

Chapter Two

A BORN PRECEPTOR

PUṢPĀÑJALI—

AN OFFERING OF FLOWERS IN A FEW WORDS

by

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On the Advent Ceremony, *Vyāsa-pūjā*, of
His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupād Śrī

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Towards the last quarter of 1947, I was directed by His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj to start a Sanskrit school at 7 Sitakanta Banerjee Lane, Calcutta, the old ancestral house of A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, the founder of the worldwide

organisation 'Iskcon'. By then, that house was rented as the second branch of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Kolerganj, Nabadwīp.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, my *śikṣā* Guru, asked me to teach *Harināmāmṛta vyākaraṇa*, *kāvya*, *alaṅkāra* and *chanda* to his *brahmachārīs*, amongst whom was Śrī Gaurendu.

I found Śrī Gaurendu, now our Śrī Govinda Mahārāj, to be extraordinary, most intelligent and endowed with exceptional memory power. He could reproduce every lesson the next day without mistake. I taught him some metres of *Chanda Mañjarī* like *tūṅaka*, *toṭaka*, *mandākrāntā*, etc., but to my utter astonishment, he composed Sanskrit verses in those metres within a few days.

One day he narrated before me that he had addressed a gathering of more than two thousand people to whom he explained the feeling, thinking and willing faculties relating to devotional practice. I asked him to explain it elaborately and he did so, nicely. Generally this is a topic to be taught to graduate students of philosophy. This was my second astonishment: that a boy of eighteen, without a general school education, could grasp and explain intricate psychological terms so correctly, so nicely!

I had to change my attitude and approach towards him. Such qualities as he displayed cannot be manifest in anyone without *sādhana* of a previous life or the special *kṛpā* of a *siddha* Guru. At that time my vision

changed and from then onwards I saw him as the embodiment of service to his beloved Guru Mahārāj.

Gradually our intimacy was transformed to a level of friendship, and when we both were alone we would chant *bhajans*. Mostly there were three songs—*badasi yadi kiñchidapi; Mādhava! bahuta minati kari toya* and *tātala saikate*—that, from his sweet tone, would drench us both with tears. The element of the divine love of the highest stage was his natural instinct.

From the very beginning I understood that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was trying to shape Gaurendu according to his own image and he wished to make him his successor. I could also understand that as Śrīla Guru Mahārāj liked me much, it was my divine obligation to contribute the best I could towards the fulfilment of his cherished desire. From 1947 until the last day of my stay in Calcutta in 1961, I was in closest touch with both of them. Then, after nearly thirty years, by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's divine will I was compelled to return to Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh; and found to my utmost satisfaction that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had fulfilled his wish to his heart's content and then departed to his eternal abode. He transmitted whatever treasure he had—mental, intellectual and spiritual—to his most beloved disciple, Govinda Mahārāj, and merged in him. This is 'Union in Separation'. His Samādhi Mandir now stands there at the Maṭh as the embodiment of 'Union in Separation'. Anyone who

wants to see Govinda Mahārāj and Guru Mahārāj united in one whole can stand before the Samādhi Mandir, observe it from top to plinth floor, once read the verses inscribed on the marble plaques, stand again in front of the Deity of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and read the Sanskrit verses composed and inscribed below the Deity—and he will find what Govinda Mahārāj is.

At last, to all devotees of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, I assure them that they will receive everything from Govinda Mahārāj that they ever expected from Guru Mahārāj. *Amṛta*, *Govinda* and *sundar* were very much liked by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and were solace of his life-breath. He has combined these three into one in Govinda Mahārāj, and left for his eternal abode keeping him here for you all. His Govinda is *amṛta*, his Govinda is *sundar*; let all of you taste the ecstasy of his Govinda Sundar.