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Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...was devotee of Kṛṣṇa. He asked Govinda Kavirāja to hear about the grace of Kṛṣṇa, but he did not give his ear to that. But lastly, when he's almost to die, he prayed fervently to his worshipped Deity, "Please give me salvation."

But it is told that the Deity told, "I have no right to give liberation. I can give different enjoyment of this mundane world, but no emancipation, or liberation from this world."

"Then who can give it?"

"That only Govinda, Nārāyaṇa, can give that."

"Then I ask your permission to worship Nārāyaṇa."

"Yes do that."

Then Govinda Kavirāja being disappointed, began his prayer to Nārāyaṇa, Govinda.

There is a valuable song, commonly it is chanted.

(1)

*bhajahū re mana śrī-nanda-nandana-abhaya caraṇāravinda re
[durlabha mānava-janama sat-saṅge taroho e bhava-sindhu re]*

(2)

*[śīta ātapa bāta bariṣaṇa e dina jāminī jāgi re
biphale sevinu kṛpaṇa durajana capala sukha-laba lāgi' re]*

(3)

*[e dhana, yaubana, putra parijana ithe ki āche paratīti re
kamala-dala-jala, jīvana ṭalamala bhajahū hari-pada nīti re]*

(4)

*[śravaṇa, kīrtana, smaraṇa, vandana, pāda-sevana, dāsya re
pūjana, sakhī-jana, ātma-nivedana govinda-dāsa-abhilāṣa re]*

[(1) "O mind, just worship the lotus feet of the Son of Nanda, which make one fearless. Having obtained this rare human birth, cross over this ocean of worldly existence through the association of saintly persons."

(2) "Both in the day and at night I remain sleepless, suffering the pains of the heat and cold, the wind and the rain. For a fraction of flickering happiness I have uselessly served wicked and miserly men."

(3) "What assurance of real happiness is there in all of one's wealth, youthfulness, sons, and family members? This life is tottering like a drop of water on a lotus petal; therefore you should always serve and worship the divine feet of Lord Hari."

(4) "It is the desire and great longing of Govinda Dāsa to engage himself in the nine processes of *bhakti*, namely hearing the glories of Lord Hari and chanting those glories, constantly remembering Him and offering prayers to Him, serving the Lord's lotus feet, serving the Supreme Lord as a servant, worshipping Him with flowers and incense and so forth, serving Him as a friend, and completely offering the Lord one's very self." [Govinda Kavirāja, *Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, p 100]

Then he began to worship the Deity that was very much adored by his younger brother Rāmacandra Kavirāja. Govinda Kavirāja, Rāmacandra. Several Bengali poems, he has got Sanskrit writings also. That was sent to Jīva Goswāmī and he, Jīva Goswāmī, gave his appreciation of those songs of Govinda Kavirāja. Rāmacandra Kavirāja was friendly to Narottama Ṭhākura. Narottama Ṭhākura and they on the two sides the same river, they lived. And sometime Rāmacandra went to Narottama Ṭhākura to meet him, sometime Narottama Ṭhākura used to come to Rāmacandra Kavirāja, very friendly. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was of same rank and friendly to Narottama, and in that connection Narottama had much affection towards Rāmacandra Kavirāja, his nephew in spiritual relation.

Devotee: In the *Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa*, are the Vaiṣṇavas supposed to follow all those rituals? Is it important for us to follow all of those rituals?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Rituals? In *arcanā*, that is in the lower position, they are to follow rituals. *Kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, *arcanā-adhikāra*. Strictly they should observe the rituals, formalities. But when the taste is created, *ruci*, then they begin the *bhāgavata-mārga*. Then *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *smaraṇa*, *vandana*, that will be principle, not much stress towards *arcanā*, rituals. But becomes more free when they make progress towards *bhajana*, *anurāga*, love, affection, taste. When taste is created, affection is created towards God, then the formalities of rituals are of less importance to them. But for the beginners they should try to follow strictly those rituals for their good, that is *viddhi-bhakti*, rituals.

vaidhi bhakta nikarastu raga vibhava navadhi [?]

[*śāstroktayā prabalayā tat-tan-maryāda-yānvitā
vaidhī bhaktiriyam kaiścīn-maryādāmārga ucyate*] [?]

