

### **The Divine Glory of the Holy mother Srimati Pranati Devi**

Om Vishnupad Paramhansa 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Prasad Puri Goswami Thakur (Srila Acharyadeva) or Srila Ananta Vasudeva Paravidyabhushan Prabhu, an eternal intimate associate of Sri Sri Gaur-Krishna, was the Preceptor of the World and Emperor of pure devotion. Similarly, Her Divine Grace Srimati Pranati Devi whom Srila Acharyadeva accepted as his wife was the Preceptress of the World and Empress of pure devotion. She participated in all the practices of pure devotion that her Divine Master performed after revealing his leela of a householder devotee. And after the disappearance of Srila Acharyadeva from the world, she revealed an incredibly intense devotional life of constant close-door chanting and meditation of the Holy Name in a transcendental mood of separation amidst unimaginable austerities for a long period of 28 years. Her leela is reminiscent of Srimati Vishnupriya Devi's, the eternal consort of Sri Gaur-Hari. Following the footsteps of Srimati Vishnupriya Devi, Srimati Pranati Devi silently preached the ideals of pure Nama-Bhajan in a mood of Vipralambha or Divine Separation by practicing the same for 28 years. And miraculous was the disappearance of the Holy Mother, Srimatai Pranati Devi on the auspicious Guru Purnima Day (also the Holy Day of Disappearance of Srila Sanatan Goswami Prabhu) in Sridham Vrindavan.

On 30.7.1949 Srila Acharyadeva revealed his transcendental leela of accepting the householder's life in accordance with the mysterious will of the Absolute Person, Sri Krishna, dwelling in his heart. In the holy Prayag Dham, he married Her Holiness Srimati Pranati Devi, the devout daughter of Mr. Atul Chandra Chowdhury, a renowned devotee. Mr. Chowdhury was a rich and aristocratic person of Allahabad. Srimati Pranati Devi was the most affectionate daughter of Mr. Chowdhury as she was endowed with exceptional qualities of head and heart right from her birth. It was mentioned in her horoscope that an extra-ordinary great Vaishnava Saint would be her husband. All the brothers of Pranati Devi were service-holders of top rank, some of them practiced Law. Srimati Pranati Devi was the sister in law of Prof. Supati Ranjan Nag, a disciple of Srila Acharyadeva. Mr. Nag MA, BL was the Additional Secretary, Gaudiya Mission, Professor of Philosophy, Jagannath College, Dacca and also an eminent advocate. This famous Vaishnava acted as the mediator in the holy marriage of Srila Acharyadeva.

The entire Vaishnava world knows that Srila Acharyadeva edited and published correct and authentic editions of as many as 65 Goswami-Scriptures within a short period and distributed them free of cost among sincere seekers of Truth and many reputed libraries of the world. No human brain can ever conceive how this Herculean task of collecting manuscripts, comparing various readings of different manuscripts, editing, printing and publishing these Divine Books containing secrets of pure devotion was performed by Srila Acharyadeva within such a short period. Sri Dibakar Mishra writes in his book "**Srila Puri Das Goswami Thakur**" (page no. 158) that Srila Acharyadeva wrote prose order and Bengali translation of most of these books. These works have not been published as yet owing to many obstacles. However, Srimati Pranati Devi was kind enough to publish about 10 of them after the disappearance of Srila Acharyadeva. Despite great difficulty in both manpower and money-power, Pranati Devi established a press and with utmost care published these precious scriptures enriched with Srila Acharyadeva's translations.

In the last part of his divine life, Srila Acharyadeva would perform solitary 'bhajan' in the garden of Sri Purushottam Lal Goswami in Vraja. Many devotees would present costly furniture,

blankets, sweaters, shawls etc to Srila Acharyadeva. He would distribute these gifts secretly among the Vaishnavas and Brahmins of Vraja. Throughout the year he would wear only a napkin of Baripada and use another napkin as his modesty-scarf. He would not use any woolen cloth despite the biting chill of Vraja. As he was always absorbed in the divine madness of Separation in Love, he had no physical consciousness.

Following in his footsteps, the Holy Mother Pranati Devi too revealed a life of unbelievable renunciation. She did not use any electric fan during the summer. Nor did she wear any wrapper during the winter. She would live on bare ground or on a wooden plank without any mattress, pillow, quilt or even any ordinary cotton-covering. Her humble meal consisted of boiled pulse and bottle-gourd without oil or spice.

After Srila Acharyadeva's disappearance from this world in 1958 in Vrindavan, the Holy Mother, Srimati Pranati Devi did not return to her relatives in Allahabad despite their repeated requests. She spent 28 years in Vrindavan after Srila Acharyadeva had entered into Nitya-leela or Eternal Pastimes in Golok. She revealed an exemplary life of a World-Preceptress by plunging deep into solitary adoration and service of the Holy Name, burning in the fire of divine separation. Completely oblivious of the outside world and even her own physical requirements, she would remain always absorbed in the meditation of the Divine Qualities of Sri Sri Guru and Gouranga, shedding profuse tears in pangs of separation in utmost humility. She would constantly cherish the sacred memory of Srila Acharyadeva and his immortal teachings. She would always refer to him as 'Prabhu' (My Master) or 'Gurudeva' (My Preceptor) with reverential awe. On the auspicious Guru Purnima day she disappeared in Vrindavan in 1986. An eye witness to her holy disappearance or 'aprakat-leela' was Sri Divakar Mishra (now residing in Bhubaneswar) who has depicted a vivid picture of her last days in his book '**Srila Puri Das Goswami Thakur**'. Sri Mishra, an aristocratic, wealthy and learned disciple of Srila Acharyadeva writes in his book (Translated in English from Page No. 145)—

