

The glories of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur

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19th September 2021

I have reached from Noida to Nagpur. Iskcon Nagpur ki jai. We have come to Dr Shyamsundar, Sharma Prabhu's village and today is a special day. It is the appearance day of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur ki jai.

**namo bhaktivinodaya
sac cid ananda namine
gaura sakti svarupaya
rupanuga-varaya te
(Srila Bhaktivinode pranati)**

Translation

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda, who is transcendental energy of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He is a strict follower of the Gosvamis, headed by Srila Rupa.

You must all pray in this way and recite this mantra. Did you all repeat it after me? Hari Hari. So his name is Sac cit ananda Bhaktivinode. He was sac cit ananda and his name was also the same. Gaura sakti svarupaya. Gauranga! So he is the form of the strength of Gaura and he distributed this strength of Gauranga.

Rupanuga-varaya te, of all the followers of Rupa Goswami he is the principle one. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur ki jai! Yadi Bhaktivinode Thakur na hoite, if Bhaktivinode Thakur had not appeared then what would have happened to all of us? Actually this is true of all the Acharyas and of the lord also. Yadi gaura na hoite or yadi Prabhupada na hoite or yadi Srila

Bhaktivinode Thakur na hoite to ki hoite.

Nothing further could have happened if they were not here. What else can we say? We were about to say that Srila Bhaktivinode was a great Acharya but who can understand just how great he was? Who can understand his greatness and his glories? He was present during the British rule period and this was also a very difficult time in India and the situation was tough for India.

He was born in the year 1838 and his disappearance was in 1914. We are talking about 1914 and not 2014 and so you can just imagine the time when he was present here. He was the district magistrate of his time and actually the English would not give many Indians many responsibilities and only a few hand picked Indians would be given some authority.

One of these persons was Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and as the district magistrate he was considered to hold a big position in those days. He was in charge of the whole district and that district was none other than Jagannatha Puri Dham. He became the magistrate of Jagannatha Puri and if you have ever been to Jagannatha Puri then you may have seen that even today his old home is still standing there.

If you do ever go to Jagannatha Puri then be sure to go to see the home of Bhaktivinode Thakur, this is on the path of the Rathayatra route. This is also where Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur was born and in this place Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur began his life's mission, you could say. As the district magistrate he annihilated the demons.

**paritranaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
(BG 4.8)**

Translation

In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of

religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.

There was one black magic tantric who was calling himself god, he could do some magic but he was arrested by the orders of Bhaktivinode Thakur. He was imprisoned and then he died later in in prison. So Bhaktivinode Thakur had an intense desire that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Gaudiya Vaishnava lineage be preached everywhere and that it may be spread further.

He therefore prayed to lord Jagannatha to have a son to assist him in fulfilling his desire to preach the message of Lord Chaitanya, the Hare Krishna Mahamantra through Sankirtan. So lord Jagannatha Swami heard this cry or prayer of Bhaktivinode Thakur and he got a son who was none other than Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur ki jai.

His given name at birth was Bimala Prashad because at the Jagannatha temple Bimala Devi is present and so Bhaktivinode Thakur was thinking that this son of mine is the Prashad, blessing of this Bimala Devi and so he gave his son the name Binala Prashad. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur wanted to retire from his government duties to dedicate himself completely with all his energy to Gauranga Mahaprabhu's mission.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur's name was Kedarnath Datta in those days, or you could say that this was his family name. The English government would not give him leave so instead he was transferred to another place called Krishnanagar which was close to Navadvipa Mayapur. So Bhaktivinode Thakur had been thinking of retiring and then residing in Mayapur and although the English government would not give him leave, they transferred him to Krishnanagar which was close to Mayapur.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur could then take his mission further whilst being in Mayapur Dham. He is called the seventh Goswami till this day because the work that the six Goswami's did in Vrindavan was done by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur in Mayapur Dham.

vande rupa sanatanau raghu yugau sri jiva gopalakau
(SadGiswami Astaka)

Translation

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvamis, namely Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami, and Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami.

Looking for Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's pastime places in Mayapur, writing books, inaugurating Parikrama of Navadvipa Mandala and in this way increasing and spreading the glories of the Dham and revealing the Dham were just some of the works of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur.

