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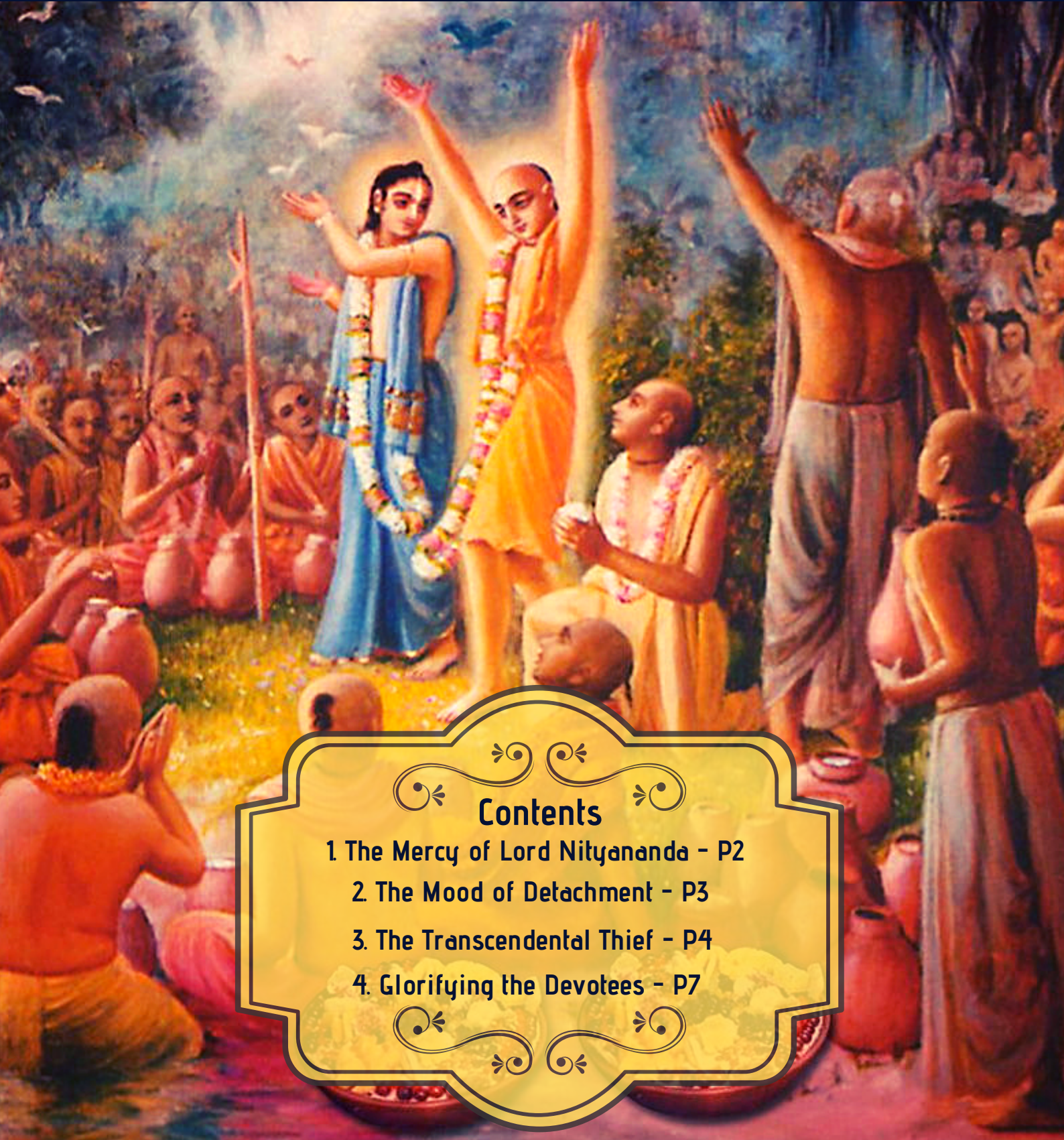
Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

# Bhāgavatam Rasamālayam

The Abode of Supreme Nectar

Meditations & Reflections from the lectures of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami

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## The Mercy of Lord Nityananda

"kautukī Nityānanda sahaje dayāmayā  
raghunāthe kahe kichu hañā sadaya

nikaṭe nā āisa, corā, bhāga' dūre dūre  
āji lāg pāñāchi, daṇḍimu tomāre

dadhi, cidā bhakṣaṇa karāha mora gaṇe'  
śuni' ānandita haila raghunātha mane

"Lord Nityānanda was by nature very merciful and funny. Being merciful, He spoke to Raghunātha dāsa as follows: "You are just like a thief, for instead of coming near, you stay away at a distant place. Now that I have captured you, I shall punish you. Make a festival and feed all My associates yogurt and chipped rice." Hearing this, Raghunātha dāsa was greatly pleased.

