

আমার গুরুদেব

My Gurudeva: a brief biography of
Siddha Manohara Dāsa Bābājī

নবদ্বীপ দাস
by

Navadvīpa Dāsa

Translated, introduced, and annotated

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Publisher's Preface

Dedication (*Nivedana*)

In this noble country of Bhāratvarṣa everyone has heard, since days of old, stories about *siddha mahāpuruṣas* (perfected, great persons). But, even if they don't know entirely who a *siddha mahāpuruṣa* is, the general belief is that a practitioner, by the power of *bhajana* in his life, can reach a supernatural state in which he is no longer just an ordinary human being. By that supernatural greatness ordinary people, too, are inspired to live holy lives. Therefore, if someone has been successful in the practice of *bhakti*, one can call him a *siddha*. In order to know a *siddha mahāpuruṣa* the effects he has on others are sufficient. But human nature is such that it does not want to think merely about effects. We want to know about the whole man, inside and outside, about that something called character. If we do not understand what someone was like in the specialness of his behavior as a practitioner and in the successfulness of his *bhajana*, then we are not benefitted because one sometimes finds an actual life matching up with an exemplary life in *samsāra*. But, in the exemplary life of our most honorable Śrī Guru Mahārājaji---good habits (*sadācāra*), knowledge (*jñāna*), renunciation (*vairāgya*) and *bhakti* have taken concrete shape. Therefore, everyone praises him as a *siddha mahāpuruṣa*. What we mean to say will be explained later with just one or two incidents from this account of his life.

For the earthly and spiritual well-being of Śrīyukta Nirmalacandra Nāga Mahāśaya, a resident of Śrīhaṭṭa, I make an earnest request at the lotus-feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanamohanajī. Without his complete financial support and whole-hearted effort it would not have been possible to publish this third edition of the book.

Śrīmān Krishna Dasa Bhaktitīrtha, who is devoted to the ser-

vice of Bhagavān, has given us great help by correcting the proofs of this book. I pray for the success of his *bhajana* at the feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanamohanajī.

Humbly,

The Publisher
(Brajānanda Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja)

Prayer

জয় জয় শ্রীগুরু পণ্ডিত মহারাজ
শ্রীল মনোহর দাস।
শ্রীগোবিন্দকুণ্ড তীরহি বৈঠত
গোবর্দ্ধন তট পাশ।।
যা কর চরণ দরশন লাভহি
মিটত সব মন আশ।
দিবা নিশি যা কর মনহি নিমগণ
যুগল মধুর বিলাস।।
ভজন প্রভাবে যাক দেবগণ গুণ সহ
বৈঠত সদা তছু অঙ্গে।
অরুণ নয়ান যুগ অন্তর আবেশে রহ
নিমজিত প্রেম তরঙ্গে।।
করুণা সাগর সোই কাহক দুঃখ হেরি
সহই না পার তিলেক
ত্যাগ ভকতি জ্ঞান তিন তাহে শোহত
অছু না মিলয়ে এক।।
জনম অবধি যাক নাহি ভেল পরশন
কাহ জড় রস প্রসঙ্গ।
ভজন নিয়ম যাক পাষণ রেখ সম
কভু না হোয়ল ভঙ্গ।।

জ্ঞানকো সাগর শিশু সম ভাবত
 কছু না জান জগমাহ।
 প্রেমকো আবেশে লীলা রস সায়ে
 দিন রজনী অরগাহ।।
 ভজনকো সীম শেষ নাই জানত
 অন্তর বিরহ হতাশ।
 দীনহি দীন চিত নিজ দোষ নিন্দাই
 দূরে রহ ভোগ বিলাস।।
 প/হ ব্রজভূষণ নয়ন রসায়ন
 অপরূপ প্রেমময় দেহ।
 নবদ্বীপ দাস আশ তছু চরণ
 চিতে জাগহ এক রেহ।।

Victory, oh victory, Śrī Guru!
 Paṇḍita Mahārāja, Śrīla Manohara Dāsa!
 Who lived on the shore of Śrī Govinda-kunḍa
 by the slope of Mount Govardhana.
 You attained a holy sight of those holy feet
 and fulfilled all your heart's desires.
 Day and night you immersed your mind
 in the sweet sports of the Loving Couple.
 By the power of your *bhajana*
 the gods with their virtues always lived in you.
 Your two reddened eyes remained
 absorbed within, immersed in the waves of love.
 He was an ocean of compassion.
 Seeing anyone suffering, you
 could not tolerate it even a little.
 Renunciation, *bhakti*, and knowledge,
 those three rested in him.
 One does not meet one like him.
 From his very birth he was not touched
 by any material *rasa* (desire).
 His rules of *bhajana* were equal
 to the marks on a stone; he never broke them!

An ocean of knowledge, he spoke like a child.
He did not recognize the world.
In a trance of love most divine,
in an ocean of the *rasa* of sport
he was submerged day and night.
The highest reaches of *bhajana*,
he never found an end to it.
His heart was troubled by seperation.
He thought himself the poorest of poor.
He condemned his own faults,
though far from him stayed
attraction to worldly delight.
Master was a treasure of Vraja,
his eyes a medicine,
his body twisted with love divine.
Navadvīpa Dāsa's hope
is that his feet mark up his heart.

Introduction (Śrī Navadvīpa Dāsa)

Siddha Mahātmā Śrīyukta Manohara Dāsa Paṇḍita Mahārāja of Govinda-kuṇḍa near the slope of Mount Govardhana in the area of Vraja was born into a Vaiṣṇava Brahmin family on the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Kārtika in the year 1254 (1848 C.E.) in a village called Mādhavapura in the district of Nadia. His father's name was Śrī Bholānātha Adhikārī and his mother was Śrī Pyāri Sundarī. He had two elder brothers. The family was supported by the gifts of disciples and the produce of some land. His previous name was Śrī Mahendranātha Adhikārī. When he was a child his mother departed for the next world. At a young age he showed a passion for knowledge. In his village there was one school and that is where he studied. When he was only six years old he had a dream one night in which a holy man (*sādhū*) came and took him out of his room to the forest. On all four sides of that forest fire was burning. That dream made a deep impression on his young mind. He understood that household life (*saṃsāra*) was not for him. At the age of twelve or thirteen he lost his father. His older brother ordered him to go to work for the household. He did not like that. For that reason he became an object of the displeasure for that older brother and went to live in a house of his aunt, which was three miles from the village of Śimūliyā in the district of Nadia and he never returned to Mādhavapura. A little while later his two older brothers contracted marriages in the village of Baksipura in the district of Nadia and left their own village to live in that village. At present all of their descendents are there. The son of his elder brother Śrīyukta Hirālāla Adhikārī

Mahāśaya came a few years ago to see Mahārājajī in Govindakuṇḍa.

