

শ্রীআনন্দগোপাল গোস্বামী

Śrī Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī



Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī Prabhupāda appeared in the 12th generation of direct descendants of Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu in the holy town of Vṛndāvana on the sacred day of Padmanābha Ekādaśī in October, 1897 as the fourth and youngest son of Prabhupāda Nīlakānta Gosvāmī and Smt. Śyāma-vinodinī Gosvāminī. At the age of fourteen he moved with his parents to the holy town of Navadvīpa, where his father established Śyāma Vinodinī Kuñja in the center of town. The place was also named after him, Nīlakānta Kuñja. The deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madan Gopāl were flanked with the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, eight principal girlfriends of the Lord. Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī studied under his elder uncle. As is the tradition in their branch of the Advaita Vamśa, the young men, representing Lord Sadāśiva (Advaita Prabhu) are

married to young *brāhmaṇa*-women of the Śākta tradition, representing Durgā Devī, and so Prabhupāda was married to Smt. Pratibhā Sundarī Gosvāminī. They had four children, three sons and one daughter. Little is known about Prabhupāda’s life, just a few following accounts are there of eye-witnesses like his disciple Girirāja Bābā, Gopāl Chandra Ghosh from the Vṛndāvana Research Institute and the renowned Vaiṣṇava publisher Śyāmlāl Hakim, all from Vṛndāvana.

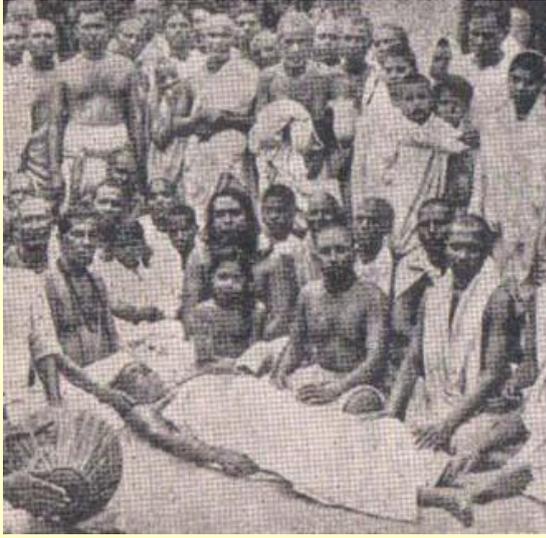


Śyāma Vinodinī Kuñja or Nilakānta Kuñja

Śrī Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī was totally averse to professional Guru-ship and never asked any donations from his disciples, although many of them were wealthy. Girirāja Bābā: “I have wandered throughout India for 20 years, from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumārī in the south, nowhere I have found such saints as father (Śrī Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī) and mother (his wife)! Such devotion! Such renunciation! They had no bank account, nothing in the post office, no land, no house, yet the service of their family deities Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Madangopāla was going on! At that time the *siddha mahātmā* Vamśīdāsa Bābājī was doing his *bhajana* in Navadvīpa – he was serving deities of Śrī-Śrī Gaura Nitāi. One day he was offering *bhoga* to his deity when Mahāprabhu said: “Take this away, I won’t eat this!” Vamśīdāsa Bābā: “Why not?” Mahāprabhu: “Because in Śyāma Vinodinī Kuñja (the abode of Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī) Madangopāl has not eaten! (viz. Śrī Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī was so poor that he had no money to offer anything to the deities, let alone feed his family)” So at 9 p.m. that evening Vamśīdās Bābā sent one bag of rice, a tin of oil, a tin of *ghī*, *dāl*, spices and so to Śyāma-vinodinī Kuñja. Out of great modesty and dispassion Śrī

Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī refused the donation – only when Vamśīdās Bābājī’s servant explained that Gaura-Nitāi would otherwise not eat, he accepted it. Mother (his wife) then cooked *bhoga* with her usual devotion and expertise, but until then Prabhupāda had not accepted any gifts or money from anyone. On the contrary, whenever he received a large donation he immediately spent it on the service of the deities in the temple or the Vaiṣṇavas.”

In 1933 Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī was in Vraja, lecturing on Caitanya Caritāmṛta during a spontaneous festival in honour of the deceased Mādhava dāsa Bābājī, organised by Prāṇa Gopāla Gosvāmī (see picture. Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī sits



in the middle, wearing a beard and having his eldest son Kīśora Gopāla on his lap)



In 1937 Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī assisted the famous Vaiṣṇava researcher, author and publisher Śrīla Haridās Dāsī with the *bhāvārtha* (deep transcendental meaning) of Śrīla Raghunātha Dās Gosvāmī’s *Dāna Keli Cintāmaṇi*. Despite their *upāsana bheda* (different modes of worship), Śrīla Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī had a deep friendship with the leading Nityānanda Vamśa Gosvāmī of the time, Śrīla Yadu Gopāla Gosvāmī.



