

Our Family the Gaudiya Math

A study of the expansion of
Gaudiya Vaisnavism
and the many branches
developing around the
Gaudiya Math.

Swami B.A. Paramadvaiti

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This book is dedicated to
all Vaisnavas and to Bhakti Devi.
Bhakti Devi's wonderful plan to inundate
the whole world with the Holy Names
of Her Lord and Master
is our saving grace.

The holy sandals of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur in
Sri Vrajasvananda Sukhada Kunj,
Sri Radha Kunda, are shown on the cover.

Srila Prabhupad appeared in this world to save the fallen and conditioned
souls. As a chosen messenger of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he
invigorated His sampradaya
by introducing many novel preaching strategies which successfully faced
the rapidly changing conditions of the people in this age of Kali. He
descended, along with some of his eternal associates, in order to fulfill the
divine plan of the Lord. Praying to his lotus feet we beg to be admitted in
the realm of the servants of his servants and be blessed by the mercy of all
the Vaisnavas. May his glories be spread all over the three worlds.

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I am eternally indebted to them.

Dear readers

Please accept my dandavat pranams at your feet. Kindly try to follow these recommendations in order to get acquainted with the scope and spirit of this book.

1. Read it from beginning to end.
2. Forgive the author for any omissions or mistakes unwillingly committed.
3. Put all your doubts aside and agree to judge only after you have considered all the points presented herewith.
4. Try to find the answers to the doubts you have had about the Gaudiya Math and any of its branches.
5. Notice that this book was not written to diminish anybody, but rather to realistically glorify all Gaudiya Math branches.
6. Let us not spare any effort to harmonize the relationship amongst the Vaisnavas in all the world.

Apologies:

This book has been compiled with the help of many Vaisnavas. Since many of them do not remember many historical details we have compiled the records as we could gather the information. Nevertheless, this is not a complete record and much more research has to be done to include any additional members or important events in the history of the Gaudiya Math and all of its branches. We have also gathered more information on some missions than on others. The real purpose of this book, however, is to bring Vaisnavas from all over the world closer to each other; and this purpose can be served particularly if more people and events are to be added in future editions.

Thank you very much for taking your valuable time to read this book which is an offering to your feet. I have no qualification to write about all the great souls mentioned in this book. For my own purification, I have accumulated all their Holy Names and researched some of the sociological aspects of our growing Vaisnava community.

It is my hope that this book may please you all.

Daso'smi

Swami B.A. Paramadvaiti

Introduction

I wrote this book in an attempt to please my spiritual master, Param Pujyapad Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, affectionately known to his disciples as Srila Prabhupad. My spiritual master stated that after the disappearance of a great acharya, great disturbances and confusion manifests. This year is his centennial appearance year, and his followers and admirers are somewhat divided and spread out all over the world. Might this be Krishna's plan to make his devotees surrender more?

We have heard and witnessed that after the disappearance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupad, there was much confusion among his disciples. Similar confusion arose after the departure of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Maharaj and many other leading acharyas. Even after Lord Chaitanya's disappearance, His sampradaya went through difficult times. Following this pattern, after the height of the construction of the great temples of Vrindavan, came the period of Muslim attacks when great monuments of the Vaisnava faith were severely damaged, and deities had to go into hiding.

Vrindavan, along with the hope of the Vaisnavas, was later restored, however, by Srila Visvanath Cakravarti Thakur and Srila Baladev Vidyabhusan. Then, when the legitimacy of the Gaudiya Sampradaya was questioned, Srila Baladev Vidyabhusan wrote the famed Govinda Bhasya as the commentary of the Gaudiya Sampradaya on the Vedanta Sutra. Years later, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's prediction that Vaisnavism would eventually influence the entire world and that in every town and village the Holy Names of the Lord would be sung, began to manifest through the activities of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur's studies had first drawn him towards Western philosophical teachings. Only after coming across the original Vaisnava writings, did he discover the greatest treasure of the world lying within; hidden by unfortunate historical developments of his time. During his early life, Vaisnavism in Bengal was suffering severely under British oppression which had replaced the Muslim tyranny of India. Many pseudo Vaisnava groups, due to their degraded sensual abuses in the name of Vaisnavism, had given a bad name to the sampradaya and to Vedic culture at large. Thus, he began his own mission with the purpose of defeating all these abuses and misinterpretations, and vigorously preached pure Vaisnavism. He also established the process of Nama Hatta for distributing the Holy Name to the entire world without discrimination. In this way, all traditional obstacles, such as caste consciousness, misrepresentations of the teachings, or attempts to claim proprietorship over Lord Chaitanya's

teachings, were soundly defeated by the Thakur. Two generations later, my spiritual master, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, fulfilled the prediction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, as well as the wishes of all acharyas, by taking the teachings of India to the rest of the world; thus bringing new aspirants from all classes and countries to the feet of the Vaisnavas. Today, two years after the re-establishment of the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha under the guidance of the senior most living disciple of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj, it has become obvious that the disciples of all the different branches of the Gaudiya Math are longing for a combined effort to serve our sampradaya. We see that vigorous efforts of individual Vaisnavas are becoming successful. As the teachings of Lord Chaitanya start embracing the world with so many different arms, it reminds us of the all-pervading universal form of the Lord. I have collected here, as much as I could, information on the history of our family, the Gaudiya Math, to serve my friends and senior Vaisnavas. Sometimes we disrespect that which we don't know and are quick to cast judgments on others due to our own immature weaknesses. Some devotees do not even realize that, as one of the branches, they are members of the Gaudiya Math family. It certainly does not look good for a person to ignore the other branches of the same tree which has given him the life of loving devotional service. We see that the different generations and missions are merging into a combined effort in the true spirit of Unity in Diversity. This cooperation is wanted. This is truly sankirtan, the congregational chanting of the Holy Names; with no attempt to control each other, but rather to love and serve each other. Of course, we still have a long way to go in order to convince all Vaisnavas to give their heart's support to this plan of Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupad and Srila Jiva Goswami Prabhupad. This will bring about an unprecedented power for the Vaisnavas in this world.

It is also true that a branch of the Chaitanya Tree may dry up and separate from the tree. We are neither happy or proud of it, yet this can happen, for example, when Vaisnava aparadha becomes rampant, or the teachings are severally distorted by some ill motivated persons. We will have to dwell on this subject in some of the chapters of this book in order to advise ourselves and hopefully learn from the mistakes of others. We should always follow the track which will certainly lead us into the service camp of Srimati Radharani and Her empowered agents.

I pray to all our readers to bless this fallen soul who has dared to approach such an elevated subject, despite his low birth and hopeless condition. I have done so in order to glorify my spiritual master and all of your spiritual masters beyond all limits. Please forgive me if I have omitted any important information or if I have made any mistakes. May Srila Gurudev guide us to write these words solely in his service. May Sri

Gauranga Mahaprabhu, the embodiment of the divine couple of Brajendra Nandana Krishna, the svayam rupa of the Lord and His beloved Srimati Radhika the svarupa shakti, bless us to never loose the association of his confidential servants. May Lord Sri Vishnu, Sri Narasingha Bhagavan, the protector of all the Vaisnavas, protect us from any mistakes in this presentation. May you, beloved Vaisnava Thakur, pray for my soul to loose all attraction to this mundane existence and to receive the shelter at Sri Nityananda's lotus feet.

This is my audacious request,
Swami B. A. Paramadvaiti

Part I

The Harmonist

The Movement of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

The ontology and history of the movement of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has filled many volumes. There are biographies of him written by Krishna das Kaviraj Goswami, Vrindavan das Thakur, and Lochan das Thakur. Throughout the history of his sampradaya further books on his life and teachings have been written and published in many languages.

Here we would like to point out one interesting feature: How Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu established Unity in Diversity in our sampradaya. How, for example, he sent many Vaisnavas to establish branches of his family into different locations. These Vaisnavas, in their various moods, brought a range of followers to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Among them are: Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Jahnavi devi, Sri Advaita Prabhu, Svarup Damodar, Ray Ramananda, as well as Gadadhar Pandit in Navadvip; Vakreshvar Pandit and Prabhodananda Sarasvati in South India and Vrindavan; the six Goswamis in Vrindavan; Syamananda Pandit in Orissa; Narottam das Thakur in Manipur and many other places; Srinivas Acharya in Bihar and other areas. All these associates of the Lord had some relationship with the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha of Srila Sanatana Goswami, Srila Rupa Goswami and Srila Jiva Goswami, and today we worship all of them, even if we generally do not maintain much connection with their respective preceptorial lines.

Tolerance and respect for all Vaisnavas and their different moods was the nature of Sri Chaitanya's teachings. While most of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's associates had the mood of the followers of Srimati Radhika, some had the mood of sakhya-bhava and others had the bhava of love for Sri Rama. Due to the development of prakrita-sahajiyism of many kinds, it later became difficult to distinguish the quality of each group. The scriptures, however, give us many guidelines to understand the adhikara and the integrity of a Vaisnava. As a matter of fact, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was a great savior of the dignity of the Vaisnava contributions to the world. Today Vaisnavism is a major force of religious enthusiasm, spread all over the world in the shape of many missions and individual Vaisnava preachers who all adhere to the strict principles of sanatandharma. As devotees of a personal Supreme God, the Vaisnavas give a non-sectarian and loving contribution to the world of theism.

Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur said, "We accept in our line those who are fully perfected souls, who know the correct siddhanta, and who are rasika, wherever they are." In this way all of the various lines were represented in our parampara in one place or another.

There are so many lines of disciplic succession, but Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur said that we will recognize the guru-parampara, not the disciplic succession.

The guru-parampara is composed solely of those who were bhagavat-gurus, even if they made no disciples and therefore there is no direct disciplic line coming from them. Some of them may not have initiated any disciples at all, but still they are jagat-gurus. In this way, with all pervading vision he collected all the mahajanas and made what is known as the bhagavat-parampara or the guru-parampara.

After the departure of Visvanath Cakravarti Thakur, so many familial disciplic lines arose, but Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur ignored them and gave recognition to Baladev Vidyabhusana, and then Jagannath das Babaji. He accepted only those in whom he detected the real spiritual siddhanta. Simply receiving the mantra in one's ear and wearing a dhoti or other cloth given by the guru does not qualify one as the guru's successor. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur did not receive any mantra from Jagannath das Babaji Maharaj, so how was he his disciple? He was a disciple of his conception: his feelings towards Krishna, his conception of rasa and his conception of tattva. This is a disciple. Most people can't understand this, but being able to see with such insight, Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur declared this to be our line.

Srila Gaur Kishor das Babaji Maharaj was also not an initiated disciple of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, but he embraced all of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur's sentiments and conceptions, and due to this his name appears next in the succession. At this point, some of the babajis said, "Whose disciple is Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati? Who gave him sannyas? Why doesn't he wear the same cloth as Sanatana Goswami did? In our sampradaya contrary to Sriman Mahaprabhu who took sannyas from Keshava Bharati everyone wore white cloth, but we see that he wears saffron cloth and accepted a danda. How can he do this?" But what relation does wearing either orange or white cloth have with bhakti? Is there any relation?

*kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya*

"Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi, or a sudra, if he knows krishna-tattva, then he is a guru" (CC, Madhya-lila 8.128), so what to speak of being a Vaisnava? Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur was thinking, "We are not qualified to accept the dress which was worn by such great personalities as Rupa, Sanatana, Jiva and Krishnadas Kaviraj. We will remain in the ordinary dress of sannyasis, and will not accept the dress of paramahansa-babajis. Remaining within the varnasram system as

brahmacharis and sanniyasis we will keep the ideal of that paramahansa dress above our heads. Otherwise, if we accept that dress and commit sinful activities, it will be aparadha at the feet of Rupa and Sanatana.”

Some babajis wear paramahansa dress and give the elevated gopi-mantra to anyone and everyone who may come, yet Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur was only training brahmacharis and giving them instructions on how to control the senses. So, which is correct? First Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur wanted us to understand what is siddhanta: jiva-tattva, maya-tattva, bhagavat-tattva, how to avoid maya in the forms of kanaka, kamini, and pratishta - these are the beginning instructions.

Gopi-bhava is very elevated; first we must understand that “I am Krishna-das” and begin taking Harinama. But some babajis immediately give their conception of gopi-bhava to whoever approaches them; then they all chant “I am a gopi, I am a gopi,” and in this way create a disturbance in society.

Our Sampradaya

The Sampradaya, as given to us by our spiritual masters, goes back to Lord Sri Krishna. Thus a great amount of spiritual masters throughout history have represented the Supreme Lord in this world. In this way they have shaped the evolution of the Vaisnava school. Srila Madhvacharya gave special glory to the school known as Brahma Sampradaya, and the appearance of Srila Madhavendra Puri further enhanced the teachings. Then the Brahma Madhva Sampradaya was blessed without limit by the appearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He accepted the sampradaya and was initiated by the disciple of Srila Madhavendra Puri, Srila Isvara Puri. Through him the transcendental school is now known as the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Lord Himself. He appeared to save the fallen souls in the age of Kali with his Sankirtan Movement, the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord. Another great gift of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the rediscovery of Sri Vrindavan Dham. He predicted that the Gaudiya sampradaya would reach every corner of the world. His principal disciples, the six Goswamis of Vrindavan, blessed us with a flood of writings to give detailed guidance to the Vaisnavas of the present age.

Every spiritual master in this line, as well as their activities, deserve to be studied. Still, the detailed history of our sampradaya remains limited to the availability of information. In order to understand the formation of

the different branches of our sampradaya we have given many details here. Due to the world wide preaching of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, there is now great demand for Vaisnava association. All this helps to form different branches of the sampradaya which embrace the world in a tide of Vaisnava mission networks.

It is noteworthy that the importance of the individual spiritual masters is the lifeline of the spreading of the sampradaya, never to overshadow the supreme importance of the Supreme Lord or the Gaudiya Vedanta siddhanta. Thus, over the years many masters have come and gone, but Sri Krishna, his beloved Srimati Radharani, and their combined incarnation of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, are deities who are universally worshipped by many Vaisnavas.

Taking into consideration the history of the sampradaya, we see how the individual spiritual masters are not given the same importance as the different disciples must give to their different individual gurus. Overall importance is given to their teachings and contributions to the world. Their explanation of the Vedanta, their literary contribution, the deities they installed, the places of pilgrimage they established, their contribution to the expansion of the Chaitanya tree, and their relationships with other Vaisnavas are all considered when estimating the importance of someone's contributions to the Vaisnavas school of thought.

Therefore, it is also said that the acharyas are self-effulgent. They shine in the light of their service to all. Even those acharyas who do not stand out in history, carry the same importance for their disciples as the famous acharyas do. Except in the case of a person who is an impostor and does not care for the real Vaisnava life, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu confirmed in the Chaitanya Charitamrita (CC Madhya-lila 7.128-129) that he will personally protect any one who teaches the science of Krishna; as taught in books like the Bhagavat Gita and the Srimad Bhagavatam:

„Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Sri Krishna as they are given in Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land“. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu further advised the brahmana Kurma: „If you follow this instruction, your materialistic life at home will not obstruct your spiritual advancement. Indeed if you follow these regulative principles, we will again meet here, or, rather, you will never lose My company“. (CC Madhya-lila 7.128-129)

The Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha World Vaisnava Association

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the most loving and humble, merciful and futuristic personality in the recent history of divine guidance manifesting in this world for all Vaisnavas. It would be wonderful if his plan to inundate the world with the Holy Names could manifest through the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha or World Vaisnava Association that was designed by none other than our dear Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupad and promoted by his beloved Srila Jiva Goswami Prabhupad.

Since its creation, the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha has re-manifested several times, the last time under the guidance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupad. It is only natural that his senior most living disciple, Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaj, continue this important mission.

The fact that Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj fulfilled the prediction of Lord Chaitanya - that Krishna's name would be chanted around the world - has revealed the true meaning of the name World Vaisnava Association and the necessity of this association in our present age. Thus, the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha or World Vaisnava Association (WVA-VVRS) is the plan of our acharyas, and all the living disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur have accepted it as the revival of the original Sabha established during Mahaprabhus advent. All aspiring Vaisnavas in the line of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur who try to serve their respective gurus are automatically members of the WVA-VVRS; whether they know it, accept it, or not. The many who are already actively involved in the re-establishment of the WVA-VVRS are mentioned here in various ways. Some members belong to the group of founding members of the WVA-VVRS. (The WVA-VVRS has also established that any sannyasi or acharya who joins the WVA-VVRS will also be considered as an equal founding member.) Meanwhile, some missions have not yet fully endorsed the WVA-VVRS. Nevertheless, many of their members are involved with the WVA-VVRS on an individual basis.

Since this book is directed towards the entire Gaudiya Math family, and since the founder of the Gaudiya Math, Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, is also famous as Srila Prabhupad, we have chosen, for the sake of clarity and etiquette, to name all of the Vaisnavas by their initiation or sannyas name. Vaisnavas of other Vaisnava sampradayas or other branches of the Chaitanya tradition can also be members of the WVA-VVRS in as much as they perceive that the Supreme Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu chose Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur as a special agent for fulfilling his predictions.

It is our humble opinion that the Vaisnava theistic mission - meant to benefit the entire world - has been most extraordinarily preserved and

distributed through the Gaudiya Math branch of our sampradaya. It is notable, as will be clearly shown in this book, that Lord Sri Krishna has utilized the Gaudiya Math in his plan for distributing Vaisnava teachings to the world. We say this with all respect to the great contributions of the four Vaisnava sampradayas and their very old traditions, or any other followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who have kept up the pure spirit of Mahaprabhu's line. In fact, one of the projects of the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha is to research the Chaitanya tree and our association with all other Vaisnavas of the older South Indian sampradayas who were blessed by the personal visit of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself.

The WVA-VVRS is working to unify the Gaudiya Math and all its extended and developing branches; to inspire individual devotees to take up responsibility for preaching; and to approach the entire Vaisnava world with the all encompassing contribution of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The particulars of this unified effort will manifest as advancement is made in the yearly WVA-VVRS Melas held in Srivas Angan, Mayapur and Radha Govindaji, Vrindavan, as well as in our joint presentations on the Internet.

Acharyas and missions desiring to become more actively involved in the action plans of the WVA-VVRS are invited to come twice a year to the organizational meetings of the WVA-VVRS to prepare proposals to the entire membership. These meetings are held before each international meeting day. Gradually, these meetings will produce an effective evolution of the WVA-VVRS as a joint forum to coordinate whatever future plans will manifest to benefit the world with the Vaisnava's contribution.

The common cause of all Vaisnavas, especially those interested in preaching, is served by such efforts as the WVA-VVRS which, like a transcendental "trade show," inform one another of the work done by each separate Vaisnava mission. It facilitates the sharing of preaching accomplishments with other missions. It also creates an environment which is attractive to other Vaisnava sampradayas which in one way or another have remained isolated in their own groups. When they see how Lord Chaitanya has inspired the world wide branches of His sampradaya to create a favorable atmosphere to spread the yuga dharma in this world, they will be drawn to contribute to the cause with their sanga. In addition, the world will learn to see Vaisnavism as a true world religion, far beyond what main stream religions and secular people have categorized to be a strange sect.

Vaisnava history does not, at any point, claim that a particular Vaisnava school may have the exclusive rights to represent the Vaisnava tradition. The Unity in Diversity which manifests through different disciples of the guru, who start new branches of the same tree is what has made the Vaisnava tradition survive up to today. Branches have thus

spread all over the world, sometimes with little or no contact with other branches of the same tradition. Needless to say, over the years this has caused certain varieties of styles and practices to develop. Through the standards established in the Vedic scriptures along with the writings of Lord Chaitanya's followers, it can easily be established who are true followers of these great teachings.

The transparent transmission of the transcendental current that may be found in a Vaisnava mission (represented by their respective spiritual leaders) depends on the divine will of God alone. Samasthi guru is the divine principle of the disciplic succession; the vyasti gurus are the individual representatives of that principle. Just as different electric outlets differ in place and form but sustain their validity due to being connected to the electric current coming from the same powerhouse. So the divine principle of guru-tattva is manifested through the divine revelation to the vyasti-guru.