After going to Śimūliyā, Śrī Mahendranātha Adhikārī (Mahārājajī) received mantra initiation from Nandakiśora Gosvāmī Prabhupāda of the Śrī Advaitavaṃśa from the village of Bāhādura in the district of Nadia. In the village of Śimūliyā there was a center for Vaiṣṇavas (an *ākharā*) where a sacred image was being worshipped. The expenses for the service were borne by a wealthy *bhakta* who lived near Mahārājajī's aunt's house. At that time, because of the absence of the previous leader (*mahānta*) the service there became irregular. At the ardent request of the people of the village, Śrī Mahārājajī took vows of renunciation (*bhekh*) from Śrīyukta Prāṇakṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya and his name became Śrī Ambikā Dāsa Bābājī. After becoming a *bābājī* he became the leader of that Śimūliyā center and lived there for three years. At that time he also accepted some disciples.

I previously said that from childhood Mahārājajī had a strong interest in knowledge. A Vaiṣṇava came from Navadvīpa to the Śimūliyā center at that time. Mahārājajī expressed his wish to study Sanskrit to him and he suggested that Mahārājajī to go study at the big center in Navadvīpa. In accordance with that he went to the big center and once there he stayed for twelve years and studied. At first he studied with Bipinacandra Bhaṭṭācārya Mahāśaya, then later he studied at the Sanskrit school of Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra Smṛtiratna Mahāśaya. After studying for two years he went to visit places of pilgrimage like Rāmakeli, Gayesapura, and other places. The next year in the month of Pauṣa he went to see the Jayadeva fair at Kenduli. On the way there he stayed for three or four months at the famous village of Mayanāḍāla, which was on the way. At the big center Śrī Svarūpa Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya was Mahārājajī's instructing guru. He also gave him the renunciation initiation again and gave him his present name.

Because of extreme exertion in studying and using too many warm substances when he had a cold, Mahārājajī's body became ill. For diagnosis he returned to the Śimūliyā center. At that time Śrī Harekṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī was there. He was a doctor. After a few days he regained his health under Śrī Harekṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī's care and returned again to Navadvīpa.

At the big center Śrī Narottama Dāsa Bābājī was one of the

paṇḍitas. Along with him, Mahārājajī many times went to visit Siddha Caitanya Dāsa Bābājī. Mahārājajī used to listen to the scriptural discussions that took place between the two of them (Caitanya Dāsa Bābājī and Narottama Dāsa Bābājī). Siddha Bābājī Mahāśaya was corpulent in his appearance. He accepted a shoe-maker as a disciple and gave him the name Viṣṇunupriyāvallabha Dāsa. He used to stay on the bank of the Ganges and perform his *bhajana*. Because he accepted a shoe-maker as his disciple the Gosvāmīs of Navadvīpa barred him from the (Vaiṣṇava) community. The laundry men and barbers went on strike. When Siddha Bābājī was troubled in this way Mahāprabhu came in a dream and said to one of the Gosvāmīs that Caitanya Dāsa Bābājī was a *siddha bhakta* and taking a shoe-maker as a disciple, for him, was not a fault. After this incident the Gosvāmīs respected Bābājī Mahāśaya and Bābājī Mahāśaya's fame as a *siddha* spread.

Siddha Bābājī one day invited Śrī Narottama Dāsa Paṇḍita and Mahārājajī to dine on grace-food (*prasāda*). Bābājī Mahāśaya used to eat food cooked by women and for that reason the Vaiṣṇavas of the big center did not accept grace-food from Siddha Bābājī. Therefore, Śrī Narottama Dāsa Bābājī and Mahārājajī went there secretly and ate! Many kinds of food were prepared for the enjoyment of the sacred image.

During the time he studied in Navadvīpa Mahārājajī once went to Kālā to see Siddha Bhagavān Dāsa Bābājī. Then Siddha Bābājī was ill and was resting. His disciple Vaiṣṇavacaraṇa Dāsajī was serving him. It was revealed then that Siddha Bābājī was three hundred years old. Whoever went to see Siddha Bābājī, Vaiṣṇavacaraṇa Dāsajī collected one *ānā* (four) *pāisā* from.

Mahārājajī once went to Kolkata for the first time and stayed in the Kambuliā Ṭolā center. Four years later, because of an absence of books like the *Bhaṭṭi-kāvya* to study, he went again to Kolkata another time. Certainly he had to travel by foot then, because at that time there was no train. When he arrived in Kolkata, he went to a wealthy *bhakta* by the name of Govinda Bābu, who lived in Bagh Bazar and made his need known to him. Govinda Bābu, showing him the greatest respect, gave him all those books. That time when he went to Kolkata, Mahārājajī stayed with Haridāsa Bābājī at the Āhārīṭolā center. That Haridāsa Bābājī used to diagnose sick people by means of herbal leaves, mantras and rites. As

a result of his instruction a *bhakta* took the footwash of Mahārājajī and paid one rupee and one paisa. As a result of that Mahārājajī became so unhappy that even after such a long period it remained strongly lodged in his mind.

A few days after that in around 1286 or 1287 (1880 or 1881) in the month of Vaishākh, Mahārājajī left by foot for Śrī Kṣetra (Purī) to see Jagannātha Deva. On the way he stopped at the center in Kāntāpukura in the district of Medinipur. After staying there for a few months with Gopīnātha Dāsa Bābājī, he arrived at the Gaṅgāmātā Monastery in Śrī Kṣetra in the month of Kārtik, after visiting places like Gopivallabhapura (the home of Śyāmānanda Prabhu), Remuṇā (the home of Kṣīracora Gopīnātha) and other places. After staying for a while in Śrī Kṣetra he went back to Remuṇā and stayed in the house of a house-holder *bhakta* for five or six months. There he read the Immortal Acts of Śrī Caitanya (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*). Later that *bhakta* entered renunciation and became known as Harijana Dāsa Bābājī. From Remuṇā he returned to the Kāntāpukura center and stayed there for over a month. After that he returned to Śrī Navadvīpa. Śrī Rādhācaraṇa Dāsa, a disciple of the *mahānta* of the big center begged him to stay, but because his mind was extremely anxious to visit Śrī Vṛndāvana at that time, he was unable to honor that request. Probably in around 1288 (1882) at the age of thirty-four Mahārājajī started his journey on foot to Śrī Vṛndāvana. On the way he stayed at the center in the village of Memārī in the district of Bardhaman. At that place because of the strain of travel his body became extremely ill and he was no longer possible to travel by foot. When a generous *bhakta* helped with rail passage Mahārājajī arrived in Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana by rail.