Śrī Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī rose daily at 3 a.m., took a bath and sat down to do his *bhajana* – no family member or disciple could disturb him until 8 a.m. Tears streamed from his eyes as he was immersed in meditation. At 10 a.m. he would eat some *prasādi* fruits and sweets of Madangopāl. He would not eat until he had finished his whole *japa*. After this he was available for his family and disciples. He attained *mantra darśana* by performing *puraścaraṇa*¹. He did not train his three sons – Kīśora

¹ *Mantra darśana* – realization of the deity of a *mantra*.

Puraścaraṇa – nonstop marathon recital of a large number of *mantras*.

Gopāla, Govinda Gopāla and Nikuñja Gopāla – for their upcoming duties as *ācāryas* by systematically teaching them *śāstra* – they learned all by hearing their father’s renowned *pāthas* (lectures). The rest was self-manifest. Also in Navadvīpa Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī lectured on Rādhārasa Sudhānidhi and his favourite pastime from Ānanda Vṛndāvana Campū: the Vasanta Līlā.



The family spent one full year in Śrī Vṛndāvana, in a small house near the Bhajan Ashram; it was then that Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī gave his famous *pāthas* on Vilāpa Kusumāñjali. The famous author/publisher Śyāma dāsa from Vṛndāvana recalls:

"In 1954, in Vṛndāvana's Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira, I was so fortunate to hear matchless *pāthas* (lectures) on Śrī Vilāpa Kusumāñjali from the mouth of Advaita Prabhupāda Vaiśāvatamsa Ācārya Pravara Pūjyapāda Śrī Ānanda Gopāla Prabhuji. Many learned *ācāryas* and Gosvāmīs, not only of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya, but also of the Śrī Nimbārka and Śrī Rādhā Ballabha *sampradāyas* came there. Everyone was astonished to hear the sweet and essential explanations of each and every *śloka* that emanated from Śrī Ācāryapāda's mouth. They had a smoke-screen of different ideas about the superiority of *madhura rasa* on the canvas of their hearts, which they had accrued from different descriptions they had heard, but now this smoke screen became faint. They loudly had to confess that the most brilliant stream of *madhura rasa* emanates from the Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs. Where the *rasa*-stream of other lectures stopped is where Śrī Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī started, because it was self-manifest that the *upāsana* (mode of worship) of *rādhā-dāsyā* is greater than *sakhī bhāva* and stands above all. In each *śloka* Śrī Ācāryapāda led them through the course of the *aṣṭakālīka līlā* and solved all the problems and questions that the *mañjarī bhāva sādhanas* had in their *sādhana* by drawing live pictures of *mañjarī bhāva* for them. Thus he blessed them forever by depicting to them the sequence of devotional services and the places where direct devotional service in Priyā Priyatama's *nikuñja*-pastimes are rendered."²

² From Śrī Śyāma dāsa's introduction to Vilāpa Kusumāñjali (Hindi) published by Vraja Gaurava Publications, Vṛndāvana. Quoted with permission of the author.

The *śrutidhara* (person who can remember and recite a text after a single hearing) Śrī Nivāraṇa Bābu made elaborate notes of these lectures, which were later shown to, and approved by, Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī.

The late Kṛṣṇa dās Madrasi Bābā of Rādhākuṇḍa was for long the sole proprietor of the incomparably valuable treasure of these elaborate notes. Śrī Nivāraṇa Bābu, who was himself a disciple of Śrī Ānanda Gopāl Prabhu, spoke this sacred text to a Bengali Gosvāmī, who wrote them down in Bengali script. Around the early 1970's Śrī Ananta dās Paṇḍitjī had begun to give *pāṭh* (devotional lectures) in Rādhākuṇḍa's Govindajī Mandir, and the Vaiṣṇavas wanted to hear Vilāpa Kusumāñjali from him. Kṛṣṇa dās Madrasi Bābā told Panditji that a Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana had the notes of Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī's lectures on Vilāpa Kusumāñjali. A *śrutidhara* (Nivāraṇ Bābu) had noted it down, but he passed away and now it was in the hands of the Gosvāmī. Paṇḍitjī went to Vṛndāvana and told the Gosvāmī that he was serving the Vaiṣṇavas at Rādhākuṇḍa (with *pāṭh*) and hence he wanted to have the notes. Gosvāmījī declined, afraid it would be broadcast, but since he came from Rādhākuṇḍa and was a Vaiṣṇava he could look at it and read it. Paṇḍitjī said: "I don't have the memory of the *ṛṣi yuga* (previous age when all could be learned from a single hearing or reading)", so he read it but could not remember all of it. When he returned to Rādhākuṇḍa Kṛṣṇa dāsa Madrasi Bābā asked him what happened and Paṇḍitjī said: "He will not give it." Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābā laughed and said: "You see, it is with me—if you like I can read it to you, but it is written in Malayalam script."

