

# Learn and Teach

The VIHE Newsletter

ISSUE No. 6

AUG - OCT '17

Inexhaustible time passes by like a silent soft breeze, hardly noticed, bringing about the various aromas of our past deeds and misdeeds, along with the transcendental opportunity to re-connect with our heart's beloved Govinda. Moving in cycles, time traverses again and again the entire space in the creation and its effects are certain. As I write these words the period known as Kārtika is back, with its hosts of benedictions at hand. Nights have become longer, only for the pleasure of the sādhakas, who can peacefully chant long before dawn. At the VIHE, every afternoon after class we gather for dīpa-dāna, the holy offering of ghee lamp to Śrī Dāmodara. In the summer season, when Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī, due to excessive heat, withdrew her sap from some of her branches, we collected those dry sticks and kept them carefully. They are now being set inside tiny clay cups, along with pieces of rope soaked in ghee, as a most auspicious medium to offer the flame of our

## Bhakti-Vaibhava Canto 1&2

December 14, 2017 - April 8, 2018

Admissions close on December 1<sup>st</sup>!

[vihe.courses.admissions@pamho.net](mailto:vihe.courses.admissions@pamho.net)

## Highlights

◆ Rūpotsava	3
◆ Kṛṣṇa! Deva Bhavantam Vande	7
◆ Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Humility	9
◆ Summer Festivals	13



One's learning will be understood when he's able to understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Vidyā. Vidyā means learning, not this science, that science. When one can understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in true perspective, then he's to be understood that he has finished his all educational advancement.

— Lecture, SB 1.5.13, New Vṛndāvana  
June 13, 1969

fledgling devotion. We remember the teachings of Prahlaḍa, who declared, "I am not a merchant!" Nothing do we demand or even think of asking from Kṛṣṇa in this time but the blessing of His merciful glance upon us in the form of engagement in His loving service.

Remembering Lord Dāmodara's curly locks of black hair and His face smeared with kajal as He rubs His tiny hands on His lotus eyes filled with fear, His face being kissed by the eternally fortunate Yaśodāmayī, we aspire for that purity of heart, that simplicity of mind, that keeps the Vrajavāsīs' consciousness sealed from any tinge of attraction for the opulences of Vaikuṅṭha, the bliss of Brahmānanda or the superficial pleasure of the dull senses. But who are we to deserve Kṛṣṇa's glance? Our hope lies in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words in the Nectar of Devotion.

*In the Padma Purāṇa it is said, "The Lord may offer liberation or material happiness to a devotee, but after some devotional service has been executed, particularly in Mathurā during the month of Kārtika, the devotees want only to attain pure devotional service unto the Lord." The purport is that the Lord does not award devotional service to ordinary persons who are not serious about it. But even such unserious persons, who execute devotional service according to the regulative principles during the month of Kārtika, and within the jurisdiction of Mathurā in India, are very easily awarded the Lord's personal service. (Nod 12)*

So we offer our lamps again and again. At the Yamunā they float away in the evening, glittering brightly, like a procession heading back home. We pray to Kālindī that she may carry our message—O Lord Dāmodara, O Śrīmatī Rādhikā, may You accept our every breath as an offering unto You. Such is the essential teaching of the bhakti śāstras—unflinching, unmotivated devotional service is the supermost means of achieving perfection. As the semester comes to an end, students, teachers and staff reflect upon what they have experienced, heard or taught. Four months flash back in our mind—the opening, the orientation, the first teachers, the first exam, the humid heat of the rainy season, the festivals, the outings,

the friendships we built. These days spent in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma build a solid foundation for our spiritual progress. But time is constantly carrying everyone forward. After the closing we shall go apart. The challenge is before all: how to sincerely and earnestly apply the knowledge in our daily life.

- Praśāntā Devī Dāsī



Yaśodā Kṛṣṇa

### VJHE Calendar (2017 - 2018)

- Nov 8 - 13 : Holy Name Retreat
- Nov 17 - 24 : Govardhana Retreat
- Dec 4 - Apr 3, '18 : Bhakti-śāstrī (Russian)
- Dec 14 - Apr 8, '18 : Bhakti-vaibhava Canto 1-2
- Mar 20 - 25, '18 : Vaiṣṇavī Retreat at Govardhana
- Jul - Nov, '18 : Bhakti-śāstrī (English)
- Jul - Nov, '18 : Bhakti-vaibhava Canto 3

# Rūpotsava—A Three-day Festival

By Mādhurya Gauraṅgī Devī Dāsī

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the exalted saint, poet, writer, scholar and leader of the Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas, appeared in this world at an unknown date and left this world on the second day of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda's swing festival, the day after Pavitropana ekādaśī.

From its inception, the VIHE has been running as an offering to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Since 1999 his tirobhava has been the occasion of a great festival, which has grown into a three-day program over time. This year, on August 2, we gathered in the VIHE temple room. For several days both staff and students had been fully engaged in various preparations. Some fortunate devotees spent the evening and night in cooking, others made opulent garlands, and the decoration team turned the temple room into a beautiful kuñja made of aśoka leaves and strings of jasmine blossoms.