This he did in Mayapur and this is exactly what the six Goswami's had previously done in Vrindavan. Hari Hari. So in Maypur or Navadvipa there are nine islands, dwipa's and one of these is Godrumadvipa. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur started to stay in Godrumadvipa. His home was previously in Jagannatha Puri and now he started living in Swarupganj in Godrumadvipa.

That place is better known as the Samadhi of Bhaktivinode Thakur and he didn't just stay there alone but this was the very important time when four prominent Acharya's from our disciplic succession were staying there together. Jagannatha das babaji Maharaja was the siksha guru of Bhaktivinode Thakur and he was there along with Bhaktivinode Thakur's student Gaura Kishore das babaji Maharaja. His student was also present and this was the son of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur.

So these four prominent Acharya's were there at the same time, staying together and conversing about the scriptures and taking association of each other. This is exactly what the six goswami's were previously doing in Vrindavan. They would gather in the courtyard of the Radha Damodar temple and speak

on Sastra and that is what was happening here in Mayapur.

Our four Acharyas were together here and in those days our Abhay Charan De was in Culcutta as his connection with the disciplic succession had not yet been made. So together these Acharya's wrote many books because they were all mostly great writers and they were also poets. The whole world is now singing their bhajans and poems including the bhajan which Srila Prabhupada would sing before each and every lecture he gave.

jaya radha madhava kunja bihari?gopi jana vallabha giri vara dhari

yashoda nandana braja jana ranjana?yamuna tira vana cari
(Jaya Radha Madhava)

Translation

Krsna is the lover of Radha. He displays many amorous pastimes in the groves of Vrindavana, He is the lover of the cowherd maidens of Vraja, and the holder of the great hill named Govardhana.

He is the beloved son of mother Yasoda, the delighter of the inhabitants of Vraja, and He wanders in the forests along the banks of the River Yamuna.

This bhajan has been written by Bhaktivinode Thakur as was the Sandhya Arati bhajan kiba jaya jaya gaurachander. Also in Iskcon Krishna Balaram temple in Vrindavan they sing one bhajan every morning during Mangal Arati which is

vibhavari sesa, aloka pravesa,
nidra chari' utho jiva
bolo hari hari, mukunda murari,
rama krsna hayagriva

Translation

The night has come to an end and the light of dawn is entering. O jiva soul, arise and give up your sleep. Chant the holy names of Lord Hari, who is the giver of liberation; the

enemy of the Mura demon; the supreme enjoyer; the all attractive one; and the horse headed incarnation, Hayagriva.

Then there is the bhajan Jiv jago jiv jago which is also a composition of Bhaktivinode Thakur as is Udilo aruna puraba bhage, dwija mani gora amani jage. This is an important bhajan and on and on and on.

Yashomati nandana, braja baro nagara ?gokula ranjana kana is also Bhaktivinode Thakur's bhajan. In all these bhajans his feelings of devotion are there along with the explanations of the lord's pastimes, whether that be Gaura lila or Krishna lila. All these are thoroughly described and one can understand what is on his mind and what is in his heart through these compilations. A man is recognised by his speech, just let him first speak.

If you give a man a microphone and let him talk you may soon find out that he is a fool number one. As soon as he opens his mouth, within a minute you will find out what a fool he is. But this is not the case with Bhaktivinode Thakur because as soon as he opened his mouth, the speech that would come forth from his lotus like mouth would produce these wonderful bhajans.

These were his bhajans and Srila Prabhupada said that in Iskcon we have the bhajans of Bhaktivinode Thakur and Narottama das Thakur which they have sung, and these are non different from the words of the vedas. Bhaktivinode Thakur also wrote many books including Navadvipa mandal parikrama and if he had not written this book we would not have known where to start Navadvipa mandal parikrama or what pastime took place where and so forth.

The whole guideline and approach to Navadvipa parikrama has been given by Bhaktivinode Thakur in this one book. Another important book is Jaiva dharma which literally means the dharma, duty of the Jiva, living entity. It is a very

interesting book in the form of many conversations that take place. He establishes the principles of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in this book Jaiva Dharma.

