

All glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga

The Appearance of Śrī Gaurasundar

by

His Divine Grace

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Within the sacred land of India, the holy footprints of the Lord and His devotees are a place of pilgrimage for the whole world. The seven auspicious places in India, which are said to award liberation, are all found within those footprints. Among those holy places is Śrī Māyāpur, which is situated in Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām. It is non-different from Mathurā Maṇḍal. Śrīla Vṛndāvan Dāsa Ṭhākura has written, “There is no other village in the world like Śrī Nabadwīp, where Lord Chaitanya Gosāñī has descended.” Truly Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām is the best of all, and there is no other place like it, since the most magnanimous mercy personified, Śrī Gaura Hari, appeared in this part of the world. He indiscriminately distributed to all persons, whether they were qualified or unqualified, the highest perfection of Love of God, which is difficult for even the demigods to obtain. He has so generously distributed this highest gift even to the most fallen. Therefore Śrī Nabadwīp is incomparable in the world.

Centre of Learning

Nearly 500 years ago Śrī Nabadwīp City was renowned throughout the world as the centre of learning and knowledge. The science of logic which was brought from Mithila, was cultured by the intelligentsia of Śrī Nabadwīp, and its fame was spread all over the world. From Benares in Northern India and from many other places sannyāsis and the class of professors who were all well read in nyāyā and vedānta all came to Nabadwīp for learning. From Kanchi in Southern India, and other places too, many students desirous of becoming well educated all came to Śrī Nabadwīp. “Persons from different places all go to Nabadwīp, for one who studies in Nabadwīp he gets the taste for knowledge. No wonder there were hundreds of thousands of students and professors there.” (Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat)

Truly speaking, even a boy can argue with a Bhaṭṭāchāryya if he studied at Nabadwīp. Everyone considered himself a great scholar if he studied there. And there was no chance of getting recognition from the scholarly community if one did not study or teach in Śrī Nabadwīp.

Glories of Śrī Nabadwīp

Nabadwīp was noted for its opulences which, by the grace of Śrī Lakṣmīdevī, were shared by all the people there. On one bank of the Ganges, the most sacred Śrī Māyāpur, the greatest place of all learning, was situated. Many wealthy persons from different parts of the world all came to settle there. Śrīla Vṛndāvan Dāsa Ṭhākur writes, "Who can describe the opulence of Śrī Nabadwīp? Thousands of people go to take bath there because Lakṣmīdevī glances over that place. Everyone lives there in great happiness. The Lord, knowing He would appear there, had arranged everything very nicely for His descent."

The whole atmosphere was surcharged with auspiciousness, with many wealthy and learned persons coming from distant places to reside there in that holy place of pilgrimage and seat of learning. There is no need in mentioning the glories associated with such a place.

The Age of Ritualism

But the pain within the hearts of the pure devotees knew no bounds. In the midst of all this grandeur and beauty they could see that everyone was simply wasting their valuable time in pursuing materialistic objectives. Seeing this, how could they be happy? Everyone was simply mad for wealth, mad for physical beauty, mad for acquiring followers, mad for knowledge and intoxicated with the empiric speculations of materialistic science. Their mad attempt for profit, adoration and distinction looked like a frenzied dance, and in the midst of such things the devotees were perplexed. How to save them? Running madly after the flickering happiness of this world, the conditioned souls judge everything from the point of view of sense gratification, and uselessly waste their time with futile talks within that plane of existence. These things are all intolerable for the devotees. Śrīla Vṛndāvan Dāsa Ṭhākura writes,

“The whole world is devoid of real love for Rāma and Krishna. As was predicted in the Scriptures for kali-yuga, people only know about ritualistic ceremonies. They stay up the whole night singing the glories of some demigod. Some of them proudly worship Viṣaharī, who removes the effect of snake poison. Others set up idols and worship them with great wealth. They spend money lavishly on their sons and daughters. Like this, everyone simply wastes their time. They never care to engage in Krishna-kīrtan which is the yuga-dharma, the only religious practice for this age. They prefer to speak ill of others rather than say good things about them.

