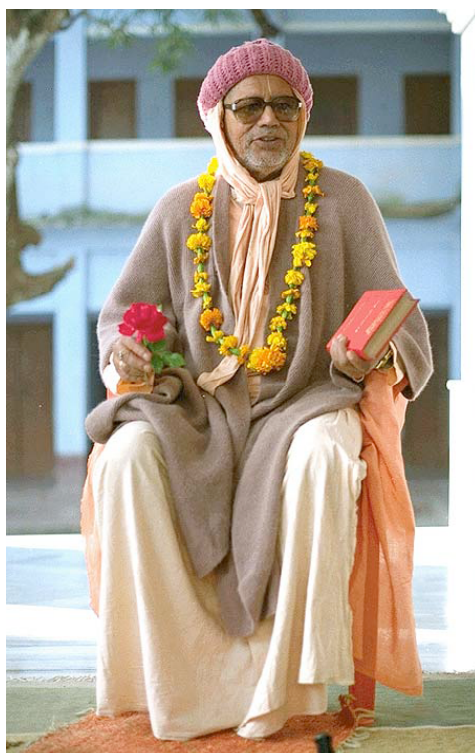


All Glories to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj



Darshan given in San Jose, U.S.A., 28th June 1992, by our beloved Srila Gurudev Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj.

This is an excerpt from the article 'Our Fortunate Association' from the magazine 'Sri Chaitanya Saraswati, The Voice of Sri Chaitanya Dev, No.2, 1994' edited and published by Sripad Swarupananda Prabhu.

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Who is Prabhupad?

'Prabhupad' was first Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, and later, in the form Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. Srila Guru Maharaj happily agreed with that — 'Yes, *Prabhupad* — he can uphold that title.' Some other disciples of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad were not happy to hear that word *Prabhupad* used for anyone but directly their Guru. Still, we find that in a general sense the word *Prabhupad* is not the extremely highest title. We address devotees as *Prabhu*, and *Prabhupad* refers to a *sannyasi*. We address *brahmacharis* as *Prabhu*, and *Pada* is the title of a

sannyasi. Of course, it is very respectable. It is also a title inherited by the Jati-Goswamis' Gurus. They refer to all their Gurus as *Prabhupad*.

So there are many *Prabhupads* in India. But when Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur preached the conception of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu all over India in a very grand way, and everyone address him as *Prabhupad*, then the title assumed a special position. But when we address our Gurudev as *Om Visnupada*, the word *Visnupada* is higher than *Prabhupad*. But now, the word *Prabhupad* has been given a new connotation — 'one who can preach real Krishna consciousness all over the world' is now the meaning of *Prabhupad*. And this has happened through the greatness of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and later Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj.

Anyhow, Srila Swami Maharaj's intention was to preach Krishna consciousness by the order of his Gurudev Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, and he tried very hard. But he was alone. No one helped him, not even his Godbrothers. Still, Guru Maharaj was always behind him, and always gave him much inspiration. He wanted to make the mission headed by Guru Maharaj, and he proposed it many times. First there was the 'League of Devotees,' then the 'International Society for Krishna Consciousness.' He proposed that Guru Maharaj head a mission in 1948-49, but Guru Maharaj was not so enthusiastic to accept such a post because he wanted to retire. And he had already accepted retirement. But he 'again got his service' after Srila Swami Maharaj's preaching, in fact!



*Srila Param Guru Maharaj and Srila Swami Maharaj
at the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math*

So when Srila Swami Maharaj (Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj) first came to the West, he tried very hard to preach Krishna Consciousness for one year. I heard directly from his lotus mouth, "In New York I had no food, no money..." He had such a heartfelt desire, so Nityananda Prabhu, Mahaprabhu, and his Gurudev could not tolerate his hardship. So they gave him the most glorious and super position of a preacher of Krishna Consciousness. About two days ago in Hawaii, when the devotees arranged a meeting for me in a park, I saw two big trees there, and I immediately remembered how Srila Swami Maharaj started, sitting under a tree with only a pair of karatals, chanting Hare Krishna. But seeing that, Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu could not tolerate it, and gave him the position of a supreme preacher of Krishna consciousness. He got much austerity when he came here, and he tried so hard.



After one whole year finally interested jivas came forward to taste the nectar coming from Srila Swami Maharaj's mouth.

But I remember the day when I first came to the West. I have so many well-wishing friends, Srila Guru Maharaj's and Srila Swami Maharaj's disciples, they have given me so much affection and chance to preach Krishna consciousness. They are wholeheartedly inviting me to these Western countries. How have these things come to me? The only cause is Srila Swami Maharaj. He blasted a tunnel through the mountain of the Western ego! He blasted a big tunnel, and I have come through that tunnel. Although it was extremely difficult for him when he started, I am getting much encouragement. So we cannot but feel grateful to him for this.

