

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

THE ART OF SPIRITUAL INQUIRY AND REPLY

(PART 1)

Questions and Answers According to
Sādhū-Guru & Śāstra



ŚRĪ ŚRĪLA SHYĀM DĀS BĀBĀ



By the causeless mercy of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī
Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda Jagat Guru

THE ART OF SPIRITUAL INQUIRY AND REPLY

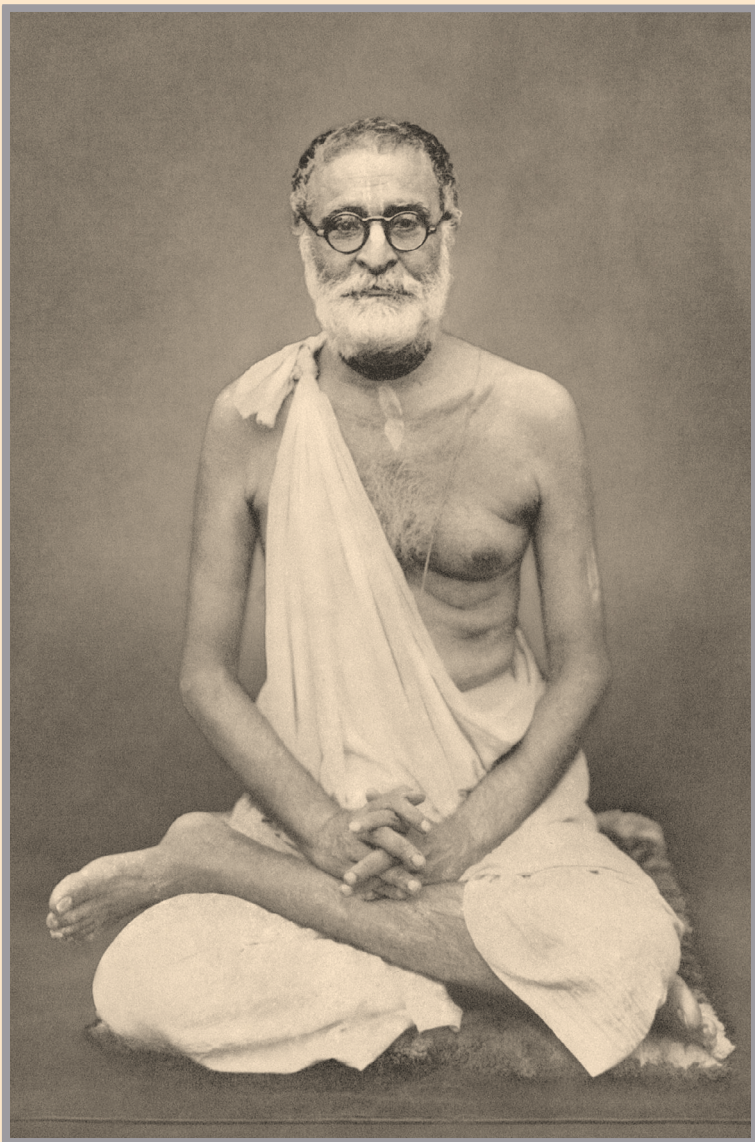
(PART 1)

ŚRĪ ŚRĪLA SHYĀM DĀS BĀBĀ



SRI BHAKTI SIDDHANTA VANI SEVA TRUST

We pray to all Sarasvatī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, the most powerful and compassionate commanders of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's team, that they will forever protect us under their divine Lotus Feet and help us carry out their orders with humility and love. We ask the readers to forgive our mistakes and inadequacies and, like bees, only look for the essence. At the same time, we hope that the willing readers will submit suggestions for improvement to us and point out any shortcomings. We pray, venerable *Vaiṣṇavas*, to be allowed to be devoted to you from the bottom of our hearts.



Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī
Ṭhākura Prabhuṇāda



Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī
Gosvāmī Mahārāja



Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja



A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪ ŚRĪ GURU AND GAURĀṄGA

This book is a compilation of those answers (in letter format) given by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja to devotees having sincere questions inside their heart from different parts of the world. May these transcendental instructions inspire all sincere seekers on the path of pure devotional service as shown by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*śrī-śuka uvāca
varīyān eṣa te praśnaḥ
kṛto loka-hitaṁ nṛpa
ātmavit-sammataḥ puṁsām
śrotavyādiṣu yaḥ paraḥ*

(ŚB 2.1.1)

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, your question is glorious because it is very beneficial to all kinds of people. The answer to this question is the prime subject matter of hearing, and it is approved by all gigantic spiritual personalities (*sadhu-guru-vaiṣṇava*, Ṛṣi, Muni, etc.).

The spiritual enlightenment between the spiritual master and the disciple is based on *ātma-jijñāsā* (self-inquiry) about how to attain *ātma-maṅgala*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we can find the example of Parīkṣit Mahārāja, who was left with only seven days to live. He went to the banks of the Gaṅgā (Śukatāla-kṣetra) to spend rest of his time of life with the hope to meet a real *sādhū* who can arrange absolute maṅgala in his life. Really it was a great fortune that Śrīla Mahārāja Parīkṣit by chance got the association of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī (by the desire of the Supreme Lord — Śrī Kṛṣṇa), who narrated all the activities of Kṛṣṇa in such a way that he could engage his mind totally in *Kṛṣṇa-kathā*. All the topics related to Kṛṣṇa are non-different from Kṛṣṇa Himself. The topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa are so auspicious that they purify the speaker, the hearer and the inquirer. They are compared to the Gaṅgā's waters, which flows from the toe of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Wherever the Gaṅgā's waters go, they purify the land and the person who bathes in them. Similarly, *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, or the topics of Kṛṣṇa, are so pure that wherever they are spoken, the place, the hearer, the inquirer, the speaker and all concerned become purified.

The present book, consists of divine letters, which all can show transcendental communications between Sampradāya-saṁrakṣaka Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja and his near and dear followers. This is an example of the divine gravity of getting the association with a self-realized personality. Those who are having the desire to arrange *ātma-maṅgala* in true sense to realize the Ultimate Goal of their life only they can go through this book. There is no doubt that Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja's divine qualities and his affectionate nature and humble attitude all are usually not exposed in front of those envious people. Even though outwardly sometimes it seems like he is hard as a thunderbolt, but that is only because of his nature to protect

the souls who are misguided. He is always identifying himself as the loyal dog of our Gauḍīya Guruvarga, and cannot tolerate the painful sufferings of *jīvas*. We all know that the *kṛpā-pātra* of Paramahaṁsa Jagad-guru Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja — Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja — who is very much in line with His Gurudeva and Parama-gurudeva Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda never wants to make any disciple or any temple, or he never likes to go to foreign countries to collect *labha-puja-prathista* etc., still, he is always ready to render absolute *vāñī-sevā* by the order of The Prabhupāda and his *Guru-varga* and Gurudeva.

Especially through those recorded letters, one will have the chance to feel the extreme causeless love and affection which Śrīla Bābā Mahārāja has for us all.

We also like to thank those devotees who all are going to contribute their letters to this presentation. Respecting the confidentiality, we tried to carefully eliminate the personal information, if any, and also limited some of the devotees' elaborate letters to Śrīla Bābā Mahārāja in a few words (or in a few lines), just to retain the questions. We humbly request forgiveness for any errors or omissions we may have made in this endeavour to present the timeless message of our Gauḍīya Guru-varga to the contemporary reader.

Truly yours in the service of Śrī Śrī Guru,
Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā

All those sincere members of Sri Bhakti Siddhanta
Vani Seva Trust (Regd.)

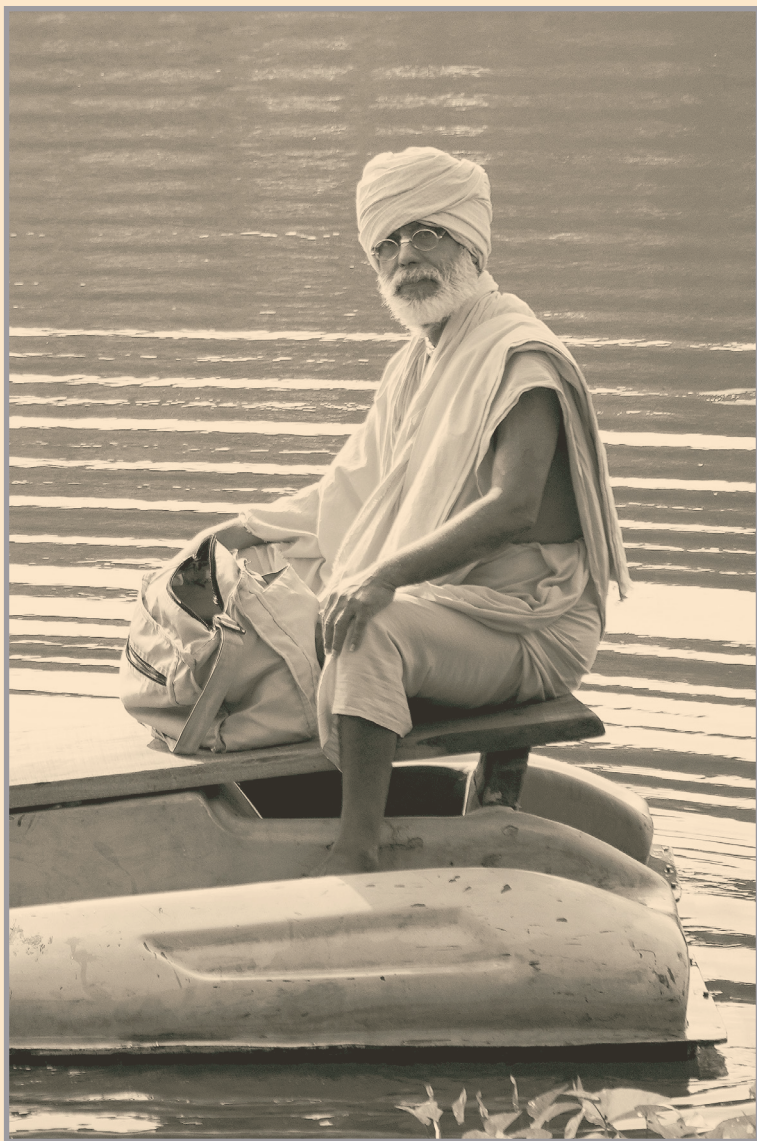
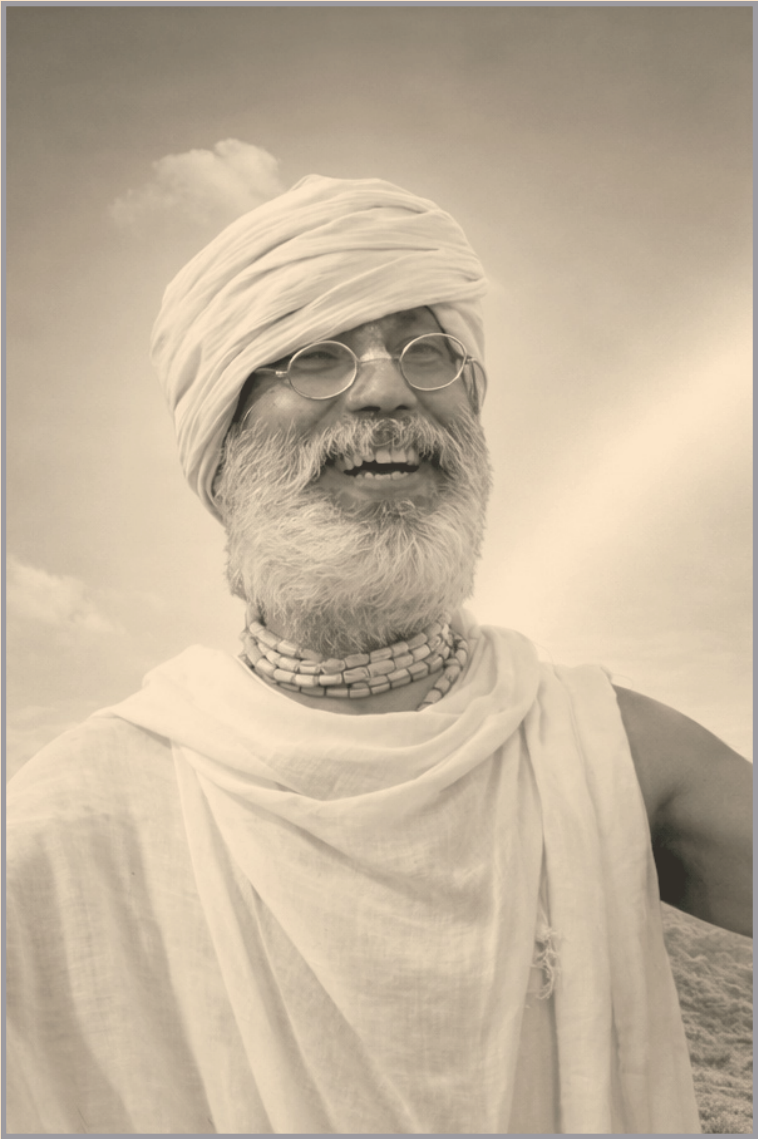


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ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES

QUESTION 1

From the book “THE *BHĀGAVATA*: ITS PHILOSOPHY, ITS ETHICS, AND ITS THEOLOGY” By Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

“In the common-place books of the Hindu religion in which the *rajo* and *tamo-guṇa* have been described as the ways of religion, we have descriptions of a local heaven and a local hell; the heaven as beautiful as anything on earth and the hell as ghastly as any picture of evil. Besides this heaven we have many more places, where good souls are sent up in the way of promotion! There are 84 divisions of the hell itself, some more dreadful than the one which Milton has described in his “Paradise Lost”. These are certainly poetical and were originally created by the rulers of the country in order to check evil deeds of the ignorant people, who are not able to understand the conclusions of philosophy. The religion of the Bhāgavata is free from such a poetry. Indeed, in some of the chapters we meet with descriptions of these hells and heavens, and accounts of curious tales, but we have been warned somewhere in the book, not to accept them as real facts, but as inventions to overawe the wicked and to improve the simple and the ignorant [...].”

So, does it mean [...] these descriptions of hell in the *Bhāgavatam* are allegorical too?

Thank you. Jaya Gaura.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

Dear Prabhuji, *Daṇḍavat praṇāma* to you all.

Śrīmad Bhagavad jī Mahāpurāṇa is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmīpāda speaking this *siddhānta*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the sound incarnation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. *Śabda Brahma* is just equal to Supreme Lord Himself, that is why Śrī Kṛṣṇa is just equal to Śrī Kṛṣṇa *Nāma* (but surely this means transcendental sound, not material sound). In some or certain cases, some allegorical references are purposely given inside *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to clarify those intricate philosophical points — like the description of Purañjana anecdotes spoken by Śrīla Nārada-jī Mahārāja in front of Prācinabarhi. Some points can be represented allegorically in some places inside *Bhāgavatam*, but with full planning, this was done to ensure our absolute *maṅgala*; that doesn't mean that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is totally devoid of reality. Supreme Lord is absolute truth, so *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also absolute truth, no doubt in it. Any part of the Absolute is also Absolute.

All the descriptions about different kinds of heavens and hells are there inside *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* at 5th canto or at 4th canto. All those are real, not at all fictitious; even the distance of the place of Yamalaya is given inside *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (99 thousand *yojanas* of the south-west corner horizontal direction). *Jīvas* are supposed to get punishment thereafter, leaving their material body with their respective material *jatona moya* body (temporarily punishable body usually given to *jīvātmā* after death) for their sinful activities, but also some practical conceptions of heaven and hell can be there here on this earth where those *jīvas* can get the result of their activities in gross form right now with their respective present gross body. Examples are given

below — Badrinātha dhāma situated in Himalayan Hills on this Earth is known as *Bhouma Vaikuṇṭha*. Śrī Braja dhāma here on this earth — Śrī Vṛndāvana is known as *Bhouma Vṛndāvana*. Also, Kulu-Manali or Pavali or Kashmir etc. can be known as *Bhouma Svarga* (Heaven). Then why not we can understand that those pros-quarters or those wine clubs (or hotels), or all those places where gambling games (illegal games) are going on here on this Earth are *Bhouma* hells.

Why is the shadow of Tulasī Devī, or the shadow of *guru-Vaiṣṇava* so important and respectable? If we can understand from heart that why even a shadow of a transcendental real object is as respectable as the original object — then in that case there cannot be any doubt or suspicion about those anecdotes given inside the *Bhāgavatam* because those are as good and real as the *Bhāgavatam* itself, same way respectable for us all. We can remember that Durgā Devī who is the incharge of this negative world is the shadow of that original potency of the supreme Lord Yogamāyā.

What Milton has written in his book ‘Paradise Lost’ is totally a separate issue. Whereas we already know that Śrīman Mahāprabhu has already declared *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as the topmost scriptural evidence (*Pramāṇam amalām*). So, in that case we should not have any doubt about *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. No doubt or suspicion can stand in the way of that Absolute Truth (or *śrauta panthā*).

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of Guru-Gauraṅga
and Gomātā your servant – Śrī Bābā Shyām Dās.

Note: For more detailed Information you can consult *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* written by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

QUESTION 2

I have heard the popular story of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Kṛṣṇa dāsa. According to the tradition, in Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa dāsa was a lame man and unable to walk, and when Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī laughed, then Kṛṣṇa dāsa thought that he was laughing at his disability. Please Bābājī Mahārāja kindly tell me whether it is true or not.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All Glories to Śrī Śrī and Gauraṅga

Dear Prabhuji,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection.

Your question can give me a nice chance to break such wrong *siddhānta vicāra*. Just the previous night one such question came about Śrīla Nāmācārya Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. He was originally *Brāhmaṇa* or took birth at *Yavana-kula*? Some such different stories are going on in this material world about Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pad, Jīva pad, ect. But our previous Gauḍīya guru-varga never approved or accepted those wrong *siddhānta vicāra*. Actually, they are simply committing a great offense, because of their doubt and suspicion.

Is there any doubt in it that Śrīla Jīva pad was hundred percent in the line of Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana? Some people speak just the opposite (they want to say that Śrīla Jīva pad was not at all in favour of *parakīya-bhāva*; he wanted to establish *svakīya-bhāva*, whereas Śrīla Rūpa & Sanātana Gosvami were in favour of *parakīya-bhāva vicāra*), whereas he himself has confirmed repeat-

edly about his hundred per cent submission unto the Lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana.

We cannot confine a *Vaiṣṇava* within our material frame of caste and birth. At all, if I have any doubt about the holiness of Śrīla Nāmācārya Haridāsa Ṭhākura, then and only then this type of question can come into our material mind, otherwise not. Topmost honorable position (designation or title) was given by Śrīman Mahāprabhu to Haridāsa Ṭhākura — As “Nāmācārya”, what more can we expect than that! Because Śrī Harināma Prabhu is above all. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī pad also was bound to confirm this point in front of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura while staying with him at Nīlācala Dhāma. Our previous Gauḍīya guru-varga never approved that kind of doubt and suspicion. From *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* or from *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata* we know that Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was from *Yavana-kula*. So what? Again — How can we expect that a mistake could be done by the great *Vaiṣṇava Ācārya* like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pad? How can we expect that a mistake could be done by the great *Vaiṣṇava tattva-ācārya* like Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī pad? That is the main question. If we can identify any fault with them, then surely, they are not *ācārya*. Any *Vaiṣṇava ācārya* (pure — especially those who are the eternal *pārṣada* of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Deva) is always flawless. We can never expect any wrong *siddhānta* or wrong etiquette from them at all.

This kind of story as you are speaking, as you have heard from some source about Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pad is never applicable for him.

Long ago I also heard, but not directly, so I couldn't get any scope to crush that kind of wrong *siddhānta vicāra*. Many such stories are going on in this material world to put us in great confusion. So please try to depend upon the right source of *hari-kathā*. Our previous Gauḍīya Guru Varga, like Śrīla Viśvanātha

Cakravartī pad or Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa or Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura or Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda or Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja or Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja or Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja or Śrīla Bhakti Saraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja — none of them ever approved that type of fictitious story that has no background.

Also in Vṛndāvana some such so-called famous *sādhus* (?) are always busy to prove that Śrīla Sūta Deva Gosvāmī was originally a *Brāhmaṇa*, whereas we can find direct evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – his own comment that “we are *viloma yata*”. Then what solution (*siddhānta*) can you expect from them?

In near future I keep hope to write and speak more about this point. Excuse me.

