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Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...We can approach God Himself, and we can find such a near guardian that as if we can live in His family. As family man we can live with Him to serve Him. God is our family head. Sometimes sonhood. Sometimes consorthood. Fatherhood. Somewhere fatherhood, somewhere consorthood, somewhere sonhood, friendship. In different respects the God may deal very familiarly with every soul as His very near and dear, very close, like family man.

But in *Bible* He's far off. He's our well-wisher. He supplies all our necessary things. He's good and great, God is good and great, great and good, but far off.

But here Kṛṣṇa consciousness says, He will come to live with you as your intimate friend in different forms. This is the gift of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, that is more deeper than *Bible* has given. The *Bible* is not antagonistic, not enemy, but a friend in the way. *Bible* is our friend in the way, not in the goal.

The goal is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa. The father as Kṛṣṇa. And as Kṛṣṇa He's sometimes son, He's sometimes consort, sometimes friend, sometimes master. In different stages He accepts us and our service very intimately, very lovingly, very sweetly. Love, sweetness, beauty, charm, similar things, and He represents that there. He's charming, He's sweet, He's beautiful, He's loving embrace. The ultimate reality is such. Our own heart of hearts is He. He's the heart of our heart. Paramātmā.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Gaura Hari.

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Vidagdha Mādhava: [reads a letter from Dayādhara Gaurāṅga]

...goes on to say, "According to this, it is more than just eternal, normally *sat* means eternal, is that true?"

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes.

Vidagdha Mādhava: But here he says, "It has no meaning if devoid of relationship with the *jīvas*."

Then he says, "Is this connotation correct? Secondly the latter part of the statement that Brahman was without perception seems impersonal. Is this the correct meaning?"

Then he goes on, "I have read one of the Gauḍīya's yearly souvenirs where they criticise young men and women dancing in so called ecstasy throughout the streets of western cities. In our coming up issue I have tried to explain the reason we all dance through the streets in the west, or for that matter danced at all, being because our Guru instructed us in that way. And that our dancing is not seen as *rāgānuga*, but is *vaidhi-bhakti*. Am I incorrect in taking such a stance? I can see the Gauḍīya's criticism. I think that they feel that our dancing is a false thing, or imitation. But if we claimed to be in *samādhī* they would be absolutely right. But I do not think that we have ever claimed or implied such. Can you advise Mahārāja?"

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes.

Vidagdha Mādhava: Do you want me to finish the letter?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes.

Vidagdha Mādhava: OK. He says, "Another item I read in *Gauḍīya* was that at the ceremony honouring Bon Mahārāja's life, following his passing, there were some words of praise written by Your Divine Grace about the activities of His Divine Grace. I wanted to know if you would mind sharing those plaudits with us.

By Your Grace, somehow I'm surviving, even growing. But due to my past activities and conditioning it is a very painful experience. At the same time the only experience worth having. So my indebtedness to you is complete. I'm bankrupt and I have nothing to give. But your sweetness lingers within me and I cannot fathom how I have come upon such Divine Grace. And I'm praying to Mahāprabhu, "Please give me something that I can give to Your Divine Grace. You are the possessor of everything my Lord, and I'm merely asking that You bless me with some aspect of Your indefatigable opulence so that I may in some small way make an effort to please my Gurudeva. Without Your mercy I'm a useless fool. Even with Your mercy I'm a useless fool. But at least I can be the agent of some of Your value ridden transcendental jewels, for the pleasure of my Gurudeva.

In this way I'm begging for Mahāprabhu's supreme mercy. First I beg from Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Prabhupāda, then from Śrīla Hansadhūta, then from Your Divine Grace, and now I'm begging and begging and begging again. Even of the unapproachable for me, the Supreme Personality Śrīman Mahāprabhu. I think I'm nothing but a mercy wallah, hankering for mercy. All I can do is take. I cannot give one *paisa*, so actually I cannot call myself a mercy wallah, he would at least sell mercy. I'm a mercy thief.

All *daṇḍavats* to you Śrī Gurudeva Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja. Your useless dacoit. Dayādhara Gaurāṅga Dāsa."

Finished. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

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Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja:

*divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt, kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā, deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ*

["The process by which divine knowledge (*divyaṁ jñānaṁ*) is given and sins are destroyed is called *dīkṣā* by the highly learned scholars who are expert in spiritual affairs."] [*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 27]

The spiritual specialist, they say, "What is *dīkṣā*? That is a process through which the spiritual knowledge is imparted." *Divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt*. So new knowledge, new estimation about the environment, about the world, awakens in one's heart. New angle of vision arises within. What we saw, that is false, *māyā*. And what is reality, to want to realise that, to realise the reality. *Kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam*. And the reaction was due to me, for my false calculation and activity, as a result of that false calculation. These things are cleared off, *pāpasya*. *Pāpa* means the reaction I acquired due to my false estimation and transaction with the environment. That is cleared when I get the real estimation of the environment, of the world outside. This is the result of *dīkṣā*, *divya jñāna*. Not knowledge from my narrow standpoint, but the standpoint of the most wide view. I see with my narrow selfish outlook. We must get rid of that false notion of selfish enterprise, and to replace that by the proper, true, estimation of the environment, of the world outside. And accordingly we shall learn to make transaction with the world. This is *dīkṣā*.