By the mercy of Srila Guru Maharaj and Srila Swami Maharaj I have many devotee friends in this Western world, and also the Southern world like Australia. All these friends are now very enthusiastic to preach Krishna consciousness. I may be a very insignificant and unqualified fallen soul, but they are following the instruction on Srila Guru Maharaj. He gave me the charge of his mission and everybody knows it, and when Guru Maharaj has said that 'this man is qualified and will be able to continue my succession' I cannot deny him. But although I cannot feel myself to have such a qualification it is not noticeable because I have so many friends who are qualified devotees of Srila Guru Maharaj and Srila Swami Maharaj — they know what is what and they can make a crow into Garuda. I am very indebted to you all.

You are giving me much respect, you are giving me everything, but what shall I give to you? I have nothing to give you. Srila Swami Maharaj has given you so much and Srila Guru Maharaj gave even more. For the general conditioned souls Srila Swami Maharaj arranged many facilities for the preaching of Krishna consciousness, and Guru Maharaj supplied nourishment.

It is my special conception that of both the Gurus, one is as *Avatara* [Incarnation], and one is as *Avatari* [Origin of all Incarnations]. Actually, Mahaprabhu came as *Yugavatara*, and Srila Swami Maharaj came like a *Yugavatara-preacher*. But within Mahaprabhu there was another Form. So I can see Srila Swami Maharaj and Srila Guru Maharaj in a nondifferent way — one Form as an *Avatara*, another as *Avatari*. You all know that Guru Maharaj gave us the finest conception, and Srila Swami Maharaj made all the arrangements — he arranged for the recipients of Krishna consciousness; he made the ground and the field, and he planted the seed; he gave the chance. And Guru Maharaj gave very good nourishment. That is my idea, and I consider that I have in both my *Siksa* and *Diksa* Gurus. But that is a general or more external matter. The internal meaning is much deeper. No doubt, there are a few who may be denied, but most of the fortunate souls will get, or have already got, that wealth of Krishna consciousness.



Srila Swami Maharaj and Srila Sridhar Maharaj share the Vyasasana at the opening of Iskcon's world headquarters in Mayapur. Srila Govinda Maharaj is seated left.

Now, the chanting of the Hare Krishna *Mahamantra* is all over the world. Who knew about it before? Who knew of the Names of Mahaprabhu Chaitanyadev, Nityananda Prabhu, the Pancha-Tattva, and Radha- Krishna — before Srila Swami Maharaj? No one knew anything about them. In that way they are very fortunate. Now, they not only know about Them, but they are giving their lives to Them as well. Guru Maharaj always used to mention a song of Vasudev Ghosh:

yadi gaura na ha'ta, tabe ki haita,
kemane dharitam de
radhara mahima, prema-rasa-sima,
jagate janata ke?

"If Gauranga Mahaprabhu had not appeared in this world, how would we have understood the position of Sri Sri Radha- Krishna and Their *Prema* — that Supreme Love and Beauty? We would never have known about that."

In this way we are so fortunate that now we have got that conception — it may not be full, it may be only some percentage, but really that is enough for the tiny soul. Eka bindu jagat dubay — only one drop of such mercy and Krishna-*Prema* can inundate the world. They have given that, and by their mercy we are becoming enlightened, and we are trying to practise Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness is the deepest conception of the Form of the Godhead. We can hear of many, many Forms of the Lord, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna — His Love, Beauty, Effulgence, everything — is extreme, and supreme. And this knowledge has been given to this world by Srila Guru Maharaj and Srila Swami Maharaj.

I also consider myself to be very fortunate that I got their mercy, and from my youth they were very merciful and affectionate to me. I received so much from them, and this is why I am always alert to how I may serve them and how I may serve the devotees. Their conception was service to the Vaisnavas, service to Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga-Gandharvva-Govindasundar, and Their Mission. This was Guru Maharaj's desire. When he gave initiation to a sincere seeker, when they asked him what service he required of them, Guru Maharaj always replied, "Serve the deity, the devotees, and Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math." Service to the Vaisnavas and Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga is our life's goal, and through that we will achieve everything — Sri Sri Radha- Krishna and Their Pastimes in Vrindavan. Although from here we cannot see and feel these things, when we properly serve the Guru and the Vaisnava, we will get everything. That was their conception, and in the finest way they gave us many things. Everyone gave much respect to Srila Guru Maharaj's conception, and gave him the highest position. Not only the disciples of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, but Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur himself gave an extremely high position to Srila Guru Maharaj. So naturally many of his (Srila Guru Maharaj's) Godbrothers were very affectionate to him and gave him that high position. The last day before Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur

wanted to leave this world he called his very intimate associates, and when they gathered in his room he ordered Srila Guru Maharaj to sing.

