



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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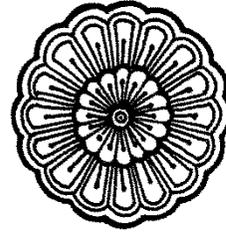
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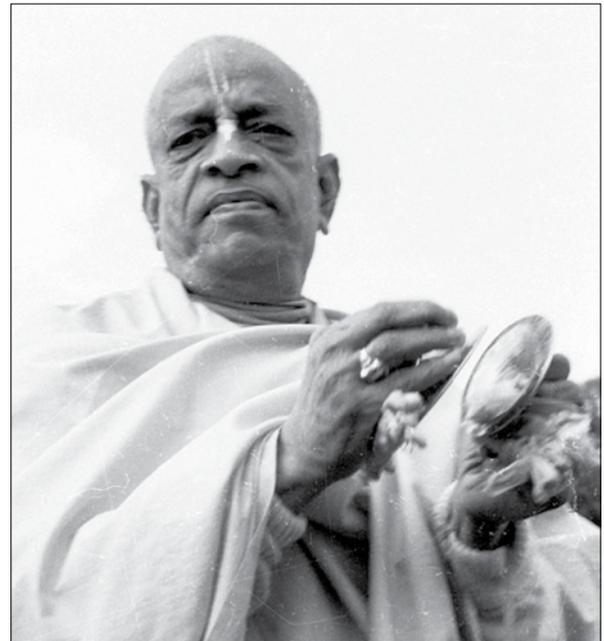


UNNECESSARY AUSTERITIES

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

Regarding the vows and chanting method you have adopted, it is very nice. But do not impose something which will be difficult to execute. There is no need of fasting once every week. Two days fasting per month on *ekādaśī* is sufficient. Besides that there are other special fasting days. Spiritual realization depends on austerities and vows, but in this age by the mercy of Krishna and Lord Chaitanya we need not undergo very severe penances, as we are unable to do it. The rules and regulations which we have already prescribed, that is sufficient for ordinary men. But as you have increased the chanting of beads daily to 25 rounds, that is very nice. (Letter to Rudra, 11 November 1969.)

Regarding the statement in *Bhagavad-gītā* that those who are demons parch [torment] the Supersoul within the body, Krishna cannot be parched, but one who observes fasting irregularly gives unnecessary trouble to the soul; and the soul and the Supersoul sitting together or the soul being part and parcel of the Supersoul, indirectly is parching the Supersoul. The idea is that one should not unnecessarily give trouble to the soul or Supersoul. That is the business of the demon. (Letter to Ekayani, 15 March 1970.)



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

If you want satisfaction, not frustration, not bafflement, then increase your love for God. And the process is very simple, recommended in this age. You haven't got to perform any severe austerity, penance, or go to the forest or Himalayan mountain, or do this or that. You be situated in your place, wherever you may be. But if you simply chant this mantra, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare,

Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, you will gradually develop. (Lecture at Harvard University, Boston, 24 December 1969.)

There is no need of separation. Live together and train up your mind, that's all. Artificial separation is never recommended. And when you see that even while living together you have no desire for sense gratification, then that is the highest stage of perfection. Voluntary restraint is *tapasyā*, austerity, and this is possible with advancement of Krishna Consciousness. Artificial separation is foolishness. We recommend voluntary restraint, not artificial separation. So you should understand that there is no objection to live together as husband and wife. The tendency is there, it is natural. But if one can check it, then that is very good. But it is not compulsory, and it is not to be checked artificially but rather with advancement of strength in Krishna Consciousness. (Letter to Himavati, 14 June 1968.)

