



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 354

Śrī Paramā Ekādaśī

12 July 2015

Circulation 8,020

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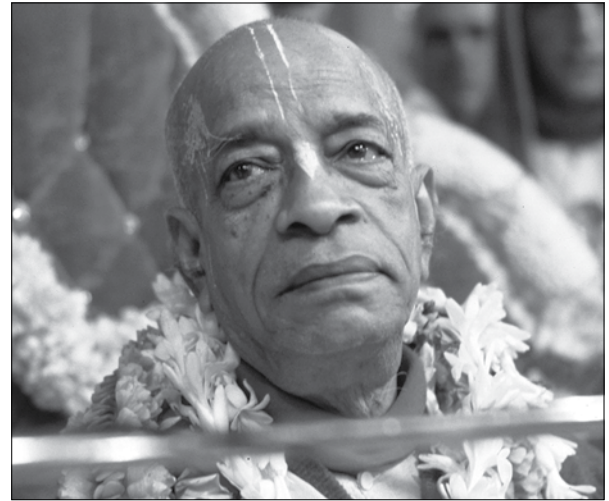


OBSERVING RATHA-YATRA

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

I am in due receipt of your letter dated July 2, 1968 describing very briefly and emotionally about the nice success of our *Ratha-yātrā* festival. When Gargamuni came here the other day he also described it so nicely, and now you can understand the specimen of transcendental pleasure in which the human society as a whole can take part and realize transcendental bliss. The car festival was very simple. After all, it is a car with four wheels. But it attracted the people so enthusiastically because there was his Lordship Jagannath. Atheistic people may say that the Jagannath deity is made of wood and the car is also made of wood, but in Krishna consciousness spiritual bliss can be exacted from anything. Even accepting the whole affair as wooden, a Krishna conscious person can understand that wood is nothing but a display of Krishna's energy. So it is the Krishna consciousness energy that gives us transcendental bliss, just like it is the electric energy passing through copper cable that gives us electric light and heat. (Letter to Aniruddha, 7 July 1968.)

You have inquired about Jagannath's cart. The crimson color with silver decorations is quite all right. There is no strict regulation about decorating the carts. We can decorate the carts very fascinatingly with gold, silver, and other shiny metallic embroidery work as far as possible. The idea is that the more we decorate Krishna, who is non-different from his cart, the more



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

we become decorated indirectly. We are compared as the shadow of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as it is stated in the Bible also, man is made after God. We understand from the scriptures that Krishna has his *vigraha*, spiritual body, which is exactly like a man who has two hands, two legs and all similar features.

If you decorate your face you do not see directly how your face has become beautiful, but when you see the reflection of your face in the mirror then indirectly you can see the beauty. Therefore, by serving Krishna directly the result of the service indirectly comes to us. Just like we offer very nice *prasādam* directly to Krishna, but indirectly we enjoy the nice taste of the *prasādam*. So we should always remember this, that Krishna is always full in himself. He does not need a pinch of our help for his



Photo by Mandavi Mehta

A devotee offers her respects to the wheel of Jagannath's cart in Puri Odisha

satisfaction. But if we try to satisfy him in so many ways as directed by ācāryas and scriptures, indirectly we become benefitted by such activities. So try to nicely observe this *ratha-yātrā* festival in London. Shyamsundar has already informed me about the scheme that three cars will be drawn to some park on the Thames, etc. So some way or other, if you can introduce this car festival in London, then by all means the London center will be successful. It doesn't matter if you can or cannot establish a temple there, but if you can introduce the *ratha-yātrā* festival, surely it will be a great success. So try to execute this will as far as possible. (Letter to Yamuna, 27 May 1969.) 🙏

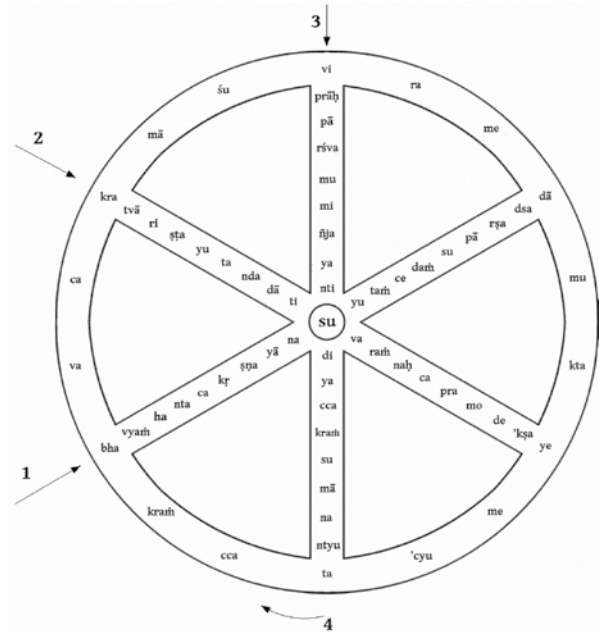
A PRAYER TO JAGANNATH'S CART WHEEL

[Click here to see the complete Sanskrit for this article.](#)

The following verse is composed in the style known as *citra-kāvya*, which literally means, "picture-poem". In this gender of Sanskrit poetry, which goes back at least 2,000 years, the verses are designed to be read in the form of a picture. When the reader lays out the syllables or sometimes words, in the shape of the given picture, hidden meanings are found. Those who have some expertise in Sanskrit may find some surprises in the below contemporary verse, not all of which are to be found in the translation. Perhaps the most famous example of this style of poetry is Srila Rupa Goswami's *Citra-kavitvāni* from his book *Stava-māla*. However there are examples of

this style to be found in the literary traditions of Odisha, South India, and other places on the Indian subcontinent. The following verse is in a sub-style of *citra-kāvya*, known as *cakra-bandha*, wheel-shaped.