**Sri-Rupa-Manjari pada, sei mora sampada,
sei mora bhajana-pujana**

Guru Maharaj was not in the room at the time, and Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur said, "Call Sridhar Maharaj." Guru Maharaj was at that period doing night duty in the room of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. Everyone did two hours of duty, and Guru Maharaj took the most difficult time of duty, which was 2.00 to 4.00 a.m. Everyone feels to sleep at that time, and Guru Maharaj accepted that time for his duty. After 4.00 a.m., when the man on the next shift had come, Guru Maharaj went to lie down for a while. He did not sleep at that time, but he just rested, because within an hour would be *arati* time, and everyone would join there. So when he was resting in this way, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur's call came. Guru Maharaj went there and his Gurudev ordered him, "Oh Sridhar Maharaj, sing '*Sri-Rupa-Manjari pada, sei mora sampada.*'" Everyone knew that Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur would leave the world, and all were in a most attentive mood. Guru Maharaj could not sing very nicely in the sense that he felt shy, and he somewhat hesitated to sing that high song. At that time, Sri Kunjabihari Vidyabhusana Prabhu, the secretary of the Gaudiya Math [later Srimad B.V. Tirtha Maharaj] was the leader in management; and he indicated that a certain *Brahmachari* could sing very nicely, so he directed him to sing instead. Of course, that was his right to direct who would sing — he was an intimate servitor of Prabhupad, and secretary as well. But Prabhupad denied. When that *Brahmachari* Prabhu started to sing, Prabhupad said, "I don't want to hear the tune, Sridhar Maharaj will sing this song." Everyone was stunned. Guru Maharaj was also very anxious, but he started to sing, and after completing the whole song Prabhupad said, "I am happy." Then he ordered others to sing some songs like *tuhu daya-sagara tarayite prani* and others. But from that day all the Godbrothers of Guru Maharaj said many times, and I heard it from them directly, "We have not seen before how heart transmission was possible; but that day we saw how Prabhupad transmitted his power of the *Rupanuga Sampradaya* [to Guru Maharaj]." After that, everyone gave high respect to Guru Maharaj as a *Sampradaya Acharyya* of the *Rupanuga* Line.

At that time there were many exalted and highly qualified *sannyasi* and *grhastha* disciples of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. Of course, there were also many *brahmacharis* as well. After the departure of Srila Bhakti

Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur many of those exalted *brahmachari* and *grhastha* disciples took *sannyasa* from Srila Guru Maharaj.

Srila Swami Maharaj also wanted to take *sannyasa* from Srila Guru Maharaj and approached him for that. But their friendship was very close, and Guru Maharaj knew his whole family history. After all, they lived together practically like the same family for so long. So Guru Maharaj said that if he were to give him *sannyasa* immediately, he would be held responsible by Srila Swami Maharaj's family if problems arose as a result; if this happened he would feel much difficulty. He advised Srila Swami Maharaj to go to Vrndavan and wait six months first. But Srila Swami Maharaj said, "No, I have no time! I need *sannyasa* immediately, and I shall go after that." Then Srila Swami Maharaj said that Srimati Bhavatarini Didi, his sister, had already promised to look after his family. She had told him, "Dada, you take *sannyasa*. Business is not your life. You cannot do business. Go out and preach." She gave him the hope that somehow she would manage for his family. But because Srila Swami Maharaj and Srila Guru Maharaj were very intimate, dear friends, Srila Guru Maharaj hesitated. But when he persisted, Guru Maharaj said, "I gave *sannyasa* to Srila Kesava Maharaj, so if you want *sannyasa* from me you can take the *mantram* from him, and it will be as good, no problem."