The WVA-VVRS recognizes only those schools which teach the traditional Vaisnava values and are not promoting any particular line or branch at the expense of others. Still, it is not the aspiration of the WVA-VVRS to judge others genuineness or bona fide nature in this regard. Only in border cases would a commission study the eligibility of a particular group to participate with the WVA-VVRS in accordance with the principles of the Vaisnava tradition. In addition, the WVA-VVRS is not responsible if anyone claiming to be a Vaisnava, whether officially affiliated to the WVA-VVRS or not, commits any wrongdoing in this world. Such things are unavoidable, and the WVA-VVRS has no active role in or possibility to „straighten out“ anybody. In case of severe damage to the good image of the Vaisnavas, the same commission which studies border cases will decide whether some member or mission should be removed from the WVA-VVRS member list.

It is our honor and sacred wish to be able to embrace all true theists in the loving fold of the WVA-VVRS and in Vaisnava Unity in Diversity. The WVA-VVRS opens the doors for all Vaisnavas to cast aside all of their superficial misgivings with other Vaisnava groups, forgive any mistakes done by others in the past, and join the kirtan of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as it was planned by our acharyas. Maya divides - Krishna unites. WVA-VVRS is Krishna's uniting force: Uniting in spirit for the common cause of all Vaisnavas is not a threat to one's individual responsibilities to his own mission. It will be very effective if we can cast aside the smaller contentions regarding ritual and different traditions and focus on our real service: to save the world from impersonal indifference and apathy towards service to a personal God. This book serves to show how Krishna blesses the true devotee with the protection He has promised, and how the purity of His sampradaya is maintained. In regards to the

exploitation of nature and rampant materialism, all Vaisnavas share the same goals and should stand strongly united with a plan to face the horror of the influence of this age. In this way, the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha will become the forum to serve the plans of our one Supreme Lord. It would be logical and natural if all followers, after understanding the purpose of the WVA-VVRS, include themselves actively in this joint effort.

The Beginnings of the Gaudiya Math

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur took initiation in the Gaudiya sampradaya from Vipin Bihari Goswami. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was the first Vaisnava acharya to promote preaching in the Western world, and he also started the Nama Hata program as a means to freely distribute the Holy Name. During his lifetime several Vaisnavas became very prominent. Among them was his main source of inspiration, Srila Jagannath das Babaji, with whose help he rediscovered the actual birth place of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Then came his connection with Srila Gaur Kishor das Babaji Maharaj who, although considering himself a disciple of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, was approached by the Thakur for the dress and mantra of a renunciate. The Thakur sent his son, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, to take shelter of Srila Gaur Kishor das Babaji Maharaj. After initial reluctance on part of Babaji Maharaj, the boy was finally accepted as his disciple and was trained by both father and guru to uplift the world with the great Sankirtan movement. In this way, the stage was set to start a mission which would change the world view of Vaisnavas and Vaisnavism. It is this mission that became world famous as the Gaudiya Math.

Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur started the Gaudiya Math together with Kuñja Babu and other intimate associates. Just after the Gaudiya Math was legally established, Srila Prabhupada and his devotees escaped certain death by only seconds. As they left one public building through the exit, an upper balcony lost it's support and came over crashing down only inches away from the devotees and Srila Prabhupada. Undaunted, Srila Prabhupada fearlessly predicted the magnanimous activity of the new mission announcing: "The Gaudiya Math will be known for saving people from imminent danger."

The spirit of his father and his guru made Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur a very determined preacher who became known as the 'lion guru'. His disciples worked hard to help their guru, and deity worship began flourishing in many centers. Through the efforts of the many outstanding disciples of the founder, the original Nama Hata

program started to change into establishments of serious ashrams. From the most simple man or woman up to kings and famous people, all received the grace of the Sri Gaudiya Math equally.

In the beginning, the mission was a revelation to the Vaisnava world and was full of innovative contributions to the preaching spirit. The introduction of the tridandi sannyasis in the Gaudiya Sampradaya was a great surprise for many. The combination of the personal God and His inconceivably infinite potency was also quite new to a world where impersonalism and polytheism had become synonymous with Hinduism. At the same time, one of the great strengths of the Gaudiya Math was its push to send members out into the world, and the West was one of the destinations of the enthusiastic Gaudiya Math missionaries.

On July 20th, 1933 the Gaudiya Math was officially presented to the King and Queen of England. Not long afterwards, the first European preaching center was established in London (London Gloucester House, Cornwall Garden, W7 South Kensington) under the name 'Gaudiya Mission Society of London'. Lord Zetland, the English Secretary of State, was the president of this society.

The second European preaching center was opened by Srila B. H. Bon Maharaj in Berlin (W30 Eisenacherstr 29).

Later, on October 8th, 1935 some of the first aspirants were received with an official reception in the Howrah Station in Calcutta under the chairmanship of the Maharaj of Burdwan, Sri Bijoy Chand Mahatab.

The Gaudiya Math revealed the true treasure of the Vedanta, the Srimad Bhagavatam, to be the ripe fruit of Vedic knowledge. This presents a world view full of devotion to the One, Supreme Lord. The Lord can appear as many variegated avatars without losing His original position. Much like Christianity, although much older, the Vedic tradition (as represented by the Gaudiya Math) teaches how to become a loving servant of God in the eternal world. They call this region Goloka Vrindavan and it lays beyond the shores of our mundane senses.

The simple lifestyle which is promoted by the Gaudiya Math also brings light to a world which is about to self destruct due to greed for material sophistication and a lack of spiritual self-satisfaction and engagement.

The journey of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to different parts of India was the primeval introduction to a world view of Vaisnava unity. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur predicted that all the Vaisnava sampradayas would come together in the present age under the inspiration of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's contribution. Fulfilling this prediction, the Gaudiya Math began by establishing tirthas all over India in remembrance of the holy journey of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu; and Mahaprabhu's footprints were installed in seventeen places. The work of the founder acharya of the

Gaudiya Math also reflected the desire to glorify all the acharyas of all the Vaisnava sampradayas. He installed their Deities in the Gaudiya Math headquarters of Sri Mayapur, he published their writings, and he established some of the Gaudiya Math temples in South India.

Under the Gaudiya Math banner, the Vaisnavas fearlessly performed the needful. Temples were established in the heart of big modern cities; old Vaisnava books were published and distributed through the Brihat Mridanga (the printing press); Vaisnavas started to use motorcars, boats and machines for distributing their message; materialism was attacked with the use of its own offspring - technology; theistic exhibitions connected art and education to promote Vaisnava values, and so on. As time has already proven, the changes that occurred and the new activities that were introduced were both God-willed and empowered.

Still, some people criticized the Gaudiya Math for their preaching activities. In the beginning years, the Gaudiya Math strongly denounced the imitators of Vaisnavism which had several currents in those days known as the Auls, Bauls, Kartabhaja, Gauranga Nagari, Sakhi Bheki, etc. These groups did not find approval from Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur. In addition, the Gaudiya Math denounced the false claim of the caste-conscious brahmanas that it was necessary to be born in a brahmana family in order to become a brahmana. Previous to Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, renounced Vaisnavas used to dress in a simple white cotton gancha. This dress is known as the babaji dress and indicates that a person has given up all other concerns for this world. Even at that time, however, there were also many so called babajis who wore this dress without being qualified. The Gaudiya Math spoke out strongly against these “babajis” as well. In this way, there was no lack of opposition to the Gaudiya Math among these different groups.

Out of all the many currents which claim to follow Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Gaudiya Math has most strongly demonstrated how the true spirit of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu can uplift this world: a world devoid of spiritual, moral, social and ecological solutions. Meanwhile, some branches of the Chaitanya tree have either dried out, barely survived, or distorted the real teachings due to misconceptions that have arisen in the past. All have been blessed, however, by the vigorous campaign of the Gaudiya Math to establish Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in His real glory and to show the transcendental character of the disciplic succession. This real disciplic succession must be totally free from any type of monopolistic, elitist, or privilege hunting mentalities which go against the nature of a transcendental family.

Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupad had taught that true renunciation is to use everything in Krishna’s service. Through the Gaudiya Math this

became manifest within the Vaisnava world. Those who still criticize the founder of the Gaudiya Math are unhappy people. They could not do anything substantial to help the world develop love of God, serve the sankirtan yajña, or bring people to the holy waters of Sri Radha Kunda. They simply exhibit their ignorance and lack of compassion towards the conditioned souls. Overall, the Gaudiya Math gives a name to the quality and message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. This book shows us that all the developments in the Gaudiya Math and its further sub-branches such as the Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math, Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, ISKCON, Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti, etc., are all a plan of the Supreme Lord to spread His loving message.

It has been confirmed in the scriptures that Krishna loves all of His devotees and that He does not want to loose any one of His preachers or their accomplishments. In fact, there are always opportunities for lesser qualified souls to come and create disturbances within the missionary organizations. For this reason, Sri Krishna creates situations which oblige many devotees to take up spiritual responsibility themselves, again and again, in order to continue the mission of their Guru Maharaj.

Thus, we find many Vaisnava missions today. Some carry the name Gaudiya Math in one way or another, some do not. Some have many branches, some have only one. Some do a great amount of missionary activities, some are rather quiet and introverted.

All, however, are supposed to stand on the following foundation: To carry the flag of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu into the hearts of all the suffering, conditioned souls, and to uphold the glory of our common founders and all their surrendered servants. All this is due to the inspiration coming through Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur.

History of the Gaudiya Math Governing Body

Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur requested his disciples to form a governing body in his absence. This governing body was supposed to administer the mission after his departure. This body was formed by twelve members: Kuñja Babu, Paramananda, Ananta Vasudev, Srila Bhakti Keval Audulaumi Maharaj, Prof. Nisikantha Sanyal, Hayagriva das B., Giri Maharaj and others. Later, all sannyasis were added to this list. While he made Kuñja Babu (the first and life-long secretary of the Gaudiya Math) the president for life, he did not indicate any particular successor acharya. As he had often remarked - the acharya is self effulgent. Thus, the initial time after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupad

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur was filled with uncertainty, with many different opinions arising concerning how the mission would continue.

The humility of the leading devotees of the Gaudiya Math was remarkable. Nobody wanted to become guru and accept disciples. In general, the consensus of everyone was: ‘we are not qualified to become spiritual masters.’ That was the reason why no sannyasi of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur ventured to take up the acharya post. Still, everybody was shy and anxious to serve other senior Vaisnavas in the absence of their guru. Looking back, it seemed necessary that some dissension be created in Sri Krishna’s Mission, in order to involve all the qualified preachers in active missionary work. (I understand this to be the reason why Sri Krishna allowed His mission to enter into a period of disagreement).

As the decision on who would be the next acharya in the mission became a dispute, many devotees suffered in separation of their beloved Gurudev. Even though Kuñja Babu was undoubtedly the most prominent organizer of the Gaudiya Math during the lifetime of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, many sannyasis did not want to accept him as the next acharya. After some time, a learned brahmachari named Ananta Vasudev was suggested as the possible acharya for the Gaudiya Math and most of the Members of the GBC and the sannyasis accepted that proposal. Kuñja Babu and his close associates, however, did not agree with the decision. Subsequently, a dispute began and the original Gaudiya Math mission divided into two administrative bodies which continued preaching on their own, up to the present day. In a settlement they divided the 64 Gaudiya Math centers into two groups.

Due to the difficulties in the Gaudiya Math Institution, older and experienced Vaisnavas realized that the call from their guru had come for them to leave those institutions and begin new limbs of the Gaudiya Math branch of the Chaitanya tree as well. Some of those who left to start new branches of the Gaudiya Math became very successful. Although, throughout the years, several other very important branches have sprung up, let us first concentrate on the two primary branches.

The Sri Chaitanya Math Branch

Kuñja Babu was a close and very dear disciple of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur since the beginning of the Gaudiya Math. With his help the Gaudiya Math spread all over India. A lot of people joined the Math and many historical achievements took place. Practically speaking, he was the administrative genius who helped the

Gaudiya Math grow into a great mission. Even though he was not so popular among all of his godbrothers, he was still highly qualified.

After separating from the Gaudiya Mission at the Bagh Bazaar Temple, he opened the Sri Chaitanya Research Institute in Calcutta. He later took sannyas from Srila Bhakti Vijnan Ashram Maharaj and received the name of Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj. He remained the leader of the Chaitanya Math branch, writing many books and publishing many titles of the Gaudiya Siddhanta from the Madras Publishing department.

He attracted support and sympathy from many important Indian politicians, and preached non-stop while traveling all over India. He initiated many high ranking Indian leaders into the Bhakti tradition. Many of his godbrothers also worked with him and helped maintain and expand the Chaitanya Math. In the Chaitanya Math the most beautiful Samadhi Mandir of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupad was constructed by him. According to Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, who later started the ISKCON mission, Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj went home back to Godhead as a pure devotee. I am quoting this just to show that temporary disagreements between Vaisnavas do not indicate that they will not get the mercy of their guru and Krishna.

The Chaitanya Math branch in Mayapur, India also sponsored the All India Vaisnava Conference on two occasions. Under the organization of Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj, along with the attendance of many representatives of other Vaisnava institutions and sampradayas (such as the Pejwar Swami of Udupi), a conference was held to increase cooperation in the spreading of sanatana-dharma.

On the Vyasa puja day of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur in 1948 a resolution was made to appoint Srila Bhakti Hriday Bon Maharaj to the position of secretary for Sri Chaitanya Math, which he served for three years. At that time a disciple of Srila B. D. Madhava Maharaj was the secretary of B. V. Tirtha Maharaj. He later became the acharya of the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math under the sannyas name of Srila B. Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj. Then, in 1954, Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj, who had worked with Srila B. V. Tirtha Maharaj (even though he began initiating disciples earlier than him) decided to leave the Chaitanya Math with most of his disciples.

After Srila B. V. Tirtha Maharaj's disappearance from this world, his godbrother Srila Bhakti Kusum Sraman Maharaj became the next acharya. In addition, many other disciples of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur started accepting disciples within and in association with the Chaitanya Math. Some are included in the following list:

- Srila Bhakti Srirup Siddhanti Maharaj. He was very dear to Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur as well as a great scholar who published many books; i.e. Uddhava Sandesh,

and Gita-anubhasya. He published a Ph.D. work on the Govinda Bhasya - the Vedanta-darshan. He also wrote Guru- pretha, The Dearest of Guru, a book in support of Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj. He had his own mission and disciples.

- Srila Padmanabha Maharaj of Guntur Gaudiya Math
- Srila Bhakti K. Tapasvi Maharaj, a disciple of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur
- Srila Bhakti Prasant Puri Maharaj, another disciple of Srila B. V. Tirtha Maharaj
- Srila Vishnu Maharaj and Srila Bhakti Prajñan Yati Maharaj

Under the Chaitanya Math mission the famous Yoga Pith, Srivas Angan, and other holy places in the Dham are maintained. After the disappearance of Srila B. K. Sraman Maharaj, the Chaitanya Math mission divided into several branches under the leadership of different sannyasis. The official person to accept disciples after Srila B. K. Sraman Maharaj's departure was Srila Bhakti Bhushan Bhagavat Maharaj, a disciple of Srila B. V. Tirtha Maharaj.

Later, many of the leaders of the Chaitanya Math, such as Srila B. S. Sajjan Maharaj, Srila Bhakti Prasun Puri Maharaj, Srila Avadhut Maharaj and Srila Bhakti Vaibhav Sagar Maharaj, helped to organize the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha meeting in Srivas Angan during Gaur Purnima of 1996. The first big World Vaisnava Association Mela was also celebrated at the same time. As the previous generations of great souls are gradually withdrawn from this world, it becomes the obvious duty of all older and newer members of this family tree to work hard in order to continue the great works started by the Gaudiya Math. Additional highlights during S. B.V. Tirtha Maharaj's time:

- 1958 Nov. 28, Dr. Radhakrisnan laid down the foundation stone of the Chaitanya Research Institute.
- 1960 Rajendra Prasad - the first president of India - came to visit the Madras Gaudiya Math on Janmastami and glorified the work of the Gaudiya Math.
- 1963 Raja Gopal Acharya - the British appointed General Governor of India also appreciated the work done by the Gaudiya Math.
- 1964 Dr. Radhakrisnan - the president of India declared that he was not truly a monist philosopher, for if he were, his father would not have given him this name. In 1964 they inaugurated the Chaitanya Research Institute with Sama Prasad Mukherji - the prime minister of India - at the University of Calcutta. At the opening there were fourteen lakhs (1,400,000) of people. There

the prime minister gave a speech in which he stated that simply making offerings to the deities is not real devotion. He explained that real devotion is demonstrated by one who spreads the Chaitanya cult without regard to cast, creed and color; inundating the whole civilization with the chanting of the Holy Names and the realization that we are all servants of Lord Sri Krishna.

- 1965 Both the president and vice president at this time - Dr. Raddy and V. D. Yati appreciated the work of Srila B.V. Tirtha Maharaj.

The Gaudiya Mission

Another principle group which branched out from the Gaudiya Math became known as the Gaudiya Mission. This mission kept the famous temple of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur at the Bagh Bazaar in Calcutta. Many central activities of the Gaudiya Math were at this temple in Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's time. However, this temple was also the cause for some dissatisfaction. The devotees fought over the use of some rooms after this splendid, marble floored temple was finished. Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur thus remarked that it would be better to sell all the marble and to print books. This temple was constructed with the impressive donation from Sri Jagabandhu Dutta. When the properties were divided, the Bagh Bazaar Math and Sri Dham Mayapur Yogapith were the most important settlements. Each group received one of these major properties to conduct their preaching mission.

Both Ananta Vasudev Prabhu and Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj were often asked to explain their guru's classes. Ananta Vasudev knew the verses his guru quoted even before he would quote them. While many senior sannyasis had declined to become acharyas, this brahmachari had shown great capacity to understand his guru's teachings. Thus when the governing body proposed that Ananta Vasudev Prabhu become the next acharya, and the proposal was accepted by many senior members of the Gaudiya Math, he accepted the post of acharya. When Kuñja Babu and his supporters started to defy their decision and to form a different branch, the Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math stayed under the guidance of Ananta Vasudev Prabhu. After accepting sannyas, Ananta Vasudev Prabhu became known as Srila Bhakti Prasad Puri Maharaj. Some years later, he left the mission, and the post was transferred to the expert hands of Srila Bhakti Keval Audulaumi Maharaj.

Srila B. K. Audulaumi Maharaj had been with the mission since the days of the Nama Hatta program of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur. He worked hard for the Gaudiya mission, and purchased many of the buildings the Gaudiya Math previously had rented. He had been the son of a big landlord in Nadia. During this time, the mission opened a wonderful new branch in Godrum, Navadvip. They published many books and their kirtans were held with lively dancing in an organized fashion.

He traveled all over India and preached to many important leaders. He also published a book of his discourses in English. His mission kept a lot of distance from the other Gaudiya Maths after the division took place. After his disappearance, the mission was guided by Srila Bhakti Srirup Bhagavat Maharaj, another disciple of Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur. He preached in India, England, and opened one center in Holland. After the disappearance of Srila B. S. Bhagavat Maharaj the mission was handed over to Srila B. Suhrit Parivrajak Maharaj. Additional highlights of the Gaudiya Mission:

- The Gaudiya Mission organized yearly Navadvip Dham parikrams.
- B. K. Audulaumi Maharaj wrote kirtan books and parikram guides including the Sri Kshetra Dham parikram, and the Navadvip Dham parikram.
- The Gaudiya Mission maintained the original Gaudiya Math temple at Kishor Pura in Vrindavan, and in Bombay they constructed a beautiful new temple.
- The Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gaudiya Math was constructed in Godrum Dham. A beautiful Pushpa Samadhi for Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur was also constructed here. From this Math the Gaudiya Mission conducted their Navadvip Dham activities.
- Another Mission was established in Assam under the name of Radha-Govinda Gaudiya Math in the Dist. of Haila Gandhi, Po. Lala Bazaar, Assam
- In Bihar another mission was established called Bhakti Keval Audulaumi Gaudiya Mission, Dist. of Mughalserai, Bihar
- Yet another mission was established in Assam called Bhagavat Gaudiya Math at Po. Karim Ganj, Assam.

