

Chapter Twenty-three

Purī Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Jagannāthdev, and His Dhām

Question: During the later pastimes of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj we heard that he wanted to spend his last days in Jagannāth Purī. Is this correct?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes, but mentally. In earlier years sometimes Śrīla Guru Mahārāj went to Purī for observing ‘*Ūrjja-vrata*’ during Kārttik month. He used to stay in the place that is now the ‘Aravinda Ashram.’

Actually, in Mahāprabhu’s *līlā*, Purī is similar to Kurukṣetra in Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā*. The mood of union in separation and intense service-need is at its greatest there. Mahāprabhu expressed:

priyaḥ so ‘yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-chari kurukṣetra-
militas
tathāham sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-
sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-
pañchama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spr̥hayati
(*Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 1.76*)

This is a verse spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to Śrīmatī Lalitādevī, and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī expressed it in this way: “Kṛṣṇa who lived earlier in Vṛndāvan Dhām, that Kṛṣṇa is now here before me and I am already in union with Him. I am thinking that this Kṛṣṇa and I, we are the

same persons as were living in Vṛndāvan, and that Kṛṣṇa has mercifully given us His union here. This is sufficient for anyone, but it is not pleasing my heart so nicely because my heart is hankering to be in Vṛndāvan with this Kṛṣṇa. Here also we are playing with Kṛṣṇa and dancing with Him. All our activities are going nicely with Him, but still I am not happy with that. My heart always wants the association of Kṛṣṇa on the banks of the Yamunā where there are many varieties of *kuñjas* and He plays His flute.

“Here Kṛṣṇa is not playing a flute, but in Vṛndāvan He plays His flute and calls everyone through that sound, and there He plays with us like our boy-friend. We want to meet with Kṛṣṇa on those banks of the Yamunā, and that will give me full satisfaction, whereas this meeting in Kurukṣetra is giving me neither full satisfaction nor peace within my heart.” This is the meaning of the *Kurukṣetra-līlā* with the *Vraja-vāsīs*. Here we find the most extreme mood of separation.

On a plate there may be your favourite foodstuffs, but if you cannot take that food then what will be your feeling? Similarly if Kṛṣṇa is in front of you but you cannot play as you like with Him, the mood of separation is very strong.

In Purī, Mahāprabhu went every day to see Lord Jagannāth living in the Temple, and He saw Jagannāthdev to be Kṛṣṇa, but still He was not satisfied with that. He needed to meet Kṛṣṇa with the Yamunā, flute, etc. Such feelings of separation came to Mahāprabhu and he suffered from that so much. It is that mood of separation that Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur worshipped. He did not worship union, but he worshipped the mood of separation of Mahāprabhu. Such mood of separation happened in Kurukṣetra, therefore he wrote that in Vṛndāvan live

bogus persons whereas the real devotees of Kṛṣṇa live in Kurukṣetra.

Śrīla Prabhupād Saraswatī Ṭhākur sent Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to Kurukṣetra to make a Centre. As Maṭh Commander he lead a small group of devotees and he succeeded in making an Ashram there. I have seen that place.

Question: Is it also the case that when the devotees saw Mahāprabhu in Puri they had the feeling, “This is Mahāprabhu, but we want Him as Nimāi in Nabadwīp”?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. Such feeling is shown in the *śloka* by Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur:

āmi chāi gaurachandra laite māyāpure

Here Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur expresses the great mood of separation he felt to see the *sannyās-veṣa* (*sannyās* clothing) of Mahāprabhu in Gambhīrā. “I like to see Śrī Chaitanyadev, but I particularly want to worship, remember, see and serve Gaurachandra, Viśvambhar Paṇḍit. It is my desire to see the Māyāpur-*līlā* of young Śrī Gaurasundar. As Nimāi Paṇḍit He had beautiful hair, He decorated Himself with fine clothing, and He engaged in Pastimes like a young *brāhmaṇa* boy along with His associated devotees in Māyāpur, Íodyān. To see Him in such a way is my worshipable desire.” Mahāprabhu used to be Nimāi Paṇḍit, and that is a very sweet Name for Him.