Thanks a lot,

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go Mātā

Bābā Shyām Dās

QUESTION 3

In *Bhagavat Gita* chapter 7 in verses 8 and 9 Kṛṣṇa describes His impersonal aspect. Where it talks about the taste of water, the light of the sun, the heat of fire, etc. And in chapter 10, verse 36, it seems to be saying the same thing that was said in chapter 7, it would be logical to put it in line with these verses of chapter 7, but the distance between them is as much as 3 chapters [...] it would seem that Kṛṣṇa has finished one topic, started another, and then comes back to the previous one... What is the point here [...]?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

Dear Prabhuji

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Please accept my unalloyed love and affection. Actually Chapter 7 and Chapter 10 of *Gītā* are not the same, because Chapter 7 speaks about “*jñāna-vijñāna*”. Whereas chapter 10 speaks about *Vibhūti-yoga*. At the beginning of the seventh chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān speaks to Arjuna that:

*jñānaṁ te 'haṁ sa-vijñānam
idaṁ vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ
yaj jñātvā neha bhūyo 'nyaj
jñātavyam avaśiṣyate*

(Bg. 7.2)

I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge, both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know.

But at the beginning of the 10th chapter Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks to Arjuna that:

*etāṁ vibhūtiṁ yogaṁ ca
mama yo veti tattvataḥ
so 'vikalpena yogena
yujyate nātra saṁśayaḥ*

(Bg. 10.7)

One who is factually convinced of this opulence and mystic power of Mine engages in unalloyed devotional service; of this there is no doubt.

From *Gītā*'s seventh chapter, both verses 8 and 9 Kṛṣṇa describe His *jñāna* together with *vijñāna* to prove that “He” is omnipresent, which should not be realized as an impersonal aspect; rather, we can realize this as *advaya-jñāna-tattva* — together with the feeling of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, where it talks about the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the heat of fire etc. And in chapter seven, verse 7-9 (also onward other *śloka*s) describing about His *vibhūti*s, so surely this is not the same topic as was described previously in chapter seven.

*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya
prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ
praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu
śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu*

(Bg. 7.8)

O son of Kuntī, I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, and the syllable *om* in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and ability in man.

*punyo gandhaḥ prthivyām ca
tejaś cāsmi vibhāvasau
jīvanam sarva-bhūteṣu
tapaś cāsmi tapasviṣu*

(Bg. 7.9)

I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the heat in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penances of all ascetics.

*dyūtaṁ chalayatām asmi
tejaś tejasvinām aham
jaya 'smi vyavasāyo 'smi
sattvaṁ sattvavatām aham*

(Bg. 10.36)

I am also the gambling of cheats, and of the splendid, I am the splendour. I am victory, I am adventure, and I am the strength of the strong.

So it is my advice to you to consider those *śloka*s both from chapter 7 and chapter 10 very carefully to realize the theme there in.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

ABOUT HOUSEHOLDER LIFE

QUESTION 4

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

To [...] Mātājī

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. Your life is full of some mysterious events. Really, I feel for you. Life is very unstable and at the same time the duration of life is so short that even to solve one problem life can go away. Also, it is true that without problems life is not possible. Any situation or problem should be realized analytically on the background of that Absolute Reality, otherwise our false emotion can continue to run towards infinity.

My *paramahaṁsa guru-pādapadma*, Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāj, told: “Emotion leads to demotion and devotion leads to promotion.”

For Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* we must be ready to cut all our material relations, no doubt in it. Your present situation can allow you to do *hari-bhajana* safely together with your two sons, of course if you want to. You have your right to reach me with your sons to quench your burning heart; who can stop you from doing so? Do not give priority to those cheap sentimental issues in your life. Who is father? Who is mother? Who is husband? All bodily relations only. Our eternal relationship with *Guru-Vaiṣṇava-Bhagavān* should be realized to solve all problems.

Go on hearing those absolute *hari-kathā-kīrtanas* with full attention to get respite from this material trap of Māyādevī. Though you are not initiated as yet, still you can go on reciting *Pañca-tattva* and *Harināma* on a regular basis, together with your sons.

I can talk with you in detail when you are coming here.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son,

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 5

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

To [...] Prabhu

My dear son,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. All your questions are very sensitive and connected with so many conflicting issues. One by one I like to discuss.

First point about your career — you like to take a completely new decision. Before taking any such new decision, you must think about your ability and stamina. To run such a heavy risk for some uncertain goal is not good. So, until and unless you are overconfident about your future career, how can you take such a new decision? That is the question. Whereas you personally told me that you are the only earning member in your family. The proposal of enrolment of your name with one institution in India as a student of astrology to get a student visa is good, but before that, be sure that this cannot hamper your financial condition to support your family members. No doubt your staying in India is good for your spiritual life. Ok, over.

Your second question regarding *sādhū-saṅga*, this can never be under the control of anybody; it is an automatic factor. In the course of travelling the fourteen worlds, by chance a *jīvātmā* can get a chance to meet with a genuine *sādhū* to get *kṛpā* from him. Actually, all can be arranged by Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu. Of course, to understand a real *sādhū*, we need prematurity of *bhājana*, but anyway, *sādhū-saṅga* can never go in vain if there is no offence (*aparādha*).

To become a true representative of *sādhū-Guru-Vaiṣṇava* is not a matter of joke. Only and only when the heart of the disciple becomes totally harmonized with *Sad-guru*, then and only then it is possible for that disciple to represent his Gurudeva — not before that. Usually, such possibility is almost rare at present. A disciple who always likes to get unusual control over others to get *lābha*, *pūjā*, and *pratiṣṭhā* in the name of *sādhū-Guru-Vaiṣṇava* as their representative can destroy the whole system of *anugatyā* or *śrauta-panthā*.

Now at present the whole system of *bhājana* is in a dilemma. People are in confusion — whom to follow, how to follow. Whom to blame for that? Seniority or juniority depends only

upon *bhajana*-power, not on age factor. If you already have the direct association of a great *sādhū* in the true sense, then automatically you can realize the difference. Distortion of the facts can never be accepted by any wise man.

Any new method of preaching by anybody, by violating the *śrauta-panthā*, is strictly prohibited and at the same time also very offensive. So always be careful about this. Your honest sincerity can help you to develop the level of your consciousness to realize everything — good or bad, true or false. Please keep silence. Never try to find any faults with others, because arguments simply can increase your dissatisfaction, which is very dangerous for your future *bhajana* life.

I can talk with you in detail when you are coming here.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 6

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear [...] Prabhu,

Danḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. I have got the news that you have become a father. That's a great responsibility for you and your wife. Really, I like to see you become a very nice Kṛṣṇa-conscious family. This is my blessing upon you.

The only thing that is lacking in this world is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so with full enthusiasm and eagerness we have to connect ourselves always with pure devotees and try to follow their way of living. It is important that we always keep their association and try to follow their teachings. This daily practice can make us strong for day-to-day life.

Our most worshipful Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was also a householder, and we can learn from him how he used his time. He would wake up at two o'clock in the night, then start translating and writing so many books. He also completed almost his daily quota of chanting *Harināma* early in the morning. Then, at eight or nine o'clock, he went to the office to perform his duties. During lunchtime he would also write many songs and essays. Afterwards he resumed his work, and in the evening, after taking a little milk and one or two *capātīs*, he again chanted *Harināma*, performed some editorial *sevā*, then went to sleep. The next morning he again followed the same routine.

So, I know that you have so many responsibilities now, but please try to contribute also to our *vāṇī-sevā*. Tarun Kṛṣṇa Prabhu shows me your banners, and I am very happy with the *sevā* you are doing. Try to always use some time for *vāṇī-sevā*; that will help you very much to progress in your spiritual life.

All my blessings are with you, and I am looking forward to seeing you here in Māyāpura.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā
Your Bābā

QUESTION 7

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, my most beloved Bābājī.

My name is M [...], [...] Dāsa Prabhu's wife, from [...] We couldn't be more grateful for your blessings upon our new-born child, [...]. He is already five months old and full of health and bliss by your mercy.

So, as Arjuna's *Annaprāśana-yajña* day is getting closer, we humbly wonder if you could instruct us what to do and how to proceed with the grain initiation in our current location, as here in Brazil we do not know how to reach anyone qualified for this matter. Should we do it on our own? How could we receive your blessings for our son on such an occasion? Could our son have your *darśana* through a quick video call one day?

Even though I am a person full of defects, a fallen soul, today my heart is full of joy for finding the courage to write for the first time to a true devotee of the Lord. Please forgive me for wasting your precious time.

Gaura Nitāi!

Your aspiring servant

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. I am extremely busy, but still I cannot ignore you. Now at present, very often just go on playing the video of my *Vandanā* and *Mahā-mantra* in front of the baby, so that he can look and hear. On the day of the first grain festival, try to arrange only Jagannātha's dry rice-*prasāda*, and at that time I can recite *maṅgalācaraṇa* over a direct video call for the baby. Then you can give the first grain into the mouth of the baby with the feeling that I am personally giving the first grain into the baby's mouth.

Also, sweet rice can be offered to Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Thākura.

[...] th Dec. 2 [...], at 11:30 a.m. as per Indian Standard Time.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your elder son, Bābā Shyām Dās

QUESTION 8

I need to understand whom I can consider as a candidate for my life partner. I'm Russian. Should it be a Russian person in order to not make hybrids? Or just white? Should it be the person who speaks the same language?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

It is more practical to choose your partner from same country and same culture (on a spiritual basis) and matching your mood. His age should be elder than yours.

QUESTION 9

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Bābā. Although various difficulties and politics around devotional life sometimes discourage us, we have full faith in your guidance and simply want to continue our *hari-bhajana* under your shelter. My wife is also expecting a baby, and we seek your blessings for our growing family. Kindly instruct us how to remain steady in *bhajana* amidst these obstacles.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear [...] Prabhu,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all.

Know my unalloyed love and affection.

Your letter touched my heart to see your love and faith in me. The root cause of all countless problems is the lack of love and faith. Self-interest can compel us to enter into dirty politics; otherwise there should not be any complication in our *hari-bhajana* life.

Hari-kathā is my life and soul. Up to the last moment of my life I like to speak *hari-kathā*. Due to some dirty situation I am bound to stop *hari-kathā* at present, but surely, shortly I can start speaking *hari-kathā* with double energy. Let them burn out of jealousy. What does it concern me? I am waiting to see the face of your baby. Immediately after the birth, you can send me a video or picture. Go ahead with your *hari-bhajana* without any hesitation. I am always there with you.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your penniless Bābā,
Shyām Dās

QUESTION 10

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Bābā. My household life has become unbearable. Because of constant suffering, my husband's opposition to my *hari-bhajana*, and many painful circumstances, I sometimes lose all hope and even think about ending my life. Kindly instruct me how I should proceed. Should I remain in such an environment or leave it? How can I continue my spiritual life and protect my children while taking shelter of *Guru* and *Vaiṣṇavas*?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda used to say that: "This material world is a place of painful testing for us all." If we can bear, then we can survive. If we can have extreme enduring power (*tolerance*), then we can survive. Committing suicide is not a solution; it is a great sinful act. In the course of travelling through the fourteen worlds (this cosmic world), by chance I can meet with a pure *sādhū-Guru-Vaiṣṇava* who can save me by his causeless mercy. Anyway, your painful life is going to help you realize the real meaning of life. So do not worry. I am always with you all to give full protection. But without one hundred percent submission (*surrender*) unto the lotus feet of Sad-guru, one cannot feel one hundred percent security.

You can go through the *kīrtana* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

“*ātma-nivedana tuwā pade kori hoinu parama sukhī...*”

As per your own realization, you should avoid all and every kind of evil association to ensure one hundred percent perfect *sādhū-saṅga* in your life. (If not physically possible, then through hearing *hari-kathā* and *kīrtana* continuously.) If your husband is a burden or barrier for you in the way of your *hari-bhajana*, then you can cut the relationship at once. Try to find a very simple and fair way to earn some honest money to lead your life honestly with all your children, and go on hearing *hari-kathā* and *kīrtana* continually to gradually develop your consciousness. Then onward you will feel more and more comfortable and free from all tension. You can go on chanting *Pañca-tattva* and the *Mahā-mantra*. From any of my pre-*hari-kathā* *Vandanās* you can hear and learn both these vital life-saving mantras. Do not believe anybody one hundred percent and put yourself into a trap again. Only and only a pure *sādhū-Guru-Vaiṣṇava* should be trusted one hundred percent. Wait and watch with full patience for the coming changes in your life. Try to build your nectarean devotional life to gain entrance into the eternal world. Try to forget the past. Life is very short — we know that very well — but proper utilization of time in *hari-bhajana* can give you one hundred percent success. There is no doubt about it. Haribol.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your unworthy son,
Śrī Bābā Shyām Dās

QUESTION 11

Hare Kṛṣṇa,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma Mahārāj,

My name is [...], and I am 21 years old. First, I would like to thank you for your amazing classes and also for having blessed the Tulasī *kañṭhī* that I am using. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I have been facing difficulties for a long time; therefore I am sending this message so that through your guidance I can advance in *bhakti*. I have artistic skills that have been used for *sevā* in the Eternal Vedic Science study group for over three years. I am very happy to do that, but I cannot make money doing art for merchants or people in general, and it has me worried. On the other hand, my birth chart shows that I have strong planetary influences to become a businessman, and I like these subjects. The problem is that it makes me anxious to earn money, and recently I started chanting mantras for Śrī Gaṇeśa, Śrī Mahālakṣmī, and Śrī Kubera. I have been guided by Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Prabhu that this takes me away from *bhakti*, and I need your guidance on how I can fulfil my material *dharma* of being a businessman while at the same time being able to advance in the spiritual process.

Please, Mahārāj, help me. I have fallen many times from the spiritual process. I fall into all the traps of *māyā*, and more and more I feel that it is impossible to reach the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Govinda. That has nothing to do with the humility of the great saints. I really feel that maybe the process of *bhakti* is not for me.

Month after month my faith is waning. About two years ago it was much stronger, but now I do not eat *prasāda* anymore, I do not fast on the appearance days of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, I cannot read or listen to *hari-kathā* often, and the *japa* rounds, which

had already reached eighteen, have dropped to six because I do not have the strength to do more than that at the moment.

Please, Mahārāj, instruct me so that I can save my wretched soul.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear Prabhuji,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection to give protection to your life.

Our life can only and only be protected by pure *Guru-Vaiṣṇava kṛpā*, of course if we have strong faith in them. Day by day, if you lose faith in them, then you can discover yourself in the ocean of misery. If you lose your faith in *hari-kathā* from the lotus mouth of pure *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*, then there is no other way to protect you. You can feel the strong attraction of *māyā*, but still the *Vaiṣṇavas* can give you full protection. Also, your age factor is a big issue — that I know very well — but still, you can save yourself by the help of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava kṛpā*. A dog can also earn money — that is not a big issue — but it cannot develop the consciousness of a human being, who can exercise rational judgment.

You can earn money in a very sweet and fair way to give full protection to your *bhajana* life; otherwise, what is the use of money? Life is passing, but we are simply playing with *māyā*. Remember that life is not meant for material enjoyment. Life is very unstable, but still it can bestow the secret *amṛta-tattva* — *bhakti* — there is no doubt about it. Only your sincerity and loyalty can give you success. Try to renew your lost habit of observ-

ing *Ekādaśī* and other *vratas*, and also chanting *Pañca-tattva* and the *Harināma Mahā-mantra*. In this way you can revive your lost spiritual health. Try to come to me someday in the near future. Try to read *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata* and *Jaiva-dharma*. Also try to hear all the *kīrtanas* of Paramahansa Ācārya Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāj. If you prefer, you may also hear all my *kīrtanas* (already available on the website) on a regular basis. Remember, if you miss this kind of rare opportunity, there is no guarantee that in your next life you will receive such a chance.

Never mind. Excuse me.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 12

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Bābā. My beloved father has recently left this world. We are deeply afflicted and seek your guidance. Kindly instruct us how we should observe the *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇa* ceremonies, and please bestow your mercy upon my departed father so that he may receive your blessings.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

To [...] – My Beloved Father

Dear [...],

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. How is my little brother? It is really a very, very auspicious sign that your father left his body after hearing *hari-kathā* and *kīrtana* on Rādhāṣṭamī day. Everything in this material world is unstable, so *hari-bhajana* is the only solution. I think you can realize this point from your heart. On 25th Sep. (Sunday), during the dark-moon period of *Pitṛ-pakṣa*, is the best *tithi* for such ritualistic activities as *śrāddha*, *tarpaṇa*, etc. But please try to send me the picture of your father and his name in time.

Actually, I am going to perform the same ritualistic activities, such as *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇa*, for the grandmother of [...], so do not worry. Surely, I shall try to make time to do something for your father.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 13

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābājī,

I hope everything is going well with you. I am so very grateful to contact you again. Daily, I miss you so much not being able to be there to serve your blissful lotus feet. May one day Kṛṣṇa, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, all *Guru-varga*, and you forgive me for my offences and for being such a fallen and contaminated *jīva*.

In my last letter, I mentioned my kids and my desire to bring them with me to serve your blissful lotus feet. I really appreciate your kind and supportive answer regarding that. Prabhu Kṛṣṇa Dāsa has kindly and closely advised me about my kids' progress in *bhakti*, and was concerned whether they were really ready to go with me to India. M[...] has also advised me on that.

During this period, I have observed them and tried to improve their dedication to the process of *bhakti*. However, they still are not following the four regulative principles perfectly, and my older son is still eating white meat and using bad language, even though I have tried to guide him. He had some health issues and did not want to observe *Ekādaśī*. They are not chanting the *Mahā-mantra* on *japa-mālā*. My younger son has started observing *Ekādaśī* and is doing well. However, he also is not chanting the *Mahā-mantra* on a *japa-mālā*.

I am afraid they are not well prepared to serve your lotus feet with the sincerity and purity required, and that they may commit offences that could compromise their spiritual path in the future. Also, their schools do not allow them to miss thirty days of classes. Do you believe they would be able to go with me to India to serve your lotus feet? I would be most grateful for your

advice and guidance on this, if possible. Please forgive me again for my faults and contamination. May one day Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and the entire *Guru-varga* forgive me and bestow upon me their eternal mercy so that I may serve you and the whole *Guru-varga* with all sincerity and the purest heart, Mahārāj-jī.

Truly yours in the service of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Respectfully yours, with sincere gratitude.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear Mama,

Try to know my unalloyed love and affection.

Look! I am not such an important personality that you should engage yourself together with all your children in my *sevā*. Rather, you should think of Śrīla Prabhu-pāda Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura and serve him through me.

Also, it is my suggestion that you allow all your children to grow naturally, while making sure that they do not get any opportunity for evil association (*asat-saṅga*). Then, gradually allow them to hear my sweet *kīrtanas* (Bengali, Hindi, and Sanskrit), and afterwards you can let them hear some gentle *hari-kathā* suitable for them.

Without applying pressure on anyone, a natural response is more practical, because all those *jīvātmās* who have come to you as your children in this life may carry their respective impure *saṁskāras*, which can initially prevent them from accepting

sanātana-dharma. Therefore, it is more practical to wait patiently for their natural transformation before bringing them to India to meet me and receive my direct love and affection.