Whilst visiting Srila Param Guru Maharaj, Srila Swami Maharaj would tell him about the progress of his preaching in the West

The Origin of the Name 'Bhaktivedanta'

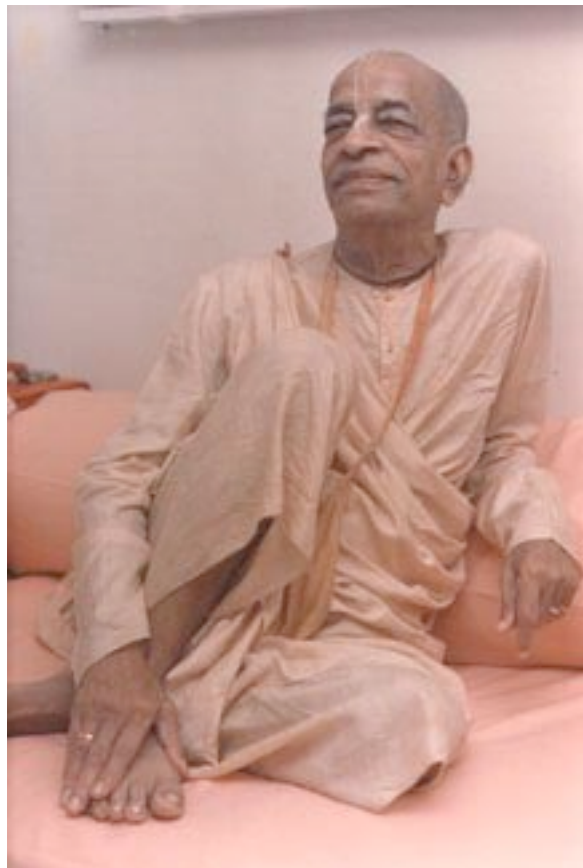
Then Srila Swami Maharaj asked what name he would take, and Srila Guru Maharaj said, "Bhaktivedanta — this is your name, and you can take any title along with that." That name had also been given to him by Srila Guru Maharaj previously. In this way, Srila Guru Maharaj was very exalted in the *Sampradaya* of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswat Goswami Thakur, and everybody gave much honour to him. Not only that, if there was any disturbance in the *Sampradaya*, or if anyone encountered any particularly difficult question, they would immediately come to Srila Guru Maharaj for consultation, after which they would follow his advices. In fact practically all the prominent Godbrothers took *sannyasa* from Guru Maharaj after the departure of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, and those who did not do so took advice from Srila Guru Maharaj on the appropriate person to take *sannyasa* from, where the proper honour of their *Sannyasa-Guru* would be preserved. Srila Madhav Maharaj was also a very exalted personality. He said to Guru Maharaj, "After Prabhupad, you are my Guru." Although Srila Guru Maharaj did not give him *sannyasa*, he asked him, "I still think you are my *Sannyasa-Guru*, but even if you don't give me *sannyasa*, give my name." And Guru Maharaj gave two proposals, one of which was Sri Bhakti Dayita Madhav, the one he accepted. Then Srila Madhav Maharaj gave Guru Maharaj his full *dandavat pranam* [prostrate obeisance] and went to take *sannyasa* from another *sannyasi*. All the devotees were very exalted at the time of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad, but after his departure they all gave supreme respect and honour to Srila Guru Maharaj as their Guru.

Guru Maharaj was very firm in the deepest conception of the *Rupanuga Sampradaya*, and for that everyone gave him much respect; but he was never very eager to receive it. Still, they always gave it. Guru Maharaj did not go anywhere, but everyone would come to see him, and they were always highly satisfied. For example, Srila Goswami Maharaj held a very high position at the time; and he gave a lecture, which I taped, in which he said, "We are very enthusiastic to preach Krishna consciousness. And when we are preaching, from time to time we are eager to know the opinion of Srila Sridhar Maharaj about our preaching. We are eager to know how he considers our preaching. If he thinks it is good, then we feel that we are getting double energy!"

When the lion walks, after a while he looks behind. Then he goes so far, and again looks behind. That is the nature of the lion. This is called *simhavalokanam* in Sanskrit. So in effect Srila Goswami Maharaj was saying, "We are preaching with our full energy, but then we are looking behind to see — 'what does Srila

Sridhar Maharaj think about it?" And he added, "This is the feeling of us all in this meeting today."

Srila Swami Maharaj, after a world tour, when returning to India would always meet with Srila Sridhar Maharaj. When he would describe the events and results of his tour, Guru Maharaj was very happy to hear, and Srila Swami Maharaj was also very happy that "everything was accepted by Srila Sridhar Maharaj." They had many discussions on the finest points of Krishna conception. Those discussions were very high, and I am fortunate I had the opportunity to hear them. They were also very affectionate to me. It is natural. We were very few *brahmacharis*, and I stayed with Guru Maharaj all the time, so automatically they gave their affection to me.



