me. “You must.’ Apayayan mam, he forcefully made me to drink this medicine. Anabhipsu andham. Why I was unwilling? Anabhipsu means unwilling. Andham, andham means one who is blind, who cannot see his future. The Spiritual life is the brightest future, but the materialists cannot see to it. You see? But the Vaishnavas, the Spiritual master, they forcefully, “You drink this medicine.” You see. Apayayan mam anabhipsu andham sri-kesava-bhakti-prajnan-nama. So this my Godbrother, his name is Kesava, bhaktiprajnan Kesava. Krpambudhi. So he did this favour upon me because he was ocean of mercy. So we offer our obeisance’s to Vaishnava, krpambudhi. Vancha-kalpa-tarubhyas ca

krpa-sindhubhya eva ca. The Vaishnavas, the representatives of the Lord, they are so kind. They bring the ocean of mercy for distributing to the suffering humanity. Krpambudhir yas tam aham prapadye. So I am offering my respectful obeisance's unto this His Holiness, because he forcefully made me adopt this sannyasa order. "So he is no more in this world. He has entered Krishna's abode. So I am offering my respectful obeisance's along with my disciples. On the first day of my sannyasa, I never thought, but I remembered that I'll have to speak in English. So I remember on that sannyasa day, when there was a reception, so I, first of all, I spoke in English. So it is all arrangement of Krsna, higher authority. We are writing like this, 'Resolved that we the undersigned members and devotees of International Society for Krishna Consciousness Incorporated, in a condolence meeting under the presidency of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, today the 21st of October, 1968, at our Seattle branch, express our profound bereavement on hearing the passing of His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktiprajnan Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, the sannyasa guru, preceptor of our Spiritual master, and on October 6th, 1968, at his headquarters residence in Nabadwip, West Bengal. We offer our Respectful obeisance's unto the lotus feet of Sri Srimad bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja with the following verse composed on this occasion by our Spiritual master.' This verse I have already explained to you. So I wish that you all sign this and I'll send it tomorrow by air mail." (lecture, Seattle 1968)

46. "I am prepared to co-operate with the Gaudiya Mission wholeheartedly. I am prepared also to be amalgamated, and they have invited me to go to India to talk frankly, face to face. But unless we have come to some definite understanding, how I can risk the journey which will involve more or less Rs. 25,000? But I am sure if Gaudiya Mission and I combine together, it will be very nice thing to preach the cult of Lord Caitanya all over the world. I can reorganise all the branches of the Gaudiya Math in India, and if there is any financial question, it will be not difficult for our society to help in that way also. So if you can negotiate about our amalgamation on a co-operative basis, it will be great service to Srila Prabhupada." (letter, Dr Syamasundardas Brahmachari, 5/9/69)

47. Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 9.18

48. SB 4.28.31

49. "I am very glad to know that Ananda Prabhu is staying with you. Please offer my dandavats. He is my old god brother. Sincere Vaishnava. Please treat him like your father. Do remain in full co-operation". (letter to Gurudasa, 73-05-06, Los Angeles)

50. "So if you are actually serious to take instructions from a siksha guru, I can refer you to one who is most highly competent of all my god-brothers. This is B.R. Sridhara Maharaja, whom I consider to be even my siksha guru, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have from his association." (letter to Hrsikesa 9/1/69)

51. "Regarding Srila Prabhupada's asking his Godbrothers for forgiveness, Srila Narayana Maharaja said, They are all trivial things. In this world-wide preaching, if some little things go wrong here and there, what difference does it make? It is all right. Whatever you have done, you have done for the well-being of the entire human society. There is no individual interest. Everything was done in the interest of God." ...[Later in the conversation Srila Narayana Maharaja says,] "' Maharaja, you didn't commit any offence. We never thought that you did anything wrong. On the other hand, you bless us. We need it. You never did any wrong. If someone is offended by your actions, that is his fault.'" (Srila Prabhupada Lilamrta, Vol. 6, p.399-401)

52 "Prabhupada: How do you think the idea?

Jayapataka: All of your ideas, Srila Prabhupada, are perfect. I am not someone to offer opinion. But if you ask, I think that actually, especially the yoga-pitha, natha-mandira, that's a very dynamic idea, and in general it must do good.