Now one day the Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana had left the notebook outside, and by chance a monkey took it along and dropped it at the place where Kṛṣṇa dās Bābā's brother Haridās resided. Although Haridās was from Kerala, he could read Bengali. Gosvāmījī searched everywhere and finally heard that the monkey had dropped it at Haridās' place, so he came to Haridāsjī and said: "Look, return the notebook to me. It is very dear to me, I don't give it to anyone." Haridāsjī replied: "Look, if you consider it properly this notebook is now mine. I did not steal it – why, after all, did the monkey bring the notebook to me? Consider it duly, the notebook is now mine." There was nothing Gosvāmījī could do. But Haridāsjī agreed to return the notebook to him after copying it. Gosvāmījī objected: "Why should you copy it? It will be broadcast all over the place." Haridās replied: "No problem. I will copy it in Malayalam (that Bengali Vaiṣṇavas cannot read)." Gosvāmījī said: "That is good. If you copy it in Malayalam I will let you copy it, not if you copy it in Bengali." So he let Kṛṣṇa dās and Haridās copy it out in Malayalam script. The script is Malayalam, but the language is Bengali, so there

was no problem for Paṇḍitjī to understand it when Kṛṣṇa dās Bābā read it to him. Paṇḍitjī used to give *pāṭh* at that time in Govindajī Mandira from 2.30 to 3.30 p.m. Then he would take a little rest and at 4 he would come to Kṛṣṇa dās Bābā and write down what he dictated. The final page was torn out by the monkey and was somehow rewritten.³ Kṛṣṇa dās Madrasi Bābā himself said of it:

"Our Mahant (Ananta dās Bābāji) Mahārāj heard these notes at Śrī Vrindavan, but could not get them, so with a broken heart he returned here (to Śrī Rādhākuṇḍ), where this humble self informed him that the same notes are here. When they were given to him there was a complete change in his *hari kathā*. Then he wrote commentaries first on Śrī Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi and then on Śrī Vilāpa Kusumāñjali, Śrī Stavāvalī and Stavamālā."



Kṛṣṇa dās Madrasi Bābā of Rādhākuṇḍa: "Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī had such *niṣṭhā* in *mañjarī bhāva*, that if someone asked him during *pāṭha* to talk about Kṛṣṇa's *bālyā-līlā*, he stood up from his *vyāsāsana* and walked out."



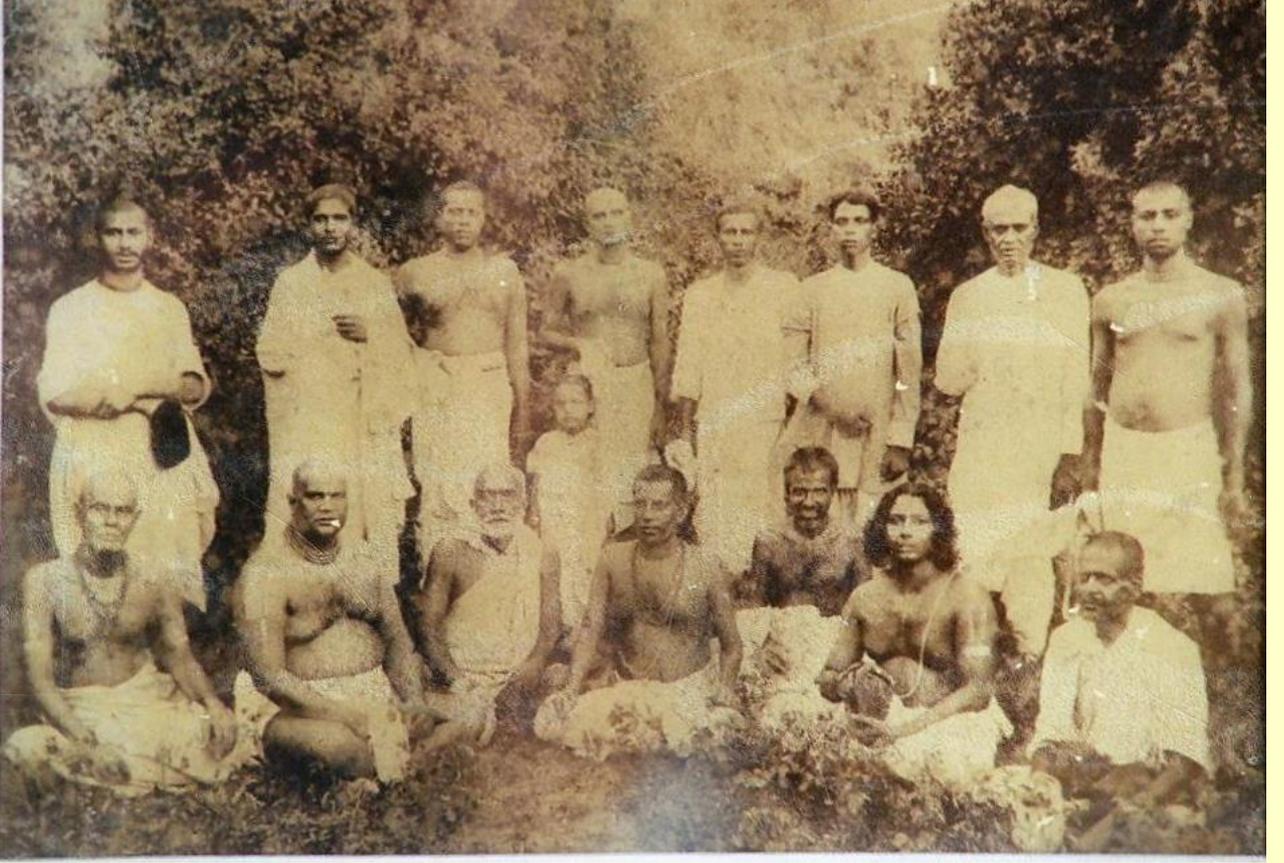
Girirāj Bābā: "Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī stayed only once in Vraja – the rest of his life he preached in Bengal. In Calcutta there was the Madan Gopāl Sevak Sangha – Prabhupāda lectured there on Vilāpa Kusumāñjali, Gopāla Campū, Ānanda Vṛndāvana Campū etc."



