



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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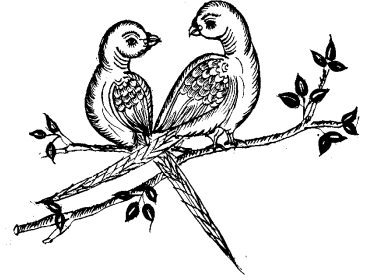
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THE STRENGTH OF BALARAM

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The first expansion of the unlimited forms of Krishna is Balaram, Baladeva. In the *Upanishads* it is stated, *nāyam ātmā bala-hīnena labhyaḥ* — “*Ātmā*, the supreme soul, cannot be understood without being favored by Balaram.” This statement is sometimes misunderstood to be referring to bodily strength — “*Ātmā*, the supreme soul, cannot be understood without physical strength.” But that is not the fact. *Bala-hīnena* means that one who is not favored by Balaram or Nityananda cannot make any progress to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is the real meaning. Balaram is *guru-tattva*, and Balaram is present in this age as Nityananda. So *bala-hīnena labhyaḥ* does not mean “without any physical strength”. It means that one has to get the favor of Nityananda Prabhu. ❁

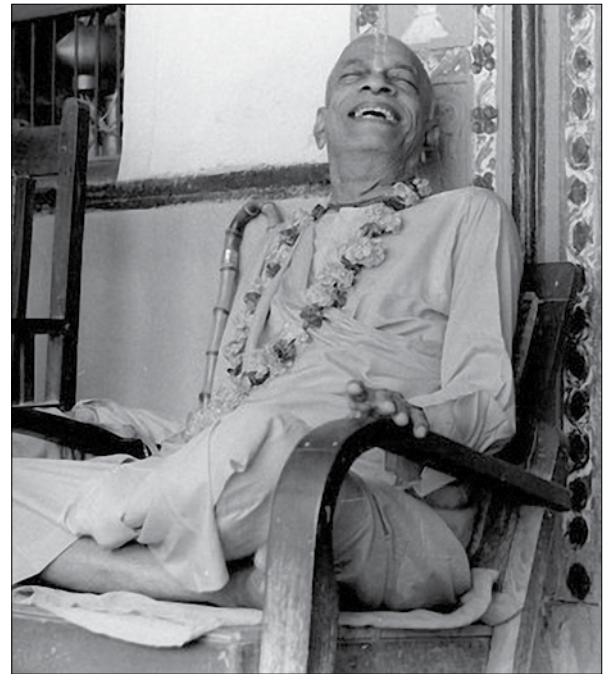
— Lecture in Bombay, 2 January 1975.

THE DEMONS KILLED BY BALARAM

From Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode's

Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta, Chapter 7

A secret of *vraja-bhajan* is that all the obstacles represented by the demons that Balaram killed can be removed by the efforts of the devotee himself.



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Dhenukasura represents the bad mentality that carries heavy loads. Pralamba represents lust for women, greed, and desire for worship and position. The devotee must remove these obstacles by his own efforts with the mercy of Krishna. Dhenukasura means ignorance of one's own spiritual identity (*svarūpa*), the identity of the holy name, and the identity of Krishna. With great endeavor the devotee

himself removes these obstacles. Pralamba represents lust for man or woman, greed for material objects, endeavor for material enjoyment, pride, and desire for worship and position. Understanding these to be very detrimental to progress, the devotee should make great effort to remove them. If his humility is true, certainly Krishna will be merciful. Then Baladeva will make his appearance and all the obstacles will be destroyed in a second. Then, step by step, progress in cultivation of *bhakti* will take place. As this process is by nature very esoteric, the devotee, being spotless in character, should learn it from a qualified guru. ❀

— Adapted from the English translation by Bhanu Swami. Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education.