Prabhupada: We want co-operation." (room conversation, Vrindavan 6/11/77)

"Tamala Krishna: Yes, I think the general is already covered by this Mayapura-Vrindavan Trust committee. That's for all of India. And Gauda-mandala-bhumi is especially for encouraging the development of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in that area--Sridhara Maharaja's natha-mandira, this



Yoga-pitha Bhaktivedanta Hall. Different buildings. Supposing one of your Godbrothers may have written some manuscript, he has no money. We can print some books for him so he can sell them, like that, works within the Mayapura area.

Prabhupada: That we shall fix up, what to spend.

Tamala Krishna: The Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity trustees would fix that up?

Prabhupada: Hm.

Tamala Krishna: Yes.

Prabhupada: All right.” (conversation, Vrindavan 30/10/77)

53. “Anyone who preaches the message of God, he is guru. So they very much appreciated, and actually it is so. Vaishnava who is preaching, it may be in a different way, according to time and place and the party. They have to change something, *desa-kala-patra*. But we have to see the essence.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam lecture, Mayapura, 8/10/74)

54. “This personal grudge is not inhuman and as I have told many times, that individualism is the cause of personal misunderstanding. When such individualism is employed in the center of Krishna there is no harm even if there is personal misunderstanding. Personal misunderstanding exists even in the higher levels. There is competition of loving Krishna even in the party of Srimati Radharani.... (Even amongst our God-brothers we have misunderstanding but none of us is astray from the service of Krishna. My guru Maharaja ordered us to execute his mission combinedly. Unfortunately we are now separated. But none of us have stopped preaching Krishna Consciousness. Even if there was misunderstanding amongst the God-brothers of my guru Maharaja none of them deviated from the transcendental loving service of Krishna. The idea is that provocation and misunderstanding may remain between one man and another. But our staunch faith in Krishna Consciousness may not allow any material disruption. Please therefore try to be sympathetic with any person even if they differ. The only qualification we have to scrutinise is if one is acting in Krishna Consciousness as far as one is able to do it.” (letter to Brahmananda 18.11.67)

“But this controversy is not material. Just like in a national program, different political parties are sometimes in conflict and make propaganda against each other, but their central point is always service to the country. Similarly, amongst the disciples of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati there may be some controversy, but the central point is how to preach the mission of His Divine Grace. If the central point is fixed up then there is no harm in such controversy. Every individual being must have his opinion; that is the significance of individuality, but all such differences of opinions must coincide in Krishna.” (letter to Mandalibhadra 28/7/69)

“Among Vaishnavas there may be some difference of opinion due to everyone's personal identity, but despite all personal differences, the cult of Krishna consciousness must go on. We can see that under the instructions of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaja began preaching the Krishna consciousness movement in an organised way within the past hundred years. The disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaja are all Godbrothers, and although there are some differences of opinion, and although we are not acting conjointly, every one of us is spreading this Krishna consciousness movement according to his own capacity and producing many disciples to spread it all over the world.” (SB 4.28.31)

“Disunity between individual souls is so strong within this material world that even in a society of Krishna consciousness, members sometimes appear disunited due to their having different opinions and leaning toward material things. Actually, in Krishna consciousness there cannot be two opinions. There is only one goal: to serve Krishna to one's best ability. If there is some disagreement over service, such disagreement is to be taken as spiritual. Those who are actually engaged in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot be disunited in any circumstance.” (SB 4.30.8)

55. Srila Prabhupada describes this in the purport of Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 12.8.

56. “The Hare Krsna movement is meant for those who are serious... There's no question of our being some sectarian group. No. Anyone can join. Students in college can be admitted. You may be a Christian, you may be a Hindu, you may be a Muhammadan--it doesn't matter. The Krsna consciousness movement admits anyone who wants to understand the science of

God.” (SSR, Chapter 1)

57. "Just by pouring water on the root of a tree, one nourishes its trunk and all of its branches, fruits and flowers, and just by supplying food to the stomach, one satisfies all the limbs of the body. Similarly, by worshipping Lord Vishnu one can satisfy everyone.' Krsna consciousness is not a sectarian religious movement. Rather, it is meant for all-embracing welfare activities for the world. One can enter this movement without discrimination in terms of caste, creed, religion or nationality. If one is trained to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, who is the origin of Vishnu-tattva, one can become fully satisfied and perfect in all respects." (SB 8.5.49)