Even after Mahāprabhu took *sannyās*, many of the Goswāmīs such as Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī many times would say the name of Śrī Sachī Mātā. Śrī Vṛndāvan Dās Ṭhākur said, and it is almost too much for anyone: even if in a dream one will chant the name of Sachī Mātā one will get full liberation and transcendental happiness.

Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur expressed his wish to be attached to Mahāprabhu's Nabadwīp *līlā*. He mentioned very clearly that Mahāprabhu took *sannyās*, and that is alright because it is His Pastime, but He has taken so much austerity, and the devotees, such as Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍit and others, cannot tolerate that.

Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur wants to see Mahāprabhu living in Nabadwīp peacefully with the devotees of Nadia. There the Pañcha-tattva are chanting and dancing in great jubilation.

When I saw hanging behind my chair in Dum Dum Park a picture of Śrīman Mahāprabhu chanting in this way, I wanted to compose a *śloka* describing it. Then suddenly I found that already Śrīla Prabodānanda Saraswatī has expressed it very nicely in his book *Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhānidhi*.

In his book, *Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhānidhi*, he has made *maṅgalārchanam* with this *śloka*. The general meaning is: "Mahāprabhu is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa with His *pārṣada* devotees in the mood of dancing; with arms upraised; with tears constantly flowing from His eyes to the earth making the whole ground wet; and with the hairs of His body standing on end thus appearing like the white and yellow colour of the *kadamba* flower—I offer my worship to this Mahāprabhu who is chanting with His devotees in Nabadwīp Dhām."

Another devotee expressed:

**mane kari node juri' hṛdaya bichāi
tāhāra upare sonār gaurāṅga nāchāi**

"That type of Mahāprabhu I want to worship in my heart, and I want to spread my heart like a carpet along the whole of the bank of the Ganges so Mahāprabhu may

dance there in my heart.” There are many such expressions.

Question: So in Puri we find union in separation twice: the devotees see Mahāprabhu in the mood of separation, also Mahāprabhu sees Jagannāthdev in the mood of great separation?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Yes. It is especially the Nabadwīp devotees who feel this mood of union in separation when they see Mahāprabhu. The Nabadwīp devotees would sometimes stay in Puri Dhām with Śrīman Mahāprabhu for four months each year.

It is the tradition that each year many of our Nabadwīp devotees go to Puri. Our Western devotees are also always eager to go to Puri even when it is not possible for them to see Lord Jagannāth. They like to see the area of Jagannāth and the places of the Pastimes of Mahāprabhu and the devotees. Previously, however, we had no place to stay there, so the devotees would stay in ‘dharmashalas,’ but sometimes there would be no rooms available, especially at the time of Śrī Jagannāthdev’s *Rathayātrā*. Therefore for the devotees’ convenience and service, it was my desire to establish a centre in Puri.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj told me not to make many *maṭhs* or I may get much trouble to run them. However, it is the will of Kṛṣṇa that lastly Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave permission, “Yes you can make three: one in Vṛndāvan, one in Puri Dhām and one in Calcutta.”

Calcutta is our ‘transit station,’ and Vṛndāvan is the destination of many devotees, as is Puri Dhām. So these three places are for service to the devotees. This is our mood.

In Puri the devotees tried for a long time to buy a piece of land but they were repeatedly unsuccessful. Then I promised to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, “I will take charge of

purchasing the land. I will go there and within two months we must certainly get something.”

I wanted to follow the example of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī, Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākur, etc., which was not to disturb the strict regulations of Jagannāthdev’s *pāṇḍās* (priests). I therefore looked in the area frequented by the Western travellers and which is a little distance from the Temple. I also wanted to avoid staying near other Missions of the *Gauḍīya Maṭhs* so as to avoid any danger of *aparādha*.