Acharyas who became active in the Gaudiya Mission or started new branches include the following:

- Srila B. Suhrit Parivrajak Maharaj - the present acharya of the Gaudiya Mission.
- Srila B. Srirup Bhagavat Maharaj - a previous acharya of the Gaudiya Mission

- Srila B. Bhushan Bharati Maharaj started a separate mission called the Bhakti Keval Ashram. In all he opened six new branches.
- Srila B. Gambhir Giri Maharaj established himself in Sri Vrindavan Dham. He is giving service in the Radha Gokulananda Mandir, Vrindavan. He revitalized this temple to the Gaudiya Math standard.
- Srila B. Svarup Tirtha Maharaj started a temple in Burdavan District and also started to preach outside of India.

Krishna's Plan

In general, it can be said that it was not personal ambition that created the difficulties in the Gaudiya Math. Rather, it was the unpredictable influence of Krishna which made certain aspects flourish and others fail as the mission continued to develop. Krishna wants all his devotees to receive credit; not only one or two. The world benefits from witnessing the individual performance of the outstanding Vaisnavas, instead of just watching voiceless members of bureaucratic missions.

The fact that Krishna's plan was different from the plans of many of His devotees became that much clearer with examples like the unexpected withdrawal of Bhakti Prasad Puri Maharaj (formerly Ananta Vasudev) from the acharya post and sannyas life.

Another example is that nobody would have ever thought that Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, who was once a grihasta known only to a few Gaudiya Math members, would become a prominent acharya and expand the mission all over the world. When he left for America at the age of 68 and started the world-wide Hare Krishna revolution, many of his brothers could hardly believe it. For some it took years to understand that Lord Nityananda's potency had chosen this special Vaisnava to fulfill the predictions of both Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur.

This story will repeat itself whenever Krishna's plan differs from arrangements made by others in this world. The acharyas will be known by their own light and by their contribution to the happiness of this world; not by resolutions or cast votes, appointments or experiments. If we simply try our best and follow our heart sincerely, Krishna will guide us from within, and the real spirit of the Gaudiya Math will never be lost.

New Branches

The real spirit of the Gaudiya Math revealed many self-effulgent acharyas. This began a continuum of branching out as founder acharyas entered into their nitya-lila. This has created such a scenario, that, in the present day, devotees of Krishna often meet each other with surprise all over the world and do not necessarily even know which branch has already reached that area and established Vaisnava communities.

Many of today's popular and growing Gaudiya Maths (often considered to be the orthodox Gaudiya Math of today) were not fully accepted branches in the beginning. Sometimes new branches are considered “rebel” branches from the point of view of the contemporary institutions from which they emerged. Many devotees who cannot see beyond the formal conception of their institution are taken by surprise by the development of new successful branches outside of their jurisdiction.

Thus, those who did not agree with the spirit of the established branches, or were simply inspired to expand the mission of their guru on their own enthusiasm, had to start without any help. Renunciates, equipped with the blessings of their guru and the Vaisnavas, many stalwarts started their missions - some of which became successful beyond imagination.

This is the beginning of a new era. In the following chapter on Gaudiya Math activities we will present the Gaudiya Math branches and outstanding preachers with a simple report on their current activities.

Very few people know the real extent to which Lord Chaitanya has, through his beloved Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, already spread his sampradaya to all corners of the world in so many different ways. Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj undoubtedly stands out as a pioneer fulfilling the wish of his guru and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu by giving the Holy Name to the whole world. In this list we will find many additional contributions to the expansion of Krishna Consciousness. It is evident that the future also holds many surprises and varieties of activities by which the Gaudiya Math family tree will benefit the conditioned souls.

Part II
In Every Town and Village

Branches of the Gaudiya Math

The following section is a list of different Gaudiya Math missions. Some are very large missions, and some are smaller branches started by individual Vaisnavas. What they hold in common is that they are autonomous branches of the Chaitanya Tree. Almost all of them have published books and periodicals, and opened one or more temples. This list is not complete, yet it gives us an idea of how widely spread the influence of the Gaudiya Math has already become. It also shows us the extent to which it has expanded, and, by increasing the Vaisnava presence, how this serves the entire world.

If anyone wishes to have further information on the respective Vaisnava missions, their founders, or members, we would like to refer you to the Internet homepage of the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha (WVA-VVRS) which tries to keep updated information on the expanding Vaisnava activities world-wide. Because we have not received complete information on all missions, some of them will just appear in name and without extensive information on their activities. If I have not adequately purified myself by glorifying all the wonderful Vaisnavas, their missions, and services, I beg to be forgiven. I also beg to be informed of my ignorance and oversights, so that in the next edition the information supplied herein may be updated. Thank you for your kind understanding. Abbreviations used in the following pages are:

- WVA-VVRS = World Vaisnava Association-Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha
- G = Generation, • M = Maharaj, • B = Bhakti

SRI NAVADVIP DHAM PRACHARINI SABHA

Founder acharya: Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur (9th Generation) He received Vaisnava diksa from Vipin Bihari Goswami and siksa from Srila Jagannath Das Babaji (8th G.). Later, in 1908, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur received Babaji-vesa from Srila Gaur Kishor Das Babaji M. Samadhi Mandir in Godrum Navadvip.

Next acharya: Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur (11th G.) Disciple of Srila Gaur Kishor Das Babaji M. (10th G.)

Present acharya: The respective acharya of the Chaitanya Math

Branches: First in Yogapith. Then in Srivas Angan, Advaita Angan, Gadadhara Bhavan.

Other special features:

- Established the Gaur Kishor das Babaji M. Samadhi Mandir in Mayapur (Sri Chaitanya Math)
- Established the Sri Nrsingha Mandir
- Established the Nama Hatta Program
- In 1894 the Maharaj of the Tripura state, Bir Chandra Dev Burman Manikya Bhadur, was nominated the first president of this Pracharini Sabha.
- The objectives of the Sabha are:
- To improve Sri Navadvip Dham and give publicity to its sanctity, glory, as well as its religious and historical importance.
- To maintain the temple called Yogapith, Sri Mandir at the birth site of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at Sri Mayapur; to carry on the daily seva puja to the deities namely Sri Gaur-Vishnupriya and other deities installed therein with
- periodical festivals in honor of these Deities.
- Upkeep of the library of arya shastras namely the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhakti literature, and the reading rooms for general use for the public.
- Collection of historical materials and archaeological finds relating to, and in connection with, Sri Navadvip Dham.
- Promotion and publication of Bhakti literature.
- Establishment and maintenance of Chatuspathi for studying Sanskrit and Bhakti literature.
- Broadcast knowledge of Arya Sastras namely Vedas, Upanishads and Bhakti literature.
- To own, hold, possess, manage, conduct or control the properties, land buildings, temples known as Yogapith Sri Mandir and Srivas Angan both situated at Sri Mayapur.

- To construct and erect new buildings; to extend, repair, improve, secure and acquire further properties both moveable and immovable for furthering the said objectives.
- To award medals and prizes and bestow honors to scholars on Bhakti literature and to those who rendered meritorious services to the said Sabha and the said Deities.
- To do all such things as may be incidental or conducive to the objectives of the Sabha or any of them as aforesaid.

CHAITANYA MATH

Founder acharya: Paramapujapada Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur (11th G.)

Disciple of Srila Gaur Kishor Das Babaji M. (10th G.) Samadhi Mandir in Chaitanya Math, Mayapur.

Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur (Srila Sarasvati Thakur) was the president of the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha .

Next acharyas:

- Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha M. (12th G.) He was sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and took sannyas from Srila Bhakti Vijñan Ashram M. The Samadhi Mandirs of Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha M. and Srila Bhakti Vijñan Ashram M. are in Sri Chaitanya Math, Mayapur.
- Srila Bhakti Kusum Sraman M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Srila B. V. Tirtha M. Samadhi Mandir in Sri Chaitanya Math , Mayapur.
- Srila Bhakti K. Tapasvi M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur Samadhi Mandir in Srivas Angan, Mayapur.

Present acharya: several.

Branches: sixty-six.

These later divided and are currently forty-two.

Sannyas initiates of Srila Sarasvati Thakur: twenty.

Sannyas initiates of other Chaitanya Math acharyas: nearly forty.

Books published: nearly 300 in Bengali, Sanskrit, English and Hindi.

New Missions branching out from this mission: approximately twenty-five.

Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur employed the following methods for the practice and preaching of the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

1. In order to circulate and popularize Bhakti literature, he established several printing presses, namely: Bhagavat Press at Krishnanagar, Nadia Prakash Printing at Sri Mayapur, Gaudiya Printing Works at Calcutta, and the Paramartha Press at Cuttack. He also edited, printed and published

large volumes of Bhakti literature, mainly Shastras written by the six Goswamis and other Vaisnava masters of the Gaudiya Vaisnava schools. These books were made easily available to the people, either free or at nominal prices.

2. He started several journals exclusively dealing with Bhakti. These include:

- The Sajjan Toshani, a Bengali monthly.
- The Harmonist, an English monthly.
- The Gaudiya, a Bengali weekly.
- The Nadia Prakash, a Bengali daily.
- The Bhagavat, a Hindi fortnightly.
- The Kirtan, an Assami monthly.
- The Paramartha, an Oriya fortnightly.

3. He held pictorial exhibits demonstrating the lives and teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the Vaisnava saints along with the stories and sermons taken from Upanishads, Puranas, Mahabharata and Ramayana. This method of preaching was very impressive and effective even among illiterate men, women and children.

4. He preached from door to door and from village to village, holding meetings and discourses with groups of men. With this purpose Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur not only sent his preachers to the remotest villages of India from North to South and from East to West but also to Burma and Europe.

5. He held religious festivals in all the centers and maths, attracting people and giving them opportunities to listen to religious discourses.

6. He also introduced and popularized the Vaisnava smritis such as the Hari Bhakti Vilas of Sanatana Goswami and Sat Kriya Sar Dipika and Samskara Dipika of Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami. He introduced Vaisnava practices (achar) based on the said smriti works among his disciples in the matter of sraddha and other religious rites.

7. He introduced and administered Pancharatrika Diksha to his disciples regardless of caste and thereby conferred on them the right to worship Bhagavan Vishnu.

8. Another aim of his was to introduce the purely Vaisnavite education and for this reason he published Hari Namamrita Vyakarana, a Sanskrit grammar book written by Sri Jiva Goswami, and established a Sanskrit Academy for study of the said grammar. It is now one of the subjects for conferring a degree at Upadhi Vyakaran Tirtha.

9. He established a Sanskrit Academy (Bhagavata Pathasala or Paravidya-pitha) for the study of Bhakti literature under his own guidance, and brought expert pandits from Udupi (South India) and other places to teach the philosophy of different schools.

10. He also established a residential English High School called Thakur Bhaktivinode Institute at Sri Mayapur to impart education based on Vaisnava faith to young boys. He did not believe in Godless education. Subsequently a junior basic school after the name of Thakur Bhaktivinode has been established by Srila B. V. Tirtha M.

11. He reclaimed and improved the old or neglected temples and places of religious importance and discovered old places associated with the life of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and other Vaisnava saints. He also raised temples and memorials at the places visited by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu all over India.

12. He introduced ten examinations of Vaisnava literature and philosophy, and history of religious sects.

13. He revived the Sri Visva-Vaisnava Raj Sabha founded by Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Goswami.

14. He introduced the practice of brahmacharya, vanaprastha and sannyas among his disciples, all directed towards the service of Godhead. The said practice is a healthy method of regulating life as a first step for entry into spiritual life.

Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakur popularized Gaudiya Vaisnavism with all its high excellence throughout the world. He established Sri Chaitanya Math at Sri Mayapur - a town full of temples and monasteries now with about a hundred branches of the Gaudiya Math. He also established places of worship in different parts of India and abroad.

Other special features and accomplishments:

Maths established by Srila B. Vilas Tirtha M:

- Banga, W. Bengal, Haridas Thakur bhajana-kutir
- Guntur Gaudiya Math, Andhra Pradesh
- Burdwan, Kuliya Gram - bhajan-sthan of Thakur Haridas.
- Diamond Harbor Gaudiya Math, 1963

Vaisnava Journals:

- “Dainik Nadia Prakash” The editor of this daily publication was Srila Bhakti Promode Puri M.
- “Gaudiya” – Bhakti Vilas Tirtha M. Published in various languages including Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Assami, English.

Parikramas:

- Vraja-mandal parikram
- Navadvip Dham parikram

Homeopathic dispensaries.

GAUDIYA MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur (11th G.)

The Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math in Calcutta became the head-quarter of the Gaudiya mission, under the direction of Bhakti Prashad Puri M. (12th G.) The mission was continued by Srila Bhakti Keval Audulaumi M. (12th G.)

Next acharyas:

- Srila Bhakti Keval Audulaumi M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Samadhi Mandir in Godrum, Navadvip.
- Srila Bhakti Srirup Bhagavat M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Srila B. K. Audulaumi M. Samadhi Mandir in Godrum, Navadvip.

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti S. Parivrajak M. (13th G.) Disciple and sannyas from Srila B. K. Audulaumi M.

Branches: thirty-four

Sannyas initiates: approximately sixty

New missions emanating from this mission: four

Other special features:

- Srila B. K. Audulaumi M. has written two kirtans: Sri Kshetra Dham parikram, and Navadvip Dham parikram.
- 'Bhakti Patra' - a monthly magazine in Bengali (Calcutta).
- Created medical services and dispensaries.
- Temples established by him:
- Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gaudiya Math, Godrum Dham. The Pushpa Samadhi of Srila Sarasvati Thakur is found here.
- Radha-Govinda Gaudiya Math, Dist. Haila Gandhi, Po. Lala Bazaar, Assam
- Bhakti Keval Audulaumi Gaudiya Math, Dist. Mughalserai, Bihar
- Bhagavat GM, Po. Karim Ganj, Assam

Outstanding activities:

- He had a very special kirtan style. Many previously rented buildings of the Gaudiya Math were also purchased by the Mission.

Vaisnava Acharyas, New Missions and Projects of the Twelfth Generation

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY THE ACHARYA'S NAME

SRILA BHAKTI PRAKASH ARANYA MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Received sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

SRILA BHAKTI VAIBHAV ARANYA MAHARAJ'S MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Vaibhav Aranya M. (12th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Srila B. Bhudev Srouti M.

Established: Krishna Balaram Mandir, Mathura. Samadhi Mandir in the same location.

New missions emanating from this mission: three

Srila Bhakti Vaibhav Aranya M. preached strongly through the letters he wrote to his disciples all over the world. He also closed a slaughterhouse in Mathura.

SRILA BHAKTI SOUDHA ASHRAM MAHARAJ'S MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Soudha Ashram M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Srila B. Vaikanash M. Samadhi Mandir in Mayapur.

Branches: four

He started a school in Calcutta.

SRILA BHAKTI SAMBAL BHAVAT MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

SRI GAURANGA GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Saurabhi Bhakti Sar M. (12th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur, sannyas from Srila Bhakti Saranga Goswami M. Samadhi Mandir in Mayapur.

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti Sundar Sudir Acharya M. (13th G.)

Branches: four

Sannyas initiates: six

SRILA BHAKTI RAÑJAN BHAKTISAR (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

SRILA BHAKTI BHUSHAN BHARATI MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Founding Member of WVA-VVRS.

SRI RUPANUGA BHAJANASHRAM

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Vilas Bharati M. (12th G.), sannyas from Srila Bhakti Shouti Goswami M.

Deities: Sri Radha Shyama Sunder. Samadhi Mandir in Sri Rupanuga Bhajanashram, Mayapur.

Sannyas disciples: one

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti Sadhan Tatpar M. (13th G.) Sannyas from Srila Bhakti Vilas Bharati M.

Books: many

Other special features:

- A very nice Temple full of Bhagavan-lila dioramas.

SRILA BHAKTI PROSUN BODHAYAN MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Hriday Bon M. (12th G.), sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Samadhi Mandir and Bhajan Kutir in the Madan Mohan Temple, Vrindavan.

Next acharya: Srila Bhakti Rasika Bon M. (13th G.), founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Srila Krishnananda Bon M. (13th G.)

Both received sannyas from B. H. Bon M.

Present acharya: Srila Gopananda Bon M. (13th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: four

Sannyas initiates: twenty

Books published: forty

New missions emanating from this mission: two

Books: many

Other special features:

- Srila Bhakti Hriday Bon M. was the first Gaudiya Vaisnava to start preaching in the West. He managed to establish temples in London and Berlin.
- He brought the first European, Bhakta Sadananda Swami, to India. Bon M. preached in practically all of the important Universities of Europe.
- He met with the King and Queen of England and with many other aristocrats in Europe. He learned German in order to facilitate his lectures at German Universities.
- He toured the whole world several times

- He was elected leader of the Mahants at the Kumbha Mela and received support from many Indian leaders for his educational projects.

GAUR GADADHAR GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Bhakti Prapanna Damodar M. (12th G.), sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Founding and honorary member of the WVA-VVRS.

Established: a Math of Sri Sri Gaur Gadadhar in Puri.

SRI GAUR GADADHAR MATH

Founder of the mission: Sri Dwija Bani Nath (12th G.), under Chaitanya Math, diksa from Srila Sarasvati Thakur and babaji of Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaj in 1994.

Present acharya: Srila Jyoti M. (13th G.). Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

SRILA B. VILAS GAVASTHI NEMI MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. He was a great pandit, had many disciples, wrote a book, and later surrendered everything to Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

SRILA BHAKTI GAMBHIR GIRI MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

Founding Member of WVA-VVRS.

SRILA BHAKTI SARVASA GIRI MAHARAJ'S MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Sarvasa Giri M. (12th G.) Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Opened his own Math in Vrindavan.

GAUDIYA SANGA

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Saranga Goswami M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Srila B. R. Sridhar M. Samadhi Mandir in Nandan Acharya Bhavan, Mayapur.

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti Suhrit Akiñchana M. (13th G.) Sannyas from Srila Bhakti Saranga Goswami M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: thirty

Sannyas initiates: forty

Books published: approximately twenty

New missions emanating from this mission: four

Other special features:

- Recovered the holy place Imli Tala in Vrindavan.

- Srila Bhakti Saranga Goswami M. went with Srila Bhakti Pradip Tirtha M. to England and preached.
- They established a permanent center in London.
- Navadvip Dham parikram.
- Established the meeting place of Sri Nitai Gaur in Mayapur (Nandan Acharya Bhavan).

GAUDIYA VEDANTA SAMITI

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Prajñan Kesava M. (12th G.)

Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami M.

Samadhi Mandir in Devananda Gaudiya Math, Navadvip.

Present acharya: Srila Bhaktivedanta Vamana M. (12th G.) Sannyas from Srila B. P. Keshava M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Other acharya: Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayan M. (13th G.). Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: fifty

Sannyas initiates: fifty

Books: approximately one hundred in many languages.

Other special features:

- A yearly, very large Navadvip Dham parikram
- A yearly Vrindavan Dham parikram
- Several Journals in Hindi, Bengali and English
- Srila Bhakti Prajñan Kesava M. was a very learned renunciate from a wealthy family.
- He also wrote a book called Vaisnava Vijay to soundly defeat the Mayavadi philosophy.
- He started a center of the Gaudiya Math in Mathura.
- He gave sannyas to the founder of ISKCON, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M.

SRILA NISKIÑCHANA KRISHNA DAS BABAJI MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. He was beloved by all. His Samadhi Mandir is in Nandagram next to Sanatana Goswamis bhajan kutir. All missions were happy when Srila N. Krishna das Babaji M. came to sing kirtan.

SRI CHAITANYA GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Srila B. G. Vaikanash M. Samadhi Mandir in Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Mayapur.

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha M. (13th G.) Sannyas from S. B. D. Madhava Maharj. Srila Tirtha M. is founding member and vice-president of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: approximately twenty-four. In Punjab and Assam.

Sannyas initiates: approximately sixty

Books published: forty

New missions emanating from this mission: four

Other special features:

- They constructed a temple at the site of the birthplace of the Gaudiya Math Founder in Puri.
- Large guest houses in the Holy Dham.
- A yearly Navadvip Dham parikram. Every third year a Vraj Mandal parikram.
- A monthly magazine; 'Chaitanya Vani.'
- To date has three world tours and is expert lecturer of Mahaprabhu's Acintya-bheda-abadha-tattva.

