

An analysis of three suspicious texts

–Jagadananda Das –

Some time ago, I wrote an article about *Bipin Bihari Goswami and Bhaktivinoda Thakur* in which I alluded to three books, *Chaitanya Upanishad*, *Navadvipa Satakam* and *Prema Vivarta*, and made the rather audacious claim that they had been penned by Bhaktivinoda Thakur and ascribed by him to the Atharva Veda, Prabodhananda Saraswati and Jagadananda Pandit respectively. This has understandably resulted in much anger against me amongst those who love Bhaktivinoda Thakur and feel forever indebted to him for their spiritual life. To state that Bhaktivinoda may have been engaged in unethical practices seems to be an insult against his spotless character. To all those who have been offended by the manner in which I originally made this statement, I offer my most sincere apologies. I consider myself the grand-disciple of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, and it is certainly not my intention to undermine the great work that he or his disciplic descendants all over the world have done. Nevertheless, I think that some important points are at issue here and so I am revisiting the subject in this two-part article.

To begin with, I would like to go into some detail about why I suspected Bhaktivinoda Thakur of writing these works in the first place. I think it is necessary to illustrate in as clear as possible a way the evidence that favors such a conclusion. In the second part of this article, I shall discuss to the best of my ability what the implications of such an accusation, if true, are for those who venerate him as their guru varga. I shall also clarify my motivations for doing so.

I consider it unjust of anyone to judge another simply on the basis of their conclusions, without studying the reasons that lead them to making them. If I receive my bank statement at the end of the month and find that I am overdrawn, I should not immediately conclude that someone has stolen my check book and debit card. I have to carefully look over the itemized list of transactions and base my conclusion on that. An unpleasant conclusion is not necessarily a wrong one.

Much of the reaction to what I have written comes of objections to my personal life and the choices I have made. I am accustomed to being treated as a “guru tyagi” and hearing this used as a fundamental argument to delegitimize anything I may say. A snake only exudes poison, the argument goes, and so should be avoided at all costs. One may be surprised to hear me say that this is not altogether unreasonable, as all scholars try to remain alert for the biases of those who hold any opinion. If a scientist paid by a petroleum company speaks against the Kyoto Protocol, for example, then we naturally suspect the impartiality of his findings.

Thus, if someone has a bias, it is perfectly legitimate to point it out, but only if it can be shown that he manipulates data or evidence, or if his conclusions are not justified by his proofs. If, on the other hand, you argue that because someone has a bias, the data and evidence must inevitably have been manipulated, you cross the line of impartiality and reveal your own irrational prejudgements. Remember: we often arrive at our biases as the result of examining the evidence. No one studies

any evidence without wanting to arrive at some conclusion. Those who are afraid of reaching an unpleasant conclusion will avoid looking at the evidence.

Furthermore, if a conclusion drawn from evidence does not fit in with one's theology, then it is the theology that must be brought into question. After all, both theology and philosophy deal with the rational harmonization of truth/reality with a global and meaningful vision of the world and God. If one closes one's eye to truth because it comes from the gutter, then one's philosophy is bound to be flawed. This all seems rather self evident to me.

One can see this kind of argument in relationship to the subject matter of this article. Sripad Bhakti Gaurava Narasingha, a respected Gaudiya Math monk and preacher, in his recent article, [Scholarship vs Divine Revelation](#), quotes his siksha guru, the late venerable Gaudiya Math sannyasi, Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Maharaj, as follows:

Yes, there are many things [in *Prema Vivarta*] stated in the name of Gauranga that support Gaudiya Math propaganda. So a particular section, those who are opposed to the Gaudiya Math, says that Bhaktivinoda Thakur wrote this book in the name of Jagadananda. They hold this opinion simply because that book supports the Gaudiya Math siddhantas very closely. For example, the Sahajiyas think that when one lives in Puri, it is not necessary to observe the Ekadasi fast because of the glory of maha prasada. It is said in the Chaitanya Charitamrita that one should honor maha prasada as soon as it is given, so these people believe that if maha prasada is given, one should not refuse it, even on the Ekadasi day. In Jagadananda Pandita's *Prema Vivarta*, however, it is clearly written that when Mahaprabhu was offered maha prasada [on Ekadasi], He touched it to His head respectfully and kept it for the next while He chanted sankirtan the whole day and night. He then broke his fast with that prasadam on the following morning.

There are many other things in *Prema Vivarta* that similarly give proof positive of Gaudiya Math ideas and it is thus very helpful for our preachers. A certain university professor [Biman Bihari] Majumdar wrote a book [Chaitanya Chariter Upadan] in which he stated very cleverly that it is not clear who wrote *Prema Vivarta*, but that it gives the Gaudiya Math people full support in their preaching activity. Perhaps Professor Majumdar came from a sahajiya family. Thus though he accepted something of Mahaprabhu he could not tolerate the Gaudiya Math's criticism of the sahajiya section. (Darsana, Sri Caitanya Sarasvata Matha, Feb. 11, 1982; [edited for facility of comprehension])

This statement has the goal of deflecting any possibility of unscrupulousness onto Biman Bihari Majumdar by accusing him of harbouring prejudices against the Gaudiya Math and allowing them to influence his impartial examination of the facts. The late B. B. Majumdar was the first University of Calcutta student to write his PhD dissertation in the Bengali language. In his thesis, published in 1935 as *Chaitanya Chariter Upadan*, he examined the various biographies of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, analyzing the contradictions between differing versions of His life, weighing their relative merits to determine which of them had the most value historically. If he concluded that the *Prema Vivarta* was too good to be true and dismissed it with only a few words, we should not take this lightly.

Admittedly, Majumdar did not go into detail, so it may be argued that the question is

still open. The purpose of this article is to examine the authenticity of the three books in question as impartially as possible on the basis of the information available to us—the texts themselves.

Methodology

The kind of investigation I propose here is one that some readers may not be familiar with. So I will just say a few words about how a philologist goes about determining the authenticity of a particular text. The first question one must ask is whether the text is known from any other source. Authors often cite other works, some of which are unknown. Such references are favorable to the establishment of a text's authority. Their absence is not conclusive, but troubling.