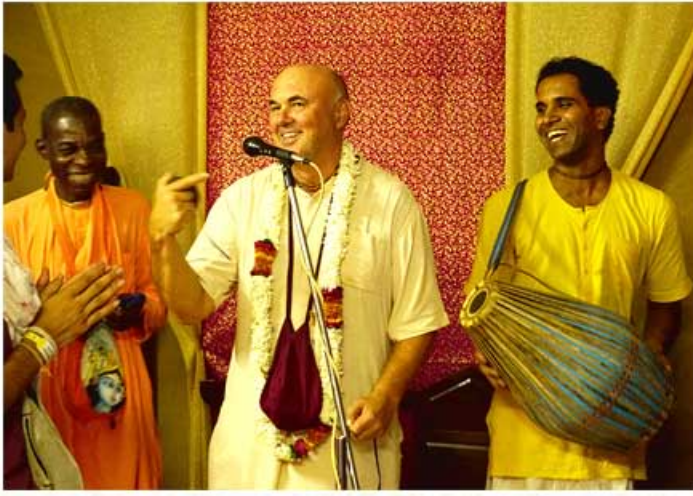
Guests started to gather at 10 am and were warmly received with sweet kīrtana. The doorway of the temple room, decorated with rice-paste raṅgolī,

welcomed everyone into a different world, the world of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. His Holiness Bhakti Dhīra Dāmodara Svāmī, blessing the event, inspired the assembled devotees by continuously stressing the aspect of humility in the character of Śrī Rūpa, bringing innumerable examples from his life. Next, His Grace Mukunda Datta Prabhu, the head pūjārī of the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple, poured the most nectarean topics into our ears. He made us remember that we can serve and understand Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Their pastimes only by following in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa.

Meanwhile, some of the devotees, like humming bumble bees, gathered together another type of nectar. Clay bowls that were prepared in advance got expertly filled with bhoga preparations. Begging him to mercifully accept this humble offering, devotees keenly arranged nearly one hundred and eight offerings on the altar. When the curtains opened His Grace Pañca Gauḍa Prabhu, the Temple President of ISKCON



First day celebration



ISKCON Vrindavan Temple President graces the occasion

Vṛndāvana, led the Gurvāṣṭaka and kīrtana, while Mukunda Datta Prabhu offered āratī. Chant, dance, and take prasāda—that’s our slogan. After a long chanting and dancing session, everyone was invited to honor mahā-prasādam. Thus fully satisfied with the transcendental opulences of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotees returned to their respective homes, knowing well that there would be more nectar running down the feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī the following day, on ekādaśī, at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara temple.

In the early morning, mṛdaṅgas, karatālas, harmonium and sound system carefully travelled with us to perform an unforgettable kīrtana in the mood of a prayer for mercy. The temple was filled with pilgrims, which created a busy and joyful atmosphere. Students and other guests arrived at Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room and lovingly surrounded our Founder-Ācārya. His Holiness Bhakti Dhīra Dāmodara Svāmī led the kīrtana, while everyone followed with full satisfaction, forgetting about the busy street life of modern day seva-kuñja and its surrounding area outside the temple.

Then, because the courtyard around Rūpa Gosvāmī’s samādhi was under construction, we moved to the open area in front of Śrīla Jīva and Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s samādhis for the rest of the program, absorbed in drinking the sweetness of the holy name. Some devotees threw themselves into the whirlpool of energetic dancing. Spinning around, they seemed to be flying. The samādhi area created a unique atmosphere. In a lecture on the Nectar of Devotion, Śrīla Prabhupāda speaks about this



Altar at the VIHE

place. He writes: “Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī and all the Six Gosvāmīs developed this Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Movement by sitting together in Vṛndāvana. Not only in Vṛndāvana, in that very particular place, Rādhā-Dāmodara temple... At Rūpa Gosvāmī’s tomb, that space, all the Six Gosvāmīs, they used to sit down and discuss Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī was reading, and all the other Gosvāmīs—Rūpa, Sanātana—they were hearing, and Jīva Gosvāmī was writing comment. That is the comment of Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā. So that place in Vṛndāvana, Rādhā Dāmodara Temple, is a very sacred place.” Indeed a very wonderful atmosphere pervaded throughout the kīrtana. We felt that Jīva Gosvāmī was blessing us and guiding us on the path that leads to the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa. Around noon, to fulfill the desires of the assembled devotees, apples and bananas were distributed.



Dancing in front of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī’s samādhi

In the early afternoon, devotees left the temple to continue their ekādaśī vrata in expectation of the most blissful disappearance festival of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī at Ter Kadamba. Cooks started cooking and the set up team prepared for the next day's departure. According to the moon calendar, August 4 in the year 2017 was the actual day of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's disappearance anniversary. Devotees boarded a bus in front of the Chitrakut Ashram at noon, and joyfully departed towards the holy place. Only the huge sculptures of Hanuman and Gaṇeṣa silently remained as witnesses of the event.