*bhavyam hanta ca kṛṣṇa-yāna-suyutam cedam supārsad sadā
kratvā riṣṭa yutandadāti suvaram naḥ ca pramode 'kṣaye
viprāḥ pārśvam umiñjayanti sudi yac cakram sumānanty uta
tac cakram bhava-cakram āsu viramed āmuktaye me 'cyuta*



Wheel diagram for the verse

How wonderful! This wheel situated so beautifully in Krishna's cart appears full of grandeur. It is his eternal, loyal associate. By its activity of moving around, it bestows auspicious benedictions for enhancing our unlimited joy. On the occasion of the *ratha-yātrā* festival in the bright fortnight of the *Āṣāḍha* month, Brahmins and devotees around this wheel sing its glories or pay respects to it. O Lord Achyuta! May this cart wheel (*cakra*) stop the wheel of my birth and death (*bhava-cakra*) and bestow liberation. — HPD 🙏



Unknown photographer

Jagannath at Ratha-yātrā in Puri

MEDITATIONS ON JAGANNATH

Author Unknown

*raktāmbhoruha-darpa-bhañjana-mahā-saundarya-netra-dvayam
muktā-hāra-vilambi-hema-mukutaṁ ratnojvalat-kunḍalam
varṣā-megha-samāna-nīla-vapuṣaṁ graiveya-hārānvitaṁ
pārsve cakra-dharaṁ prasanna-vadanaṁ nilādri-nāthaṁ bhaje*

Having two extremely beautiful eyes that defeat the pride of the best of the reddish-lotus-flowers, wearing a golden helmet decorated with strings of hanging pearls, adorned with jewel-bedecked earrings, having a bluish-black complexion similar to a rain cloud, decorated with various precious necklaces, holding a disc in his right hand, and exhibiting a joyous face — to that Lord of Niladri, Jagannath, I offer my worship.

*phullendīvara-locanaṁ nava-ghana-syāmābhirāmākṛtiṁ
viśveśaṁ kamalā-vilāsa-vilasat-pādāravinda-dvayam
daityāriṁ sakalendu-maṇḍita-mukhaṁ cakrābja-hasta-dvayam
vande śrī-puruṣottamaṁ prati-dinaṁ lakṣmī-nivāsālayam*

With eyes like blue lotuses, joyously displaying the complexion of a new dark cloud, controlling the universe, having two effulgent lotus feet that are Kamala's (Lakshmi's) delight, to the enemy of demons, having a face that shines as effulgently as the full moon, and holding a disc and lotus in his two hands — to that Lord Purushottam, the abode of Lakshmi, I daily offer my obeisances.

*udyan-nirada-nīla-sundara-tanuṁ pūrṇendu-bimbānanaṁ
rājīvotpala-patra-netra-yugalaṁ kāruṇya-vārāṁ-nidhim
bhaktānāṁ sakalārti-nāśana-karaṁ cintārthi-cintāmaṇiṁ
vande śrī-puruṣottamaṁ prati-dinaṁ nilādri-cūḍāmaṇiṁ*

Having a brilliant cloud-like, beautiful bluish-black body, with a face resembling the full moon, with two beautiful lotus-like eyes, who is like an ocean having multitudes of waves of mercy, who destroys the

distresses of his devotees, who is like a touchstone for those who constantly meditate on him — to that Lord Purushottam, the crest-jewel of the Nilachal hill, I daily offer my obeisances.

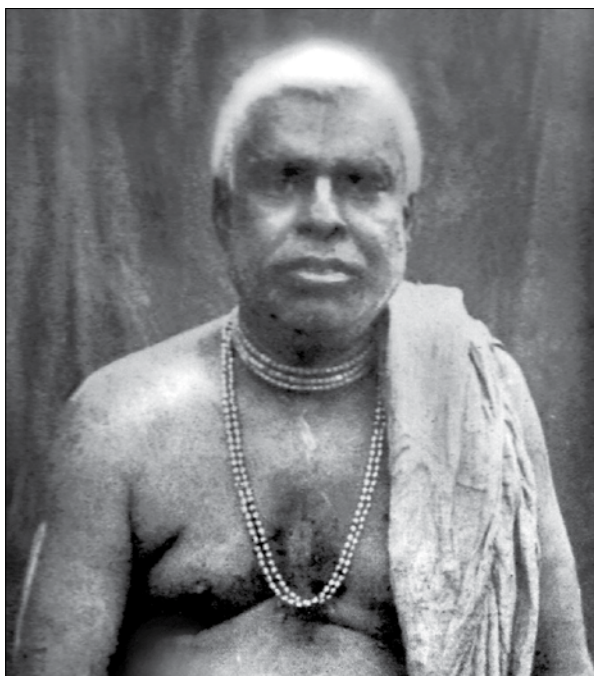
*nilādrau śaṅkha-madhye śata-dala-kamale ratna-siṁhāsana-sthaṁ
sarvālaṅkāra-yuktaṁ nava-ghana-ruciraṁ saṁyutaṁ cāgrajena
bhadrāyā vāma-bhāge ratha-caraṇa-yutaṁ brahma-rudrendra-vandyaṁ
vedānāṁ sāraṁ īśaṁ sujana-parivṛtaṁ brahma-dāruṁ smarāmi*