Of utmost importance in any authentication procedure is the original manuscript itself. If one has the original manuscript, one can examine the paper or palm leaves for their age, the handwriting for its style (styles change in different times, so that handwriting from the 15th century can be clearly differentiated from that of the 19th). Manuscripts are also often dated by the scribe, which is useful information.

The three books in question are remarkable for the absence of any manuscripts, either in the library of Bhaktivinoda Thakur or those of his families or disciples, or indeed in any other manuscript library in the world, so we only have Bhaktivinoda Thakur's word for it that they ever even existed.

Some people have suggested that damaged manuscripts were traditionally consecrated to the Ganges if they were beyond repair. This may be true, but here again there are questions. In the case of rare texts like these three, which contain much material that would no doubt have been seen as controversial in the Vaishnava or Hindu world of the time, the expectation is that the discoverer would have made them available for verification. An editor who wants to remain above suspicion does not throw away the only existing manuscript of a rare and valuable text, no matter how badly damaged.

Furthermore, if, as we are led to believe in the case of the *Prema Vivarta*, the discovered manuscript was in the handwriting of the author himself, it would have been seen as a sacred relic and preserved religiously, irregardless of its condition.

But the above suggestion is based on the proposition that a manuscript is in very poor condition. It is not unheard of for valuable ancient manuscripts to be discovered with missing pages, etc., and still be brought to publication. If a manuscript was in a damaged state, then an editor in good faith indicates missing pages or passages—an example that immediately comes to mind is the famous *Sri Krishna kirtana* of Badu Chandi Das. In the case of the three books in question, however, the published texts show the contrary. Each of them appears to have been perfectly preserved, indicating that the manuscripts must have been in excellent condition. There are no missing words where weevils ate away the pages or where water was spilled, running the ink, or where old pages had crumbled or been torn. If a manuscript of this quality had been found, surely it would not have needed consecrating to the Ganges or the ocean!

Next, in the absence of a manuscript, it is very important to have the text as it was originally written. There are many clues to be had about the age of a text from its orthography and language. There are many regionalisms and dialectical differences in Bengali that can give us clues about the author of a text. A text written by a Bengali who has lived a long time outside Bengal may show traces of this, such as Krishna Das Kaviraj, whose Chaitanya Charitamrita contains many words of Brajabhasha. In the case of our three books, the editor has not notified us of any editorial decisions, so we must assume that the text has been left unchanged.

Though the language of the *Prema Vivarta* has many similarities to the medieval Bengali found in the other works of the time, there are also a number of modern verb forms and locutions that rarely appear in these other texts. For instance *keGde* rather than the expected *kAGdi*, the *-Ti* suffix, etc.

The third and most important source of information that can help us in assessing whether a book is genuine or not is its content. How can this be done? The main method is comparing it with other texts and known historical data and scrutinizing it for anachronisms. If we have an idea of the presumed date of a text, this should be quite revealing. We are bound, of course, to base our conclusions on a linear perception of history. Though miraculous events are sometimes said to be behind the discovery of ancient texts, these claims must be treated with suspicion, as must texts that give detailed predictions of future events. Thus if a text is said to have been written in the 1500s, we should not expect another from the 1600s to be quoted, or other material from a later date to be found in it.

Someone may ask, how can we tell who has borrowed from whom? Or whether they have not borrowed from a common source? The questions that will help us to solve these problems are the following: Is one of the texts better known than the other? A well-known, widely disseminated text naturally has more credibility than another, unknown and doubtful text. Does the later text acknowledge the existence of the earlier one anywhere? What is the sequence of the borrowed material? Is the borrowing wholesale or fragmented? Does it permeate one text or the other? What about context of the borrowing?

There are other elements of content that may be anachronistic. We know that certain controversies arose in the Gaudiya Vaishnava world at different times, which may not have been discussed exhaustively in any of the early works of the sampradaya. The very inchoateness of early evidence is often the reason for later controversies. If adequate answers had been given in the beginning, there would have been no later controversy. Thus most of the debates of the 19th century are at least in part due to conflicting or incomplete evidence in the early canonical texts. If an early text speaks too directly to a later controversy, without any comparable contemporary discourse, then we must count this as a point against its authenticity.

Lastly, it is the preponderance of such evidence that tips the balance. One or two of the abovementioned anachronisms may be tolerated as coincidence, but when a book purported to be from the 16th century is filled from beginning to end with statements that support the specific theological positions of a 19th century author, alarm bells go off. "If it is too good to be true, it probably is."

Chaitanya Upanishad

According to the introduction to the first edition of the *Chaitanya Upanishad*, Bhaktivinoda Thakur states that the manuscript was sent him by a friend, Madhusudan Das, who also produced the Bengali verse translation that appeared in the 1887 publication.

There does not appear to have been any kind of critical inquiry into the authenticity of the text. No scholars were approached for an opinion. It was accepted at face value, a commentary written, and it was published. No information was given about what then happened to the original manuscript, nor has any other manuscript older than 1887 (or newer for that matter) ever been found elsewhere.

There are numerous catalogues of Sanskrit texts, including the *Catalogus Catalogorum*, which attempts to include all manuscripts in all Indian libraries. When I was in London I was able to peruse these catalogues in search of the *Chaitanya Upanishad*, but without success.

Sadhale has published an index to the Upanishads in which he catalogues no less than 223 titles, including the 108 standard texts named in the *Muktaka Upanishad*. The *Chaitanya Upanishad* is nowhere to be found in this list. Nor has it ever been named or quoted in any other text, such as those written by the six Goswamis or later acharyas like Vishwanath or Baladeva. This preponderant silence must be taken as damaging to any claims of the text's authenticity.

The *Chaitanya Upanishad* is a very short work. It contains only 19 sentences or verses, of which two are verses taken directly from the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, namely 11.5.33 and 34. These two verses have only been interpreted as referring to Chaitanya by later acharyas, most particularly by Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur. To find them in an Upanishad about Chaitanya indicates that this work was almost certainly written after the 18th century. Such glaring anachronisms are what I call "red flags." Another such red flag is the mention of the town of Nabadwip (jAhnavi tIre navadvIpe).