The kāmādāra of the Śrī Govindajī Temple entered renunciation, taking the name Śrī Gurucaraṇa Dāsa Bābājī and established a temple and a Vaiṣṇava residence at Govinda Ghāṭa. When Mahārājajī came to Vṛndāvana he gave him a place to stay there. A little while later he gave Mahārājajī the responsibility of the temple and the Vaiṣṇava residence and went off to the Dāujī Temple at Kusumasarovara. Mahārājajī was at Govinda Ghāṭa for five years.

At that time, Balarāma Dāsa Paṇḍita Bābājī of Jhāru Maṇḍala was living and Jagadīśa Dāsa Bābājī of Kālidaha used to live in

Madanamohana Ṭhōra. Both those Vaiṣṇavas were famous as *siddhas*. Mahārājajī used to study the works of the Gosvāmins with Prabhupāda Gopīnātha Gosvāmī of the Rādhāramaṇa Temple and many other Vaiṣṇavas also used to study with him, too.

One day he heard that a *brahmin* of Jaipura gave up being a member of the Vallabha community and wanted to enter the Gauḍīya community. He asked Nityānanda Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya, who was a *bhajanānandī* (one who rejoices in private worship) in the lineage of Gadādhara Paṇḍita at Madanamohana Ṭhōra for entrance into renunciation. That Nityānanda Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya was approached for training in private worship (*bhajana*) by many Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Nityānanda Dāsa Bābājī gave that *brahmin* mantra initiation, entrance into renunciation, and the name Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Dāsa. This Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī had come to Vṛndāvana one time before. At that time he was a householder and his wife was alive. When his wife went to the next world he again came to Vraja. That Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī later, by the power of his private worship and learning became famous throughout Vraja as the Siddha Paṇḍita Bābājī of Dāujī Bāgicā. His method of private worship and his renunciation were shaped in imitation of the six Gosvāmins. This Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī used to study with Gopīnātha Prabhupāda and it was in this context that Mahārājajī became acquainted with him and gradually established a closeness and friendship. Dāujī Bāgicā Paṣṇita Bābā has now gone to the eternal world, but as long as he was alive their friendship and intimacy remained constant.

One day (after Mahārājajī had established his sacred images at Govinda-kunḍa) Śrī Mahārājajī sent the grace-food of Śrī Madanamohanajī weighing one *tolā* in a small covered box to Paṇḍita Bābā. Paṇḍita Bābā seeing it laughed and said, "This much grace-food?" After saying that, he took one tiny bit and ate it.

Once, thinking that Śrī Mahārājajī was displeased with me, I stayed in Vṛndāvana. I could not muster the courage to go to him in Govinda-kunḍa and also I was not able to stay in Vṛndāvana. In this dilemma I went to Paṇḍita Bābā and he said, "You do not know your guru; I know him. You should not be afraid. Go to him. He will not be offended by you." In accordance with his instruction I went to Govinda-kunḍa and saw that Paṇḍita Bābā's statement was completely true. He knew personal interaction so well. More

about Paṇḍita Bābājī will be mentioned later.

After staying for five years at Govinda Ghāṭa Mahārājajī, getting Gurucarāṇa Dāsa Bābājī's permission, went to Kusumasarovara to do private worship and stayed there with him. At that time Kartā Bābājī was in Govardhan and Harigopala Dāsa Bābājī was in Sūrya-kuṇḍa. Caturbhujā Paṇḍita and others of Rādhā-kuṇḍa used to come and study the *Bhāgavata* with Mahārājajī at that time. In this way five years passed.

At that time, Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paṇḍitajī was staying the Nāthajī Temple in Govinda-kuṇḍa and used to beg for alms at the village of Anor. Śrī Yaśodānandana Bhaṭṭa Mahāśaya of Jyotipura used to give readings at Bāgicā. Paṇḍitajī said in that gathering that Śrī Vallabha Bhaṭṭa was a disciple of Gadādhara Paṇḍita Gosvāmin. Because of that the villagers who were followers of the Vallabha tradition became angry with him and at that time Paṇḍitajī had to go elsewhere.

After staying for five years at Kusumasarovara Mahārājajī went out on *parikrama* (circumambulation of the holy sites) of Vraja in order to search for a place to do private worship. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paṇḍitajī and others went with him. When he came to Ādibadrī, the sight of the isolated hilly countryside pleased him as a place for private worship. Śrī Rāghava Dāsa Bābājī, who lived in that place, also gave him a small cottage for worship, but because of fear of the misbehavior of the Muslims (Meḃa Jāti) there he went on to Kāmyavana and then from there to Nanda Grāma. At Nanda Grāma he established his seat for private worship. But the Vaiṣṇavas who were with him and Śrī Gopāla Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya of Bhādābalī obliged Mahārājajī to teach the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* of Śrīpāda Jīva Gosvāmin at Bhādābalī. At the request of the Vaiṣṇavas he taught the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* for one year there. From time to time Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paṇḍitajī also used to teach. After the class ended Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paṇḍitajī along with Śrī Gopāla Dāsa and others went out again on Vraja *parikrama* and Mahārājajī went to Govinda-kuṇḍa.

Govinda-kuṇḍa was then a deserted and peaceful place. Seeing the natural beauty of the place by the side of Girirāja, he decided that he would stay there and do private worship. There Kṛṣṇa revealed himself to Śrīpāda Mādhavendra Purī while giving him

milk. Also the sacred image Śrī Gopālajī (who is now at Nāthadvāra and is known by that name Śrī Nāthajī) was uncovered from the depths of the earth by Purī Gosvāmin. In that place, too, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the form of a sacred image, appeared and accepted the food (*āṅgā bhoga* ?) given by Chaturāi Nāgāra. With the water of Govinda-kunḍa the king of the gods, Indra, consecrated Śrī Kṛṣṇa at the time of his manifest sport.

