

Tridandisvami Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
YUGA-ACARYA AWARD

Uchagaon, India: October 31, 2003

[Included with Srila Narayana Maharaja's lecture is a short report on a historical festival that took place in Vrndavana during this year's Kartika parikrama. At that festival Srila Maharaja was awarded the title "Acarya of the Millenium". Just before and just after the festival, in his own Sri Kesavaji Gaudiya Matha, he told the devotees that he does not think himself qualified for such an honor. Actually Srila Rupa should be honored with this title. So, only on behalf of our previous acaryas like Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and our Srila Prabhupada that he accepting this honorary title.]

On October 31, 2003 in the Vraja village of Uchagaon (Lalita-sakhi's village), Vrajajacarya Pith and the World Religious Parliament in Delhi jointly awarded Parama-pujyapada Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja the title "Yuga Acarya".

The program began with traditional and ancient songs sung by the Nandagaon and Varsana panditas. After that the various representatives of each village performed the puspā abhiseka ("bathing" with a shower of flowers) of Srila Narayana Maharaja. All the heads of the various communities representatives threw flowers on Srila Maharaja's divine body and honored him by placing garlands on him. Svami Shamaji, the head of the World Religions Parliament, gave Srila Maharaja an upper cloth, a special cloth for the Yuga Acarya. A certificate was then presented to Srila Maharaja by Deepak Raja Bhatta, who is the head of Vrajacarya Pith.

The following individuals garlanded Srila Narayana Maharaja:

The chairmans of Varsana and Nandagaon
Head of Vraja gopa community – Sri Singh Cadri
Head of Lalita-devi temple – Sri Krsnananda Gosvami
Head of Premapith Dijara – Sri Lalitji
Head of the brahmana community of Uchagaon – Pandit Harivallabha Sharma
Head of the brahmana community of Gazipur Village
Sri Gangashamji
Head of Chiksoli village (Citra sakhi's village)
Senior doctor of Varsana – Sri AK Sharan
Savita didi representing Srila Gurudeva's disciples
Sri Krsnakumar Mahesvari

Padmanabha Maharaja was then called by the organizers to come to the podium, to read the words written on the award plaque. Although the plaque was not written in perfect grammatical English, it had a power and exactitude in its choice of words that seemed to the audience to supercede and transcend all languages of this world.

"Vrajacarya Pith and the World Religious Parliament of New Delhi, India presents acarya of the millennium. Engrained with the comprehensive spiritual wealth of the Vedas and Vedangas Ayurveda, Jyotisa (astrology) and related sciences; the protector of traditional heritages, eloquently knowledgeable in the doctrines of Sanskrit which is the mother of all languages; staunch believer in its spread and propagation, a passionate seeker of human social welfare; dedicated to the traditional path and following Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Caitanya Matha and the bhaskara gurus, being disciple of Srila Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, and entrenched in service through bhakti; a remarkable follower and adherent of the Aryan-sanatana philosophical traditions, propagator of love of all faiths, humility and selflessness towards every religion, saintly with pristine spirituality and giver of profoundest love to one and all; follower and practitioner of luminous sanatana knowledge upholding the great tradition of universal brotherhood; dedicated to the promulgation, propagation and protection of the unique Vraja culture and environment, and immeasurably desirous of the redevelopment of Vraja – his divine holiness is one who is enlightened and embraced with divine benevolence and is an authoritative acarya filled with eruditeness, a teacher of teachers, and a guardian and flag bearer of the Sri Krsna bhakti movement – his divine grace Om visnupada astottara-sata Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja then addressed the leader of the Vraja Pyadisha, Deepak Raja Bhatta, and all the exalted and renowned scholarly persons who gathered from Varsana, Nandagaon and all the places of Vraja. His discourse was given in Hindi, simultaneously translated by Sripad Akhilesha dasa Adhikari for those Western devotees who were fortunate to have headphones, and later translated for the transcriber of this document by Sripad Ramacandra dasa Adhikari:]

"I am in no case fit for the high class of honor you have given to me. It is due to your own greatness, benevolence and charitable natures that you are giving it to me. I feel ashamed to accept this designation, because it is far too elevated for me. Syamaji, the head of the World Religious Parliament, and Deepakji, the head of the Vraja Pyadisha, intensely insisted again and again to give me this award, and I rejected it again and again. But finally they forced me to accept it. In this honorific title you have used the word acarya. In that regard there are so many past acaryas, such as our Gosvamis, Sri Madhvacarya, Sri Vallabhacarya and so on. In comparison to all of them, I am insignificant. I do not understand the reason you all find me fit for this designation of Yuga Acarya. This is Kali-yuga and so

many exalted, self-realized acaryas came. It may be possible that this is Kali Yuga and I am the present, or most recent, acarya of Kali Yuga.

"One fact is true though; from the core of my heart I am always totally surrendered and dedicated to the Vrajavasis. My very big concern is that all the important places in Vraja-mandala are vanishing and they are not being looked after correctly. Nowadays there is little concern in the people like our Sripad Ramesh babaji and others. I heard that an enormous number of rupees is allotted for the upliftment of Vraja-mandala, but that the money has gone in vain, in individuals' pockets.