*"On the 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1986 I got information about the Holy Mother's illness at 10 a.m. on July 14. At that time the Holy Mother lay unconscious within her room owing to high blood pressure. There was none to nurse her. Again the door of her room was closed from within. She gave response to my very first call and also asked me how I came to Vrindavan. But she did not open her door. I knocked many a time on the door, waited for nearly one hour. At last I sat down on the verandah of a neighbouring house with great anxiety. Suddenly a local woman placed her hand on the door and found it open. She called me to go inside. As soon as I entered the room, I found the Holy Mother completely senseless. Who opened the door? How did it open? The whole matter remained a mystery to me.*

*However, arrangements were immediately made for her nursing and medical treatment. But when she gained back her partial consciousness, she said, "No, I need neither any treatment nor any medicine. My master will cure me." She was meaning Srila Acharyadeva by 'My Master'. When she regained her sense, she began to sing in a feeble but sweet voice the devotional song—"Atma nivedan tua pade kari hainu parama sukhi." [I have become very happy by surrendering myself to your lotus-feet.]*

*The physician was soon called. He examined the patient and remarked that it was her last stage. Yet medical treatment continued. My wife, my elder daughter and other godbrothers soon reached the place. Many Vraja-dwellers began to pay a visit to the Holy Mother. Everyone was saying—“The Mother has performed bhajan (devotional practice) with great sincerity throughout her life. So she will not leave this world on any other day. She will surely disappear on the auspicious day of Guru Purnima.”*

*From July 19, she became wholly unconscious. On that day, one godbrother of mine asked me—“The mother is senseless. How can she remember Sri Krishna at her last hour”? I replied-“It is true that her external senses have become unfit, but in her heart remembrance of Krishna must be intact. The Great Emperor of pure vaishnavas has accepted her as his wife. So it is certain that she will go to Golok.”*

*At last the red-letter day came. It was July 21, 1986. Srila Sanatan Goswami Prabhu disappeared on this auspicious Guru Purnima day. It was 8 o’ clock in the morning. My daughter sponged her body. I painted the holy tilak on her forehead. At 8.20 Kirtan started with drums and cymbals. Devotees present began to sing “Sri Krishna Chaitanya Sachisuta Gaur-gunadham”, a miraculous thing happened. Both the hands of the Mother became totally palsied since July 19. Those stiff hands could not be bent despite many efforts. Suddenly those two hands became automatically folded and came up to her head. With folded hands she paid her obeisance to her Divine Master, Srila Acharyadeva and left this world. No medical science can ever explain how the stiff hands became suddenly flexible at the time of a devotee’s departure from this world. All present there were surprised and awed to see this miraculous disappearance of the Holy Mother. Everyone realized that at her last moment, she had the vision of her gurudeva Srila Acharyadeva to whom she paid her loving obeisances with folded hands. After that her left hand rested on her chest; her right hand straightened and fell on her bed. Her name was Pranati which literally means ‘obeisance’. The Holy Mother paid her last obeisance to the lotus feet of her Preceptor and went back to him after justifying her name in an incredible way.”*

She loved a Great Jagat Guru, she served him with without any hypocrisy, surrendering herself unconditionally and whole-heartedly to his lotus-feet. She followed his mighty message of ‘shuddha hari-bhajan’ or pure devotion in the line of Sri Sri Rupa-Raghunath. She practiced silently, secretly and sincerely the supreme teachings of Srila Acharyadeva, completely alienating herself from the outside world for a long period of 28 years. Ultimately she was rewarded. She received the divine grace of her ‘divine master’. Without the grace of ‘Mahat’ or a Great Devotional Magnet, nothing is attainable in the spiritual world. And a slight offence at his divine feet is enough to send the blasphemer or offender to eternal hell.

The disappearance leela of the Holy Mother is strongly reminiscent of that of Srila Acharyadeva 28 years ago. His pangs of separation from Krishna gradually reached such a stage that he could no more keep his life on earth. On the holy Gaur Jayanti day in 1958, he revealed his leela of having a little fever. He fasted all day and chanted the Holy Name incessantly. One day passed, two days passed, three days passed. Everyone implored him to take some food. But he did not comply with their requests. In the morning of the fourth day (March 8, 1958), he began to say these words to the devotees around him, “Be introspective, go within. Don’t stay outside. You are to go to your own place. Give up vanity of authority. Know it for certain that Krishna alone is

the Supreme Ruler, Master and Protector. Take shelter at his Lotus-Feet. There is no other way of survival. It is Krishna Who is making you do all deeds. It is a great folly to be a master yourself.

In the afternoon he affectionately called all the devotees to his bedside and made them seated near him. Then he started saying, "I have little time at my disposal. Please tell everybody to shed profuse tears and sing *"Sri Krishna Chaitanya Sachisuta Gaur-gunadham"*, and *"Sri Nitai Gaur Sitanath."* Then he became silent for some time. At last he called out with great affection—"Jay Nitai-Gaur-Sitanath." Tears of love rushed down his cheeks and he left this world. The devotees erected his sacred Samadhi Temple in Sri Radhakunda.