That day Śrī Mahārājajī stayed in Govinda-kunḍa. At night he had a dream in which he saw a holy man (*sādhū*) whom he had seen once in a dream as a child. That holy man indicated to him that he should stay at Govinda-kunḍa and do private worship. After having that dream he decided to stay in Govinda-kunḍa. After going to Govardhana he asked Śrī Gopāla Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya to send all of the belongings he had left in Nanda Grāma to Govinda-kunḍa. On the southeast corner of Govinda-kunḍa beneath a large banyan tree Rāma Dāsa Bābājī use to do private worship. After him, his disciple sold the place to Yaśodānanda Bhaṭṭa Mahāśaya of Jyotipura. Bhaṭṭajī planted banana and flowering trees in that place, creating a small garden. He also built three earthen huts and gave them to a caretaker to stay in. Two huts were used by the caretaker---one was empty. The caretaker let Mahārājajī stay in that empty hut to do private worship. This probably happened in the Bengali year 1300 (1894 C.E.). A little while later Śrī Rasika Dāsa Bābājī, with the help of money from the King of Tārāśa, Vanamālī Rāya Bāhādura, built a small brick cottage for worship and a small hut for the service of Giridhārī in that garden. A little while after that Rasika Dāsa Bābājī gave the brick cottage to Mahārājajī and went to stay in a village named Khānpura. In this way Mahārājajī settled permanently in Govinda-kunḍa.

At that time on the northern shore of the *kunḍa* lived Durlabha Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya and Chaturāi Vrajavāsī. A Vrajavāsī brahmin from the village of Māmudpura (Candrasarovara) used to perform the service in the Nāthajī Temple. Then there was no one else there. Śrī Rādhāmādhava Dāsa Bābājī had already left his body at a very old age. Rādhāmādhava Dāsa Bābājī was the renunciation guru of Giridhārī Dāsa Bābājī, the older brother of Vanamālī Bābu.

A little while after Mahārājajī settled Govinda-kunḍa, Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paṇḍitajī went to Puchurī and began to do private worship. Then, from time to time he used to visit other places, too.

From Puchuri he many times would go seeking alms to Ānora village in the evening and would receive grace-food at Mahārājajī's cottage. After discussing sacred topics with each other he would return home late at night. A little while later Gopāla Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya of Bhādāvalī, came from Jāhājpura in Orissa with Śrī Caitanya Dāsa Bābājī. Śrī Caitanya Dāsajī, after receiving initiation into renunciation from Gopāla Dāsa Bābājī's guru, stayed first with Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Dāsa Paṇḍita Bābājī in Rāghava's cave and later at Govinda-kunḍa for a few days. His disciple Śrī Mādhava Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya is now living at Govinda-kunḍa doing private worship.

After the arrival of Caitanya Dāsa Bābājī Śrī Haribhajana Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya along with his disciple Gopāla Dāsa Bābājī came to Govinda-kunḍa. At first they stayed in the worship cottage of Maṇirāma Vrajavāsī and later when Caturāi Vrajavāsī went to the next world they did private worship in his cottage. Śrī Gopāla Dāsa and Rāmasvarūpa Miśra of Ānora village and others used to study the *Śrī Bhāgavata* with Mahārājajī. At that time Śrī Mahārājajī used to go for alms-food. A little while after doing that he saw some dogs in a dream and as a result he gave up going for alms-food and instead just begged for some flour.

In Ānora village the Gosvāmīs of the Vallabha community were very powerful. They looked down on the holy men of the Gauḍīya community and said they were engaged in misconduct. Rāmasvarūpa Miśra received mantra initiation from Śrī Mahārājajī and became his disciple. That same Rāmasvarūpa was the priest of the Vallabha Gosvāmīs. Therefore there was a great controversy in the village. Many of the villagers began to say many things and Mahārājajī, too, became worried. A few days later a Vallabha Gosvāmī came to Jyotipura. The brahmin villagers spoke to him against Rāmasvarūpa and Mahārājajī. That Gosvāmī had a dream that night and the next day revealed that Mahārājajī was a holy man of the highest community and a great-soul. There was nothing wrong with Rāmasvarūpa receiving initiation from him. He should continue to act as priest as before. After this the controversy ended. A few days later that Maṇirāma Vaiśya of that village and a few other Vrajavāsīs became Mahārājajī's disciples. From that time on Mahārājajī did not go to villages for alms. The villagers came to him to give him flour. At that time Viṣṇu Dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya came from Nārengābāda and began to live in the

Śrī Nāthajī Temple.

Śrī Mahārājajī used to do seven *lākhas* of the holy names each day and he was always absorbed in remembering the sports of the eight periods of the day and night. He used to sleep very little. He did not even have a bed or bedding. He used to speak very little. He spent all his time in a worship cottage in the shade of an isolated banyan tree. Occasionally, in the afternoon, he used to go to Gopāla Dāsajī who lived on a hill. He wrote a book on the sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa called *Śrī Vaidagdha-vilāsa* and another called the *Nāma-ratna-mālā* at that time. Both books have been published. At that time Mahārājajī had a few students and disciples. Among them is the humble author of this book.

A little while later Śrī Mahārājajī was afflicted by *vāyu* and became ill. That lasted for nearly a year. When he recovered it was noticed that his nature had completely changed. His heart had become as soft as butter. He was not able to tolerate anyone's suffering. He gave up his regular chanting and did not put on *tilaka* everyday either. Because of the increasing incursions of monkeys and vultures, Mahārājajī, in the place where the temple now sits, built a grotto and cleared away the jungle growth from that place. And in 1915 CE he left the garden and began to live in the grotto. After moving there a few householders became his disciples and students. In 1917 after building the temple Śrī Mahārājajī revealed the service of Śrī Madanamohanajī. In 1918, in the month of Jyaiṣṭha, on the thirteenth day of the white half of the month, in honor of the procession of the sacred image's throne, he invited the Vaiṣṇavas of all the eighty-four krośas of Vraja to a huge festival held at great expense.