Most of the other verses in this text are pastiches of Upanishadic verses with Chaitanya's name inserted. Later upanishads like *Gopala Tapani* typically take a few verses from the eleven oldest and most authoritative upanishads and make a few changes or, in some cases, none at all.

All in all, these signs would clearly tell us that this upanishad was written very, very late, certainly after Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's disappearance and probably long thereafter. The temptation to have Sruti evidence for strongly held beliefs is the main reason that most of the 223 upanishads were written. There is no reason to suppose that this is any different.

It has been said by some that the language of the Upanishads is difficult to imitate and that this text in particular possesses characteristics, such as Vedic accent (svara), that are proof of its ancient character. In fact, these characteristics are not all that hard to imitate. Most of the late upanishads are written in a very simple, formulaic language, using certain key expressions (e.g., sa hovAca), the formula of

the disciple asking a question, usually in simple form (ko vA devatA, ko vA mantraH). As already stated, many of these phrases are borrowed directly or calqued from other upanishads, like Gopala Tapani (ya enam rasayati bhajati dhyAyati). The svara is present in the few archaic phrases like sa hovAca, etc. I don't see anywhere that this effect could not have been produced by using earlier texts as models.

Did Bhaktivinoda write the *Chaitanya Upanishad*? In 1886, a year before its publication, he wrote Dasopanishad Curnika, which shows that he had been studying the Upanishads not long beforehand. This means the Upanishadic mood and language were fresh in his mind. It is incorrect to argue that he did not have the linguistic wherewithall to do so. He did publish it. He did comment on it. He presented it unquestioningly as though bona fide, though in similar circumstances most people would have been suspicious. He did not invite impartial third parties to assess the manuscript. He did not preserve the manuscript, though in 1887 Aufrecht was making his great researches into Sanskrit manuscripts in eastern India, an exercise that was surely not unknown to Bhaktivinoda.

Navadvipa Satakam (NS)

We have no information about the date of publication of NS. This work is attributed to Prabodhananda Saraswati, but is almost definitely that of someone else. No reputable scholar that I know of takes this work seriously as an original composition by Prabodhananda.

Prabodhananda is a problematic author for numerous reasons and I have written at length on him and his work, which I, like many other Gaudiya Vaishnavas, have savoured with relish. It would not be unusual if this work had never been mentioned by any other Gaudiya author, so an argument against its authenticity ab silentio should not be taken as particularly meaningful. Even so, no copies of this book have ever been found and none are listed in any catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts.

The most noticeable feature of NS is that nearly every verse is taken directly from either Prabodhananda's *Vrindavana-mahimamritam* (VMA) or *Caitanya-candramritam* (CCA). Only a few words in each verse have been changed to make it relevant to Nabadwip. If indeed Prabodhananda had written NS, he must have done so while in the East prior to establishing himself in Vrindavan. This would mean that his VMS was written after NS. It is almost inconceivable that any author would plunder his own previous work so ruthlessly and in such crass fashion. Judging from the selective method in which VMA verses appear in NS, it is clear to any impartial observer that NS has been created from the former, with a few verses from CCA thrown in at the end.

No effort has been made to disguise the borrowing, which is wholesale and with few exceptions follows the exact same verse order as found in what I believe to be the original texts. A few verses appear to be original. I count 13 that are not to be found in either CCA or VMA: 13, 76, 78-83, 98-99, and 102. In all, 74 verses are from VMA (all from the 17th sataka), and 15 from CCA. For the full text of NS with a concordance to VMS and CCA, see [Navadvipa Satakam](#).

In my article on Prabodhananda, I have shown that he most likely did visit Nabadwip. The town is mentioned in five verses of CCA: 1, 83, 100-102 (three of which are found in NS as verses 85, 88 and 97). In CCA, Prabodhananda never mentions the names of the “nine islands,” about which the Gaudiya Vaishnava school is completely silent prior to Narahari's relatively late *Bhakti-ratnakara*. In *Navadvipa Satakam*, however, Godrumadwip, where Bhaktivinoda Thakur had his own residence, is named no less than ten times. Mayapur is similarly named five times, and all the other islands at least once. Since the nine islands theory of Nabadwip was particularly important to Bhaktivinoda Thakur, this must be considered a particularly bright “red flag.”

The most charitable way of looking at NS is that the author made the changes and then, in recognition of the preponderance of Prabodhananda's original authorship, gave him credit for the composition. This is indeed the diplomatic position taken by Haridas Das. Of the three books in question, this is the only one he mentions in his *Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana*. There he writes,

This book of 102 verses has been ascribed to Prabodhananda Saraswati. It describes the glories of Nabadwip in a language and style almost exactly like that of the Vrindavana-mahimamrita. In some places, a few verses have been quoted from Chaitanya Chandramrita, with a few changes added. Though Prabodhananda wrote a hundred centuries of verses in glorification of Vrindavan, the flow of creativity knew no interruption. It is not easy to believe that in writing a hundred verses about Nabadwip he would plunder his own work, making only slight changes to suit the new subject matter. It is my impression that some great personality who had deep feeling for the glories of the land of Nabadwip adapted the language and mood of Prabodhananda's hymn to write this new work and then attributed it to him. Unless we can see one or two manuscripts of this work, it will be impossible for us to remove this doubt. (page 1581)

A less charitable view is that the author's intent was to enlist Prabodhananda's name in support of the nine islands concept of Nabadwip, the name of Mayapur, etc..

It is impossible to say for certain whether Bhaktivinoda Thakur himself composed NS, but the suspicion has to be strong. He published it. He did not preserve the original manuscript. He gave no history of the MS's provenance. His ideas are amply represented in the promotion and glorification of Nabadwip's nine islands.

There was no need of great Sanskrit knowledge to make the few changes to the original verses, but of course Bhaktivinoda was amply equipped to do so. Besides, the Thakur wrote numerous works in Sanskrit, which have much of the flavor of Prabodhananda in them, such as *Gauranga-smarana-mangala-stotra*, published in 1896. If Bhaktivinoda did not pen this work himself, he was still fully complicit in its dissemination. Therefore, it is a moot point whether he actually did or did not write it.