["Devotional service which is governed by the rules and regulations of the scriptures (*vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*) is also called *maryāda-mārga*, or the reverential path of devotion, the path of serving the Lord in opulence, by different scholars (such as Vallabhācārya)."] [*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sīndhu*, *Pūrva-vibhāga*, 2.269]

Rūpa Goswāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sīndhu*, he gives these lines to us. That the *vaidhī-bhakti*, the regulated devotion. The jurisdiction of regulating devotion is up to that stage when our taste for the service of the Lord awakens. Abhi-bhāva, pāvanāvatī [?] When our taste is created, our affection, attraction is created for Kṛṣṇa, then stress on the strictness of following the rituals has lessened, not so much place is given for rituals. Taste, *laulyam*, *lobha*, greed. Before that we're to follow very strictly the rules and regulations of devotion as prescribed in the religious books, so many *Purāṇa*, so many *Smṛti*, *Samhitā*. And all collected and made *Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa*, made for the Vaiṣṇava devotees.

Vidagdha Mādhava: Guru Mahārāja, is that when one reaches the stage of *bhāva*? Is that when the rituals become less important?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: When *bhāva* arouses one is established in *rāga-mārga*, even before that. *Ruci*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, then *ruci*. *Niṣṭhā*, *śraddhā*, then *bhajana-kriyā*, *sādhū-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*,

then *anartha-nivṛtti*, then *niṣṭhā*. *Niṣṭhā* means *nairantaryya*, continuous mentality towards Kṛṣṇa, no break, always thinking about Kṛṣṇa, not otherwise. This is *niṣṭhā*, the continued remembrance of Kṛṣṇa and His own. Then real taste is created after that. After continued remembrance, then the taste. Otherwise in the lower position sometimes some taste is seen to be present within us, and sometimes our mind is thrown in another way. That is not taste proper. Taste proper is to be located after, *niṣṭhā* means *nairantaryya*, that is continued recollection of Kṛṣṇa. Then if any taste we feel within us that is bona fide taste, and from there we can trace *rāga-mārga*, *rāgānuga*. He can depend on his own inner tendency, and may not care much about the formality of worshipping.

Just as suppose for a, who keeps the child, what is she? A lady who keeps another child, nurse? Not only nurse but *dhātrī*, midwife, or what is she? Midwife, who is the representative of the mother, for her, rules and regulations necessary how to nurse the child, to take care of the child, regulations necessary for the midwife, for the nurse. But when there is affection of mother such regulations are necessary. Out of affection the mother will look after the child. No rules or regulations necessary because her natural affection towards the child will force her to look after the child.

But who is not a mother, her own child, for her formality is necessary. "That you must drink milk twice, thrice. Or do this thing, that thing." All these things are there, duty.

But when affection comes from within then the regulations are slackened. When affection, our inner awakening of the soul, and inner affection, the attraction we feel for Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of our heart, then regulations are slackened. *Vaidhi bhakta dikha restu raga eva bhava navati* [?]

As long as that inner taste for the service of Kṛṣṇa does not arise we must take to the *śāstric* regulations in our daily activities and worshipping. And thereby we shall hope that inner awakening will be done and our inner taste will awaken for the service of the Lord. Do you follow? Am I clear?

Devotee: Yes. Guru Mahārāja. Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, there is mention of his mother, but I wanted to know why is there no mention of his father?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Because his father did not have any recognition in the Vaiṣṇava society, we are told, so the name of father is not mentioned.

But it is also a rumour created by the anti Vaiṣṇava that the Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura's mother, Nārāyaṇī, who was a niece of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit, she took, swallowed some betel after Mahāprabhu took it. Mahāprabhu took some betel and some remains offered to Nārāyaṇī. "You take it." And Nārāyaṇī after swallowing that betel nut, already chewed by Mahāprabhu, Mahāprabhu offered something to Nārāyaṇī, "Take it." And after taking that Nārāyaṇī had child within her womb, and then Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura came, from her womb. This rumour was spread by the anti Vaiṣṇavite.

But really we are told that when Nārāyaṇī was married, anyhow to a non Vaiṣṇava, who did not have devotion, or affection for the Vaiṣṇava cult. So his name is not mentioned as the father of Vṛndāvana, only Vṛndāvana Ṭhākura, he's acquainted by his mother's name, Nārāyaṇī Nandana. Father's name not mentioned, only mother's name mentioned, Nārāyaṇī, because Nārāyaṇī was a devotee of Śrī Gaurāṅga Deva Mahāprabhu.

