

Prabhupada's connections

Kolkata

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Kolkata is janma bhumi and the whole world is karma bhumi of
Srila Prabhupada

Dated: 14 August 2015

Venue: Kolkata

Occasion: ISKCON 50th Anniversary Kolkata

Hare Krsna, a pretty serious group here in Kolkata. All hundred countries representatives are here today. Many of you must have come here for first time in Kolkata, I welcome you all here. And many Prabhupada disciples and grand disciples are here. Haribol! Quite a grand number.

Yesterday HH Bhakti Purosottam Maharaj was saying "the grand disciples are more dearer to Srila Prabhupada than us." Haribol

Father loves his children but father loves his grand children more, that's the experience of the world also. So not only we direct disciples of Prabhupada love him but what about you all, do you all love Prabhupada also? Haribol. I know how much you love Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada is our loving spiritual father and yours loving grand spiritual father. In his home town we have assembled, Kolkata dhama ki...jai. We have a different relationship or approach with Kolkata then most of the other people of Kolkata. For us this is a holy place birth place of Srila Prabhupada and today you are going around exploring Kolkata. I was also thinking as you are going around Kolkata you are going back to the old days, how Kolkata was 100years back. What happened here? What happened there? And for us what happened in relationship with Prabhupada in Kolkata?

Kolkata is Prabhupad's janma bhumi, have you heard this term before 'janma bhumi', janma is birth and place is place. And then Prabhupada has his karma bhumi also, janmabhumi-place of birth and karma bhumi- place of activities. Of course place of activity of Srila Prabhupada is all over the world, he went 14 times all around the world.

I was thinking as we are going around Kolkata visiting Prabhupad's pastime places. When I went to New York for first time in 1978, the day after our arrival we took a tour of places in New York we were visiting all places of activity of Prabhupada his karma bhumi. We were just Giriraj prabhu that time and myself and there were few others who had travelled with me that time from Mumbai then to New York. We had one more disciple of Prabhupada called Puru Prabhu, he was incharge of Prabhupada museum in New York. He used to take devotees around places of New York. So we had a nice tour as you all are going Kolkata having tour of his janma bhumi places, we had visited his karma bhumi places in New York. We had visited Tompkins Square Park. Haribol. There is a tree under that tree Prabhupada used to give a talk to assembled devotees. First public chanting took place at Tompkins Square Park.

Then we visited 26 second Avenue the matchless gift shop, ISKCON'S first center ever. Now we have over 500 centers, in every town there is a center and 1000s of namahatta center. But ISKCON'S very first center was in New York-The matchless gift shop, we visited that. Then we went to Bowery, the drunkards of New York that Pabhupada used to mix and mingle, travel and preach, that's called Bowery.

Then river side the yoga center where Prabhupada used to do his kirtan. Like that we went around New York visiting Prabhupads places. Here you including myself going to visit Prabhupad's house. My guide here told me, half of the town was owned by Suvarna Malik family, Suvarna means gold. People used to say you are Abhya Mohan Dye then what's this Malik.

Prabhupada said Malik is a title given by mohammadin rulers. When Prabhupada was born and brought up but prior to that there was ruled by mohammadin for almost 1000 years. So this title was given by Muslim rulers. Prabhupada was explaining Malik means Maalik they used to be the maalik – the owners –big land lords, business men and the whole economy was in their hands. Prabhupada was staying with his grandfathers they were Malik. Even the person who took Prabhupada to meet Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur in 1922 at Gaudiya matha in Bagbazar was also Malik.

The MG road as we were coming here we saw MG road- Mahatma Gandhi road, Prabhupada's house is on MG road. In 1896 Prabhupada was born Guar Mohan Dey his father and Prabhupada recalls how when he used to get up he used to hear "ding ding ding..." What was that ding ding ding? Bell ringing and counc shell blowing. Prabhupada would get up these sounds were like alarm bell, bell is ringing and conch shell is blowing and Prabhupada would get up. This was the home atmosphere, father devotee and deity family and worshipping family. Well we say life time preparation prior to his departure yesterday 50 years ago from Kolkata. Again Prabhupada was born in Kolkata, he was given instruction to go to the West and preach in English language that instruction also came in Kolkata and he also departed for the West from Kolkata quiet a coincidence, Kolkata connections.

So life time in preparation, that preparation did not begin with the instructions of Bhakti Siddhanta 'you to the west preach in English language.' But I was thinking that life time preparation began with his birth in Kolkata and even coming in contact with Bhakti Siddhanta Sarawati Thakur he was preparing that was also part of life time in preparation before he was leaving for the West. The way he was born and brought up, as he was born this boy is very special boy he will establish over 100 temples. So this prediction also took place at Kolkata.

