

*All Glories to the Divine Master  
and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya*

# *Centenary Anthology*

*Pastimes, Glories and Teachings of  
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*

**First compiled as an offering on the Occasion of  
The Centenary of his Holy Advent**

With an introduction by  
His Divine Grace  
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

**EXCERPT**

Nabadwip, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

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All Glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

## Chapter Two

# Transcendental History

(A condensed excerpt from *‘Śrīla Guru Mahārāj—His Divine Pastimes & Precepts in Brief* by Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj)

The blessed parents of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī, of highly respected Brāhminical lineage, were Śrī Śrī Upendra Chandra Deva Sharmmā Bhaṭṭāchāryya Vidyāratna and Śrīmatī Gaurī Bālā Devī. They named their illustrious son, our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Śrī Rāmendra Chandra Deva Sharmmā Bhaṭṭāchāryya. His blessed Appearance was at Śrīpāṭ Hāpāniyā, District Burdwan, West Bengal. During the presence of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in the world, at that sacred place a beautiful Temple and Ashram, by the name of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Ashram, was constructed by our benevolent Sevaite-President-Āchāryya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

From his noble and gracious father, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s exalted line of forefathers [*Sāt-puruṣa*] are as follows: his father’s name, Śrīyukta Upendra Chandra Deva Sharmmā Bhaṭṭāchāryya; his grandfather’s name, Śrīyukta Rām Gopāl Deva Sharmmā; his great grandfather’s name, Śrīyukta Rāmdhan Deva Sharmmā; his father was Śrīyukta Rājīva Lochan Deva Sharmmā; his father was Śrīyukta Mṛtyuñjay Deva Sharmmā; his father was Śrīyukta Dhanañjay Deva Sharmmā; and his father was Śrīyukta Govinda Rām Deva Sharmmā. The title ‘Bhaṭṭāchāryya’ was peculiar to the line when they predominantly performed and taught religious sacrifices and worship [*paurohitya*]. In the line, many were also Brahminical spiritual masters with thousands of disciples. There were a number of professions adopted in the line,

including farming and landownership. Sanskrit scholarship was predominant all through. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was aware that Śrīyukta Rāmdhan was a particularly outstanding scholar. The illustrious family line of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj originates with the sage called Rajaṛṣi Vātsya, and is known as the Rajaṛṣi Vātsya *Gotra*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's mother's family lineage was also Bhaṭṭāchāryya *Brāhmaṇa*. Her father's name was Śrīyukta Rādhā Vallabha Bhaṭṭāchāryya, from a place called Khaithan.

By the arrangement of the free will of fortune, the first child of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's parents did not live. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was the first son, then after His Divine Grace the second son was Śrīyukta Maṇindra Chandra, after whom came the first daughter Śrīyuktā Jagadhātṛī Devī. After her were two sons, Śrīyukta Satyendra Chandra, then Śrīyukta Amarendra Chandra. The last two children were the daughters Śrīyuktā Uṣā Rāṇī Devī and Śrīyuktā Ramā Rāṇī Devī. Śrīyuktā Ramā Rāṇī Devī [Devyā], a devout disciple of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Also, Śrīyuktā Jagadhātṛī Devī, Śrīyukta Satyendra Chandra and Śrīyukta Amarendra Chandra all accepted initiation from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Prior to the Appearance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, his father's elder brother's wife [*jeṭhi-mā*], Śrīmatī Kumud Kāminī, was one day visiting a holy place of pilgrimage to have the *darśan* of a particular Deity. She dreamt that night that the Deity presented her with a beautiful baby. The baby was effulgent and his head was without hair. She thought, Śrīmatī Gaurī Devī has no issue, so in the dream she gave the baby to the hand of Śrīmatī Gaurī Devī. After some days, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj appeared, and lo—Śrīmatī Kumud Kāminī saw that the newly-born child was identical with the beautiful baby of her dream.

He stayed at his maternal uncle's house for his primary education at Khaithan Grām where he attended the local Pāṭhśālā [primary school] there. His intelligence was brilliant, his character most exalted. Twice he got double promotions at school, and he was always top of the class.

From childhood, he had an in-born aptitude for the Sanskrit language. He attended the high school at Okarsā, about two miles walk West from his home at Hāpāniyā.

When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was a youth, Śrīmatī Gaurī Devī would cook many tasteful vegetable dishes for the family. But when Śrīla Guru

Mahārāj ate, his mother wept. Guru Mahārāj would only accept one vegetable—the bitter Neem leaf prepared as a wet vegetable with rice. Further, he would only eat what was given to him once. He wouldn't accept anything a second time—because in his heart he offered everything to the Lord before eating.