"I have arranged this parikrama in order to bring the foreign devotees here – to narrate to them the glorification of Vraja-mandala and to have them visit all these glorious places. I would like them to understand the glories of the holy places. I also want them to see the dilapidated condition of these places so they can begin to think about their renovation. These foreigners should see what they are giving their life to, and through them I will do what I can to redevelop the pastimes places in Vraja.

"I tried, by my own efforts, to renovate Brahma-kunda and Uddhava-kyari, which is practically totally destroyed, but the government did not want to cooperate. At Uddhava-kyeri we have planted many trees, but then the government members told me, "Why have you done this on your own? You should go through the government." If we go through the government, however, the government men do not do anything to help. I want to redevelop Uddhava-kyeri and I have already spent 150,000 rupees to do so. The government men wrote me, "Don't plant trees there." But before the government's letter reached us we completed the planting in two days. I met the magistrate but he had no brain. I told him and his associates, "In the entire universe Vraja is the most important place, and you want to stop redeveloping it?"

"I do not think that there is one real Indian in the Parliament otherwise he would have thought about renovating these places. This Vraja-mandala is the life and soul of Bharata (India), and unless we accept its culture our life will go in vain. It is the Indian government in name only. If its members were Indian they would have taken care.

"Srimati Radharani is Vrndavanesvari. Lord Krsna may be Vrajesvara, but He cannot be Rasesvara because our Srimati Radharani is Rasesvari. Sri Krsna dances when Srimati RAdhika snaps Her fingers. What to speak of Radharani, even Mother Yasoda terrifies Him, by showing Him a stick.

"Sri Krsna falls down at the feet of the gopis. All demigods worship Him as God, yet the position of these gopis is so highly elevated that that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna falls at their lotus feet. He told the gopis:

na paraye 'ham niravadya-samyujam
sva-sadhu-krtyam vibudhayusapi vah
ya mabhajan durjara-geha-srnkhalah
samvrscya tad vah pratiyatu sadhana

["I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahma. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation." (Srimad-bhagavatam 10.32.22)]

"I am completely absorbed in and influenced by the culture of Vraja-bhava. It is the real "jyotir gamaya" – the light into we should enter. We should understand that the ultimate limit of bhagavat-prema (love of God) is radha-dasya (service to Srimati Radhika).

"What is bhagavat prema? Without radha-dasya no one can attain Lord Krsna. Who is a Vrajavasi? Not everyone born in Vraja is a Vrajavasi. A Vrajavasi is one who has a mood like Nanda Baba, or Mother Yasoda, or Srimati Radharani. One who has a bhava (transcendental emotion) like Nanda Baba – "Krsna is my son" or that "Srimati Radhika is my sakhi" is a Vrajavasi. One who has such a relationship with Srimati Radharani will think, "We don't want any direct relationship with Krsna. Our mistress, our life and soul, is Srimati Radhika. If Sri Krsna calls me I won't go. I will only do what is required to make Them meet." The manjaris, those Vrajavasis who think "Srimati Radharani is our friend," understand that Sri Krsna is fully controlled by Her. They are palya-dasis of Srimati Radharani and are so great that they can even stop Krsna when He is on the way to see Her. This culture is full of prema.

"This spiritual culture has degenerated now in Vraja. I would like to see that when people come from outside to look into this culture, the residents approach them in an honorable way – not to rob the Westerners pockets to fill their own. These days Indians don't read Srimad-Bhagavatam, and certainly they don't read it in Parliament. I don't think that anyone in our Parliament knows these truths or has even read Srimad-Bhagavatam.

"I am happy that Syamadasaji, the head of World Religious Parliament has read my translation and commentary of Sri Bhagavad-gita and appreciates it. Bhagavad-Gita is our real treasure. I have not done anything wonderful. I simply translated the commentary of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and, having taken his remnants, I also wrote something.

"Our Vraja consists of Kadamba-kyari (Uddhava Kyari), Pavana-sarovara and many other places of Lord Krsna's transcendental pastimes, and according to my capacity I am donating money to renovate them. I want to make the government members understand that by my renovating Vraja-mandala their own status will

be glorified, but they do not understand. They said we should do this in a proper way, but when I asked them what is the proper way they said, "Submit an application." We gave them an application and nothing happened for four months– the magistrate was transferred and no action was taken to renovate. Without their help we have begun renovating Ter-kadamba and Pavana-sarovara, and we have already started cleaning the water of Radha-kunda and Manasi-ganga. We are trying to purify the water of Pavana-sarovara, Pili Pokhara and Yasoda-kunda. Three-quarters are already purified by the apparatus we brought, and we will try to purify the rest, and also the Yamuna. By the help of rich scientists and others I will help them.