An advance party had gone ahead and been busily engaged since early morning, preparing all that was necessary to welcome the devotees in Ter Kadamba. And in the same way a river collects her waters from many different streams, the pujārīs travelled in a special car to deliver the bhoga cooked and brought by vaiṣṇavas from all over Vrndāvana and other places. In Ter Kadamba, they unloaded the devotees' wealth of love in the form of 251 preparations.

As soon as everyone reached the venue, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's bhajana sthalī, a grand guru pūjā started, immediately followed by the bhoga offering. Bhakti Dhīra Dāmodara Mahārāja offered a beautiful āraṭi while devotees danced and sang. Naturally everyone developed the desire to honor the very special mahā-prasādam. Before letting us move on, Mahārāja tuned our consciousness by delivering a speech on the value of mahā-prasādam and the transcendental method of honoring it.

Four enthusiastic devotees, having intensely meditated on the festival for the past weeks, came up with a play—"Śrī Caitanya mano 'bhiṣṭam," featuring Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Jagannātha Purī. It revealed the greatness of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his ability to understand the secrets of the mind of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The

drama exposed Śrī Rūpa as a great transcendental poet, whose handwriting is as beautiful as mukutāra pānti, a row of pearls.

The rest of the day was filled with kīrtana and decorated with verses and aṣṭakas describing Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities and pastimes as well as the bhava bhaktas' eagerness to achieve His association and service. A puṣpa abhiṣeka was offered to the presiding Lords of Ter Kadamba, Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma. Then, when the darkness of night stepped in, Their Lordships listened to a sweet evening kīrtana while gently swinging on Their swing. One hundred and eight ghee-lamps were lit and allowed to waver in the soft summer breeze for Their pleasure.

Finally we were all invited to gather inside the small structure of the kuṭīra where Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is being worshiped and join in Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's prayer, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada, for an unending kīrtana during which no one could help but dance till their last breath. As parents disturb the joy of their children by calling them home from playing, the bus and cars drivers honked like enemies controlled by time and soon the vehicles took us all away, closing up this blissful event. All we could do was to remain in separation, eagerly waiting for next year's festival.

## A ROW OF PEARLS

śrī-rūpera akṣara—yena mukutāra pānti  
pṛita hañā karena prabhu akṣarera stuti

### SYNONYMS

śrī-rūpera akṣara—the handwriting of Rūpa Gosvāmī; yena—like; mukutāra pānti—a row of pearls; pṛita hañā—being pleased; karena—does; prabhu—Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; akṣarera stuti—praise of the handwriting of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

### TRANSLATION

Thus being pleased, the Lord praised the writing by saying, "The handwriting of Rūpa Gosvāmī is just like rows of pearls."

-- Cc. Antya 1.97 --

# FESTIVAL AT TER KADAMBA



Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's bhajana sthālī at Ter Kadamba



Bhakti Dhīra Dāmodara Svāmī offering āraṭī



Devotees' offerings to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī



Puṣpa-abhiṣeka of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma



Drama - Lord Caitanya amazed at Rūpa Gosvāmī's understanding



Offering of lamps in the evening

# Kṛṣṇa! Deva Bhavantam Vande

A Translation by Śrīla Prabhupāda - SB. 1.11.26

śriyo nivāso yasyoraḥ  
pāna-pātraṁ mukhaṁ dṛṣām  
bāhavo loka-pālānām  
sāraṅgāṇām padāmbujam

## TRANSLATION

The Lord's chest is the abode of the goddess of fortune. His moonlike face is the drinking vessel for eyes which hanker after all that is beautiful. His arms are the resting places for the administrative demigods. And His lotus feet are the refuge of pure devotees who never talk or sing of any subject except His Lordship.

## PURPORT

There are different classes of human beings, all seeking different enjoyments from different objects. There are persons who are seeking after the favor of the goddess of fortune, and for them the Vedic literatures give information that the Lord is always served with all reverence by thousands and thousands of goddesses of fortune at the cintāmaṇi-dhāma, the transcendental abode of the Lord where the trees are all desire trees and the buildings are made of touchstone. The Lord Govinda is engaged there in herding the surabhi cows as His natural occupation. These goddesses of fortune can be seen automatically if we are attracted by the bodily features of the Lord. The impersonalists cannot observe such goddesses of fortune because of their dry speculative habit. And those who are artists, overtaken by the beautiful creation, should better see to the beautiful face of the Lord for complete satisfaction. The face of the Lord is the embodiment of beauty. What they call beautiful nature is but His smile, and what they call the sweet songs of the birds are but specimens of the whispering voice of the Lord. There are administrative demigods in charge of departmental service of cosmic management, and there are tiny administrative gods in the state service. They are always afraid of other competitors, but if they take shelter of the arms of

the Lord, the Lord can protect them always from the attacks of enemies. A faithful servant of the Lord engaged in the service of administration is the ideal executive head and can well protect the interest of the people in general. Other so-called administrators are symbols of anachronisms leading to the acute distress of the people who are governed by them. The administrators can remain safely under the protection of the arms of the Lord. The essence of everything is the Supreme Lord: He is called the saram. And those who sing and talk about Him are called the sāraṅgas, or the pure devotees. The pure devotees are always hankering after the lotus feet of the Lord. The lotus has a kind of honey which is transcendental-ly relished by the devotees. They are like the bees who are always after the honey. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the great devotee ācārya of the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya, has sung a song about this lotus honey, comparing himself to the bee:

