

## A VISITOR'S ACCOUNT OF SITANATH'S UTSAV, FEBRUARY 2011

Jay Radhe



Diary of Sitanather Utsava in Sri Nikunja Gopal Gosai ashram

### Five Blissful days at Prachin Mayapur

When I arrived the first day in Sadhu Baba Ashram I perceived the same atmosphere of Sri Vrindavana for the first time since I arrived in Nabadwip. Knowing with faith that Nabadwip is non-different from Vraja, blind as I am I really needed to see a silent blissful and sweet natural village to remember my Vraja, my prana and dhana.

By the treasure-like mercy of a senior disciple of Sri Nikunja G. Gosai I came to know the location of his holy Ashram during my stay in Nabadwip.

It is too little to say that in Prachin Mayapur I felt at home. The merciful glance of the didis Tulsi and Namita showered me with Sitanather kripa and the divine fountain of the loving glance of Sri Nikunja Maharaja.

Especially I felt just like being in Govardhana, with the cows being in the ashram and gobar (cow dung) all over the natural floor. This was not the ordinary beauty of nature but the sweetest divine human pastime, where

every single particle of dust is the sacred holy dhama of Madan Gopal. Wherever The Lord resides and relishes the treasure service of his beloved devotee, there is Vraja, and that place is worshiped by all His dear servants.

With humble bhava and great eagerness I asked to reside in the holy ashram for 5 days, intending to celebrate the great festival of the Appearance of Sri Advaita Prabhu and with great happiness I embraced the kind hospitality extended by the spiritual daughters and sons of Sadhu Baba Maharaj.

Rasika devotees nourish their life and bhajan with rasika sanga and they are always eager to search for and achieve that rare, golden chance to behold such sanga.

Every disciple of Sadhu Baba possesses special esoteric qualities. Sadhu Baba probably was very selective in accepting disciples. His preference falls on those who spontaneously offer their genuine heart's surrender, more than any external show of bhajan. In this way only those who were really sincere and possessed genuine devotion became the fortunate beggars for His divine mercy. Even today we can see how when a disciple is pure, free from duplicity, innocent in his thought, and free from reservation in his total abandon, then only his heart became a crystal reflecting the mystical, marvelous feature and inner nature of his Guruji. This is the meaning of jemon guru temon sisya [so Guru, so disciple].

Just as we can perceive Lord Krishna in Vraja anywhere and everywhere, in the same way here we can perceive the presence of those who descend in the divine family of Advaita Prabhu and are born to be Acarya. Even now Sri Nikunja Gopal Gosai, Sithanath Avatara, permeates this holy ashram where purity and simplicity are the fresh blowing breeze of the surrounding atmosphere.

In the soothing shadow of the Bael-tree, at the lotus-like base of of Sri Sadhu Baba's baitak [seat], I offered my most genuine homage and my hearty prayers, bowing joyfully to Sri Gopesvara and beholding within

the core of my heart the sweetest darshana of Lord Madan Gopal, whose complexion is like an autumnal cloud and whose merciful glance protects everyone who takes shelter of His simple but most gracious mandir.

Here everything is impregnated with the sweet smile of Madan Gopalji and his beautiful cows. His smile is like the sun of the ashram and bestow rays of prema to his residents, warming their hearts in the cold winter and soothing their minds in the hot summer, filling their thought with the mystery of His divine Lila.

The cow dung on the floors announces the good fortune of those who reside in this marvelous hidden Vrindavan. The senior female devotees who are in charge of the ashram are extremely compassionate, grave, and seriously dedicated to the loving service of the mandir - these sweet care-takers are just like Sita Thakurani. They are the fortunate Kripa patras of Sadhu Baba and the heart of their beloved Madan Gopalji.

Here peace reigns supreme. The silence of inner devotion announces the smaran of the hidden madhurya of Vraja, which melts the hearts of those who have the rare fortune to reside here even for a few days.

In this ashram purity is the natural fruit of a higher ruci; humility is the effulgence of the soul bowing to every living entity just like the sun bows to the earth with its unlimited rays - faith and bhakti are the result of a genuine surrender to the Feet of Sri Guru. All these attributes of Sadhu Baba's bhaktas are encased in the frame of their unsophisticated nature, authentic modesty and kind hospitality which made me feel the only discomfort was the sad day of my departure.

The mellow of Gaura (Vraja prema and Radha dasya) combined with the grave and deep bhava of Lord Sivaji incarnated in Sri Advaita Acarya, and Sri Sitanathji undoubtedly manifested Himself in the Holy person of Sri Nikunja Gosai who inherited divine esoteric qualities unknown to common people, which He disclosed only to the rare souls who follow the spiritual descendants of Advaita Prabhu, the Adwaita vamsa.

It is perceived that Sadhu Baba likes simple-hearted people, not those who make a show to chant lakhs of names, but who instead possess genuine devotion and are by nature very innocent, though actually learned in the essence of the holy shastra.