Gopāl Ghosh, Vṛndāvana Research Institute: "My father, bank manager Śācīndranāth Ghosh, had an intimate friend named Amiya Gopāl Chaudhuri, who was a back-neighbor and close friend of Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana. He lived in a place called Sūrya Kuñja and used to attend the *kīrtans* and festivals in Śyāma Vinodinī Kunja. Rādhāramaṇa Gosvāmī, an Advaita Vaṁśa Gosvāmī from the branch of Balarām Miśrā, was a great singer of Caitanya Maṅgal. He used to do wonderful *kīrtans* of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* and Gaura-*līlā* that were attended by Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī and

³ Noted from a lecture by Paṇḍit Ananta dās Bābāji at Rādhākuṇḍa, April 12, 1999.

his son Kiśora Gopāl Gosvāmī. At that time, around 1950, Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī organized the annual festival for Advaita Prabhu’s appearance in Vṛndāvana. He gave wonderful lectures on Vilāpa Kusumāñjali and Rādhārasa Sudhānidhi in the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple for one fortnight. All the Gosvāmīs of the Rādhā-Vallabha temple (who believe that Rādhārasa Sudhānidhi was composed by Hita Harivaṁśa Gosvāmī instead of Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, as is claimed by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas) attended. They all offered their obeisances to Prabhu. About the disputed authorship of Rādhārasa Sudhānidhi Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī told them: “Some person may come to a mango grove and inquire: “How many trees are there, how many fruits are there in them? Who constructed this grove? How are the fruits sold and who is the owner?” while another, who is very tired, will just come and purchase the mangoes, offer them, sit under a tree and say: “Aha, how sweet are these mangoes!” So similarly, Rādhārasa Sudhānidhi is a wonderful book, born by the grace of ‘Śrī Rādhārāṇī, whoever may have composed it. What matters is the relish of its contents – it is necessary to relish it. We need to become qualified to extract the *rasa* from this book. *Rādhā-dāsyā* is the goal of our lives and Madangopāl becomes subdued by us if we can meditate on the footsoles of Rādhārāṇī. *Rādhā-dāsyā* is our only shelter.” Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī said that again and again. His lectures were so amazing that all the Vrajavāsīs exclaimed “Jay Rādhē! Jay Rādhē!” Everyone was stunned and speechless with admiration because of his lectures and they would anoint him with sandalwood-pulp and flower garlands.”



Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī sitting left of Prān Gopāl Gosvāmī (with long hair and Brahmin thread), 1920s

“Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī’s first disciple was a *bābāji* named Advaita Dās. He lived at the western bank of Brahmakuṇḍa; he was very renounced and came to Vraja as a teen to study the Gosvāmīs’ books. He took *bhekh* from Mādhava dās Bābāji and used to beg the ingredients for Sītānātha’s *utsava*. He was very devoted to his Guru and was always present during Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī’s *pāṭhas* to serve by making all necessary arrangements while the *pāṭha* went on and bringing people to the *pāṭha*. I was a schoolboy and did not understand much of these matters but somehow I was attracted and came to see. I only knew a little bit about Rādhārāṇī’s glories, but it gladdened me. I saw many people getting goosebumps on their skin from ecstasy, due to listening to the lecture; some were shivering or weeping emotionally.”

“Then there was the annual festival for Advaita Prabhu’s appearance in Vṛndāvana, held near Topi-kuñj. People said they have never seen such a big festival. When the procession came out, umbrellas and fans from all the temples were used to serve the deities. The three Prabhus (the sons of Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī) walked in front – in the middle was the eldest one, Kiśora Gopāl Gosvāmī, the second son Govinda Gopāl Gosvāmī, was on the right and the youngest one, Nikuñja Gopāl

Gosvāmī, was on the left. Behind them, in the *kīrtan*, was Prabhupāda Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī and others were there too, perhaps Premgopāl Gosvāmī too. Behind that, on a palanquin, were the deities Rādhā-Madangopāla and a large picture of Sītānātha (Advaita Prabhu), fanned on both sides by devotees from Navadvīpa. People from the market offered so many garlands to Prabhu that one person was needed to take them off again and again. Many *sādhus* joined the procession, *ārati* was done on the way and here and there donations were offered. The procession set out at midday and only reached its destination after midnight, because on the way extensive *kīrtans* took place in various places. In front of Sevā Kuñja *kīrtan* took place for 20-25 minutes, in front of Lālā Bābu’s temple Yamunā Pulin *kīrtana* was held and in front of Nidhuvana a *kīrtan* about Rādhārāṇī’s glories. They were large *kīrtans* too, with many Vaiṣṇavas taking part.