In doing that we are to understand what is the nature of the world we're living in. We're not masters of what we see. I'm not monarch of all I survey. This is totally wrong, downright falsehood.

But there is some monarch. We're not monarch, I'm not monarch. The monarch is there, and I'm also within His survey. 'I'm monarch of all I survey.' I'm not surveyor but I'm an object of being surveyed. The world is being surveyed and I'm a part of this world. I'm also being surveyed by the monarch of the world. And what is the result of that surveying? To know that and to learn to go on accordingly, according to the instruction of the surveyor proper, Absolute Surveyor. That is *dīkṣā, divyaṁ jñānaṁ*, divine knowledge, *divyaṁ jñānaṁ*. What is divine knowledge?

*īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ, [yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā, mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam]*

["Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong."] [*Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, 1]

Not only is it false that I'm the owner, but none is owner, but only one master. *īśāvāsyā*. Not one, neither many, one but not myself. He's the master of the whole, that is God, the Lord, Kṛṣṇa. And not only the world belongs to Him but we also belong to Him. This knowledge. What are we? We're slave to the master of the world.

*jīvera 'svarūpa' haya-kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
[kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā-śakti' bheda-bheda-prakāśa']*

["The constitutional nature of the *jīva* soul is that of an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa; the *jīva* soul is a manifestation of divinity which is one with Kṛṣṇa and different from Him. The *jīva* souls are the marginal potency of the Lord."] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 20.108]

To feel that this is the truth. I'm very small, very insignificant. My condition is very pitiful. I'm to crave mercy, to crave help from high, for my misguided life, misunderstood life. All these things are being dealt every day. This is the purpose of getting *dīkṣā, divya jñāna*. To do away with our local experience and to invite the perspective, the estimation from the centre, the surveyor from the centre. What is what. To be introduced newly to the environment. To forget my previous estimation and to invite the new estimation about the thing and to go on accordingly. To control my conduct accordingly. That what we see around us, that has got owner, not owner-less. Neither I'm owner of them. Neither I'm owner of what I see, what I survey - at the same time none is owner who are like myself. One owner there is and He's also my owner.

Now how to go on then? Mathematical calculation. This is also property, I'm also property, I'm a servant, this is His substance. According to the masters will I'm to deal with all. That is serving. The Lord is to be served, not to be enjoyed, and His things are also to be served, not to be enjoyed. That will be the deduction, that will be deduced from *divya jñāna*. I'm a serving unit in this world. Neither I can thrive by renunciation, no right to renounce. A slave cannot make any strike, that "I won't do the work." No, you're bound to do your duty. Neither you can go on with the work according to your own whim, nor can you strike, to say that I won't co-operate, no. Only one side open, that you must have to discharge your duty. You do not do that you commit offence, and offence means punishable, you'll be punished. The fact is so stern, the reality is so cruel. We have no independence of our own. We must not think that we're owner.

At the same time we cannot think that we're owner of our own self, that 'according to my will I can deal with my environment.' No. You're bound., you're duty bound to treat your environment in a particular way, in a reverential way, in a serving way. Then you're normal, otherwise you're abnormal, and you're to be punished. That is *aparādha*, offence. *Sevā*, neither *bhoga*, nor *tyāga*, neither enjoyment nor renunciation. No right, no right to enjoy, no right to renounce, non co-operate, but only one side open, that is to serve. And we're to face with this cruel reality. At first it may seem to be cruel, to be rough. But if we can understand the purpose, innate, underlying, then we shall gradually find that this is only the key to happy life.

Neither self aggrandisement, with the help of the others, one wanting to live on others energy, that is insulting, that is cowardice, improper. But because we cannot utilise it only for my selfish purpose, so I must leave it, that is also not honourable, not justifiable. We're living together, we must have some sort of duty towards my environment. I cannot see me cut off things from the environment. An organic whole, the parts are co-related, so we have also got co-relation with our environment, with our four sides things. This is natural. We're a part of organic whole and we've got our respective duty to one another. Just as this body, one part has got some duty to discharge for the whole, and through that to every part. So neither *bhoga*, nor *tyāga*, like the *jñānī's*, the Buddhists, the Śāṅkarites, the *tyāgī*, neither their formula or estimation is right. Nor the exploitationist, "whatever I see it is for me, I'm monarch of all I survey," That view also not true. To understand this deeply.