Above all, a very loving and respectful attitude towards women permeates the ashram, especially the deep belief that who received the divine mercy of the Lord and Sri Guru can act as guides and representatives of their Guru after His departure from this world. When purity is combined with affectionate care it bestows a warm joy to the heart, and this made me really feel like their little sister. In the ashram women are not excluded or feared as agents of maya, but revered and loved with the same innocent affection and care everyone spontaneously gives to a mother.

There were not so many rooms available in the ashram, and many senior disciples attended the festival. It is well said that a house is as big as the heart of its owner. In this way many families spent several days together, celebrating the Utsava with a blissful heart. By some unreasonable

fortune I also received the chance to spend these wonderful 5 days in such a marvelous vaisnava-sanga. Finally I found the place where renunciation and loving care go together in this golden treasure family of Sri Gauranga.

The day before the appearance day of Sitanathji a joyful Asta prahar Maha mantra Kirtan was permeating the ashram, filling our hearts with the sacred memories of Sadhu Baba, who performed 3 months harinam continuously without bothering about eating or sleeping before He departed for His Nitya Lila.

I wonder now, if I felt so many blooming sweet devotional emotions at heart, spending only 5 days in this gupta Vrindavan of Sri Nikunja Gosai, then how deep must have been the faith and bhava of those who spent maybe 5 months or even their entire lives here, in the service of Sri Guru and His beloved Deities?

All over the ashram many Tulsi-trees grow, poured with the fountain of bhakti flowing from the heart of the great care taker of the mandir.

The worship of Sri Gopalji and the maintenance of the mandir is performed with whatever the Lord provides without any hard effort, and his dear servants are free from any greed or any desire for pratishtha.

A senior disciple of Sadhu Baba narrated wondrous divine pastimes regarding the time when His Guru was present in this world. I may recall some of them, which astonished me and delighted my heart with great bliss -

When Sri Nikunja Gosai was residing in this ashrama there were no buildings at all there, only the small mandir, the Bael tree and forest all around. Sadhu Baba used to sit under the Bael-tree to perform his deep bhajan even in the cold or in the heat. He used to cure his disciples with many herbs, extracts from plants, bael fruits and secret mantras.

Once Gopalji asked Him personally to play his Sitar in front of the mandir and when Sadhu Baba started to play and chant bhajan with his Sitar, a snake crawled all over his body and across his belly, but Sri

Sadhu Baba carried on chanting, playing his Sitar undisturbed. Later the snake left, leaving the assembly of devotees amazed.

Once a devotee whose name was Bablu came to take darshan of Sri Nikunja Gosai with his old mother. Sadhu Baba predicted an unexpected death for this young devotee. A few weeks later, during the celebration of Sri Advaita Acarya's appearance day, Bablu took shelter of Sadhu Baba as his life and soul. Sri Guru then advised him to surrender and pray to Madan Gopalji so he would have not to fear death anymore. During his stay in the ashram Bablu was bitten by a snake and left his body in the presence of his gurubhais. Sadhu Baba then instructed one of his disciples to give some water to drink to Bablu, who suddenly regained his consciousness and came back to life by the power of the great siddhi and mercy of his Gurudev.

Somehow the event repeated itself some other time, and Bablu was again bitten by a snake. He immediately ran to the mandir but he fainted senseless at the gate of the ashram.. Sadhu Baba immediately perceived that Bablu had arrived, and sent a disciple to bring him in front of him. Sadhu Baba then recited some secret mantra and Bablu regained his life for the second time, developing more and more intense love for his Gurudev.

Once during a prominent day for the worship of Lord Sivaji, Sri Nikunja Maharaja was seen seated above the water of the Ganga near a ghat near His mandir where He accepted the abhisekha [shower] of Ganga-water, revealing He was Sadashiva Himself. Gaura Das, a devotee I met during the utsav, and a few other fortunate disciples beheld that unique and esoteric darshan.

Today, 10 February 2011, a procession of devotees are holding photos of Sithanathji and Sadhu Baba for the parikrama of the inner path of Prachin Mayapur, bestowing nam kripa of their holy kirtan to all the fortunate listeners around the naturally beautiful horizon of cows, villagers (dham vasis), palm and coconut trees, framed by the Holy streams of Sri Ganga. Someone still remembered that when Sadhu Baba

was present, on this occasion 25.000 Vaisnavas performed this parikrama with an indescribably blissful kirtan.

Feeling unlimitedly grateful to all the devotees of the holy ashram where I received kind care and a powerful example to nourish my humble bhakti lata, a huge fire of spirituality which inspired and enlightened my soul, I pay my homage again and again with deep devotion, praying to their lotus feet that I may always remember in my heart all the devotees of Sri Gaura Hari who are an unlimited ocean of mercy and divine qualities...

Their touch and blessing enable us to see Sri Madan Gopal holding a flute in His hands, His glance full of Vraja madhurya. Even when, in His external pastimes, He is taking the cows to the groves, He hopes in the core of His heart that Radhaji's kinkaris will soon arrange His meeting with Priyaji. With His hand He seems to be begging for the glance of His beloved Mohini Radha..

Jay Nitai Gaur Sitanath! Doya koro doya koro kripa koro more..

Jay Radhe

Indurekha dasi