SRI KRISHNA CHAITANYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Kamal Madhusudana M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from Srila B. R. Sridhar M. Samadhi Mandir in Mayapur.

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti Prinan Vishnu Devatam M. (13th G.). Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: six

Sannyas initiates: five

Books published: five

Other special features:

- His temples are very elaborate.
- He was a great scholar.

SRILA NAYANANANDA DAS BABAJI MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Founding Member of WVA-VVRS.

Other special features:

- Srila Nayananaada das Babaji M. supervised the constructions in all branches of the Chaitanya Math. This service was given by Srila Sarasvati Thakur.
- Now he is in charge of the Champahatta Gaudiya Math center of Gaur Gadadhar. This temple has existed since the time of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He has performed this service to Champahatta Gaudiya Math for the last seventy-one years.

- Srila Nayananada das Babaji M. always wore white clothes following the instructions of Srila Sarasvati Thakur in spite of his spirit of renunciation. Later he took babaji from Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaj.

PARAMAHAMSA GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Alok Paramahamsa M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Sannyas from Srila B. R. Sridhar M.

B. A. Paramahamsa M. was the personal servant and he formerly preached with Srila Sarasvati Thakur. His Samadhi Mandir is in Sri Mayapur Dham, Ishodyan.

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti Sadhak Niskiñchana M. (13th G.) Diksa from Paramahamsa M. and sannyas from B. Promode Puri M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Sannyas disciples: three

Present acharya: Srimad Bhakti Sadhak Niskiñchan M. (13th G.) Previous manager of a big Zamindar in Mayapur. Held the responsibility of Grantha publishing department.

GOPINATH GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Promode Puri M. (12th G.) President of the WVA-VVRS. Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur, and sannyas from S. B. G. Vaikanash M.

Branches: fifteen

Sannyas initiates: one hundred twenty

Books published: approximately eighty

Other special features:

- Excellent writer and editor of many magazines.
- His publications include:
‘Nadiya Prakash,’
‘Chaitanya Vani,’
‘Gaudiya, Bhagavat Darshan.’
- Srila B. P. Puri M. is expert in all Puja and Deity installations, temple inaugurations, etc.
- He installed over eighty Deities in his life. His first Deity-installation was at Yogapith.
- He is one of the first members of the Gaudiya Math
- Many senior Vaisnavas, from godbrothers to acharyas of other missions come to consult him.
- He revived the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha in 1994.

- Almost 100 years old, he still opens temples, giving relief to others.
- He restored the Keshi Ghat and the famous Dauji Mandir in Vrindavan.
- He is famous for cooperating with his godbrothers.

SRILA BHAKTI SRIRUP PURI MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Protector of Svarup Ganj.
Intimate associate of Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

SRI KRISHNA CHAITANYA MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Vaibhav Puri M. (12th G.) Sisyas of Srila Sarasvati Thakur, and sannyas from Srila B. Giri M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: sixteen

Sannyas initiates: twenty

Books published: approximately thirty in Oriya

Other special features:

- Preached in Orissa.
- Beautiful temple constructions.
- Preached in South India.
- Restored an old Seva Kuñja temple of Radha Vrindavan Chandra in Vrindavan.
- Has recently toured Europe for the third time at the age of 86 years.

SRILA SADANANDA SWAMI (12th G.)

Sisyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

Books: six in German, others in Swedish, English and Spanish

Other special features:

- He was the first German Vaisnava.
- Srila B. M. Bon M. brought him to India.
- He lived in India with his guru Srila Sarasvati Thakur and later returned to Germany and Sweden.
- He did this with the help of a disciple of Srila B. M. Bon M. - Vamana das (Walter Eidlitz) (13th G.) This was the first time that Gaudiya Vaisnava literature was published outside of India.
- They also preached in universities and started the first European Vaisnava circle.

SRILA BHAKTI VAIBHAV SAGAR MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. He did seva to the deities in Mamghati.

SAKHI CHARAN BABU (12th G.)

Outstanding contributor to the Gaudiya Math. He helped many godbrothers and missions. He entered his Samadhi in Imli Tala.

SRILA BHAKTI KUMUD SANTA MAHARAJ'S MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Kumud Santa M. (12th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur and sannyas from S. B. G. Vaikanash M.

Branches: six

Sannyas initiates: thirty

Books published: twelve

Other special features:

- Srila Bhakti Kumud Santa M. is always helping to celebrate Vaisnava functions.
- He also preached in the West.
- His main center is in Beherla, Calcutta.

PROFESSOR SRILA NISIKANTHA SANYAL (12th G.)

Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur. He did not open his own mission, but he wrote the important book Sri Krishna Chaitanya in English. His own guru wrote the introduction to this book. He was a professor at Ravenshaw College and chief editor of many Gaudiya Math publications.

SRILA BHAKTI SVARUP SAR MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

SARASVAT GAUDIYA ASHRAM

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Srirup Siddhanti M. (12th G.) Sisya of Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

Present acharya: Sri Bhakti Rañjan Sagar M. (13th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Sannyas from Srila Bhakti Srirup Siddhanti M.

Branches: three

Sannyas initiates: seven

Books published: forty

He published and wrote many important books, Guru Prestha being one of them, and others which were out of print for a long time.

Other special features:

- He constructed three elaborately decorated temples with permanent theistic exhibition incorporated into the sculptures of the entire temple area.

SRI CHAITANYA SARASVAT MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami M. (12th G.) Sisya and sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Samadhi Mandir in Sri Chaitanya Sarasvat Math, Navadvip.

Present acharya: Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda M. (13th G.) Sannyas from Srila B. R. Sridhar M.

Branches: fifty

Sannyas initiates: approximately thirty

Books published: approximately two hundred (Translations to other languages)

New missions emanating from this mission: nearly ten

Other special features:

- Vaisnava Toshani, monthly English Magazine.
- Publications in many languages.
- Journals in several languages.
- Yearly Navadvip Dham parikram and Vraj Mandal parikram.
- Centers world-wide.
- Srila B. R. Sridhar M. was highly accepted by most Vaisnavas. He opened several of the original Gaudiya Maths. He composed many songs which are sung in many places in the Gaudiya Math, i.e. his song to his spiritual master, the Sri Sri Premadham Dev Stotram. He clearly advanced the siddhantic understanding of Srimad Bhagavad Gita: The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute and is heralded by all Gaudiya Vaisnavas for his lofty composition and style in Sri Sri Prapanna Jivanamritam. In the last years of his life, his preaching extended all over the world, and his books were published in many languages. Many spiritual masters came to him for advise. He was a great Sanskrit scholar and poet.

SRILA BHAKTI BHUDEV SROUTI MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. He opened his own Math in Chalgram Midnapur, prepared articles of his guru for the Gaudiya Patrika.

ISKCON - International Society for Krishna Consciousness

BBT - Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

Founder acharya: Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. (12th G.) Sisy of Srila Sarasvati Thakur, and sannyas from S. B. P. Kesava M.

Samadhi Mandir in Krishna Balaram Mandir, Vrindavan.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami M. surprised the entire world as well as his godbrothers with his outstanding achievements. He single handedly fulfilled the prediction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: The Holy Names of Krishna will be sung in every town and village in the world.

Srila B. R. Sridhar M. said: “What was announced by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, conceived of by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, started by Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Goswami M. was fulfilled by Swami M. (Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami).”

Present acharyas: many

Branches: approximately five-hundred

Sannyas initiates: approximately 150

Books published: about three thousand titles (in 64 languages)

Printed and distributed: 400 million

New missions emanating from this mission: fifteen

Other special features:

- The founder started 108 centers around the world, which were later increased by his disciples.
- Many vegetarian restaurants and farm communities.

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust:

- Publications in over sixty-four languages. The first complete edition in English of the Srimad Bhagavatam and the Chaitanya Charitamrita with the purports of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M.
- Several homepages in the Internet for preaching in digital format.

Bhaktivedanta Archives:

- Vedabase - a computer database containing 80 translations of Vaisnava classic books on digital format with Bhaktivedanta purports
- A library of recorded lectures and songs on Tape and CD (magnetic and digital media formats).
- 14,000 letters to his disciples.

Bhaktivedanta Institute:

- scientific research, publications and conferences
- promotion on traditional Vaisnava arts worldwide
- training seminars on arts and sciences
- “Origins magazine” an analysis of life & matter issues

Other Publications:

- Biography of the founder by Srila Satsvarup das Goswami

- Back to Godhead Magazine, in English and many other languages (started by the founder on 1944)
- Hare Krishna World - an international newspaper in English
- ISKCON Television – Vaisnava television pioneers
- ISKCON Cinema - Sri Yadubara and Srimati Visakha prepared many movies for preaching.

Other Preaching Activities:

- Pada-yatras world-wide – walking and preaching around the globe.
- Ratha-yatras in major cities all around the world (more than 50).
- Television biography of the Founder of ISKCON to be broadcasted for two years in India.
- Gurukulas - pioneer work of establishing Vedic principles in primary school education.
- Prasadam distribution, food relief, and vegetarian restaurants world-wide.
- FATE - First American Transcendental Exhibition.
- Attempts to create self sufficient farm communities world-wide.
- Penetrating politically very difficult areas, such as Communist and Muslim countries; successfully establishing Krishna Consciousness in these areas.
- The Mahamantra and other devotional songs were included in their music and thus made Krishna's name very famous.

SRILA BHAKTI PRADIP TIRTHA MAHARAJ (10th G.)

Disciple of Srila B. Vinode Thakur, and sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur.

He was a great writer and published a commentary on the Bhagavat Gita. He was sent to England to preach.

SRI CHAITANYA GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Gaurab Vaikanash M. (12th G.).

This is a branch of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math of Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava M. (12th G.).

Sannyas initiates: thirteen

Books published: ten

SRILA BHAKTI GAURAB VAIKANASH MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Established Math in Bhuvaneshvara, Orissa. Known also as Raj Pandit.

SRI LA BHAKTI SUDHIR YACHAK MAHARAJ (12th G.)

Sannyas from Srila Sarasvati Thakur. Well known as a great cook and did seva in Vrindavan.

SRI CHAITANYA BHAGAVAT MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Vicar Yajavar M. (12th G.) Sannyasi of Srila Sarasvati Thakur

Present acharya: Bhakti Vistar Vishnu M. (13th G.). Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: six

Sannyas initiates: ten

Books published: six

Other special features:

- Srila Bhakti Vichar Yajavar M. has his Samadhi in Mayapur. He was the last sannyasi of Srila Sarasvati Thakur.
- His temples are very elaborate.
- He was also the first to declare, in a public Vaisnava meeting, that Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. must be a Shakti-avesa-avatar in order to do what he was chosen to do. Srila B. R. Sridhar M. agreed with this intuition.

Vaisnava Acharyas, New Missions and Projects of the Thirteenth Generation

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY THE ACHARYA'S NAME

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION -

SRI CHAITANYA BHAKTI RAKSHAK MANDAPA

Founder acharya: Srila Badri Narayan Bhagavat Bushan (13th G.) Sisya of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. and Srila B. R. Sridhar Maharaj

Branches: ten

Books published: fourteen.

Other special features:

- Publications in English and Spanish.
- Jayasri Classics publishing house.
- Opened centers in Radha Kunda and Sevaite of Gadadhar Danta Samadhi in Vrindavan.
- Ratha Yatra in Caracas Venezuela.

BHAKTI KEVAL AUDULAUMI GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Vilas Bharati M. (13th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Sisya of Bhakti Keval Audulaumi M.

Branches: six.

He opened one of the branches coming from the Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Mission.

Books: two in Bengali.

SRILA BHAKTI RASANANDA BON MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Founding member of the WVA-VVRS Sisya of S. B. M. Bon M.

Branches: one; Bon M. Gaudiya Math Mayapur

BHAKTIVEDANTA INSTITUTE ISKCON

President: Srila Bhakti Svarup Damodar M. (13th G.)

Sannyas from Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M.

Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Other special features:

- He organizes scientific conferences on the synthesis of science and religion.

SRIPAD DASARATH SUTA DAS B. (13th G.)

Sisya of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Member of WVA-VVRS.

Books: Translator and publisher of about one hundred Vaisnava books.

ISKCON BHUVANESVAR

Founder acharya: Srila Gour Govinda Swami (13th G.). Sannyas from Bhakti Vedanta Swami M. Samadhi Mandir in Sri Sri Krishna Balaram Mandir ISKCON, Bhuvaneshvara.

Books: he personally translated the books of his guru into Oriya

Other special features:

- He wrote different books and magazines
- He opened a temple in Bhuvaneshvara.
- He was an exalted devotee and a great and learned scholar.

SRI CHAITANYA MUDRANI GAUDIYA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Prakash Hrisikesh M. (13th G.)

Harinam from Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M., Diksa from Srila B. R. Sridhar M. and sannyas from Srila B. P. Puri M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Other special features:

- Opened missions in Bulgaria and Malaysia.

- He has published many books by Srila B. R. Sridhar M. in English.
- Editor of WVA-VVRS magazine.
- Sadhu-Sanga Magazine.
-

BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI ASHRAM TRUST

Founder acharya: Srila Bhaktivedanta Ksirodaksayi Vishnu M. (13th G.). Sisyas of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami M., and sannyas from Srila B. A. Paramadvaiti M. Founding Member of WVA-VVRS.

Branches: two (Vrindavan and London)

Books: twenty

Other special features:

- 'Bhagavat Darshan' magazine in Hindi

KRISHNA INSTITUTE

Founder: Sripad Kusakratha das Brahmachari (13th G.) Sisyas of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Also a Sanskrit scholar.

Other special features:

- Translator and publisher of more than 300 Volumes of Goswami literature.

SRILA BHAKTI MADHAVA MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Sisyas of Srila B. D. Madhava M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

SRILA BHAKTI PRABHAV MAHAVIR MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Sisyas of Srila B. D. Madhava M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: three

Books published: three

Other special features:

- Preaches in Vrindavan and in Western countries.

HUNGARIAN VAISNAVA ASSOCIATION

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Abhay Narayan M. (13th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. A fearless preacher; he was a disciple of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. and took sannyas from Srila B.R. Sridhar M. His Samadhi Mandir is in Balastia, Hungary.

Present acharyas:

- Srila Bhakti Kamal Tirtha M. (14th G.) Sannyas from Srila Bhakti Abhay Narayan M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

- Srila Krishnananda Prabhu (14th G.) Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: five

Sannyas initiates: one

Books published: forty

Other special features:

- Kagylókürt Magazine, four times a year in Hungarian.
- Ganges Vaisnava Journal, four times a year in Hungarian.
- Srila Bhakti Abhay Narayan M. is the first preacher behind the Iron Curtain.
- He translated the Bhagavad Gita into Russian and Hungarian.
- He opened temples in Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.

SRILA BHAKTI KINKARA NARAYAN MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Disciple of Srila B. K. Sraman M. and sannyas from Srila B. P. Puri M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Temples: Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, Milan Kuñja, Radha-Govinda-Mahaprabhu, Parganas, West Bengal.

SRIPAD NRISINGHANANDA DAS ADHIKARI (13th G.)

Member of the WVA-VVRS.

Other special features:

- Director of ISKCON Television - the first Vaisnava World Video service.
- Produced and published over 200 videos on Vaisnava topics.
- Srila Bhakti Vikash Padmanabha Maharaj (13th G.). Sisyas of S. B. R. Sridhar M. and sannyas from S. B. P. Puri M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

VRINDA - Vrindavan Institute for Vaisnava Culture & studies

ISEV - Superior Institute of Vedic Studies

SEVA - Editorial Service of Vaisnavas Acharyas

Founder acharya: Srila B. A. Paramadvaiti M. (13th G.). Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Sisyas of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. and sannyas from Srila B. R. Sridhar Maharaj.

Other acharyas:

- Srila Bhakti Vimal Harijan M. (13th G.) Sisyas of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. and sannyas from Srila B. R. Sridhar M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Samadhi Mandir in Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Radha-Vrajesvara, Bogota, Colombia.

- Srila Atulananda Acharya Prabhu (13th G.) Sisya of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: eighty-two

Sannyas initiates: fifteen

Books published: 120

New missions emanating from this mission: two

Other special features:

- VRINDA has restored old temples in Vrindavan including: Vrinda Kuñja Mandir, the Gopal Mandir, and the Yamuna Kuñja at Imli Tala.
- Many vegetarian restaurants, ashrams, and farm communities in Europe, America (South, Central, North), and India.
- Publications in German, Spanish and English.
- ISEV is a program which also offers Bhakti Yoga Courses by correspondence.
- First German and Spanish Internet Presence of Vaisnavism.

SRILA BHAKTI PARAMARTHI MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Sisya of Srila B. R. Sridhar M. and sannyas from Srila B. P. Puri M. He has a center in Assam.

SRILA BHAKTI PARIVRAJAK MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Started a mission in Mayapur and Howrah, Calcutta. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Organization of Navadvip Dham parikram.

SRILA BHAKTI PRASUN PURI MAHARAJ'S MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Prasun Puri M. (13th G.) Disciple of Srila B. Vilas Tirtha M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Books published: two

RADHA KRISHNA MATH

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Vijay Puri M. (13th G.). Founding member of the WVA-VVRS. Sisya of S. B. Saran Santa M. and sannyas from S. B. P. Puri M.

Other acharyas: Srila Bhakti Mangal M. (13th G.). Sisya of S. B. Saran Santa M.

Branches: One, in Calcutta

SRILA BHAKTI VAIBHAVA SAGAR MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Sisya of Srila B. Vilas Tirtha M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: one, in Mayapur

Other special features:

- Caretaker of Rudradvip Gaudiya Math. Maintains an excellent library of Gaudiya Math literature.

SRIPAD SATYARAJ DAS ADHIKARI (13th G.)

Disciple of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Founder of Folk Books. Publisher of the 'Journal of Vaisnava Studies' - A quarterly with scientific articles.

Books: Author of many on Vaisnava research.

CHAITANYA MISSION

Founder acharya: Srila Jagat Guru Siddha Svarupananda Paramahansa (13th G.). Disciple of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: eighty

Books published: thirty, in English

Other special features:

- In the 1960's he was a yogi in Hawaii and had many disciples.
- He later surrendered, with all of his disciples, to Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M.
- 'Life-force News' in English, Polish, Russian and Philipino.
- He is a pioneer in preaching on Cable TV.
- He is accompanied by another disciple of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M., Sripad Tusta Krishna (13th G.)
- He has published many booklets giving Vaisnava guidance on social topics.
- His mission also preaches in many communist countries.

SRILA BHAKTI SIDDHANTI MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Sisya of Srila B. R. Sridhar M. and sannyas from Srila B. P. Puri M. He has a center in Navadvip.

Chaitanya Isha Mandalam

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Nandan Swami M. (13th G.) Sisya of Srila B. R. Sridhar M. and sannyas from Srila B. Promode Puri M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Centers: England, USA, and Malaysia.

Books published: six

Srila Bhakti Svarup Tirtha Maharaj (13th G.)

Sannyas and disciple of Srila B. S. Bhagavat M. of Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math. Mission close to Calcutta. Well known as an international preacher. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

GAUDIYA VAISNAVA SOCIETY

Founder acharya: Srila Bhakti Vedanta Tripurari M. (13th G.) Sisya of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. and sannyas from Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Branches: six

Sannyas initiates: three

Books: approximately twenty

Other special features:

- The founder has written many books.
- Publishes the ‘Gaudiya Vedanta’ magazine - a quarterly in English
- One of the best philosophical Vaisnava Journals available. ‘Clarion Call’ is also published by him.
- He is famous for organizing the world’s largest distribution of Vaisnava literature.

Other acharyas: Srila Bhakti Gaurava Narasinha M. (13th G.). Sisya and sannyasi of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Sannyas initiates: three

Books published: two

Other special features:

- Srila B. G. Narasingha is the first Western born Vaisnava to open a Mandir in Vrindavan and South India.

MANTRA MEDITATION, HAWAII

Founder acharya: Srila Turiya Mahasaya M. (13th G.) Sisya of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.

Other special features:

- Renovation project in Govardhan Vrindavan.
- Newsletter in English, and expert in Deity worship.