As a young lad, he unfailingly bathed every day in the sacred Ganges at Dāmpāl. Rising early before sunrise, he would walk there daily, three miles and back. He would also pick some lotus flowers from a natural reservoir and offer them every day to the Ganges and Lord Śiva. Once when walking to Jāmāpur with a lotus flower in his hand for offering to the Deity Buṛarāj [Lord Śiva], he had a sudden revelation of Viśva-Rūpa, the Universal Form.

When studying at Baharampur college at District Mushīrabād, one day Śrīla Guru Mahārāj happened to meet an astrologer at the Baharampur railway station. The astrologer requested Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to show him his hand, upon seeing which he remarked that [1] Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would be fully self-realized, [2] he would become a famous preacher of *Harikathā* far and wide, and [3] he would depart the world at ninety-three years of age. All three predictions came true. The name of the astrologer was Yogī Bīr Śrī Baradā Majumdār. He was the headmaster of the Lālgolā high school, seven stations down the line, about a two-hour trainride from Baharampur. That school was founded by a King by the name of Rājā Yogendra Nārāyaṇa Rāo, in the name of his father Rājā Mahendra Nārāyaṇa Rāo. Yogī Bīr Baradā Majumdār was accepted by the famous general of Bengal, Subhash Chandra Bose, as his Guru.

At college Śrīla Guru Mahārāj became indifferent to his books of study, and would read only *Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta* and *Śrī Chaitanya-Bhāgavata*. Yet, he passed his examinations, coming in the first division, while the student most diligent in his studies failed. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts he studied law, but before completing those studies he joined Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement in 1921, staying for about two years. From childhood, however, despite the fact that he was born in a renowned *Smārta-brāhmaṇa* family, his natural mood of religious attraction was for the *Śaṅkīrtan* [congregational chanting of the Holy Name] of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Om Viṣṇupād Paramahaṁsa Śrī Śrīla Prabhupād Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī [1874–1937] was the illustrious Founder-President of Śrī Chaitanya Maṭh with sixty-four branches all over India, known as *Gauḍīya Maṭhs*. He also established preaching missions abroad. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, during his college studies, was deeply attracted to the Divine Life and Precepts of Śrī Chaitanyadev, and as a result he first made contact with Śrīla Prabhupād in the Gauḍīya Maṭh, and he fully committed himself to the Mission in 1926. When Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj left home and joined the Mission, his Gurudev, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupād was overjoyed, and he quoted the famous *Śrī Gītā śloka* in appreciation:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।  
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्त्तते ॥

yad yad ācharati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah  
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvarttate

“The people follow the ways of the great. They follow whatever conclusion the great personalities accept as correct.” He expressed his openhearted joy that such an extremely qualified person as Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj had come forward to participate in the Mission of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Even before taking *sannyāsa*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj was a very exalted and firm preacher in the Mission, and Śrīla Prabhupād was most satisfied with him. In 1930, at the original Ulṭā Dāṅgā Gauḍīya Maṭh, Śrīla Prabhupād Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī ordained him in *Sannyāsa* [monkhood], awarding him the *Tridāṇḍa-Sannyāsa* title of Śrīmad *Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara*, meaning ‘the Illustrious Guardian of Devotion’, because of his formidable scriptural command and natural, deep spiritual insight. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj travelled extensively throughout the whole of India preaching fluently in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, and English. His English carried an attractive sweetness and eloquence of a unique character. He successfully spread Lord Śrī Chaitanyadev’s Message on mass levels such as various colleges and universities, and he conducted public seminars and *Saṅkīrtan* Festivals.

Once when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj went to Giriḍi at Bihār, he delivered a lecture at the Barristers' Library there. After the lecture a gentleman came forward, and weeping, he said, "We used to think that our ancestors were fools, and that we have now become civilised by the association of the British. But today, Mahārāj, hearing your talk, we cannot but feel how great we were, and how low we have fallen! Our ancestors were so, so great, and now we have fallen into such filthy garbage!"

On another occasion at Giriḍi, at a conference, the president of the conference, a learned scholar, one Mr. Basāk, remarked after hearing Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's speech, "We thought for so long now that *Vaiṣṇava-dharmma* was a branch of Hindu religion. But today, Mahārāj, after what I have heard from you, with your sound argument and Scriptural evidence, we know now that *Vaiṣṇava-Dharmma* is the Original Religion—the *Jaiva-Dharmma* or Religion of all souls—and all others are only the misconceived portion of the original."