I tried so hard, but each piece of land that seemed suitable was eventually found to be under litigation or otherwise unavailable. Six weeks passed in this search, to no avail. Finally I prayed to Lord Jagannāth, “Wherever You will give some land, I will make a temple there.” Within three days news reached me through Śrīpād Dāmodar Mahārāj that a man wanted to sell some land in the area of Gaur Batsahi. I met the proprietor and within five minutes the sale was settled, and within just fifteen days it was registered.

Our prayer to Lord Jagannāth, Lord Baladeva and Lady Subhadrā should be: “Kindly grant us some opportunity to render service at Jagannāth Purī.” Śrīla Guru Mahārāj gave a clue to *bhajan* life under Paṇḍit Gadādhara. Our *Maṭh* is near his Temple, the Temple of Ṭoṭā-Gopīnāth. Going from our Temple towards Ṭoṭā-Gopīnāth Temple, on the right side is Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭh, the Temple established by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupād.

We purchased the land for our temple in 1984 and the Deities were installed in 1990. Service goes on at our Maṭh in Purī daily. Our guest-house, Sevak Bhavan, is now well-known in Purī, and all the town’s rickshaw drivers know its location.

Question: How did the Deities come to our Ashram in Purī?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Inspiration came from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that there may be no, or at least very few, *Śrī Vighras* (Deities) of Nityānanda Prabhu in Purī Dhām. At that time several Deities of Mahāprabhu were there but not of Nityānanda Prabhu.

In Nabadwīp we were already keeping two Deities: Śrī Nitāi and Śrī Chaitanyadev. It was at first the desire of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj that these Deities of Nityānanda Prabhu and Mahāprabhu would play in Govinda Kuṇḍa opposite the Temple here in Nabadwīp, and still it is in my mind to try to manifest such a project here. I would like to do it this year itself, and I have asked one good carpenter devotee to come. He can do so much *sevā* in the Centenary Hall and especially he can make a nice *siṃhāsan* (throne) and a boat for Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurāṅga's Pastimes in Govinda Kuṇḍa. It has been my hidden desire to do this, and I have already purchased some teak wood especially for this project.

When I asked Śrīla Guru Mahārāj if I could take these Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaura Deities from here to Purī, he agreed, and said that if I wish, I may take them.

So, by the grace and will of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj when our Purī Maṭh manifested, Mahāprabhu accepted the Name of 'Chaitanya' and went with Nitāi to Purī for Their Pastimes. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj honoured these Deities and he touched the feet of Them both. They are very exalted and very heavy.

Previously there was no *kīrttan* written for the particular *ārati* of Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Chaitanya. Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur had previously composed the *Pañcha-tattva Ārati* (*Kiba jaya jaya Gaurāchaṇḍer ārotika śobhā...*) and he

composed *Yugala-ārati* (*Jaya jaya Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-yugala-milan...*) for the worship of Śrī Śrī Radha-Kṛṣṇa, but no *kīrttan* had been composed for Mahāprabhu and Radha-Kṛṣṇa on one altar. Therefore, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj composed *Śrī Sāraswata-Ārati* specifically for the worship of our Nabadwīp Maṭh Deities, Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundarjīu. It was following their example and by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's inspiration that I composed *Nitāi-Chaitanyadev Ārati* for our Deities in Purī.

The area of our Temple is called 'Gaur Batsahi' which means the way and area of Mahāprabhu. It is the place where Mahāprabhu would regularly pass through, most probably after visiting the Jagannāth Temple, going to see Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākur, or going to bathe in the sea. The area is near the lotus feet of Chaṭak Parvat, the Govardhan Hill of Puruṣottama Dhām.

Question: You mentioned that our Purī Maṭh is near to Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit's Ashram. In what way can devotees derive benefit from this proximity?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: You can gain benefit from everywhere. It exists within one's mood of devotion; benefit's nature is like that. But there is some particular opportunity that when seeing Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit's Ashram you can remember the Pastimes of Mahāprabhu.

