

An Offense to Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākuraṇī

From Śrīla Narahari Cakravartī's *Narottama Vilāsa*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu once very carefully gave a *govardhana-śilā* to Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. No one can begin to describe the bliss that Dāsa Gosvāmī felt while worshiping that holy rock. When Dāsa Gosvāmī left this world, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī became absorbed in serving that *śilā* with great care and attention. When Kavirāja Gosvāmī left this world, then Śrī Mukunda Dāsa sank into the ocean of *prema* simply by serving the *śilā*, and he worshiped it for quite some time thereafter.

Now I will elaborate about how the *govardhana-śilā* was passed on. The most-dear devotee of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī is Śrī Ṭhākura Narottama Mahāśaya. Narottama's disciple was Cakravartī Gaṅgā-nārāyaṇa. Gaṅgā-nārāyaṇa's wife was named Viṣṇu-priyā. Her heart was happiest when she was absorbed in the *rasa* of serving Śrī Govindadeva. Her daughter Kṛṣṇa-priyā was just like pure devotion personified. Indeed, she was so devotional that she even earned the title, "*rādhā-kuṇḍa-vāsī thākuraṇī*". She left Gauḍadeśa and wandered all over Vraja. Observing strict self-imposed rules and regulations, she settled at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. At this time, Śrī Mukunda Dāsa observed her wonderful character, and he continually praised her in great happiness.

When Mukunda Dāsa became very old, he once ate some bad food and developed a stomach disorder. But Kṛṣṇa-priyā put him on such a diet that cured the malady and gave him a good appetite as well. Mukunda Dāsa would tell her again and again, "You show affection for me just like a mother." One day, he said, "I cannot fathom the great devotion you have for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, you are certainly fit for the transcendental mellows of this *govardhana-śilā*." Saying this, he handed over the sacred rock of Dāsa Gosvāmī to her. A few days later, Mukunda Dāsa left this world. Thus, Ṭhākuraṇī continued rendering service to Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's *govardhana-śilā*. She had such a loving affection for it that, without factually understanding such affection, I can say nothing really concrete about it.

One day, Śrīmatī Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākuraṇī directly saw Vrajendra-nandana in the *śilā*. There's no way to describe the fun that went on that day.

Rūpa Kavirāja's Offense

It is practically impossible to relate to you the activities of Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākuraṇī. Hari-nāma was constantly present on her tongue. To whomever she showed her mercy, that person would have all desires fulfilled. But if anyone offended her, he became ruined. Once, a devotee named Rūpa Kavirāja committed an offense to her; consequently he became afflicted with leprosy and died miserably, becoming a ghost. Some other time I will explain this story in detail. Now I will briefly outline it here.

Rūpa Kavirāja was born in a very elevated family and was accustomed to saintly behavior. I will describe what kind of *guru-kṛpā* he received by explaining the different guru-disciple relationships that were current at the time.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's dear devotee is the merciful Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī. His disciple is Śrīla Narottama Mahāśaya. His disciple is Cakravartī Gaṅgā-nārāyaṇa. His disciple is Cakravartī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa. His disciple is Rūpa Kavirāja (the godbrother of Viśvanātha's guru Rādhā Rāmaṇa Cakravartī). Śrī Rūpa Kavirāja traveled with his spiritual master from Gauḍa to Vraja. He had very firm faith that guru and Kṛṣṇa are one. Receiving the order of his spiritual master, he resided at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Previously he had studied different branches of knowledge such as Sanskrit grammar, and subsequently he developed a sincere desire to study the scriptures headed by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Taking permission from his guru, he thus began to study the literature of devotion under the guidance of Śrī Mukunda Dāsa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa Cakravartī then returned to Gauḍa.

Rūpa Kavirāja studied the books of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī, and others, and thus he became constantly absorbed in tasting and relishing the divine mellows of *prema-bhakti*. All of the residents of Rādhā-kuṇḍa felt very happy to see him thus engaged. Within a few short days Śrī Mukunda Dāsa awarded Rūpa Kavirāja with divine transcendental knowledge.