Prema Vivarta

Prema Vivarta, which was discovered and published by Bhaktivinoda Thakur during his stay in Puri from 1900 to 1903, is a somewhat longer and more complex work

than the two discussed above. It is attributed to Jagadananda Pandit, one of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's prominent associates. According to Bhaktivinoda's first edition, he discovered this manuscript on the beach near his Puri residence, Bhakti Kutir, which was situated just next door to Giridhari Asan, where Jagadananda had lived and worshiped his Giridhari deity, which interestingly enough was served by Siddhanta Saraswati for a short period during this time.

The situation with the *Prema Vivarta* is similar to that of our two previous texts. There are no manuscripts, no previous knowledge that any such text ever even existed. The first mention of the *Prema Vivarta* is found in Bhaktivinoda Thakur's own Amrita-pravaha-bhashya commentary to the Chaitanya Charitamrita, written in 1894. There he proposes that the words prema-vivarta mentioned in CC Antya 12.154 might be referring to a book. The verse goes as follows:

*jagadAnandera prema-vivarta zune je jana
premera svarUpa jAne pAya prema dhana*

Anyone who hears Jagadananda's prema-vivarta will understand the true nature of divine love and attain the great treasure of prema.

Bhaktivinoda's suggestion that this might be a book is only given as an alternative to the primary meaning, which fits the context of Jagadananda's pastimes described in the chapter and for which this verse serves as a conclusion. The words prema-vivarta itself means the kind of contrarious or refractory loving behaviour that Jagadananda was known for in his relation with Chaitanya.

The ostensible date of the *Prema Vivarta*

Jagadananda states in chapter two of *Prema Vivarta* that he wrote it after Chaitanya's disappearance, in Jagannath Puri, while Swarup Damodar was still alive. Generally, prevailing opinion is that Swarup Damodar did not live very much longer after Mahaprabhu's disappearance. As such, the date of authorship would have been somewhere between 1534 and 1544. At the very beginning (2.5) the author writes that his intention was to write Mahaprabhu's lila, but to keep it "ati sangopane" or very secret. This could be taken as an explanation for why the book was not widely distributed and pretty much unknown.

Borrowings

Before going on to anything I else, I would immediately like to point out the most obvious clues to the impossibility of the above dates for *Prema Vivarta*.

Chapter 20 contains 85 verses in glorification of the Holy Name. A quick comparison with the 11th chapter of Hari Bhakti Vilasa shows that 84 of these verses are there, with only two of them coming out of the order in which they are found there. However, if one compares the two texts, it is clear that PV has borrowed from HBV and not the other way around, as a selection has been made, with certain verses being left out.

HBV is one of the earliest Goswami works, so it is conceivable that Jagadananda knew of it by 1540, though he makes no mention of it in this chapter. This is somewhat surprising, for though medieval authors were not scrupulous about

naming their sources, they usually recognized wholesale indebtedness to other authors, especially if they had high authority in the sampradaya, as was the case with Sanatan Goswami.

It should be pointed out that several of the verses quoted in this chapter are also found in Bhaktivinoda's *Bhajana-rahasya*, which was also written during the time he spent in Jagannath Puri.

HBV 11.342 = PV 20.42 = BR 1.4

HBV 11.453 = PV 20.191 = BR 1.5

HBV 11.454 = PV 20.193 = BR 1.6

HBV 11.417 = PV 20.169 = BR 1.17

HBV 11.451 = PV 20.188 = BR 1.18

HBV 11.510 = PV 20.227 = BR 1.28

HBV 11.398 = PV 20.136 = BR 2.3

HBV 11.399 = PV 20.137 = BR 2.3

Chapter 19 is also interesting. It is an extensive discussion of the ten offenses to the Holy Names. The offenses to the Holy Name are mentioned several times prior to this (7.24, 8.89). It is well known that this subject is one that Bhaktivinoda held dear to his heart, along with the analysis of the "reflection of the Holy Name." These are also matters that we know preoccupied him during his stay in Jagannath Puri. The *Hari-nama-cintamani*, written during this time, is almost entirely based on an expanded discussion of the ten offenses. (It may also be pointed out, as a matter of interest, that this book also involves the Jagannath Puri historical setting—Mahaprabhu engaged in conversation with Hari Das Thakur.)

O brother! You cannot chant the Holy Name in the association of non-devotees. The sounds of the Holy Name may come out of your mouth, but it will not really be the Name. It will sometimes be the Name's reflection (*nAmAbhAsa*) and sometimes offensive chanting (*nAmAparAdha*), but brother, you should know that in either case, this kind of chanting interferes with the attainment of pure devotion to Krishna. If you want to chant the Holy Names, then associate with devotees and keep desires for sense enjoyment, liberation and yogic powers at a distance. (Prema-vivarta, 7)

Another interesting fact is that the PV contains the full chapter of the Padma Purana that contains the ten offenses. Coincidentally, the publication of Padma Purana was another project in which Bhaktivinoda Thakur was engaged during his time in Puri. The edition he published (1901) was significant precisely because it contained this chapter, which is missing from most editions.

Even more conclusive is the large number of verses sprinkled throughout this work that have been either quoted verbatim from Chaitanya Charitamrita or are so close as to be unmistakable borrowings from that most influential work. In this case, there is no chance whatsoever that Krishna Das borrowed from Jagadananda, for he has clearly recognized his debt to Murari Gupta, Vrindavan Das, Svarupa Damodar, Kavi Karnapur and Raghunath Das as the main sources for his work. If he had gone so far as to quote Jagadananda verbatim, he would surely have mentioned it. As such, it is indisputable that the *Prema Vivarta* was not written in the first half of the 16th century, for it is well known that Krishna Das wrote the CC in 1612, after the death of Jiva Goswami.