Although externally you are all far away from me, I am always with you through my *Gaura-vāñī-sevā*. Be assured of this.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 14

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear Mama,

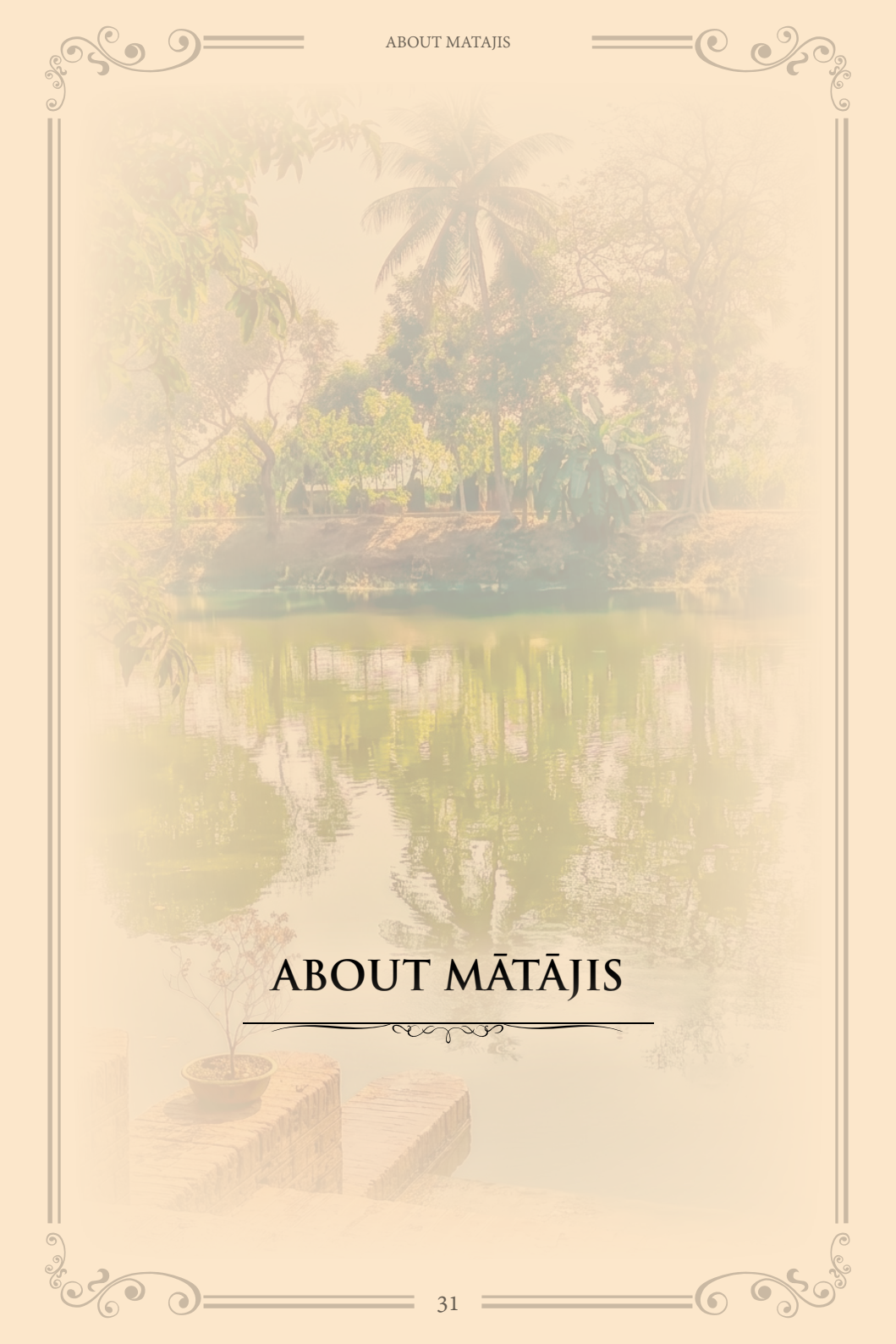
Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. Really, I am very, very happy to see the picture of my little brother. When and how can I get his (Raman's) association — that is the main question. A *Vaiṣṇava* baby is really very rare. I would like to hand over all the responsibility of *sevā* to him. Please take proper care of my little brother. This is my request to you. From time to time you can send me pictures of my little

brother so that I may feel happy. How is your health? Please let me know.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son.



ABOUT MĀTĀJIS

QUESTION 15

This is a letter written by Śrīla Babaji Mahārāj in response to some recently published comments on the article we are publishing named “*Those mātājis they cannot act as ācārya to give dikṣā or sannyāsa but can give śikṣā if at all they are tattva-vett-vi-viduṣi realized souls*”

Below you can find some of the comments, and after the answer given by Śrīla Babaji Mahārāj

Comment No. 1

There are many scriptures, but we don't follow everything. We follow *Vaiṣṇava* scripture, and in *Sat Kriya Sara Dipika* it is stated that Mātājis can be given the renounce order.

Comment No. 2

If we accept *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* as our *pramāṇa*, then we would have also to accept that it allows only a *brāhmaṇa* to be a *guru*.

It says:

*prapitsur mantra-nirataṁ prājñāṁ hitaparaṁ śucim | praśāntaṁ
niyataṁ vṛttau bhajed dvija-varaṁ gurum ||38||*

Thus, one who is desirous of surrendering with faith should take shelter of a *guru* who is always engaged in chanting the *mantra* and is a knower of *bhakti*-

siddhānta (*prājñam*), is always engaged, without any desire for personal benefit, in showering mercy on fallen souls (*hita-param*), who is always pure in heart or free of sins, peaceful, and always committed to his prescribed duties (ordained by his guru or by *varṇāśrama*). Such a *guru* should be the best of the twice-born (*dvija-varam* meaning *brāhmaṇa*).

According to this definition of a *brāhmaṇa*, the majority of male *gurus* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* would not meet the qualifications. The verse requires a *guru* to have undergone the various *saṁskāras*, beginning from one's birth. These *saṁskāras* are described in *smṛti-śāstras*. They also require birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family. According to the *smṛtis*, these *saṁskāras* cannot be performed for one who is not born to *brāhmaṇa* parents. The above verse from *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* also talks about the six activities of a *brāhmaṇa*: studying *śāstra*, teaching *śāstra*, performing *yajña* for oneself, performing *yajña* for others as a priest, giving charity, and accepting charity. If we apply this definition of a *brāhmaṇa*, then most *gurus* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* would not qualify. If, however, we do not accept this definition, then we apply *śāstra* selectively. That is considered a defect—*ardha-kukkuṭi-nyāya*. This means we accept what is convenient and reject what is troublesome.

Comment No.3

Seems to me like very out of line *smarta Brahmin* nonsense talk.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga to whom it may concern.

Dear / Devotees,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. I beg for all your blessing to survive in *gauḍīya bhajan*. Try to know my unalloyed sincerity unto the Lotus feet of our *guru-varga* to protect the absolute dignity of our *sampradāik vāṇī vaibhava*. Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī Pati Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda Paramahansa Guru said that: “You have already left the way of *praṇipāt-paripraśna* to avoid connection with the absolute truth and you have accepted the way of *tarka* (logic) to get lost forever in the ocean of *māyā*. What we can do for you!”

Actually, our challenging mood or audacity can throw us into the ocean of *māyā* forever. Only this kind of benefit we can get, nothing else. Serving temperament and humble mood lost means everything lost. Actually, pure *attma* is never confined within body limit, they are beyond the limit of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, because this is only applicable for bonded *jīvas* at least having some faith in Vedic injunctions. Also, man-women conception is very sensitive issue for those bonded *jīvas*, which is the only reason for why Śrīman Mahāprabhu was very very strict about this point. Of course, surely that doesn’t mean that *mātājis* are all useless. They have the very vital part to play in our Vedic society as ideal mothers. By the causeless mercy of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoḍ Ṭhākura we know the essence of all Vedic *sāstra*. He has pointed out that “*vṛitta brahmanism*” is far more practical and important than “*soukra brahmanism*”, but still we should not break the social system based on *varṇāśrama-dharma*. As per the following *śloka* quoted from Śrī Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta we know the absolute *siddhānta vichar* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu:

*kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*

(Cc Madhya 8.128)

Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī* or a *śūdra* — regardless of what he is — he can become a spiritual master if he is *kṛṣṇa tattva vit*.

We know the following *śloka* from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7th canto that:

*viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacaṁ variṣṭham
manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārtha-
prāṇaṁ punāti sa kulāṁ na tu bhūrimānaḥ*

(ŚB 7.9.10)

If a *brāhmaṇa* has all twelve of the brahminical qualifications [as they are stated in the book called *Sanat-sujāta*] but is not a devotee and is averse to the lotus feet of the Lord, he is certainly lower than a devotee who is a dog-eater but who has dedicated everything — mind, words, activities, wealth, and life — to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee is better than such a *brāhmaṇa* because the devotee can purify his whole family, whereas the so-called *brāhmaṇa* in a position of false prestige cannot purify even himself.

He who is *kṛṣṇa tattva vit* he is surely *guru*, but due to some specific reasons usually *mātājis* cannot act as an *acārya* (but can act as *śikṣā-guru*) or even they should not step into renounced order. *Manu saṁhitā* never approved the free (or fanciful) life-

style of *mātājis*, so they should be under the sweet control of father, mother, brother or husband etc. Due to shortage of time and space only we would like to quote some selected evidence in favour of the above *siddhānta vichar*. As per ‘*Samskar Dipika*’ compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī we can find the following *śloka*, first chapter 2nd *śloka*.

*brahman-kṣatriyaḥ-visaḥam āśrama vidhi bodhitah
strī – śūdrā – dwija bandhu namāśramah prati sheditah*

Āśrama adhikāra (right) is approved for those *brahmanas*, *kṣatriyaḥ* and *vaiśyāḥs* in *śāstra*. *Strī*, *śūdrā* and *dwija bandhu*, I mean fallen *Brahmins* – they have no right to step into any *āśrama* because this is strictly prohibited in *śāstra*.

Also, Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura has confirmed this point in *Śrī Śrī Caitanya-Śikṣāmṛta* 2nd chapter or 2nd rainfall 4th chapter on the topic of the utility of those women in *grhastha* life: “For those women *grhastha āśrama* is suitable for them or in some special cases *vanaprastha* can be possible, except that any other *āśrama* (or renounced order) not to be accepted by them. Any special powerful women by achieving the right of entering into *brahmacārya* or *sannyāsa āśrama* on the strength of *para-vidyā* — *dharma* — if at all came out successful or can come out successful, surely that should not be accepted as evidence for those women having soft *śraddhā* (like you), soft body and soft intellect (or mind).”

Ok still if you like to kick out *Bharadvaja-saṁhitā* even after watching the *kṛpā* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu on Bharadvaja Ṛṣi at Śrī dhāma Māyāpur (all *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* honour that special place as Bharadvaja Tila as per *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma*

parikramā khaṇḍa), but how it is possible for you to avoid Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His instructions based on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? Not even single evidence you can quote in favour of your opinion to establish your false ego. Repeated use of this word—male *guru*, male *guru*, male *guru* by you can confirm your strong desire to become a female *guru* by violating the instructions by Gauḍīya *guru varga*. Your *Gurudeva* (?) could give you fitting answer to your challenging mood, but alas he is no more here on this earth with us. By watching the apparent angry mood of Shankar Bhagavān against the Prajāpati Dakṣa to give him heavy punishment, if you are not ready to accept him as Vaiṣṇava Raja then what it concerns to us, because we can realise very easily that you are blind. Actually, *kaṇṭha jīvattama* can never attain *maṅgala* but *niṣkaṇṭha* – Yayati or Ajāmila or Saubhari Ṛṣi they could attain *maṅgala* because at least there was no duplicity inside their heart.

I am less interested to pass any remark about the present toxic or dirty situation created by some demons in the holy place of Nāma-Hatta established by Śrīmān Nityānanda Prabhu (though Nāma-Hatta is eternally present still was brought down by Him) by the help of which whole world can get perfect guidance. When we can see the following evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.10 *śloka* that:

*viprād dvi-śaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-pādāravinda-vimukhāt
śvapakam varīṣṭham manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārtha-
prāṇam punāti sa kulaṁ na tu bhūrimānaḥ*

(ŚB 7.9.10)

If a *brāhmaṇa* has all twelve of the brahminical qualifications [as they are stated in the book called *Sanat-Sujāta*] but is not a devotee and is averse to the lotus feet of the Lord, he is certainly lower than

a devotee who is a dog-eater but who has dedicated everything — mind, words, activities, wealth, and life — to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee is better than such a *brāhmaṇa* because the devotee can purify his whole family, whereas the so-called *brāhmaṇa* in a position of false prestige cannot purify even himself.

Then where from the question of disqualification of most of our Gauḍīya *ācāryas* (Gauḍīya *guru-varga* but not those present *ācāryas*) coming? Surely all scriptural evidence cannot be accepted by us, but those *sattvik Purāṇas* and *Samhitā* can be accepted those which are in favour of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīmān Mahāprabhu also wanted to advocate this *siddhānta vichar*. He told that *Pancharātra* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* express the same *siddhānta vichar*.

From *Hayaśīrṣa Pancharātra* you can get the clue from C.c. Madhya 20/237 or from *Narad Pancharātra* or from many other sources Śrīmān Mahāprabhu quoted many evidences (you can go through *sanātana-śikṣā* or *rūpa-śikṣā* etc.).

In *Hari bhakti vilas* all different countless evidences can be found quoted from different *śāstras* by Śrīla Sanātan Gosvāmīpad as per the direct instruction of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu but surely you will be in big confusion regarding the authenticity of those evidences if you are not enjoying full *kṛpā* of our Gauḍīya *guru-varga*. As for example, the topic of initiation or the topic of *guru-śiṣya* testing process or their symptoms etc. You can try to understand those topics analytically (without *guru-ānugatya*) but externally you can find just the opposite of what our *guru-varga* done. If at all I have taken shelter unto the lotus feet of any *sad guru* (Sarasvat Gauḍīya *guru-varga*) from our own *sampradāya* then how it is possible for me to ignore or insult

Gauḍīya *guru-varga* like Sad-Gosvāmīs or Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura or Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda or Śrīmān Mahāprabhu who is our *saṅkīrtan piṭhā*. Surely my rude behaviour and fanciful crazy mind can take me away from Gauḍīya *guru-varga* forever. Even I cannot have my right to identify myself as a Gauḍīya devotee, rather those Gauḍīya *guru-varga* can identify me as a traitor or as a spy of Kali.

QUESTION 16

Gaura Hari Hari Bol! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Respected Bābājī Mahārāj,

Please accept my *praṇāma* unto your lotus feet. I have repeatedly seen your strong preaching about female *gurus* giving *dīkṣā*. But, knowing only a little of the history of our *guru-paramparā*, I know that there have been female *dīkṣā-gurus* in our own *sampradāya*. I read in your article about Jāhnavā Mātā being an exception because she is *Svarūpa-śakti*. But then what about the other female *dīkṣā-gurus*? There was also Hemalatā Gosvāminī and others later on, before Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, although, as I understand, that was an exception when no qualified male *guru* was available. With my conditioned mind I can only think that you stress this point about female *dīkṣā-gurus* so much because nowadays it is becoming a fashion to become a *guru*, and you cannot tolerate seeing unqualified persons taking such a position. That applies to both unqualified male and female *gurus*. Especially women, when they are still on the material platform,

are not at all suitable for such a position. I strongly agree on that point. And I thought that actually every real *Vaiṣṇava* guru has to be empowered by *Svarūpa-śakti*, regardless of being male or female. So, because of this, I could not understand your point as to why you stress so much that female *gurus* should not give *dīkṣā*. Also, I could not find the reply in your recently published article. Should I think that the female *dīkṣā-gurus* in our *sampradāya* were all useless, or that their *mantra* was useless? So this doubt has been created in my mind, and I am fearing to commit *aparādha* to them. If I ask questions, that does not mean that I disrespect, offend, or challenge anyone. If I am treated as an offender just because I ask questions, and if I might go to hell simply because I ask questions, then maybe it is better to stop reading *hari-kathā* and trying to understand anything. I will only pluck flowers and chant *harināma*, etc. I want to offer my respects to all *Vaiṣṇavas*. I do not want to take any sides in arguments and discussions. Please excuse me for trying to enter a domain that is not meant for me. In my personal case, I know very well that I have a weak mind, and I never aspire to take *sannyāsa* or become a *dīkṣā-guru*. Please excuse me, dear Bābājī Mahārāj, for having the audacity to ask these questions. I will not again comment on your *hari-kathā*.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

To the Honourable Mātājī [...]

Dear Mātājī,

Daṇḍavat unto your lotus feet.

I seek your unalloyed *krpā* to give a fitting answer to those antagonists. Really, I always feel very, very happy to see all your

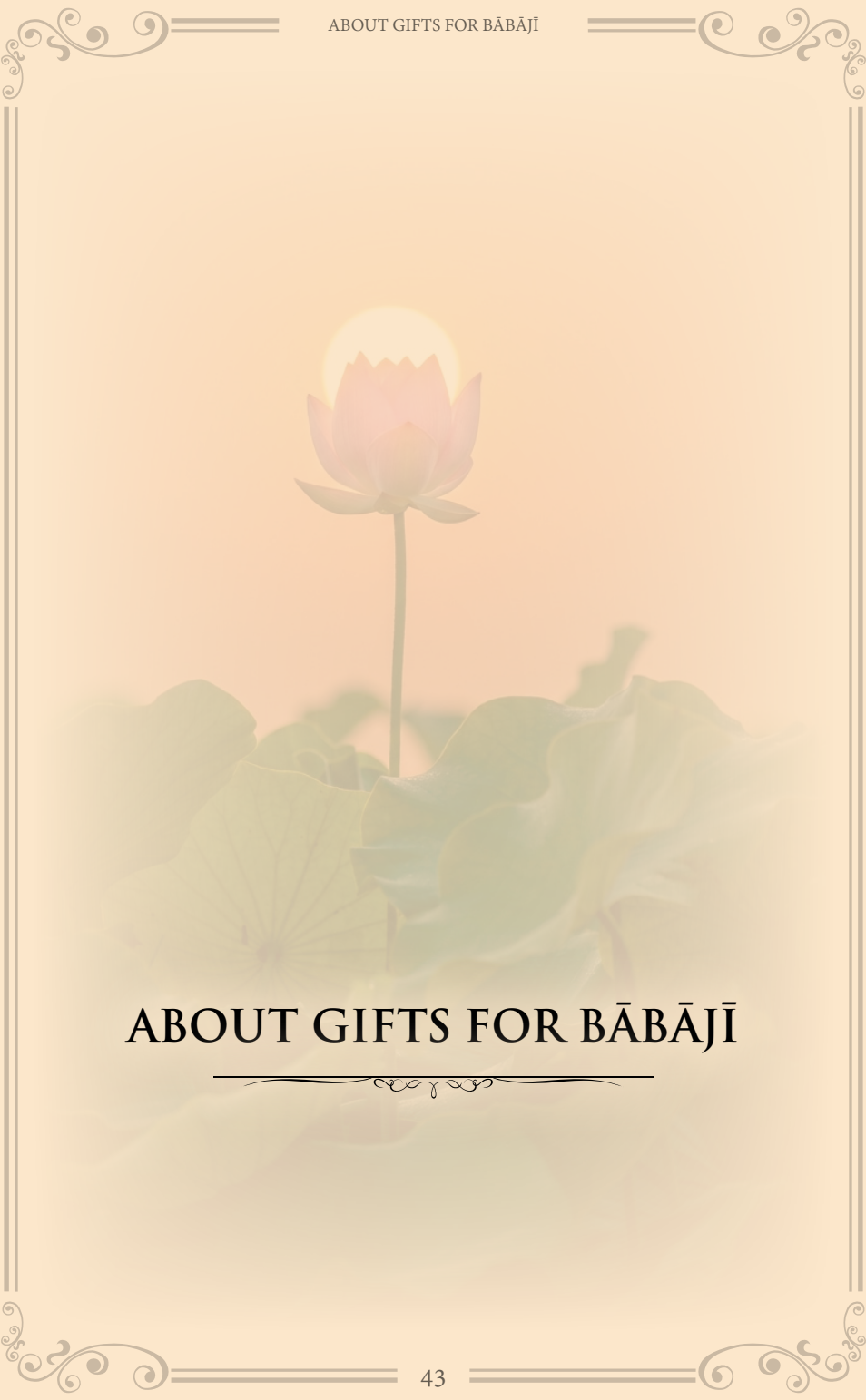
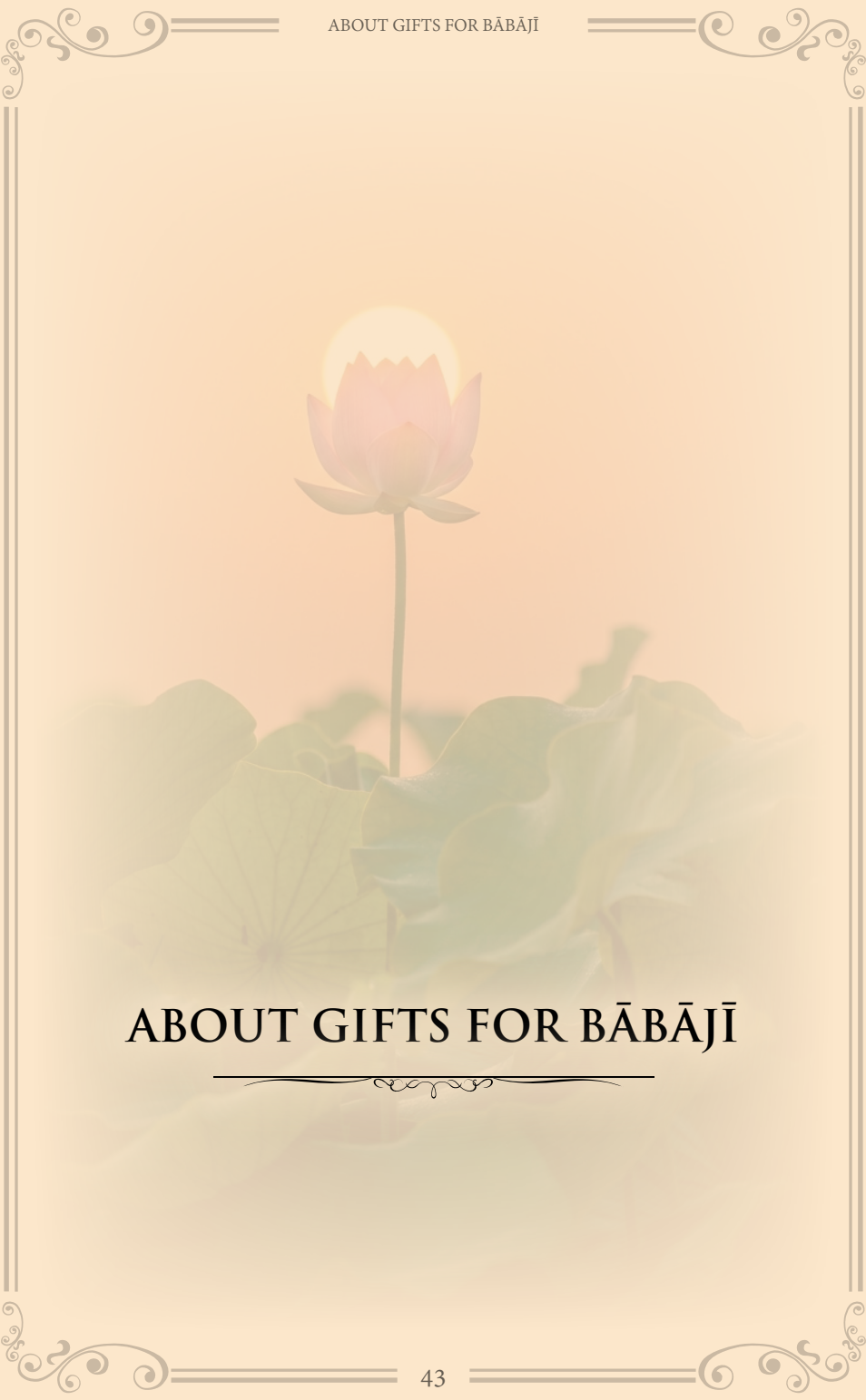
questions — you know it very well. I never feel tired of giving absolute answers to those questions. But this time your question could not draw my affection due to your challenging mood against our *śrauta-panthā*. You know very well that I have no personal opinion. I can only show you all the scriptural evidences presented by our Gauḍīya *guru-varga*. Then why have you become upset after getting the appropriate answer? I never feel disturbed, nor do I fear facing any authentic question from you all. But surely I cannot bear the breaking of the divine dignity of our Gauḍīya *guru-paramparā*. Your comment, “I have repeatedly seen your strong preaching against female gurus giving *dīkṣā* (or *sannyāsa*),” is totally baseless, because I think you are blind and unable to see that my heart is always busy protecting and preserving the divine dignity of our *sampradāyika-vāṇī-vaibhava*. Never try to misunderstand me, because all of you, my children, may kick on my chest, but it is my duty to forgo all this nonsense. Previously you received all the scientific answers to your questions. I think your unknown *asat-saṅga* is going to misguide you. I have no objection if you like to reject me, because I am a neutral personality, beyond any *lābhā*, *pūjā*, or *pratiṣṭhā*. I never expect anything from anybody. I never invited you or anybody into my life, but everyone came automatically. Some have left me, but I do not care. I have nothing to do with that. Even after giving so many scriptural evidences, still today you are not at all ready to stop arguing. I regret that. I am never influenced by anybody.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā,

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās,
one of your aspiring servants.