[CC Antya 6.49-561]



**HH BCS:** Today we celebrate the Chida Dadhi Mahotsava. Since it occurred in a place called Panihati, it is also known as "Panihati Festival". This festival is about a "prince", the son of a very wealthy person. Just to give an idea - we cannot calculate how much his father's or the family income was! He was the only son in the family. The two brothers of his father and another brother, his elder brother did not have any child so he was the only successor in the family - a very very wealthy person, a very wealthy family. And he became attracted to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He came across Haridas Thakur when he was a young boy and coming in contact with Haridas Thakur, he became attracted to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He heard about Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His teachings, about His personality, about His pastimes and he became attracted and that Personality is "Sri Raghunath Das Goswami". Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's six principal associates are known as the six Goswamis and he is one of them.

Raghunath Das Goswami one day got the news that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa. So taking sannyasa those days meant that one would leave his family, go away and nobody will ever get to see him. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's elder brother, Vishvarup took sannyasa and nobody ever saw him. That's how it used to be those days. Communication was not that advanced and when they left home, they left forever.

So Raghunath Das Goswami got the news that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa and he left home. All along, all his life, he was hoping that someday he will be able to see Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. But when he got to know that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa, he became extremely heart broken. He felt that he would never be able to see Him.

Then Raghunath Das Goswami got the news that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to the house of Advaita Acharya. Advaita Acharya's house was in Shantipur and Raghunath Das Goswami's family used to live in a place called Triveni, which was the confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. And it was not very far from Shantipur and Raghunath Das Goswami got the news that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was in the house of Advaita Acharya. It was actually arranged by Nityananda Prabhu. After Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa, he just ran towards Vrindavan. For three days and three nights he was just running and running and running towards Vrindavan and with him, there were four other devotees including Nityananda Prabhu.

Nityananda prabhu tricked Chaitanya Mahaprabhu knowing how heart broken the residents of Navadwip were due to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's suddenly taking sannyasa and leaving home. So he tricked Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and brought Him back to Bengal, to Navadwip near to Shantipur. And some cowherd boys were tending the cows and Nityananda Prabhu taught them that when this person comes and asks you what's the name of this place, you tell him that this is Vrindavan. So according to the instruction of Nityananda prabhu, when Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came, seeing the cows and cowherd boys he thought that he arrived in Vrindavan. And, so when He asked the boys the boys told Him that this is Vrindavan and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then asked Nityananda Prabhu, Nityananda we came to Vrindavan! And this is Yamuna! Nityananda Prabhu said – Yes! Yes! This is Yamuna! And as soon as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu heard that He just jumped into the river but then He saw that Advaita Acharya is coming on a boat so He asked him - how did you come here? Then Advaita Acharya said that Nityananda sent me a message that He is bringing you here so He asked me to bring some fresh clothes for you. So Chaitanya Prabhu felt very very upset. He realized that Nityananda Prabhu tricked Him and brought him to Shantipur, on the other side of the river of Shantipur called 'Ambika Kalna'.

So He accused Nityananda Prabhu - Nityananda, you lied to me! You instructed those boys that they lie to me. When I ask, to say that this is Yamuna. What's happening!? You are lying! Do you think my sannyasa is a joke? I wanted to go to Vrindavan and you tricked me and brought me back.

Nityananda Prabhu said - No I didn't lie because wherever You are that is Vrindavan! And after Ganga and Yamuna met in Prayag - Yamuna is flowing on the left hand side of the river bank and Ganga is flowing on the right side. So this is the left hand side of the bank, so this is Yamuna. So this is how Nityananda Prabhu brought Chaitanya Mahaprabhu back to the place Shantipur. In the meantime all the devotees were informed in Navadwip that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is coming to Shantipur. So all the devotees from Navadwip rushed towards Shantipur. And only person who didn't come was Vishnupriya Devi because it is not appropriate for a sannyasi to meet his wife. Raghunath Das Goswami also got the message, so he came and met Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

His family was very well known and they were on good terms with Advaita acharya and when Advaita Acharya got the news that Raghunatha Das Goswami came, he brought him to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Raghunath Das Goswami got a chance to meet Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. And He told Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that he wanted to go with Him. He told Him that I don't like to stay at home, I want to go with you.