Even from those who are puffed up with their detachment and renunciation we never hear the chanting of the Holy Names from their lips. Some others think that the time of bathing is the only auspicious moment for chanting the Names ‘Govinda’ and ‘Pundarikakṣa.’ Those who recite the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam for the education of the people do not have the devotional serving mood in their tongue. Thus the Lord’s energy produces the worldly illusion. This causes the devotees’ unhappiness to increase without limit. Seeing the whole world devoid of Krishna-bhakti their hearts are burning within. Some of them feel such intense pain that they want to leave their bodies. Others simply sigh and produce the Name ‘Krishna’ in their exhaling. Their food no longer tastes good in their mouths. When they see the activities of this material world they become exceedingly unhappy.”

Śrī Advaita’s Promise

Śrī Advaita Āchāryya was glorified by everyone, even among the society of non-devotees, as he was the representative of all the Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Advaita Prabhu was residing in Māyāpur and for the welfare of the world was engaged in worshipping the Lord and preaching His glories. The miserable condition of the living entities who were all forgetful of Krishna was giving pain to his heart. He would arrange daily meetings for the devotees at which they would all express grief and profusely shed tears over the dreadful world situation. The Āchāryya, who was an ocean of mercy, found the miserable condition of the living entities to be unbearable and he decided resolutely within himself that he would call the Lord Himself to descend and save the situation: “I will meet Vaikuṅṭhanāth and bring Him here. Dancing and singing I will deliver all living entities.” The glories of Advaita Āchāryya were not unknown to the devotees. All were pleased by hearing the promise of Advaita Āchāryya and they all engaged in his service, having full faith in him.

Śrī Nityānanda’s Appearance

With this promise fixed in his mind, Advaita Āchāryya meditated on offering Ganges water and Tulasī leaves to the Lord, constantly calling to Goloka Behari again and again. The Lord’s throne was shaking. The devotees, who were also engaged in calling the Lord, abstained from all comforts and material enjoyment, and to relieve the devotees’ unhappiness the all-merciful Lord prepared to descend to this world. Needless to say, when the Lord descends He comes with all His paraphernalia and associates. Therefore, before the Lord’s descent the all-auspicious Nityānanda Prabhu, who appeared in Rārhadeśa, came first to make all the necessary preparations to receive the Lord.

Māyāpur:

Śrī Jagannātha Miśra’s Home

Śrī Māyāpur is the centre of Nabadwīp Dhām and is called Antardwīp. Śrī Jagannātha Miśra lived at this place, Antardwīp. He was a vastly learned scholar and a generous person and the resort of the purest souls. Śrīla Vṛndāvan Dāsa Ṭhākur has written:

“Nabadwīp is the place of residence of Jagannātha Miśra. He was as devoted to his religious duties as Vasudeva himself. His magnanimous character was as unlimited as Brahman. No one could compare with him. Formerly he was Kasyapa, Daśarath, Vasudeva and Nanda Mahārāj, and now, as Jagannātha Miśra, was the combination of all. His wife, named Śachīdevī, was completely devoted to her husband. She was the emblem of Krishna-bhakti and the mother of the whole world.”

Transcendental Ray

This very pure, divine couple tragically lost eight daughters, but after that they begot a son named Viśvarūpa who had uncommonly beautiful features. They always worshipped the Lord in great transcendental ecstasy. Day by day Viśvarūpa, who always satisfied his father and mother, grew like the bright half of the waxing moon. This dark world got the strength of the auspicious planets. In 1406 Śaka there was a special day because Śrī Jagannātha Miśra saw a brilliant transcendental ray make its way into his heart, and again from his heart it entered into the heart of Śrī Śachīdevī. Feeling thrilled, Miśra was overwhelmed with joy, and from that day Śachīdevī became transformed into a wonderful embodiment of that transcendental ray. Miśra told Śachīdevī all these things he had observed, and when Śachīdevī confirmed that she had also experienced the same things, it only caused Miśradeva to increase his wonder: “I see in the sky as if many heavenly beings are making hymns in praise of me. The whole atmosphere has become delightful with many enlightened persons coming and going from this place.” Noticing all these things, Miśra said with joy, “From these things I can understand that a great personality will be born.” With great attention this divine couple were always performing Viṣṇu worship.