SRI CHAITANYA GAUDIYA SEVASHRAM

Founder acharya: Srila B. Sambandha Yachak M (13th G.). Sisya of B. Vilas Tirtha M. and sannyas from B. P. Puri M. Acharya of Chaitanya Math, Midnapur, W. Bengal.

SRILA BHAKTI YATI MAHARAJ (13th G.)

Sisya of Srila B. Vilas Tirtha M. and sannyas Srila B. Promode Puri
M. Founding member of the WVA-VVRS.
Guardian of Radha Kunda Kuñja Bihari, Gaudiya Math.

Part III

Vaisnava Relations

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His Relations with the Vaisnava Sampradayas

The guru parampara of the Gaudiya Math established the link with the Brahma-Madhva Sampradaya. Thus, along with the other three sampradayas (Sri Sampradaya, Rudra Sampradaya and Kumara Sampradaya) the Brahma Sampradaya teaches the Vedic culture to the world. There are also a few points of these four sampradayas that were incorporated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu into the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya Sampradaya.

In the narration of Sri Navadvip-Dham-Mahatmya Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur relates the time when Sri Nityananda Prabhu took Srila Jiva Gosvami on a tour. Herein it is mentioned how Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted two principles from each of the four sampradayas and incorporated these into His own sampradaya. It is also mentioned that the four principal acharyas of these four lineages later took birth as Lord Chaitanya's devotees during His manifest lila:

Ramanuja of the Sri-Sampradaya preached the philosophy of dasya-rasa and visishta-advaita. He was reborn as the gaura-bhakta named Ananta who lived near Vallabhacharya's house. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the following two principles from the Laksmi-Sampradaya:

1. The concept of unalloyed devotion free from karma and jñāna-ananya-bhakti.
2. Service to the devotees – bhakta-jana-seva.

Madhva of the Brahma-Sampradaya preached the dvaita philosophy. The following points were accepted from this sampradaya:

1. The complete defeat of the Mayavadi philosophy – keval-advaita-nirasana.
2. The worship of the deity of Krishna and understanding it to be eternal – krsna-murti-sevana.

Vishnusvami of the Rudra-Sampradaya preached suddha-advaita philosophy. He was reborn as the gaura-bhakta named Vallabha Bhatta who perfected his own sampradaya by Gauranga's mercy. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the following from this sampradaya:

1. The sentiment of total dependence on Krishna – tadiya-sarvasva-bhava.
2. The path of spontaneous devotional service – raga-marga.

Nimbarka of the Kumara-Sampradaya preached dvaita-advaita philosophy. He was reborn as the gaura-bhakta named Keshava Kashmiri. Again, two points were accepted:

1. The need of taking exclusive shelter of Radhika – ekanta-radhikasraya.
2. The exalted mood of the gopis love for Sri Krishna – gopi-bhava.

The concentrated theistic outlook of worshipping the Lord above all gives Vaisnavas a common cause and foundation. Their primary focus is avisesa-vada, the monotheistic explanation of the Vedanta. The worship of the deity of the Supreme Lord, and the respect held for the great acharyas in all sampradayas are also characteristic traits of the Vaisnava traditions.

In his book Prema Pradipa, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur points out the following:

1. The Supreme Lord is one without a second. He possesses all transcendental potencies and controls all laws.
2. The Supreme Lord has an exquisitely beautiful, all-auspicious spiritual form. That form is transcendental to all laws of the material world. In Him all contradictions are wonderfully reconciled. Though He has a form, He is all pervading. Though He is beautiful, mundane sense cannot perceive Him. Though situated in one place, He is simultaneously fully present everywhere.
3. Both the animate and inanimate are born from His energies. He is the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of time, place, and law.
4. The living entity's constitution is spiritual, but by the Lord's desire he is conditioned by material nature and thus enjoys or suffers under those laws. By the process of devotional service, however, he is freed from material bondage.
5. The path of jñana and karma are full of hardship. When jñana and karma serve the purpose of bhakti, there is no fault. But, unlike karma and jñana, bhakti is fully independent.
6. The living entity's duty is to associate with sadhus and discuss devotional service.

The Gaudiya Math tradition teaches us that the divine couple in Vrindavan is the original form of Godhead, and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself combined with his dearest Srimati Radharani. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to give this truth. He is the yuga-avata who distributes the congregational chanting of the Holy Names all over the world. His appearance made Sri Navadvip identical with Vrindavan. Thus, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is also called the bhakta-avata and sometimes the

hidden avatar, since he generally concealed his divine nature and preached krishna-bhakti, absorbed in the mood of separation.

Not all Vaisnava sampradayas embrace this ontology, but concentrate more on the worship of Sri Lakshmi Narayan, Sri Sita Rama, Sri Nataji, Sri Balaji, and Sri Venkateshvara. Nevertheless, they still all worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In addition, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has already become more and more accepted as the yuga-avatar. In Vrindavan, as well as in South India, the drama of Sri Chaitanya's Lila has been included into the drama presentations, and the whole world has learned about the glory of the sanatana-dharma through His influence.

Some Thoughts On Other Religions

The Gaudiya Math also recognizes the fact that the Supreme Lord has manifested messages to humanity in other religions as well. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, for example, gave great respect to the teachings of Jesus calling him the savior of Jerusalem, and also wrote comments on the first Commandment. Many other famous Vaisnava acharyas preached about Jesus with the same spirit. The president of the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sab Srila B. P. Puri Maharaj, said: "The contribution of Jesus to the world of theism cannot be ignored." Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is also known to have spoken with Muslims on many occasions. He even referred to the Koran and accepted Allah as another name for Vishnu.

While the Gaudiya Math accepts the validity of all pure theism, it has proved necessary to clarify areas where followers have deviated from the original teachings. As an example of this, in his multiple encounters with Christian leaders, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj stressed that "Thou shalt not kill" includes animals as well. In fact, Father Canciani of Rome published a book called Jesus was a Vegetarian. In his research, he discovered that the first Christians had been persecuted by Roman authorities and cattle farmers because they were preaching and spreading vegetarianism.

It must also be noted that in the Gospel of the Twelve, one of the older Christian scriptures, Jesus is found teaching vegetarianism, reincarnation, and the law of karma almost with the same vocabulary as the faithful Vaisnava. Considering that the Essenes (Jesus' own community) were known to be strict vegetarians, it can be concluded that the modern Christian meat eaters have deviated from their real teachings.

Such things have happened in Kali Yuga in all religions. We have to find the essence. In this way it will become very obvious that all true theistic religions teach the same moral standards that guide humanity

towards loving devotional service. Those who wish to gain access to the deepest and finest of all of God's messages to this world will study the deeper ontology of every religion. Such studies, handled by true devotees, will never become the cause for violent disputes (such as the disputes often created by political manipulators for selfish purposes).

The Gaudiya Math has converted members from all religions and schools of thought to Vaisnavism. Still, the positive spirit of cooperation with other religions for the moral upliftment of humanity is fully accepted by Gaudiya Vaisnavas. At the same time, the Gaudiya Math will also spare no effort to make everyone happy in this world by respectfully sharing with them the gifts of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Caste and Cultures / Superiority & Inferiority Complexes

The scriptures fully support the conversion of all peoples to Vaisnavism, and thus the right and duty for all to practice the highest services of the Vaisnava faith. Yet, somehow or another, very deeply rooted in the conditioned soul, there is prejudice against others whose origin lay in a different culture, caste, or race. Whatever influences of the past have impregnated this psychology of imperfection, it stands out as a shameful reality.

This difficulty exists even among the Vaisnavas in India. There, for example, neophyte Vaisnavas of Bengali origin do not get along with those of Hindi speaking origin. Similarly, when Westerners suddenly showed up to preach Vaisnavism in the dress of sannyasis and spiritual masters, it was not easy for all the Vaisnavas of India to accommodate them. There was immediate acceptance and welcome to the new recruits from the advanced Vaisnavas in India, but it is not easy for those who are still confused about Vaisnava etiquette and siddhanta. European and, especially, American superiority complexes with respect to poorer countries and different races also left a bad taste by the behavior of the young Western Vaisnavas. However, the Vaisnava communities have succeeded in combining the greatest variety of people living and working together towards a common goal.

Srila Rupa Goswami has personally condemned looking upon a Vaisnava in accordance with their birth. Therefore, we should be very careful in this regard. The Gaudiya Math family now branches out all over the world and many tests will have to be passed to prove that we really see beyond the bodies and behave as real brothers and sisters.

It is not only fear of the unknown which stands in our way, but also, straight out selfishness that opposes our true vision. Sometimes we feel antipathy against one devotee or devotee group, and the next moment we feel sympathy towards another. Both of these feelings are rooted in the same error. We should look at all Vaisnavas as our worshipable prabhus. Any type of inclination which is rooted in some kind of prejudice is against the highest principle.

We may sometimes feel that it is necessary to preach to some social class apart from the general public due to their inaccessibility of a common platform. This may be done, but it is dangerous; and until the recruits from that different social order come down from their prejudiced platform and honor all Vaisnavas equally, it will be difficult to successfully convert them to being true Vaisnavas.

As an example of this, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu refused to go and see the devotee king Prataparudra Maharaj since a renunciate should not associate with people in worldly positions. On the other hand, He offered the highest regard to a Muslim-born devotee, Srila Haridas Thakur.

Any type of superiority complex harbored within a neophyte Vaisnava should be clearly understood to be an enemy of real Vaisnava sentiment. On the other hand, any feeling towards personal inferiority is traditionally accepted as a good excuse to secure one's position as the lowest of all servants. Srila Sanatana Goswami and Srila Haridas Thakur's behavior in Jagannath Puri give ample evidence of this fact. Therefore, it is quite appropriate for Western Vaisnavas to feel very low due to their low birth, but it is an offense on the other side for a brahmin born Vaisnava to consider himself superior.

Broadminded concepts fit perfectly into the real Vaisnava world view and preaching activities. Narrow-minded persons, trying to cling to birth privileges are simply outdated and would do better researching the glorious generosity of the Vedic sages. By the grace of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the real World Vaisnava Family will rise to embrace the world with Unity in Diversity reaching all cultures and peoples.

We have already witnessed Germans, Jews and Arabs dancing together in Sri Vrindavan Dham, music celebrities leading millions to listen to the Mahamantra, surrealistic Vaisnava drama troops preaching against the effects of the age of Kali, and Krishna temples in skyscrapers and previous Christian churches. There is nothing which Krishna cannot do.

Is the Gaudiya Math Sectarian?

All forms of God are eternal and they have a transcendental position. Krishna and Vishnu, for example, have separate pastimes but they both belong to the same divine truth. We are not to make a case of contention when discussing different lilas of the Lord, but simply appreciate the many ways in which the Lord manifests and the variety of relationships He develops with His many devotees. The truth of the conditioned souls approaching spiritual understanding by the intervention of divine grace creates the vast diversity that we encounter. If we cannot appreciate that, we may as well doubt our own convictions and how they came about.

Sincere searchers of the truth have received help from within and without throughout the ages. At the same time, there have always been corrupting tendencies of the conditioned soul within all spiritual currents. Still, as Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj often said: "Love for God is the highest goal of life. It does not matter how a person got this love of God. If he has it, he is a perfect person." With respect to other Vaisnava sampradayas, this same principle applies. As our prominent acharya Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur has taught: Vaisnavas are happy about any manifestation of true theism in this world.

Gaudiya Vaisnavas will take any valid thought regardless of where it comes from. For example, Hegel's statement: "Die to live," was often used by Srila B. R. Sridhar Maharaj in describing the surrender of the soul to Krishna. Vaisnavas are also willing to expose their teachings to constructive critique in a very non-dogmatic way.

Naturally, the Gaudiya Math teaches many religious principles and rejects those who intend to harm other living entities. As such, in the world of irreligion and corruption, Gaudiya Math teachers stand out as revolutionaries spreading a world consciousness of proper behavior and spiritual fulfillment; they are not yogis who promote personal salvation and indifference to the suffering world.

The Gaudiya Math wants to contribute that which has been received from our disciplic succession to all thinkers of the world from all schools of thought and to serve humanity at large. It wants to distribute the happy nectar given to the world by God Himself. In the form of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, He introduced the congregational chanting of the Holy Name. The divine principles of Sri Krishna's lila of love can cure humanity from the addiction to mundane lust, and there is no room for sectarianism in this effort.

Vaisnavism - Real and Apparent

The material nature and the agents of illusion (Maya) often come to disturb the Vaisnava faith. Due to this, difficulties arise between those who follow the highest Vaisnava ideals and those who simply claim to do so. The cheating mentality called vipralipsa manifests everywhere in this material world. Vaisnava movements are not immune to this. Therefore, it is the duty of the acharyas to always maintain the purity in their realm of influence. They must denounce any misuse which may disturb Vaisnava missionary activities, and cause wrong impressions in the public opinion of Vaisnavas. Vaisnavism – real and apparent – is a topic which has to be discussed among Vaisnavas regularly to protect ourselves from our own immaturity, flickering minds, and mountains of false ego.

Every sincere soul, practicing the precepts of the Vaisnava ideals, can become a pure soul. If the history of the Caste Goswamis, Smarta Brahmanas, Prakrita Sahajiyas, and Institutionalists have created a disturbing influence in this world, it only confirms the famous sloka:

*sruti-smriti-puranadi-
pancaratra-vidhim vina
aikantiki harer bhaktir
utpatayaiva kalpate*

“Devotional service which is not executed in accordance with the verdict of the revealed scriptures is simply an unnecessary disturbance to human society”. (Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu 1.2.101). We have to do everything we can to reach the highest purity in our spiritual life and our spiritual missions. Those who follow the sanatana-dharma are always dedicated to fighting off tyranny, both in the physical world and in the realm of thought. If any person manifests symptoms of a true Vaisnava and promotes the pure values of Vaisnavism, then everyone's heart will become happy.

Relations with Babajis

Renunciates in our sampradaya previously dressed in the way of babajis. The six Goswamis of Vrindavan wore such dress. At the same time, they preached vigorously by writing many books, holding regular classes, inspiring the construction of great temples, and establishing the worship of the deities with great love. They established holy places and sent their followers to distribute the literature in all directions. During Srila

Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's time, babajis such as Srila Jagannath das Babaji Maharaj and Srila Gaur Kishor das Babaji Maharaj carried on the tradition. Even today we see many babajis in the Holy Dham who preach the Gaudiya Math tradition, serving both the Dham and the devotees who visit there.

However, due to the influence of the age of Kali and the many unfortunate activities of some who dressed as babajis, that dress was not respected among the common people at the time Gaudiya Math began. Many of these so called babajis were living on donations by the pious and ignorant public without any real contribution to the mission of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Due to their questionable behavior, many fell under suspicion of public opinion. Among the babaji groups who were not favorable to the Gaudiya Math were the followers of a Babaji who became well known for chanting their "own" mantra everywhere. These babajis were not accepted by the true Radha Kunda babajis.

Considering Sri Radha Kunda the holiest of all places, the Gaudiya Math took Sri Radha Kunda's glory all over the world. Yet even some of the residents of Radha Kunda's shores, did not appreciate what the Gaudiya Math had done. Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur clearly denounced these materialistic tendencies among the residents of the Dham. At the same time, he gave a clear understanding of who a real babaji is; i.e. who does and does not deserve the respect given to a true renunciate. There is, therefore, really no opportunity for conflict. The Gaudiya Math accepts real babajis and Dham gurus, but stays away from those who lack substance.

Relations with Caste Goswamis and Smarta Brahmanas

A person can only be accepted as a genuine Vaisnava if he accepts the basic precepts of the sampradayas and can explain his course of action according to the shastras. Caste Goswamis such as the descendants of the Nityananda Vamsa, Advaita Vamsa, and Smarta Brahmanas want to limit mercy to the rights and duties acquired through one's birth. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, along with Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and the acharyas following in his line have actively refuted this stand and defeated the idea in many debates.

The high priest of the demons, often mentioned in the Puranas, is called Sukracharya. The literal translation is 'Seminal-Acharya,' or someone who declares the birth connection the only way to transmit powerful positions to future generations. This proposal has always been

refuted by the Vaisnava sampradaya. There are so many stories that speak of this. One outstanding story is that of Valmiki, formerly a murderer, was transformed by the initiation he received from Srila Narada Muni and converted into the great author of the Ramayana, the holy scripture.

In our modern world it is already common for people born in non-Vedic families and previously addicted to sinful activities to start Vaisnava missions and initiate others (including brahmin born Hindus) into the real brahmin Vaisnava tradition. This is a revolution in itself that has helped to create a great renovation and invigoration of spirit among Hindu born people both in India and abroad.

Relations with Mayavadis

Vaisnavas and Impersonalists have a rift which goes back to the puranic times and to the great Vedic acharyas. The Gaudiya Math continues to take the appropriate strong stand against all who claim themselves to be God or otherwise, that God has no personality. This is not the forum to enter deeply into the ontological discussion of this rift. Still, it must be mentioned here that the material world is full of theories and speculations leaning on the advaita, or monistic, impersonal world view, which has created havoc in the minds of the conditioned souls.

Even though many of the impersonalists share a good amount of the Vedic Vaisnava siddhanta, it still holds true that their apathy towards serving a personal God in eternity is making their company a danger for the tender faith of love. Therefore, the Gaudiya Math has taken up the strong banner of pure monotheism in order to save the world from voidness and impersonalism. Our acharyas are also well known for their strong teachings that have converted Mayavadis to the Vaisnava faith.

Followers of the Vedanta schools who exclude the transcendental lila of the Lord from their conception of Nityananda are not considered favorable to devotional feelings of the Vaisnava sanga. As such, they are to be avoided and cannot be considered theists in the true sense of the word. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur even wrote that one should not associate with those who hesitate to criticize the impersonal interpretation of the Vedanta.

Since the impersonal interpretation of the word theism already contradicts the dictionary understanding, one can easily understand how such an interpretation becomes the source of many arguments. Theo is God and God is the Supreme Person: the one without an equal - with no one superior to Him. If the Supreme had no personality, in some way He would already be less than all the thinking, feeling and willing persons of

His creation. This idea is unacceptable to a Vaisnava, thus he cannot accept either the Buddhist's nor the other Impersonalist's interpretations of the final truth.

The last snare of illusion, even when accompanied by austere and pious behavior, is this impersonalist assumption. Without real humility, the Mayavadi concludes: "There is no higher being or authority above me. I can save myself. My individuality was a 'good for nothing' affair." Vaisnavas feel deep compassion for souls with such frustrated conceptions, but they also understand that the world of love is hiding from people with such an attitude. Therefore, Vaisnavas try to spread the Holy Name of the Lord to purify the whole world from such attitudes.

Imitators

Those who claim to practice Vaisnavism but have introduced unauthorized changes of conduct or conceptions into their practices and philosophy are called imitationists (imitators) or prakrita-sahajiyas. They have deviated from the sampradaya. In India, there are many well known groups of such imitators and their misconstrued teachings such as the Auls, Bauls, Gauranga Nagari, and Sakhi Bheki and many more, old and new. In addition, some neophytes claim to already be on the platform of Krishna Consciousness while they are really not so. To be able to identify the imitators, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupad compiled a book called Prakrita Rasa Sata Dusani. At the same time, he re-established the full glory of the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya through his Gaudiya Math.

Imitation is generally found when the lazy mentality of the conditioned soul wants to get a cheaper, easier version of spiritual life. The misuse of the Vaisnava philosophy to get money, women, or fame will also drag someone away from the real process. The ongoing search for purity, or permanently watching and always remaining under the guidance of truly advanced Vaisnavas, is the only protection from falling into the influences from the external world, and the imitator tendencies within the mind.

Temples in the Kingdom of Maya

Human beings are subject to a world of misunderstandings. These misunderstandings also manifests between Vaisnavas. Once, when asked why there is so much Maya to be found even in a Temple of Krishna, a

sadhu replied: “We should not be surprised when we find Maya in the temples, we should be surprised that there are temples in the kingdom of Maya.”