58. punah krsna-rati haya duita prakara  
aisvarya-jnana-misra, kevala-bheda ara  
gokule kevala' rati—aisvarya-jnana-hina  
puri-dvaye, vaikunthadye—aisvarya-pravina  
aisvarya-jnana-pradhanye sankucita priti  
dekhiya na mane aishvarya—kevalara riti  
santa-dasya-rase aishvarya kahan uddipana  
vatsalya-sakhya-madhure ta' kare sankocana  
"Attachment for Krsna is divided into two categories. One is attachment with awe and reverence, and the other is pure attachment without reverence. Pure attachment without reverence is found in Goloka Vrndavana. Attachment in which awe and reverence are prominent is found in the two cities Mathura and Dvaraka and in Vaikuntha. When opulence is very prominent, love of Godhead is somewhat crippled. According to kevala devotion, however, even though the devotee sees the unlimited potency of Krsna, he considers himself equal with Him. On the transcendental platform of neutrality and service, sometimes the opulence of the Lord is prominent. However, in the transcendental mellows of fraternal, paternal and conjugal love, the opulence is minimized." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 19.192-195)

59. "Thus devotional life is divided into two stages -- sadhana-bhakti and bhava-bhakti. Sadhana-bhakti refers to the development of devotional service through the regulative principles. The basic principle for the execution of devotional service is faith. Above that, there is association with devotees, and after that there is initiation by a bona fide spiritual master. After initiation, when one follows the regulative principles of devotional service, one becomes freed from all unwanted things. In this way one becomes firmly fixed and gradually develops a taste for devotional service. The more the taste grows, the more one desires to render service to the Lord. In this way one becomes attached to a particular mellow in the Lord's service -- santa, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhura. As a result of such attachment, bhava develops. Bhava-bhakti is the platform of purified goodness. By such purified goodness, one's heart melts in devotional service. Bhava-bhakti is the first seed of love of Godhead. This emotional stage is there before one attains pure love. When that emotional stage intensifies, it is called prema-bhakti, or transcendental love of Godhead. This gradual process is also described in the following two verses found in the Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu (1.4.15-16)." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 23.13, purport)

60. See Caitanya-caritamrta Adi lila Chapter 3

61. "Conjugal love (madhurya-rasa) is also known as srngara-rasa." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 8.88)

62. "So far as I know, my Guru Maharaja's position was one of the assistants of the manjaris." (letter to Hamsaduta, January 16, 1969)

63. madhuryojjvala-premadhya-sri-rupanuga-bhaktida-  
sri-gaura-karuna-sakti-vigrahaya namo stu te  
namas te gaura-vani-sri-murtaye dina-tarine  
rupanuga-viruddhapasiddhanta-dhvanta-harine  
"I offer my respectful obeisances unto you, the personified energy of Sri Caitanya's mercy, who delivers devotional service which is enriched with conjugal love of Radha and Krsna, coming exactly in the line of revelation of Srila Rupa Goswami. I offer my respectful

obeisances unto you, who are the personified teachings of Lord Caitanya. You are the deliverer of the fallen souls. You do not tolerate any statement which is against the teachings of devotional service enunciated by Srila Rupa Goswami.” (Srila Bhaktisdhanta Sarasvati Pranati)

namo bhaktivinodaya sac-cid-ananda-namine

gaura-sakti-svarupaya rupanuga-varaya te

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda, who is transcendental energy of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He is a strict follower of the Goswamis, headed by Srila Rupa.” (Sri Bhaktivinoda Pranati)

64. In Goloka Vrindavan, where these rasika devotees serve Krishna in their spiritual forms, neutral rasa is not present.

65. mor ei abhilas, bilas kunje dio vas

nayane heribo sada jugala-rupa-rasi

ei nivedana dharo, sakhir anugata koro

seva-adhikara diye koro nija dasi

“My desire is that you will also grant me a residence in the pleasure groves of Sri Vrindavan-dhama. Thus, within my vision I will always behold the beautiful pastimes of Radha and Krishna. I beg you to make me a follower of the cowherd damsels of Vraja. Please give me the privilege of devotional service and make me your own maidservant”. (Sri Tulasi-kirtana, verses 3-4)