At first a disciple named Kṛṣṇa Dāsa used to beg for flour. Ruṭi and *nima* leaf juice constituted the offering to the sacred image. After a little time passed like that, when Ananta Dāsa became a disciple then rice offerings were made. Later, when many disciples had come, the service began to be carried out with their help. A *bhakta* from Āgrā built a worship cottage. Later, when Satyacaraṇa Guha became a disciple, he built the present temple. A few from among the other disciples constructed a few more cottages. For flowers for the service of the sacred image, a garden was created. From that time forward many became students and disciples and the arrangements for making offerings to sacred image

increased. In 1936 C.E., for the procession of the throne, Mahārājajī again invited the Vaiṣṇavas of the all the eighty-four krośa's of Vraja to a big festival.

Between 1915 and 1936 twenty years of passed in great bliss. A little while after that the *vāyu* became strong again and Mahārājajī became very sick. It was as if he would not live any longer. When that became a little bit better it was noticed that Mahārājajī's nature again had changed. He became full of severe heat, sadness, lamentation, and humility of mind. When the question of accepting another disciple came up, he became upset. Whomever he saw he bowed down to and he was always critical of himself. No interest in any subject remained anymore. He became indifferent to the operations of the temple. He created a committee from among his disciples to carry on the service and placing all responsibilities upon it he became completely free of worry and activity. He began to spend his days alone in solitude. He was no longer able to bear association with people. If he was alone he was happy. Drinking just a little bit of milk he maintained his body. Śrī Mahārājajī at present is more than ninety-four years old.

পূর্ব

তেজোদগ্ধ নমকায় বৈরাগ্যের প্রকট মুরতি,
গম্ভীর নিরীহ শান্ত নিরপেক্ষ আত্ম সমাহিত,
তুষার মণ্ডিত যথা অভ্রভেদী ভূধর শিখর,
নিশ্চল উন্নত শির, ধ্যান মগ্ন ধূজটীর মত,
নির্বাত নিষ্কম্প অতি দূরে লোক কোলাহল,
তপস্যার বহিঃ শিখা প্রজ্জ্বলিত অরুণ নয়নে।

Before

Filled with vigor, naked-bodied,
the visible form of renunciation;
deep, desireless, peaceful, independent,
self-collected; like a mountain peak
piercing the clouds, decorated with snow;
with head raised up and motionless,
absorbed in meditation like Dhūrjaṭi,¹

¹Śiva

breathless, unshivering, far from the
hub-bub of ordinary folk;
flame of dispassion, red eyes ablaze.

উত্তর

কাহার পরশে দেব, ছিন্ন হল সেই ধ্যানযোগ
কোথা গেলে সেই তেজ সেই জ্ঞান সেই নীরবতা?
ধৈর্যহারা আত্মহারা সর্বহারা শিশুর মতন
বক্ষঃ ভেদি বাহিরায় মর্মস্তুদ আকুল ক্রন্দন।
ধূলায় লুণ্ঠিত তনু অশ্রুসিক্ত দীন হতে দীন,
ক্ষুধিত নয়ন তব কারে যেন করে অন্বেষণ।
সাধনার অবসানে আজি হেরি একি উন্মাদনা,
অন্তরে বাহিরে জাগে অপরূপ বিশ্ব-মনোহর।।

After

At whose touch, Lord, has that meditation been broken;
Where have they gone, that vigor, that knowledge, that
silence?
Shorn of composure, of self, of all, just like a child,
Fervent heart-splitting sobs break out from his chest,
Rolling in dust, body sprinkled with tears, lower than
the low,
Your thirsty eyes as if searching for someone;
At the end of *sāadhanā*, today we see madness.
inside and outside awakens an uncommon world en-
chantment (Manohara).

Chapter 1

Before

This is a story of long ago. I had just entered *samsāra* (married life). Just as into many people's lives a change enters, so it was with mine. I used to hear about Mahāprabhu from Lālabihārī (Goswāmī) Babu. He was one of the foremost *bhaktas* of Gaura, therefore my heart became inscribed with his words. It occurred to my ignorant mind that Mahāprabhu would give me *mantra* and become my *guru*. I went to Navadvīpa with Goswāmī Prabhu. A few days after returning I realized that it was necessary to accept a manifest *guru* (a *guru* who was embodied here on earth). My father brought me to our family *gurudeva*. Seeing him wearing red cloth with a garland of big conch shells and long limbs (Tall and imposing), I was afraid. I was not able to accept him as my *guru*. A few days after that, I had a dream in which I saw, standing beside a mountain, a renunciant (*bābāji*). Into my ear a sound came: ``He is your guru." But I didn't receive any indication of where he lived, of where he could be found. I made up my mind that I must go out in search of my guru.

My father asked: ``You, my oldest son, will reject our family guru?" I replied: ``Father, can one cross over the ocean of material existence on the pretense of having a family guru?" My father was wise and said nothing more.

I went to Kāśī, but Viśvanātha Ṭhākura did not allow me to stay there more than three days. My mind began to draw me to

Vṛndāvana. After worshiping Lakṣmī Devī, I arrived in the holy *dhāma* and visited the holy images (*thākura*). After that I went to Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The imaginary image of Śrī Kuṇḍa that I had had in my mind was broken. I went out on *parikrama* of Mount Girirāja. In the jungle near Govinda-kuṇḍa some cowherders were herding their cows and singing! On seeing me, one of them said: ``go see the *sādhū mahātmā*. He is on the south bank of the *kuṇḍa*. Taking his advice, I went to the bank of the *kuṇḍa* and beneath a huge banyan tree there was a cottage for private worship. In that isolated, forested area, it was as if peace had taken shape and was living. Many peacocks and monkeys moved around here and there fearlessly. There were no signs of people anywhere. I went in front of the cottage and sat down in the shade of that banyan tree. I noticed that the door of the cottage closed. After waiting for a while the door opened and I saw that in the interior of that cottage, in the half-darkness, someone was sitting. It was the very person I had seen in my dream!

His body was thin and his figure was fatigued by private worship, but it seemed as if some unusual power (fire) of austerity pervaded his whole body. There was so much light (fire) in his eyes that it did not seem possible to look him in the eye. Noticing me he asked "What do you want?" Gosvāmī Prabhu (Navadvīpa's Nityagopāla Gosvāmī) was with me like a constant companion. Out of respect and embarrassment my throat became blocked. Therefore he (Gosvāmī Prabhu) introduced me and made known my request for mantra initiation. Hearing this Bābā replied, "To a family man deeply involved with the objects of the senses and on top of that a lawyer, I will not give initiation." Saying this he pushed the door closed!