The more branches a tree has, the more opulent he looks, and the more blessings he will give. Therefore, Krishna's unity is full of diversity. But, Maya wants to divide and not let the victims get any chance to reunite with other Vaisnavas. For that reason, Maya invents a great amount of psychological tricks. Here are just a few of those mental excuses which keep us away from the much needed sadhu-sanga:

1. My guru is really the only one who can give the highest nectar. Therefore, I will not associate with anyone who has not realized this fact.
2. I am so fallen that I will not go to contaminate other devotees.
3. If I associate with other Vaisnavas and their missions, my disciples will notice that I am not the only real devotee after all, and they may stop loving me.
4. Maybe my disciples will be more attracted to another devotee - senior to me - and will want to leave my company.
5. Other Vaisnavas may have different standards than we have in our temples and the absolute understanding of my disciples may be disturbed.
6. I do not like to listen for hours when other Vaisnavas lecture.

My spiritual master once wrote me in a letter, “You Westerners are always in a fighting spirit, and even if you do not want to fight, someone will induce you to fight anyway.” Let us consider the fact that in almost all communities soon or later some fight or misunderstanding erupts. What can be done? Somehow, the locally involved devotees have to solve this problem; which they usually do quite quickly. Sometimes, however, disputes over the jurisdiction of preaching paraphernalia such as temples, vehicles etc., may endure longer due to an unclear instruction from the departed spiritual master.

Yet, as we have often witnessed, even disputes such as those mentioned above do not stop our preaching spirit. Nor do individual misunderstandings or even fights between individuals and missions usually affect the overall relationship others maintain with the disputing parties. They are usually considered secondary. Since smaller and larger disputes may appear at any time, we should carefully observe how the advanced devotees deal with such situations. In this way, we will learn to continue preaching without being too affected when Kali yuga manifests in some way.

Vaisnava institutions are also not meant to make us lazy, complacent, envious, indifferent or non-intellectual. They are not created to let others

think for us. Thus, leaders should do well to train their disciples in such a way that their sraddha, as well as the association with other Vaisnavas of the same sampradaya can survive in their absence. Otherwise, a cult will be created, not a branch of the Vaisnava Sampradaya - as Srila Jiva Goswami conceived of it.

By Krishna's arrangement all little difficulties can be harmonized. We need only to be attached to real sadhus and preach. Thus, more facility than we can handle will appear by Krishna's grace; as He can give His devotees anything at anytime. This is one of the important lessons to be learned from the Gaudiya Math history. Those who, in the past, had become enveloped by territorial disputes were rather inattentive to the preaching and may even have lost some of Krishna's assets due to their negligence.

On the other hand, those who continued with the real spirit of the Gaudiya Math preaching work and renounced the easy facilities (by starting again in the same humble way their guru had started his mission) received support and new enthusiasm from all sides and expanded the real service world beyond the limits of expectation. There are many examples of this still taking place.

As we have come to witness, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, Srila B. R. Sridhar Dev Maharaj and Srila B. P. Puri Maharaj (to mention just a few very important personalities in the recent history of the Gaudiya Math) all acted in the same way. They kept friendly ties with their close Vaisnava friends and godbrothers even if they had disputes with others. They kept aloof to those discrepancies for the sake of serving their gurus. They even forgave those who had offended them in the past for the sake of serving Vaisnava harmony. They worked with their godbrothers in a surrendered mood and tried to unite the Vaisnavas for the sake of their guru's plans.

They started Vaisnava missions themselves to help spread the real teachings of their Gurudev to others who prayed to them for help. Even though they were sometimes outspoken on a particular situation or disturbance, they did not exclude any actively preaching godbrother or their disciples from the Gaudiya Math family and their personal blessings. In addition, they excused themselves for having offended others and declared that nobody could offend them because they were too fallen anyway. If this is not enough evidence to prove my point, I am sure we can go to other acharya examples of the past or present to find that same holy principle alive.

Kali Yuga is an ocean of faults. Victims of Kali engage in quarrel and hypocrisy. If we want to progress in spiritual life we must not dwell on the faults of others. Too much of this activity will simply bring those faults to manifest within ourselves. If someone is causing a disturbance for others,

he will have to be dealt with by higher authorities. Whatever our opinion may be, we shall try to be very generous with others, strict with ourselves, and do everything possible to happily accommodate everyone in the Krishna Conscious family tree. Those who do not have such a wish, but rather create antagonism among Vaisnavas, can be understood to be in great need of help.

Party Spirit is the Greatest Enemy of Truth

Any type of preaching that excludes other Vaisnava branches from receiving the kind grace of Krishna and our parampara is not very generous, to say the least; what to speak of those who teach that their mission is the only one that carries on the true secret of the sampradaya. This party spirit mentality may impress the new followers of their mission, but it also goes against the spirit of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu, Abhirama and other non-discriminating distributors of mercy.

Party Spirit can manifest subtly or grossly in a preaching mission especially with overzealous followers. Every conditioned soul loves to hear that he joined the most unique mission so that he can think that he is special. Impartially viewed from a distance, such concepts are nothing but extended forms of egotism, and the followers of such concepts are, at best, neophyte Vaisnavas.

Those who engage in party spirit preach the trustworthiness of a single person or mission. Some preach that their connection provides a higher seed of bhakti which is not equaled by others. While they may not disqualify other acharyas, they often treat their contemporaries with contempt, especially if they have taken up the service of acharya. In extreme cases, followers try to transfer the exclusive credibility of acharya to one spiritual master at the cost of all the other active acharyas.

One of the serious problems with party spirit is that it creates a disturbance in society (Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu 1.2.101). Some party spirit preachers create doubts in new and old devotees about other spiritual masters. These doubts circulate and damage the faith of disciples of other spiritual masters. Party spirit preachers will warn others with questions such as: “Does your guru give siddha pranali?” Or, “What is the adhikara of this or that guru? Does he know his own spiritual form in Goloka?”

Those who preach with a party spirit do not like to associate with other Vaisnavas who are not under their control. They are often hypocritical, and are not afraid to commit Vaisnava aparadha or sastra-ninda. Party spirit, in general exploits the highest philosophy of bhakti by

utilizing it as a recruiting technique. This disturbing mentality is typical for kanistha-adhikaris.

The members of missions with exclusive attitudes and concocted philosophies tend to be hostile towards other Vaisnavas and are easily offensive. They try to find faults with other Vaishnavas and thus try to draw support for their distorted conclusions. If their followers realize the truth of the situation, they naturally lose faith in such leaders. Such people, without the connection with the WVA-VVRS, are unfortunated because they have not learned to associate with other Vaishnavas.

It is the duty of an acharya to protect his disciples in the beginning stages of their faith from outside influences that may disturb their tender creeper of devotion. With the emerging world Vaisnava community we should try to harmonize with a common universal interest of saving souls in this world under the banner of Lord Chaitanya's Sankirtan Movement rather than clash with different centers of local interest. Love, trust and respect to all sincere Vaisnavas is a fundamental principle of sadhu-sanga in the active and living tree of the parampara of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Branches of the Chaitanya Tree

The congregational chanting of the Holy Name inaugurated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the recommended process of spiritual relief which calls upon humanity to change its material course of action and degradation. Thus, the only reason to establish a Vaisnava mission is to help relieve humanity's suffering and, in this way, please the Supreme Lord. Those souls who aspire for the association of other devoted souls, being attracted by the call of the Vaisnavas, need relief centers where the ideals of the Vaisnava faith are being taught and practiced. These places cannot be contaminated by the selfish, ulterior motives or sense of private proprietorship. Therefore, it is necessary for the acharya to establish some kind of religious trust which will assure the transcendental nature of the activities which develop in and around the temple or ashram community. Such places are the best oasis, within this dark world, where people can participate in the loving devotional service of the Supreme Lord.

A new branch of the Chaitanya tree manifests as a natural process springing from the inspiration of an acharya who wishes to continue the mission of his guru. Sometimes this creation of a new branch is accompanied by birth pains due to the lack of acceptance and support from other Vaisnavas. To establish the dignity and credibility of such a mission

it is necessary to pronounce its beliefs and procedures of service as part of the preaching activities.

The nature of a transcendental community may vary according to the acharya and the sevaites (or board of directors who protect the spiritual nature of a temple). For the maintenance of the community, the acharya will establish the rules and regulations. However, in such maintenance, one principle remains of paramount importance: the purpose and the assets of the community shall not favor any individuals material interests- otherwise the purpose of the spiritual oasis will be spoiled.

Purity Among Acharyas

Personality cults pervade the earth. Followers of so called incarnations of God, music celebrities, movie stars, and politicians, are misguided and lose their valuable human opportunity for self-realization. Is the Vaisnava guru another person to guide his followers according to his own whims? In the jungle of this material world, where everything, including religious vocabulary, is used for selfish ends, it is rather difficult to get a clear picture. Superficial observers are immediately at a loss; but those who are sincere, even if they have no connection or clue as to God's nature can rely on their inner guide to direct them towards the truth. Since every genuine guru will always give all the credit to his guru, considering himself nothing but an instrument to implement his guru's wishes, it is clear that only via the criteria of guru, sastra, and sadhu shall someone be accepted as a bona fide acharya or guru among the Vaisnavas. This means that his teachings are subject to the check and balance approval system within the Vaisnava family.

In some cases, where persons have wrongly taken guru positions, there have been deviations from the true Vaisnava path and these personalities have temporarily mislead their followers. Purity in purpose, therefore, is recognized only when someone sticks to the goal of his guru and thus the whole sampradaya. In this way, there is no difficulty when different branches of the sampradaya overlap geographically or in a certain function, since it is assumed that they all follow the common cause and respect the principle of Unity in Diversity.

Do Not Neglect Any Vaisnava

Krishna loves the nirupadhi Vaisnava who executes His service without being noticed by anyone. But, if he is neglected by other Vaisnavas,

Krishna does not accept the service of such devotees. The following narration reminds us of this fact:

When a Raja Suya sacrifice conducted by Yudishthira Maharaj ended successfully, the bell which hung in the center of the arena was known to ring on its own accord. Once, however, after the Brahmanas finished all their offerings to the Supreme, the rishis, and the demigods, everyone looked towards the bell but nothing happened. In desperation, Yudishthira asked Krishna for help. Krishna told them that they had worshipped all the great personalities but had neglected the simple humble Vaisnava. Arjuna knew one such devotee who lived in a straw hut outside Hastinapur. He went to bring him to the arena. The Vaisnava was reluctant and only upon hearing that he would meet Krishna did he agree to go with Arjuna on his chariot. There he was worshipped by all and Draupadi cooked a feast for him. He mixed all the different preparation together and ate with delight. Then he was taken back to his home and everybody looked towards the bell. Nothing happened. Yudishthira Maharaj was worried. There seemed to be no solution. Again the last resort was Krishna. “What mistake did we commit now?” Krishna told them, “Somebody must have offended that Vaisnava.” They asked all, but everyone denied it. Finally, when they asked Draupadi she lowered her head and said, “Yes, I offended him. I cooked a nice feast for him, but when he mixed all the preparations together I thought this devotee has no culture.” Krishna confirmed that this was the offense. The next day Arjuna went to the same devotee. Again, it was difficult to convince him to return but finally he could not reject Arjuna’s pleading. He was worshipped and Draupadi cooked another, even bigger feast for him. He mixed all the preparations together and as he ate the last morsel of food, the bell started to ring with great force and all the assembly rejoiced.

Nothing Bad Happens Without Good Reason

Initially I thought that by joining a Vaisnava ashram all my problems would be finished. Well, I was wrong. We have to be alert at every moment so as to not fall in Maya. Kanaka (desire for wealth), kamini (desire to satisfy our lust), and pratistha (desire for fame) always linger within us waiting to catch us in an inattentive moment. Spiritual advancement is not acquired by simply staying in the mission for many years. Even elder members of missions have to be careful. In truth, we are only safe in the pure praying mood of a helpless soul aspiring for true devotion.

There is a saying in South America: “Nothing bad happens without good reason.” We have experienced many difficult moments in our ashram life as well as in the history of Vaisnava missions. Why do such difficulties occur? Krishna is the supreme controller: When He sees His devotees entangled, or with offensive mentalities, He makes drastic arrangements to protect the path of purity.

Even in my most difficult moments and after apparently insolvable situations, I soon discovered the blessing in disguise. For example, I was told not to associate with advanced devotees for the sake of institutional concerns. Nevertheless, I disregarded these formal objections and thus I obtained the merciful association of pure devotees of Krishna; whom are very rarely found.

Impartially said, I have to thank all those who have, even unwillingly, made my life so complicated that it forced me to move onward on this path of the search for Sri Krishna.

The ups and downs within our sampradaya can also be seen as ways of preserving the sampradaya’s purity. They help spread the essence of its teachings free from any institutionalized control. Srila Bhaktivinode’s writings confirm this in many of his historic statements such as:

- Sectarianism is the greatest enemy of truth.
- As long as they are ignorant, we should expect that they will act ignorantly.
- If you cannot find inner peace, you must, as Vyasa did, knock at the inexhaustible fountain of truth.
- Vaisnavism is the religion of liberty, unmixed truth, and absolute love.

Lessons to be Learned

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami describes: „In the absence of my beloved Gurudev even Govardhan looks to me like a great python and Sri Radha Kunda, the holiest of all places, looks like a tiger mouth ready to devour me.“ In truth, the disappearance of one’s guru is one of the most difficult moments in a disciple’s life. In separation of Sri Guru, life seems to be unbearable. In addition, many difficulties concerning how to continue the acharyas mission naturally arise.

To continue the guru’s mission after his departure, it is necessary for some Vaisnavas to give shelter to newcomers just as the acharya gave to all of his personal disciples. But who is qualified to continue his mission? This question gives rise to so many opinions. Some may be perfect, some may be wrong. How the spiritual lineage continues after an acharya leaves

frequently takes some time to manifest. We may wish for a formal or institutionalized solution during this time, but this transitional period is necessary to awaken all the disciples of the spiritual masters to the need of their own complete surrender.

Our guru has taught us how to recognize a real Vaisnava and the true philosophy. He has taught us to preach the Vaisnava siddhanta to impersonalists and to atheists. He has warned us about so many gross and subtle deviations. Now, in his absence, we are hopefully mature enough to remain faithful to his teachings. We must learn to act correctly. If we have not yet done so, it is the time to fully surrender. Otherwise, confusion will be unavoidable.

How shall we continue to preach with enthusiasm without the presence of our Gurudev? To whom shall we send the new devotees to take shelter of as we did when we met Sri Gurudev? So many tests are coming now, all of a sudden. Are my godbrothers really qualified to continue the disciplic succession as gurus? Or, is it because of my envy that I am seeing so many faults in them? In this way, our mind will search for a clear understanding of how to continue, or better yet, how to surrender more in our life. The process of Krishna Consciousness is voluntary, and in the end we all have to decide with our own hearts how we want to continue the order of our guru. Our own understanding of our guru's order will be our only guiding light.

After the disappearance of my diksa guru Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, and after the disappearance of my sannayas guru Srila B. R. Sridhar Maharaj, I experienced many unexpected difficulties. During that time, I also studied the history of the Gaudiya Math. What appeared at first to be very chaotic and extreme, later revealed itself to be an urgent intervention by Krishna to teach us the basic principles of a pure disciplic succession. Whatever painful development had to be witnessed was a lesson to be learned for the many who only very recently had come in contact with the disciplic succession. In the long run, these lessons, which we have had to learn very quickly, will prove to be the struggle of the disciplic succession against contamination and misuse. It will also be understood that any time a personally motivated individual takes a position in a spiritual organization, it is doomed to failure. Here are some examples of the lessons we have received.

Acharya Transition - Theory and Practice

In the past, acharyas have prepared their disciples for the moment of physical separation in different ways, but, to my understanding, none of

them changed the dynamism of the guru parampara. Some acharyas appointed some rittvik acharyas to initiate on their behalf; indicating that such rittvik acharyas could become real acharyas after their departure. Others appointed a secretary for the mission after their departure. Some acharyas left a paper declaring a particular dear and trusted disciple to be the next acharya in charge of the temples and Deity worship which were established by him. There are really no hard and fast rules concerning what an acharya must do in such cases. But, one thing remains without a doubt: No acharya has neglected the need of the plurality and dynamics of spiritual revelation which permeates the scriptures and the living tradition again and again.

For technical reasons, or to avoid devotees fighting over the use of assets, the guru may easily put his assets and trust upon one particular disciple. Yet, his and Mahaprabhu's order to all his disciples is clear: All of you should try to save others by becoming gurus yourselves and teaching the conclusions of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam. Interpretations which tried, in the past, to limit the spiritual revelation of an acharya to one institutionalized outlet all proved to be wrong; bringing about embarrassment for that mission. In other words, every disciple shall, according to his fullest hearts content, be able to give to others what he has received from his Gurudev. This may very easily mean that he has to start a new branch mission of the Vaisnava tree.

Our spiritual master sent us out so many times. "Go and open new centers for the mission," he would say. "Do not be attached to anything except Krishna and Sri Guru's grace. After all, if Krishna wishes to utilize you in some special service, he can reveal that very easily." For this reason we can tell when an acharya is self-effulgent. As our disciplic succession confirms; acharyas manifest as lighthouses to show the path in this dark age of Kali. Krishna will show the acharyas to this world, and we shall help them as much as we feel inspired to do so.

The past has shown that some acharyas may be the gurus of many other gurus, while others may just carry on their service almost unnoticed. Sri Krishna Himself reserves all the rights. Only by His function as caitya guru, does the relationship guru-disciple come to have validity. Voting, public opinions, political considerations, or false claims of exclusivity are bound to fail in this process. They have nothing to do with the guru parampara. Maybe a guru writes many books, maybe he does not; maybe he initiates many disciples, maybe he has only one; maybe he is a learned Sanskrit scholar, maybe he is not; maybe he is born in an Indian brahmin family, or maybe he comes from a Western mleccha family. All these differences should not bring us to go against divine principles by discriminating between one acharya or another.

Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj wrote in *The Search for the Ultimate Goal of life*: “To think of one guru as more pure than another is an offense.” Only Krishna knows everything. On our part, we do well by simply respecting anyone who actively preaches the true glory of our beloved guru and Krishna.

The Posthumous Rittvik Escape

Rittvik acharya is a term which is strictly used in our sampradaya to represent a living acharya under his order. There is no other reference in our long lineage of another kind of rittvik acharya being implemented. If there were, everyone would like to be initiated by Srila Rupa Goswami or Narada Muni through rittvik. Still, due to bad experiences in our sampradaya and the mental speculation of some devotees, it was proposed that a new procedure be introduced into the disciplic succession whereby new devotees could be initiated as disciples of the already departed acharya. This system, known as the ‘posthumous rittvik acharya system’ created a good amount of arguments but no viable spiritual solutions for anybody.

Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj warned us of the dangers of deviation by giving the Christian example and demonstrating how they lost their guru-disciple connection over the years. The Sikhs also abolished the guru system after Guru Govinda Singh. Both systems are rejected by our sampradaya. In fact, the only case where we have heard of this kind of posthumous rittvik acharya is in some sahajiya tradition in Bangladesh.

The other inherent danger in the posthumous rittvik acharya proposal is that the person who is offering rittvik connection to a disappeared acharya is acting on his own whim; and when he does not live up to the standard of devotion himself, he will abandon the newcomer to an unprotected life.

The acceptance of a living spiritual master as the principle of becoming the servant of the servant of God cannot be voided simply because the opportunity exists for unqualified persons to occupy such a post. Guru, shastra, and sadhu are the guides on the spiritual path. According to the Vedic principles, if someone who is inspired to find God accepts another person as his spiritual master, Krishna Himself takes the responsibility to protect him. This personal connection with a spiritual master is the greatest relief for the conditioned soul.

Searching for the guru and serving him in any of his forms is an eternal, voluntary principle which gives true life to our parampara. Srila

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj highlights this point in one of his speeches.

„Gentlemen, on behalf of the members of the Bombay branch of the Gaudiya Math, let me welcome you all because you have so kindly joined us tonight in our congregational offerings of homage to the lotus feet of the world teacher, acharyadev, who is the founder of this Gaudiya Mission and is the President-acharya of Sri Sri Visva Vaisnava Raja Sabha -I mean my eternal divine master, Om Vishnupad Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya, Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaj.