ABOUT GIFTS FOR BĀBĀJĪ

QUESTION 17

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga!

Hare Kṛṣṇa Bābā. Please accept my *daṇḍavat praṇāma*.

You are very kind to me and gentle. I'm very grateful for that.

I think I will fail all your tests. I'm not humble so I don't have the symptoms of humbleness. I think I can follow your direct instructions in order to learn etiquette and at the same time not to be falsely humble. I promise I will try to do my best to do only what pleases you. Happy birthday!

[...] Dāsī. *Daṇḍavat*

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru & Gaurāṅga

To my dear foolish sweet Mama

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. I highly appreciate your deep concern about me and my *bhajana* — which is quite natural in the way of genuine eternal relationship. But who that crazy idiot told you that my *āvirbhāva-tithi* is on Aśoka Aṣṭamī (Vasanta Aṣṭamī), Madhu-māsa — just the previous day of Rāma-navamī *tithi*?

Actually, I have no *āvirbhāva-tithi*, because I am eternal present. If you try to share this dirty news with anybody then I can beat you like Paraśurāma, no excuse. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection and please wait and watch for the *vāstava* (real) *kṛpā* in your life. I am always with you.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service
of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā,

Your useless son, Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 18

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

To My Mama [...]

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. Really, I was little bit angry to see you sending such a costly thing for me, but as and when I looked at the letter I cooled down. No doubt you are my genuine mother, but don't forget that at present your son is a *sannyāsī*. So how can you allow me to use such a costly thing? Specially at present you have no income source, so, wastage of money is not at all good. I have nothing to pay you back, also it is true that if I become inundated to you then the eternal relationship can move toward infinity, which is good for both of us. Actually, I have no time to use all those things — that is the main problem. I pray for you unto the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda to accept your *sevā*.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son, Bābā

QUESTION 19

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

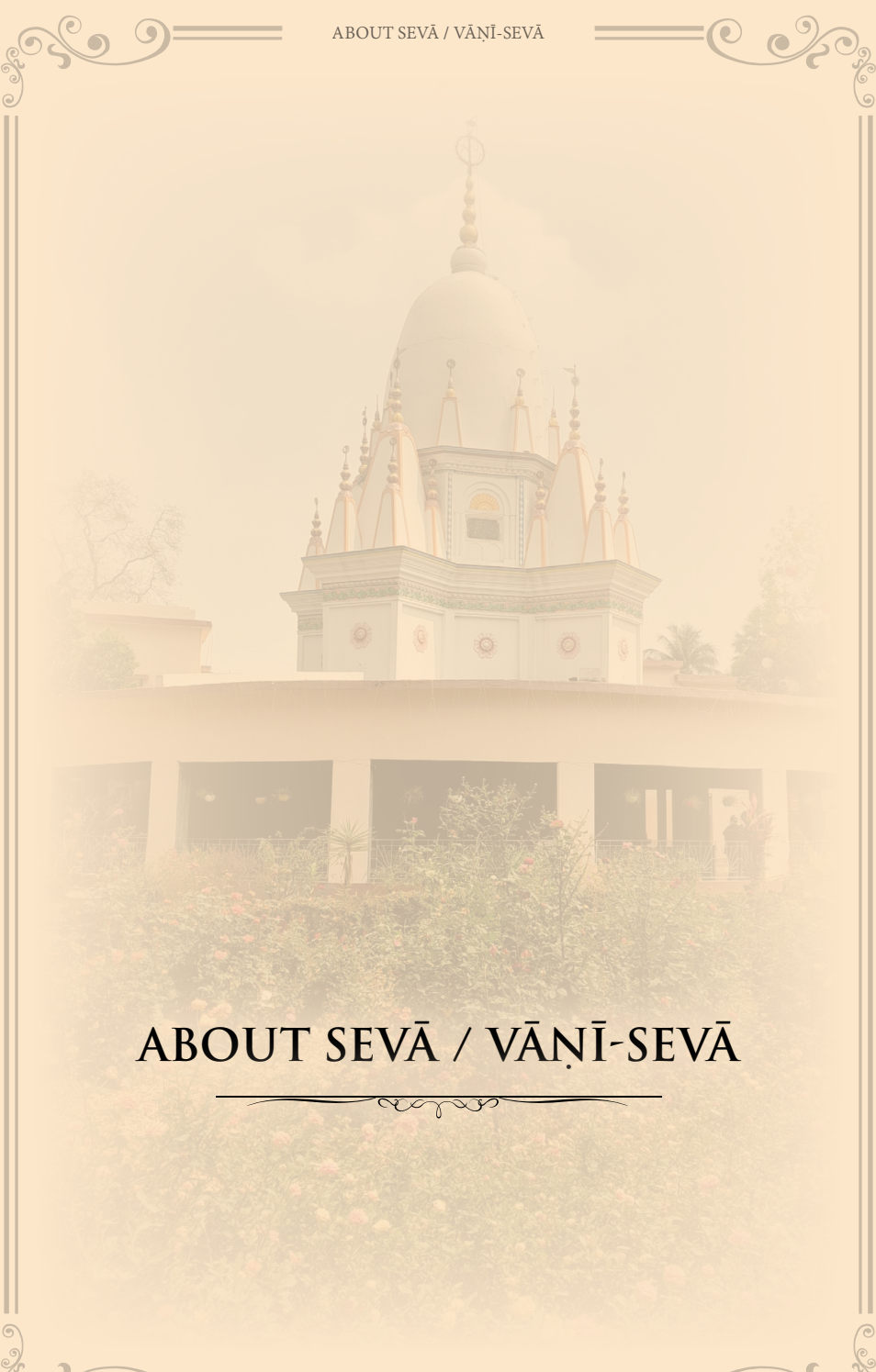
All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

Dear Mātājī, *Daṇḍavat praṇāma* to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. Hope you all ok with your positive mood to start *hari-bhajana*, which is the only way to get rid of Māyā to swim into the ocean of blissful nectar. I am always grateful to you all, because you all are trying to assist me in my *hari-bhajana*. My life style is so simple so simple that I cannot find any application of your sophisticated cooking system sent by you.

Sorry! Please do not waste money. Waiting to meet you.
Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā,

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās



ABOUT SEVĀ / VĀṆĪ-SEVĀ

QUESTION 20

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear [...] Mātājī,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. I am very happy to know your desire to meet me shortly to bless me. All your enthusiastic mood to serve *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*-Bhagavān can help you big way to make progress in your spiritual life. *Aprākṛta-vāñī-sevā* can give you proper success, no doubt in it. Don't worry, I am always with you all.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

QUESTION 21

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

To [...]

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. As per your declaration, you 2 are going to follow *brahmacarya-vrata*. Until and unless you are successful to engage all your sense organs and mind in *Guru-Vaiṣṇava-Bhagavān-sevā* you can never come out successful in devotional life. Who's speaking what? — I am less interested about that, but what Śrīla Prabhupāda told — that I wanted to project. Now you will have to search your heart to find answer to my question of *Guru-sevā*. If you cannot find any application (in *Guru-sevā*) of what you were learning then what is the use? Sanskrit and Bengali can give you some backing in your *bhajana* if at all can be applied properly; otherwise all material education is useless in *Hari-bhajana*. Keeping in mind the gravity of *vāṇī-sevā*, you must get preparation very quickly to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda. Through the computer you will have to do *vāṇī-sevā* in all different ways. Internet course you can complete if you think it fits. Life is so short that we should not waste our time. Homely *sevā* is a burden for you? Excuse me, never try to misunderstand me; I am always with you.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your beloved,
Śrī Shyām Bābā

QUESTION 22

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear Mātājī,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. I am very happy to see your divine *vāñī-sevā* mood. Your highness has taken the divine responsibility to help us to do flawless *vāñī-sevā* regarding English publication. Only I have the vigorous energy to continue Bhakti-siddhānta *vāñī-sevā* by the blessing of Gauḍīya *guru-varga*, but the lack of my eligibility make me feel shy in front of you all, because I was a pure science student. Please excuse me for that. Anyway, I am getting divine help from Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu through you all. My unending energy is giving me inspiration to go ahead with more and more *vāñī-sevā*, but I am afraid because life is very short. How far, how much I can come out successful — that I don't know.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Yours, a fallen son,
Śrī Bābā Shyām Dās

QUESTION 23

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Please know my unalloyed love and affection. In the name of my *śikṣā*-Gurudeva, Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Vaibhava Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, my heart always dancing. Also, in the name of some disciple who has a genuine link with him like Śrīpāda Niṣkiñcana Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Paryāṭaka Mahārāja or Śrīpāda Brajendra Prabhu, etc., I became very very happy. It is so nice of you that you always try to keep a link with me through *hari-kathā*, which can surely prove your authenticity, so I have no doubt in it that you are enjoying *guru-kṛpā*. *Guru-kṛpā* is the most fundamental objective in the way of *Hari-bhajana*. *Guru-tattva* is the unique and *akhaṇḍa-tattva*, so your positive feeling of *Guru-sevā* can surely help you to do voice translation of *Gītā Rahasya Dhyāna*, which I think can bring an evolution in our *Vaiṣṇava* society, because this is the most fundamental teachings (I mean the foundation of spiritual life) in the way of Gauḍīya *bhajana*, still which has been neglected all the way by those *sahajiyās* to go to hell. So think your such *sevā* can bring a flood of *kṛpā* in your *bhajana* life. Please don't fear, try to keep self-confidence and, if possible, you can send me a sample of your first trial run *sevā*. If I find it all ok, then what problem in it to keep it open for the whole world for their benefit? Also, you can get this whole *pravacana* in written note form, so that we can publish in book form. Anyway, somebody ready to pay for that. Why not you come here and stay (at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura) with us so that we can take care of you?

Wish you good luck.

Thanks a lot in the *sevā* of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

Special Note:

At present if you prefer to start your *sevā* of voice translation of *Upadeśāmṛta* (by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda) still it is ok, but the first one (*Bhagavad-gītā*) is more important, because we are waiting for long time to get it translated by a competent personality (devotee) who can catch the central theme of each and every *Gītā pravacana*. You have the chance to go through each and every *Gītā pravacana* again and again to understand properly, to translate accurately.

QUESTION 24

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear [...] Dāsa Prabhu,

Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. I am very afraid

of the warning given by Śrīla Prabhupāda that: “Slightest deviation from the track of *guru-pāda-padma* can make you fall down.” So, when I am speaking *hari-kathā* or writing something or doing any *sevā*, I am always very careful about how to satisfy Śrīla Prabhupāda and *guru-varga* 100%. No smell of self-interest should be there in my heart. As per *sāstra-siddhānta*, if I am 100% harmonized with the heart of Śrīla Prabhupāda, then and only then it is possible for me to represent Śrīla Prabhupāda, otherwise I will have to get severe punishment for my fanciful attitude. Any *mahājana-vākya* (speech) or *kīrtana* should be quoted intact way without changing even dot, comma, full stop, etc. This is the perfect *siddhānta-vicāra*, because their heart is so sophisticated and full of gravity that it is really impossible for me to understand. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that: “If we are going to speak something of our own by avoiding all the quotations of our *guru-varga* (who all are in our Gaudīya *paramparā* line), then we will have to take the responsibility for that.” Pure *Guru-Vaiṣṇavas* are less interested to gather *lābha*, *pūjā*, *pratiṣṭhā*, so they always try to follow the teachings received from *śrauta-vāṇī* (*guru-paramparā*). *Śuddha Guru-Vaiṣṇavas* are self-effulgent objects like the sun-god, so their divine speech or writing or their divine personality itself can represent themselves in front of public if they are lucky enough to accept those in their own life.

As per Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura all our strong personal efforts of preaching can come to a flop end if those people are not at all ready to cut their material bondage in front of whom I am going to preach. So anyway, we are less interested about how many people going to vote us, rather we are interested about the quality shown by Śrīla Prabhupāda. So, it is my strong request to you to put all your energy in direct *vāṇī-sevā* like translation of *hari-kathā*, or translation of countless articles published on our website which is more practical, otherwise there is every possibility to get deviated from Śrīla

Prabhupāda (or *śrauta-panthā*). If you can realise my heart 100% then surely you can try to do *sevā* accordingly. You are my child, so never try to misunderstand me.

Regarding *Guru-Vaiṣṇava kṛpā-prāpti* (I mean to get *kṛpā* of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*) Śrīla Prabhupāda never wanted to put any restriction, because according to the *sukṛti* of *jīva* they can get it in course of time. Of course I am not going to speak about high level intimate association of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava* right now, which can bring problem for those newcomers.

Please go through my previous letter to understand and realise my heart. “Slow but steady wins the race”— this is the formula shown by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I am in great pressure with all the proper management of the construction job of the new place of *hari-kathā* or with *gośālā-sevā* together with continuous *vāñī-sevā*, etc., but still by the endless mercy of *guru-varga* I am fine, because only I like to become a faithful dog of my *guru-varga* to protect their absolute interest. If your total responsibility (good or bad) is lying with me, then be sure I can protect you 100%, otherwise not. Those who got the scope to stay with Śrīla Prabhupāda for a long time (like 30 or 40 years) — they could not understand him, so how can you expect that common people can know me so easily? Śrīla Prabhupāda said that: “If one can get established in the *ācāra-ādarśa* (idealism) and the teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu then this is itself a great preaching.” Then why are you worried with those foolish people? Countless writings and *hari-kathā* are waiting for your translation, then why is your Website/Facebook so poor and blank, I don’t know. Why you are only busy with this small book? Anyway, I have no objection if you publish this book, but you should write the following note in the book:

“All the footnotes given in the book are represented by [...] Dāsa Prabhu (the Brazilian devotee), the disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Vijñāna Bhāratī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, according to his own understanding.”

Otherwise, I need to go through those footnotes. One example given below:

“The *bhajana-kuṭīra* is a simple room, a small hut dedicated exclusively to *bhajana*, the worship of Kṛṣṇa and the chanting of the Holy Names. It is usually a very small house, devoid of furniture and comforts, such as a room for meditation where there are no other stimuli and where very advanced devotees spend their days reciting the greatest of all mantras.”

Śrīla Bābā Mahārāja’s version below:

“The word “*bhajana-kuṭīra*” means a small hut (made of clay and straw, etc.), or a small room where a pure *Vaiṣṇava* is doing *nāma-bhajana* with full loveful devotional mood, where Kali cannot get entry.”

Never mind. Excuse me if you can.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā,

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 25

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

My dear father [...] Dāsa,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. Please don't try to misunderstand me. It is not my desire that you publish the book without any footnotes, but due to my tremendous affection I wanted to convey to you my heart, that if there are some necessary changes, then nobody can misunderstand you. That is why I wanted to give the appropriate meanings of those words, or you can publish those footnotes according to your understanding in your name. I have no objection to it, but you will have to go through those footnotes again to clarify those points scientifically. If there is at all any special question, then surely I can cooperate with you. Don't forget that we are all together trying to satisfy Prabhupāda to serve his mission flawlessly.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your son —
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 26

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

To [...] Prabhu

My dear son,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all.

Know my unalloyed love and affection. Now at present we are passing through a very hard and critical time of Kali, so at all the questions of survival is the most vital question in front of us in our *bhajana* life. So, I never like to start any competition or argument with anyone or with any society or with any group because this can just spoil my time of *bhajana*. The sole responsibility of Śrī Gaura-*vāṇī-pracāra* is eternally resting in the hand of Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu, so who am I to venture to take a new step without His approval? Up to now whatever preaching is done by the inspiration and approval of Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu, though not enough, is still not so bad, because the whole world is running towards the wrong direction. Who can pay attention to my absolute call — that is the most vital question at present. By looking at the present dirty condition of the so-called devotional field, I purposely have taken the decision to save you all without any further extension of our plan and program.

If you yourself can catch the actual fire glowing inside my heart by just staying beside me, then automatically our preaching *sevā* can go further without wasting money and energy at present. I think your previous plan to stay near me at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura

with your translation *sevā*, etc. is more practical than running behind a mirage. Also, your broken health and mental weakness cannot allow you to take on a big responsibility of preaching. Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava can see the past, present and future clearly. Only money power is not a solution; we need all absolutely dedicated souls, but where and how we can get such genuine *sevaka*? Your previous plan to get together (we all) in a certain garden to celebrate any *utsava* is not bad. So, towards this end, we can jointly try our best after this current construction *sevā* of the new place of Bengali *hari-kathā* is over at Godrumadvīpa. So long as I am living on this earth, this is the best policy for us to stay together at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura with an honest *sevā* mood. Our *viśuddha-ācāra-ācaraṇa* and our absolute effort to preach *viśuddha Gauravāṇī* will surely propagate all around the world today or tomorrow. *Viśuddha-bhakti-pracāra* as spoken by Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not so easy; it is time-consuming, and at the same time the procedure is very slow. So please try to think over and again before taking any new step. We like to follow our *guru-varga* in *toto*. Please never mind. Waiting for your quick reply.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

Special Note:

My dear father — never mind, I think it is more practical to follow the strict rules and regulations established by Śrīla Prabhupāda. At the time of Śrīla Prabhupāda anybody was at least allowed to have his direct *darśana* to get purified, but the

question of *harināma* or *dīkṣā* or *sannyāsa* was not so easy. Still, according to inner (*antar-darśana*) *darśana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes used to break general rules to give *harināma* and *dīkṣā* or *sannyāsa* to somebody very quickly. So according to Śrīla Prabhupāda, *Vaiṣṇava darśana* or *sevā* mood should not be under any restriction. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that life is going, we have no time, so as soon as possible we should start *hari-bhajana*.

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja

(Cc *Madhya* 19.151)

According to their *karma*, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.