Gosvāmī Prabhu got up and began to look around at the enchanting beauty of the forest and of Girirāja. I regained composure and remained sitting quietly. A little while later the door opened again. He saw me and said to me: "Why are you sitting there? Go away." Suddenly, a huge surge of audacity came into my mind and I blurted out: "I have not come all this way just to go away!" In response he said: "You are a householder engaged in sensual affairs. If I were to give you mantra there would be obstacles to my private worship." I replied: "Mādhavendra Purī Pāda gave initiation to Advaita Prabhu." Hearing that, he said: "Look, I am a renunciant. You are a householder with money. You are young in

age and have a wife at home. If you took initiation from me you would not have any household happiness. You should not take initiation mantra from me." I placed my hands together and said: "If I had any desire to enjoy the happiness of householder life I would not be present before you here today. Show me some compassion, so that the pleasures of householder life do not delude me."

Hearing this statement, Siddha Bābā came outside. His radiant, naked body was filled with the power of private worship and it shone through every limb. I bowed down in deep respect. After studying the lines on my hand, he said: "Come back on Rādhā-kuṇḍa Aṣṭamī¹ and your wish will be fulfilled." After saying that he again closed the door. And I, free of worries in my mind, departed.

Initiation was then ten to twelve days away. I wandered from forest to forest without visiting any populated places. In this condition Gosvāmī Prabhu always followed me about. His body was old and feeble. Because of the afflictions of the traveling his hands and feet were bleeding, but he said nothing. Now he has gone to the eternal abode, but I will not ever be able to repay my debt to his limitless affection.

On the appointed day, in the morning I went to the cottage on the bank of Govinda-kūṇḍa. I saw that Mahārājajī was waiting for me with some *kuśa* grass in his hand. That day I was alone without any companion and my wish was fulfilled. On the subject of mantra I did not say anything to Mahārāja. The mantra that he gave me in my ear I had received previously. I was astounded--how did he know? In a state of extreme perplexity, I spent more than a month wandering from forest to forest until Gosvāmī Prabhu came and got me and took me back home.

My heart no longer in householder life. A few months later I left. When Mahārājajī saw me he laughed. From afar I bowed down to offering my respect. He did not allow anyone to touch his feet while they were bowing down. Tis time I had a good opportunity to observe him. In one corner of his cottage a few hand written and printed books were piled up. There was also a mat made out of palm leaves, a piece of stone with a triangular

¹ The celebration of the creation of Rādhā-kūṇḍa.

grinder on it, a wooden water-pot, and a cup. These were his belongings, his possessions?. His body was naked except for a loin cloth and an upper, shawl-like cloth, Actually, it was an upper cloth in name only!

In a cloth bag hanging from his neck, was his string of beads for chanting the holy names. He daily recited seven hundred thousand (*lākhas*) of holy names (the *mahāmantra*). One could say that he hardly sleep at all. He bathed three times a day: at sunrise, noon and sunset. At three or four in the afternoon he ate grace-food of whole wheat flat breads (*ruṭi*) acquired from alms begging (*madhukari*). In the late afternoons Rāmasvarūpa, Gopāla Dāsa and others would come to read the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. Because he was a superb scholar in all scriptures he was known in Vraja as Paṇḍita Mahārājajī. If in Vraja or in the Gauḍīya community any particular questions arose concerning private worship, proper behavior and scripture people would come to him for his learned opinion.

In Govinda-kunḍa there was a big problem with mosquitoes. Sleeping was difficult. Nearby there was a small hill covered with a *sija* thorn bushes. The top part of that was open. There a slight breeze blew and there were less mosquitoes. Therefore, I slept there. At night after the second watch suddenly my sleep broke. The moon had risen by then. Looking about I found Śrī Mahārājajī standing near my head. Out of respect I sat up. Without saying a thing he left. Perhaps he had come just to look around.

I mentioned previously that Mahārājajī said seven hundred thousand holy names in a twenty-four hour period. He didn't sleep. One day while he was doing his chanting, his string of beads tore. At this obstacle to his private worship, he became pensive. He thought to himself that private worship is independent like the Lord; it does not depend on anything. Private worship cannot be stopped because of a problem with one's beads. The mind itself will do the work of the beads. To what village would he go to beg for some thread? That would be a great problem. So, thinking like this, he threw the broken string of beads into the water of Govinda-kunḍa! Returning to his cottage he sat on his worship seat and private worship did not appear. He became extremely agitated. He thought that some offense had occurred; therefore, there was no appearance in private worship. He got

down into the water and began to search for the string of beads. The word got out and other Vaiṣṇavas came and stringing a new set of beads they gave it to him. Day and night he used to do private worship: he did not eat, he did not sleep. Seeing seeing such unsatisfied desire and enthusiasm for private worship I was amazed. Mahārājajī's eyes burned like two fires. His body was as light as the wind. At that time he wrote a book about the divine sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa called *Vaidagdhyā-vilāsa* (Play of Cleverness) and *Nāmaratna-mālā* (Garland of Name-gems). Rai Bahadur Vanamālī Bābu had those printed.

One day I went to Mathurā, and brought some grapes for Mahārājajī. In the afternoon I gave them to him and he in turn gave them to Gopāla Dāsajī, who had just arrived. In my mind I felt great sadness. Seeing my face he knew it and said: "The tongue and the penis occupy very small places in the body of a living being; but see their influence, see their power. The creation of all living beings depends upon them. The living being is bound to them. That which has so much natural power one cannot hope to satisfy."

I remained silent, though my mind did not accept it. My illusion-bound vision allowed me to only understand eating and pleasure.

One day I saw that some cultured men and women from Kolkātā had come to see Gurudeva. Observing their appearances it was clear they were important people. I heard that one of the women was the queen of some locale. She asked: "Is there a great saint (*sādhu mahātmā*) here?" I replied: "There is." Again she asked: "May I see him?" I replied: "Kindly go and see." They all went forward. Mahārājajī at that time had just offered *tulasī* and water to Giridhārī Thākura and mixing some flour with water had offered that as well. He was about to eat his meal of grace-food. Mahārājajī turned around once and looked at them. Then he turned his back to them and remained sitting. The visiting people offered their respects and waited for a good while. Mahārājajī did not say anything. One person from the group asked: "Doesn't the holy man say anything?" I replied: "He does say a few things; but if there are women present he won't." Another gentleman who was with them said that it was the queen's desire to give something for the service of the holy man. After saying that he took out a one hundred rupee note. I said with embarrassment that he

does not accept money. The gentleman did not give up easily and asked me: "Why don't you ask him?" When I in great trepidation asked him, Mahārājajī replied: "We have no need. Tell them to give it to someone else." This answer everyone heard and offering their respects, they departed.