To give all the instances of quotation would be too lengthy, but a few examples will

surely serve as sufficient evidence. Compare, for instance, the following discussion of vairAgya, which quotes verbatim Mahaprabhu's instructions to Raghunath Das Goswami:

vairAgI karibe sadA nAma saGkIrtana |
 mAgIyA khAJA kare jIvana rakSaNa ||
 vairAgI haJA yebA kare parAkpekSA |
 kArya siddhi nahe kRSNa karena upekSA ||
 vairAgI haJA kare jihvAra lAlasa |
 paramArtha yAya Ara haya rasera vaza ||
 vairAgIra kRtya sadA nAma saGkIrtana |
 zAka patra phala mUle udara bharaNa ||
 jihvAra lAlase jebA iti uti dhAya |
 ziznodaraparAyaNa kRSNa nAhi pAya ||

“A renunciate should always be engaged in repeating the names of the Lord and should keep his body and soul together through begging. Anyone who takes the renounced order and then becomes dependent on others cannot achieve his ends and Krishna will ignore him. One who becomes a renunciate and then lusts for tasty foods will never attain his spiritual goal, and will simply become the slave of his tastebuds. A vairagi's duty is to always chant the names of Lord Krishna and fill his belly with spinach leaves, fruits and roots. One who runs here and there looking for good things to eat becomes attached to his sex organs and his belly and will never attain Krishna.” (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.22-27)

From *Prema Vivarta*, chapter 16—

vizuddha vairAgI kare nAma saGkIrtana |
 mAgIyA khAiyA kare jIvana yApana ||57||
 vairAgI haiyA yebA kare parAkpekSA |
 kArya siddhi nahe kRSNa kare upekSA ||58||
 vairAgI haiyA kare jihvAra lAlasa |
 paramArtha yAya Ara haya rasera vaza ||59||
 vairAgI karibe sadA nAma saGkirtana |
 zAka patra phala mUle udara bharaNa ||60||
 jihvAra lAlase jei samAje beDAya |
 ziznodara-parAyaNa kRSNa nAhi pAya ||61||

Not only are the two sets of verses very similar, but they also come in the same context, i.e., Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions to Raghunath Das. Perhaps some believe that Mahaprabhu's spoke to Raghunath in Bengali rhyming verse and that this is an exact quote, but this would be misconception. These are Krishna Das Kaviraj's words and have no place in a work written seven decades earlier.

This one example should be sufficient, but there are more--some from this same chapter of the Chaitanya Charitamrita. Compare:

(PV 7.10, 13, 14)

vairAgI bhAi grAmya kathA nA zunibe kAne
 grAmya vArtA nA kahibe jabe milibe Ane
 bhAla nA khAibe Ara bhAla nA paribe
 hRdayete rAdhA kRSNa sarvada sevibe
 aSTa kAla rAdhA kRSNa sevibe kujja vane

(CC 3.6.236-7)

vairAgI bhAi grAmya kathA nA zunibe kAne
bhAlo nA khAibe Ara bhAlo nA paribe
amAnI mAnada haJA kRSNanAma labe
vraje rAdhA kRSNa sevA mAnase karibe

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(PV 11.16)

kibA varNI kibAzramI kibA varNAzrama hIna
kRSNa tattva vettA yei sei AcArya pravINa

(CC 2.8.128).

kibA vipra kibA nyAsI zUdra kene naya
jei kRSNa tattva vettA sei guru haya

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(PV 10.2)

brAhmaNera sat kula nA haya bhajanera yogya |
zraddhavAn nIca jAti nahe bhajane ayogya ||

(CC 3.4.66)

nIca jAti nahe kRSNa bhajanera ayogya
sat kula vipra nahe bhajanera yogya

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(PV 10.14)

dInere adhika dayA kare bhagavAn
abhimAna dainya nAhi rahe eka sthAna

(CC 3.4.68)

dInere adhika dayA kare bhagavAn
kulIna paNDita dhanIra baDa abhimAna

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(PV 10.8)

tihoG ta prakRta bhakti sAdhaka madhyama |
ati zIghra kRSNa bale haibe uttama ||8||

(CC 2.22.67)

yAhAra komala zraddhA se kaniSTha jana |
krame krame teGho bhakta haibe uttama ||

--o)0(o--

(PV 7.6)

markaTa-vairAgya tyaja jAte deha raGga

(PV 9.18)

yathA yogya viSaya bhujja anAsakta haJA

(CC 2.16.238)

markaTa vairAgya nA kara loka dekhAJA
yathA yogya viSaya bhujjo anAsakta haJA

--o)0(o--

(PV 17.26)

indriyA carAJA bule prakRti bhulAiyA

(CC 3.2.120)

indriyA carAJA bule prakRti sambhASiyA

--o)0(o--

The descriptions of raganuga bhakti.

(PV 16.53)

bAhya dehe kRSNa nAma sarva kAla gAya |
antar dehe thAke rAdhA kRSNera sevAya

(CC 2.22.156-7)

bAhya abhyantara ihAra dui ta sAdhana
bAhye sAdhaka dehe kare zravana kértana
mane nija siddha deha kariyA bhAvana
rAtri dine kare vraje kRSNera sevana

This kind of detail about the bhakti process could only have come after Rupa Goswami, but the language itself is similar to Chaitanya Charitamrita.

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The description of the conditioned soul in chapter six can be seen as a composite of the versions found in Madhya 19, 22, and 24.

(PV 6.4)

Ami siddha kRSNa dAsa ei kathA bhule
mAyAra naphara haJA cira dina bule

(CC 2.22.24)

kRSNa nitya dAsa jIva tAhA bhuli gela
ei doSe mAyA tAra galAya bAndhila

Besides these, there are also some verses that recall Narottam Das' Prarthana—

viSaya chADile zuddha habe tomAra Azaya (PV 10.11)

AhA prabhu nityAnanda kabe karibe dayA
abhimAna chADAJA more dibe pada chAyA (PV 10.16)

The above evidence shows the preponderance of the Chaitanya Charitamrita's influence on the *Prema Vivarta*, both in language and in subject matter. This should be sufficient to convince any impartial observer that Jagadananda Pandit could not have written the *Prema Vivarta*.

Jagadananda's life and personality in *Prema Vivarta*

Naturally, when an ancient book purporting to contain historical information is discovered, one immediately makes comparisons with what one already knows. There are numerous contradictions to be found in the differing biographies of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, often involving tiny details, sometimes theological issues. Indeed, one expects to find both confirmations and contradictions in any newly discovered text. No two people give exactly the same version of a story; indeed, if anyone sits down to write his or her version of a story, it is usually because they have something specific to add or because they wish to contradict popular misconceptions, or defend a particular vision of events. Krishna Das, for instance, felt the need to promote a very specific vision of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that could not be found in the biography of Vrindavan Das, whose agenda very much included promoting Nityananda Prabhu and defending his reputation.