Who can say when, how, or why a *jīvātmā* can take a positive turn for *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*? You can consider the case of Jagāi and Mādhāi. Any *jīva* is not bound to show respect to me; it is an automatic factor. My pure *ācāra-ācaraṇa-ādarśa* (idealism) or my absolute *siddhānta-vicāra* can automatically catch the attention of the public, of course if at all they are searching for the absolute good in their life. So external pressure is useless. Also, external examination or testing as was arranged by Śrīla Prabhupāda for the inspiration of devotees is not bad, but one

examination or testing is not sufficient to realize the position of a *jīvātmā* (or devotee). Many such degree holders have gone to hell or are supposed to go to hell. Because *kṛpā* is the most vital thing.

QUESTION 27

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

My dear father,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. I discover your mind is a little bit diverted. Please pay attention to your *sevā*, otherwise you can lose everything.

Thanks a lot.

With great concern,

Your son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 28

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

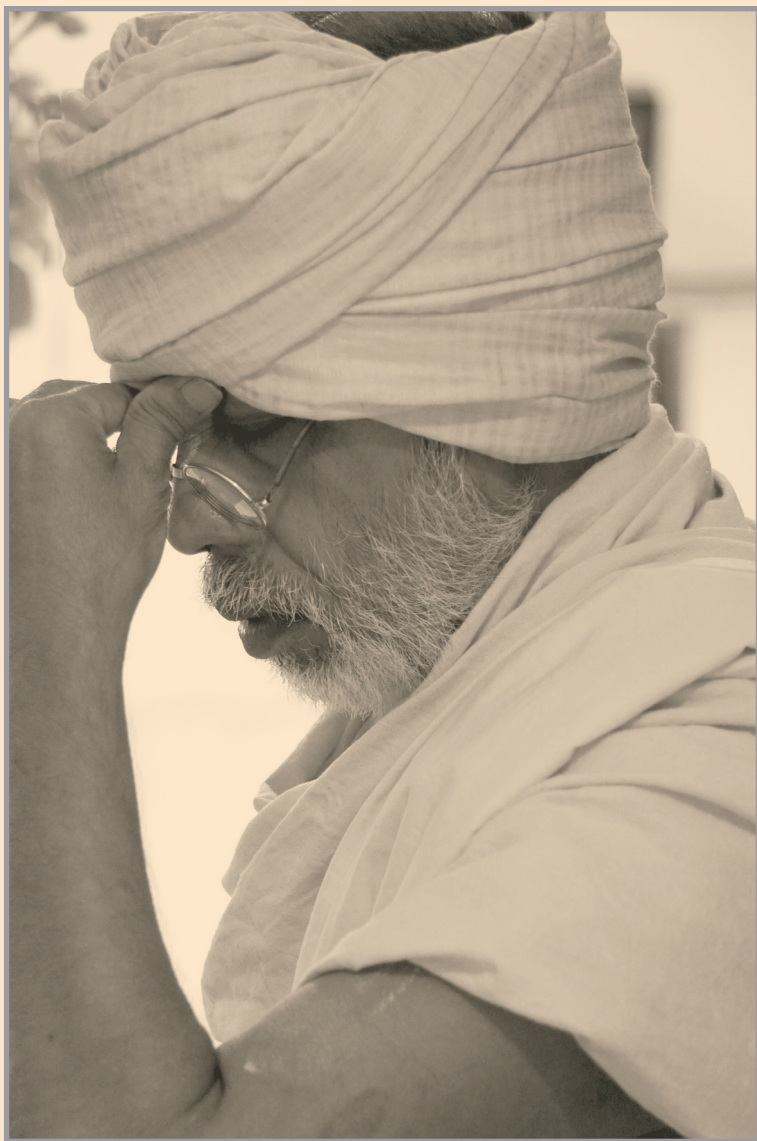
My dear son,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. Life is full of countless problems, but still you are trying your best to satisfy *Śaṅkīrtana-pīṭha* Śrī Gauraṅga Mahāprabhu through Gaura *vāñī-sevā* in the form of translation into Spanish language. Though *hari-kathā* never depend upon any language, because it is the language of loveful heart, still I am bound to confess that I have no idea about Spanish language, so it is my humble request to you to go through your translation *sevā* again and again before publishing. I am very happy to discover such an active *sevaka* who is ready to give his heart and soul unto the lotus feet of Śrīman Nityānanda, the original *sevā-igraha Guru*.

Thank you a lot.

Truly yours in the *sevā* of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your Bābā,
Śrī Shyām Dās





ABOUT SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

QUESTION 29

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, dear Mahārāj.

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

My name is [...] and I am 76 years old. I have gone through many religious philosophies, but my greatest commitment has always been to God and to the truth. Therefore, I spent my life searching for something that would truly honour God. When I came in contact with the *Bhagavad-gītā* two years ago, I found God. In this way I approached Prabhu Kṛṣṇa Dāsa's study group, who introduced me to Śrīla Bhakti Vijñāna Bhāratī Gosvāmī Mahārāj, whom we respectfully call Śrīla Gurudeva, and also to you, Mahārāj-jī.

I am writing to you because at present I am almost blind due to glaucoma. I cannot read the sacred books (another student reads them to me), I cannot see the devotees or the Deities on the altar, and it is difficult for me to perform some kinds of *sevā*. The doctor has proposed a corneal transplant from another person, but I have doubts whether this might create any karmic consequences for me. If I regain the ability to read the *śāstras*, and if I can once again look upon you during your merciful *hari-kathās*, would those blessings not justify accepting this operation? I humbly beg for your instructions.

My soul is daily at your lotus feet, listening to your magnificent *hari-kathās*, which are the main support by which I remain steady amidst the constant storm of this Kali-yuga.

I warmly thank you for your sacred attention and await your wise guidance. Please accept my obeisances once again.

Your aspiring disciple

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection.

I feel very heavy at heart after hearing about your situation. But according to *aprākṛta-darśana*, everything is arranged for our ultimate good by the Supreme Lord, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, do not worry. I am always with you all. By continuously hearing *hari-kathā*, you can develop the third eye, which is called *jñāna-caṅkṣu*, or, more accurately, *bhakti-caṅkṣu*. I think this is the more practical vision.

Regarding the retinal replacement of your eyes, you may try to undergo the operation if circumstances permit. There is no harm in it. I am waiting patiently to meet you very soon.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 30

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

To My Dear [...] Prabhu

Dear Prabhuji,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection.

Your painful situation always touches my heart. But according to your *karma-phala*, you have been placed in such a situation that at present it is quite impossible for you to come to me. Therefore, it is my suggestion that you chant the *Pañca-tattva* mantra and the *Harināma Mahā-mantra* with a deeply appealing mood. At the same time, continue hearing *aprākṛta hari-kathā* constantly, offering earnest prayers at the lotus feet of Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu to help you come out of *māyā* and, in the near future, serve the pure *Guru-Vaiṣṇavas* from your heart.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 31

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, dear Bābājī Mahārāj

Your *hari-kathās* during Puruṣottama month have been the brightest part of my days. I cannot properly express how deeply they are impacting my life. I feel tired of being a characterless demon. I feel tired of dealing every day with my dirty mind and emotions. I know I do not have enough sincerity, faith, or realization, but at the same time, somehow I also know that you are my only hope for making spiritual advancement and becoming able to perform *bhajana* one day. I do not know exactly how this should be done or whether there is any particular procedure for asking, and I apologize for my ignorance. But I humbly beg you to accept me somehow. I want to take *dīkṣā* from you, and I want to receive faith and spiritual strength from you so that I may develop the mood to serve you sincerely. Please save me. Please help me. I remain at your disposal to follow whatever instructions you may give me.

From your aspiring servant,

[...] Dāsa

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

To [...] Prabhu

Dear Father,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection.

I am very, very happy to see your mood of service. However,

stability of mind is the first requirement for becoming firmly established in Gaura-*bhajana* (*hari-bhajana*).

Please do not become overly occupied with the external process of *bhajana* at present.

I am always there with you. I think you can feel that.

Thanks a lot

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 32

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

To My Dear Mamoni

Danḍavat praṇāma to you all. Never try to forget my unalloyed love and affection.

I know the painful situation in which you have been placed, but it is my suggestion that you accept everything in a positive way. Material attachment and material detachment are both *māyā*. For the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I am prepared to renounce

even my own renunciation. This is called actual *yukta-vairāgya*. But “it is never too late.” With this strong faith you can go forward. I am always with you. Try to satisfy Bhagavān Śrī Gaurāṅga Deva by serving the pure *Guru-Vaiṣṇavas* (the Gauḍīya *Guru-varga*).

Proper *sevā* to *Guru*, *Vaiṣṇavas*, and Bhagavān means sincere service performed in accordance with their desire. Try to come back to me as soon as possible. You and [...] can both dedicate your body, speech, and mind — everything — for the absolute *sevā* of *Guru*, *Vaiṣṇavas*, and Bhagavān.

Thanks a lot

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 33

Can we do other things while holding the *japa-mālā*? For example, can we use the index finger, which remains outside the bead bag, to hold objects such as a plastic shopping bag?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

It is strictly prohibited to concentrate on other activities while chanting *japa*.

QUESTION 34

Is it possible to attain success in *bhajana* within one lifetime?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

Actually, this kind of question is absurd, because the *jīvātmā* has been wandering for an infinite period throughout the fourteen planetary systems. Passing through 8.4 million species of life, the living entity travels throughout these fourteen planetary systems. By great fortune, in this human life we receive the opportunity to meet *Guru* and *Vaiṣṇavas* and thereby discover the final solution to our endless journey of suffering. Therefore, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

(*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.151*)

According to their *karma*, all living entities wander throughout the entire universe, travelling within the fourteen planetary systems. Some rise to the higher planets, while others descend to the lower planetary systems. Out of millions of such wandering souls, one who is most fortunate receives the association of a bona fide spiritual master by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By the combined mercy of Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, that soul receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.

So why should we take the risk of waiting for another life? Without strong determination, we can never become successful

in our *bhajana*-life.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your beloved Bābā

QUESTION 35

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

Dear Devotees,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection.

I am very happy to receive your inquiry letter. Actually, I always like to project myself as a dog of my *Guru-varga*. I am always interested in protecting their *aprākṛta* interests. Therefore, where is the question of my receiving honour or dishonour? That is the real question. My expectation of honour or position from others — especially from *Guru* and *Vaiṣṇavas* — can take me to hell. Therefore we know the following *śloka* from the *Śikṣāṣṭakam* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu:

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

(Śikṣāṣṭakam 3)

One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, considering oneself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than a tree, free from all false prestige, and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.

So, my dear sons, please do not think too much in a way that may cause him to fall down.

According to the established etiquette of our *Vaiṣṇava* society, the normal way of showing respect to one another is sufficient at present. Do not neglect him simply because you know him to be my representative. At least, do not sit on his chair or bed, do not give him orders, and do not make any disrespectful remarks about him. Rather, help him reach the final goal of *hari-bhajana*.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your beloved Bābā,
Śrī Shyām Dās

Waiting to receive all your *kṛpā* with full patience.

QUESTION 36

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Bābā!

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga!

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in *Jaiva-dharma*, explains that there are two types of *sādhana*: *vaidhi* and *rāgānugā*. Also, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke about *sādhana-kriyā*, *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti*, and *prema-bhakti*. I think the meaning of the word *sādhana* is more than simply “practice” or “exercise.” Otherwise, how can one practise something that is already arising spontaneously? Could you please explain more clearly the meaning of *sādhana*? What exactly is *rāgānugā-sādhana*?

One definition of *sādhana* is: “The method one adopts in order to attain one’s specific goal (*sādhya*).” If *rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti* is impelled by spontaneous love, can I say that, at the stage of *sādhana-bhakti*, one has already attained the *sādhya* (love for Bhagavān) and continues one’s *sādhana* (devotional activities) only to increase that love?

You have also said that we continue all devotional activities eternally. Therefore, may I understand that at a certain stage these activities become fully real, whereas before that they were only a kind of exercise? In other words, *sādhana* is not merely practice, is it?

Thanks a lot.

Your foolish, useless daughter,

Śrī [...]

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

To [...]

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all.

Right you are. *Sādhana-bhakti* has a very exclusive inner meaning.

After taking *dikṣā*, generally only *sādhana-kriyā* begins at the preliminary stage. But, through sincere *guru-vaiṣṇava-sevā*, when all *anarthas* gradually disappear, actual *bhakti*, which is called *sādhana-bhakti*, automatically manifests within the heart by the mercy of the *Svarūpa-śakti*. The *Svarūpa-śakti* is not bound to obey any particular or fixed rules and regulations. She is *parama-svatantrā* — completely independent. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say: “*Bhakti* is the natural function of our soul.” Now the question is: if *bhakti* is so natural, why is it not manifest within us? Because of association with *māyā* since *anādi-kāla* (time without beginning), it appears to be missing. Just as fire already exists within a piece of wood, the wood must nevertheless come into contact with an external fire before its own fire becomes manifest. Similarly, by associating with pure *sādhus*, *Guru*, and *Vaiṣṇavas* who possess *śuddha-bhakti-bhāva*, the conditioned soul receives the spark of devotional fire and becomes spiritually awakened. Of course, not everyone receives such fortune. Only those who are fortunate enough to satisfy such exalted devotees, either directly or indirectly, receive that opportunity. *Vaidhi-bhakti* is driven by the strict rules and regulations of *śāstra*, not by spontaneous attraction. However, when that *vaidhi-bhakti* becomes completely natural, one ultimately transcends mere scriptural obligation because an intense *lobha* (spiritual greed)

awakens within the heart to follow the mood of service of a particular Vrajavāsī. First of all, you must realize from the heart that you are completely different from your material body and mind. Without this realization, all one's efforts and practice may ultimately end in failure. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

*vidhi-mārga-rata-jane, svādhīnatā-ratna-dāne,
rāga-mārga karāna praveśa*

(*Suno He Rasika Jana* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

By granting the jewel of spiritual independence to those who faithfully follow the path of *vidhi-mārga*, He allows them to enter the path of *rāga-mārga*.

Rāga-bhajana is not a matter of joke. *Rāgātmikā-bhakti* exists only among the eternal residents of Vraja. By following them completely from the heart, one can attain *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Then spontaneous love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, under the guidance of the loving mood of a particular *Vrajavāsī* whom one desires to follow, gradually becomes the natural function of one's life.

All glories to Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās



ABOUT COMING TO MĀYĀPURA

QUESTION 37

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Mahārāj-jī. Mātājī [...] and I are planning to come to India to have your *darśana* and serve you and your *sevākas* during the Kārtika month. May I ask what the Bhakti Siddhānta Vāṇī Sevā group plans are for this special month? When does Kārtika begin for you, and when does it end? Sorry to bother you, Mahārāj, but since we do not trust the calendars of other institutions, we decided to ask you directly. Please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet.

Your aspiring servant,

[...]

P.S. This name is a drop of mercy I received from you that changed my entire life, but I do not tell anyone about it, just as you instructed me.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear [...],

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. I am very happy to know about your plan to come to Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma to cast your merciful glance upon me. Actually, Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma is our eternal home, and at present we are all foreigners. Therefore, you should not come here with a return ticket. On 6th October 2022, Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī-vrata is the beginning of our Kārtika-vrata, and 4th November (Utthāna Ekādaśī) is the conclusion of the *vrata*. However, if cir-

cumstances require, we can continue our *hari-kathā* up to Rāsa-pūrṇimā, on 8th November. A detailed announcement of our programme will be made at the proper time.

You are always welcome.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 38

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. I am very anxious about you and about your present situation. Therefore, I would request you to come here to Māyāpura and stay very safely with my [...] Mama so that you may develop your *bhajana*-śakti. Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu can arrange everything for you. I know that your financial position is not at all good at present, and that you are not receiving support from anybody. Then why are you going to

send such a large amount for the construction of that Aprākṛta Sarasvata Nāma-saṅkīrtana Bhavana — I do not know. Anyway, Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu will surely bless you for this kind of *niṣkapaṭa-sevā*-mood expressed by you.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.
Your Bābā

QUESTION 39

Please accept my *daṇḍavat praṇāma*!

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga!

This last week, before you came back to Māyāpura, was a little bit hard for me. I got several drops of poison, I think, while trying to maintain harmony. Even though I increased my *sādhana* and, in one sense, improved it (by the blessings of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura), I felt like a robot — I could not feel anything. Maybe it is just because the Nilācala Mahāprabhu topic was over. I do not know. But after today's *hari-kathā* I feel better.

I want to offer whatever energy I have (and am capable of giving) to *vāñī-sevā* or any other *sevā*. On one hand I felt very inspired today, but on the other I know that I do not have much to offer. My mind is very *cañcala*, and I do not have deep knowledge of any language. I wanted to ask you something:

1) I want to come to Māyāpura. During my previous stay in the *dhāma* I enjoyed materially. I liked being with the devotees and having a simple and easy life without material problems and pressures. But I also had the chance to have your *darśana*. As I told you, I planned to buy an apartment here in Italy and rent it. But now I think that I do not want to work several years just to pay it off. For several weeks I have wanted to quit my job and go to Māyāpura. But there are no flights, and e-visas are being blocked. Then I read the article by Sadānanda Dāsa, “Change of Environment,” where he said that living in a holy place is not actually *bhakti*. At least that is how I understood it. When I once asked if I could do something for you, you told me that when I come to Māyāpura you would give me some *vāñī-sevā*. From that moment I began to desire to leave everything and come. Then, in *Rāma-kathā*, you said that if one stays in the *dhāma* in the name of *dhāma-sevā* while desiring sense gratification, that is not *dhāma-sevā*. I am confused. What should I do? How can I best satisfy *Guru-Vaiṣṇavas*? Also, my work is stressful for me and it is really difficult to do what I am supposed to do. Besides that, the environment is very contaminated, and I am surrounded by materialistic people and atheists. I am also material, but I want better association.

2) When a disciple speaks with the *Guru* in the mind, does the *Guru* hear those prayers? *Guru* knows everything — but what exactly does that mean? Is it *guru-tattva*, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, or that particular personality? Should I ask all my questions externally, or can I simply speak them in my mind and consider them already asked?

3) Recently I have not had much time, but I have become very inspired to learn Bengali. You always encourage it. Perhaps in the future I may become useful in translation *sevā*. Maybe you, or the devotees, know some lady teacher who could teach me

online? I would gladly pay a reasonable fee. Should I do that?

Daṇḍavat praṇāma!

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. I am very, very anxious to know that you have taken some drops of poison for testing. Why? Why? *Hari-kathā* is the pure *amṛta*. Day by day you are drinking more and more *amṛta*. Also, you have started doing *vāñī-sevā* in a big way from your heart, then why are further complications arising inside your mind? Your perfect submission can prove that your mind is now my mind. Therefore, I would like to engage your whole mind in *vāñī-sevā* to save you from danger. *Dhāma-vāsa* (*dhāma-sevā*) is surely an approved mode of *bhakti*. Maybe Śrīla Sadānanda Prabhu was obliged to speak negatively for those *kapaṭa* people. Among the five principal limbs of *sādhana-bhakti*, *dhāma-sevā* (*dhāma-vāsa*) is one of them. Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Deva, has already spoken very strongly in support of this truth. Try to gain stability of mind through *guru-sevā*. Never mind. I am always there with you in the form of *aprākṛta hari-kathā*.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your unworthy son, Your Bābā Mahārāj

QUESTION 40

Hare Kṛṣṇa,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Mahārāj. Please accept my service, even though my heart is still impure. I beg you to bestow your mercy upon me and allow me to visit India during the next Kārtika. I deeply desire to have your *darśana*. I would like to kneel before your lotus feet in the holy *dhāma*. Please bless me so that I may become purified of all my *anarthas* and reach Śrī Māyāpura. My goal in life is to cleanse my heart so that your *śikṣā* may reside there forever. Praying that everything goes well with your *Gośālā* as soon as possible.

Your aspiring servant

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

Dear Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. Your earnest request for my *kṛpā* proves your genuineness and sincerity. Also, I am surprised to see your deep concern for me and my *Gośālā*, which can surely prove your eternal relationship with me. Anyway, your coming to Māyāpura to bless me will give me full satisfaction. What more can I expect than that? Cleanliness of heart is only possible by hearing *Vaikuṇṭha-vāṇī* (*hari-kathā*) from an authentic source. But this should not be our ultimate goal. We perform *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* of *hari-kathā* to attain the most precious and auspicious jewel — *kṛṣṇa-prema*, I mean the loving eternal *sevā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana. At present, cutting through *māyā* is a great challenge in our life, but everything is possible by *sat-guru-kṛpā*. What is not possible by *Guru-kṛpā*? That is the main question.

Be careful. Only after cutting *māyā* can *hari-bhajana* truly begin, not before that. Nevertheless, our devotional practice can and should continue regularly without interruption, gradually leading us to the final goal of life — Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*prema*.