He also wrote many commentaries- especially Chaitanya Charitamrita and one commentary called Amrita Pravaha Bhashya. Srila Prabhupada has written the introductions to each chapter in his Chaitanya Charitamrita which have been taken from this Amrita Pravaha Bhashya of Bhaktivinode Thakur. Hari Hari. What other books has he written, anyone knows?

There is Harinam Chintamani. We are people who chant the holy names and therefore we have our Japa sessions and in this book Harinam Chintamani Bhaktivinode Thakur speaks about how offences against the holy name should be avoided during and it is explained what is an offence against the holy name.

This book Harinam Chintamani is a dialogue between Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Haridas Thakur which has been written in book format and this book is Harinam Chintamani. He has written many other books and you can also call Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur a social scientist. During his time the principles of religion or dharma were being disturbed or not complied with and instead demonic principles were being taught in society.

That is when Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur studied the whole situation and made one list of the pseudo transcendentalists, like Aula, Baula and Sahajiya, Gauranga Nagari and so on. There were many sects such as this who were tainting the name of the Gaudiya Vaishnava lineage and there was diffusion alongside a lot of preaching against the principles of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur set all this straight and his son Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur took this task further through his preaching work and then Srila Prabhupada took this preaching even further and gave Krishna consciousness to the

whole world. These principles are now being put into place but it was Bhaktivinode Thakur who initially pointed all this out and said 'no, no this is all wrong. This is not right, what is happening and this is a fault.'

kaler dosa nidhe rajann
(SB 12.3.51)

Translation

My dear King, (although) Kali yuga is an ocean of faults

So in doing this he established the principles of religion, dharma samsthapanarthaya which is what the Acharya's do, they establish the religious principles. First the lord establishes these three principles

paritranaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge
(BG 4.8)

Translation

In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.

First the lord appears on the scene and then paritranaya sadhunam, he protects the devotees and secondly he tries to annihilate the miscreants, which he successfully does so. The lord does this and when the lord is not here on this planet performing his pastimes, in between his different incarnations the Acharyas of the disciplic succession fill in the lord's role and do the work that the lord would have done if he was personally present.

So to reestablish the principles of religion is the work of the lord but saksad dharitvena samasta sastrair. The lord gives the Acharya the energy to do this work just like Srila

Bhaktivinode Thakur has done everything he has. It was also not an easy task and in those days people did not even know the birthplace of lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

There were so many different places claiming to be the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur put a full stop to all this nonsense. This was possible with the help and guidance of his spiritual master, Jagannatha das babaji Maharaja's and babaji Maharaja was carried in a basket to Navadvipa, not by Bhaktivinode Thakur himself but by another devotee.

Just like when a farmer wants to dig a lake someone will have a water detector, there are persons who can use this and they tell the farmer where to dig and where there will be water underneath. They wave this machine around and it detects where the water is. In this way Bhaktivinode Thakur detected the proper birthplace of lord Chaitanya with the help of Jagannatha das Babaji Maharaja.

He wanted to detect the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and so he wondered here and there and then he finally reached the place we now call Yogapith, the birthplace of lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. At this time Jagannatha das babaji Maharaja was one hundred and thirty years old and just like we see in his photo, he could not even sit straight.

He could not even open his eyelids which had drooped low and somebody had to open his eyelids and only then could he see. That Jagannatha das Babaji Maharaja suddenly became so energised upon seeing the birthplace of lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that he jumped out of his basket in which he was sitting and he started shouting 'Haribol Haribol Gauranga Gauranga.'

So it was established that this was the place. Jagannatha das Babaji Maharaja got the credit for doing what? For signalling the birthplace of Gauranga Mahaprabhu. 'This is the birthplace

of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.’ What can we say about Bhaktivinode Thakur? The great preaching which is currently going on in terms of Nama Hatta and Bhakti Vriksha has also been established by Bhaktivinode Thakur.

You can say that he is the originator of this preaching and he also wrote one book called Godruma Kalpataru and in this book he has made predictions as to who will do what and how much preaching they will do in the future. Jayapataka Swami Maharaja has taken the leadership in Iskcon of this Bhakti Vriksha Nama Hatta and he has started this preaching.

