

All glories to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga

## Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur



Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur had been praying for a ray of Visnu, someone to help him spread Krishna consciousness. Even though Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was a very important judge and thus very busy, he still managed to have time to write many books and to talk and preach about Mahaprabhu with enormous enthusiasm and energy.

On February 6, 1874 at 3:30 in the afternoon Bimala Prasad was born in Jagannath Puri, in Orissa, India.

Jagannath Puri is the city where Lord Jagannath lives. He was born not far away from the Lord's temple.

His mother was Sriyukta Bhagavati Devi and his father was Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, one of the great gurus in our Sampradaya (guru line). Bimala Prasad was their fourth son.

When he was born he had his umbilical cord wrapped around his neck just like a Brahmin's thread, and many other signs showed that he was a very special child. The astrologer (someone who calculates the position of the stars and planets) said: "I have done many horoscopes in my life,



but I have never before seen such a horoscope filled with all the signs of a great personality. This child will become famous all around the world as a wonderful teacher and he will teach people what the real goal of life is."

Bimala Prasad was about six months old when the Ratha Yatra festival took place. This wonderful festival is celebrated every year. The Deity of Lord Jagannath together with His sister Subhadra and brother Balarama come out of the temple and They travelled through the streets of the city in huge carts giving everyone the opportunity to see Them and bow down before Them.

When Lord Jagannath's cart passed through the street where Bimala Prasad lived it stopped right in front of their house and it didn't move for three days!

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur (Bimala Prasad's father) told Sriyukta Bhagavati Devi (his mother) to take Bimala Prasad to Lord Jagannath's cart. Then one of the garlands which had been offered to the Lord fell right around Bimala Prasad's neck! Everyone understood that Lord Jagannath had given a sign to show them that this boy was His great devotee.

On the cart Bimala Prasad was given grain for the first time. This is a special moment in the life of a child. Bimala Prasad was given Lord Jagannath's Prasadam.

Some time later, another special day took place. Bimala Prasad was given coins, a pen and holy books to choose from. He chose the holy books (Srimad-Bhagavatam) and that indicated that he would become a preacher (a teacher of the knowledge of God).

When Bimala Prasad was about ten months old he went to Bengal. He travelled there on his mother's lap in a palanquin. There he grew up in a town called Ranaghat. His mother always spoke to him about Krishna.



One day, when Bimala Prasad was about two or three years old he took a mango his father had just brought from the market, and said: "This is mine."

Then his father said very seriously: "What is this? I have brought new fruits to the house to be offered to the Deity and you already took one of them? Remember, new fruit should first be offered to the Lord. Nothing should be taken without giving it to the Lord first."

Bimala Prasad felt very bad about himself and he said: "Oh what have I done, what bad things was I thinking! I will never eat mangoes again in my whole life. This is the punishment for someone who is greedy."

Never again in his whole life did Bimala Prasad eat mango, even though he was very young when this happened.

When Bimala Prasad was just seven years old he would worship a Deity of Lord Kurma. His father had found the Deity in the earth. He would always listen very carefully when his father would talk about Krishna to other people. Everyone was astonished that such a small boy was interested in such things.

Bimala Prasad would remember everything he would read even if he read it just once.

He knew all the verses of the Srimad Bhagavad-gita by that time and he could also explain them to others. Later on he would help his father with making a magazine called Sri Sajjana-Tosani. When he was about eleven he went along with his father to travel throughout India to visit all the different holy places of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.





He never had to study anything at school, just by hearing what the teacher taught he would be able to answer any question the teachers would ask him.

When he was thirteen his father, Bhaktivinoda Thakur, brought him a Tulasi-mala from Jagannath Puri and told him to chant the Name of Hari and a Nrsimha mantra on them. He did that every day as well as worshipping his Kurma Deity.

He studied astrology and some time later, when he was eighteen he went to college, but he also read more and more books about spiritual things, about Mahaprabhu.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Bimala Prasad's father, discovered the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Many devotees would come and visit there.

One day a great devotee, Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaj came to Nabadwip to listen to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. The only things he had were the mala around his neck, one in his hand and a few books. He was a great devotee and always chanted the Holy Name of the Lord.

Bimala Prasad was very impressed with Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaj and his father told him to ask him for initiation. When Bimala Prasad finally asked him, Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji replied: "Mahaprabhu will be asked. When He agrees it will happen."

Some time later, Bimala Prasad returned and asked, "What did Mahaprabhu decide?"

"I forgot to ask," Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji said.



The next time when Bimala Prasad enquired whether he had asked Mahaprabhu, he said: "I asked but He didn't tell me what He decided."

Bimala Prasad was very, very sad after hearing this. He really wanted to become his disciple and he finally said: "If you don't give me your mercy I will not be able to stay alive." Then he started to cry.

Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaj's heart melted and he then told him to bathe and to come back. He then initiated him. Bimala Prasad Datta became Srila Varsabhanavi-devi-dayita Dasa, and later he became Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur.

He started writing more and more books and he would give talks about Krishna consciousness.

When he was thirty-one, in the year 1905, he lived in a small cottage near the Yogapitha, the birthplace of Mahaprabhu. He took a vow (a promise) to chant 192 rounds per day. He would cook, and after offering he would take some rice without using his hands, while lying on the floor. He would sleep on the floor, without using a pillow, and he chanted and read the holy books the whole time. He had no desire for himself, his only desire was to serve Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga and to make a worldwide mission.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur left this world on June 22, 1914. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur continued to make the magazine, Sajjana-Tosani, and he printed his father's books. His spiritual master Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaj left this world on November 17, 1915.

On 29 March, 1918, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur took sannyasa, at the age of 44, from the picture of Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaj. He decided to do so because there was no other spiritual master at the time and he had no God-brothers.





Later that year, in November, a devotee rented a house and Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur started the 'Bhaktivinoda Asana' there, an organisation where people would come and hear about the teachings of Mahaprabhu. He wrote many books and he gave his heart and soul to make this a place where everyone could come and hear about the true teaching of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Later, in 1922, the organisation was given another name, 'Sri Gaudiya Math,' which spread out all over India.

Great devotees like Param Guru Maharaj Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj and Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj Prabhupada joined that Mission.

They, and later our beloved Srila Gurudev Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj, took care that the mission of Mahaprabhu would be spread all over the world.



On the morning of December 31, 1936, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur asked Srila Param Guru Maharaj to sing 'Sri Rupa Manjari Pada,' a beautiful song by Srila Narottama Dasa Thakur expressing the highest conceptions of our Sampradaya.

The next day, January 1, 1937, at 5:30 A.M, the 'Acharya-sun' as his father Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur had called him, left this world and went back to the spiritual world.



**Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur ki jaya!**