REMEMBERING THE EIGHT-FOLD PASTIMES

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati
Thakura Prabhupada*

There is no doubt that what you have learned about *aṣṭakālīya līlā-smaraṇa* from the *vaiṣṇavas* in Vrindavan is praiseworthy, but this subject matter is not to be understood while one is full of *anarthas*. These matters are realized by a qualified person while chanting the holy names of Hari. This is called self-realization. One's constitutional position is awakened when all *anarthas*, unwanted things, are destroyed. When one's constitutional position is revived, eternal realization of the self is automatically achieved. No one can artificially teach that to another person. Still, the realization one attains while sincerely chanting the holy names of Hari should be approved by the spiritual master and other *vaiṣṇavas*.

The advice that inexperienced spiritual masters residing in different places artificially impose on the minds of unfit practitioners cannot be accepted as a useful introduction to perfection. A self-realized person is automatically known by his characteristics, and a spiritual master simply helps him advance on the path of worshiping the Supreme Lord. I have nothing more to say about this. According to the degree of advancement on the path of *bhajana*, these things naturally manifest to the non-duplicitous, service-inclined heart.

— *Patrāmṛta*, Nectar from the Letters, translated by Bhumipati Dasa, published by Isvara Dasa, Touchstone Media, Kolkata, 2012.

THE PRISTINE CHARACTER OF JADA-BHARAT, PART 1

From the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Canto 2, Chapters 13 and 14

[*Srila Jiva Goswami writes in his commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (5.14.45) and elsewhere that the Bharat Maharaja and Jada Bharat described in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa are different from the ones described in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. He says that the narrations of Bharat Maharaja and Jada Bharat given in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa are from another kalpa, and these two personalities in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa are more inclined to jñāna than to bhakti. We explore the character of these two personalities from Viṣṇu Purāṇa in this multi-part series.*]

The sage Maitreya spoke to Sri Parashar Muni, “Dear lord! You have described the complete details of the structure of the earth, oceans, rivers, and the positions of the planetary systems as asked by me. I also understood how the three worlds in this universe are dependent on Lord Vishnu and how transcendental knowledge is the best knowledge.

“O lord! Previously you described in brief the character of King Bharat. I wish to listen to it in detail. Kindly narrate that history. I have heard others say that he used to constantly meditate on Lord Vishnu through mystic yoga while staying in the place known as Shalagram Kshetra. How is it that even after staying in such a pious place and meditating on Lord Hari he could not obtain liberation, and instead had to obtain the body of a Brahmin? And what did he do after obtaining the body of a Brahmin? O learned sage, please narrate to me all these details.”

Sri Parashar Muni replied, “That most fortunate king of the earth stayed in Shalagram Kshetra for a long time, all the while meditating on the Lord. Bharat Maharaja, the best of all qualified people, had obtained the highest benefit of human life by exhibiting qualities like non-violence and by restraining his mind.

*yajñeśācyuta! govinda! mādhavānanta! keśava!
kṛṣṇa! viṣṇo! hṛṣīkeśa! vāsudeva namo 'stu te!*

*iti rājāha bharato harer-nāmāni kevalam
nānyaj-jāgāda maitreya kiñcid svapnāntare 'pi ca*

etat padan tad-arthaṁ ca vinā nānyad acintayat (9 – 10)

“O Lord of sacrifices! O Achyuta! O Govinda! O Madhava! O Ananta! O Keshava! O Krishna! O Vishnu! O Hrishikesh! O Vasudeva! Obeisances to you all.”

In this way, Bharat Maharaja only recited the names of Lord Hari. He would not utter another word, even

in his dreams. Neither did he meditate on anything else besides the meanings of these words.

“Freed from all material association and equipped with mystic yoga, that austere king would only gather sticks of wood, flowers and *kuśa* grass for his daily worship. Besides this, he would not gather anything or do any other work.

“One day he went to the river, and after taking his bath he performed his morning duties. O sage! At the same time a pregnant doe arrived near the bank of the river to drink water. When she had almost finished drinking water she heard the loud roar of a lion, which frightened all the animals present there.

“Immensely terrified, she jumped onto an elevated portion of the riverbank. Due to jumping high, the fetus in her womb fell out into the river. King Bharat saw this and caught hold of the new born fawn. Exhausted and shocked due to jumping high and delivering a baby, the doe fell down and died. Seeing that the mother was dead, King Bharat brought the baby deer back to his hermitage.