BALARAM'S PLOW AND KRISHNA'S FLUTE

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Gour Govinda Swami: Rules and regulations are needed at the beginning, that's *sādhana-bhakti*. Therefore we have two paths: *sādhana-bhakti* and *rāgāmugā-bhakti*. Therefore, Balaram's plow and Krishna's flute. Balaram has a plow in his hands and Krishna has a flute in his hands. Why? Balaram will cultivate. *Sādhana-bhakti* is cultivation. The cultivated field is the heart. After being properly cultivated by *sādhana-bhakti*, then comes *karṣaṇa*, you'll come to *rāga-bhakti*. Then Krishna's flute will attract you, *ākaraṣaṇa*. *Karṣaṇa* and *ākaraṣaṇa* are the activities of Krishna-Balaram.

Devotee 1: Doesn't *sādhana-bhakti* mean that very little love is there?

Gour Govinda Swami: Love will generate! Love will be produced if properly cultivated. If guru sows the seed of the *bhakti* creeper but your land is barren, then it will never sprout. Gopinath Acharya said to his brother-in-law Sarvabhauma, *ūṣara-bhūmite yena bijera ropāṇa* — "I am just sowing seed in a barren land. How it will sprout, germinate?" *tānra kṛpā yabe habe* — If Mahaprabhu showers mercy, then it will happen. (Cc. *madhya* 6.105-106)

After the field of the heart has been cultivated and all *anarthas* are gone, then you'll be attracted to Krishna. Then you will hear Krishna's flute and be attracted.

Then you'll run in the dead of night like the *gopīs*. Bilvamangala was so mad that he was running to the prostitute Chintamani in the dead of night in spite of torrential rain and all the land being inundated. Then Chintamani gave him a great blow, saying, "What is this? Why are you so attracted to my body? All nasty things are inside this body — urine, stool, blood, bile, mucus, hair, bones, and marrow — all nasty things. Is there anything nice in my body? Why are you are not attracted to the all-beautiful Krishna? Why are you are not running to him, and instead are running to me?" Then Bilvamangal turned his face towards Krishna. The plow had gone very deep and rooted out the weeds. That is the action of Balaram's plow. That is the slap of guru. *Guru karṇa-dhāra* — guru catches your ear and slaps you, "Hey, rascal!



Balaram with his plow and club

What are you doing?" Guru gives you a kick to help you understand. With one kick, everything will be finished. One kick is enough.

My Guru Maharaja used to say that the blacksmith has a big hammer. With one stroke of that hammer, everything is finished. Nityananda's kick is Balaram's plow. It goes to the deepest regions of the heart. That kicking is his mercy.

Devotee 1: Should we pray for that kicking?

Gour Govinda Swami: Yes! Pray for that kicking from Nityananda Ram, Balaram. You should beg for his mercy, welcome it. Don't be afraid of it. ❀

— From a lecture in Bhubaneswar, 1 March 1992.

JIVA GOSWAMI'S WORSHIP OF KRISHNA BALARAM

*Adapted from Srila Narahari
Chakravarti Thakur's*

Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara 1. 719-738

When Sri Jiva was only a boy, he avoided playing with friends or doing any other activities that had no connection with Krishna. He would make deities of Krishna and Balaram, worship them with flowers and sandal paste, and dress them with fine clothes and ornaments. When he would bow on the ground before them, he would weep. He offered them various kinds of sweets and then enjoyed eating the *prasādam* of the deities with his friends. He loved the deities of



Pata-citra style painting of Krishna-Balaram from Orissa



Unknown artist

Wall mural of Balaram from South India

Krishna and Balaram so much that even when he was alone he would play with them. At bed time he would clasp the deities tightly to his chest and sleep. Although they thought he was only playing, his parents were unable to separate their son from his deities. Everyone was happy to see Jiva's love for Krishna and Balaram.