When Mahārājajī went to do beg for alms in the village, if a woman came out to put food into his begging bag he would turn his face away. Even after such a long time, the old Vrajavāsīs of the village talk about that and feel proud that such a great mahātmā was in their village.

A few days after that I went to Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. After staying there a few days I returned to Bābā. The whole day Mahārājajī did not open the door of his cottage. In the evening, Maṇirāma Dādā gave me one flat bread. After sunset Mahārājajī came outside and went with his water pot in hand, to take his bath. After finishing his bath he returned and said: "Why do you trouble the Vrajavāsīs for your own benefit?" I bent my head down in shame. Gurudev went into his cottage, closed the door, and did not come out again. The next day too, the door remained closed until the afternoon. Gopāla Dāsajī and others came. At everyone's request, Mahārājajī came outside. He said: "Look, sitting on my seat, when I close my eyes, all I see are human faces. So many kinds of human faces. Therefore, I have decided that I will not look at human faces after this." Gopāla Dāsajī and the others began to speak soothingly to Mahārājajī. I was speechless and just stared at his luminous emaciated body.

A little while after this, I began wandering from village to village in Vraja. Whatever the villagers gave I used to support my body. After a few months I returned to my home, but before the end of the year I returned. At that time in Vraja there was a fearful outbreak of the plague. Of how many people died, there is no record. There was even nobody to burn the bodies and many cows also died in the plague. When I arrived, I saw that Mahārājajī was doing intense preparatory rites (*puraścaraṇa*) day and night there was no break in his private worship. How many sacred diagrams (*yantras*) did he draw on paper? How many kinds of *gāyatrī*,² mantras of the gods, mantras of sacrifice and so forth did he

²A special kind of mantra in a Vedic meter of twenty-four syllables. Considered especially powerful and holy.

write? There is no counting it. Noticing that my body was weak, he asked the reason for it. I told that from time to time my body had fallen ill. He instructed me to recite the *gāyatrī* and the *gāyatrī* of the sun. According to his instructions, I began to chant, but when I chanted a fever came. When this happened again and again I informed my gurudeva. Mahārājaji said: "I understand that you are not able to bear it. Therefore, therefore chant your mantra of your beloved deity." When I did as he ordered the fevers no longer came.

On the north bank of Govinda-kuṇḍa, an old Vaiṣṇava used to live whose name was Durlabha Dāsa. He practically always did preparatory rites. One day I went to Durlabhaji. While repeating the names "Hare Kṛṣṇa," he came out. I saw that around his neck were the five garlands. Realizing that I had disturbed his private worship, I begged his forgiveness. Smiling he said, "Śrī Bhagavān impelled you from inside and therefore you came. It is not your fault. If I had not come out, you would have been saddened and gone away. Bhagavān, the all-seeing ruler and basis of all, is looking into my heart and will not accept my offense." Hearing this statement I was speechless.

A few days later I went to Govardhana. The village was decimated by the plague. There was nobody even to burn the dead bodies. The family of the postmaster died; his cows died; in fear of his life he left the post office and ran away. The few villagers who were left told me: "Why should you die here, leave this place." I replied: "Bābā, I am not so fortunate that I will die in the land of Vraja."

One day I had a dream and in it I saw trouble for my *gurudeva*. My mind was much disturbed so I went to Govinda-kuṇḍa. In fear of the plague the Vrajavāsīs left their villages and went into the fields. There was no end to their sufferings. I told Mahārājaji about the bad dream I had. He laughed and said: "If I die will you be able to stop it? If not, why do you worry? What Śrī Bhagavān will do, will be; and it will be for the good! You are not able to depend on Him. Becoming uselessly worried you experience unhappiness. You are not able to do private worship with a steady mind. Learn to depend on Him. If you depend on Him, your mind will become steady and then your private worship will begin. Private worship does not occur with a troubled mind."

Mahārājajī did not allow people to touch his feet when bowing before him. After washing his feet, he would mix dirt in the water with his foot, lest anyone try to drink his footwash. In fear I remained quiet. I did not have the courage to express my mind's sadness.

The warmer the weather became, the worse became the mosquitoes. It was not possible to sit even for a minute quietly, what to speak of sleep. I bought a mosquito net. Mahārājajī asked: "What is that for?" I replied: "You will be able to rest. You are not be able to sit because of the disturbance of the mosquito." He laughed and said: "Why is time wasted in sleep? The mosquitos are doing the work of friends, they do not allow too much sleep." After that I gave that mosquito net to Īśāna Dāsajī. I silently looked on, what more could I do?

People were dying from the plague. For two *praharas* (six hours) there was intense heat. Durlabha Dāsajī was sitting in the shade of a huge neem tree, in his hand was his string of beads for chanting the holy names and he was counting his chanting. Suddenly in front of him, like a cloud of smoke appeared an enormous dark figure. That figure began to move around him on all sides. Bābājī Mahāśaya asked in astonishment: "Who are you? Why have you come here?" The shadow figure replied: "I am the messenger of time (death). I have come to take you." Babaji replied with a peaceful face: "Okay, take me. I am ready." The figure said: "If you do not stop saying the holy name, I will not be able to take you." Babaji replied: "I am not able to stop saying the holy name. You must take me in this condition." The shadow figure disappeared. When Mahārājajī came outside, Durlabha Dāsajī came to him, told him this story and asked him its meaning. Mahārājajī replied: "This was the time for your appointment with death, but because of the power of your private worship, your life has been increased."

For a few months I again wandered from village to village in Vraja. I was very anxious to take on the *dharma* of renunciation. When I returned I made my desire known. Gurudeva said: "The time has not yet come. Do private worship while supporting yourself by begging for alms and after that the arraignment will in some way be made. At two o'clock I went to the Mānasagaṅgā and at the bathing place I put on the garb of a renunciant by my-

self. As soon as I climbed up the steps of the bathing site a very old Vaiṣṇava from Maṇipura called to me and gave me some alms food. My life of begging for alms began.