"Javata is the place of Srimati Radharani's in-laws, not Nandagaon. We don't believe that Nandagaon is the place of Srimati Radharani's in-laws, but rather that place is Javata. Srimati Radharani is not married to Sri Krsna. Radharani is dear to Sri Krsna, but Yogamaya didn't allow their marriage. If Srimati Radhika was Krsna's wife and Nanda Baba was Her father-in-law, they would have taken Her in their home – but they didn't. She didn't live there. Also, Satyabhama and Rukmini had so many children. Why didn't Srimati Radhika have any children?

"Srimati Radhika did not stay or live in the house of Nanda Baba as a bride because She is Krsna's paramour. This paramour- rasa is the topmost rasa. A wife is a type of servant. If one becomes a wife she is forced to serve her husband, and her husband is bound to supply her necessities like clothing and other paraphernalia. We have never seen that Krsna gave clothes, soap or anything of the sort to Srimati Radharani. He only gave Her garlands, which are free of cost. He never spent any money on the gopis.

"We have to reconcile Srimati Radhika's supposed marriage. She was married in Bhandiravana, but that was not a real marriage. It was by the gandarva system of simply exchanging garlands. No inlaws were present. By Yogamaya's order She and Krsna never married. The essence of this Srimad-Bhagavatam is parakiya-bhava and this is what Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to give. I want to present the idea of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Srimad-Bhagavatam was spoken by Sri Sukadeva Gosvami and written by Vyasadeva. This is what Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to give. He accepted that Srimati Radharani was never married to Krsna, and our Gosvamis like Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami and Srila Jiva Gosvami are in the same line. There are so many examples of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mercy in the form of Srila Rupa Gosvami's Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu. These books are only descriptions of these principles.

"I want to renovate Javata. I went to that sacred place of Srimati Radharani's in-laws, but I saw that the managers are installing deities of Durga-devi and Ganesh. Ganesh, Sankara, and Parvati are sitting there on the altar. I was sad to see these deities sitting there. I told the managers, "If you take them off the altar then I will develop this place." They became angry.

"I am trying to beautify this small place where the pastimes of Yavata can be remembered. Now, even the vata tree is not there in Yavata, but rather another tree is there. This is shameful.

In Vrndavana, at Rasa-sthali, there is no vata, banyan tree. I want to plant a vata tree there. I came to know that Bhattaji wants the renovation of this place. Let them come up with program and I'll see it. Since I already want to serve this sacred place. I can expand my program to include them."

After Srila Maharaja's talk, When Mr. Syama, the organizer of the program, went up to the podium and thanked him, He addressed him as "this fellow". He explained that he used the word "fellow" because, "When we Vrajavasis love someone, we accept him as our own intimate family member or our own self – so we call him 'fellow'. This Yuga Acarya, this fellow, demonstrated that he is fit for this post. He says he is not fit for it, but his humble words are also the symptom of the greatness of great personalities.]

[Some of the Nandagaon panditas were upset by Srila Maharaja's saying that Nandagaon was not Srimati Radharani's in-laws' place, so he spoke further:]

"The Srimad-Bhagavatam is written in paroksavada. Paroksavada is a statement that is made only indirectly. For example, Krsna told the gopis who came after hearing His flute playing, "Go back to your homes and serve your husbands. It is the dharma religious duty of a chaste wife to serve her husband – even if her husband is ugly, sick, lame or crippled or harsh." "Oh," the gopis replied, "We have just heard this message from you. You are so great to have given us this instruction, and therefore You are our guru. We have heard from authority that we must serve our guru first, and then anyone else. We accept You as our guru because You are giving us this religious knowledge. Also, you are our real pati, one who nourishes another. You are the personality who nourishes our heart. You nourish everyone, even our husbands, and therefore you are our pati in real sense." Pati also means husband.

"We should therefore understand that this section of Srimad-Bhagavatam contains statements made indirectly. Srimati Radharani possesses all the qualities that attract Lord Krsna. At the same time, Krsna is so attractive that He attracts Her. He attracts Srimati Radharani more than He is attracted towards Her. So I am not rejecting Krsna. He is unlimitedly beautiful and has such unlimitedly great qualities that even Srimati Radharani becomes attracted towards Him. Please do not misunderstand that by glorifying Srimati Radharani I am undermining the glorification of Krsna. I am not trying to make Krsna look small. By paroksavada, indirect reference, I am truly glorifying Him."

Pujyapada Madhava Maharaja composed two verses in honor of Bhaktivedanta Srila Narayana Maharaja receiving the Yuga Acarya award. The first verse is for both of his Guru Maharajas – his diksa-guru Srila Vamana Maharaja and his

siksa-guru Srila Narayana Maharaja, and the second verse is for Srila Narayana Maharaja:

1st sloka: vande bhaktivedantau sri vamaana narayanau sahaditau
gaudadaye sobhabantau (puspabantau) parivrajakacarya yugacaryau

2nd sloka: yugacarya prabhun vande Sri Narayana karunamayam
sri radha dasye lobham datva tarayate bhuvana trayam

2nd sloka: "I offer my obeisances to he who was awarded the title Yuga Acarya, Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja. He is an ocean of mercy. Radha dasye lokam datva – he is giving greed to follow the maidservants of Srimati Radhika, and by giving this greed he is delivering the three worlds."

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