Just as Mahāprabhu is also told mostly as Śacī Nandana, not so much as Jagannātha Mīśra Nandana. Very famous Śacī, because when He took *sannyāsa* before long ago Jagannātha

departed. His *sannyāsa*, His *saṅkīrtana*, all these came out after His father left, and mother Śacī had to bear all these troubles with the son. Leaving this ordinary pleasure of the worldly life, the only son given to exclusive devotion to Kṛṣṇa, showing so many fits, without caring for any improvements in the household affairs. Then after all He left the whole household, even the girl, wife, and He left, took *sannyāsa*. All these troubles Śacī Devi had to tolerate. So Śacī Nandana, Śacī Nandana, He's told, not so much as Jagannātha Mīśra Nandana, His father's name, not so much mentioned.

So also here, Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura's father, he was an atheist, but his mother, she was cent per cent devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Mahāprabhu. So her name is mentioned Nārāyaṇī Nandana, Vṛndāvana. Not any trace we find in the literature about his father.

And some rumour also spread in the way, that some remains of the betel nut was given to Nārāyaṇī and that was the cause of her pregnancy, and Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura came. Amongst the *sahajiyā* such stories are going on.

Devotee: Guru Mahārāja, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who Mahāprabhu converted...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: That was, and Prabodhānanda other person, Prabodhānanda was the uncle of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, came from south. And Prakāśānanda, some say that he's the founder of Āmṛta Braja Pratika, Śīśir Ghose has mistaken there that Prakāśānanda was converted into Prabodhānanda, and he wrote all these things. But it is not, because Prabodhānanda he's reckoned as one of the original eight *sakhīs* of Vṛndāvana. Rādhārāṇī had eight very intimate she friends, Tuṅgavidyā one of those eight, and Prabodhānanda was Tuṅgavidyā in Vṛndāvana. That Prabodhānanda cannot be *māyāvādī*.

Prakāśānanda māyāvādī aparādhī. Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura writes in *Caitanya-Bhāgavata*. "Mahāprabhu says that in Benares there is a *māyāvādī* and a great offender, Prakāśānanda. He does not recognise My devotion, and cuts to pieces My spiritual body." conda conda [?]

In this way the Prakāśānanda Paṇḍit of Benares has been mentioned, and also we find that he's a great *māyāvādī paṇḍit*.

And Prabodhānanda he's reckoned as one of the eight principal she friends of Rādhārāṇī, so he cannot be a *māyāvādī*. These two are separate persons. Prabodhānanda was converted to Vaiṣṇavism, but he also might have gone to Vṛndāvana, but not much recognition he got in the Vaiṣṇava society. Both rejected from this side, and also not much respect from that side, almost gone to unknown quarters.

Devotee: Kavi Karṇapūra, who has written the *Gaura-Gaṇoddeśa-Dīpikā*, how does he know who those personalities are in Kṛṣṇa *līlā*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is his inspiration? His father was one of those eight *sakhīs* of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Śīvananda. Former Śīvananda was one of the eight intimate *sakhīs* of Rādhārāṇī [known as Champaka-latā]. From him he got the inspiration.

When Mahāprabhu was in Purī and met that son Karṇapūra, He asked him, "You boy, take Kṛṣṇa *Nāma*, Hare Kṛṣṇa."

The boy did not take. Mahāprabhu tried His best but the boy did not pronounce Kṛṣṇa.

Then Mahāprabhu told, "What is this? I'm making so many chant in the world, chant this Kṛṣṇa Name, chanting Kṛṣṇa, chanting Kṛṣṇa *Nāma*, to so many in the world widely, and I fail to pronounce the Name of Kṛṣṇa from the mouth of this boy. What is this?"

Then Svarūpa Dāmodara came to relieve, he told that, "You have given this Name and the boy has taken it, he has *īṣṭa* mantra, and the mantra one should not speak out. So he has taken the mantram and kept it in the inner quarter of his heart, he won't speak it out." Svarūpa Dāmodara explained in that way.

Then Mahāprabhu out of affection, put the big toe of His foot into the mouth of the boy, and the boy began to suck Mahāprabhu's toe. And he became afterwards this Kavi Karṇapūra. Inspirations came in him. Such a good poem he has produced, very charming. Hare Kṛṣṇa. So inspiration, seeing some sign, some sort of similarity, and they could connect, what is what.

Devotee: Also Guru Mahārāja, I have heard that there are twin other *Caitanya-Maṅgalas*, one by a Locana Dāsa, another by - Locana Dāsa is one. It does not seem to be bona fide.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Not bona fide in all respects. More or less influenced by *Gaurāṅga-nāgarī-vāda*, that is not accepted by the true Vaiṣṇava. And Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura himself was in opposition. The first book about Mahāprabhu written by Vṛndāvana. The reference of that we find in *Caitanya-caritāmṛtam*. *Caitanya-Maṅgala* was written afterwards. And that had some contamination of *nāgarī-vāda*, that Gaurāṅga like Kṛṣṇa, He also mixed with so many girls in the *parakīya* line.