Guar Mohan Dey very religious, very pious gentleman, so many sadhus coming to his house. So they would come to Guar Mohan Dey's home also. Sadhus coming for prasada, sadhus coming for satsanga and Guar Mohan Dey would appeal to these sadhus "please bless my son so that he becomes devotee of Radha Rani." There are so many tuitions going on all over but Prabhupada was getting Mridanga lessons. They had their own small Radha Krsna deity and Prabhupada and his sister together would worship Radha and Krsna. The boyhood days worshipping Radha and Krsna. He used to go to Radha Govind temple, did you visit?

We hear in lilamrit, Prabhupada as a small boy would spend hours in the temple, attend arti. Little Abhya used to just stand and stare at pujari offering arti to Radha Govind and for hours he would look at the deities of Radha Govind, Radha Govind ki...jai

So later on Prabhupada installed RadhaKrsna deities in ISKCON Kolkata, he named those deities Radha Govind and then in New York first deities he installed he again gave the name Radha Govind deities, Haribol. So these are the connections whatever Prabhupada did, his life time preparation he had been doing himself learning and later on he taught to the whole world.

When he started temples in Mayapur and other places and here he started food for life. No one should go hungry in radius of 10 miles around the temple. This spirit he had picked up in Kolkata as he was born and being part of. He himself of course was lover of prasadam. He used to love kachoris and he used to fill his pockets, hands are full, mouth is full of kachoris. Because they used to see his mouth always filled with kachoris, he was called as kachori mukhi. He is kachori mukhi-his mouth is always filled with kachoris.

He wanted his own ratha, elders were organizing big big ratha yatra festivals, big chariot, big Jagganath. But he wanted his own ratha yatra festival. So Guar Mohan Dey was going around

looking for a chariot, either they were too big or too expensive. So in time they were returning home disappointed they could not find any ratha, but as they were returning home they saw in a small lane there is a ratha and they entered that lane. One lady was selling the ratha and bargain was stopped at deal was closed and price was affordable and Guaramohan Dey immediately bought that chariot. And Prabhupada would organize ratha yatra festival in Kolkata with his friends and he used to insist, hye! When we conclude ratha yatra we must have prasada distribution. His elder sister Bhavatarini Mataji, Pisima as they call her here, she used to cook for Prabhupada. Many Prabhupada disciples have seen her she used to spend lot of time in Mayapur and Vrindavan. So Abhaya used to instruct his sister, hye! You have cook prasada.

Kolkata's one name before Britishers rule was Govindpur. So as he was growing he went to school, Motilal school, britishers could not pronounce Motilal such a nice name so they spelled it Mattilal. Motilal School founded by Malik family so Prabhupada went to that school. Then he went to Scottish church college, as he was growing he was getting influenced by independence movement Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Prabhupada used to attend some of their gatherings. And on another side Mahatma Gandhi also, Prabhupada was getting influenced. He started wearing khadi clothes and then around that time Malik took Prabhupada to see Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur. They both offered obeisance's to him and they had not even sat properly, Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur said "you seem to be very intelligent you should preach Bhagvat dharma all over the world" that instruction came and then Prabhupada was having debt independence is a priority. Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur said, no no there is another kind of independence we have to fight for and then Prabhupada said "I was defeated." And in that very first meeting he was convinced that "Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur is my Guru Maharaj." Then he executed the will of his Guru Maharaj, for that 50 years ago on 30th August 1965 he departed for the West from

Kolkata. So this is quite a historic place for us. And ISKCON Kolkata has explored all the hidden treasures they have discovered. We are very thankful to ISKCON Kolkata authorities.

I would just say that when Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited birth place of his guru maharaj Iswarapuri it's in Bengal, which he visited with all awe and reverence. And one thing he did he took some mud with him. They call it dirt; dirt is not a good word. So he took some mud from there that mud have touched the lotus feet of his Guru maharaj. So Caitanya Mahaprabhu did this. And then everyday Caitanya Mahaprabhu would take few particles of that sacred mud from his Guru maharaj's birth place and he ate that honored that . So this way we could see how significant is the birth place of spiritual master and how that should be honored, remembered and contemplated upon and take inspiration from also. We should also take lot blessings from this place. This place will bless all of us to carry on Prabhupada's mission.

Srila Prabhupada ki...jai
Kolkata dhama ki...jai
Radha Govind dev ki...jai