## A Mood of Detachment

So at that time Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told him "markaṭa-vairāgya nā kara loka dekhāñā yathā-yogyā viṣaya bhujja' anāsakta hañā' which means that just for show do not display monkey renunciation. A monkey also lives in a forest, eats roots and fruits, stay naked but after all it's a monkey. So He said - Go home, just accept whatever is necessary in relation to Krishna consciousness in the mood of detachment. Saying that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sent Raghunath Das Goswami home. After Shantipur, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to Sri Jagannath Puri. When Raghunath Das Goswami got to know that Mahaprabhu went to Jagannath Puri, he ran away from home two times to go to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.



## The Transcendental Thief

Then his father sent his men - soldiers probably on horseback, who caught him and brought him back. So then, seeing that he was running away from home like that his father decided to get him married and it has been described that he was married to a girl who was as beautiful as an Apsara, a celestial damsel, personality from the heavenly planet. In a way Raghunath Das Goswami, kind of settled down at home but his heart was always at the feet of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Thereafter Raghunath Das Goswami got the news one day that Nityananda Prabhu came to Panihati. Panihati also is a place on the bank of Ganges. That was the residence of Raghava Pandit, a very intimate associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. So getting the news, Raghunath Das Goswami went to meet Nityananda Prabhu. At that time Nityananda Prabhu was sitting on the bank of the Ganges under a banyan tree, a huge banyan tree surrounded by His associates. When His associates saw Raghunath Das Goswami offering obeisances from a distance, they informed Nityananda Prabhu that Raghunath Das Goswami paid his obeisances from a distance. Nityananda Prabhu said - Oh! So that thief has come! Bring him to me. So Raghunath Das Goswami was brought to Him. He offered his obeisances, placing his head at the lotus feet of Nityananda Prabhu and very mercifully Nityananda Prabhu placed His lotus feet on his head. Then Nityananda Prabhu told him - You thief! I will punish you and the punishment is that you have to feed me and my devotees chipped rice (flat rice) and yogurt.

Flat rice in Bengali is called chida (the rice is beaten and fattened and then you soak it and it becomes edible) and dadhi means yogurt. So Raghunath Das Goswami very happily accepted that punishment. He organized a feast. He sent his men to buy chipped rice and yogurt and they bought all the chipped rice that was present in the market, they bought all the yogurt that was available in the sweet shops and they bought all kinds of sweets and all kinds of fruits. In Bengal this is the time for fruits - mangoes and jackfruits and they organized a feast. Hearing about the feast, people just started to come, a big feast is going on and the sweet shops vendors came, they also ate chipped rice and yogurt. Nityananda Prabhu then called Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and some of the devotees saw that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was there.

And they observed some very strange happening that Nityananda Prabhu was picking up some chipped rice and yogurt from everybody's plate and He was offering it to somebody. Some saw that he was offering it to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was eating it and then Nityananda Prabhu was eating it. So many people came, the whole land became covered. There was no place on the land. So people just went to the Ganges, standing on the Ganges they started to eat the chipped rice and yogurt. So this is how that festival took place. Raghunath Das Goswami then went home after that. And one day taking advantage of some situation, when the pujari was missing, he went, thinking to report it to the head pujari or family priest. Then he left. This time he did not take the regular path. He took a different route and he came to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Raghunath Das Goswami's mother told his father that this time you catch him, just tie him with chain. His father said - A wife as beautiful as an Apsara and the wealth like that of Indra could not tie him down, do you think that a man made chain can tie him up? That is what is happening when someone gets attracted to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He loses all interests in this material world. So he decided that they were not going to call him back but he arranged to send six servants to take care of him in Jagannath Puri and he arranged to send two thousand rupees every month. Those days two thousand rupees means that would be something like at least two hundred thousand dollars. With that money Raghunath Das Goswami was organizing a huge feast for Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his associates.