In this book, we do indeed find both new narrative material and biographical tidbits, as well as interesting confirmations of other accounts, particularly those of the Chaitanya Charitamrita.

We learn that Jagadananda was born in the same village as Sivananda Sena, who took him to Nabadwip for an education, where he met Chaitanya (8.17). Sivananda taught Jagadananda the Bhagavata and Gita when he was just a boy (8.18), he learned to cook at Sivananda's house (8.20). In the same passage, he speaks of Kavi Karnapur briefly, briefly confirming the Chaitanya Charitamrita story about his composing Sanskrit verses at the age of seven.

Since we are already convinced that this work is by a later author, our way of looking at this data is not as the genuine testimony of Jagadananda, but as the work of a later author's imagination, in this case probably intended to provide a few tidbits of novel information to lend credibility to the work. Interestingly, despite the Gaudiya Math's acceptance of the authenticity of *Prema Vivarta*, I have not seen this material included in any Gaudiya Math biographies of Jagadananda. Could it be that there is some doubt even in those circles about the historical value of this text?

According to the depiction in Chaitanya Charitamrita, Jagadananda had a quarrelsome nature. Indeed, in the early part of CC (Adi 10.23), where Krishna Das lists the numerous participants in Chaitanya lila, he specifically describes Jagadananda as quarrelsome or argumentative (kondala).

In *Prema Vivarta*, the author describes himself by exactly the same word no less than

seven times (2.18, 2.25, 5.1, 5.9, 7.21, 9.35, 13.10), including chapter signatures (7.21, 9.35).

prabhura kundale jagA kende kende bale
nAma bhaja nAma gAo bhakata sakala

Jagadananda, who is always arguing with his Lord, tearfully appeals to everyone: “O devotees! Worship the Holy Name. Sing the Holy Name.”

Indeed, Jagadananda seems fairly proud of his argumentative nature through such frequent references. At the very beginning of the book, he even tells a story of a quarrel he had with Mahaprabhu during his student days (PV 2.18 ff). Needless to say, this is rather unusual and somewhat unexpected. It is not often that someone proudly boasts of an argumentative relationship with the person he or she loves. Indeed, Jagadananda defends this relationship in language reminiscent of the Chaitanya Charitamrita—

(PV 5.4)

bhAla tAra hauka sukha mora hauka cira duHkha
tAra sukhe habe mora sukha ||

It is all very well, as long as he is happy. I may be eternally distressed, but if he is happy, then so am I.

(CC 3.20.52)

na gaNi Apana duHkha, sabe vAJchi tAGra sukha
tAGra sukha AmAra tAtparya
more yadi diyA duHkha, tAGra haila mahA sukha
sei duHkha mora sukhavarya

I don't mind the pain He gives Me. All that concerns Me is His pleasure. My greatest joy is to see Krishna happy. If that happiness comes at the expense of My suffering, that still gives Me joy. That pain is My greatest pleasure.

(PV 5.7)

bADaya AmAra roSa tAte tAra santoSa
tAra prasannatA mora iSTa ||

Sometimes I get angrier and angrier, but that only pleases him. My only goal is to see him pleased.

(CC 3.20.54)

kAntA kRSNe kare roSa, kRSNa pAya santoSa

Sometimes Krishna gets pleasure when His mistresses are angry with Him, but He enjoys being chastized and told off.

Even the book's title indicates that its subject is to be the quarrelsome relationship between Chaitanya and Jagadananda. However, conspicuous in their absence are the very same stories that are recounted in detail in the Chaitanya Charitamrita—i.e., the buying of fragrant oils for Chaitanya, which he refused, etc. (5.5), Jagadananda's argument with Sanatan in Vrindavan (5.2), his angry departure for Vrindavan (5.9), etc., all of which merit only passing mention. If PV had preceded CC and was the source for the CC account, then we would expect to find the original story told in a more complete or detailed fashion in PV, rather than the other way around. Indeed, this summary presentation gives the impression that the author feels his readers will already know these stories.

In CC (1.10.21, 3.7.142, 2.12.152) and Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika (51), Jagadananda has been identified with Krishna's wife Satyabhama, whose quarrelsome nature is

depicted in the Harivamsa and other Puranic texts. In PV (2.11-16), however, Jagadananda defends himself against such an attribution.

The Lord jokingly said to me one day, “You are a powerful queen of Dwaraka. I am just a beggar, so why do you serve me? There are hundreds of other sannyasis like me.” I answered, “Stop joking with me. Why don’t you tell me that I am Srimati Radharani’s maidservant? You have stolen Radharani’s bodily color. I will capture you and drag you back to Vrindavan, where you shall be punished for your thievery. I would like you to throw me down at Radharani’s lotus feet, but instead you send me off to Dwaraka. You are just playing games with me. I know all about your sannyasi tricks. You want to deceive me and serve Radharani all by yourself.”

I pay countless obeisances to Radharani, whose partial manifestation is Satyabhama in Dwaraka. (PV 3.1)

rAdhA pada dAsI Ami rAdhA pada dAsI |
rAdhA dyuti suvalita rUpa bhAlovAsi ||

I am a servant of Radha's feet. I am a servant of Radha's feet. I love Krishna in his form wrapped in Radha's effulgence." (using words directly from Svarupa Damodar's famous verse.) (1.54)

It is well known to historians that the influence of the Vrindavan school on Bengal was decisive. It is very difficult to ascertain exactly what the devotees of Chaitanya believed during his lifetime. Most of the early texts show an adherence to the Bhagavata Purana and not to the kinds of raganuga sadhana that dominates the work of the Goswamis and post-Narottam period in Bengal. Chaitanya was recognized as God before the mood of Vrindavan was recognized as above all other devotional moods. Thus many of his companions were given identities as demigods, eternal associates from Dwaraka or other Bhagavata pastimes. In the changing atmosphere following Narottam’s arrival in the East, it became necessary to award multiple identities to some of these associates to recognize their participation in the “higher” rasas. This took place quickly in the Nityananda and Advaita vamsas, where disciples and followers defended their interests, but Jagadananda had no such protectors. The author of this book evidently took this duty upon himself.