66. This was confirmed by Srimati Kaumadaki dasi who was in Los Angeles at the time.

67. This is a verbatim quote from Srila Puri Maharaja to Ramesha das.

68. “Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu (1.2.2) gives the following information about sadhana-bhakti:

krti-sadhya bhavet sadhya-

bhava sa sadhanabhidha

nitya-siddhasya bhavasya

prakatyam hrdis sadhyata

The process of devotional service -- beginning with chanting and hearing -- is called sadhana-bhakti. This includes the regulative principles that are intended to awaken one to devotional service. Devotional service is always dormant in everyone’s heart, and by the offenseless chanting of the holy names of the Lord, one’s original dormant Krsna consciousness is awakened. This awakening to Krsna consciousness is the beginning of sadhana-bhakti. This can be divided into many different parts, including faith, association with devotees, initiation by the spiritual master, engagement in devotional service under the instructions of a spiritual master, steadiness in devotional service and the awakening of a taste for devotional service. In this way, one can become attached to Krsna and His service, and when this attachment is intensified, it results in ecstatic love for Krsna.” (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 19.177)

69. krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih

kriyatam yadi kuto ’pi labhyate

tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam

janma-koti-sukrtair na labhyate

“Pure devotional service in Krsna consciousness cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price—that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay.” (Srila Rupa Goswami, Padyavali 14, quoted in Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 8.70)

In the purport Srila Prabhupada says, “Henceforward the basic principle underlying the talks between Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramananda Raya will be spontaneous loving service to the Lord. The regulative principles according to the injunctions of the Sastras are necessary insofar as one’s original dormant Krsna consciousness is not spontaneously awakened. An example of spontaneous action is the flowing of rivers into the ocean. Nothing can stop this flow of water. Similarly, when one’s dormant Krsna consciousness is awakened, it

spontaneously flows to the lotus feet of Krsna without impediment.”

70. kanthavarodha-romaSrubhiih parasparam lapamanah pavayanti kulani prthivim ca  
“Conversing among one another with throats choked, hair standing on end, and tears flowing, the Lord’s intimate servants purify their own followers and the whole world.”

PURPORT

“One may ask, Does Narada expect me to also become a great devotee and experience such ecstasy?’ The answer is yes, the ecstasy of devotional service is open to all. But a humble devotee may think himself unfit to experience the advanced stages of Krsna consciousness for many lifetimes. We may respond best to a sutra like this by trying to appreciate, at least slightly, the wonderful influence of the great souls who have come to this earth. This will inspire us to seek the association of the servants of the servants of such great souls, to assist them in their mission, and to receive shelter from them against the world of maya.

The symptoms of ecstasy should not be imitated, but it is not wrong to aspire to experience them. In *The Nectar of Devotion*, Rupa Gosvami encourages us to develop a spontaneous attachment for serving the Lord without any desire for profit. Srila Prabhupada writes, In other words, one should learn how to cry for the Lord. One should learn this small technique, and one should be very eager and actually cry to become engaged in some particular type of service. This is called *laulyam*, and such tears are the price for the highest perfection.’ [The Nectar of Devotion, p. 84]

...At least on an individual basis every sane person should save himself by coming forward to render service and to hear from Vaisnavas of the caliber Narada describes in this sutra.... Lord Krsna praises the influence of Narada: If someone is able, by chance, to see face to face a great saintly person like Narada, who is always serene and merciful to everyone, then immediately that conditioned soul becomes liberated. This is exactly like being situated in the full light of the sun; there cannot be any visionary impediment.’ [Krsna, p. 97]” (Narada-bhakti-sutra 4.68, purported by Satasvarupa Goswami)

“Therefore, if we do not associate with the advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikari*, if we simply want to remain in the lowest stage of devotional service, then we are not making progress.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.33, Vrindavana, November 12, 1972)

71. Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.33 lecture, Vrindavan, November 12, 1972

72. “But without *viddhi-bhakti*, you cannot reach to the platform of *raga-bhakti*, although that is our aim. *Raganuga*, *raga-bhakti* is executed following the footprints of the devotees in Vrindavana. That is called *raga-bhakti*. Krsna’s personal associates. Not to become directly Krsna’s personal associate, but following the footprints of Krsna’s eternal associates, we can come to the stage of *raga-bhakti*. That is called *para-bhakti*. That *para-bhakti* is required.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.26.35-36, Bombay, January 12, 1975)