

Who was Vasudeva Datta?

Svami Sadananda Dasa

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https://www.sadananda.com/txt/en/text_downloads/en/vasudeva_datta-en.pdf

[...] Considering the typologi of the bhaktas, bear in mind Mahaprabhu's beloved eternal companion Pundarika Vidyanidhi, who concealed his existence as a bhakta *completely* by pretending to be a rich person dedicated to mundane pleasures. Still, Mahaprabhu did not want to leave him for a second. He changed his name from Vidya-nidhi to *Prema*-nidhi etc. Pundarika was immensely rich, still, he did not do *anything* for the poor, because he never came to think of the suffering of the world, as he was *always* absorbed in Krishna and His lila.

Each bhakta has his own *individuality*, there is no *norm*, no types! Each of Caitanya's contemporary bhaktas had particular, characteristic features, they expressed everything a bhakta possibly can be – exemplified to the extreme – and Vasudeva Datta the extreme of daya or compassion on *all* living beings.

One must always be aware of the fact that when bhakti fills the heart, it *does not change the structure of the bhakta's empiric character*. Vritra asura, for example, does not become a pious sage in the Christian sense. In Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu I.3.4 it says: "Bhakti in the form of bhava-bhakti is completely independent of all mental functions, still, it manifests in a person's empiric character and in his mental functions (manovritttau avirbhuya) and becomes one with his mind, his character, his individuality. (The fire assumes the shape of an iron bar, in spite of being completely independent, having its own power and existence)."

Pundarika Premanidhi does not set up a soup kitchen for the poor of Navadvipa, but keeps himself hidden behind his wealth, and by his luxurious living he keeps people away, even most of the bhaktas.

What counts is what we *are*, not what we seem to be.

What counts is what we *are*, not what we *do*.

And when we *do* something, it is an expression of what we *are*.

In *bhakti* there is no affectation, making oneself a slave under a *norm*, suppressing one's empirical nature! – There we have Raghunatha Dasa at Radhakunda in Vraja, a complete

renunciate to his nature, the slightest breath of air seemed to blow him down; that's how thin he was. And there we have Pundarika Vidyanidhi, resting on a costly silk bed with fragrant oil in his hair. And there we have Gadadhara, since youth a renunciate, an ascetic to his *nature*, who was startled when he met Vidyanidhi for the first time and thought he had come to the wrong address [...].