Excuse me. I cannot cheat you all.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son, Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 41

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Daṇḍavat praṇāma, Śrīla Mahārāja.

My name is [...] I sent a letter to you a while ago when I was experiencing difficulties in *bhakti*. Thanks to your guidance, I was able to get back on track. Thank you very much. I hope that one day I can repay you by performing some *sevā* at your lotus feet. Today I am sending this message to ask for your advice. I am a photographic model, and I have received a proposal to spend six months in India, either in New Delhi or Baṅgalore. I have already had meetings with the person in charge, and I checked the integrity of the modelling agency. Everything seems proper and safe, and my family approves of the trip. The main issue is that this journey would only be truly beneficial for me if I could

also visit you and render *sevā* at your lotus feet. The agency told me that after a few months of work I would be able to take some time to come and see you. That made me very happy and hopeful. However, in this Kali-yuga, India can be much more dangerous than I imagine, as Prabhu [...] warned me. Therefore, I am writing this letter to ask for your approval to undertake this journey. I cannot go without your approval, and if you do approve, I would also like to ask for your advice on how I should conduct myself. I humbly thank you in advance for your attention.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Praṇāma*

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

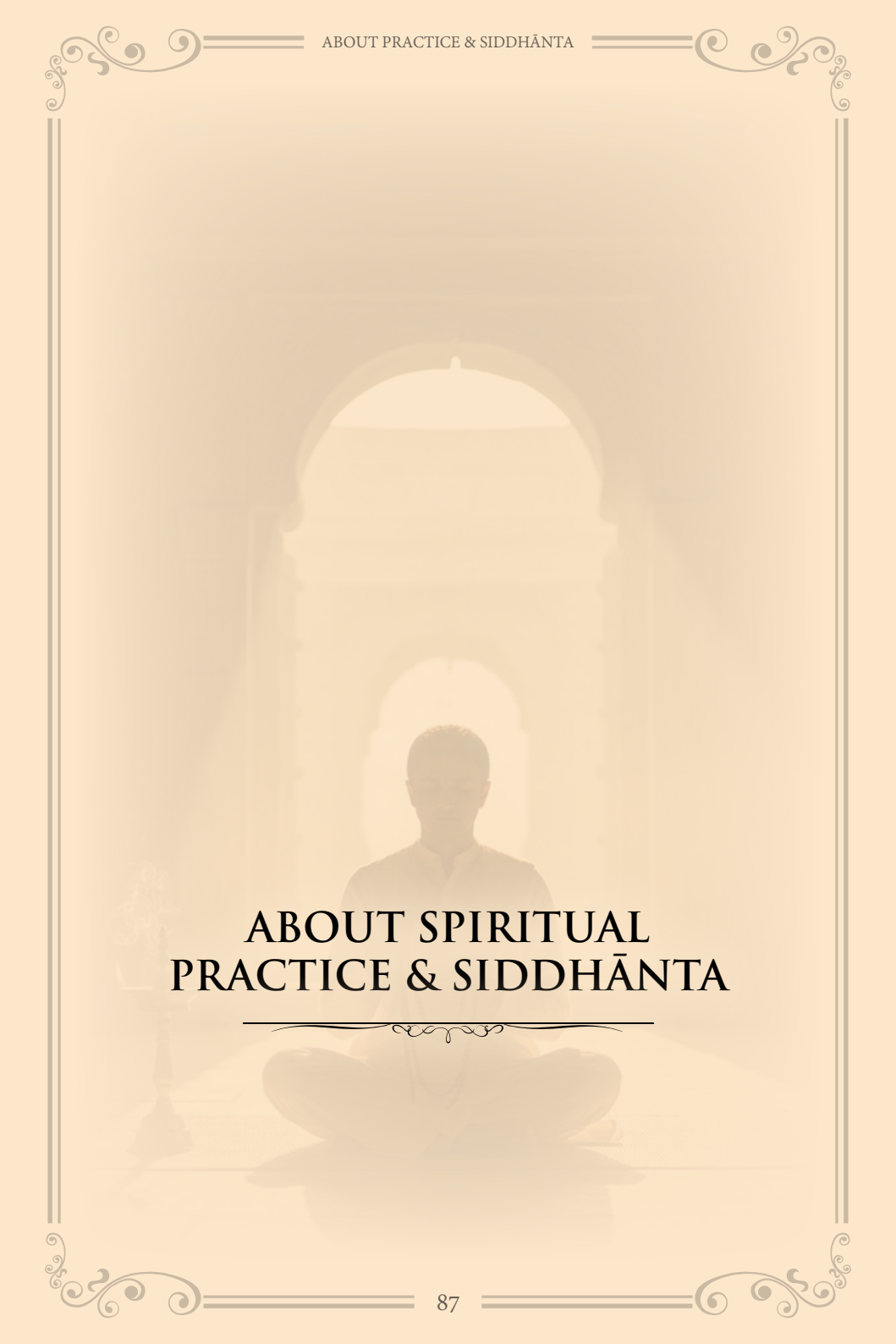
My dear father,

Danḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. Actually, Śrī *Guru-kṛpā* is the most vital factor. On the strength of *Guru-kṛpā*, one can obtain the ability to overcome any kind of eventuality. In this way you can develop self-confidence to protect yourself, because our real self-confidence means strong faith in Śrī *Guru-Vaiṣṇavas*. Although I know that the film industry and modelling agencies are almost the same—I mean, they are full of contamination — still, when I am with you, then you may come. But it is my advice to you to be very careful about bad association. You must try to relate each and every activity to *bhāgavata-sevā* in order to maintain the purity of your body and mind; otherwise, problems may arise. Try to maintain both internal and external purity.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās



A person is shown in a meditative pose, seated in a lotus position. They are positioned in the center of a long, brightly lit corridor with a series of arches receding into the distance. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants. The overall atmosphere is serene and spiritual. The text 'ABOUT SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & SIDDHĀNTA' is overlaid on the image.

ABOUT SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & SIDDHĀNTA

QUESTION 42

Letter (undisclosed)

What is the proper understanding of *prasādam* and *harināma-saṅkīrtana* according to Gauḍīya *siddhānta*?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

Dear Prabhuji,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. All your *vicāra* written in your letter regarding *prasādam*, *hari-kathā* or *sat-saṅga* is following the exact track shown by Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. In our pure *paramparā* line, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Dev Gosvāmī Mahārāja or Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja or I Myself always speaking the same. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda used to speak that: “To preach *hari-kathā* (*Vaikuṇṭha-vāṇī*) is the absolute Idealism of ‘*jīve dayā*’ (showing mercy to *jīva*).” To speak about the absolute — absolute way standing on an absolute platform is actual *jīve dayā*. If this be the *siddhānta-vāṇī* then why do you hesitate to announce this *siddhānta* in front of so-called devotees. Maybe you cannot get popularity due to your truthfulness, but Supreme Lord will surely be happy. This is called Pure *Bhakti*. To keep people in darkness is not the *vicāra* of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura of the following *śloka* from *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*:

*śreyān dravya-mayād yajñāj jñāna-yajñaḥ paran-tapa
sarvaṁ karmākhilam pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate*

(Bg. 4.33)

O chastiser of the enemy, the sacrifice performed in knowledge is better than the mere sacrifice of material possessions. After all, O son of Pṛthā, all sacrifices of work culminate in transcendental knowledge.

According to *siddhānta-vicāra* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, we can see that he wanted to give the following theme — any spiritual activities can get honourable results according to the manifestations of *cid-bhāva* (*cinmayī-bhāva*). If *cinmayī-bhāva* is absent then this becomes a material activity without any meaning. All our body, mind or anything involved in any kind of *yajña* — all material things — nothing else, but according to our *bhakti-mārga* those things become *cinmayī* through our devotion. How *rice-dāl-subjī* become pure *prasādam* in Jagannātha Temple? This is the main question.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaking to Arjuna that *jñāna-yajña* is far superior to any *yajña* which is related to material things, because ultimately this going to express *cid-bhāva* in fine form. But be careful that *jñāna-yajña* ultimately in excellent stage become *bhakti-yajña* which is the ultimate goal for all *jīvas* to show, because *bhakti* is the natural function of our soul. To help any *jīva* to develop sufficient consciousness to realize his own constitutional position as *nitya-sevaka* of Supreme Lord is called actual *jīve dayā*. So always we must discuss or preach about — actual *Guru-tattva*, actual *dīkṣā-tattva*, actual *sat-saṅga-tattva*, actual *Harināma-tattva*, actual *hari-kathā-tattva*, actual *prasāda-tattva*, etc. to stop people from going to join a cheating Organization. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that: “To arrest the current perverted tide of this Fanatic Society is the seemingly unpleasant duty of Gauḍīya Maṭha — perfect Gauḍīya Devotee.” Also, very often he used to say that: “In the name of *hari-kathā* and *hari-kīrtana* those who are going to cheat common people

— we common people are so foolish that we always want to be cheated by them, so that's why we are cheated." Lack of their sincerity cannot help us to get divine help.

Regarding offering of *prasādam* (for Beginners)

Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda used to say that: "*Bhakti* is the natural function of our soul."

On the basis of this *siddhānta* we can easily realize that due to the influence of *māyā* we cannot realize how purely we should serve Supreme Lord. To serve Supreme Lord we must go up to the level of transcendental purity, but actually for new devotees (especially those who are not initiated) as such there is no heavy restrictions, but still just like a small child they can go on following some idealism set by previous *Gauḍīya Ācāryas*. This is not *sādhana-bhakti* for them at present, because they are not initiated as yet, but still, they can try to practice. If at present they cannot follow those rules and regulations strictly, but still their soft emotion and faith can get the chance to climb a solid ground of devotional field in the near future. At least they can go on hearing real *hari-kathā* continuously to develop at least minimum purity to satisfy Bhagavān in the near future after getting initiated by a bona fide spiritual master.

Regarding offering of *prasādam* (for devotees who are already initiated)

Devotees those who are already initiated by a bona fide spiritual master they must follow the strict rules and regulations set by Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda to develop flawless devotional mood (*niṣkapaṭe-bhāva*) to maintain both internal and external purity. They are requested to follow the *arcana-paddhati* published from Gauḍīya Maṭha to get detailed information about it. If they are already having basic knowledge, for them the procedure of offering given below within a few lines:

1. *Buttha suddhi*, then *guru-pūjā*, then *guru-paramparā-pūjā*, after that Gauraṅga Pūjā, after that Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Vighraha can be worshiped.

2. *Bhoga* can be offered in separate plates, for *guru-varga*, Gauraṅga, and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. With *Tulasī-mañjarī* for each plate. For each *prasādam* plate separate water glass should be there. Then offering *mantra* should be uttered for each plate for respective Deities or photos. Or if you like to offer only one plate of *bhoga* together with one water glass, then first you will have to offer to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *Vighraha*, then secondly you will have to offer to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, then in third stage you can offer that *prasādam* to all *guru-varga*. But don't forget to maintain all purity regarding your body, mind, etc. Item collected for *bhoga* should be pure (not collected from a dirty, materialistic personality). Also, the cook-man should cook with full devotion. The man going to offer to Kṛṣṇa should have flawless devotional mood (without any duplicity).

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gauraṅga and Go Mātā,

Insignificant,
Shyām Bābā

QUESTION 43

Dear Bābājī Mahārāja, *daṇḍavat praṇāma*

I have 2 questions I would like to ask you, but they are coming from other *kathās* you gave previously. They are not part of the *Kathā* you are giving on these days, so I hope it is ok for me to ask them.

In one of your *kathā* you spoke of your experience in serving one *Vaiṣṇava* who had injured his head due to a fall. If I well remember, in spite of you serving him, this *Vaiṣṇava* was abusing you. Then your Guru Mahārāja heard about it and he told you that he will pay for his offenses, even if he was not in his right mind. For many days I have thought about it, because it really struck me this point. We are westerners, and our mental *prārabdha* is very heavy due to our sinful activities. Many devotees have also serious psychological issues that, in spite of them knowing it is wrong, still it is compelling them to act in a way that may give pain to other *Vaiṣṇavas*. So how can one who is mentally sick get the full result of his own *aparādhās*? Will you please elaborate on that? I think in our stage it is very important to know this.

My other question is: one of you *kathā* you said something that really struck me: that we can approach Vṛndāvana only after having approached the Gambhīrā. I find this point so beautiful, could you please elaborate on that?

Thank you very much for your time and for the enlivening *kathās* you are giving to us.

Your servant

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

Dear Mama

Know my unalloyed love and affection.

Your question can give me inspiration to give answer in such a way so that this can become a solution for those who all are having that kind of doubt and suspicion — not only for you. What is *pāpa* (sinful act) and what is *aparādha* (offence)? What is the basic difference between *pāpa* and *aparādha*? That is the main question. Actually, *pāpa* is related to our material body, mind and intellect, I mean related to our gross body and fine body, but *aparādha* has its great impact on the *jīvātmā* itself. Sinful activities are done by the help of body, mind and speech, that is why at the time of death *Yamadūtas* are usually coming to catch any sinful *jīvātmā* to give punishment at Yamalaya. After getting proper punishment by Yamarāja, they can get free from sinful activities done by them before. But through this procedure, they cannot erase or eradicate their tendency of *pāpa* already there inside their heart. Only and only by *Harināma* and *hari-bhajana* can they purify themselves. There is no other alternative way. Even only *Nāmābhāsa* can make them free from all countless sins done in their whole life before, not only that, but also they can get *mukti* (salvation) but not *bhakti* (genuine nectar).

But knowingly or unknowingly if some *aparādha* done — then this can have a great impact on the *jīvātmā* itself directly. No way out. Any dirty or wrong action if done against *Guru-Vaiṣṇava-Bhagavān-Harināma-dhāma-mahāprasādam* or anything related to *Hari-bhajan* field can cut and throw our consciousness level to put us down and down, even up to the low level of a wild beast.

In *Kali-kāla* sinful activities are increasing at an alarming rate. But *Nāmābhāsa* cannot make us free from such *aparādha*. We should find out the original cause of our *aparādha* to beg for pardon positively, otherwise not. Perhaps you have heard that some time *Guru-Vaiṣṇava* begging for pardon (out of their humble mood they speak that way) — in the following way:

“Knowingly or unknowingly, if at all any *aparādha* done please excuse.”

Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī pad going to beg for pardon in each and every step unto the Lotus feet of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Mahāśaya for any *aparādha* at all done knowingly or unknowingly.

The effect of any great *aparādha* can go even up to the next birth to give heavy punishment. You can remember the case of Cāpāla Gopāla, or the case of Devānanda Paṇḍita, or the case of Gopāla Cakravartī who insulted Śrīla Nāmācārya Haridāsa Ṭhākura at Saptagrāma or the case of Prajāpati Dakṣa who insulted Śrī Śiva Śambhu. This way we can get countless such documents which can put warning before us. Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has written in his *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata* that – even if Śūlapāṇi (Trident holder) Śaṅkara going to make *aparādha* still he will have to get the result (punishment) of *aparādha* done by him. So even if any mentally disbalanced man is going to commit any *aparādha*, still he will have to suffer for that, no other way.

Thanks a lot,

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga – and Go Mātā

Bābā Shyām Dās

QUESTION 44

Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahārāj, please accept my *Danḍavat praṇāma* at your lotus feet.

First, I want to thank Puruṣottama Dāsa and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Prabhus for making this connection with you possible. My name is [...], I'm a disciple of *Nitya-līlā* 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Bhārātī Gosvāmī Mahārāj and live in Brazil. I have a very strong doubt that arose some years back but I kept it for myself since there is the danger of *aparādha* around this subject and I was waiting to get in touch with a *Vaiṣṇava* like you, so that I know I will get the proper answer about this delicate subject. I've been in touch with Nityānanda Parivāra and other *Vaiṣṇava* groups, which argue some things about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda — They say that he did not receive *sannyāsa-veśa* from his *Gurudeva*, and therefore it's wrong, and also that his *guru* did not establish the wearing of saffron cloth, and that the *veśa* was only white.

They say that the *dīkṣā-mantras* that we recite are not the same *mantras* that Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāj gave to his other *śiṣyas*. So, these points are very delicate and they kind of disturb my mind.

Besides it, I've recently read the *Gaura-Govindārcana Smaraṇa Paddhati* of Śrīpāda Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī and there are *Gāyatrī mantras* of the *Pañca-tattva* and also other *mantras*... Is there any specific reason for why the *dīkṣā* in our *paramparā* does not include the *Gāyatrī mantras* of Nityānanda, Advaita, Śrīvāsa and Gadādhara in the *dīkṣā*?

Thank you so much for everything you give to us, please accept my humble *Danḍavat praṇāma* at your lotus feet.

Jaya Nitāi!

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

Dear Prabhuji,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. Look Prabhuji, even your first point is also contradictory, because Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu is not a material personality so that He can keep a flow of His heretical flow of blood and flesh, so you have no scope to write that way which you have written to me: “I have been in touch with Nityānanda *Parivāra*.” Those who are going to demand such blood and flesh link with Nityānanda Prabhu — they are all 100% *sahajiyās* and fraud, so they have no right to pass any such remark about *aprākṛta* Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. Out of 8 approved *arcās* (worshipable object of Prabhu and His *Pārṣadas*), photo is also one of them. So a photo of Śrī Gurudeva (*Sad-guru*) is just equal to himself. That is why Śrīla Rāmānujācārya took *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Yamunācārya’s photo at the bank of Ananta Sarovara. Similarly, any great *nitya-pārṣada* of Bhagavān can take *sannyāsa* from the photo (*Āloka Citrapaṭha*) of his *Gurudeva* which cannot be a topic of controversy. Anyway, they are all *nitya-sannyāsīs*, so what to speak about their *lokātīta* activities? Saffron cloth and *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa* are already approved in *śāstras* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *Purāṇas*). Externally you all cannot see the approval of saffron cloth and *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa* in the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda by his *Gurudeva* (Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābā), but know it for sure that all Gaura *Pārṣadas*, including Śrīman Mahāprabhu already approved him to wear this saffron cloth and *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa-veśa* through their order to him to go for massive preaching. I have already given so many answers to those foolish *sahajiyās* to stop their barking.

Many *Hari-kathās* on these topics you can find on the Internet — but you will have to search. If you can realize the sweet balancing track of *mantra-paramparā* and *Bhāgavata-paramparā* as shown by Śrīla Prabhupāda, then this kind of barking argument can automatically come to an end. Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābā is our *Bhāgavata-paramparā*, not *mantra-paramparā*, so there can be some external disparity, but the main theme of *Bhāgavata-paramparā* power is already inherited there. Please don't go for fanciful bad association (evil association) to spoil your own brain. Perfect *guru-anugātya* together with that strong faith in *guru-Vaiṣṇava-paramparā* can give you success in your *bhajana*.

According to your own standard you can read some *śāstras* like *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Upadeśāmṛta*, *Manaḥ-śikṣā*, *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, *Jaiva Dharma*, etc., not *Dhyāna Candra Paddhati* right now. Let those *sahajiyās* jump into fire to die, what it concerns to you? Jagad-guru Śrīla Prabhupāda the Great has given us the scope to recite *Śrī Caitanya Gāyatrī* from *Śrī Caitanya Upaniṣad* — which is itself complete because *Pañca-tattva* is nothing but the expression of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in five different forms, nothing else. Śrīman Mahāprabhu is just equal to *Pañca-tattva*, so *Śrī Caitanya Gāyatrī* can give all the complete result. So, separate *Gāyatrī* of Nityānanda or Advaita Gosvāmī is not so urgent as such.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go Mātā.

Insignificant Shyām Bābā

QUESTION 45

Mahārāj! *Daṇḍavat praṇāma!* Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Please get well soon so that we can hear *Hari-kathā* from you!

Please excuse me my stupidity and ignorance. This is my condition. Should I be helpless?

I want to believe that *Vaiṣṇavas* will never leave me even if I'm offensive. The other day you told, "You need not come to me. Go away!" You also said that the worst thing that can happen is to be cut from *Vaiṣṇavas*. Why *Vaiṣṇavas* would cut someone from them? People due to their ignorance and offenses can go away. But why do they let go? Will *Gurudeva* save those who left Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda and fell down? What is their destiny? Why Nityānanda Prabhu wanted to save Jagāi and Mādhāi at any cost? They also were offensive towards *Vaiṣṇava*.

Please don't be upset with me. I was listening to your *hari-kathā* and every time you were saying "one stupid devotee" I was thinking you would mean me.

Please get well soon and don't leave us without *hari-kathā*.

Also, the following question was in my mind, can you please elaborate on it little bit.