This concept is originally of Bhaktivinode Thakur and there is also a bhajan that he has written

**nadiya godrume nityananda mahajana
patiyache nam hatta jivera karana**

TRANSLATION

In the land of Nadiya, on the island of Godruma, the magnanimous Lord Nityananda has opened up the Marketplace of the Holy Name, meant for the deliverance of all fallen souls

He is herein reminding us all that the founder of the Nama Hatta is lord Nityananda because Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had sent lord Nityananda to Bengal to preach. So Nityananda Prabhu who is the Adi Guru, the original Guru, preached in Bengal and in that very disciplic succession Bhaktivinode Thakur came and gave shape and form to this Nama Hatta program. This Nama Hatta preaching began for the deliverance of all the conditioned souls.

This is also another great contribution of Bhaktivinode Thakur. It is he who predicted that one great soul will soon appear and that this great soul will preach this message all over the world. He also said that those who will follow the teachings and instructions of this great soul will come to India and to Navadvipa and they will all come together and chant ‘jaya sacinandana jaya sacinandana jaya sacinandana

gaurahari.'

This was the prediction of Bhaktivinode Thakur in relation to Srila Prabhupada's coming and how there will be preaching all over the world. People from all over the world will come to India and to Navadvipa, Mayapur to sing the glories of Sacinandana. This was the prediction of Bhaktivinode Thakur and we can see how it is coming true.

His own son said to his grand disciple Abhay Babu, 'you look like an intelligent young man. You go to the western countries to preach the message of lord Chaitanya!' In this way, to make true the prediction of his father, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur is giving this order to Srila Prabhupada. Two days ago it was the anniversary of Prabhupada's departing for this journey to the west in 1965.

He preached all over the world and therefore the prediction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu became true and now people from all over the world are coming to Navadvipa and they are singing 'jaya sacinandana jaya sacinandana.' I have just remembered that we were going on Padayatra once in Orissa and there was one headmaster of a school where we visited and stayed for a while.

Where was this place, the village where now there is an Iskcon centre as well? Yes, Bhadrak. So here Bhaktivinode Thakur had been the first headmaster of this school and we got a record of all the headmasters the school had ever had. They had a list which is an updated list of the headmaster till this day and on top of the list was the name of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur as headmaster.

What can we say about these great sages, Acharyas to whom we are so much indebted? We can only try our level best to pay this debt back and we can do this by understanding their instructions and following them. We can take inspiration and energy from these teachings and then preach them further. This

is exactly what Srila Prabhupada said, 'do as I did!' I am also doing a little bit myself. One of the final instructions of Bhaktivinode Thakur was to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur.

He told him to perform and lead Navadvipa Mandal Parikrama and he said that whoever does this Parikrama, by their doing so, the whole world will be liberated. So during the centennial, the hundredth birth anniversary of Srila Prabhupada, we had a t-shirt printed. All the devotees on Parikrama were wearing this t-shirt during Parikrama. On this t-shirt was printed a quote of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur.

The quote was 'by performing Parikrama, one can liberate the whole world.' This was the order that Bhaktivinode Thakur gave and so following this order, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur performed Navadvipa Mandal Parikrama eight times along with his thousands of disciples. So whatever work Srila Prabhupada performed was the work of Bhaktivinode Thakur also.

One Acharya takes the preaching work to a certain limit or level and then the next Acharya takes over to further this work and he fructifies it and establishes it. Then the next Acharya comes in succession and takes over to continue the work. No single Acharya finished his mission in his one lifetime so the Acharyas who are to come along in disciplic succession develop the mission further.

So we can say that this current time is ours, it is us devotees turn now we can say and so the work that Bhaktivinode Thakur once performed, was furthered by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur and then Srila Prabhupada preached the same mission all over the world. He said 'do as I did.' So he wanted that whatever he had started, we all preach further and increase that work. Hari Hari.

So we should pray at the lotus feet of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur so that he may give us energy, intelligence and loving

devotion so we may become instruments in helping to further this movement. In this way we may be able to please him. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur's appearance day ki jai. Gaura prem anande hari haribol.