When Raghunath Das Goswami came to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, this time Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted him. Now through this incident we get to know one very wonderful secret of progressing in spiritual life that is why Nityananda Prabhu called him a thief and why did He punish him? A sweet punishment of course but still he termed it as "punishment" because Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Nityananda Prabhu's asset. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Nityananda Prabhu's property. "Hena nitāi vine bhāi, rādhā-kr̥ṣṇa pāite nāi." Without Nityananda Prabhu's mercy one cannot get Radha Krishna that is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. So that's why when Raghunath Das Goswami wanted directly to have Chaitanya Mahaprabhu by passing Nityananda Prabhu therefore He called him a thief.

He was trying to steal His property. And also another way you can look it is that Raghunath Das Goswami was trying to approach Chaitanya Mahaprabhu but he could not but this time he could. After getting the approval and the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu he could. Therefore we can understand that the way to approach Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is through Nityananda Prabhu. If we try to approach Chaitanya Mahaprabhu without the approval and mercy of Nityananda Prabhu he will never be successful and approaching Nityananda Prabhu also means approaching through Nityananda Prabhu's representatives, the bona fide spiritual masters who are Nityananda Prabhu's representatives. So this time Raghunath Das Goswami succeeded in approaching Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. And Chaitanya Mahaprabhu offered him to Swarup Damodar Goswami, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's most intimate associate. Therefore Raghunath Das Goswami is also known as Swaruper Raghunath, Raghunath of Swarup Damodar.

So Raghunath das Goswami, getting the money from his father, the servants and all the facilities and organizing the feast then started to consider that his father is a materialist - Why should I take money from him? So he stopped taking money from him. So Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asked Swarup Damodar - Raghunath does not invite us for a feast anymore? So Swarup Damodar said - Yes he stopped taking money from his father and he sent his servants back home. So Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asked - Then how does he maintain himself? Swarup Damodar said - He stands by the Simha Dwaar, the main gate of Jagannath temple and when the pujaris go home after serving Lord Jagannath, they offer him some prasadam.

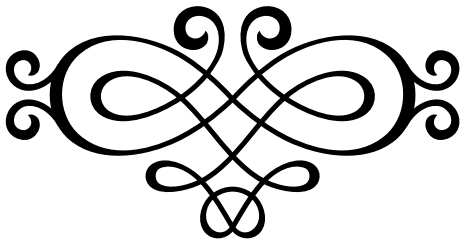
Mahaprabhu was very pleased. Then after a while Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asked Swarup Damodar - Swarup, I don't see Raghunath Das outside the temple anymore. So he said - Yes he stopped taking prasadam that the pujaris gave (him). So then Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said - Then how does he maintain himself? He said - the prasadam of Jagannath temple that is distributed to the beggars, he sits with the beggars and takes prasadam. Mahaprabhu was very pleased. Then after sometime, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asked Swarup Damodar - I don't see Raghunath there also, sitting for Jagannath's Prasadam that is distributed among the poor people. He said that he stopped taking that prasadam also. So what does he eat? How does he maintain himself? Swarup Damodar said - That Prasadam that is thrown away in the garbage, that is rotten, stale - that (Prasadam) Raghunath collects that and washes that and whatever is the edible part, he keeps (and eats). That is how he is maintaining himself. Hearing that Mahaprabhu just ran to Raghunath Das Goswami where he was staying and He told him - Raghunath, you have all this wonderful Prasadam of Jagannath and depriving us all? Raghunath was very embarrassed.



No no, I don't have any prasada. Then Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said - Oh now you are lying to me? Saying that He reached out to a clay pot containing that Prasad that was kept under the bed, he pulled it out and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu started to eat that. Raghunath Das Goswami was trying to stop Him by saying - this is not for you, this is not for you to eat! Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then stopped eating that.

So this is how through Raghunath Das Goswami, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu established the principle of renunciation. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu actually came to teach the process of renunciation, the science of renunciation which is Krishna Consciousness. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya described it as "Vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yogam-śikṣārtham ekah puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dharikṛpāmbudhir yaś tam ahaṁ prapadye". In order to teach "vairagya vidya", the process of "vairagya", renunciation, which is "nija bhakti yogam", which is actually his own devotion, devotion of a servant, 'siksartham ekah purush puranah'. The Supreme Personality of Godhead came as Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He is an ocean of mercy, I offer my obeisances unto him. And that vairagya vidya was taught through Raghunath Das Goswami. The height of opulence, from that not just suddenly, whimsically taking to the process of renunciation, but gradually.

