



तव कथामृतं तसजीवनम्
tava kathāmytam tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Issue No. 162 Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

6 October 2007

Śrī Indirā Ekādaśī, 10 Padmanābha, 521 Gaurābda

Circulation, 2,007

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CLAIMING TO BE GOD

*His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada*

The conditioned life of a living being is caused by his revolting against the Lord. There are men called *deva*, or godly living beings, and there are men called *asuras*, or demons, who are against the authority of the Supreme Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (Sixteenth Chapter) a vivid description of the *asuras* is given in which it is said that the *asuras* are put into lower and lower states of ignorance life after life and so sink to the lower animal forms and have no information of the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. These *asuras* are gradually rectified to God consciousness by the mercy of the Lord's liberated servitors in different countries according to the supreme will. Such devotees of God are very confidential associates of the Lord, and when they come to save human society from the dangers of godlessness, they are known as the powerful incarnations of the Lord, as sons of the Lord, as servants of the Lord or as associates of the Lord. But none



of them falsely claim to be God themselves. This is a blasphemy declared by the *asuras*, and the demoniac followers of such *asuras* also accept pretenders as God or his incarnation. In the revealed scriptures there is definite information of the incarnation of God. No one should be accepted as God or an incarnation of God unless he is confirmed by the revealed scriptures.

The servants of God are to be respected as God by the devotees who actually want to go back to Godhead. Such servants of God are called *mahātmās*, or *tīrthas*, and they preach according to particular time and place. The servants of God urge people to become devotees of the Lord. They never tolerate being called God. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was God himself according to the indication of the revealed scriptures, but he played the part of a devotee. People who knew him to be God addressed him as God, but he used to block his ears with his hands and chant the name of Lord Vishnu. He strongly protested against being called God, although undoubtedly he was God himself. The Lord behaves so to warn us against unscrupulous men who take pleasure in being addressed as God. ❀

—Purport to *Bhāg.* 1.2.16

SECTARIAN PREJUDICE

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode
Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta 3.3

To be controlled by prejudice causes many problems. From prejudice arises partiality; from partiality comes disrespect for truth.

Wearing the signs of the *vaiṣṇava* is one of the methods of cultivating devotion, involving the body. But to think that that is the distinguishing characteristic of a *vaiṣṇava* is a prejudice arising from sectarianism. Controlled by such false beliefs, a person may not respect a real *vaiṣṇava* who is not wearing those marks. If a devotee has such prejudice and he cannot find good association within his own organization, he will not venture to find good association elsewhere. Since nothing can be accomplished without good association, such a devotee falls into a dangerous position. Those who are bound to the *varnāśrama* system by prejudice also fail to develop a taste for a higher level of *bhakti*. Sometimes hatred, which degrades a person even more, may also appear.

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FROM THE LIFE OF SRILA MADHVACHARYA

Sri Madhvacharya was born in the small village called Pajaka kshetra, near Udupi in the Karnataka state of India. This holy place is intimately connected with the pastimes of Lord Parshuram. The surrounding area on the west coast of India is called Parshuram-srishti, “the creation of Lord Parshuram”. Madhva’s father was a saintly *Śivalli* brahmin, who named his son “Vāsudev”.

Even as a child, Madhva was extraordinary in every respect. He repeatedly astounded his teachers by exhibiting superhuman intelligence. He performed several miracles in his youth, the most notable of which was freeing his father from a debt to a local landlord. The small boy gave a handful of tamarind seeds as payment, and those seeds miracu-

lously turned into gold coins and satisfied the landlord completely. Other persons say that the landlord was satisfied by the simple and sweet behavior of the wonderful boy and there was no miracle. Vāsudev also killed a demon that by mystic power had taken the form of a snake and had tried to attack him. He crushed the snake’s head under his toe and finished the demon.