When Śrīlā Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī passed away large commemoration-festivals were held both here and at Rādhākuṇḍa, organized by Advaita Dāsī. Niranjan Bābu, a disciple of Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī who lived at Kālā Bābur Kunja, was there, Nivāran Candra Kara (who noted down the famous Vilāpa Kusumāñjali lectures by Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī), a Brahmin named Sukumār Chaṭṭopādhyāya or Mukhopādhyāya, who wore a long beard, and a Gadādhara Vaṁśa Gosvāmī whose name escapes me now, and who lived at Dhīrasamīra. During the commemoration-festival (*viraha utsava*) a Nagara Kīrtan went out to the bank of the Yamunā where they held an extensive *kīrtana*. On the final day Māthura Viraha Kīrtan was held (describing the *gopīs*’ feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa after He left Vṛndāvana to stay in Mathurā) and Nṛsimha Ballabh Gosvāmī (a famous lecturer in Vṛndāvana in the 1960s-70s and 80s) gave *pāṭha*, perhaps on Vilāpa Kusumāñjali. The three Prabhus (Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī’s three sons) could not attend because they were busy organizing similar festivals in Navadvīpa.”



Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī passed away in the auspicious month of Śrāvaṇa (July 1961), at the age of 64, due to diabetes. Śrīlā Nikuñja Gopāla Gosvāmī: “There was no question of any inheritance talks – father was only saying: “Hā Rādhē! Hā Rādhē!”

Girirāja Bābā: “I came to see him when he passed away. There was no talk about family life going on at all. He would just cry out two names of Rādhā: *hā svāmini! hā karuṇāmayi!* That’s all.”

Śrīla Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī wrote one Sanskrit Aṣṭakam in praise of Advaita Prabhu: *advaita prabhor aṣṭakam*. He also had his own explanation of the *Gopāla mantra*, dividing it into the three age-phases of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja - *Kṛṣṇa* stands for the *kumāra*-age (0-5 years of age), *govinda* for the *paugaṇḍa*-age (5-10 years) and *gopī-jana-vallabha* for the *kiśora* age (10-15 years of age).



ŚRĪLA ĀNANDA GOPĀL GOSVĀMĪ'S SŪCAK KĪRTAN

*jaya re jaya re jaya, prabhu sitānātha jaya,
śāntipura śānti sudhākara
jaya śrī acyuta tāta, tina putra subikhyāta,
balarāma kṛṣṇa miśra-vara*

“All glory and victory to Prabhu Sītānāth, the peaceful moon of Shāntipur!
Victory to His three famous sons, Śrī Acyuta, Balarām and Kṛṣṇa Miśra.” (1)

*gaura kori abatīrṇa, tribhuvana koilo dhanya
jay dāo sei dayāmoy
sei vaṁśe nīlamanī, nīlakamal, nīlakānta,
janmilen tin mahāśoy*

“Give victory to the compassionate one who blessed the three worlds by causing
the descent of Śrī Gauranga and in whose dynasty three great souls took birth –
Nīlamani, Nīlakamal and Nīlakānta.” (2)

*tāder je guṇakothā, gāy sabe yathā tothā,
śraddhā saha braje chilo bāsa
paṇḍitera śiromaṇi, rādhā-preme cuḍāmaṇi,
rādhā-kṛṣṇa sebā abhilāṣa*

“Everyone sings the details of their glorious attributes everywhere. They lived
in Braja with faith. They were the crown-jewels of scholars and the crest-jewels in
terms of love for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who yearned for the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.”
(3)

*nīlakānter cār putra, prabhu tār sarva kaniṣṭha,
rūpe guṇe ati anupam,
tero śata cār sane, padmanābhaikādaśī dine,
āvīrbhāvo sei guṇa-dhām*

“Nīlakānta had four sons, and the youngest of them all was most unique in his form and attributes. This treasure of attributes took birth in Braja-dhāma on the day of Padmanābh-Ekādaśī in the Bengali year 1304 (October 1897).” (4)

bālyā-kāle kṛīḍā-raṅge, sakhā bhrātā-gaṇa saṅge
khelilen jeno braja-cāṅde
sadā thāken ān-mone rohen jeno kār dhyāne,
pitā bolen poḍilo śyām phāṅde

“He was playing childrens’ games with his friends and brothers, as if he were the moon of Braja (child Kṛṣṇa). His mind was always elsewhere, as if he was meditating on someone. His father said: ‘He has fallen into a Śyāma-trap’ (he is captivated by Kṛṣṇa).” (5)

caudda varṣa boyos jobe, cār bhrātā loiyā tabe,
pita thākur gelā gaura dhāme
braja chāḍibāra kale, bhāsen prabhu āṅkhi-jole,
kintu sukhī jāba gaura bhūme