"O my Lord Kṛṣṇa, I beg to offer my prayers unto You. My mind is like the bee, and it is after some honey. Kindly, therefore, give my bee-mind a place at Your lotus feet, which are the resources for all transcendental honey. I know that even big demigods like Brahmā do not see the rays of the nails of Your lotus feet, even though they are engaged in deep meditation for years together. Still, O infallible one, my ambition is such, for You are very merciful to your surrendered devotees. O Mādhava, I know also that I have no genuine devotion for the service of Your lotus feet, but because Your Lordship is inconceivably powerful, You can do what is impossible to be done. Your lotus feet can deride even the nectar of the heavenly kingdom, and therefore I am very much attracted by them. O supreme eternal, please, therefore, let my mind be fixed at Your lotus feet so that eternally I may be able to relish the taste of Your transcendental service."

The devotees are satisfied with being placed at the lotus feet of the Lord and have no ambition to see His all-beautiful face or aspire for the protection of the strong arms of the Lord. They are humble by nature, and the Lord is always leaning towards such humble devotees.

# The shelter of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

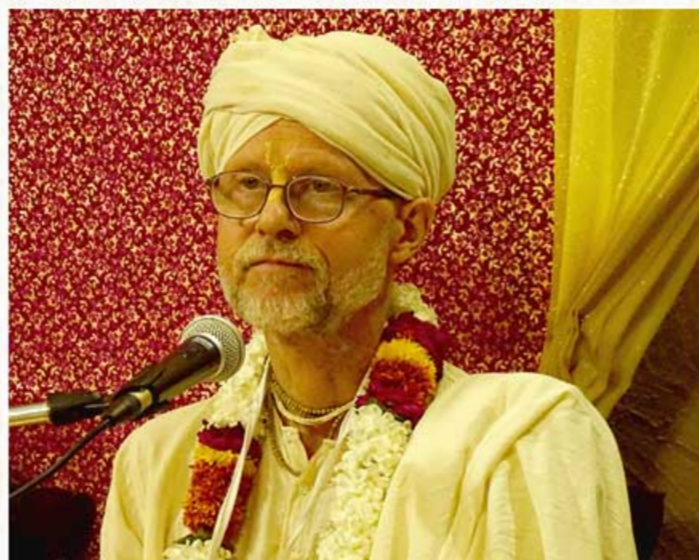
From a lecture by His Grace Mukunda Datta Dāsa

All our previous ācāryas have accepted the shelter of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pāda. Whenever Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master and the founder of our Society, chanted the maṅgalacaraṇa, first he offered obeisances to his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thakura, by reciting “om ajñāna-timirāndhasya...” Then, immediately after that, he chanted one of the famous verses in glorification of Rūpa Gosvāmī pāda —

śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhīṣṭam  
sthāpitam yena bhū-tale  
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ  
dadāti sva-padāntikam

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was empowered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to write transcendental literatures. They met in Prayāga. There Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed him for 10 days, near the confluence of the three holiest rivers—Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. Mahāprabhu told him to write transcendental literatures for the benefit of the fallen conditioned souls of the age of Kali and instructed him to go to Vṛndāvana dhāma to reveal the pastimes places of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī did that and his literatures are most important for us. Among the four books being studied at Bhakti-śāstrī level, two are from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī—Śrī Upadeśāmṛta (The Nectar of Instruction) and Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (The Nectar of Devotion). These are very important for the devotees desiring advancement in spiritual life.

Many ācāryas have installed Deities in Vṛndāvana, but as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, we primarily worship three main Deities—Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madana Mohana, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda deva and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gopinātha. Rādhā Madana Mohana are known as the Deities presiding over sambhanda-jñāna. They help us establish our relationship with the Supreme Lord, to come to the understanding that we are by constitution eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. The ācārya for that is



Rūpa kathā with Mukunda Datta Prabhu

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. Having gotten that knowledge, we then have to find our way back to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. We have to practice in order to realize our spiritual nature, apart from the gross and subtle body, so we may realize Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form, sac-cid-ānanda svarūpa.

The second Deity, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda deva, preside over abhideya-jñāna. They accept the service of the devotees who are practicing devotional service and the ācārya for that is Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pāda. He has shown us the way how we can realize by practicing, by following the instructions given by the previous ācāryas and the Supreme Lord.