Per custom, his parents advised Vāsudev to get married, to become a *samsārī*, a family man. However, Vāsudev replied that he would like to become a *jagat-samsārī*, a family member of the whole world. Thus, at the tender age of about eight years, Vāsudev announced to his parents his intention to take *sannyāsa* in order to preach pure spiritual knowledge and devotion of Lord Hari to all good people. After seeing the distress of his parents at this pronouncement, he promised to wait until another son was born to them. Finally, at the age of eleven, upon the birth of a younger brother (who many years later joined his *sannyāsa* order as Vishnu Tirtha), he took *sannyāsa*. His initiating guru, Achyutaprajna Tirtha, gave him the name Ananda Tirtha. Shortly after, Achyutaprajna attempted to educate the young *sannyāsi*, but was astonished to see his inborn knowledge. For example, Ananda Tirtha pointed out that there were thirty errors in the very first line of the philosophical text named *Iṣṭa-siddhi*. Madhva thus began to fulfill his mission of refuting the false *māyāvada* philosophy, which propounds wrong theories such as that God is impersonal Brahman, that there is no difference between the soul and the Supersoul, and that the mortal world is unreal phantasmagoria. Madhva presented his conclusive *vaiṣṇava* philosophy in a seed form in his *Dvādaśa Stotras*, which totally defeat the illusory *māyāvāda* concept. Initially, his guru Achyutapreksha, being a follower of traditional monism, was disappointed with what he saw as the unusual philosophical interpretations of his disciple. Gradually, however, by hearing the infallible argumentation and superhuman perception of Ananda Tirtha, he also became convinced, converted to the Dvaita Vaishnava faith and took the

Vaishnava name “Purusottama Tirtha”.

Soon thereafter, Ananda Tirtha was honored by his guru with the title “*pūrṇa-prajñā*”, which means, “the possessor of complete wisdom”, “all knowing saint and pure devotee”, and “one who has full realization of the Supreme Lord Krishna”.

Madhva toured extensively all over India several times to propagate his teaching of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. He defeated rivals belonging to various schools of thought, and by his convincing arguments converted earnest truth-seekers to his Vaishnava faith.

Sri Madhva was famous for his skill in debate, which were amply evident when he trounced all opponents who dared to oppose him. One early convert to his school was Sobhana Bhatta. After losing to Madhva in debate, he accepted Madhva as guru and was given *sannyāsa* under the name Padmanabha Tirtha. Two other notable opponents whom Purna Prajna defeated in debate and converted to ardent devotees were Trivikram Pandit, and Syama Sastri. The latter accepted *sannyāsa* as Narahari Tirtha.

By his own example, Sri Madhva trained many disciples to preach Vaishnava philosophy. He installed the deity of Lord Sri Krishna in Udipi and instituted eight *maṭhas* for the worship of Krishna. To this day, these *maṭhas* serve the purpose of propagating Madhva’s teachings.

Sri Madhva performed many miracles, thus proving his spiritual status, by directly exhibiting his personal potency. Per people’s request, with one hand, Madhva once lifted a boulder weighing many tons that one hundred people assembled together could not lift up. On the top of that boulder, there has been placed an inscription in Sanskrit, *ānanda-tīrthena eka-hastena sthāpitā śilā* — “Ananda Tirtha lifted this stone with one hand”. On another occasion, Madhva led some of his disciples to a secret spot in Kurukshetra where he showed them the long-buried weapons of the Pandavas. One of those was a large club, which he had used in battle in his past incarnation as the mighty Bhimasen. ❀

— Adapted from a biographical sketch of Srila Madhvacharya written by Gadadhar Pandit Das, included in his translation

of *Dvādaśa Stotra of Śrīman Madhvācārya*. Published by Vidhwan Vittalacharya Trust. Udupi, India. 2006

OBSTACLES ON THE PATH OF DEVOTION

Śrī Hari Bhakti-sudhodaya 10.46-50

After a minister of Hiranyakasipu preached to Bhakta Prahlad to give up the worship of Lord Vishnu, Prahlad replied:

*vṛtāni vighnaih śreyāmsi prabho sarvāṇi sarvadā
śreyastamā kathā siddhyen nivoirghnā hari-bhāvanā*

O my master, there is no doubt that whenever one does good, one meets obstacles. It is a fact that in order to perform any auspicious act there will be many difficulties to overcome. So how can the most auspicious *hari-bhajan* be performed without facing obstacles? (47)

*kadācit kasya cid viṣṇo ramate cañcalaṁ manaḥ
drāvayanty atha tad vighnāḥ śārdulā hariṇaṁ yathā*

Some unsteady persons with polluted hearts pretend to be devotees of Lord Narayan. But when they meet obstacles they give up *hari-bhajan* and flee like a deer from a tiger. (48)