Chaitanya and Nitai were so bound by his love for them that they appeared to him in a dream. First, Krishna and Balaram appeared in a dream, and Sri Jiva was enchanted to see Krishna in dark blue color and Balaram in white color. They looked like cupids and enchanted the universe with their beautiful forms. Suddenly, Krishna and Balaram were replaced by Gaura and Nitai and the universe was perfumed by the scent of their bodies. Overjoyed with this vision, Sri Jiva wept and fell at the feet of his two masters. Gaura-Nityananda Ray, the twin oceans of mercy, put their feet on the head of Sri

Jiva and embraced him affectionately. Whatever they spoke fell like nectar on the ears of Sri Jiva. In ecstatic love, Sri Gaurasundara offered Jiva to the gracious feet of Sri Nityananda. But Nityananda repeatedly instructed Sri Jiva, “Let my Gaura Prabhu be your life and soul.” When he again bowed down to the feet of Gaura Nitai, they suddenly disappeared and Sri Jiva fell into an abyss of disappointment. ❀

— Adapted from an English translation by Kusakratha Das. The Krishna Institute. Culver City, California.

BALARAM TATTVA

Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupada's **Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta 1.3.85-88**

Krishna and Balaram are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.23:

*ekonaviṁśe viṁśatime vṛṣṇiṣu prāpya janmanī
rāma-kṣṇāv iti bhūvo bhagavān aharad bharam*

In the nineteenth and twentieth incarnations, the Lord advented as Balaram and Krishna in the Yadu dynasty, and by so doing removed the burden of the world. (85)

*eṣa matṛ-dvaye vyakto janakād vāsudevataḥ
yo navya-ghana-sārābho ghana-śyāmāmarah sadā*



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श्री कृष्णकथामृत बिन्दु

Begotten by his father Vasudeva, Lord Balaram appeared in the wombs of two mothers. His complexion was white as camphor. He always dressed in garments dark as a raincloud. (86)

*saṅkarśaṇo dvitīyo yo vyūho rāmaḥ sa eva hi
pṛthvī-dhāreṇa śeṣeṇa sambhūya vyaktim iyivān*

Combining with Lord Seshu, who holds the earth, Lord Balaram, whose second expansion is Lord Sankarshan, appeared. (87)

*śeṣo dvidhā mahī-dhārī śayya-rūpas ca śārṅgīnaḥ
tatra saṅkarśaṇāveśād bhū-bhṛt saṅkarśaṇo mataḥ
śayya-rūpas tathā tasya sakhya-dāsyābhīmānavān*

Seshu appears in two features, as the maintainer of the universe and as the couch of Lord Vishnu. As the maintainer of the universe he is an *āveśa-avatāra* of Lord Sankarshan, and as Lord Vishnu's couch he thinks himself the Lord's servant and friend. (88) ❀

— Adapted from the English translation by Kusakratha Das. The Kṛṣṇa Library. Los Angeles. 1990.

LORD GAURANGA CRIES FOR VRAJA

The Gaudiya Poet Vamsi Das

*bhāvāveśe gorācānda vibhora ha-iyā
kṣaṇe dāke bhāiyā śrīdāmā baliyā*

Lord Gaurachandra is overcome with ecstatic spiritual love. One moment he calls out, “My brother Sridama!”

*kṣaṇe dāke subalere kṣaṇe vasudāma
kṣaṇe dāke bhāi mora dādā balarāma*

The next moment he calls out, “Subal!” The next moment he calls out, “Vasudam!” The next moment he calls out, “My elder brother Balaram!”

*dhabalī sānalī karaye phūkāra
pūrala pulake aṅga bahe prema-dhāra*

He calls out [for his cows], “Dhabali! Sanali!” The hairs on his body stand erect. Streams of tears of ecstatic love flow down his body.

*kāliṅdī yamunā bali prema-jale bhāse
pūraba paḍila mane kahe vamsī-dāse*

He calls out, “Kalindi! Yamuna!” Vamsi Das describes that while thinking of his previous pastimes as Lord Krishna, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu floated in the ocean of ecstatic love. ❀

— From *The Acarya's Songs and Poems Glorifying Lord Gauranga and Lord Govinda*. Translated by Kusakratha dasa. No date.