“When he was fourteen years old his father took him and his three brothers to the abode of Gaura (Navadvīpa) to live there. Prabhu floated in tears when he left Braja but he decided to blissfully go along to the land of Gaura.” (6)

prabhu nīlakānta gosāi, śrī nabadwīpe jāy,
nīlakānta kuñja niramilā
śrī rādhā madan gopāl, dui mūrti su-rasāl,
dui pāśe aṣṭasakhī dilā

“Prabhu Nīlakānta Gosvāmī thus went to Navadvīp and established Nīlakānta Kuñja there, where he had his two luscious deities Rādhā and Madangopāl flanked by Their eight girlfriends.” (7)

madhur sebā prakat kori, putradige hāte dhori,
śikhāilā prema-sebā kāje
kulera deva sītānāth, virājita sītā saha,

śrī mandira ālo kori rāje

“He took his sons by the hand and revealed to them the sweet service (of Rādhā-Madan-gopāl), teaching them loving devotional service. The temple was illuminated by the family’s arch-father Adwaita Prabhu and Sītā-devī.” (8)

*piṭṛ kṛpāy prabhu mora, sadā sebā rase bhor,
pāṭh śikṣā jyeṣṭha tāta ṭhāi
śrī pāṭh varṇanā kale, aḡaṇita śrotā mile
śobhā jeno śukadev gosāi*

“By the grace of his father my Prabhu was always immersed in the flavours of devotional service. He learned *pāṭh* (devotional lecturing) from his elder uncle. When he gave *pāṭh*, innumerable listeners gathered and he looked as beautiful as Śukadev Gosvāmī.” (9)

*nirjan bās anurāgi, tāi prabhu śahar-tyāgi
gelen cole phul-bāgān mājhe
sethāy giyā śiṣyagaṇa, dhariyā rājiv caraṇ,
sthāpilo śyām-binodini kuñje*

“Being very attached to living in solitude, Prabhu gave up the city and went to live in a flower-garden, where his disciples, holding his lotus-feet, founded Śyām-vinodini kuñja.” (10)

*tathāy-o śrī sītānāth, śrī madangopāl virājita
sebā dekhi juḍāya nayan
śrī rādhā madangopāl, daraśane tanu vikal,
prabhu mora bāhya-hārā hon*

“There too, Śrī Sītānāth and Śrī Madangopāl resided. Seeing their service, my eyes are soothed. When my Prabhu saw Śrī Rādhā and Madan Gopāl, his body was thrilled and he lost external consciousness.” (11)

*daśākṣara mantra-rāje, labhilā māyera kāche,
dhanya mātā yār heno putra*

*vyavahār paramārthe, guru holen dui arthe,
lābh mantra hoilā kṛtārtha*

“He received the regal ten-syllable Gopāl-*mantra* from his mother. Blessed is the mother of such a son! She was his *guru* both materially and spiritually, and he was blessed by receiving this *mantra*.” (12)

*āmodinī mañjarī svarūpa, dilen mātā aparūpa,
sebā dilā pāda samvāhan,
smaraṇete tanu-man, sei kāje nimagan,
varṣā heno jhare du'nayan*

“Mother gave him the wonderful *siddha-svarūp* of ‘Āmodinī Mañjarī’, and the service of massaging the Divine Pair’s lotus-feet. With his mind and body he was immersed in that meditation while tears showered from his eyes.” (13)

*smaraṇāṅga bhajanete, magna prabhu dine rate,
lilā gāne sadāi vibhor
dāsa prabhur aṅaṇita, tārā-o bhajane rata,
vañcito’smi hata bhāgya mor*

“Day and night Prabhu was immersed in the item of worship named *smaran* (meditation) and in singing of the Lord’s pastimes. Prabhu’s innumerable servants were also dedicated to *bhajan*. O I am deprived, I am so unfortunate!” (14)

*śrī gaurāṅgera hārda bhajan, tāte rata anukṣaṇa,
chay gosāi-er ānugatya loye
bosiyā āpan mane, śrī mandirer kuñja-bane,
nirapekṣa smaraṇete rohe*

“He was always dedicated to hearty worship of Śrī Gaurāṅga, following in the footsteps of the six Gosvāmīs. Sitting in the groves of his own temple he was totally fixed in meditation, indifferent to the world.” (15)

boliten garva-bhare, rādhā-pade buke dhare,

*jete hoy narakete jābo
ār kichu cāhibo nā, ekā kṛṣṇa loibo nā,
ekā kṛṣṇe phirāiyā dībo*

“He used to proudly say, holding Śmt. Rādhārāṇī’s lotus-feet to his heart – ‘if necessary (for Her service) I will go to hell.’ I don’t want anything else (but Her), I will not accept Kṛṣṇa alone – if Kṛṣṇa comes to me alone, I will send Him back.” (16)