*sarveśa-bhāvanā-niṣṭhaṁ lobhayantiṣ ṭadāḥ surāḥ
rakṣāmsi vā bhīṣayanti guravo vārayanti vā*

Even if the gods offer them temptations, if demons place them in fearful situations, or if elders advise them otherwise, devotees cannot be swayed from the path. (49)

*durlaṅghyān īdṛśān vighnān dhiyā nirjitya yaḥ sudhīḥ
tam eva bhāvayan nātham sa tasya padam aśnute*

In spite of the obstacles that naturally come, wise persons remain resolute. They remain firm in their steadfast devotion to Sri Hari and attain the supreme goal of life. (50) ❀

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THE GAURA MOON

The Poet Jnana Das

(*beloyāra-rāga*)

*śacī-garbha-sindhu-māḥje gaurāṅga-ratana rāje
prakaṣa ha-ilā abanīte
heri se ratana ābhā jagata ha-ila lobhā
pāpatama lukāila turite*

The regal jewel of Lord Gaurāṅga was manifest in this world within the ocean of Sachi's womb. Gazing at the splendor of this jewel, the people of the world yearned to attain it, and the great sins quickly hid.

āya dekhi giyā gorācānde
e cānda-vadanera āge gaganera cānda ki lāge
cānda heri cānda lāje kānde

(Refrain) Come and gaze at the moon of Lord Gaurā! In the presence of the moon of Lord Gaurāṅga's face, of what use is the moon in the sky? Gazing at the moon of Lord Gaurāṅga's face, the sky's embarrassed moon wept.

pīyile cāndera sudhā dūre nāki yāya kṣudhā
tāi tāre bale sudhākara
e cāndera nāma sudhā pāne yāya bhava-kṣudhā
haya jīva ajara amara

Anyone who drinks the nectar of that moon finds his hunger flees far away. The sky's moon says: The very name of this moon is nectar. Anyone who drinks that nectar finds the hungers of this world of birth and death flee far away. That person becomes free from old age and death.

gorā-mukha-sudhākare hari-nāma-sudhā jhare
jñāna-dāse se amṛta cāki
eḍābe saṁsāra-saṅkā gorā-nāme māri ḍaṅkā
samana-kiṅkare dibe phāṅki

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:
Gopal Jiu Publications
c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir
National Highway No. 5, IRC Village
Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India, 751015
Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026
Email: katha@gopaljiu.org
Website: www.gopaljiu.org
Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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On the nectar moon of Lord Gaurā's face flows a nectar river of Lord Hari's holy names. Jnana Das has taken some sips from that river. To dispel the fears of this world of birth and death, beat the big drum of Lord Gaurā's holy name. Yamarāja's servants will be cheated of their due. ❀

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THE CAITANYA TREE

Srila Kavi Karnapur

Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya 1.6-7

āścaryam yasya kando yati-mukuṭa-maṅṅir
mādhavākhyo munīndrah
śrīlādvaita-prarohas tribhuvana-viditaḥ
skandha evāvadhūtaḥ
śrīmad-vakreśvarādya rasa-maya-vapuṣaḥ
skandha-śākhā-svarūpā
vistāro bhakti-yogaḥ kusumam atha phalam
prema niṣkaiṭavam yat
brahmānandaṁ ca bhittvā vilasati śikharām yasya
yatrāṭṭa-nīḍam
rādhā-kṛṣṇākhya-līlā-maya-khaga-mithunam
bhinna-bhāvena hīnam
yasya cchāyā bhavādhva-śrama-śamana-kārī
bhakta-saṅkalpa-siddher
hetuś caitanya-kalpa-druma iha bhuvane
kaścana prādūrāsīt

Its wonderful root, the great sage Madhavendra Puri, the crest jewel of *sannyāsīs*; its new sprout Srila Adwaita, who is famous in the three worlds; its first branch Avadhuta Nityananda; its other branches Sriman Vakreswar Pandit and other sweet devotees; its flower, blossoming devotional service; its fruit, sincere love; its highest branches breaking through the boundaries of the material worlds and providing a place for the nest of the two playful birds Radha and Krishna to stay without ever being separated; and its shade, a resting place for those who travel on the path of repeated birth and death — the *caitanya-kalpa-druma* tree grows on this earth to fulfill the devotees' desires.

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