Gadādhara Paṇḍit lived a little distance from Mahāprabhu's Ashram. Mahāprabhu lived about one kilometre away at Kāśī Miśra Bhavan, now known as 'Gambhīra.' When Mahāprabhu would go to bathe and meet with Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākur He would sometimes come via the road past Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit's Ashram and He would meet with him. Also Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit sometimes invited Mahāprabhu to take *Prasādam* there. Every day Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit would offer *bhoga* to the

Deities in his Ashram and sometimes he would offer that to Mahāprabhu who would immediately come and accept it. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit did not buy anything, but would somehow collect all ingredients. Mahāprabhu especially liked a particular spinach preparation that Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit made.

In His later Pastimes, almost every day Mahāprabhu would go to the ocean and meet with Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit, and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit would sometimes go to Gambhīra and read the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahāprabhu. For the last twelve years Mahāprabhu lived in Purī in an extreme mood of separation in Gambhīra. When Mahāprabhu was so intoxicated with Kṛṣṇa-prema in Gambhīra, and constantly in the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa and crying, crying, crying; at that time Gadādhara Paṇḍit would go there and give nourishment through his reading of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Mahāprabhu considered every letter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to be a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, and when He heard it from Gadādhara Paṇḍit's lotus mouth He felt so much peace and felt Himself to be fully nourished. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit served Mahāprabhu in this way.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj composed the *praṇāma-mantram* to Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit:

**nīlāmbhodhitāṭe sadā svavirahākṣepānvitam
bāndhavam
śrīmad-bhāgavatī-kathā madirayā sañjīvayan
bhāti yaḥ
śrīmad-bhāgavatam sadā svanayanāsrūpāyaṇaiḥ
pūjayan
goswāmipravaro gadādhara vibhurbhūyāt
madekāgatīḥ**

“If a friend feels so much separation from his girlfriend or boyfriend, he or she cannot understand what to do and may even act like a madman. At that time a friend may try to make him peaceful by giving a little wine or something similar. The ecstatic recitations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita are likened to this nourishment which he gave to Śrīman Mahāprabhu in His extreme mood of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the non-different form of Kṛṣṇa Himself, and it is ecstasy in the form of sound vibration. Śrīman Mahāprabhu would sit opposite Gadādhara Paṇḍita and He would receive nourishment from Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita’s reading of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

“Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita himself became intoxicated to chant the *śloka*s from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and he would cry. With those tears he worshipped his dearest friend, Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Such is the mood of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and that Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita Goswāmī is the only shelter of my life.”

Mahāprabhu took the whole *bhāva* and *kānti* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; that is, all the mood and colour of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was taken by Mahāprabhu because He wanted to taste Her ecstasy. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita is Rādhārāṇī minus the mood of Herself, that having been taken by Mahāprabhu. Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita is the incarnation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, but he is subdued. However, this is of another plane, and it is all full.

A short while after Mahāprabhu took *sannyās* it was decided by the devotees in Śāntipur and agreed by Sachī Mātā, that Mahāprabhu would stay in Jagannāth Purī. Then Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita decided, “I shall go there and stay.” Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita took *kṣetra-sannyās*, which means that he promised to accept to stay in one place.

That place was his Ashram, the Temple of Ṭoṭā-Gopināth.

The Orissan poet Govinda Dās Kavi was in Puri at the time of Mahāprabhu's leaving His manifest Pastimes, and he wrote that Mahāprabhu left by entering within the Ṭoṭā-Gopināth Deity. Śrīla Prabhupād Saraswatī Ṭhākur did not accept all his writings, but he did accept this idea of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's disappearance.

Śrī Ṭoṭā-Gopināth is also famous for His Pastime that one night He sat down so that Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit in his old age could still reach up to garland Him. He remains seated to this day.