Dayādharma Gaurāṅga is a good scholar, but still he's perplexed, nonplussed almost, to understand, intellect. He's a doctor, research scholar, but intellect is not sufficient to make us understand all these difficulties of this life. Not only reading from the scriptures independently, independent reading of the scriptures cannot impart us the necessary light to understand the things contained in the books, or scriptures.

ya'o paḍa bhāgavata vaiṣṇavera sthane [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā*, 5.131]

Mahāprabhu says: "Go and read, study *Bhāgavata* from a Vaiṣṇava. Try to get the angle of vision from him."

*tad viddhi praṇipātena, paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam, jñāninas tattva darśināḥ*

[Kṛṣṇa says: "You will be able to attain all this knowledge by satisfying the enlightened spiritual master with prostrate obeisances, relevant enquiry, and sincere service. Great souls who are most expert in scriptural knowledge and endowed with direct realisation of the Supreme Absolute Truth will teach you that divine knowledge."] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 4.34]

ācāryavān puruṣo veda ["Only one who has a Guru can know the truth."] [*Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, 6.18.2]

You must have an Ācārya if you want to study that revealed scriptures. You can't study it alone, independently, not in an empirical way, that we'll be able to understand. Only in the descending method is it possible. It comes in a descending method, that knowledge. And that does not depend on our literary education. A literate man will understand more, and an ordinary illiterate person

won't be able to understand spiritual truth, not that. Illiterate can understand, and literate may fail to understand. Independent of this worldly scholarship, that is.

Only *praṇipāta*, *paripraśna*, *sevā*, serving attitude, surrender. These things are necessary to be illuminated by the higher revealed truth. From Guru, from Vaiṣṇava, through them it will come down to my heart, then to my brain. Or really in my soul, soul will be awakened, soul's body will grow. I shall see, come out from the bondage. In this way, *divya jñāna*, *dīkṣā* means all these things. To engage oneself in the quest of the revealed truth through a particular process. *Praṇipāta*, *paripraśna*, *sevā* - surrender, honest enquiry, and serving attitude. We can acquire that sort of knowledge, understanding, and we're to adjust us accordingly to get the benefit of *dīkṣā*.

It is not a mere formal thing, it is not this, that we shall only repeat the mantram I have got. But the mantram wants to say something, he has got it's meaning, and he wants to say something to me, and ask me to do that and I shall have to do that. Then I shall get the desired result. The purpose of the *dīkṣā* will be fulfilled. But mere repetition of a few technical sounds, that does not finish *dīkṣā*. Knowledge is transmitted and you must utilise that sort of knowledge in favour of your realisation of higher life, real life, proper life. And eternal life, life after death, life after so many deaths, death also, this will continue. Eternal knowledge of the eternal soul about the eternity. Both the knower and the known and the knowing. These three things are eternal. He'll find himself that I'm an eternal part of this world, and there is eternity also, I'm a part of that, and eternal relationship is also there. And from that relation, so many functions, so many activities are presupposed and that should be done, that sort of duty should be discharged. This is *dīkṣā*, *divya jñāna*. *Divya* means non mundane, supernatural, transcendental.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. No more today.

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Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In that very place a temple is constructed, he was born there.

Devotee: I didn't have a chance, but I wanted very much to go there.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Just over the way, Jagannātha's chariot is drawn, on the left side, there in Purī he was born. On Grand Road, when chariot's going on the left side.

Devotee: Oh. Is it where the Gauḍīya Maṭh *āśrama* is now?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Mādhava Mahārāja has got *āśrama* there. He purchased the land and constructed a temple and *āśrama* there, Mādhava Mahārāja did it.

Devotee: Then I was there, my mistake.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Then that, another where Mahāprabhu lived, Mahāprabhu, He stayed there for eighteen years, that is Gambhīrā. Then Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *samādhi* tomb. Then Gadādhara Pandit's temple, that Kiśora Gopinātha. Then this side there is a garden house, Jagannātha-vallabha where Rāmānanda stayed, lived, Rāmānanda Rāya. Then there is Sārvabhauma's house. So many. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

