

Dear Maharajas, Vaisnavas, and Vaisnavis,

We, the undersigned, are making this statement in response to some of the opinions put forth by the Vaisnavas of Sri Krsna Balarama Mandir in Seva Kunja. In doing so, we unreservedly offer our sincere respects to them.

Recently there have been many heated philosophical exchanges between devotees, especially on social media, regarding the assertion of the Vaisnavas from Krsna Balarama Mandir that Pujyapad Nitya-lila Pravista Om Visnupada Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is eternally serving Radha and Krsna in a male form as a priya-narma-sakha – an intimate cowherd friend of Sri Krsna.

Yet, Srila Gurudeva repeatedly emphasized in lectures, in letters, in darsans, on walks, again and again, that Srila Prabhupada is, in fact, fully in madhurya-rasa; that he is a Rupanuga Vaisnava exclusively devoted to Srila Rupa Goswami in the same mood as all the acaryas in our line; and thus he is illustriously situated in our bhagavat-parampara within the Gaudiya Vaisnava sampradaya. To claim otherwise would be to remove him from our Rupanuga line.

Srila Gurudeva would sometimes quote from Srila Prabhupada's own books to prove this, and he clarified for us again and again the difference between madhurya-rasa and the other rasas. The Vaisnavas at Krsna Balarama Mandir claim that priya-narma-sakhas are also in madhurya-rasa, but whilst it is true that they sometimes touch madhurya-rasa, according to Srila Gurudeva there is no possibility of a priya-narma-sakha possessing the amorous mood of Krsna's beloved gopis. He left no room for doubt on this matter.

We have also made inquiries from Vaisnava scholars and consulted the authority of our Gaudiya scriptures. Nowhere, however, have we seen any evidence that a most dear friend of Krsna, a priya-narma-sakha, can have an intimate relationship with Him in the same way as a beloved gopi.

However, at the heart of this issue lies the claim that Srila Gurudeva deliberately misled us about the truth of Srila Prabhupada's rasa; that he "transcendentally cheated" us to bring us into his fold. This is unacceptable, and painful even to consider. Srila Gurudeva was never duplicitous in his dealings with us. Ever.

Despite the strong assertions made by the Krsna Balarama devotees, there are a number of essential questions that remain unanswered:

- Why was the conception that Srila Prabhupada is in sakhya-rasa not submitted to Srila Gurudeva for clarification and validation?
- Where is the concrete evidence, or even a glimmer of evidence, that Srila Gurudeva's privately and publically stated convictions about Srila Prabhupada's svarupa were nothing but a "preaching tactic" or "strategy"?
- Where is there any un-interpreted (as-it-is) statement from Srila Gurudeva declaring our Srila Prabhupada to be a sakha of any kind?
- Where is it stated that priya-narma-sakhas are capable of experiencing and revealing madhurya-rasa in the mood of Srila Rupa Goswami?

We, and numerous other disciples and followers of Srila Gurudeva, Srila Prabhupada, Srila Gaura Govinda Maharaja and Srila BR Sridhar Maharaja, are confident, having directly heard over many years from these pure Vaisnavas and/or having read their books, that these questions can never be answered.

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Neither from what we have heard from Guru, sadhu and sastra, nor by the application of logic, can we reconcile how a Vaisnava of Srila Prabhupada's historic stature could advance the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (*anarpita-carim-cirat*) as he did, without being a complete representative of our disciplic line, thus situated on the topmost level of madhurya-rasa.

We accept that there will always be differences of opinion in this world, and we respect the right of the Vaisnavas from Krishna Balarama Mandir to hold fast to their conceptions, but because we cannot abandon what we have learned from Srila Gurudeva, we cannot agree with them and do not wish to participate in any further discussions with them on this matter.

Despite the fact that the exchanges on the subject have caused some disturbance within Srila Gurudeva's sanga, we understand that, in the words of Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaja, "the environment is always favourable", and all events are directly arranged by the Lord to enable His plan to unfold. In this case, it has been observed that this current opposition has been arranged by the Lord to bring new strength, clarity and unity by having the opportunity to deeply contemplate Srila Gurudeva's teachings and our Gaudiya siddhanta, thus allowing our minds to focus on the true glories of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, our Srila Prabhupada.

Many of the undersigned have thus far preferred not to make any public statement or comment in this debate. We are doing so now to clarify to the wider sanga, that if some of us have previously kept silent, it is not because we agree with the views held by the Vaisnavas of Krishna Balarama Mandir.

In closing, we want to remember Srila Gurudeva's siksa: "It is essential to have great harmony amongst devotees. It is through this harmony that you will be successful." We sincerely aspire for such harmony – to all be fully united in upholding the dignity of our sampradaya.

Where we cannot agree, we will offer respect from a distance. In this spirit we will maintain our enthusiasm to progress on the path of bhakti.

Aspiring for the service of Sri Guru and Vaisnavas,

BV Padmanabha Maharaja
BV Nemi Maharaja
BV Tridandi Maharaja
BV Bhagavat Maharaja
BV Vaikhanas Maharaja
BV Srauti Maharaja
BV Vishnu Swami
Brajanath das
Syamarani dasi
Sudevi devi dasi
Kishori Mohan das
Mukunda das
Mahabuddhi das
Pran Kishor Das
Champakalata Dasi
Manjari dasi (ACBS)
Rsabhadeva dasa
Niscintya devi dasi
Madhusmita dasi
Vaijayanti mala dasi
Shashikala dasi (Vrindavan)

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Shilpakarini dasi
Vichitra devi dasi
Bhudhara das
Lalita dasi
Bhadra dasi
Krishna Bhamini dasi
Brajesh das
Raghava Pandit das (NL)
Sundar Gopala das (UK)
Nikunja Vilasini dasi
Hari kanta das
Saraswatidevi dasi (Betts)
Jagat Mohini dasi
Akhilesh das adhikari
Visnu das
Mithiladhisa das
Brajendranandana das
Abhay Charan Das
Abhishek Dogra
Alpana Sharma
Ambrish das
Amit Singh
Anupama Dasa Amesh
Arjuna Polanco
Asha Jyoti Pandey
Ashok Karad
Atmarama Isvara Das
Bal Gopal das
Baladeva das
Balarama Dasa
Bernd Meuwissen
Bhakti Devi dasi
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Jayanta das
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Krishna Kanta das
Krsnakarunya das Brahmacari
Kunai A Khedlekar
Lakshman das
Lal Prasad
Lalea Ika
Lalit Kishori dasi
Latika dasi (Tbilisi, Georgia)
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Madakini Monica
Madhu Kantha Das
Madhukar das
Madhuvrata Das
Manimati dasi
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Marcia Akridge
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Milosch Deuter
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Nagari dasi (Russia)
Nagendra Singh
Nanda Nugent
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Nash Selvester
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