In His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's own words: "This must be deeply studied and considered by the learned section. The *Vaiṣṇava-Dharmma* that Mahāprabhu gave is the original *Vaidika-Dharmma*. What Śrīla Rāmānujāchāryya and Śrīla Madhvāchāryya gave has completely merged into the Line of Mahāprabhu. And what Lord Śaṅkar, Lord Buddha, and Rāmkrishna Mission have given is all hodgepodge. One who can properly catch the gist of this is benefitted in the extreme. *Sambandha-jñāna* is a great thing; then there is *Abhidheya* and *Prayojana*. These are the essential three stages of the whole theology."

Once in Bombay, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave a lecture at the Theosophical Society. The subject of his talk was "The Superexcellence of the Teachings of Śrī Chaitanya". The president, in his introductory lecture, spoke the age-old dogma that all religions are one and the same. When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj took the stand to speak, he said:

"It is a very regrettable that I must first, in order to speak on my subject, announce that I completely disagree with the president. Because to even enter into my subject, the prerequisite is the comparative study in theology.

"I have come to speak on not only the excellence, but the *Superexcellence* of the Teachings of Śrī Chaitanya. Therefore, I am bound to show the subject of my delivery by surpassing all the lower

stages of soil. So, in order to have your attention, I am bound to first point out the president's gulf of difference in his opinion with me.

“*Sambandha*, *Abhidheya* and *Prayojana*—first we shall make these three divisions. *Sambandha* [relationship] will mean to first separate all other religious conceptions except for the *Vaiṣṇava-Dharmma* as given by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu—Kṛṣṇa conception, the others all being concerned only with Brahma conception, Paramātmā conception, etc. *Abhidheya* is the means to the end; that we can hear from Śrīman Mahāprabhu to be *jñāna-sūnyā Bhakti* [Devotion unalloyed by intellect], *śuddha-Bhakti* [Pure Devotion], in *sādhbu-saṅga* [association of the true devotee]. And *Prayojana* or the goal is *Prema*; but not *mukti* [liberation]. *Dharmma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* [religiosity, economy, material desire and liberation]—these are not the goal. Only *Prema-Sevā*, Loving Service to Kṛṣṇa is the supreme goal.”

Seeing Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj's sensitive, rich Sanskrit Writings, his Gurudev referred to him as ‘a fit person to continue my Spiritual Succession’. Seeing his keen scriptural insight, his Gurudev also adorned him with the accolade ‘*Śāstra-nipuṇa Śrīdhar Mahārāj*’ or ‘Scriptural Genius Śrīdhar Mahārāj.’ On another occasion his Gurudev also referred to him as ‘*niveditātmā*’ or ‘a pure soul fully surrendered unto the Supreme Lord’.

Just prior to departing this world he was fully satisfied to hear *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarīpada*—his most beloved Song of the deepest Divine Service—from the lips of Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhuṇād, by virtue of this action, clearly illustrated that Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj is his Chief Successor Preceptor and Representative of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhuṇād, who is the Foremost Preceptorial Apostle of Śrī Chaitanyadev.

After the departure of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhuṇād, Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj founded the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh in 1941. At that time, it was no more than a thatched hut on the banks of the holy river Ganges. At that time, Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj composed this beautiful Sanskrit verse. The verse is a mysterious prediction, telling of the universal renown the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh was to know in the future:



श्रीमच्चैतन्य-सारस्वत-मठवर-उद्गीतकीर्त्तिर्जयश्रीं  
 बिभ्रत्संभाति गङ्गातट-निकट-नवद्वीप-कोलाद्रि-राजे ।  
 यत्र श्रीगौर-सारस्वत-मत-निरता गौरगाथा गृणन्ति  
 नित्यं रूपानुग-श्रीकृतमति-गुरुगौराङ्ग-राधाजिताशा श्र

śrīmach-chaitanya-sāraswata-maṭhavara udgīta-kīrttir jaya-śrīm  
 bibhrat sambhāti gaṅgā-taṭa-nikaṭa-navadvīpa-kolādri-rāje  
 yatra śrī-gaura-sāraswata-mata-niratā gaura-gāthā gṛṇanti  
 nityam rūpānuga śrī-kṛtamati-guru-gaurāṅga-rādhā-jitāśā

In the Holy Abode of Transcendental Touchstone  
 Śrī Nabadwip Dhām—the selfsame Śrī Vṛndāvan,  
 in the land of Koladwip, whose inner identity  
 is the King of mountains Śrī Govarddhan,  
 near the charming shores of the Holy River Bhāgīrathī  
 who delivers all the fallen souls  
 stands that grand and glorious King of all Temples—  
 Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh.