In my youth I stayed with Srila Swami Maharaj in his house, and I was in charge of the Chaitanya Saraswat Math branch there, at 7 Sita Kanta Banerjee Lane. And Guru Maharaj ordered me to learn *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* from Srila Swami Maharaj whenever Guru Maharaj was away from Calcutta. Guru Maharaj also sent me many times with him for preaching. Not only that, I would go to preach shop-to-shop at Boro Bazaar, but at that time I had no books for distribution. Srila Swami Maharaj told me, "You distribute this *Back to Godhead*."

He had published two or three editions, but due to lack of funds he could not continue it. So he had a fairly large quantity stored in his room. Who would distribute it? There was no one. So when I joined, Srila Swami Maharaj told me, "Take the *Back to Godhead* and distribute it door-to-door." And so I was the first distributor of *Back to Godhead*.



Back to Godhead, 1956

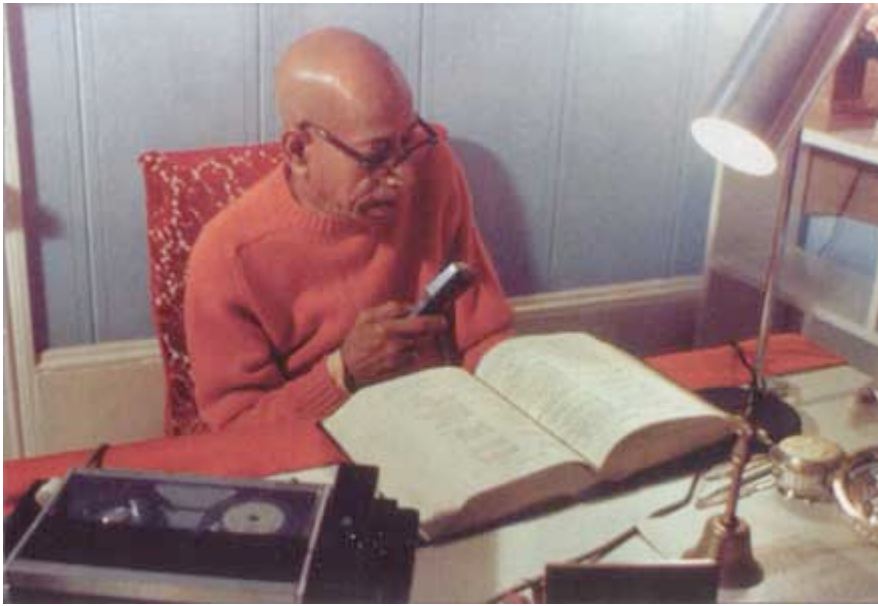
So wealth has come to me in many ways. Wealth means: the affection of the Gurus. Maybe I am very unqualified. I did not even study at school. I was a very naughty boy. The teacher would beat me every day, so I would stay away. So, no schoolwork. But what qualification has come to me is from Guru Maharaj. I have no fear. Many are fearful to invite questions, but I feel it is very good for me if anyone asks me questions. It is by the mercy of Guru Maharaj and the Vaisnavas. I am always declaring, "Questions are very good for me, you can ask any question about Krishna consciousness." I have no fear because I heard for so long from Guru Maharaj, so some idea has grown in me; and by their mercy what I do not know will also come to me. Like English — I can speak now — but my friend here remembers very well the days when we travelled in the train together, but we could not speak a single word to each other! But now I can speak....

By the mercy of Srila Guru Maharaj — after Srila Swami Maharaj departed, Guru Maharaj accepted his servitors and followers in many ways. He was the very affectionate and close friend of Srila Swami Maharaj, and that is why after Srila Swami Maharaj's departure he accepted his followers, his associates, and tried to continue the movement of Krishna consciousness happily. And now, as you can see, it is continuing.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj Prabhupad was empowered to spread Krishna consciousness all over the world. In just twelve years, he circled the globe fourteen times, opened farm projects, schools and 108 temples in six continents, and initiated 5,000 disciples. Aside from founding ISKCON,

he also founded the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, the Bhaktivedanta Institute for Science, and the Bhaktivedanta Charity Trust.

By 1977, he had translated, written, and published fifty-one volumes of books in twenty-eight different languages, including important commentaries on classic Vedic texts such as *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Chaitanya Charitamrita*. His teachings are also forever preserved in 960 recorded conversations, 1,662 recorded lectures, and thousands of letters. Srila Prabhupad considered the production and distribution of his books to be his most important contribution to humanity. To date over 400 million volumes of his books have been sold. Through his books and his followers, Srila Prabhupad's legacy continues to touch the hearts of millions of people and to guide us in understanding the practical reality of spiritual life.



Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj Prabhupad ki jaya!