If I am married to Kṛṣṇa how can I serve Rādhā? I don't know about this high topic but I just understood that I should meditate on how to serve Rādhā always and help Her to meet with Kṛṣṇa. I am ignorant and I can't reconcile the *mādhurya-rasa* with *Rādhā-dāsyam*. I was told that this is the highest achievement for a *jīva*. They told 'by listening to *hari-kathā* I will understand slowly slowly.' But I am a hypocrite. I'm just speaking. I don't have a serving mood. I have only *kāma*. By the mercy of

Vaiṣṇavas one day I will be able to say it from heart: “I want to be an intimate *Dāsī* of Rādhā.”

I hear so much about *sevā* but I still don’t understand how can I serve *Vaiṣṇavas* and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

I’m full of faults and I don’t have faith in *Vaiṣṇavas*. I have just a little faith in chanting but that also sometimes goes, and that little faith doesn’t allow me to chant properly anyway. It just keeps me chanting *nāmābhāsa* or *nāmāparādhā*. Please don’t be angry. I’m not trying to know the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. I know that this won’t help just to know. I’m completely identified with my female body, so by now I would like to realize that I’m not this body.

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

Dear Mamoni,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection. Actually, anyhow they can never throw us out, so surely someday they can rescue us, no doubt in it. But due to accumulated *anartha* and *aparādhā*, it will take a long period of time for their deliverance. When mother speaks ‘Go Away, Get Lost — I don’t like to see your face’, then be sure that she likes to see my face very much. You cannot understand this sensitive point, so I say you are foolish. *Guru-Vaiṣṇava* can be compared with a fathomless ocean of *karuṇā*. So how can they stop flowing *kṛpā* up to you? Those who all left Prabhupāda mercilessly — they can again come to Śrīla Prabhupāda some life to get delivery of their Self, but all their previous *aparādhā* should be eliminated.

We all *jīvātmās* are *śakti-amśa-tattva* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so natu-

rally Śrī Kṛṣṇa is our husband. Only you will have to realize this point from your heart. Also, we Gauḍīyas always pray the hymns of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10th Canto:

*kātyāyani mahā-māye
mahā-yoginy adhiśvari
nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi
patim me kuru te namaḥ*

Oh! Kātyāyanī, Oh! Mahā-Māye, Oh! Mahā-Yoginī!
Oh, Devī, we want Kṛṣṇa, who is the son of Nanda
Mahārāja, to be our Husband.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa can have infinite wives, but no problem for Him — the Supreme Lord. But we all wives should always honour and obey Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, the Divine Couple, is our worshipable objective. Infinite wives they all have their unique and common objective to seek the complete satisfaction of that Divine Couple — without any smell of self-interest (dirty *kāma-bhāva* inside our heart should not be there). No doubt about adjustment factor among themselves because all their centre point is one and the single. Try to prepare yourself accordingly. Even my joking has some inner meaning — you should realize this. In this way automatically *mādhurya-rasa* and *Rādhā-dāsyā* can get all proper balance.

Thanks a Lot.

Truly Yours in the Service of
Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go Mātā.

Insignificant,
Shyām Bābā

QUESTION 46

I offer my respects unto you. I offer my respects unto all the *Vaiṣṇava* devotees of the Lord. Please excuse me if I make any offenses unto your lotus feet writing this letter to you. I am a fallen soul in a very sad condition and I have a humble request unto you. Please accept me at your lotus feet. Without your mercy I have no hope. By the mercy of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda I met my guru, who was his disciple but who later had a very sad and bad fall and got involved in many sexual scandals around the world (I don't want to say his name because I think it is not necessary). Anyway, I am grateful to him because he connected me with the Gauḍīya *siddhānta*. For some time, I was living as a *brahmacārī* in the jungle of Ecuador. This body was born in Colombia.

I had the mercy of getting introduced to the *harināma-saṅkīrtana* of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda, but I need to confess to you that I've not been able to be successful in my spiritual life till now. In this life I had very low birth in a very ignorant meat-eaters' family in Colombia, and I had a childhood marked by sexual abuses at an early age (I accept my bad *karma* and whatever I have to pay in this life), but I want to get out of this *saṁsāra* serving the feet of the devotees. My life had been busy in serving my senses and being controlled by my sexual impulse, never peace in my mind. Actually, I am living in Halifax, Canada, with my wife and two kids.

You inspired me and gave me hope. I found your videos on YouTube, so I've been listening to *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from you, and it makes me believe in the real *siddhānta*. It makes me believe that there is hope for souls like me in such a sad condition in this world.

Please give me your mercy. I surrender unto you and accept

you as my guide and inspiration to get closer to Bhagavān's feet.

Thank you for *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. Please give me *sevā*, please, please, please, I beg you.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

To [...] Prabhu

My dear father,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. My heart became very heavy by hearing your painful situation. People they like to find solution of each and every problem, but without the mercy (*kṛpā*) of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*-Bhagavān nobody can go out of tension (problem). Sometimes they are jumping into fire from a frying pan — this is their solution, nothing else. If we can jump into *Kṛṣṇa-bhajana* (*sevā*), then this kind of burning experience can act as a catalyst in our life. So don't worry, I think now after a long-term horrible experience Śrīman Nityānanda Baladeva going to show some favourable mood to you, otherwise, really it is quite impossible for you to open your heart in front of me without any hesitation. I think surely you can get *kṛpā* of Śrīman Nityānanda Baladeva very shortly through Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava. Be careful because Śrī Māyādevī always waiting to put us in trouble.

We never want to be controlled by Mahāmāyā, because then we cannot do *Hari-bhajana*. We always want to be controlled by *Hari-Guru-Vaiṣṇava* to get the final settlement of our infinity journey. To discover the eternal *svarūpa* of a *jīva* as the eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the final solution. You need not to keep any link with anybody, not even with your fallen *Guru*. Only

and only you will have to depend upon those firing *hari-kathā-kīrtana* to save your life. Try to forget your painful experience to dive into the ocean of nectar.

Truly yours in the *sevā* of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Thanks a lot.

Your useless son —
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 47

Daṇḍavat praṇāma Mahārāj Jī,

Please forgive my delay in replying to your loving letter, I know I have no excuse.

Now that I came back here, sometimes I think of all the beautiful things that you made me understand (especially *guru-tattva*), and I have the impression that I went up on the top of the Himalayas with you. And it looks like a dream now that I am far away. I miss you more than I could imagine and it makes me want to cry, but I will try to focus on my *sevā*, prepare more sincere aspiring devotees and bring them to your lotus feet. We just finished the diacritics and Sanskrit corrections on the PDF of your book, so we are going to start to do the layout now. I pray that it will be published soon.

Kali-yuga has increased a lot since I last came back to this country, so please, if you have time between your vital *sevā*,

think of me here, lost, and far away from your loving sight.

Your aspiring son,

[...]

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru & Gaurāṅga

To my dear father,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all, including your mother — whom I think my own mother. Really a deep feeling of separation going to overpower all my heart and mind, still I will have to bear it, because no other way. At least I can have the scope to feel that everything in this material world is unstable. To drive out *māyā* this is the perfect medicine for us all. Full concentration in *Guru-sevā*, which is just devoid of *māyā*, can surely give us *sevā-siddhi*. In the *Ekādaśī kīrtana* (written by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) we can see the following *siddhānta-vicāra*:

bhakata-sevā, parama-siddhi, prema-latikāra mūla

Service to the pure devotees of the highest order is the root of the creeper of devotion.

When we can feel that Nāma Prabhu and Nāmī Prabhu are non-different from each other, then and only then we can chant pure *Harināma*, and this way finally we can get the scope to meet with Bhagavān Hari. If at all your mind is laying with me at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura then be sure that is your success. *Māyā* can always create adverse situation, but your Guru-*bhakti* (*niṣṭhā*) can always give you full protection, so don't worry. Your effort to

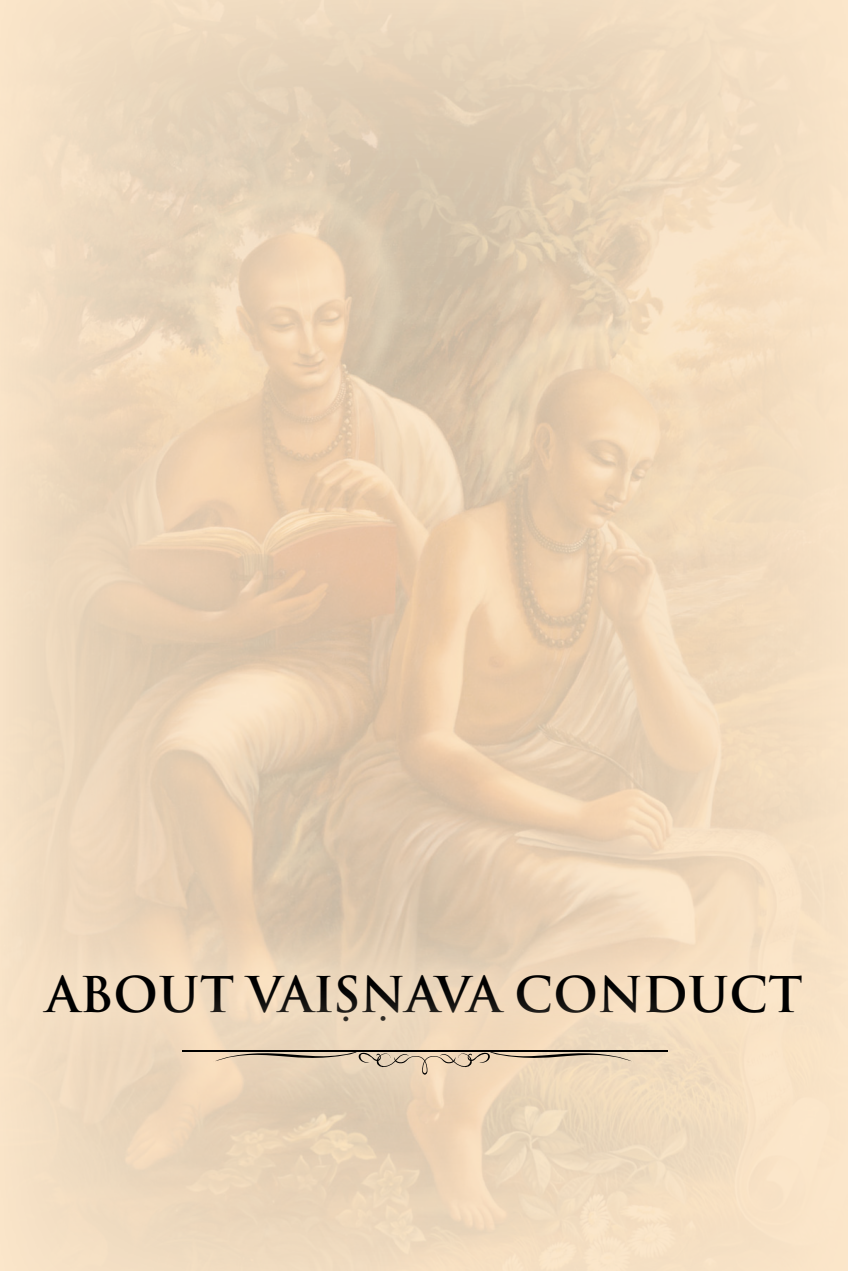
represent me perfectly in front of bonded soul, if backed by your perfect *ācaraṇa*, then in that case you can get proper success. On the strength of your perfect *ācaraṇa* you can go ahead day by day, I hope so.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Your useless son,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās





ABOUT VAIṢṆAVA CONDUCT

QUESTION 48

Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Daṇḍavat praṇāma*, Mahārāj Jī. My name is [...], I am from [...] and I watch your classes on the YouTube channel with [...] translation. I am so grateful for the opportunity to hear from you. I am very impressed with the Vedic knowledge, especially when I hear you speak. Watching your recent classes when you talk about Jesus I had a lot of doubts, please send me your answers. Svāmī Mahārāj used to talk a lot about him too! But Śrīla Bhāratī Mahārāj doesn't mention him in his books. In the Bible it is written that Jesus is going to return to save humanity and I heard from many devotees here in Brazil, including an American devotee who attends your classes, that the coming of Mahāprabhu would have already been Jesus' return. Is it true? So, is it okay to put Jesus on the altar? And worship him as if he were Kṛṣṇa? Can I surrender to Jesus and sing Christian prayers? Is that *bhakti* too? Jesus turned water into wine at the request of his mother Mary, but wouldn't that be intoxication or could we drink wine now and then like Catholics do during their celebrations? Is it true that Jesus will return soon, and that the demigods will come down here on Earth and solve all our problems in Kali-yuga? Many people have claimed that this is the meaning of Dhanya Kali. Are Jesus and Kṛṣṇa the same person? Does Mahāprabhu confirm that Jesus is Kṛṣṇa's son? Many practitioners say that if we pronounce the name of Jesus it is equivalent to chanting the Mahāmantra, is this true? In Vedic culture, is the cross a sacred symbol? Can I put a cross on the *kaṇṭhī-mālā*? In the Gospel of Jesus, it is written that we are also God, is he *māyāvādī*? Should I read the Gospel or focus on the *Bhagavad-gītā*? Forgive me if my questions are too ignorant, but in my country, Jesus is very strong and when you speak of him I need your help to understand.

Thank you. Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Daṇḍavat praṇāma*.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Guru and Gaurāṅga.

To my dear [...] Devī ([...]),

Accept my unalloyed love and affection. *Daṇḍavat praṇāma* to you all those who are going to develop their consciousness up to the level of the standard set by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu — the Supreme Lord.

Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda told that: “*Bhakti* is the natural function of our soul, which is at present not visible due to the strong covering of *māyā* (illusion).”

Your finite conception cannot allow you to follow me fully right now. All your prejudicial conception or faith or logical interpretation should be thrown away totally — if you are at all interested to catch that absolute truth — the absolute way by the causeless mercy of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*. Logical interpretation cannot stand in the way of that absolute truth. Half-truth is more dangerous than a lie. Be careful about that. Śrī Kṛṣṇa (or Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Deva) is the Absolute Godhead — all-powerful, all-pervading, so none can be compared with Him — any way. Also, *Śrī Gītā* alone can give you the complete spiritual knowledge under the guidance of pure *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*. There is every possibility that due to an unstable mind you can lose everything. So be careful about any type of *asat-saṅga* (evil association). Only your strong faith in *Guru-Vaiṣṇava* can save you from *māyā* (illusion), which is likely to come in front of you in the form of misconception of *tattva* or in the form of Christian association or even in the form of wine and woman, etc. As per all those authentic scriptural evidences, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original source of everything (the original cause of all causes), so natu-

rally you or me or everybody, or even Jesus Christ himself, can be treated as the son of the Supreme Lord (or messenger), but any other wrong conception cannot be allowed — anyway.

Only and only one-pointed devotional practice under the guidance of pure *Guru-Vaiṣṇava* can expel all your misconceptions and impurity (dirty garbage) from your heart. Try to live in an exclusive way with the help of continuous *hari-kathā-kīrtana* to avoid all types of contamination and save yourself from imminent danger.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of Guru,
Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā —

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 49

Dear Bābājī Mahārāja,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma.

For many years I have dedicated my life to serving *Guru, Vaiṣṇavas* and others, but now I feel that I have neglected my own *Hari-bhajana*. Looking back, I feel great regret that I have done so much for everyone else but so little for my own spiritual life. This thought makes my heart cry.

Now my health has become very weak, and because of old age I am unable to travel to India to take your association personally.

Is there still any hope for me? How should I spend the little time that remains in my life so that it may become successful?

Please bless me so that I may engage properly in *Hari-bhajana*, hearing *hari-kathā* and rendering *vāñī-sevā*. I beg for your guidance and mercy.

Your servant

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All Glories To Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear, Respected Prabhuji

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Know my unalloyed love and affection together with respect to reach a balanced position. Total satisfaction of mind and heart is only possible through actual *Hari-bhajana*. You have done a lot for others but nothing for yourself. This kind of heart rendering crying can surely give you a scope to realize the mystery of *bhajana*. I am your useless Godbrother if at all I can come in your use in *Hari-bhajana* then I would deem myself very lucky, especially because you are my Senior Godbrother. You must bless me to engage me in perfect *vāñī-sevā*. I know your health cannot permit you to come here to India to bless me physically in this old age, but still your strong will power can take me in front of you in fine form — without any plane fare and visa. The rest of your life can come out successful through hearing *hari-kathā* and doing *Harināma-saṅkīrtana*. Khaṭvāṅga Rāja was successful to utilize a very small amount of time which was left in his life. Never mind; I am with you together with all my *Guru Varga*.

Thanks a lot,

Truly yours in the service of Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go Mātā.

Your Useless Godbrother Śrī Shyām Bābā

Always expecting your *kṛpā*.

QUESTION 50

Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, *Daṇḍavat praṇāma* unto your lotus feet, I would like to introduce myself to you.

My name is [...], I live in Barrackpore, Kolkata. Actually, my origin is south India, Andhra Pradesh, but my father was born and brought up here so I also was born and brought up here in West Bengal. I am 15 years old; I study in Bhaktivedanta Gurukula Vṛndāvana. The school is a residential school in Vṛndāvana, so most of the days I live in Vṛndāvana only. I studied in class 10, I came in contact with Śrī Gauḍīya Māṭha 3 years ago; earlier I was associating with the *jaṭā* Gosvāmīs of Nityānanda *parivāra* in Khardah. Two years back I started hearing your *hari-kathā* regularly, including all your old Bengali *hari-kathās*. In my family I am the only devotee. Earlier I used to eat meat, but then I left it with great effort, and I convinced my family members not to eat meat; now I am taking pure vegetarian food, before eating I offer it to Lord, by your mercy I am chanting 16 rounds daily. So, this was a brief introduction of mine.

The rest of the things, in detail, I will offer unto your lotus feet when you give *darśana* to me. Please bestow your unlimited mercy upon this fallen soul.

Daṇḍavat praṇāma.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

My Dear sweet little father,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Please try to know my unalloyed love and affection. Your letter going to touch my heart. Your strong faith unto the Lotus Feet of *Guru-Vaiṣṇava*-Bhagavān can give you success in your life, but there should be Non-stop (continuous or uninterrupted) pure *sat-saṅga* in your life, otherwise there is every possibility of fall down, because *Māyā* is too strong. What is your future plan and program? That is the most vital point. Your complete submission unto the Lotus Feet of a *Sad-Guru* can make you a great *sādhū-Vaiṣṇava*. Actually, our personal desire or our like and dislike cannot allow us to do perfect *hari-bhajana*, that is the main problem. *Hari-bhajana* is such an exclusive thing that it is almost impossible to realize from heart in this present bonded condition. Then wherefrom the question of actual *hari-bhajana* can arise? I suggest you dedicate your life and soul unto the Lotus Feet of *Sad Guru* to realize the absolute truth, because this is the right time in your life. I like to meet you, but when, how, and where? I can suggest you meet me on Monday 27th the next, outside the *bhajana-kuṭīra* of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (Godrumadvīpa, Svarūpa Gaṅja, Fakirtala) at 9 am. Or at Śrī Māyāpura Hulorghat Śiva Mandir at 9.30 am, because I am always busy. I can promise you that only this kind of *hari-kathā* can save your live, no alternative way open. Over.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā
Your useless son, Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās



ABOUT HIGHER
GAUDĪYA SIDDHĀNTA

QUESTION 51

Can a conditioned soul become free from Māyā in Kali-yuga?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Hope you all are ok with your *bhajana*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that time is *paramārtha* (*bhajana*), though we know the foolish conception of those material people that time is money, because they are all in the ocean of *māyā*. If we have no divine goal in our life, then we can become hopeless. Our strong faith in *guru-Vaiṣṇava* and *śāstra* can give us sufficient backing to get the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord — the nectar. How and when you have developed such a question — I don't know, but really this is painful to believe that no bonded soul can get free from *māyā* in Kali-*kāla*. If so, then who can do *bhajana* with what belief? No faith in *śāstra-vacana* means all zero. This is the conclusion of all authentic *śāstras* that our bonded condition can be removed by the association of pure *tattva-vit sādhu*. Of course, until and unless one can prove 100% submission unto the lotus feet of *tattva-vit sat-guru*, till then no question of *bhajana-siddhi* can arise, then what to speak about *bhāgavata-prāpti* (to achieve)?! Nonstop *hari-kathā* hearing can help you big way to tide over the situation.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā,

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 52

Letter (undisclosed)

Why have I again become attracted to Māyā after receiving so much *Hari-kathā*?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

Dear [...] Prabhu, my son,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Please try to know my unalloyed love and affection. I wonder how it is possible for you to jump into *māyā* again, even after getting the golden opportunity to hear Goloka *vāṇī* of Śrīla Prabhupāda through me for long time. I am sure that you are not doing absolute *sat-saṅga* through my *hari-kathā*. I think I am surely not your Idealism in your life, otherwise it would not have been possible for you to run here and there fancifully like a crazy to lose your *bhajana*. I am sure, as per your cheap sentiment you are following some big *Ācārya* to get lost in this material world. Ok, I think I have no right to check your running opposite way. “Enjoy yourself” — is the basic formula of this material world, except for those pure devotees, because their life is totally dedicated unto the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, so they never run for sense gratification, not even in dream. Try to forget me to get more and more material facilities. This is the trap of Māyā Devī to divert your attention. Over.

