

**His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī
Mahārāja**

82.11.21.C

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

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

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

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

Devotee: No proof?

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

Devotee: In letters?

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

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

Devotee: No.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes, when he went away he did not like Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī Ṭhākura because he preached in a different way, not in the garb of these *bābājīs*. His way of preaching was of a different type which other disciples of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the section we call *sahajiyā*, and they were the masters of the Vaiṣṇava society at that time, they could not give any recognition to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī because his fashion was of another nature. Just as I heard from Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu. He was first in the opposite camp, then came to Guru Mahārāja and took initiation there. I heard from him that Prabhupāda [Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī Ṭhākura], after taking *sannyāsa*, he went to Vṛndāvana, to visit. And Paramānanda and Kuñja Bābu, they were clad in European dress, and Prabhupāda took red cloth of a *sannyāsī*, went to visit Vṛndāvana. The *sahajiyā* section, they say: *rakta-vastra 'vaiṣṇavera' parite nā yuyāya...*

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

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

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

One Paṇḍita, Govinda Paṇḍita, Śaṅkar Tīrtha, who gave as a chairman, the first reception to Swāmī Mahārāj here in Navadvīpa I arranged that. He flatly admitted one day in a meeting: "That we first criticised Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, that he's ignoring the past,

and ignoring the present Vaiṣṇava section. He's taking a new course of his preaching. But it was our fault now I realise."

Weekly he had a paper, *Adivasi* [?] And in many places, they have all criticised our Guru Mahārāj. "He's a man of modern type. He's leaves the old things, fashion, leaving respect for that." In this way, and that gentleman, that Paṇḍita, Govinda Śaṅkar Tīrtha, in a meeting he clearly told that: "We could not understand him. That he's meant, he has come for world propaganda and to take such policy as he's to conquer the whole world, and not only confined to our own cell and going on with the *japam* etc. The other type, he's sent from the higher order, higher sphere, to propagate this Vaiṣṇava *dharma* of Mahāprabhu in a novel way so that it may be acceptable by the public at large. Especially his aim was to convert the Westerners. So he took such and he presented European dress."

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

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

mouth of the highest type and in the line of Mahāprabhu and dealing very extraordinary reverence to the creed. The *Gītā*, *Bhāgavatam*, with very particular attention and reverence and respect he used to do.

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

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

And also, analysing and met so many *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas and so many things. That attracted us, that cancelled this present Vaiṣṇava because the society, especially the *brāhmaṇas*, they had abhorrence for the so-called Vaiṣṇava society, and the Goswāmīs also, for their practice. Both, Goswāmīs and they abhorred them. But I had some special regard for Mahāprabhu, going through His advice and character, practices, teachings and practices. I had to make much struggle to come from the position which we hold in the society, to Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. Only the highest ontological aspect, and give his thought, not an artificial but natural. That attracted me and so on.

He did not care for the *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas or so-called Goswāmīs. He hated them. That was our experience. And we are attracted by the exclusive devotion towards *Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā*, what is Vaiṣṇavaism preached by Mahāprabhu. Wholesale, wholesale, people could not estimate how, length and breadth. So extraordinary and such earnestness to preach that, that is incalculable. The earnestness to preach the doctrine of *Bhāgavatam* and Mahāprabhu in the purest form. Too much earnestness, most intense earnestness. He was up to anything for this. So much intense earnestness to preach the doctrine and doctrine also of the purest type eliminating everything.

prithi vite yata katha dharma nam chole

What of this Lalitā Prasād and others? Single-handed he challenged the whole world, all the doctrines in the religious path, defeating them successfully. And with reason, he was practical with his faith. And at least

fifty-five years I am holding that and not only that I am, it is daily corroborated by the *śāstra* and by the thoughts, relative thoughts, is daily being corroborated, extended, what he did is alright. ...did not care a fig for other's opinions.

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

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

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

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Oh.

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

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

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

Devotee: He says that ...

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

Devotee: Yes.

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

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

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

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

Devotee: But in your stage of life...

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

When I came here in a cottage first, then I found one *brāhmaṇa* boy who took the dress of a *sakhī* and lived in that locality. And as a *sakhī* he's

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

I replied, We are not persons to believe you. We are persons of Gauḍīya Maṭh, members of Gauḍīya Maṭh, we know what is Kṛṣṇa and who can see Him and how to do it. We have got some idea. So you are a bogus man, you are preaching and you are cheating the public saying that you have seen Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

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

So, so many things. *Adhokṣaja*, He cannot be seen and if it is seen coming down it is very, very rare. Coming down from the spiritual sphere to the mental sphere and becomes so much strong that when eyes open overflowed can see Him. And when He withdraws nothing remains. So it is not so easy. There are so many stages - *ādau śraddhā*, *sādhu-saṅga*,

bhajana-kriyā, anartha-nivṛttiḥ, bhakti, bhāva-bhakti, prema-bhakti - the stages are there, mathematical calculation we can trace in one man by measuring by computer, this philosophical computer, that how much progress is there. Has he got *śraddhā* proper? He will say: "Oh, Śiva is also, Śiva, Kṛṣṇa, Kali, Śakti - all God, all equal." And that man will say 'I have seen Kṛṣṇa.' So there is the standard, measurement, criterion is there in what stage one will see Kṛṣṇa. And when one has seen Kṛṣṇa what will be the after effect? One who has seen Kṛṣṇa, the after behaviour, conduct, after that what will be there? All these things to be considered.

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

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

Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Swāmī: Yes. I will also say that I have not yet seen Kṛṣṇa but I am in the way in search of Kṛṣṇa. I have not got Him, not seen Him, but I am in the search of Kṛṣṇa and I feel that I am on the path of real search. And whatever told, or whatever seen or said, that in the path these things will be, I have some sort of experience of that, that in the real path of Kṛṣṇa I am, so far I can guess. But I have not the audacity to say that I have seen Kṛṣṇa, I am in *līlā* with Him, all these things. I revere, and I don't want also to have it so cheaply. Cheap Kṛṣṇa I don't want, this market Kṛṣṇa I do not want. I want as guided by my Guru Mahārāj to have that Kṛṣṇa. In this birth or in hundreds of births after, does not matter. This is my ideal. I'm not going to deceive anyone by any statement but I think I am in the path. By the grace of *guru-varga* I am in the path. That I can say.

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

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

Devotee: Imagination?

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

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

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

Devotee: So at that point he had access.

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

Devotee: I have not had any flashes.

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

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

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

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

Devotee: Yes, there are strong material desires.

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

Devotee: I was sacrificing for many years...

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

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

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

End of recording, 82.11.21.C

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