In that beautiful retreat, the surrendered devotees  
 whose lives are the Message of Śrī Gaura,  
 are eternally absorbed in the Loving Service  
 of the Divine Master, the Golden Lord Gaurāṅga  
 and the Loving Lord Śrī Govindasundar  
 with His Consort Śrīmatī Gāndharvā,  
 accompanied by all Their Beloved Associates.

With hearts always filled with good hope  
 to attain the Grace of the Lord,  
 following faithfully in the Line  
 of Śrī Śrī Rūpa and Raghunāth—  
 the Storekeepers of the Unlimited Treasure  
 of Pure, Sweet Love Divine,  
 those surrendered souls ever sing the unending Glories  
 of the Transcendental Name and Qualities  
 of the Most Magnanimous, Original Supreme Lord  
 Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅgasundar.

Indeed, the hearts of all beings, moving and still,  
 marvel in the Glory of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh  
 as they take shelter in the soothing, affectionate shade  
 of the victory flag that flies aloft  
 and sings wholeheartedly to the world the ever-expanding  
 renown of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh;  
 bearing that banner of all Transcendental Benedictions,  
 Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh ever shines resplendent  
 in all its Divine Magnificence.

[Rendered into English by Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu Śrī B.A. Sāgar, from the Bengali translation of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, after the departure of his Gurudev, naturally became unanimously honoured as the most exalted Representative of the Gauḍīya Succession; although he always, and openly so, considered himself as junior. By their requests, he conferred the holy order of *sannyāsa* upon many of his exalted, eminent Godbrothers, including Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keshav Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Āloka Paramahaṁsa Mahārāj and Śrīla Bhakti Kamal Madhusūdan Mahārāj, Śrīla Nārasimha Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhāgavat Mahārāj, Śrīla Āchāryya Mahārāj, etc.

During a circumambulation Festival at Vṛndāvan, Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj, the most senior preacher, and disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupād, personally worshipped Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj with one hundred and eight lamps, and incense, etc., on the occasion of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's Appearance Day. Śrīla Goswāmī Mahārāj performed this function joined by many of his disciples and other Godbrothers.

The Godbrother of His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupād, was, of course, the personality to inundate the Western world by cultural and spiritual tidal waves. From 1965 to 1977, he single-handedly transmitted the original Teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a global proportion. His Divine Grace Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupād was an unprecedented, magnificent Divine Phenomenon in himself. Yet, we

heard from him personally, and history has recorded it, that he had only about ten days of association with his Gurudev, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupād. But he had long and intimate association from his time of initiation all through, with the most intimate of all his Godbrothers, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj.

Later, when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was over 80, thousands of persons from all over the world took the pilgrimage to Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, in Nabadwip, India. He accepted some thousands of persons from all over as his disciples. And he handed their charge over to his intimate attendant and associate-servitor, and his personally selected successor, Āchāryyadev Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. It is indeed the greatest fortune for the world that [at the time of this printing] Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, since 1992, has now completed his fifth World Tour, preaching the Religion of humility, selflessness, and tolerance. It is the fulfillment of the heart's desire of our beloved Master Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

As I mentioned in the beginning, the Ocean of the Pastimes of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj is unlimited. How many drops of that ocean can a mere sparrow extract? In this world, time is not on our side. Ordered by my Gurudev, I have tried—in my own random way—to present some of these drops of honey for the bumblebee devotees of the Lord. I pray there is no offence in my doing so. If I do not try, that will also be an offence. Whoever hears the nectarean Divine Pastimes and Teachings of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj cannot but attain the Supreme Wealth of life itself—Love for the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Before closing this chapter, two other incidences suddenly come to mind.

After the disappearance of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupād, there were major struggles. They were always resolved and harmonised by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was loved by all. Once during that period, a very learned devotee personality who was considered an adversary of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, came to visit him. In fact, he had a habit of visiting Śrīla Guru Mahārāj quite often.

That day, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked him,

“You are supposed to be a member of the oppositionist party to me. Why are you always coming here to see me?”

That devotee personality immediately replied, “Because of your disinterested nature, super intelligence, and strong common sense.”

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Bābājī Mahārāj often visited Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's birthplace Śrī Hāpāniyā. He would ask the villagers, did Śrīdhara Mahārāj study at school here? Did he bathe in this pond here? and so on, and so on. One day Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked him, “You are my Godbrother; why are you so often visiting my birthplace? What is the reason?”

Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāj replied, “Because your writings are non-different from the writings of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. So I'm going there to take the dust of the land of your Pastimes on my head.”

*Centenary Year*