At Śrīkuṇḍa begging for alms was very difficult. There were so many holy men living by begging in one village. In this way, however, one year passed during which I would visit from time to time Śrī Govinda kuṇḍa. During that period it became very cold. On Lalitākuṇḍa chunks of ice were floating. Śrī Mahārājajī's only covering for his body was one patched garment. At night he would sit and do private worship, his body would be shivering from the cold. He was not becoming absorbed in private worship. He became angry with his body. At night in the icy water of the *kuṇḍa*, he began to take his baths. By chance I went to the bathing place to bring water and what did I see? Śrī Mahārājajī up to his neck in water. Coming up onto the bank, he changed his clothes. I asked him the reason for taking bath at night. He said in response: "My body has become extremely pampered." I humbly informed him about the extreme necessity in this tremendous cold for a thick quilt. Where the icy cold wind had touched his body red spots appeared. Gurudeva replied: "A renunciant should not use cotton." Saying this he entered his cottage. In general, he did not say more than a few words. He said: "If one talks too much private worship does not happen; water does not stay in a broken pot."

One day I was sitting on the bank of the *kuṇḍa* and Śrī Mahārājajī came to bathe with his water pot in hand. Looking in my direction he said: "Whatever subject you think about more, to that you become attached. And that kind of residual impression will develop. Always try to think about Bhagavān. Do not think about false and useless things." Indeed, I had been sitting there thinking about this and that.

One day a Vaiṣṇava came and he asked Mahārājajī how the obstacles to private worship can be overcome. His answer was this: "If you put your whole heart into private worship (that is, if you stake your whole life on trying to do private worship). The higher self (*paramātmā*) who sits inside you, seeing your simple, gileless whole-hearted effort gives you His grace. He opens the door to private worship. All obstacles gradually disappear as one does private worship. It does not happen in a day. As much as firmness

and whole-hearted focus is needed in private worship, to the same degree are steadiness and tolerance needed. Keeping one's mind in a proper condition for private worship is very difficult. Look, in order to advance in this ordinary world, in order to attain happiness, what effort does a living being, blinded by delusion, not spend its entire life exerting? Are you able to say that you have tried to do private worship properly and yet still you have failed? If your mind rejoices in material things, then how can there be private worship? If one is attached to material things, the mind does not become pure, and if the mind does not become pure there is no *bhakti*. If there is no *bhakti*, one cannot perceive the true nature of the conscious reality (*cidvastu*). To the degree that material residual impressions are destroyed by the power of private worship, to that degree the mind becomes pure. The obstacles, too, gradually depart."

After a year had passed, somebody came from my home again and took me back. Two or three months later I received a letter from Śyāma Dādā. He wrote that Mahārājajī had developed the wind disease (*vāyu-roga*, a kind of mental illness or neurosis), and he had not come out of it. He was unable to recognize people and he just wandered from forest to forest. He forgot to bathe and eat, and in his backbone there was a crackling sound. In his letter Śyāma Dādā asked me to come quickly and arrange for his diagnosis. Śyāma Dādā had gone to Mahārājajī with the desire to take the renunciation rites (to assume the dress of a *bābājī*). When he arrived he found him in that kind of condition. After receiving that letter I departed for Vraja within seven days. When I reached Govinda-kunḍa I saw that Gurudeva was not in his private worship cottage. After much searching I still was not able to find him. The next day after searching again I found him at the slope of Girirāja. When I went up to him he simply stared. It was as if his eyes were looking off into some distant realm. I had no indication that he even saw me or was able to recognize me. I begged him to come to his cottage. He gave no response to that. I was not even able to tell if he heard me or not.

Evening came and gradually he began to move towards Girirāja. With not other recourse I returned to Govinda-kunḍa. When I got back I told Śyāma Dādā all about it. Śyāma Dādā said that because of extreme harshness the wind (or breath) had become strong in his private worship. It would be necessary to bring some traditional

medicinal (*kavirājī*) oil and put it on Mahārājajī's head. The next day in the afternoon I saw that Gurudeva was bathing in the water of the *kuṇḍa*. When he came out of the water I gave him a loin cloth and an upper cloth and he put them on. I asked him: "Śyāma Dādā says that your wind has increased. Shall I bring some medicinal oil for you?" Mahārājajī began to laugh. His eyes were so soft and affectionate; it was as if he were intoxicated. There was no longer that intensity; there was no longer that fire. His appearance had completely changed. It was as if by being submerged in an ocean of bliss, he had lost his self. Seeing that transformation, I was overwhelmed with amazement. Mahārājajī said: "Look, a shining horse came down from the orb of the sun and swallowed my head. Because of that my mind went bad." Saying this he began to laugh again. I simply stared with unblinking eyes at his eyes which were slightly reddish from his intoxication. Mustering up some courage I said: "Śyāma Dādā is not able to understand, but I understand." Without giving a reply Mahārājajī went back to the slope of Girirāja. He did not give me a chance to ask him about food.

The next day Muṇirāma Dādā and other Vrajavāsīs came. In the early afternoon Gurudeva came to his cottage. Seeing us there he was pleased. When we asked him about food, he did not give any objection. He sat just like a child and ate. His nature had completely changed. There was not that intense harshness; he became as soft as a woman. But he did not sit on his meditation seat like he did before. There was no string of beads or bodily markings (*tilaka*). He did not speak very much and in addition it was not always possible for us to understand the meaning of what he said. A few days passed in this way. Only with earnest entreaty and great humility could one get him to eat grace-food. I left him in this condition, being obliged at that time to return home.

The next year I came again and saw that he was like before. It was as if he had become even more soft. As soon as I arrived he asked if I had eat grace-food or not. That Mahārājajī, who used to discipline me by giving me one Vrajavāsī flatbread after fasting the whole day, no longer existed. If any items were brought, even though he would not use them, he accepted them. He did not refuse them like he did before. Summoning up some courage, I touched his feet with my hand and bowed down; he did not say a word. But now he seemed always absent-minded. It was as if

he had gone off somewhere; he did not even remember his body. Again, from time to time his external awareness returned. A cow once came close and stood near him and he rubbed his hand over its body; an amazing transformation---his two reddish eyes were filled with bliss. Even after seeing it there are no words to describe that bliss.

All of the books of scripture that were piled up on one side of his cottage were no longer there; someone had taken them all away. I asked about the books, he replied: ``There's no more need for books." He had renounced scripture. The meaning of this I was not able to fully grasp at that time. But a few days later I was able to understand it. But he did not sit any more on his meditation seat, closing the door like before, nor did he chant on his string of beads.