Gaura Paramya and Gaura Gadadhar Bhava

An interesting aspect of *Prema Vivarta* is the view of Chaitanya that pervades it. The work begins with the Swarup Damodara verse made famous in Chaitanya Charitamrita, which defines Mahaprabhu as both a combined form of Krishna and Radha, as well as Krishna imbued with the mood and bodily hue of Radha. This is followed by a rather detailed explanation of this verse. The author uses the term “acintya-bhedAbheda” (1.4) to explain this simultaneous oneness and distinction. Needless to say, this term is not found anywhere prior to Jiva Goswami.

(PV 1.28)

ata eva rAdhA kRSNa dui eka haJA
adhunA prakaTa mora caitanya gosAJA

(CC 1.4.56-7)

rAdhA kRSNa eka AtmA dui deha dhari
anyonye vilase rasa AsvAdana kari

sei dui eka ebe caitanya gosAJi
bhAva AsvAdite haila eka thANi

Chaitanya as teacher and exemplar of the devotional path are not absent from this work, though most of the teachings are put in the mouth of Swarup Damodar. Nevertheless, the teachings to Raghunath Das, portions of which have been cited above as bearing almost exact identity with those found in CC, are spoken by Chaitanya here as there.

Seemingly contradictory to the idea that Mahaprabhu is a combined form of Radha and Krishna, is the decidedly “nagara” mood found in *Prema Vivarta*. The use of the epithet “gorA” are distinctive in this group (rather than “gaura”). This spelling is not used even once in Chaitanya Charitamrita, nor in Chaitanya Bhagavata. (Two instances of “gorAcAnd”) See Vasudeva Ghosh, Govinda Ghosh, Narahari, Lochan Das, Govinda Das Chakravarti, and others who are known as known as Gaura Nagara. Bhaktivinoda himself shows a tendency to use this epithet, it is found especially in Kalyana-kalpa-taru and Gitavali. The term kapaTa nyasi (5.5) is also one familiar to Nagara texts.

Similarly, Gaura Gadadhar themes are frequent, far more prominent than anywhere in the contemporary literature, even in works like Chaitanya Mangal, though present in the songs of Sivananda, Vasu Ghosh and other Nagara poets. Though this tendency in Bhaktivinoda is not given much recognition much in the Gaudiya Math, it is distinctly present in his song books. (For instance, Bhaktivinoda’s personal deities were Gaura Gadadhar; Gaudiya Math temples tend to have a single deity of Mahaprabhu with Radha Krishna, or Gaura Nitai.)

gadAi gaurAGga muJi rAdhA zyAma jAni

I know Gadai and Gauranga to be Radha and Shyama. (PV 2.44)

This Gaura Gadadhara mood is related to the glorification of Nabadwip in the second chapter of *Prema Vivarta*. In Nabadwip, Gauranga tries to make a parakeet say the names of Radha and Krishna, but the bird only says “Gaura Hari.” A brief argument ensues, with the concluding exchange,

The parakeet said, “Vrindavan has become Nabadwip, while Radha and Krishna have become Gaura Hari. You are my Krishna and this Gadadharis my Radha. Gaura Gadadhar and the lords of my life. I am incapable of saying anything other than this.” The Lord answered, “I am a worshiper of Radha and Krishna. It displeases me to hear anyone else’s name glorified.” So saying, he took Gadadhar’s hand and returned to Mayapur, abandoning the parakeet who said “Sing whatever you like, I will go on worshiping as I always have.” (PV 2.37-42)

Another interesting and anachronistic feature of PV exhortation to worship Mahaprabhu in the “ashta kala lila.”

ore bhAi saba chADi baiso navadvIpa pure
gaurAGgera aSTa kAla bhaja duHkha yAbe dUre

O brother, give up everything and reside in the town of Nabadwip. Worship Gauranga through the eight periods of the day and all your miseries will disappear. Just as Krishna has eight different kinds of pastime according to the eight periods of

the day. If you worship these pastimes according to the mood taught by Gauranga, you will be charmed. Anyone who is determined to worship Krishna should also worship Krishna through the eight times of day in Gauda (Sic). Someone who does not know the mood of Gauranga and wants to worship Krishna will never realize the transcendental truth of Krishna. (PV 11.12-15)

Though the Gaura-chandrika method of introducing Krishna lila likely became current even before the 1570's through the writings of poets like Sivananda and the Ghosh brothers, the idea of an ashta kaliya lila for Gauranga took much more time to develop. Indeed, in 1895 Bhaktivinoda published a poem "by an unknown author" written on the model of the Radha-krishna-lila-smarana-mangala-stotra, glorifying Mahaprabhu's pastimes over the eight periods of the day. (There is another such stotra attributed to Vishwanath Chakravarti; some verses are common to the two. Some investigation is needed.).

Nabadwip/Mayapur

The last two references bring us to the glorification of Nabadwip. The author of PV starts this very early, stating in the first chapter that the joys of Vrindavan are eclipsed by those of Nabadwip.

vrajera adhika sukha navadvIpa dhAme
pAila puraTa kRSNa Asi nija kAme

There is more pleasure to be had in Nabadwip than in Vraja, for the golden Krishna has come here of his own volition. (PV 1.38)

navadvIpe nA pAila yei vRndAvana
vRthA se tArkika kena dharaya jIvana

The skeptic who does not recognize Vrindavan in Nabadwip is a useless skeptic (PV 2.46)

As mentioned in relation to the *Navadvipa Satakam* above, one of Bhaktivinoda's concerns was to preach the town of Nabadwip according to the conceptions he had formed in his researches related to the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. As such, we are not surprised to find frequent references to Mayapur (1.18, 1.46, 2.41, 4.2, 11.16, 14.10). Though the theme pervades the book, the eleventh chapter in particular reveals an interest in describing Nabadwip as a dhama equal to Vrindavan in the following passage:

This planet is most glorious within the universe, and here it is the land of Gauda that is most fortunate. In the land of Gauda, it is Nabadwip that is most glorious. This land of sixteen kos is revered throughout the universe. Through it runs the great flowing Ganges, and the confluence of the Ganges with the Yamuna and Saraswati are also found there. On the eastern bank is Mayapur, which is equal to the spiritual realm of Goloka, in the midst of which is the house of Sachi where Gauranga appeared. (PV 11.13)

The passage reminds one of the beginning of Jaiva Dharma. The term "sixteen kos Nabadwip," found for the first time in Bhakti-ratnakara, is also mentioned elsewhere in PV:

Sola-kroza navadvIpe vRndAvana mAni ||2.44||

I hold this sixteen kos Nabadwip to be Vrindavan.