*tāte sarva nāśa hole, lobo tāhā abahele,
lobo kṛṣṇa rādhā saha ele
kāraṇ rādhā-dāsī āmi, rādhā garavete bhrami,
bilāibo āsile yugale*

“If such an attitude would ruin me, then all right, I will accept Kṛṣṇa neglectfully, and only if He comes along with Rādhā. Because I am Rādhā’s maidservant, and I will wander around being proud of Rādhā. If the Divine Pair comes I will offer myself to Them.” (17)

*sadā rādhā nāma kori, du’nayane bohe vāri,
pulakete aṅga jāy bhare
rādhā nām je kore, tāre prabhu buke dhare,
boliten kine nili more*

“I always sing Rādhā’s name with tears in both eyes and my body filled with goose-bumps. Prabhu embraced those who sang Rādhā’s name; he used to say: They have purchased me.” (18)

*sītānāther janmotsav, korito nā loka sab,
mora prabhu tāhā pravartilo
ki vipul āyojon, nava rātri sankīrtan,
bhulibe nā tāhā ye dekhilo.*

“At that time no one held a festival to celebrate Advaita Prabhu’s advent, but my Prabhu starting organizing such festivals. How huge were such celebrations! It

involved nine nights of *sankīrtana* (singing and dancing). Anyone who saw this would never forget it.” (19)

*ei goto botsorete, ki ānanda utsabete
kori mora prabhu lukāilā
śrīdhara kṛṣṇā caturthī din, rādhā-pade holo līn,
yāra dāsī tār kāche gelā*

“Last year, during a festival of bliss, my Prabhu hid himself (he passed away). On the fourth day of the dark lunar fortnight of the month of Śrīdhara (Śravaṇa or July-August), he attained the lotus-feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, joining She whose maidservant he/she is.” (20)

*kothā gele mora prabhu ānanda gopāl
āra nā heribo tava mūrati rasāl
(kothāy gele doyāmoy, virahe prāṇ jwole jāy)
modigake diye phāṅki kothā cole gele
aparādhi bole ki go modere tyājile*

“Where has my master, Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī, gone? I will never see his luscious form again. (Where has the compassionate one gone? My life-airs scorch in the fire of separation)! Where has he gone, tricking us all? Has he abandoned us because we are offenders?” (21)

*ku-putra āmrā baṭi kintu tumi pita,
pita to tyaje nā putra śāstre ache gāṅthā
tomār virahe prabhu prāṇ jwole jāy
akasmāt eki holo bhāviyā nā pāi*

“We are bad sons, surely, but you are the father and the scripture says a father never abandons the son. O Prabhu! Out of separation from you my heart burns! I don’t understand why this happened so suddenly!” (22)

*boro sādḥ chilo prabhu ebār braje ele
nā chāṛibo prabhu tava caraṇa kamala*

(caraṇ dhore poṛe robo)
(jete cāile nā chāribo)
rādhārāṇīr dohāi diyā caraṇe dhoribo
sebā adhikār loiyā caraṇa sevibo

“It was always your great aspiration, Prabhu, and now you have come to Vraja. I will not give up your lotus-feet. (I will stay here, holding these lotus-feet) (Even if you want to leave I will not let go) I swear on Rādhārāṇī that I will hold on to your lotus-feet. Taking the *adhikāra* for devotional service I will serve your (or Her) lotus-feet.” (23)

se sādhe sādhibo bād nidārun vidhi
(dārun vidhi ki korilo pitri-hīn moder koilo)
Prāṇ jwole jāy prabhu kāṇde sadā hṛdi
Tumi jār tār kāche cole gele guru
Śukāilo āmāder sob āsā taru

“Cruel fate has accomplished this now (what has cruel fate done, making us bereft of our father?). Prabhu, my life-airs are burning and my heart constantly weeps. O Guru, you have gone to She whom you belong to, thus withering the tree of our hopes.” (24)

(sob āsā ghuce gelo sebā korbo bhajan śikhbo)
ke ār śunābe moder rādhā guṇa gān?
ke ār milāye debe śrī rādhā caran?
ke ār koribe temon pāṭh rasa grantha?
tomā sama kebā ār āche bhāgyavanta?

(All my hopes are dashed for rendering devotional service and learning *bhajan*.)
Who else will sing me of Rādhā’s glories?
Who else will help me attain Śrī Rādhā’s lotus-feet?
Who else will lecture like that on *rasika* scriptures?
Who is so fortunate as you are? (25)

(hāy! morā ki korbo, kothā gele ābār pābo? – hāy morā ki korbo?)
bālye mora bairāgya hoilā prabhu more ākarṣilā
duḥkhe gelām nabadwīpa mājh

*dekhi prabhur doyā hoilo nija kāche bolāilo
duḥkhī hoilā dekhi mora sāj*

“Alas! What can I do, where should I go to find you again? Alas, what should I do?” In my childhood I became renounced and Prabhu attracted me. In distress I went to Navadvīp and when Prabhu saw me he was compassionate and called me to him. He was sad to see how I dressed.” (26)