Then come Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gopinātha, worshipped by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, who is known as the ācārya for prayojana-jñāna or tattva. This is for those in the advanced stage of devotional service, when love of God has actually manifested. But actually any of these ācāryas can give all forms of knowledge—sambhanda-jñāna, abhideya-jñāna and prayojana-jñāna. Because of the nature of their literatures, they have been addressed respectively as acarya for the different levels of devotional service. However, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī accepted the shelter of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Even Sanātana Gosvāmī, although he was his elder brother, (continued on page 12)



# A Brief Look at Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Humility

By Dvijamaṇi Gaura Dāsa

## The Meek Inherit the Mission

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda is glorified as the devotee under whose supervision the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Movement is conducted [NOI Preface]. One may wonder, "How could a person become so powerful as to oversee the greatest mission for global re-spiritualization in the history of the world?" The power and inspiration granted to Rūpa Gosvāmī may be seen as a result of his humility. Rūpa Gosvāmī never flaunted himself as a great philosopher, writer, poet, devotee, or scholar. Rather, willing to graciously play any role given to him by the Supreme Lord, Rūpa proved himself most trustworthy. Thus he was able to accept the most confidential work in service to Lord Caitanya.

It is humbleness that attracts the Lord's mercy and empowerment. Arjuna, although a greatly

accomplished warrior, lovingly submitted to Kṛṣṇa in order to gain confidence in his duty. Unwilling to harm even one man for his own gratification, the same Arjuna slayed many thousands after accepting his instrumental role in carrying out Kṛṣṇa's will. Never before, nor any time since, has a person fought with such strength and valor as did Arjuna at Kurukṣetra. Similarly, the grandeur of Mahāprabhu's teachings – a highly refined presentation of the awakening of devotional service and the soul's love for God – to be presented systematically for the uplift of the world in the darkest of times is a task granted to a servant not only imbued with superior compositional talent, but to one with unflinching surrender born of utter humility. Such humility resides in one who boldly carries out the order of the spiritual master without pride or desire for recognition.

Let us take a look at how Rūpa Gosvāmī provides a brilliant example of humility in his tireless efforts to delineate the path of pure devotion for the eternal benefit of humankind.

## First Encounter with the Master

On the path of spiritual awakening, humility is oftentimes seen to be the result of repentance for one's past exploits at the expense of others. But Rūpa Gosvāmī's humility was not a result of lamenting previous wrongs performed in ignorance. Rather, his was an exhibition of the eternal pure nature of the soul. The eternally liberated denizens in the sublime Vaikuṅṭha realm compete for the opportunity to enhance one another's glories rather than seek glory for themselves. Rūpa Gosvāmī, whose consciousness was never sullied by material contact, nevertheless presented himself as fallen. On many occasions, Rūpa Gosvāmī expressed shame at having been associated with, and an employed servant of, oppressive Muslim rulers. But, in fact, he was never touched by such association, "as the lotus leaf is untouched by water." He and his



Sanātana Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī

brother Sanātana had been coerced into government service under Nawab Hussein Shah under the threat of violence to the local brāhmaṇas. It was to protect the local people that they took ministerial posts, not for personal gain.

During their careers as ministers under the rule of the power-hungry Nawab, Rūpa and Sanātana longed for the time when they could be permanently relieved of government service. They wished to fully dedicate themselves to the Lord's Saṅkīrtana Movement. One day, they caught word of Mahāprabhu's coming to their area on His way to Vṛndāvana. Being government servants, they stole away at night, incognito, in hopes of meeting their eternal Master. They first came upon Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, by whose grace they could hope to contact Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa informed Mahāprabhu of the presence of Rūpa and Sanātana. Mahāprabhu beckoned them, and upon receiving His permission through Nityānanda and Haridāsa, the two brothers approached Him, offering prostrated obeisances and keeping straw between their teeth. They said, "All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu! You are the most merciful savior of fallen souls! Since You have specifically incarnated to deliver the fallen souls, please consider that there are none so fallen as the two of us, for we are worse than Jagāi and Madhāi." Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was actually pained to hear their humble prayers for His mercy. He replied, "Please abandon your humility, for my heart is breaking to see you so humble." At that moment, the Lord awarded them the names Rūpa and Sanātana, acknowledging them as His eternal servants and initiating them as disciples.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, "You have written several letters showing your humility. By reading them, I could understand your heart. I really had no real business in coming to Bengal, I have come just to see you two brothers." After promising their deliverance, the Lord blessed them by placing His hands on their heads. Feeling humbled, they immediately bowed down and placed His lotus feet, not His hands, upon their

heads. The devotees present at that time all cheered in happiness at seeing the brothers' good fortune. Then Rūpa and Sanātana touched the feet of all the vaiṣṇavas.

Before departing from that assembly, the two brothers begged the permission of all the vaiṣṇavas present that they may take leave. It can be noticed from these exchanges that both Rūpa and Sanātana, although already having become accomplished scholars, never took the special favor of Lord Caitanya as an indication of their own distinction. Rather, they took every opportunity to enhance their respect for the other vaiṣṇavas present, feeling dependent upon their blessings.

### The Transcendental Composer

Recognizing Rūpa Gosvāmī's transparent receptivity to His mood and mission, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed him to describe in writing the confidential mellows of devotional service. While in Jagannātha Purī, Rūpa composed dramatic verses describing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with his eternal consorts. The devotees were "filled with bliss and struck with wonder" upon hearing his descriptions of the nectar-laden syllables of Kṛṣṇa's holy name. [Cc. 3.1.121] Enthused, Rāmānanda Rāya and others insisted on hearing more from Rūpa in order to taste more and more nectar. But even after receiving such praises and approval from the most learned devotees of Lord Gaurāṅga, Rūpa maintained his humble stance, feeling himself incapable of producing anything glorious on his own.