Later, however, after Mukunda Dāsa left this world, an amazing thing happened. Just a few days after Mukunda Dāsa disappeared, this Rūpa Kavirāja committed a grave offense unto Śrīmatī Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākuraṇī. One day, as Rūpa Kavirāja was preparing to recite the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all the Vaiṣṇavas assembled to hear the transcendental narration. Kṛṣṇa-priyā Ṭhākuraṇī arrived in great happiness. Being honored by everyone, she was offered a courteous welcome with great delight by the assembled devotees. However, Rūpa Kavirāja did not show her any respect. Nevertheless, she didn't think anything of it, but simply sat there perfectly content and jubilant to listen to *śrī kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

After reciting the Bhāgavatam for a short while, Rūpa Kavirāja looked up and said to Ṭhākuraṇī, “How is it possible for you to do two things at the same time? It is greatly disturbing to see that while listening to Śrī Bhāgavata recited by me your tongue is chanting the holy names. How can you do this?” Ṭhākuraṇī replied, “It is simply the habit of this tongue to constantly chant. It doesn't impede my hearing in the least.”

Upon this, Rūpa Kavirāja just sat there and became overwhelmed with furious anger. That very moment he was ruined. First, he developed a contemptible mentality towards his own spiritual master, then likewise towards *kṛṣṇa-caitanya-vigraha* and the Vaiṣṇavas. He became bereft of the supremely rare path of devotion. Being pinched by his offense, he was robbed of the *prema-āveśa* (overwhelming absorption in ecstatic love) that he was previously feeling. In all ways he increased his puffed-up false conception of himself, thinking he was very important and distinguished. Gradually, he committed many more offenses unto others. Concocting his own erroneous philosophy, he became most troubled, and thus he embarked on the selfish path followed by those who are envious of the Supreme Lord.

The luster of his body faded, and his fire of digestion decreased. This lack of luster became visible in every limb. Finally he realized that he was afflicted by leprosy, which was spreading quickly throughout his entire body.

Within a few days, Rūpa Kavirāja's envious activities became very clear to everyone. Reduced to a ruined, decaying wretch, he fled back to Gauḍadeśa. He tried returning to his Gurudeva's *āśrama* by deceitfully pretending that nothing was wrong, but everyone there already knew the whole story, and he was greatly embarrassed. The story of Rūpa Kavirāja rejecting his guru spread all around, and people were talking about it everywhere. Thus humiliated and utterly ruined, he felt very uneasy in Gauḍa, so he fled to Orissa and stayed in Khuriya-gram. Living there, his body gradually became eaten up and totally devastated by the leprosy. Being severely afflicted with pain, he finally died after terrible suffering. Becoming a ghost, he began to seize and haunt other persons who also offended Vaiṣṇavas. Whomever he haunted would immediately understand, “Now I've committed some offense.”

Whenever someone asks me, “If he was such a qualified devotee, then how was it possible for him to suffer this terrible outcome?” Then I reply, “By committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, what can you expect?” It is stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*vaiṣṇavera sthāne haya kṣudra aparādhā
mahā mahā premīra premete paḍa vāda*

By committing a small, seemingly insignificant offense unto a devotee of the Lord, even a topmost devotee who possesses the highest standard of transcendental love falls down from that *prema*.¹

Thus the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, has explained all this in detail, informing everyone of the consequence of the bitter fruit of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Therefore, that person who becomes very careful not to offend devotees becomes the greatest, most fortunate person within the entire universe.

— Translated by Dāsarath Suta Dāsa

Bibliography

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- Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. English translation and commentary by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles. 1975.

¹ This verse quoted by Narahari in *Narottama Vilāsa* is not found in the edition of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* published by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura nor in the version translated and published by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. As there are many versions of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is possible that this verse is found in another edition. In any case, evidence that even a *premikā-bhakta* could fall down upon committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.10.25):

*mahad-vimānāt sva-kṛtād dhi mādrñ
naṅkṣyaty adūrād api śūlapāṇiḥ*

“If one insults a great devotee then even if they are as powerful as Śūlapāṇi, Lord Śiva, they will fall down.”