

Caitanya-Aṣṭakam

Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī

Letter from Sadānanda to Vāmandās and Hella

Puri, 4 June 1953

Into English, within square brackets and

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harir dr̥ṣṭvā goṣṭhe mukura gatam ātmānam atulaṁ
sva mādhyamāṁ rādhā priyatara sakhīvāptum abhitaḥ
aho gauḍe jātaḥ prabhur apara gauraika tanu bhāk
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīm yāsyati punaḥ (1)

In Vraja, Hari had seen His Own unparalleled form in a mirror (old sources dealing with the līlā [the Divine play] tell of a shining pillar in the house and at other places) and in order to experience His Own madhyamā, just like Rādhā, the most beloved of all the sakhī-s, He became avatāra in Gauḍa, He, Prabhu, with His golden (gaura) form as a unity of Himself and Her; He, Śacī's Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (1)

purīdevasyāntaḥ praṇaya madhuni snāna madhuro
muhur govindodyad viśada paricaryārcita padaḥ
svarūpasya prāṇārbuda kamala nīrājita mukhaḥ
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīm yāsyati punaḥ (2)

He, Who is filled with sneha [stage of prema, serving love, adjusting to every new situation at lightning speed], since He has been bathing in the nectar (madhu) of praṇaya (intimate, serving love without every reservation) from Purīdeva's heart (according to the ṭīkā, the commentary, this refers to Īśvara Purī Gosvāmī [Caitanyadeva's dīkṣā-guru]), He, Whose feet are reverently

served (arcita) in the pure physical service (paricaryā) continually performed by (His servant) Govinda, He, Whose countenance, like in arcana, is offered innumerable breath-of-life-lotuses by Svarūpa (i.e. Svarūpa Dāmodara) [Caitanyadeva is the breath of his life, his one and all]; He, Śacī's Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (2)

dadhāṇaḥ kaupīnaṁ tad upari bahir vastram aruṇaṁ
prakāṇḍo hemādrī dyutibhir abhitaḥ sevita tanuḥ
mudā gāyann uccair nija madhura nāmāvalim asau
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīṁ yāsyati punaḥ (3)

Clothing Himself with the loincloth used by the monks, and over this the reddish cloth; this *stately* form, Whom the golden radiance of the Golden Mountain serves to perfection (the Golden Mountain is Sumeru, which at the sight of Him, instead of being proud of its own golden radiance, used it in its service of Him), He Who joyfully sings His Own sweet Names *aloud*; He, Śacī's Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (3)

anāvedyām pūrvair api muni-gaṇair bhakti nipuṇaiḥ
śruter gūḍhām premojjvala rasa-phalaṁ bhakti latikām
kṛpālus tām gauḍe prabhur ati kṛpābhiḥ prakāṭayan
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīṁ yāsyati punaḥ (4)

He, Prabhu, the Merciful, Who filled with unprecedented mercy disclosed the creeper of bhakti in Gauḍa, the creeper whose fruit is ujjvala-prema-rasa (the foremost rasa, śṛṅgāra- or gopī-rasa), the creeper which in times past (like a precious treasure) *had been kept concealed* by the Śruti-s and been *unknown even for muni-s conversant with bhakti*; He, Śacī's Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (4)

nijatve gauḍīyān jagati pariḡṛhya prabhur imān
hare kṛṣṇety evaṁ gaṇana vidhinā kīrtayata bhoḥ
iti prāyaṁ śikṣāṁ janaka iva tebhyaḥ paridiśan
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīṁ yāsyati punaḥ (5)

This Prabhu, He, Who out of all people of the world made these gauḍīya-s (the bhakta-s in Gauḍa) to His Own, telling them: “Oh, you Gauḍīya-s, do kīrtan with the rule (vidhi) of counting ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’” (i.e. to count the number of Names with the help of the mālā, the rosery); He, Śacī’s Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (5)

puraḥ paśyan nīlācala patim uru prema nivahaiḥ
kṣaran netrāmbhobhiḥ snapita nija dīrghojjvala tanuḥ
sadā tiṣṭhan deśe praṇayi garuḍa stambha carame
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīṁ yāsyati punaḥ (6)

He, Who always [during His visits to the Jagannātha-temple] stands behind the precious pillar of Garuḍa, and always, over and over again, looks at the LORD of Nīlācala (Jagannātha), and in states of intensive prema baths His Own stately, shining form in the showers gushing from His eyes; He, Śacī’s Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (6)

mudā dantair daṣṭva dyuti vijita bandhūkam adharaṁ
karaṁ kṛtvā vāmaṁ kaṭi nihitam anyam parilasan
samutthāpya premnāganita pulako nṛtya kutukī
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīṁ yāsyati punaḥ (7)

He, Who in mud (ānanda), with His teeth bites His red lips, which outshine the red bandhūka-flower; He, Who puts His left hand on His hip, while keeping His right hand high up in the air, expressing various gestures, while His innumerable bodily hairs are standing on end in prema, dancing merrily; He,

Śacī's Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (7)

sarit tīrārāme viraha vidhuro gokula vidhor
nadīm anyām kurvan nayana jaladhara vitatibhiḥ
muhur mūrcchām mṛtakam iva viśvaṁ viracayan
śacī sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana śaraṇīm yāsyati punaḥ (8)

[Being in] the garden on the bank of the river [Yamunā], [She, Rādhā, was once] forlorn in the separation from the Moon of Gokula (Kṛṣṇa). Now, pouring out a second flood of endless streams of tears, He [Caitanyadeva in Rādhā-bhāvā, being aware of Himself as Rādhā] (like Rādhā in Her separation from Kṛṣṇa), Who swoons, over and over again [lose consciousness of the outside world], and Who makes *everyone* (present) to become like unconscious, like dead; He, Śacī's Son, will He be seen by me again (will He ever come into my field of vision)? (8)

śacī sūnor asyāṣṭakam idam abhīṣṭaṁ viracayat
sadā dainyodrekād ati viśada buddhiḥ paṭhati yaḥ
prakāmaṁ caitanyaḥ prabhur ati kṛpāveśa vivaśaḥ
pṛthu premāmbhodau prathita rasade majjayati tam (9)

Who always reads these eight verses about Śacī's Son, verses which bestow that which has been much longed-for, who reads them in dainyam [with genuine humility] and a pure mind – he will be the object of Caitanya Prabhu's kṛpā [seizing mercy to the one who is utterly unworthy]. Overwhelmed in absorption in His kṛpā, Prabhu will make him dive deep into the ocean of prema, which bestows rasa [realised, direct service]. (9)