Sixty-two years ago, on this auspicious day, the acharyadev made his appearance by the call of Thakur Bhaktivinode at Sri Kshetra, Jagannath Dham at Puri.

Gentlemen, the offering of such an homage as has been arranged this evening to the acharyadev is not a sectarian concern, for when we speak of the fundamental principle of Gurudev or acharyadev, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my guru from yours or anyone else's. There is only one guru, who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me and all others.”

The sincere seeker is taken to his personal spiritual master by the help of the inner guide, the paramatma, who is God Himself. Thus, the choice of the spiritual master is mystical. Many people visit different branches of the Gaudiya Math and also other movements. How faith arises in the heart to accept someone in particular as a guardian is beyond comprehension. This process of faith and accepting a spiritual master cannot be administered by others. Every soul is responsible for his choice. This applies to the acceptance of the diksa guru as well as the acceptance of the siksa guru. Whenever attempts are made to geographically or institutionally restrict the free flow of faith towards a spiritual master, it results in some kind of disaster.

We conclude that the posthumous rittvik acharya idea proposed by some disciples of ISKCON's founder acharyas is not part of our tradition. Such ideas will not be embellished by trying to point out that one's guru is so extraordinary that from now on the sampradaya will change. This is really an offense against the guru. No authority in our family has approved of such distortions. Even if it is painful, we have to work hard and try to continue serving our guru in separation. It is not enough to hang up huge pictures of an acharya, play his tapes and quote his words.

If someone is qualified and trustworthy enough to receive the service of another person, then he would also be a candidate for the transmission of Krishna's mercy. If new searchers, who wish to be active in service, are

not finding such qualified Vaisnavas, they should be encouraged to look elsewhere. There is no need to share the sad company of someone who has no trust or is not trustworthy. Krishna will help us to regain our enthusiasm in the association of real sadhus and the family will go on, as our gurus wish.

The Acharya Appointed by a Committee

Another particular lesson we learned is that acharyas cannot be appointed or controlled by committees. In the eyes of his disciples, the acharya is accepted as the fully independent complete authority and representative of the Supreme Lord. Because of this, his position can easily clash with the relationship he has with his godbrothers, or with other members of the mission.

Difficulties may also arise with respect to the decisions made on the assets of the mission, especially if those assets were accumulated with the help of the acharya's godbrothers before he started initiating.

On the other hand, institutions need a board of directors. In the absence of the founder acharya, the board of directors has to protect the mission, properties, deity worship etc. Combining the acharya tradition with the board of directors is quite complicated. While different proposals have been made and experiments performed to solve this dilemma, many have failed to create harmony in the missions.

Even the grand temples of the great Gaudiya acharyas such as Srila Sanatana Goswami, Srila Rupa Goswami, and Srila Jiva Goswami were affected by this type of confusion, giving rise to the Caste Goswami tradition.

The original free spiritual current was presented by the priests to be a confined family seminal (sukra) disciplic succession. Worse still, many young kids in these Caste Goswami families did not have interest in the mission and started to take advantage of the temples; using them as a means to make a living or simply for their own enjoyment.

In response to this dilemma, Srila B. R. Sridhar Maharaj suggested that the original temples started by a founding acharya remain as tirthas for the future branches of the family. New acharyas, he said, should start new centers or develop small communities. The tirthas serve to bring together all the godbrothers of a branch to celebrate main festivals. In the tirtha no new acharya becomes prominent.

Yet there are so many circumstances to be taken into consideration here. For example, who will maintain the tirthas? The tirthas will only work if there are many new branches which are ready to give financial

support to a central tirtha and to send devotees there to keep the worship running. The sevaites (or the board of directors) no doubt have a great responsibility, but they can not have jurisdiction over the feelings and relations a devotee has with his spiritual master.

Let us never forget that every member of a Vaisnava family is a voluntary member, and that he will remain so as long as he feels that his heart is properly situated. The sevaites and the respective acharyas who decide to continue the initiation process shall lovingly try to find a way of mutual respect and a happy preaching spirit. This is the real test to pass in order to create unity in diversity and thus have the Vaisnava family grow without obstacles.

The Appointment of an Acharya as an Exclusive Successor

Not only committee appointments faced severe problems, but another phenomena also manifested: Some devotees interpreted the nomination of a successor acharya of a mission to mean that he had the exclusive right to represent his guru to the world. They believed that anyone else who might give initiation would not be qualified and would violate Vaisnava ethics. This concept stifles the preaching spirit.

Srila B. R. Sridhar Dev Maharaj explained that everyone has the right and duty to give to one's heart's content that which he received from his spiritual master. It is a laudable attempt if someone wants to give spiritual shelter to others. This can not be controlled by law or restricted in any way. Srila Sridhar Maharaj even welcomed other acharyas in his lifetime to initiate and be part of his mission.

The acharya can nominate one of his disciples to continue as acharya and to manage his temples in order to avoid fighting among the godbrothers, but the acharya does not limit the line of spiritual masters to only one particular person. That would contradict the whole Srimad Bhagavatam and the Chaitanya Charitamrita.

There is a great need in this world for many spiritual masters. The service done by anyone who is faithful to his guru and feels the inspiration to protect others should at the least be considered 'a noble act.' All these conflicts help us to see that the real dynamic expansion of Krishna Consciousness can only come from persons who are happily surrendered in this process as our loving spiritual masters were.

Rank is but the Guinea Stamp; Man is the Gold of It

Today, the world of Maya is so strong that even leaders of countries are often caught as cheap little thieves filling their pockets instead of serving their people. In the name of religion, the most unwanted material activities can also be found. It is no surprise that people are doubtful about the intentions of anybody who follows a path of submission to the spiritual master as the representative of the truth and God's pure goodness. It almost sounds unbelievable. Still, this is our path, and our only hope.

The saying, „Rank is but the guinea stamp; man is the gold of it“ comes from the English times when a guinea stamp was printed on gold to testify to its quality. Here, we use this popular saying to describe the difference between a post, a prestigious position, a function or a form, as compared to the holder of the position and the essential substance which should stand behind the formal conception. True devotees are the only gold promised by the Vaisnava guinea stamp of a brahmana, sannyasi, guru, or mahanta. Fortunately, we have examples of such stalwart devotees in our Gaudiya Math history that, upon any investigation on their sanctity and level of extreme dedication, all doubts regarding their purity disappear.

Unless a person is surcharged with the service life, his acceptance of other's service or collaboration is a hoax, and Krishna will sooner or later expose that painful fact for the benefit of all. Often, some unqualified people in bureaucratic Vaisnava institutions try to use material facilities for a lowly purpose that obliges true devotees to withdraw from such environments to save the dignity of their guru's line. Therefore, we should not blindly accept every person who is holding a position among Vaisnavas, but instead should carefully watch the surrounding sadhus to see if they are happy with the service of their leader. If other people start to chant Krishna's name and start becoming good devotees by connecting with such a leader, Krishna must be using him for His purpose and we shall show our respect.

Reinitiation - Demoniatic and Divine

Our siddhanta points out that in the long run our sampradaya is really a siksa-guru sampradaya. Nevertheless, the sambandha-jñana (the knowledge of our eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord) is generally given along with the diksa connection. Received through the initiation

process, this connection is, in many ways, the life line of a disciple in spiritual life, as well as the source of his conviction and service. Therefore, to lose one's diksa guru is a great calamity in a person's spiritual life.

Generally speaking, if a Vaisnava has left the service of his guru he should be saved; whatever it may take. Yet, Vaisnava etiquette must also be considered. If two spiritual masters have a relationship, they can easily cooperate with each other to take care of a disciple. This is common in instances when devotees, especially brahmacaris, need to change their location. If a Vaisnava requests another Vaisnava to look after his disciples, there is obviously no need for re-initiation.

In several instances, however, many devotees have lost their faith in their diksa gurus due to the wrong behavior and insensitivity of those gurus. These devotees became very helpless and went searching for shelter at the feet of other Vaisnavas. Under the circumstances, some received a connection through initiation from another guru who was in the mood of offering relief to the suffering devotees. The sentiment was that the previous initiation was really not valid, since the promised protection was not given. In such cases, Vaisnavas should be content if his friends and brothers find a place where they are happy to continue their devotional service.

Overall, it is up to the criteria of the spiritual master to see how he wants to deal with disgruntled followers of another guru. It is his responsibility, and he will receive the reaction if he does not consider the other Vaisnava's situation with sensitivity. If, however, re-initiation takes place between two acharyas or Vaisnava missions without communication or due cause, it only demonstrates the lack of recognition towards the genuineness of the other. Any case of motivated preaching against another guru in order to steal his disciple is clearly offensive and will have disastrous results. It is desirable if such differences could be eliminated, and the common cause could be discovered. Guidance with respect to such situations can be found in the actions of great devotees such as Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, Srila B. R. Sridhar Maharaj, Srila B. P. Puri Maharaj, and many others. Of course, above all, Krishna is the true enjoyer of all of His devotees.

Transcendental Courtesy

In truth, it is quite natural that close contact between conditioned souls will be full of difficulties. Even those who have chosen the path of bhakti and enlightenment sometimes enter the field of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. In this way our human frailties are exhibited. Devotees

from different missions who meet in Vaisnava functions may not necessarily agree on every point within their practices and siddhanta. Tension may also exist between members of the same mission. Still, we should follow the famous advice: Hate the sin, not the sinner. Differences such as styles of preaching, over-zealousness of neophyte devotees for their guru or simple ego clashes should not disturb our overall appreciation for each other.

Westerns, particularly, often have the tendency to be harsh with each other. Such treatment is altogether undesirable. Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger and harshness are clearly described as demoniac qualities in the Bhagavad Gita and one should not feel justified in this sort of behavior. A forum should exist for discussing philosophical points without becoming blasphemous towards others.

Personal attacks should be avoided and the truth should be spoken in a pleasing way whenever possible. When a sannyasi once asked Srila B. R. Sridhar Maharaj if there were any special instructions for him before he left to preach in the West, he replied: "Yes, there is one thing. You must not have these harsh dealings with each other."

In addition, assuming the mistakes of individual Vaisnavas to be a general trend of an entire group is only a shameful residue of the influence of the age of Kali. We should all try not to give any space to Kali in our preaching life and our Vaisnava relations. Meetings among Vaisnavas in a courteous spirit will always help in resolving misunderstandings.

Devotees are also of different natures. In The Teachings of Lord Chaitanya, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj relates that Srila Rupa Goswami encourages devotees of similar natures to join together and discuss the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness. In this way their faith will become strong. On the other hand, if devotees of different natures clash over the philosophy, they may disturb their faith as well as the faith of others.

The path of devotional service is full of tastes, as well as degrees of surrender and conditioning. Not every person can understand every instruction in the same way. Some instructions of the Vaisnava literature can only be really understood by very advanced Vaisnavas. Therefore some literature is practically prohibited for the general sannyasis, let alone the beginners. Yet this should not become a reason to disrespect each other or avoid creating a welcoming atmosphere in our temples for all other members of the World Vaisnava Family.

Each devotee is at a different stage of development. Thus, tolerance needs to be present in order to allow and encourage everyone to grow in their Krishna Consciousness. This does not mean that there cannot be philosophical discussions and dialogue. Rather, such discussions should be

done in a spirit of helping individuals and groups advance in their Krishna Consciousness.

This attitude could be called transcendental courtesy. Meetings such as the WVA-VVRS meetings, or the celebrations of a Vaisnava acharyas Vyasa Puja or tirobhava, are attended by many members from various missions. During these types of meetings transcendental courtesy is quite normal. After all, we all have so much in common and so little to disagree upon, once we start appreciating each other.

Customs Within the Gaudiya Math

Sistachara means the rules of conduct and worship, as passed down from the verbal instructions of the spiritual masters to their disciples. These unwritten rules of relationship between different Gaudiya Maths find their roots in the Vaisnava tradition. While missions may differ on certain subjects, a general pattern can be observed almost everywhere. It is compulsory, by the nature of the non-sectarian Vaisnavas, for instance, to be very friendly and appreciative of the devotees and the services done by members of other branches.

Nevertheless, disputes or misconceptions have entered into various branches, or between missions, resulting in many unfriendly relationships in the Gaudiya Math family. Thus, for the purpose of guiding us, I will record a few of the characteristics of proper Vaisnava conduct that I have observed in the Gaudiya Math:

1. Whenever any Math celebrates a special festival in honor of their founder etc., they invite the other different branches in their vicinity to attend the function. To show respect, the other missions send a few members to honor the invitation.
2. Respect is shown among the Gaudiya Math members in accordance with seniority. Often, however, senior members will reject such respect, choosing to honor a younger Vaisnava who has done outstanding service. They, in return, will reject that motion and insist to honor the senior members first. This is a kind of a loving struggle often observed among real Vaisnavas. In this way, the speakers are chosen within the meetings, and other personal care is scheduled.
3. If a Vaisnava comes to bless a meeting or festival he will generally receive, in accordance with the ability of the host, the following items:
 - A sweet worded welcome.

- A sitting place in the form of an asana made of kusa grass or cotton. (Senior members are often received with a wooden bench.)
- A request to speak Hari katha.
- An invitation to take prasadam.
- A donation to cover his travel expenses.
- A cloth.
- An invitation to rest.

These are the basic customs observed among Vaisnavas which make their association very sweet. In fact, these elements of fraternity and friendly welcome to guests is compulsory for any well educated person. Even an enemy should not feel ill treated when he comes to your home, what to speak of other Vaisnavas. To serve them properly only brings about blessings and happiness.

In addition, a few more points may be mentioned herein:

1. One inquires from an arriving Vaisnava about his initiation and service connection in order to find out how to properly honor and encourage this Vaisnava on his path.
2. One should not glorify his guru extensively in front of his guru's seniors or his godbrothers. To refer to your spiritual master in front of his godbrothers with the same name his godbrothers use for their guru is also not correct.
3. In the Gaudiya Math, in general, we are always in the spirit of offering respect to others without expecting anything first.
4. If any type of pride comes to contaminate the Vaisnava relationships, it is just a question of time before Krishna sends a lesson. We are happy about this. The environment is friendly to all of us, all of the time.
5. Never despair in difficult moments. Learn your lesson well, and continue your path of surrender.

Most importantly, we should never forget the sloka by Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupad: yena tena prakarena, manah Krishna nivesayet...“Above all else people should think about Krishna. Later, the rules and regulations can gradually be introduced.”

Everybody has to be happily accommodated in this family of Krishna Consciousness. This is the golden rule, and our attitudes should not interfere with this ideal. Topics such as the different songs sung in different functions, their rituals, and initiation procedures, etc., are quite secondary. Even though the book Sat Kriya Sar Dipika, by Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami, gives guidance on many samskaras (purification rituals),

we have seen that different acharyas have adopted different simplified variations of rituals in their preaching practices. This is not a reason for dispute.

If someone is too much of a neophyte to understand this, he will have a hard time associating with other Gaudiya Math branches. It is not possible to apply the same strictness at all times, places, and circumstances. Let us be flexible, harmonize, and again, always think of Krishna.

The Origin of the Soul

From 1981 to 1996 a controversy arose within the ISKCON limb of the Gaudiya Math branch of the Chaitanya tree concerning the origin of the soul. Thus, it will be briefly mentioned here that the Gaudiya Vaisnava siddhanta, as taught by our acharyas, perfectly clarifies the fact that the jivas come from Sri Krishna's tatastha sakti (marginal potency) and have not fallen down from the personal association with Lord Krishna in Goloka, or from the association of Lord Narayan in Vaikuntha.

In the second chapter, entitled Hari -jana kanda, of „Brahmana and Vaisnava“ (page 86) Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura states:

„Before acquiring material designations, the living entity is supremely pure. Even though he is not engaged in serving the Supreme Lord, he remains situated in the neutral position of santa-rasa due to his marginal nature. Though the living entity born from the marginal potency does not at that time exhibit a taste for serving the Lord due to a lack of knowledge of self realization, his direct propensity of serving the Supreme Lord nevertheless remains within him in a dormant state. Though the indirect propensity of material enjoyment, which is contrary to the service of the Lord, is not found in him at that time, indifference to the service of Hari and the seed of material enjoyment, which follows that state of indifference, are nevertheless present within him.

The living entity, who belongs to the marginal potency, cannot remain indifferent forever by subduing both devotional and nondevotional propensities. He therefore contemplates unconstitutional activities from his marginal position. As a sleeping person dreams that he is active in the physical world without actually being involved in activities, when the dormant indifferent living entity of the marginal potency exhibits even a little apathy to the service of the Supreme Lord and situates himself in a neutral, unchanging condition for even a little time, he is infected by impersonalism. That is why the conditioned soul desires to merge in the impersonal Brahman, thus exhibiting his mind's fickle nature. But due to neglecting the eternal service of the Lord and thereby developing the quality of aversion to the Lord, he cannot remain fixed in that position. In

this way aversion to the Lord breaks his concentration of mind and establishes him as the master of this world of enjoyment.

Maya, the external energy of the Supreme Lord, then induces the marginal living entity to enjoy this world through her covering and throwing potencies and thus shows the living entity the reality of being averse to the Lord's service."

In fact, all four Vaisnava sampradayas are in agreement with respect to this topic. Statements to the contrary (such as those found in Back to Godhead etc.) or those which lend themselves to interpretation, can be understood as simplifications within a framework which does not require siddhantic clarification. At any rate, the secrets of the origin of the soul are well kept by our Supreme Lord who reserves all rights to fully facilitate His loving lila, and who does not oblige anyone to have a relationship with Him.

How Vaisnava Siddhanta Views Copyrights of Transcendental Literature

By using copyrights someone claims to own the rights of a creative contribution. Yet this is incompatible with the nature of the divine descent of knowledge into this world. Limiting the publication of holy scriptures and their distribution to any one person or institution contradicts the nature of our siksa guru parampara and the Vaisnava acharyas. Any copyright claim decision which causes the number of transcendental books distributed and published to decrease is also certainly not in the interest of any Vaisnava acharya.

The only real proprietor of the rights is the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Himself, and it is He alone who decides which disciple is qualified to deliver the pure message of his guru. Once, when Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj was reading the Krishna Book, his secretary asked him why he was reading his own books. Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj replied: "These are not my books, they have been dictated to me."

While Krishna allows His Bhagavat-Gita to be printed by many different people, only the real devotees get the blessings of bhakti by printing this sacred text. Therefore, all other attempts by any Vaisnava institution to claim the exclusive rights to their acharya's contributions is not in accordance with the transcendental law.

The spiritual master is a transparent medium of God who delivers His teachings to the world. Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj wanted

his books to be distributed by anyone to everyone. When he was present, even those who kept a distance from the administration of his mission were allowed to distribute his books. Acharyas desire their teachings to be handed down through their disciples and other sincere Vaisnavas.

A disciple receives the mantra and teachings from his guru; and he promises to remain faithful to his guru's teachings. This is the only formal condition required for a disciple to be accepted. Thus, each disciple has the right and duty to distribute the teachings of his guru in the way he considers the most appropriate. It is also true that every Vaisnava mission naturally wants to use the literature they print and distribute to further their cause through the invitations printed in the books.

History has shown that the properties of the missions of great acharyas sometimes end up in the hands of mundane persons unaware of the sacred meaning of such places. Nevertheless, such people have not had the opportunity to claim monopoly on the teachings and writings of their guru and founder acharyas. This is a very important observation. It is a well known fact that successors sometimes fail to continue the acharya's line of pure devotion, while other disciples succeed in carrying on the essence of the sampradaya.

Due to the misdirection of some leading members of Vaisnava missions, the properties which their guru established have become objects of dispute or misuse. Nevertheless, the teachings of any true guru are the property of all those who carry on the true spirit of his message. Since it can not be pre-determined who is really a qualified disciple, all have the right to preach the message of their guru as well as to publish and distribute his teachings. Only by his own qualification, and not by any type of nomination, can someone be accepted to represent his spiritual master properly. We find that this conclusion is supported by the living Vaisnava tradition. Examples of this include the following:

- All Gaudiya Math branches freely publish the books of the previous acharyas. I.e. ISKCON published the Brahma-Samhita, which was previously published by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur.
- All Gaudiya Vaisnavas sing the songs of Bhaktivinode Thakur and of Narottam das Thakur.
- Usually, Vaisnavas are very happy if any other Vaisnava prints and distributes the sacred Vaisnava literature of any author; knowing well that Krishna and the author are very happy when more souls come in contact with the divine truth.
- Since only Krishna can lead someone to his spiritual master (brahmanda bhrahmite kona..), it is a mistake to think that

someone could unlawfully abuse the teachings of any guru by distributing and publishing his works.