Question: What guidance would you like to give for the devotees going to the Jagannāth Rathayātrā Festival this year?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: The first thing is not to break any rules and regulations of the Jagannāth Temple. They will humbly try to see the places of the Pastimes of Mahāprabhu and His associates such as Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākur, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāy, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodar, Śrī Raghūnāth Dās Goswāmī, Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit, Śrī Jagadānanda Prabhu, Śrī Paramānanda Puri Goswāmī, Mahārāj Pratāparudra's house, Guṇḍichā, Śikhi Māhiti's house, and many others. They will see these places and try to feel in their heart the mood of union in separation shown by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and they will offer prayers to the associates of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. If they cannot go inside any of the places then they can see these places from outside.

Question: We have heard it is recommended that a visitor to Vṛndāvan should stay just three nights so as to minimize his chances of committing offences. Does this recommendation apply to Śrī Puri Dhām also?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: In fact this is not actually so. If

the devotees will go to Vṛndāvan and follow the mood of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī and Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī they can stay in Vṛndāvan, but they should not go there for business or for the Loi Bazaar shops.

The Dhām is *chinmaya bhūmi*—it is made of transcendental substance. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was questioned many times by the Western devotees as to how one should see Nabadwīp Dhām, and he clearly explained that it is *chinmaya bhūmi*. So we should see the Dhām in this way, and not with any mundane view.

The matter is that when we shall go to the Dhām we shall try to live and feel where we are going: the feeling should come that it is the transcendental Dhām, and Mahāprabhu’s Pastimes with his devotees are always going on.

My own mood is that I do not go every day to the Temple of Lord Jagannāth, but I go before Jagannāth in His Temple and I say to Him in this way: “My *daṇḍavat praṇāms* to Your lotus feet. I am present, Sir. I am here.”

I cannot see Jagannāth because I cannot see Him through my mind and vision, therefore I am not trying to approach Him in that way. Instead I am presenting myself in front of Jagannāth with the mood and prayer, “I am here at Your lotus feet. Please see me.”

“Please see me,” means: “My good and my bad—everything is in front of You. You please make me as You like to see me.” That is the mood. Then I do *parikramā* and then return to our Ashram by the ocean to stay under the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Chaitanyadev.

It is my advice to everyone not to behave like a businessman with Śrī Jagannāthdev. Not to approach Him in the way of, “I am paying my *daṇḍavat praṇāms*. Give me

this, give me that. Make my son good, my wife good....”
No. We shall pray like Prahlād Mahārāj:

**yadi dāsyasi me kāmān
varāms tvaṁ varadarṣabha
kāmānām hr̥dyasaṁrohaṁ
bhavatas tu vṛṇe varam**

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: 7.10.7)

“If You want to give something to me, and You are eager to give, then please give me this: that I shall not be again within the illusion of desiring anything. Please don’t permit me to ask You for anything again. Please demolish that type of desire from my heart.” This should be our prayer and this is *ananya-bhakti* (exclusive devotion) in *śānta-rasa*.

When devotees will go to see Lord Jagannāth during the time of *Rathayātrā* they will see His Deity, no doubt, and they will pray: “Jagannāthdev, if You want to give anything, please give devotion.” We will make this our desire, and not anything of mundane form.

In the mundane plane, whatever bad or good will come to us will come according to our *karma*. We will not involve our Master and Lord with that.

Question: Upstairs in the devotees’ quarters adjoining our Temple is a large new room for Your Divine Grace and you occupied it for some time. However last time you were in Puri you returned to your previous quarters downstairs in Sevak Bhavan. Why was that?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Downstairs in Sevak Bhavan I feel much peace of mind, I am readily accessible to all, I can see all the comings and goings of the people and there is a nice garden outside, but upstairs in the Temple accommodation I cannot see who is coming and going,

and I cannot meet with the devotees so readily.

If we invite anyone, they may feel a little trouble to climb the stairs. Also if I stay in Sevak Bhavan it is helpful to make the devotees there conscious of their conduct in the Dhām. There is also plenty of space for devotees and guests to sit and meet with me. For these reasons I moved back to Sevak Bhavan, so that I can serve my Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in a better way.