But Vṛndāvana Dāsa he has discarded it wholly. "Mahāprabhu never cast a glance towards the girls in this life," he told. "Not *nāgara*. Because He's a *brāhmaṇa* in Ācārya family, and Kṛṣṇa came in the milkman sect. And He has come to show the position of an Ācārya, Guru, and Guru may not have such misconduct. Then who will care for him? Who will take him as Guru if he shows such slack character, mixing with the girls? Who will come to take and accept him as Guru, Ācārya? So He never showed that sort of conduct that He mixed with so many girls, never. He was very particular about that, very careful." Still Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura says, "He never by the corner of His eye cast any glance to any ladies or any girls. So the people must not give this name to Gaurāṅga, as *nāgara*, as an ordinary citizen. What is general temperament of a citizen, to mix with the man and woman, free mixing, not that. Gaurāṅga was not of that type. He was a very strict moralist, a life He maintained all through." So Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura mentioned this.

se heno nāma prabhu nama sane kane pathe gaurāṅga-nāgara heno sthali nahi boli [?]

"So none should pronounce such that Gaurāṅga was a frivolous boy who mixed with the girls in a slackened way. None can blame Him in this way. He was very strict about that."

It is written by Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura in his original book.

But in Locana Dāsa's, "There were many who had connection with Viṣṇu Pṛīya, and they with the help of Viṣṇu Pṛīya, Mahāprabhu's wife, with Viṣṇu Pṛīya they came in connection with Gaurāṅga, Nimāi Paṇḍit."

"No." Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura discarded. "This is all imaginary. This is only a foolish tendency to make Kṛṣṇa *lilā* and Gaura *lilā* similar. To prove that Gaurāṅga and Kṛṣṇa are one and the same, this

sort of imagination has been taken resort to, resorted. So we're not at one with Locana Dāsa in that affair."

And many also, this Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātana Goswāmī, then [Raghunātha] Dāsa Goswāmī, Kavirāja Goswāmī, Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura. So many, they have given description about Mahāprabhu, but none mentioned in that way. Very strict moralist He was in His previous life. So Gaura *līlā* is a *līlā* of an Ācārya, a preceptor, that of a Guru, suiting the taste of a Guru. To plead Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, why Kṛṣṇa *līlā* is so high, only in the position of Kṛṣṇa the Absolute can show that *līlā*, not otherwise. Even Nārāyaṇa, or all other incarnations of Kṛṣṇa never did so. Only with the exception of Kṛṣṇa and no other incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, or Nārāyaṇa, nowhere.

Devotee: Guru Mahārāja, it is sometimes said that Śrīdhara Swāmī in his commentaries sometimes agreed with Śaṅkarācārya.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: No, he has refuted Śaṅkara, but he had his own *sampradāyic* creed which is *viśuddhādvaīta*. Amongst Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* there are four conceptions with slight differences from one another. *Śuddhādvaīta* by Viṣṇu Swāmī and Śrīdhara Swāmī followed that *sampradāya*. Then *dvaitādvaīta* by Nimbarka. And *śuddha-dvaīta* was Madhvācārya. *Viśiṣṭādvaīta* by Rāmānuja. These four Vaiṣṇava specific *sampradāyas*. One coming from Brahmā, Śrī, Brahmā, Rudra, Sanaka. But there's little difference between them. Śrīdhara Swāmī he comes from *śuddhādvaīta*, of Viṣṇuswāmī. And the Vallabhī *sampradāya*, at the present time, they also come from the *śuddhādvaīta sampradāya*. And Mahāprabhu came from *śuddhādvaīta*, Madhvācārya *sampradāya*, but with modification of *acintya-bhedābheda*.

So Jīva Goswāmī who was a strict follower of Mahāprabhu, Śrī Caitanya Deva, he differed in some point from Śrīdhara Swāmī. Mahāprabhu mainly supported Śrīdhara Swāmī because he has saved devotees from the interpretation of Śaṅkarācārya, in *Gītā*, in *Bhāgavatam*. Personality of Godhead he has admitted, he has proved, revealed, but impersonalism he encouraged. So mainly Śrīdhara Swāmī is Vaiṣṇava, but he followed *viśuddhādvaīta*, and Mahāprabhu's creed was *acintya-bhedābheda*. So Jīva Goswāmī slightly differed from him here and there in the interpretation of *Bhāgavatam*. Just as in *Bhāgavatam* in the first *śloka*.

*janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itararāś cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāt
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ
tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmahi*

["O my Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, O all pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore

meditate upon Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth.”] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.1.1]

Here, *tejo-vāri-mṛdāṁ yathā vinimayo*, the meaning of the word *vinimayo*, Śrīdhara Swāmī has taken as ascription. He says that, “There is glass, we may take it for light. There is sun ray, mirage, we may take it for water. The thing is one thing and we accept that thing as another, this is the meaning of the word, *vinimayo*.”

But Jīva Goswāmī has not accepted that. He has said, “No, the word *vinimayo* that never means ascription, but it is transformation. The gas, air, may be transformed into water. The water may again be transformed into solid or, and transformation, the glass may come, the stone may come, from water. In this way, air, ether, air, fire, water, earth, all, one can come from the other. By transformation and not one is ascribing another.” In this way Jīva Goswāmī has explained, he’s differed from Śrīdhara Swāmī. So here and there a little difference he had.

Devotee: Is this transformation the same as *vikara* or not?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: *Vikara*, yes. Not *vivarta*. *Vivarta* and *vikara* are of different kinds. Śaṅkara says *vivarta*, one thing misunderstood as another. Here Jīva says no, a real transformation is there in the potency, *śakti parinam*. The potency may admit transformation of it in different kinds, it is possible. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: How are we to take the differences we hear between great Vaiṣṇavas. Like you’ve just explained the difference between Śrīdhara Swāmī and Jīva Goswāmī. From our point of view they’re both great Vaiṣṇavas, but they have some difference...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, amongst Vaiṣṇavas there are much differences. We are to follow the direction of Śrī Caitanya Deva.

In the conception of monarchy much difference. In the conception of democracy, communism, there is much difference. Some common, something different, it will always be there. Even in democracy, even in monarchy, every monarch is different from another monarch, one’s rule is different. So this *vaicitrī*, variegatedness, will always be present. Not that you can find exactly congruent copy of one of the other, it is not possible, some sort of difference must be.

Even there is difference in Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa Svayaṁ-Bhagavān, Svayaṁ-Rūpa, then Svayaṁ-Prakāśa, Prabhāva-Prakāśa, Vaibhava-Prakāśa, Prabhāva-Vilāsaḥ, Vaibhava-Vilāsaḥ, in the conception of Kṛṣṇa Himself. So this distinction, not difference, rather distinction, we’re to observe always, we must be alert to find.

A man, from mother, mother sees with some affection. Then his friend from another angle of vision. The wife from another vision. If he’s a king the subjects with another vision. One and the same man, different conceptions. All cannot be congruent, some sort of difference there must be, according to their, the perception, the quality, the nature of the perceiver, the conceiver. But mainly something common, something different.

The main Vaiṣṇava groups, they're always after personal, eternal, personal God. These four, Madhvācārya, Rāmānuja, Viṣṇuswāmī and Nimbarka. "The Ultimate Reality is personal."

Then Śāṅkara and others, their group say, "No. He's impersonal is the highest conception of reality."

The main difference, but person of what type? The Svayaṁ-Bhagavān characteristic personality, that is only seen by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, the Kṛṣṇa Svayaṁ-Bhagavān. To certain extent by the Nimbarka. But the *svakīyā* and *parakīyā*, the distinction is there. Then the *śuddhādvaita* school, they like more *vātsalya*. Then the Rāmānuja section they consider Nārāyaṇa to be the original and Kṛṣṇa His extension. So much difference there may be, all may not be congruent. The conception of the truth may also have some degree and difference there.

Sajātīya-bheda, then *vijātīya-bheda*, *sojātīya-bheda*. A tree is different from a stone. A tree is different from another tree. A tree has got it's difference within it's own, branch, leaf, root, trunk, all these things. *Sajātīya-bheda*. The banyan tree, then so many other trees also there. *Sajātīya-bheda*.

So in the conception of Godhead that sort of difference, distinction. This Nārāyaṇa, the Kṛṣṇa, the Dvārakeśa, Rāmacandra. Then so many incarnations here. Nṛsimha, Varāha, all these things, difference. Avatārī, Avatāra. And amongst Avatāra also the degree of the Absolute characteristic represented differently, according to the section of the devotee, the capacity of appreciation in them.

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