- For practical reasons, there is no objection to coordinating and publishing books by previous acharyas in a joint effort by several missions. Yet, this can only be done if the purpose of the publishing house is transparent and known to all who participate. Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj himself encouraged his disciples to write even while he was personally present. How can a disciple write if he has no permission to quote his guru and to publish his writings?

Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj started many different divisions of his publishing house called the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. I (B. A. Paramadvaiti) was personally responsible for several Bhaktivedanta Book Trust departments (in Swedish, Danish, Finnish and Portuguese) from 1973 to 1979.

Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj gave us full freedom to publish and happily welcomed any new books. His concern was that all energy should be spent for Krishna, regardless of who will manage it afterwards. Potentially, every disciple of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj and their genuine followers are qualified to start a transcendental publishing division and to publish Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj's, Srila Sridhar Maharaj's, as well as all the other previous acharya's writings. He only has to make sure that the energy from these books will truly be used for the Lord's service; otherwise he will be held responsible by his reactions. It is also necessary for any transcendental printing department or joint Vaisnava enterprise to be transparent in their financial dealings in front of all their contributors. As the saying goes: Clear accounts maintain the friendship, or, Love and trust with good administration.

The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust and all other publishing divisions in the Gaudiya Math are nothing less and nothing more than a service branch of the Gaudiya Math. It is very disappointing when the family members cannot recognize their other relatives. Are any of our great acharyas like Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur less important in the Vaisnava history than Srila Jiva Goswami? Imagine someone from the Radha Damodar temple trying to claim royalties for any of Srila Jiva Goswami's books that have been published by Vaisnavas. It is bad enough that so many wonderful tirthas, such as the Goswami temples, have been occupied by television watching and „bidhi“ smoking residents.

It is time to bring the true siddhanta into clear focus. Successors of an acharya, even if they received the proper appointment, should keep in

mind that their godbrothers have the equal right and duty to carry on the
disciplic succession. This is the law of the disciplic succession.

Part IV

Attempting to Harmonize

Our Goal is Quality

Is there any need for, or benefit gained by comparing Vaisnavas to each other? My godbrothers often rejected elevated Vaisnavas on the plea of: 'What did he do to save me?' Or, 'what did he do for Krishna in comparison to Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj?' I felt so sad that, due to this material comparison, my brothers were deprived of the sadhu sanga they needed so urgently.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur explains that only the highest devotee can know what level of advancement the others are on. He says that a Vaisnava's glories can also be understood by how many temples he opened, how many devotees he brought to this line, or by how much literature he wrote or distributed. While every Vaisnava should be very happy if another Vaisnava is successful in his missionary activities, we have to consider the many other Vaisnava instructions to get a complete picture of the right course of mentality to develop.

The Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita states: You should neither criticize nor glorify a Vaisnava. Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj stresses in his purport that we may make an exception in connection to glorifying a devotee for some extraordinary feat he accomplished by Krishna's grace, but we should never criticize a Vaisnava. This is so important that we can only refer here to the wonderful book *The Heart of Krishna* by Srila B. P. Puri Maharaj. This book shows us how Vaisnava aparadha will destroy our spiritual advancement.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj confirms that we should only associate intimately with Vaisnavas who are favorable towards the way our guru's mercy and Krishna descended into our lives. At the same time, we should not associate with those who like to put down our spiritual master, or who criticize other Vaisnavas unduly. The scriptures also state that a spiritual master is known by his disciples. A good disciple must therefore take care to please his guru by representing him well.

Every devotee loves to speak of the glories of his spiritual master. If he does not understand that same necessity for another, or if he is not generous in the evaluation of another's feelings for his guru, we can understand that he must be very immature. Such a person cannot see beyond the I and mine platform. He thinks: 'My guru is the best of all.' Or, 'my guru can give something one cannot get elsewhere.' Such comments are extensions of ego consciousness, are not in the line of a humble Vaisnava, and serve only to create disturbance among the spiritual family.

If we give recognition to some person for his great service, this is acceptable. But, if we commit the blunder of using that fact to put down

another Vaisnava in any way, we will become aparadhis. Even subtle indications of comparing the glory of one's guru to show his 'superiority' will become an offense to guru tattva, a breach of Vaisnava etiquette, and in short an aparadha. Every Vaisnava who is accepted by other Vaisnavas must be a great soul. Among them, the shining stars will naturally be recognized in their own light. They don't need to be, nor would they like to be publicized among other Vaisnavas- what to speak of being pushed on other Vaisnavas. This is nothing but spiritual common sense.

In conclusion, one should treat Vaisnavas properly at all times. Being sensitive to their feelings is definitely more important than quantity or quality considerations. We have heard our gurus say that Srimati Radharani thinks that all are devotees except herself. In the same light, Srila Sridhar Maharaj told us: "whoever says, 'I have something,' we should offer our respects to from a distance." Such a person does not reflect what we are looking for.

Harmonizing Different Standards Among Gaudiya Maths

With the translations of many books and songs for Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj's world-wide movement, the worship of Krishna gradually took on different variations. Who could forget the beautiful Govinda song composed by George Harrison which Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj introduced in his temples for the greetings of the deities. In addition, in Africa people celebrated the leading devotees as tribal chiefs, and in Brazil everybody brought their samba instruments to join in Lord Chaitanya's kirtan.

Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj's style of preaching in the West was very revolutionary; but his own guru's suggestions for preaching had not been any less revolutionary. To open ashrams for Vaisnava ladies was quite unique. Yet, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur had already spoken about their existence and necessity in Prema Pradip.

This quality of adaptation is not new to our sampradaya. Over the years, different branches of the Gaudiya Math have developed many styles of kirtan, artik, puja, and preaching techniques. Both Srila Narottam Das Thakur and Srila Syamananda Prabhu developed particular kirtan styles. Vaisnavas of different areas also chanted their bhajans in their respective languages, and the influence of their local cultures became noticeable. Manipuri Vaisnavas and Orissa Vaisnavas are examples of this.

The soul's craving for love of God is her constitutional right, but in the external world everything changes to some degree. Even deity styles,

temple constructions, styles of Vaisnava book publishing, festivals, and prasadam recipes change. While visiting different Gaudiya Maths, I noticed that they chanted different songs for their morning worship, and that the artik was also carried out with subtle variation. Some had the guru-parampara on the altar starting from the right side, some started from the left; some had a picture of Vamsidas Babaji Maharaj, some did not. Once I witnessed my sannyas guru, Srila Sridhar Maharaj, eat a piece of pizza out of love for his Western lady disciple. All in all, I understood that we are only interested in the essence. Neophyte devotees have the tendency to think that something can only be done in one particular way but, in truth, an empowered preacher may make adjustments according to time, place, and circumstance.

Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupad states that all bona fide spiritual masters teach the same essence of Krishna Consciousness even though the details may change. If the essence is present in a preaching mission and there is no deviation in the siddhanta, the details of delivering that essence should be happily accepted. This may not always be easy to understand. When I first heard of Straight-edge hard-core music for Krishna I was horrified by the idea. Then, when I met young people who were totally convinced of Vaisnavism due to their contacts with this music scene, I recognized my narrow-mindedness in this regard. Today, many Vaisnava rock groups have affiliated with our temples and help bring many souls closer to the Holy Name of Krishna.

We have to judge things by their results. We cannot expect all devotees of the Lord to act in the same way. Krishna loves variety. If, however, He is displeased with some adjustment made in a mission, it will come to be known soon or later. As long as we do not forget the essence of Krishna Consciousness, all differences can be harmonized with a generous mind. In this way, we will see that Lord Chaitanya's plan is really for the whole world; and we will not be surprised with all the new variations that arise as Krishna conquers the hearts of people around the world.

Brihat Kirtan

Harmonizing the devotional community could be compared to harmonizing a large kirtan. An inspirational kirtan requires the cooperation of many different types of devotees under proper guidance and conception.

It is the responsibility of spiritual authorities with vision to arrange the kirtan with everyone's benefit in mind. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur states that the more advanced devotees should lead the kirtan so that everyone may benefit. A devotee should not lead a kirtan simply to satisfy his ambitious, passionate nature, ignoring more qualified devotees. Fancy mirdanga playing with excessively loud beats that drown out the chanting and call too much attention to the player are also to be avoided. The instruments used are meant to support the chanting of the Holy Names: the focus and center of any kirtan being the Name of Krishna. The yuga dharma is coming together to glorify Krishna through his Names and the Name should be the prominent vibration supported by all other vibrations.

Life in a community, like a kirtan, requires constant harmonization and protection. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupad used to hold meetings in which disciples who did not appreciate each other had to say something good about the other person. Srila Sridhar Maharaj also taught us that it is simply a waste of time to go adjust the environment - to adjust everything and everyone around ourselves. Time is better spent 'oiling our own machine' or working on our own Krishna Consciousness. Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj changed forever the lives of countless Westerners by his personal example.

Godbrothers and Goduncles

The topic of godbrothers and goduncles comes up in Vaisnava communities where a forum of discussion and possibilities of disagreement exist. In some cases we may criticize our godbrothers, but we should carefully avoid criticizing our goduncles. Usually, godbrothers have different ideas and styles that may all please their guru. Sometimes, these differences lead to the creation of a variety of services and centers. However, if we criticize our godbrothers in a negative way - by putting them down, or creating politics against them - then we will commit aparadha which will disturb our devotional kripa.

With respect to the godbrothers of one's own guru (one's goduncles), the topic is much more delicate. Unless the goduncles have revealed a very negative attitude towards the guru, they should also be treated with the same respect as one treats his guru. As an example of this, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu showed formal respects in Puri to Brahmananda Bharati who was not behaving properly, but was a godbrother of his guru.

To meet an unqualified person in the seat of an acharya is very painful, and we should pray that we may never find ourselves in such a sad situation. If the heart of a devotee is telling him that a Vaisnava is really

doing something wrong, then he should keep a distance from that Vaisnava or spiritual master and his disciples. Distance will say enough. Yet, even if a Vaisnava whose initiating spiritual master has disqualified himself has to be given aid, it should happen in accordance with the most important Vaisnava precepts. In the WVA-VVRS it is fundamental to accept all those who wish to serve their guru of a recognized line. They will be benefited by that sanga, and Krishna will do the rest to help all of us in this complicated world.

The Title Prabhupad

In my experience in the Gaudiya Math I have often come across mixed feelings with respect to Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj being called Prabhupad by his disciples in front of his godbrothers, or, on the other hand, the not calling him Prabhupad by his godbrothers. Overall, I believe the topic of who can be called Prabhupad and when one can be called by that name can be harmonized quite easily.

We all know that the title Srila Prabhupad has been given to great acharyas in our sampradaya in the past. (Even other caste Goswamis use it for their gurus.) Every spiritual master is also considered a great acharya by his disciples and, as a representative of his guru's line, he is no more or less than other spiritual masters. Whatever name or title a spiritual master accepts to be called by his disciples is really of no business to his godbrothers. But, as godbrothers, they also have a valid name for him. This sentiment is understandable in that it would bring about equal confusion for each of us if one of our godbrothers began being called the very same name which we are accustomed to use for our guru. It is for this reason that Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj's godbrothers call him Swami Maharaj to this day. Since this book is meant for all members of the Gaudiya Math family, we have also used his original sannyas name.

It should be understood that it is never a mistake to call one's guru by the name one has learned, but in front of the guru's godbrothers it is the proper etiquette to call him by the name known by his godbrothers. The disciple should also learn not to feel disturbed or upset when his guru's godbrother call his guru by their private brotherly name. Sometimes a godbrother may make an exception to encourage the disciples of his godbrother, or he may have accepted his godbrother as his siksa guru and thus also call him his guru name. Such a behavior, however, should not be expected. Nor should we be surprised if other great Vaisnavas do not consider our guru to have the same exclusive importance as we do.

Only if such a standard can be introduced will missions and leaders be able to freely associate with respect and a strong sentiment of Unity in Diversity. I think that is what all of us really aspire for. After the physical departure of even the most powerful acharyas in the world, the Vaisnava world is the only hope for disciples to happily continue in separation from their guru. This is my understanding of proper Vaisnava etiquette regarding names of gurus; and it is my heartfelt wish that we can all create a WVA-VVRS environment where the non-offensive Vaisnavas will share with each other and help to protect each other's preaching efforts and successes.

Every acharya will always be seen in the light of the contribution he has made to the sampradaya. There is no need to demonstrate the importance of our gurus by attaching numbers of exclusive titles and glorification to his name. On the other hand, if some disciples feel comfortable by glorifying their guru with many titles, we should be generous enough to accept that. However, let me ask you a question. Why is nobody anxious to attach many titles to Narada Muni or Sukadev Goswami when they speak about them? I fear that as long as we make the names an issue of contempt, we are not really in contact with the substance.

Divine Reconciliation

Vaisnavas of the world unite for an increased effort to save the conditioned souls from their karmic reactions. Let us all create the loving network which will properly exhibit the dignity of the supreme Lord Sri Krishna and all his empowered beloved sons and daughters. The Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha - World Vaisnava Association is the perfect forum through which we can all associate within the plan of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Therefore, let us join together at meetings, Melas, and festivals of the WVA-VVRS. Let us share our preaching accomplishments and encourage each other by hearing from each other. When Srila Sukadev Goswami spoke, all the sages of India came to listen. It is well known that the lord conveys his blessings through his devotees. Thus, we need each other's association. Taking a straw between my lips I fall at your feet and beg you not to deprive all of us of your holy association.

If we can present the world with the religious culture of the Vedic tradition and a new strength of Unity in Diversity, we will all sing and dance with increased happiness. Strong, independent acharyas and Vaisnava missions will all stand up for the one truth of Love Supreme. They will do so not to control each other, but to exhibit the glories of this

living tradition which continuously grows as more and more people with Vaisnava faith work to carry on the sacred tradition of the guru parampara. Additional facilities such as the Internet allow for Vaisnavas to communicate with each other all over the world. It also allows for the accessibility of information on Vaisnava missions and their literature for the majority of households in the world.

Whatever differences may have existed in the past are instrumental in the growth of our transcendental understandings. Broadmindedness and Vaisnava love, beyond the limits of one mission or another, is a symptom of an advanced Vaisnava. It will not always be easy, and some problems will not be resolved in a day, but this is not important. The effort is the glory in itself which protects us from any failure.

All true Vaisnavas are members of this sanga. No formalities are required to be a part of it. But, if we want this forum to be more effective, it will take many qualified Vaisnavas to invest a lot of energy and ideas. All volunteers should try to meet and gather further strength and ideas to make all Vaisnavas happy. In this way the Vaisnava world will further enhance the Golden age of the spiritual renaissance begun by Lord Sri Chaitanya in this age of Kali.

Again, I beg to be forgiven for the omissions and possible mistakes made in this presentation. Time has been short and we want to offer this publication to you in the year of the 100 birthday of Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaj, the President of the WVA-VVRS. All Glories to him and to all the living disciples of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur. They have done a marvelous job to help this sanga come together and have blessed us with their association and encouragement. They, and all the Vaisnavas make living in this world bearable. We fall at their feet and pray for causeless blessings. Let the glorious kirtan of the Gaudiya Math branches embrace the world, so that the jivas may discover real Love.

THE AUTHOR

Srila Bhakti Alok Paramadvaiti Maharaj was born on October 12th, 1953 in the village of Osterkappeln, Germany. At a young age he felt an attraction to India and the monastic life. At the age of fourteen he started studying the Vedas (parallel to the study of Carl Marx and Western philosophers). He published a book on social protest and two journals against the injustices of this world. Still, he could not find any true hope for the world and the mundane struggle for environmental change.

At seventeen, after analyzing the world of exploitation, he left all social connections to his society, parents and school, and entered the yoga ashram of Sri Aurobindo in Germany. There he experienced the life of impersonal indifference to the struggle of the world. He quickly discovered, however, that this polite form of atheism did not solve the problems of the world, nor did it seem to make the practitioners humble or soft-hearted. The fact that God, the supreme, merciful creator of all, did not exist in their philosophy, the impersonal yogis succeeded only in cultivating the pride of having none superior to themselves. Thus, he decided to dedicate his energy towards finding a true spiritual master.

Soon afterwards his prayers and meditations led him to Sri Krishna's Holy Name. He then entered the Gaudiya Vaisnava ashram as a brahmachari in the recently inaugurated local Krishna ashram of Düsseldorf, Germany. There, he was trained in the principles of bhakti yoga and prepared himself to become a disciple of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj.

In 1972 he was initiated by Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj in Paris. His name became Alanath das. From this moment on, his life became very dynamic. He helped his spiritual master distribute the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Europe and America. Then, in 1976, his spiritual master sent him to help the mission in South America.

After the departure of his guru from this world, he struggled to keep the purity of his guru's mission. After some years, he joined other Vaisnavas in India and started associating with various Gaudiya Maths. In 1984 he received initiation into the renounced order of the sannyas ashram from the great acharya Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj. Profoundly inspired by his teachers, he began initiating disciples in order to help continue his spiritual masters service.

He started a preaching branch known as VRINDA (Vrindavan Institute for Vaisnava Culture and Studies), which quickly spread to various countries. Today the VRINDA mission has 82 centers around the world. He also founded ISEV (Superior Institute of Vedic Studies) and SEVA (Editorial Service of Vaisnava Acharyas). He has published many

holy books and is the author of various others. He is a lecturer in English, German, and Spanish languages. In addition, he has restored many old temples in Vrindavan and started many temple constructions around the world. Vaisnava ecological awareness and ecological communities have increased strongly under his guidance.

Many lectures on krishna-katha, festivals, book publishing, and Vegetarian Restaurants are also inspired by him. He has established country ashrams and has installed deities of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna in many countries. He has also initiated many new sannyasis and has sent them out to preach.

His home-study yoga course has spread quickly bringing thousands of students to study the Bhakti teachings. His latest work is to organize the University education programs of the WVA-VVRS through the Internet and through local Vaisnava academies. He has pioneered the preaching on the Internet, establishing the Vaisnava presence in several languages. Under the guidance of his siksa guru Srila B. P. Puri Maharaj he has tried to help unite the different Vaisnava branches from different sectors of India and other countries through the Visva Vaisnava Raj Sabha. To serve the dignity of all the great acharyas of the past and the present, and to show the historic development, need, and nature of Vaisnava Unity in Diversity, he has now compiled this book.

Other books by Swami B. A. Paramadvaiti

ENGLISH

The Yoga Course for Home Study
The Temple president
The Search for Purity
Vaisnava Ecology

SPANISH

The Liberated Woman (La Mujer Liberada)
Predictions for the Present Age (Predicciones Para la Era Actual)
Abortion - Inviting Disgrace (El Aborto- Invitando a la Desgracia)
Yoga vs. Drugs (Yoga versus Droga)
Yoga vs. Occultism (Yoga versus Ocultismo)
Vaisnava Etiquette (Etiqueta Vaisnava)
Illicit Sex (El Sexo Illicito)
The Will (El Testamento)
The Science of Vegetarianism (La Ciencia del Vegetarianismo)
Bhagavad-gita: The Supreme Science (El Bhagavad Gita: La Ciencia Suprema)
Initiation: The Second Birth (La Iniciación- El Segundo Nacimiento)

GERMAN

Bhakti-yoga - How it came to the West (Bhakti Yoga- Der Weg in den Westen)

- Some of the above titles are available in two or three languages.
- Tapes are available from the tape ministries in three languages: Spanish, German and English.
- Many online publications are also available.
- Video recordings are available upon request

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- THE BHAGAVATA - by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, Guardian of Devotion Press.
- IN SEARCH OF THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE - by Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Rupanuga Bhajana Ashrama.
- THREE APOSTLES OF GAUDIYA VAISNAVA MOVEMENT - by Tridandi Sri Bhakti Prajñan Yati Maharaj, Sree Gaudiya Math.