Situated in the conch-shaped Niladri amidst a hundred-petalled lotus on a jeweled throne, decorated with all types of jewelry, with beauty resembling a new dark cloud, accompanied by his brother Balaram, at the left side of his sister Subhadra, having chariot-feet, worshipped by Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva and Lord Indra — I fix my mind on that essence of all the Vedas, the Supreme Lord, surrounded by his dear devotees — the Supreme Brahman, Jagannath, appearing in a form of wood.

*dorbhyaṁ śobhita-lāṅgalaṁ samusalaṁ kādambarī-cañcalaṁ
ratnādhyam vara-kunḍalaṁ bhujā-balair ākrānta-bhū-maṇḍalam
vajrābhāmala-cāru-gaṇḍa-yugalaṁ nāgendra-cūḍojjvalam
saṅgrāme capalaṁ śaśāṅka-dhavalam śrī-kāmapālam bhaje*

With two beautiful arms carrying a plough and a club, appearing unsteady due to drinking honey liquor, decorated with jewels and beautiful earrings, with strength that caused the earthly planetary system to shiver in fear, with two cheeks possessing the peerless luster of lightning, decorated with the crown of Ananta Shesh, expert in battle, and with a whitish complexion like the moon — I worship that Lord Balaram, the fulfiller of all desires. 🙏

— *Jagannātha-panīcakam*. Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the *Bṛhat-stotra-ratnāvalī*. Published and printed by Khemraj Shri Krishna Das at the Venkateshwar Steam Press, Bombay, Vikram Samvat 2013 (1956 A.D.)



AN INVITATION TO CHANT HARINAMA

Srila Thakur Bhaktinoda

Why did I, the most unfortunate fallen soul, not take birth at the time when Sri Gaurachandra inundated the entire world, including the highest mountains, with the flood of love of God? Therefore I was unable to relish those waves of love of God!



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

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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Why did I not take birth at that time to serve the lotus feet of Sri Chaitanya? Why did I not become the servant of Sri Rupa and Sanatan? Why did I not carry the water pot of Raghunatha? Why did I not wander with Ramananda Ray around Chakratirtha? Why did I not see the deliverance of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya? When Prakashanand Saraswati, the leader of the *sannyāsīs* of Kashi, attained spiritual bliss in the form of devotional service to the Lord, why did I not take birth then to relish the devotion-filled nectarean waves of the Lord's arguments with those *māyāvādī sannyāsīs*?

Even though such a coveted desire is rare, still if I would have taken birth as a mundane logician in the family of a Brahmin at that time then Sri Krishna Chaitanya, the friend of all living entities, would have punished me with his sharp arrow-like words and accepted an atheist like me as his servant! Then he would have entrusted me to Haridas Thakur to be rectified by the chanting of the holy names! Alas! If I could have constantly seen with my spiritual eyes the Lord sitting in the midst of the *vaiṣṇavas* and delivering all living entities, who are burned by the fire of material existence, through distributing the nectar of the holy name! How much ecstasy would the associates of the Lord have been in when, after awakening all living entities from the lap of illusion, the Lord would have raised his hands and said, "Take this remedy for material disease, drink the mellows of ecstatic love and become immortal!" Countless human beings, afraid of demon-like material enjoyment, would have begged for his shelter. Then the Lord would have embraced them out of love and happily awarded them love of Krishna. Thus, the material disease of the living entities would have been cured.

I am a servant of Sri Chaitanya and am fallen in the material ocean. The Lord is my only guide and protector. According to his order I am inviting all of you to chant the holy names of Hari. O living entities! O friends! Give up *karma-kāṇḍa*, the path of fruitive activities, *tarka-kāṇḍa*, the path of argument and speculation, and *brahma-kāṇḍa*, the path of worshiping the impersonal *Brahman*! Come and take the love of God distributed by Sri Chaitanya to your full satisfaction! Then your disappointment will be destroyed, your contaminated state of conditional life will be vanquished, and you will regain your original constitutional position. You will then attain peace, which is your constitutional characteristic, and you will relish unlimited ecstatic love of Krishna. ॐ

— *Bhaktinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava* (9.27), Translated by Bhumipati Das. Published by Iswara Das and Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2003. (Re-edited with publisher's permission.)