At the end Raghunath Das Goswami went to Vrindavan, settled down there and he used to take just a cupful, a cup made of a leaf, a cupful of buttermilk once in three days. One day his servant found a big leaf. He thought - if I make a cup out of this big leaf then this will have lot of butter milk in it. So he will be forced to take or compelled to take more butter milk. He brought that to Raghunath Das Goswami. Raghunath Das Goswami said - Oh such a big leaf! From where did you get it? He said - I got it from Sakhisthali. Sakhisthali is the grove or kunjha of Chandravali. As soon as he heard of Sakhisthali he threw away that (leafcup) because he is so loyal to Srimati Radharani, that he didn't take (anything in) the name of Chandravali.



## Glorifying the Devotees

So in Iskcon also we see such examples. In Iskcon, when Prabhupada came, Prabhupada came to teach vairagya vidya and many devotees were coming from very very wealthy families in America and out of them, Giriraj Maharaja holds a very very special position. Tukaram prabhu although already mentioned that Giriraj Maharaj comes from a very wealthy family and he became attracted to Srila Prabhupada. And I was just thinking that the similarity between Raghunath Das Goswami and Giriraj Maharaja and actually that's the reason why I requested him to speak first.

Just to give an idea, in 1977 I was in Bombay with Srila Prabhupada and there was a big program in Cross Maidaan, in central Bombay, the heart of Bombay city, a huge pandal and Prabhupada came and the program was very successful. Every day about ten thousand people used to come and attend that and the press were very very wonderfully presenting the success of the program and the happenings of the program and I remember at that time one article was printed. I think it was The Times of India or Hindustan Times and that described how a millionaire's son has disregarded his father's wealth and became a devotee and guess who they were talking about - Giriraj Swami!

When Prabhupada and the devotees went to Bombay, they were actually staying in the most opulent part of Bombay city, in Marine Drive, but Prabhupada decided to take this piece of land in Juhu which was like a remote place those days. Many leaders, leading devotees who were in India at that time were very much against Srila Prabhupada's taking of that property. They were, in a way they were so reluctant to take that property that even after paying the money when there was a possibility of losing that place they did not actually make much of an endeavor to get that back because they thought it was a waste of time. It is so remote and as Tukaram Prabhu mentioned - infested, that place was infested with rats and snakes. I heard that the devotees, when they would sleep at night, the rats would run over (them). So there was nothing, they had to clean the place - the growth of undesirable trees and plants there and built tin walls and shade and lived there.

The weather was extremely hot. Bombay gets very very hot. It gets extremely hot. There were no air conditioners - what to speak of air conditioners, there was no fan and Giriraj Maharaja - Prabhupada sent him there, he just took it upon himself. Just consider - an extremely wealthy situation in America. Not only going to India but practically living in the middle of a jungle, undergoing so much of hardship. And he took it upon himself, stuck it out, he didn't give up! And not only that, but every day, he was going to the city of Bombay, to cultivate the people.

Giriraj Maharaj was cultivating one of the richest families. I heard many incidences, I will just narrate one such incident how tenacious Giriraj Maharaj was in cultivating people, just to give an idea how he was actually persuading people to take to Krishna consciousness. He used to go to the city of Bombay. He had a car - the driver used to drive him. And one day he saw somebody, a very handsome young man getting into a Mercedes Benz and he told his driver to follow the car. So he found out where he was and so the next day he came and he wanted to meet that person. But that person didn't give him an appointment. So then He came again but this time he didn't lose, he just stayed there.

And the person said that he didn't want to meet him and didn't give him an appointment to meet him, he just stayed in his office, but Giriraj Maharaja stayed there, in front of his office. Then finally it was quite late at night, he came out and then Giriraj Maharaja met with him and his response was that he was not interested but Giriraj Maharaja persuaded him, preached to him exceptionally, and eventually this person had become one of the most supportive devotees in our movement in India - that is Krishna Chandra prabhu, a son of a very very illustrious industrialist in India - Maffat Lal, his name is Hrishikesh Maffatlal, now he is Krishna Chandra Das. Giriraj Maharaja cultivated so many such wonderful devotees and we are so fortunate to have him here with us. It will be so wonderful to hear about Raghunath Das Goswami from such a wonderful representative of Raghunath das Goswami!

*[From a lecture given by H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami at Iskcon, Laguna Beach, California on June 6th, 2014.]*