In chapter 15, a completely original pastime describing youthful pastimes in Nabadwip, contains the previously unheard story of Goradaha, a tank near Gadigacha village. Gadigacha is present-day Swarup Ganj, which is part of Godrumdwip, the portion of Nabadwip where Bhaktivinoda had a residence, and which, as mentioned above, he often glorified in his own writing. The pastime described there is a miraculous event—only one of two in PV—when Mahaprabhu transforms an alligator (nakra) with the touch of his foot, revealing that this being was a demigod who had been cursed by Durvasa to take birth in this lower form, but showed the added kindness of blessing him with the promise of liberation by the touch of Gauranga’s foot. This story has obviously been calqued on many similar puranic incidents. In style and composition, it recalls many of the anecdotes found in Bhaktivinoda’s own *Navadvipa-dhAma-mAhAtmya*, where it is not found. However, in the posthumously published *Godruma-candra-bhajanopadesa* (verse 13), there is a reference to this very story.

Other things

I believe that what has already been said is sufficient to support my thesis that this book was not written by Jagadananda but by someone else, and that most likely Bhaktivinoda Thakur. There is, in fact, a great deal more in *Prema Vivarta* that could be said to point to Bhaktivinoda Thakur—many other questions of subject matter, language and style.

One of the most important themes is, of course, purity and sincerity in devotional practice. Bhaktivinoda detested hypocrisy and immorality in religious life and fought against these things throughout his career. Some of the best and most original verses in *Prema Vivarta* deal with this subject:

gorAra Ami gorAra Ami mukhe balile nA cale
gorAra AcAra gorAra pracAra laile phala phale

It is not enough to simply advertise repeatedly that one is a devotee of Mahaprabhu, saying, “I am Gora’s, I am Gora’s.” The benefits of being the Gora’s follower come for one who takes up the practices he taught as well as preaching his mission. (PV 8.6) Another favored theme frequently broached by Bhaktivinoda is that of zaraNAGati. Though zaraNAGati is mentioned in the Goswami literature and Chaitanya Charitamrita, it is nowhere given the kind of centrality found in Bhaktivinoda’s work. Lines like these (PV 18.20) are so similar to many lines in Bhaktivinoda’s work it practically screams his name

zuddha bhaktira anukUla kara angIkAra
zuddha bhaktira pratikUla kara asvIkAra

Another theme that we see in Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s writing that comes up in *Prema Vivarta* is the distinction between renounced and householder life, especially in its favorable view of the latter.

gRha chADi bhikSA kare nA kare bhajana
vaiSNava baliyA tAre nA kara gaNana

One who has renounced householder life and begs for his livelihood, but does not engage in bhajan should not be considered a Vaishnava. (PV 17.10)

gRhashta vaiSNava sadA nAmAparAdha rAkhi dUre
AnukUlya laya prAtikUlya tyAga kare
aikAntika nAmAzraya tAhAra mahimA
gRhashta vaiSNavera nAhi mAhAtmyera simA

A householder Vaishnava should avoid offenses to the Holy Name. He should accept everything favorable to spiritual life and reject everything unfavorable. The glory of the householder is exclusive shelter of the Holy Name, and there is no limit to the glories of a householder Vaishnava. (PV 17.17-18)

At the same time, the *Prema Vivarta* tackles the question of Sahajiyaism, discussing some of the terms used by the Sahajiyas and adapting them to the orthodox context. These terms are pIriti, Aropa, pravartaka, sAdhaka and siddha.

lampaTa pApiSTha ApanAke kRSNa mAni
kRSNa lIlA anukRti kare dharma hAni

The sinful womanizer who thinks that he is Krishna and then imitates Krishna's lila causes disruption in religious life. (PV 17.28)

It is almost certain that this well-developed Sahajiya terminology was not around in Jagadananda's time, whereas it is well known that Bhaktivinoda Thakur was much troubled by the well-developed and powerful influence of Sahajiyas in the Vaishnava world of the late 19th century.

Conclusion

I feel that anyone who looks on this collection of evidence must be obliged to come to the conclusion that Bhaktivinoda Thakur either wrote *Prema Vivarta* himself, or colluded with someone else who wrote it. No one could seriously hold that Mahaprabhu's associate Jagadananda Pandit wrote this text prior to Krishna Das Kaviraj's *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, prior to the formulation of Vaishnava Sahajiya doctrines, prior to Narottam Das and the cult of Nabadwip Dham, etc.

If someone says it is impossible to prove that Bhaktivinoda Thakur wrote this book, I would say he is indeed correct. But the preponderance of circumstantial evidence is so strong that if presented in a court of law, the chances of conviction would be fairly good.

I have gone to the trouble of summarizing this evidence here because of the uproar that my previous article caused, where I did not detail my rationale for make such radical and apparently offensive statements. I doubt seriously that this will go far to convince those who reject even the possibility of a blemish on Bhaktivinoda's character. To those people I will remain a hateful offender and the object of eternal opprobrium.

This is truly unfortunate. Even so, I would like to justify my actions and I would like to defend myself against the accusations of malicious intent, which is the usual charge levied against me. I should also like to examine the alternatives available to us, if we indeed accept the possibility that this evidence is true. This is a significant question, because it is not necessarily unusual or impossible that those we admire and respect, even as gurus, may be found to have engaged in acts that are morally or

ethically unacceptable. Where does this leave our faith?

I shall attempt to answer these questions in "*The implications of our gurus' moral failings.*"