*ḍāki kāche bosāilā , sakṛpāy āśray dilo,
sompi dilā madan-gopāla pāy
vraje dilo pāṭhāiyā, nija kṛpā sancāriyā,
se kṛpār tulanā nāhi hoy*

“He called me to him and mercifully gave me shelter at the lotus-feet of Madan-gopāl. He dispatched me to Vraja and empowered me with his own grace, of which there is no equal.” (27)

*śrī guru karuṇā bole, gaura sevā avahēle,
peye dhanya mui dīna hīna
ei kṛpā koro sabe, yabe karma śeṣa hobe,
hoi jeno ei raje līna*

“On the strength of Śrī Guru’s mercy the service of Śrī Gaurāṅga is easily attained and a lowly wretch like me will be blessed. May everyone be merciful to me so that when my duties in the world of action are completed, I can attain the dust of his feet.” (28)

*dīna ‘rādhā-govinda dās’, śrī guru caraṇe āśa,
gāy ei virahera gāṅthā
sarva bhaktera caraṇete, ei bhikṣā dine rāte,
guru guṇa gāi yathā tathā*

“The fallen Rādhā Govinda Dās, hoping for the lotus-feet of Śrī Guru, sings this song of separation. Day and night I pray for this gift at the feet of all the devotees – may I sing the glories of the Guru everywhere.” (29)

ŚRĪLA ĀNANDA GOPĀL GOSWĀMĪ

By Samyukta Debnāth

Pūjyapāda Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī Mahodaya was the crown jewel of Vaiṣṇavas. I had the rare fortune to enjoy the vicinity of this *mahā-puruṣa*. He is my *dikṣā-guru*. I heard from my grand-uncle (Śrī Rākhāl-chandra Ghosh), grandfather (Śrī Jagannātha Ghosh) and grandmother (Śrīmatī Belārāṇī Ghosh) that Gurudeva Śrī-Śrīla Ānanda Gopāla Gosvāmī Mahāśaya used to come to lecture on the Bhāgavat 2-3 times a year in the Chāltā Bāgān Mandir (forgot the name) in the Simlā district of Calcutta. My revered grand-uncle and –mother used to go to the Chāltā Bāgān Mandir to listen. I heard from my revered grand-uncle that the assembled devotees of Calcutta used to wait to hear Gurudeva’s lectures like thirsty Cātaka birds. Whole groups of devotees used to come to Chāltā Bāgān Mandir to hear these lectures. Here my grand-uncle and –mother used to go and speak with Gurudeva after the *pāṭha* and would take him to our home. From that time on Gurudeva would stay in our house whenever he came to Calcutta. This is now about 60 years ago⁴. One time he came to our home (at 3 Anath Babu Bazar Lane, Cal-6) bringing his deities Śrī-Śrī Madana-gopāla, Whom he was always serving, and stayed for 6 weeks to 2 months. It is then when I first saw him. It was arranged that every evening Gurudeva would lecture in our house, which was a huge white brick two-story building. On one side of the building was Gurudeva and on the other side were descending stairs. These stairs used to be filled up to the first floor with a crowd of devotees that were listening. In those days microphones were not yet used, but his sweet baritone voice and the beauty of his amazing descriptions caused *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-līlā* to appear in very form before the audience. The overwhelmed audience was spell bound and motionless, as if enchanted by a *mantra*. Apart from that I also heard that arrangements were made to bring audiences from different temples, ashrams and institutions. From my grand-uncle’s mouth I heard that not only Calcutta was impressed by the amazing expertise of his lecturing, but even foreign regions were.⁵ Many scholars elaborately praised his lectures after hearing them.

⁴ At the time this article was written, perhaps around the year 2000.

⁵ Here foreign means other parts of India, not foreign countries.

After the lectures were finished Gurudeva would discuss *śāstra* with the devotees into the night, for a long time.

He got up from bed at 4 in the morning to serve Madanagopālji. After that he sat down to do *japa*. The *siṃhāsana* of Madanagopāl was in front of him. Gurudeva was sitting there in meditation. His body was motionless. Without end, tears trickled from his closed eyes. I have seen that Ṛṣi steeped in meditation. But at that point my immature mind could not understand yet what a great *sādhaka* was going to some high world to serve the lotus-feet of his worshipable Lord.

An offering of fruits and sweets used to be given to Śrī Madanagopāl at 10 in the morning, but the offering was not taken off the altar before Gurudeva had completed his *japa*.

The responsibility of writing about Gurudeva has fallen upon a most insignificant person like me. What shall I write? I could not understand his elevated *sādhana* and his learning while I had his association. Now, at a mature age I see him in the light of a learned mind and I ponder on how much good fortune the Lord has bestowed on me to become the disciple of such a great soul who was a direct maidservant of Śrī Rādhārāṇī.

Whatever service I could playfully render in this short time is my life's savings.

Today also it is my keen prayer at his lotus-feet that he may engage me in the service of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet. Because unless Guru bestows his mercy we cannot go to Her.

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