Where did they all come from?

On 1407 Śakabda, Phālgun, full moon day, at evening time, the Lord Gaurachandra was born. On this pleasant spring evening, the day of the full moon, there was also a lunar eclipse. The banks of the Ganges and the roads of the city leading to the Ganges were all filled with throngs of people — a very thick crowd — and all were struggling along the way. Seeing this great crowd of people, one felt as if the whole universe had come here leaving the rest of the fourteen worlds vacant. Everyone was filled with ecstatic bliss. The sound of ‘Hari’ filled up and resounded throughout the fourteen worlds. It was as if

all the auspicious signs of the universe were rising at the same time, the splendour of Nabadwīp was so brilliant. An unprecedented vibration of the Name of Hari resounded from the many devotees gathered on the bank of the Ganges. The flood of the Harinām made all inauspicious signs disappear on this occasion of the lunar eclipse, and instead brought boundless joy to everyone. As they stood on the banks of the Ganges, everyone was thinking, "Where did so many people come from? Previously there were so many eclipses, but so many persons, and such a great vibration of the sound of 'Hari,' we have never seen or heard anything like this before and we are overwhelmed with joy!" They were all filled with intense happiness but they could not understand the cause. This was going on, and all without exception were feeling very good. Even fallen persons were laughing in the company of the Hindus, relishing the chanting of 'Hari, Hari.' There was pleasure in all ten directions, and even the river water was feeling pleased. It was a very favourable evening. Indeed, Lion rashi, Lion lagna, highly placed planets, the six planets, the eight signs — all auspicious signs were visible. Everyone was well dressed and decorated for the Lord's Appearance and singing songs. At that time, the life of the whole world, Śrī Śachīnandana, appeared.

The Spotless Moon appears

In Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's house, there was no limit to the joyful atmosphere found in Śrī Śachīdevī's room. The flood of Harinām inundated the whole world as the Spotless Moon appeared today. And that is why the moon in the sky covered his face out of shyness (in the lunar eclipse). Why shouldn't he cover his face? The moons on the Lord's toenails give such a brilliant, merciful light that they outshine millions of moons, and it is that same Gaurachandra who appeared today. Everywhere, on all sides, flowers were raining from the sky. The sounds of millions of conch shells and beating drums, and the dancing of divine personalities all began at that time. The whole earth resounded with

“Jaya Jaya” and the entire universe became liberated. The news of the appearance of Gaura Hari was thus announced. The devotees directly felt within themselves full satisfaction. The sweet sounds of the conch, bells, mṛdanga, and karatals became sweeter still when mixed with the chorus of, “Jaya Śachīnandana, Jaya Gaura Hari.”

Only the fortunate can see

Everything connected with Gaura Hari is eternal. His Name, Form, Qualities, Pastimes, Associates, Paraphernalia, etc. are all eternal. His Appearance is eternal. For those fortunate persons who are pure in heart, the eternal Lord resides in their hearts always. Our tiny brains cannot understand these things. So the Lord is *achintya bhedābheda* appearing in the form of Āchāryyadeva as the highest conclusion of this principle. Only by the grace of sādhu and Guru are we able to know the glory of Śrī Chaitanyadeva who is the eternally pure, fully liberated Ultimate Reality. At that time, those fortunate persons who have received the mercy of the sādhus can understand that Gaurachandra appears as Śrī Krishna in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. They feel great ecstasy within their hearts and they are able to understand, “Today Gaurāṅgaraya was performing His Pastimes and only a few fortunate persons were able to see.”