After Rāmānanda requested him to speak the introduction of his second drama, Lalita-mādhava, Rūpa hesitated, saying, "In your presence, which is just like brilliant sunshine, I am as insignificant as the light of a glow worm. It is even impudent for me to open my mouth before you." [Cc. 3.1.173-174] Then only did Rūpa proceed to provide intricate, poetic, and tasteful descriptions of the Lord's eternal lila, giving transcendental pleasure to Rāmānanda Rāya. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, also being very pleased, praised Rūpa's use of literary ornaments in his

poetry, declaring that without such poetic attributes, “there is no possibility of preaching transcendental mellows.” [Cc 3.1.198] Witnessing the special mercy of Lord Caitanya on Rūpa Gosvāmī, and stunned by seeing his personal qualities, all the devotees present were awe-struck. Haridāsa Ṭhākura embraced Rūpa, extolling his good fortune. Rūpa responded by accepting no credit of his own, saying, “The only transcendental words I can utter are those which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu makes me speak.” Despite his superlative purity and expertise, Rūpa felt himself low and unqualified to receive respect.

### A Serendipitous Encounter

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, along with Śrī Sanātana, was ordered to excavate the lost pastime places in Vṛndāvana and to establish temples. Such an endeavor had been made previously by Bhūgarbha Gosvāmī and Lokanātha Gosvāmī, who had not achieved tangible progress. Rūpa would also sometimes lament his inability to reach these goals. Yet he stayed in Vṛndāvana, faithfully carrying with him the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

One day, while Rūpa was sitting on the banks of the Yamunā contemplating his mission, a beautiful young boy approached him, inquiring about his despondency. Rūpa explained his mission to build beautiful temples for the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and to establish centers of learning which would produce systematic theology. After Rūpa's explanation, the boy gestured for Rūpa to follow him. They came to Gomā Tilā, a small hill where one cow would come daily to dispense her milk. The reason for this, the boy explained, was that a Deity of Govinda deva was buried within the hill, having been hidden there by the villagers after a Muslim invasion years before. The cow's milk would trickle down through the earth and bathe and nourish the forgotten Deity. Then the young boy disappeared. Somewhat skeptical, Rūpa visited the mound the next morning, and – lo and behold! - there came the mother cow to give her milk! He found some local villagers and inspired them to start digging. Finally, from within the earth, they uncovered the Deity of Govinda deva.

The local people, understanding Rūpa to be a blessed personality, enthusiastically erected a temple for Śrī Govinda deva and began regular worship. Thus he was able to reveal the service of Govinda deva in Vṛndāvana, and the worship continues to the present day.

A parallel can be drawn with the life of the great unalloyed servant of Śrīla Rūpa, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in the United States of America at the age of 69, determined to fulfill the high order of his spiritual master to preach to the English-speaking world. As did Rūpa Gosvāmī, he arrived in a place where he apparently had no followers, little support, and hardly any idea of exactly how his mission would be accomplished. But, in all humility, he strove in earnest to uncover Kṛṣṇa's plan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda exhibited unflinching faith in his Guru Mahārāja's order by being prepared to “preach to the four walls,” “even if no one attends.” And at times he did just that, living alone in a tiny, cramped office, delivering lectures to a sparse audience, many of whom were older women who had heard about him through Dr. Mishra's yoga studio. Young seekers from the Lower East Side came to his assistance and recommended that he move downtown where a young, hip crowd of free-thinking musicians could tune in to his otherworldly message of divine origin. Undeterred through the many tribulations that would follow, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted Kṛṣṇa's arrangements, step by step, until he finally met those souls who would wake up to the profoundness and urgency of his mission. In humble submission to the order of Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta, he took no credit of his own for fulfilling the desire of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī to distribute to the world scientific knowledge of Kṛṣṇa bhakti, pure love of God in its fullest expression.

### Concluding Words

The foregoing exchanges reveal the favorable mood of a devotee: to feel oneself unqualified yet all the same unabashedly eager to assist in the

Lord's mission. Such selfless enthusiasm yields a greater result than the artificial withdrawal of one's energies in an attempt to show oneself to be without pride. Freedom from false pride is shown not only by modest behavior but also by positive acceptance of the burden of responsibility for carrying forward the bhakti cult. One may aspire to become so responsible by meditating on the self-sacrifice and humble attitude of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. By his example and teachings, Rūpa guides us to discover within ourselves that most treasured quality which awards uninterrupted devotion: humility in action. Automatically, by such unreserved engagement in devotional service, one gains awareness of one's total dependence on the Lord in accomplishing any objective.

## The Shelter of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

(continued from page 8)

practically accepted him as his guru. That is of course out of humility. There is a past time in this connection.