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Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, he was the son of Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, in whose house Mahāprabhu stayed for four months continuously, on the banks of Kāverī, Śrī Raṅgam, the highest holy place of Rāmānuja *sampradāya*. Śrī Raṅgam, near Tiruchirappalli, Trichy, on the banks of Kāverī River. Śrī Raṅgam. There lived one Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇava, Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa. And Mahāprabhu was guest in house for four months continuous during *cāturmāsya*. And his boy was Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, and his brother one Prabodhānanda, both of them followed Mahāprabhu to Vṛndāvana. By call of Mahāprabhu both of them came to Vṛndāvana. Prabodhānanda, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's previous guru and paternal uncle, he lived in Śrī Kuṇḍa, Kamavana in Vṛndāvana. And Gopāla Bhaṭṭa he lived in Vṛndāvana in the association of Rūpa and Sanātana as he was asked by Mahāprabhu to do so. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa once came from Vṛndāvana to Purī to see Mahāprabhu, Śrī Caitanya Deva. And Mahāprabhu asked him, "Go stay in Vṛndāvana under the guidance of Rūpa and Sanātana."

He did that. He established a temple there, that Rādhāramaṇa Gira [?] at present in Vṛndāvana. That is the temple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. First he was, he came from *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*, but he joined this Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. It is said that he started the temple with Śālagrāma. But once some merchant came to visit Vṛndāvana and he offered many jewels, jewellery, the ornaments, to the Deities. And Gopāla Bhaṭṭa thought, "My Deity is only Śālagrāma, if mine would have been in a Deity figure then I could get many ornaments and decorate my Lord." It is said that in the morning he saw that from Śālagrāma a Deity has come out, a Kṛṣṇa concious Mūrti, and just on the back in a part, that Śālagrāma is connected. And that was spread, and the greatness of the Deity and temple had much admiration and propoganda. That Rādhāramaṇa was the Name of the Deity. Then at present, what, whom we find there, the householder disciple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, they're living there and continuing the *sevā*. Generally they're scholars, study about Sanskrit and different scriptures.

Jīva Goswāmī has written this *Bhāgavata-Sandarbha*, he has mentioned there, "This original rough copy, copy of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, I have systematised them, I have grouped them in a system. First the epistemology, that is *Bhāgavata*, *Tattva-Sandarbha*, then *Bhāgavat-Sandarbha*, *Paramātmā-Sandarbha*, *Kṛṣṇa-Sandarbha*, *Bhakti-Sandarbha*, *Prīti-Sandarbha*. Six parts of *Bhāgavat-Sandarbha* or *Sat-Sandarbha*." That was compiled by Jīva Goswāmī and there is reference, "That Gopāla Bhaṭṭa left some notes scattered here and there, and I have taken, consulted the notes by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa and making a system, I have produced this book *Bhāgavat-Sandarbha*."

Sanātana Goswāmī Prabhu, he compiled *Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa*, the Vaiṣṇava treatise book where this Deity worshipping and the formalities of Vaiṣṇava *dharma*, that how to fast on Janmāṣṭamī day, how to manage the worshipping, different Deities. All these things are mentioned in *Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa*. *Vaiṣṇava-śruti*, how one, a devotee will pass his days, how you should worship, how the temples, how the *vrata*, vow, how *Hari-Nāma* should be taken, details have been given in *Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa*, a big *śruti grantha*. He has also mentioned that, "I have taken, I have compiled this with the help of the southern *brāhmaṇa* Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, his collection, and I am only preparing the *tikā*, the commentary of it." So both Sanātana and Jīva referred to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa for their books. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa came from the Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇava section and also from the *brāhmaṇa* class. That was Gopāla Bhaṭṭa.

There was one disciple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa by the name of Harivaṁśa, he was of a little different type, something like *sahujyā*. He was seen one day to chew betel nut in the Ekādaśī fasting day, but

objection was raised by other disciples of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa against him, his Godbrother Harivaṁśa. And there was some quarrel, and it is said that he got some support from Prabodhānanda, because Prabodhānanda wrote many Sanskrit books. Very good Sanskrit and very fervent and emotional. *Vṛndāvana-Sataka*, *Navadvīpa-Sataka*, *Rādhā-rasa-sudanidhi*, that famous book in praise of Rādhārāṇī. These books are very much appreciated by that section, Harivaṁśī, who came from Harivaṁśa, their main guru. First guru Harivaṁśa started a section named Harivaṁśī. Harivaṁśa himself was a disciple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. But some difference, little slackness in the strict life of a austere life of a devotee, little slackness that Harivaṁśa. That comes from Gopāla Bhaṭṭa we're told.

Yesterday also was the disappearance of that Rāmacandra Kavirāja. Rāmacandra Kavirāja he was a disciple of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya. We're told he had a very beautiful figure and a beautiful mind also. He had one house nearby Narottama Ṭhākura, Padar River, on the other side, the left side of Padara, big river coming from Ganges. There Narottama and this side, right side, the residence of Rāmacandra Kavirāja, and his elder brother Govinda Kavirāja. Govinda Kavirāja was a devotee of Śakti...

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