

Written by Vanamali dasa Adhikari

Srila Narayana Maharaja spent about one week in the month of August in Sri Vrndavana Dhama. There, he is staying in his new rooms at Gopinatha Bhavan, which enjoys a panoramic view of Sri Yamuna Devi. In the evenings he gave classes at the Sri Rupa Sanatana Gaudiya Matha, where he regularly spoke from the Srimad Brhad Bhagavatamrta of Srila Sanatana Gosvami. He read from Srila Sanatana Gosvami's own commentary on the work, which gives deep insights into the pastimes therein. During this time he spoke on the section in which Sri Narada Muni traverses the universe to find the greatest recipient of Sri Krsna Bhagavan's mercy.

In the mornings, Srila Maharaja took japa walks around his neighborhood by the Yamuna. At 6.00 am, with a small entourage of devotees including my fallen self, he would walk down the entrance way from Gopinath Bhavan on to the Parikrama path, turn right and move at a steady pace to a spot on the Yamuna bank opposite the Nityananda Vamsa Mandira. There he descends the bank and performs acamana by touching the waters of Sri Yamuna Devi to his lips and then his head. After ascending the bank he recites the Sri Yamuna-astakam with solemn devotion.

We go over the road and walk up through Nityananda Vamsa to the lower end of Loi Bazaar, and Srila Maharaja then proceeds up through the Bazaar. At that time in the morning the shops are all closed and the only excitement is around the Sabji Bazaar. Srila Maharaja walks strongly through the commotion until he gets to the Bungkhandi Mahadeva Mandira, where we turn right into Bhanki Bihari Road. He continues down this road for about three hundred meters until we turn into an alley way that goes down past the Lord Nrsimhadeva Temple, the Ballava Acarya Mandira and leads to our Sri Rupa Sanatana Gaudiya Matha. He stops at the Matha for a few minutes to take darsana of Sri Sri Radha-Vinodavihariji and to talk with the devotees before again walking down to the Yamuna and back to his rooms at Gopinatha Bhavan.

He walks powerfully and only pauses to acknowledge the dandavat pranamas offered by the local residents or to talk briefly with the occasional very fortunate soul. His mood is sometimes deep and full of gravity as when he is chanting the Yamuna-astakam, and sometimes light and jovial as he jokes with the devotees. These intimate moments spent with Srila Maharaja are enlightening because they taught us further how to worship and behave with suitable reverence in the Dhama. They also give us a glimpse of the loving and friendly mood of the Lords pure devotee in his eternal home.

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