Excuse me for my concern for you all, because I love you all from heart.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā,

Your useless servant,
Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 53

How to take care of and worship Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī?

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī is Bhakti Devī, so we must be very careful to worship Tulasī Devī. *Darśana* (to see), *sparsana* (to touch), *dhyāna* (to meditate), *ropaṇa* (to plant seeds), *secana* (to give water), *pūjana* (to worship), *parikramā* (to move around Tulasī Devī), etc., *sevā* of Tulasī Devī can give you *bhakti* — if done with full care and respect. The great Nāmācārya Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura used to do Tulasī-*pūjā* and *harināma*. If you can maintain both internal and external purity then you can get great result shortly.

Try to offer water, flowers, garland, *dhūpa*, *dīpa*, etc. to Tulasī Devī both in the morning and evening time. At a veranda, on a rooftop, or at any open place where sufficient air, water, and sunlight facility is available, there you can keep Tulasī Devī. Or you can make an altar for Tulasī Devī.

From time to time, cutting the Tulasī mañjarīs can help the

growth of the plant. But always try to protect Tulasī Devī from too hot or too cold weather. Don't try to touch Tulasī Devī in an impure condition. Only after taking bath and changing cloth you can worship Tulasī Devī. Tulasī leaves can be offered unto the lotus feet of Bhagavān with great care. While taking leaves from the Tulasī plant you must beg for pardon.

I can say this much at present.

Gaura Hari! Haribol!

QUESTIONS 54

Daṇḍavat praṇāma.

Please tell Bābājī Mahārāj that I am one example of a *sad-guru* reaching out to collect a fallen soul on the other side of the world. It is causeless mercy, and also evidence of what Bābājī Mahārāj said — that *Guru* does not necessarily need to travel personally to collect fallen souls.

Thank you.

D.D.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear Respectable Mātājī,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all.

Please try to know my unalloyed efforts to establish the most exclusive Gauḍīya *siddhānta-vicāras* of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Sometimes it seems that fire is coming out of my mouth, but believe me or not, it is not at all due to an angry mood. Rather, it confirms my deep relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda and with you all. Excuse me. Your letter was not clear. You must excuse me as your poor brother, who is unable to reach your lotus feet to beg your pardon. I promise that I can never forget you all. So where does the question arise of breaking our loving relationship, when I always depend upon your unalloyed love and affection, without which I can die? Please always feel free to write to me and guide me. Otherwise, I may think that you are feeling annoyed with me. You are cordially invited to come to Navadvīpa to bless me. Be assured that I never intended to say that a *paramahansa* need not go out preaching to collect fallen souls. Rather, I wanted to say that the pure *ācāraṇa* of such exalted personalities is itself more than sufficient to influence us. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: “It is not possible for me to satisfy everybody by presenting pure *siddhānta-vicāra*.” Therefore, it is quite natural that some will accept me and some will not. Nevertheless, I must remain on a neutral platform to distribute the causeless mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda to everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, country, or colour.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the *sevā* of
Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā.

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās
Your poor fallen brother.

QUESTION 55

Daṇḍavat praṇāma!

We have just read the following excerpt from a letter by Śrīla Sadānanda Svāmī to Mario, in which he speaks about what Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Prabhupāda said regarding illustrations in books. Are there perhaps more statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda on this subject that you have heard? What does Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābājī think about it?

Here is the excerpt from the letter:

Letter from Svāmī to Mario (13.09.1974):

Bhagavān can only be seen with the ears — that is, one should hear who Bhagavān is, His qualities, and so on. What does *Shyām* mean? Lemonade-blue? Is His face really like those kitschy pictures? Or the four-armed Viṣṇu with such an impossible form as depicted in those paintings? Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta's paintings? It was a disciple of my *Guru* — otherwise of little use and not entirely sound of mind — who was permitted to paint from photographs. They were terrible! Prabhupāda did not like them.

He also did not tolerate illustrations by modern artists in editions of the *śāstras*, nor those kitschy pictures of Kṛṣṇa (from calendars) that newcomers used to paste inside the lids of their tin trunks.

Kind regards.

Rādhe! Rādhe!

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

Dear Mātāji,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection.

Always try to pray at the lotus feet of Śrīla Sadānanda Svāmīji to bestow some causeless mercy upon me, so that I may survive on the path of *Viśuddha Caitanya-vāñī-sevā* up to the last moment of my life. All your writings and *siddhānta-vicāra* give me immense pleasure. Nobody can break your *aprākṛta siddhānta-vicāra*, because all of it is supported by the *dārśanika-vicāra* of Śrīla Sadānanda Svāmipāda (or Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura). But the conditioned souls are so blind that they cannot find the true meaning of that *aprākṛta jagat*. Therefore, all our previous *Guru-varga* — such as Śrīla Vyāsadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sūtadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Nārada Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Śaṅkara Bhagavān—purposely indicated the Absolute Truth only by direction, because all transcendental realities are beyond human comprehension. For that reason, our *Guru-varga* has always taken some material examples (or pictures) simply to indicate the Absolute Truth by way of a near approximation. Although such representation is, strictly speaking, prohibited, still there is no alternative.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās, An aspirant for the dust particle
of the lotus feet of Śrīla Sadānanda Svāmipāda.

QUESTION 56

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Bābā!

Daṇḍavat praṇāma! All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga.

I heard in one of your lessons that *aprākṛta* selfishness means thinking about the actual need of our soul. You spoke about *svārtha* — the absolute benefit of the *ātmā*. In another *hari-kathā*, you explained that *kāma* is the desire to satisfy our material senses.

Do we have *aprākṛta* senses? If we want to satisfy them, what is that called?

I was meditating on the fact that the *gopīs* were dissatisfied with Brahmā because he was not expert in creation and had made eyelids, although they always wanted to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Is this a sweet expression of their love? How is their *aprākṛta* complaint connected with *kṛṣṇa-sevā*?

Also, in the *Vastraharaṇa-līlā*, why did those Vraja-kumārikās desire Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their husband? Why did they not simply pray for *kṛṣṇa-sevā*?

Devotees always want to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa, hear about Him, play with Him, and serve Him. But do they not also desire *ānanda* for themselves?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is all-attractive. It is quite natural that someone feels attracted to Him. When one experiences such attraction, one naturally wants to remain with the object of one's love, to see Him and hear about Him — just as Gadādhara Paṇḍita left aside his *kṣetra-sannyāsa*.

I know that the relationships between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Vrajavāsīs are the purest, but I would like to understand the

nature of *kṛṣṇa-prema* — the subtle difference between *prema* and *kāma*.

Thanks a lot.

Your useless, foolish daughter, devoid of mercy,

Śrī [...] Dāsī

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga.

To my dear foolish sweet Mama,

Dear blessed Mama,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. With a strong desire to attain your full faith and love, your useless boy shall try his best to give an appropriate answer to your questions.

No. 1

Actually, in our present material condition we have no *aprākṛta* sense organs. However, in the course of sincere, loving *bhajana*, *aprākṛta* senses gradually manifest within us for serving Bhagavān, who is also *sat-cit-ānanda-maya*. But before that, the first necessity is to become a *Nāmānandī-sādhū*. When we develop tremendous attraction for *Bhāgavata-sevā* (*Grantha-Bhāgavata* and *Bhakta-Bhāgavata*), then automatically Harināma Prabhu begins dancing upon our tongue, giving us the qualification to become a *Nāmānandī-sādhū*. Sense gratification is called *kāma*.

No. 2

Aprākṛta selfishness, by which one protects the absolute interest of one's soul through *hari-bhajana*, is actually very glorious. Just as Yadu, the son of Yayāti, neglected the selfish interest of his own father in order to serve Śrī Hari — that is, to perform *hari-bhajana*.

No. 3

Aprākṛta jealousy can be observed among the Vraja-*gopīs* in their eagerness to satisfy Śrī Kṛṣṇa completely. This is truly unique and worthy of appreciation.

Jagad-guru Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura used to say:

“Love and rapture, when they arise solely for the unique and absolute service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are truly excellent and worthy of appreciation.” Such loving competition is always found between the two groups in Vraja — Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's group and Śrīmatī Candrāvalī's group.

No. 4

Absolute loving protest has a unique speciality that can only be understood by a *premika-bhakta*. The complaint of the Vraja-*gopīs* against Brahmā simply reveals their deeply rooted absolute love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa — nothing else. Yes, it is a sweet expression of their absolute love. Their dissatisfaction proves their endless *sevā*-mood toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa, completely devoid of even the slightest fragrance of self-interest.

For the Vrajavāsīs, their *sevā* is identical with their very existence. Their *sevā-svarūpa* is an expression of *Svarūpa-śakti*.

No. 5

Those Vraja-*kumārikās* desired Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their husband in order to establish their relationship with Him beyond any uncertainty or social criticism. Actually, they are all manifestations of Bhagavān's own *Svarūpa-śakti*. They are eternally the wives of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In reality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the lawful husband of all of us. Marriage simply means the union of two souls possessing complementary natures in order to harmonize their respective emotions.

No. 6

For conditioned souls, it is audacious to desire direct meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rather, they should sincerely engage in His service under the guidance of a bona fide *Sad-guru*, so that they themselves may become objects of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *darśana*. A conditioned soul can never perceive any *aprākṛta-vastu*. The *śāstras* declare:

*aprākṛta vastu nahe prākṛta-gocara
veda-purāṇete ei kahe nirantara*

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 9.194)

Spiritual substance is never within the jurisdiction of material perception. This is the constant verdict of the Vedas and *Purāṇas*.

Therefore, what to speak of directly seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa?

However, the *premika-bhaktas*, overwhelmed by spontaneous separation, become so intensely afflicted that they feel unable to continue living. They cry only to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa and cool the burning fire of separation within their hearts. This is entirely natural for them.

Śrī Bhagavad-gītā declares:

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham*

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.7)

Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religion and a rise of irreligion, O descendant of Bharata, at that time I manifest Myself.

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.8)

To deliver the devotees, annihilate the miscreants, and re-establish the principles of religion, I appear age after age.

In his commentary on these verses, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda explains the same *siddhānta*: pure *premika-bhaktas* desire only to be rescued from the endless ocean of painful separation. They never desire to engage Bhagavān in their own service. Their spontaneous mood of *sevā* is completely devoid of any trace of self-interest.

No. 7

The desire for sense gratification is called *kāma*, and it is extremely impure.

Among the Vrajavāsīs there is no mentality of self-enjoyment

whatsoever. That condition is called *prema*. This is the essential distinction between *prema* and *kāma*.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta declares:

ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā — tāre bali 'kāma'
kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema' nāma

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.165)

The desire to satisfy one's own senses is called *kāma* (lust), whereas the desire to satisfy the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called *prema* (love).

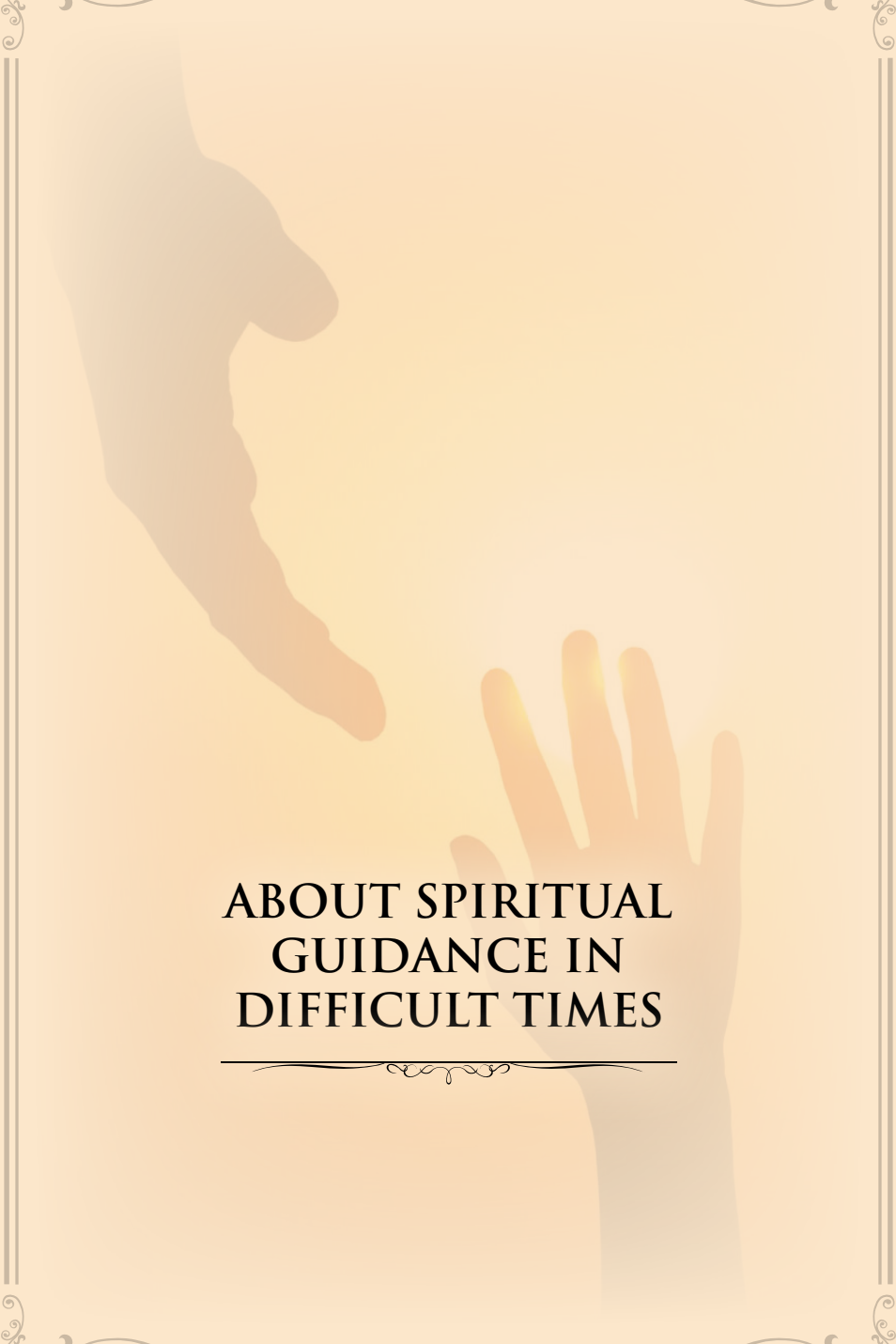
No. 8

The sole aspiration of the Vraja-gopīs — and indeed of all the Vrajavāsīs — is the absolute enjoyment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To experience their own highest happiness only through serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the most absolute way is the deepest and most confidential truth of their lives. What then can be said of the Vraja-gopīs, who are always prepared to sacrifice their very life, soul, reputation — everything — for the absolute service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa? This is completely beyond ordinary human comprehension. If they can satisfy Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then they automatically experience complete satisfaction themselves. Therefore, please do not try to speculate upon this most confidential and sensitive *bhajana-rahasya* at the present stage.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the *sevā* of
 Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā

Your useless son,
 Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās



ABOUT SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

QUESTION 57

Daṇḍavat praṇāma

I have a friend who is having suicidal thoughts. What do the *śāstras* say about this?

Also, is it possible to approach Lord Dattātreya from a *Vaiṣṇava* platform? My friend, who is experiencing these suicidal thoughts, is practising the ascetic yoga taught by Dattātreya while maintaining a focus on *Vaiṣṇavism*.

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Dear Prabhuji,

Daṇḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection. It would be best to bring him before me at Śrī Māyāpura (Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma). If that is not possible at present, there is certainly some risk, because such a person requires immediate guidance from a pure *Vaiṣṇava*. For the time being, he should continuously hear the *Pañca-tattva mantra*, the *Mahā-mantra*, the *Nṛsimha-mantra*, and various Gauḍīya *kīrtanas* (in Sanskrit, Hindi, or Bengali) available through our society (<https://shyamdasbaba.com/gauḍīya-bhajans/>). The yoga process prescribed by Dattātreya is not practical for *Vaiṣṇavas*. It would be far better for him to practise some gentle *prāṇāyāma* as instructed by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava Mahārāja, together with continuous *aprākṛta hari-kathā*, *śravaṇa*, and *kīrtana*.

Actually, this kind of tendency is generally seen in a person suffering from mental depression. Therefore, only pure *sat-saṅga* can free him from this condition. There is no other way. If this

aprākṛta hari-kathā and *kīrtana* truly touch his heart, then I am one hundred percent sure that he will not commit suicide. I shall pray at the lotus feet of Śrī Nṛsiṃha Deva for him under the guidance of Śrīla Gurudeva and Prabhupāda. Please send me his photograph and his name immediately.

Thanks a lot.

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā.

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

QUESTION 58

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gauraṅga

Dear Mama,

Danḍavat praṇāma to you all. Try to know my unalloyed love and affection.

All the different kinds of problems we face in life should be accepted as the *kṛpā* of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛpā* may come to us in two ways. One appears to be negative, in the form of various kinds of suffering and difficulties. The other appears to be positive, in the form of wealth, comfort, or material enjoyment.

Therefore, I am confident that, day by day, you will develop detachment within your heart by observing the miserable condition of material family life. The more detached you become from material things, the more attraction you will naturally develop for the eternal spiritual world. So never allow your heart to become disturbed by the unpleasant situation in which you have been placed.

Rather, try to come here to Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma to receive the causeless mercy of Śrī Gauraṅga Deva. I think this is much more practical than simply expressing deep grief.

Thanks a lot

Truly yours in the service of
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mātā

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

**CLOSING LETTER:
ABOUT THE MOOD OF
VĀṆĪ-SEVĀ**

QUESTION 59

Letter (undisclosed)

Answer by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja:

To the Ācārya of Śrī Chaitanya Mission

Om Visnupada Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vicar Vishnu Mahārāja,
Dear honourable Mahārāja,

Please accept my humble obeisances and *Danḍavat praṇāma*.

One of your poor and useless Godbrother Shyam Baba trying his best to serve the Lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Gauḍīya *guru-varga* by the help of Gaura-*vāñī*. To project the unique Ācāryaship of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his absolute Idealism, sometimes my speech becomes very heavy, but be sure that without “*trinad api bhava*” I cannot get power to speak like that. I expect no honour, no position, no money, nothing in return. I think as a senior Godbrother you have full sympathy and blessing for me, especially since you are the disciple of such an exalted *Sad Gurudeva* whom I respect much, because he never took shelter of falsity in any circumstances. He was totally fearless. He used to speak that if we are really going to do *Bhajan* of that Absolute Truth, then how can we make any compromise with falsity? Truthfulness is the foundation of our *Bhajan* without which all is zero. When I wanted to project the absolute glory of your *Gurudeva* as an absolute speaker, then I was bound to speak that way, but that doesn’t mean that I have any insulting mood. I have enough honour and respect for a perfect *acārya*, you know it very well. When my *Gurudeva* told me that: “You are useless, what *sevā* have you done so that you can speak something?” Believe me or not, then I was very very happy to receive *niṣkaṇṭe kṛpā*

from my Divine *guru-pada-padma*. I could realize that surely Śrī Gurudeva can give quality in me someday, with this positive hope I am waiting very patiently. I need all your blessings from heart to come out successful in my *vāñī-sevā*. Many times, before I got inspiration from you all for my writing and speech. My *vāñī-sevā* can prove my honest effort as the servant of my Gauḍīya *guru-varga* (especially Śrīla Prabhupāda). I beg for pardon. If any mistake was done knowingly or unknowingly. I like to see your Lotus-feet, but really, I am unlucky because I cannot make up any time, but I keep hope.

Thanks a lot

Truly yours in the service of
Guru-Gauraṅga and Go-Mata

Your usless Godbrother (a fallen soul) Bābā Shyām Dās,
waiting for your causeless mercy





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Cleanliness of heart is only possible by hearing *Vaikuṇṭha-vāṇī* (*hari-kathā*) from an authentic source. But this should not be our ultimate goal. We perform *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* of *hari-kathā* to attain the most precious and auspicious jewel — *kṛṣṇa-prema*, I mean the loving eternal *sevā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana. At present, cutting through *māyā* is a great challenge in our life, but everything is possible by *sat-guru-kṛpā*. What is not possible by *Guru-kṛpā*? — that is the main question. Be careful. Only after cutting *māyā* can *hari-bhajana* truly begin, not before that. Nevertheless, our devotional practice can and should continue regularly without interruption, gradually leading us to the final goal of life — *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-prema*.

(Excerpt from a letter by Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja)



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