Rūpa Gosvāmī pāda has written many books, including Vidagdha-mādhava and Lalitā-mādhava, which describe Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana and in Dvārakā. In the beginning of each book, there is always a mangalācaraṇa or invocation for auspiciousness, one or sometimes several verses. Once, Rūpa Gosvāmī gave his manuscript for review to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who found everything very wonderful, but pointed out one verse, which he was not completely confident with. In that verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had described Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's braid, comparing it to a black snake. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī thought that it was not a good comparison. Rūpa Gosvāmī accepted his point and asked him to help find a better verse or comparison to remember Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's beautiful hair. Sanātana sat down, chanted, and meditated, trying to get some better comparison, but he couldn't find any. Then he stood up and began walking back and forth again and again, still trying to find some better idea. He got none. This was happening at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Suddenly, at a little distance, he saw some young girls. There was a swing between the trees. One of

As a final treat, let us ruminate on Rūpa Gosvāmī's most pleasing mood as it is exhibited in text 6(b) of the Prologue to his Vidagdha-mādhava:

“O learned devotees, I am by nature ignorant and low, yet even though it is from me that Vidagdha-mādhava has come, it is filled with descriptions of the transcendental attributes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, will not such literature bring about the attainment of the highest goal of life? Although its wood may be ignited by a low-class man, fire can nevertheless purify gold. Although I am very low by nature, this book may help cleanse the dirt from within the hearts of the golden devotees.”

the little girls was sitting on the swing and the other girls were pushing her. Being intrigued, he came a little closer and then he saw there was a black snake above the girl on the swing. Thinking of her safety, he ran towards the place shouting, “He! Lali! Lali! Watch out! There is a snake!” Lali is a means of addressing a small girl in Vraja. As he came closer, wanting to save the girl, everything disappeared. He realized that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī had manifested that so he could understand that she was satisfied with the comparison used by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pāda. So Sanātana Gosvāmī had so much respect for his younger brother. Practically he respected him as a śikṣā guru.

As far as Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, he accepted the shelter of Rūpa Gosvāmī throughout. In one of the books he wrote, Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī, in which he glorifies Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, he, as a sādḥaka, takes shelter of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and on the transcendental platform he also takes shelter of Sri Rūpa-mañjarī, the dear confidential maid servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Such literature is for those who are more advanced in spiritual life. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to recite all of the 104 verses of Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī by heart. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is also offered obeisances as rūpānuga varāyate. Ācāryas are all followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī — Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravatī Ṭhākura...

# Summer Festivals

By Mādhurya Gaurāṅgī Devī Dāsī

Vṛndāvana is the land of festivals. The spring and hot seasons throw everyone into a whirlpool of exuberant celebrations. Then, in the early rainy season it slows down, giving devotees a break. But soon again, unable to keep itself concealed, the festival mood emerges from its resting chamber to conquer the world anew. By August, the whole Vṛndāvana town is buzzing in eager preparation for the year's most magnificent celebration – Janmāṣṭamī, the appearance day of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Pilgrims from all over come to offer their devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Many of them touch their foreheads to the dust of Vraja and start the most auspicious Vṛndāvana parikramā. Hundreds of temples are making expert arrangements, expecting thousands upon thousands of visitors. Shopkeepers are trying to hide their smile, knowing well that this season will increase their wealth. Everyone is filled with joy and transcendental bliss.

Not long after, the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī arrives. Janmāṣṭamī is the year's most famous event, but Rādhāṣṭamī, I would say, is the year's most secret. You would not see as big a crowd on the streets. If guided by externals only, you would almost not see anything different from a “normal day.” But with a little access

to a transcendental magnifying glass, you can notice a special expression on everyone's

face—the unique pride of the Vrajavāsīs, announcing that today is the day of our Rādhārāṇī. These special events are the life giving force of the devotees. Everyone gets pulled into a transcendental bubble, and the VIHE people are no exception. Devotees set up these two beautiful festivals with a lot of Hare Kṛṣṇa kīrtana, fragrant flowers, loving offerings, and deep prayers.

Janmāṣṭamī was celebrated on August 15. Friends and well-wishers were warmly invited to spend the afternoon and evening glorifying the Lord. Even devotees from Kenya blessed us with their presence. The small temple room was filled with vaiṣṇavas. Our Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Deities were offered a seat and prepared for Their bathing ceremony. Opulent items such as ghee, yogurt, milk, honey, coconut water, fruit juices and rose syrup were profusely poured over Their bodies while the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra was sung without a break. The program went on till ten o'clock at night. At last, the assembled devotees, including those in dogs' bodies, happily partook in the caraṇāmṛta.