“O sage! After this, King Bharat started raising the young deer, which grew day by day under his care. The baby deer would sometimes eat grass near the hermitage, and sometimes would wander off into the forest, but would return back, fearing the lions. Even if the fawn would leave the hermitage in the morning, it would return in the evening and would lie down outside the hermitage.

“O learned Brahmin! In this way, the king’s mind was constantly attracted to thinking about the fawn, which would sometimes be near the hermitage and sometimes be far off. His attention would not go anywhere else. That same King Bharat, who left his entire kingdom, his sons and his relatives, now started expressing extreme attachment for the young deer.

“If the fawn was late in returning to the hermitage, he would start thinking within himself, ‘Alas! Did a wolf eat him? Did he fall to the sharp claws of a lion? Just see how the earth is decorated with its footprints. I don’t know where that fawn, the object of my delight, has gone! Will he return back safely to scratch my arms with its horns? Just see! The grass straws cut by its newly formed teeth appear as beautiful as the tufts of hair adorning newly shaved and initiated *brahmacārī* boys.’

“In this way, the sage Bharat would keep worrying for the young deer that had gone out for long.



Musk Deer

Unknown artist

When he would finally return, Bharat would be delighted due to affection. In this way, the same King Bharat that had given up his kingdom, enjoyment, prosperity and relatives lost his *samādhi* due to being excessively attached to the young deer. The king’s mind would be fickle when the fawn exhibited a fickle nature, and it would keep thinking of the fawn when it would go far away during the day.

“In due course of time, King Bharat left his body. Considering himself to be like a father to the deer, he looked affectionately at the deer, who was watching him with tear-filled eyes. In his meditation on the deer at the time of his death, he thought of nothing else.

“Due to his intense meditation on the deer and memories of his previous life, King Bharat thereafter took birth as a deer in the ferocious forest of *jambu-mārga* named Kalanjar. O great sage! Due to having memories of his previous life, King Bharat as a deer detached himself from his deer family early in life. He left his deer mother and came back to Shalagram Kshetra, where he would subsist on dry leaves and grass and tried to perform activities that would undo the cause of his attaining an animal life. In due course of time, he left this deer body and appeared in a family of disciplined lineage of brahmin sages.” 🙏

[To be continued...]

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Hindi Translation published by Motilal Jalan, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.



Painting by B. K. Mitra, Gita Press, Gorakhpur

Separation from Shyamasundar

CHEATED IN LOVE Sri Vidyapati

*nayanaka ota hoite hoeta bhāne
viraha hoeta nahi rahata parāne*

Just as he [Krishna] went out of sight [from Vrindavan to Mathura], I felt that my life airs would no longer remain in my body.



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*se āve desāntara ātara bhelā
mana-matha madana rasātala gelā*

[Alas!] Now that he has gone to a farther away land [Dwarka], it feels that cupid has also disappeared to *rasātala*, the lowest planetary system.

*kaona desa vasala ratala kañona nārī
sapane na dekhāe niṭhura murārī*

Which country has he gone to? Who is the lady that he now enjoys with? Alas! Even in my dreams now I am unable to see cruel Murari.

*amṛta sicali sani bolalan hi vānī
mana pati āela madhura-pati jānī*

While leaving [for Mathura], he spoke to all of us with such sweet words. My simple mind believed them, considering him to be the truthful Lord of Mathura.

*hama chala tuṭata na jāeta nehā
dine dine bujhalaka kapāta sinehā*

I [as a simple village woman] believed that this love would never break. Alas, day by day, the lamp of my expectations extinguishes due to this pseudo love [of cheater Murari].

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from *Vidyāpatī Ṭhākura ki Padāvalī*. Compiled and edited by Shri Nagendranath Gupt. Published by Shri Maharaja Rameshwar Singh Mahodaya. Printed by Indian Press, Prayag, 1910.