Rādhāṣṭamī, surcharged with love and sweetness, took place on August 29. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Deities appeared for the occasion and increased the beauty of the festival with Their divine forms. Students queued up, pulsating with intense eagerness, to bathe Their

Lordships augmenting the emotions of the assembled guests immersed in an out-of-this-world kīrtana. Thereafter, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoyed showers



Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa during abhiṣeka on Rādhāṣṭamī

# Upcoming Courses & Retreats

## Bhakti-śāstrī (Russian)

Бхакти-шастри на русском языке

Dec 4, 2017 – Apr 3, 2018

### BOOKS & TEACHERS

#### Bhagavad-gītā:

Bhakti Rasāyaṇa Sāgara Svāmī,  
Ādi-puruṣa Dāsa, Gaurasundara Dāsa,  
Rādhā Prema Devī Dāsī

#### Nectar of Devotion:

Sārvabhauma Dāsa

#### Nectar of Instruction:

Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī

#### Īsopaniṣad:

Suradāsa Dāsa

#### Introduction to Deity Worship:

Mukunda Datta Dāsa, Rāmāi Paṇḍita Dāsa

#### Sanskṛt:

Nityānanda Dāsa

#### Vaiṣṇava Etiquette:

Gaurasundara Dāsa

#### TO APPLY:

vihe.russian.admissions@pamho.net

#### FOR MORE INFO VISIT:

<https://vk.com/viherussian>

[www.facebook.com/russian.vihe](http://www.facebook.com/russian.vihe)

[www.facebook.com/vihe.vrindavan](http://www.facebook.com/vihe.vrindavan)

#### CONTACT:

Padmāvati Devī Dāsī - +91 9837993747

## Bhakti-vaibhava

STUDY OF CANTO 1 & 2

Dec 14, 2017 - Apr 8, 2018

### SEMINARS

#### Invocation

#### Sanskṛt Meters

#### The Ten Topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

### TEACHERS

Yadunandana Svāmī, Sārvabhauma Dāsa,  
Ādi-Puruṣa Dāsa, Śrīvāsa Dāsa, Aruṇa  
Carāṇa Dāsa, Praśāntā Devī Dāsī

## International Vaiṣṇavī Retreat

at Govardhan

“WORSHIP OF THE DEITY”

March 20-25, 2018

### TEACHERS

Yaśomatī Devī Dāsī, Dāmodara Priyā Devī  
Dāsī, Praśāntā Devī Dāsī

## Summer Festivals

(continued from page 13)

of soft petals of roses and other fragrant flowers gently gliding down on Their delicate bodies—all carefully prepared by the Bhakti-śāstrī students. Many cooked and uncooked items as well as fruits and drinks were offered, while beautiful prayers, such as the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛpā-Kaṭākṣa Stava

Rāja, spoken by Lord Śiva to Pārvatī, and Prārthanā Paddhati from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Stava-mālā, were sung for Their pleasure. The meditation was so deep that the time to honor mahā-prasādam came as a surprise. Excited by this opportunity, devotees streamed to the prasādam hall where a grand feast was distributed—a perfect conclusion to this heart-touching festival that is so special to all Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas.

# Bhakti-śāstrī

Jul – Nov 2018

## BOOKS

Bhagavad-gītā  
Nectar of Devotion  
Nectar of Instruction  
Śrī Īsopaniṣad  
Introduction to Deity Worship  
Sanskṛt pronunciation

## TEACHERS

Bhakti Dhīra Dāmodara Svāmī, Sārvabhauma  
Dāsa, Ādi-puruṣa Dāsa, Prāṇeśvara Dāsa,  
Laxmimonī Devī Dāsī, Praśāntā Devī Dāsī

## VIHE Audio Page

Seminars since 1987

[http://vihe.org/audio\\_lectures.html](http://vihe.org/audio_lectures.html)

## Contact Us -

### Website:

[www.vihe.org](http://www.vihe.org)

### Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/vihe.vrindavan](http://www.facebook.com/vihe.vrindavan)  
[www.facebook.com/vaisnaviretreatinter-  
national](http://www.facebook.com/vaisnaviretreatinternational)  
[www.facebook.com/russian.vihe](http://www.facebook.com/russian.vihe)

### Admission for courses:

[vihe.courses.admissions@pamho.net](mailto:vihe.courses.admissions@pamho.net)

### Admission for Russian courses:

[vihe.russian.admissions@pamho.net](mailto:vihe.russian.admissions@pamho.net)

### Retreats registrations:

[vihe.retreats.registrations@pamho.net](mailto:vihe.retreats.registrations@pamho.net)

### General inquiries and feedback:

[vihe.office@pamho.net](mailto:vihe.office@pamho.net)

### To donate:

[balaji.vihe@gmail.com](mailto:balaji.vihe@gmail.com)

To read the previous issues of “Learn and Teach” go to,

[www.vihe.org](http://www.vihe.org)

or follow the links below,

Newsletter 3 (Nov '16 - Jan '17):

<http://vihe.org/newsletter3.pdf>

Newsletter 4 (Feb '17 - Apr '17):

<http://vihe.org/newsletter41.pdf>

Newsletter 5 (May '17 - Jul '17):

<http://vihe.org/newsletter5.pdf>

## Serve at the VIHE

Please note the following staff vacancies. If you are interested, please write to [balaji.vihe@gmail.com](mailto:balaji.vihe@gmail.com)

- General Administrator
- Correspondence Course Instructors
- Fund Raising Coordinator

**Editorial Team** - Praśāntā Devī Dāsī, Viśākhā Priyā Devī Dāsī, Mādhurya Gaurāṅgī Devī Dāsī, Madhusūdana Viṣṇu Dāsa, Prema Sindhu Gaurāṅga Dāsa



**International Society for Krishna Consciousness**  
Founder-Ācārya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda