



तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 453

Śrī Śayanī Ekādaśī

12 July 2019

Circulation 9,439

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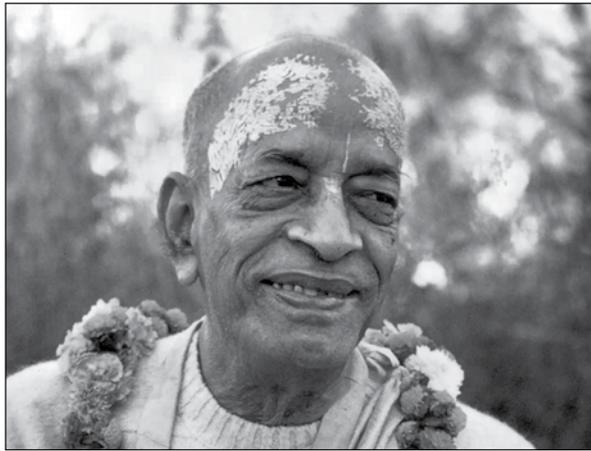
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“READ MY BOOKS”

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

You should read all this. You don't read. In the first volume of *Bhāgavata* these things are explained. But I don't think you read all these things. If you don't read, then you will feel restless, “Oh, let me go from Japan to India, from India to Japan.” You are restless because you don't read. I am laboring so hard for you, but you don't take advantage.

Don't take advantage of eating and sleeping. Take advantage of these books! Then your life will be successful. My duty — I have given you such valuable

things, day and night trying to convince you with each word. If you don't take advantage of this, then what can I do for you? 🙏

— From a lecture in Tokyo. 2 May 1972.

CHANTING AND VAISHNAVA SEVA

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

People should not make a show of worshiping the Lord while remaining averse to serving devotees living in the *maṭha*. A *maṭha* contains all the ingredients for the Lord's service. Simply by serving the *maṭha*'s residents, we become qualified to chant the holy name. That is, our taste for chanting will increase. If instead we remain absorbed in serving materialistic relatives we will never learn to chant Hari's holy name. If we remain busy in the service of family members while remaining indifferent to serving Hari, guru, and the *vaiṣṇavas*, we will never become inclined toward chanting. To induce us to chant Krishna's name, Sri Gaurangadev, the combined form of Sri Radha-Krishna, appeared in this world. If we show no interest in chanting and thereby disregard His teachings, we will never attain auspiciousness.

Chanting is the best form of *kṛṣṇa-sevā*. If other *sādhana*s help us develop our chanting, then they deserve to be called *sādhana*. Otherwise, they are simply

impediments on the path of chanting. Congregational chanting of Krishna's holy name is the king of *sādhanas*. It is the only infallible *sādhana* capable of bringing us to perfection. Sri Mahaprabhu did not teach deity worship in his *Śikṣāṣṭaka*; he simply taught us to chant.

In *Bhakti-sandarbha* (anuccheda 173) Sri Jiva Goswami Prabhu writes, *yadyapi anyā bhakti kalau kartavyā tadā kīrtanākhyā bhakti saṁyogena eva kartavya*: “Although we should perform other limbs of bhakti in this age of Kali, they should be performed along with chanting the Lord's holy name.” Krishna's holy name and Krishna himself are not two separate entities. The holy name is Krishna and Krishna is his holy name. The holy name of Krishna is the son of Nanda; He is Shyamasundar. If we realize that our only duty is to chant those holy names congregationally, our perfection is guaranteed. 🌸

— *Amṛta Vāṇī* page 182. Compiled by Sripad Bhakti Bhagavat Mayukha Maharaja. Published by Isvara Das and Touchstone Media. Mumbai, India. 2004.

LOVE FOR THE DEVOTEES

**Adapted from the Bhaktamāla of Sri Nabha
With commentary by Priyadas**

There are a number of books named Bhaktamāla that are compilations of stories from the Bhāgavatam, other Purāṇas, and local traditions about the Lord and his devotees. However, some of these Bhaktamālas are not accepted by Gaudiya Vaishnavas. The Bhaktamāla compiled in Hindi around the year 1666 by the vaiṣṇava Nabha Das and later commented on by Priyadas in 1766 was accepted and appreciated by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada. The 1897 issue of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* included a review of a Sanskrit translation of Bhaktamāla. Also Nabha Das' Bhaktamāla was included in a list of suggested reading material for Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's Sampradāya-vaibhavācārya test that was administered to devotees of the maṭha.

Not much is known about Nabha Das. Priyadas writes in his commentary that Nabha was born in the line of Hanuman, presumably meaning a line of devotees of Lord Rama's monkey devotee. He says that Nabha was blind and that due to extreme poverty his mother left him in the forest when he was five years old. He was found by two saints, Sri Kilhadev and Sri Agradev, who sprinkled water on the boy's eyes and gave him sight. After that, Sri Agradev gave him initiation into a Rama mantra and instructed him to stay at Galta ashram

in the foothills near Jaipur. According to the local tradition in Galta, it was there that Nabha compiled his Bhaktamāla.

From the prayers given in the beginning of his commentary, it seems that Priyadas belonged to the Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya sampradāya. He describes his spiritual preceptors as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Sri Srinivasacharya, and Sri Manohar Das.

Once Srila Ramanujacharya instructed his disciple Lalacharya, “You should love the devotees millions of times more than you love the Lord.”

Lalacharya replied, “Guru Maharaja, this is impossible.”

Ramanuja then said, “You should treat all devotees as if they are as good as your spiritual master.”

But again Lalacharya replied, “This is also very difficult.”

Then Ramanujacharya instructed him, “Then love them as your brother and not less than that.” Lalacharya accepted this instruction, and from that day he began serving the devotees like they were his own brother.

Once, a dead body adorned with *tulasī* neck beads came floating in the waves of the nearby river. Lalacharya's wife saw the dead body while fetching water, and told her husband about it. Lalacharya took the dead body out of the water and brought it home, accompanied by musical instruments, and then took it to the crematorium ground



Nāma-tattva

“O FOOL!”

King Kulashekhar's Mukunda-mālā-stotra 37

*idaṁ śarīraṁ pariṇāma-peśalam
pataty avaśyaṁ śata-sandhi-jarjaram
kim auśadhaṁ pṛcchasi mūḍha durmate
nirāmayam kṛṣṇa-rasāyanam piba*

O fool! O rascal! This constantly mutable body is under attack from innumerable attachments and diseases, and death is certain. What remedial measures have you undertaken? Simply drink the medicine of Krishna's name, which is the cure for all diseases!

— *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, including commentary by Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode. Translated by Sarvabhavana Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan. 1999.





Painting by Sambanand Monappa Pandit

Krishna's friend the flute

and properly performed the funeral ceremony. He felt sad due to separation from his brother. Later on, he considered that his brother was a devotee of the Lord who had left his body and gone back to Godhead. In this way he preached to his mind and became pacified.

On the thirteenth day, Lalacharya arranged for a grand festival in honor of the departed devotee. He invited his relatives and the Brahmins of the village. Everyone accepted the invitation, but they did not show up in time for the meal. The Brahmins spoke among themselves, "A dead body came floating down the river. No one knows his caste or parentage. Therefore, we cannot have our meal in that ceremony." Indeed, they accused Lalacharya of creating a disturbance in the Brahmin community. Lalacharya waited a long time, and when he learned that the Brahmins would not come, he was very aggrieved. He thought it wise to approach his spiritual master and receive instructions from him. He went to his guru maharaja and offered him respectful obeisances. With folded hands he narrated the whole story. Sri Ramanujacharya told him, "Go back without any fear or hesitation. These unfortunate and poor Brahmins do not know the glories of *prasāda*. Those who actually know the glories of *prasāda* will come quickly to your place, for your satisfaction." Saying this, Sri Ramanuja looked at the sky and then to the ground, as if to invite the Lord's

associates from Vaikuntha. He assured Lalacharya, saying, "Return home and very soon the residents of Vaikuntha will come to your place to honor *prasāda*."

After awhile, a group of the Lord's associates, assuming the form of Brahmins, arrived at Lalacharya's house. When the local Brahmins saw them, they talked among themselves: "Let these persons eat. Do not stop them now. But when they return after eating we will inquire from them and ridicule them."

When Lalacharya saw the Lord's associates, he felt flat onto the ground to offer his obeisances. He then prayed, "O lords! You have shown your kindness upon me by considering me as your servant. Now please sit down and honor *prasādam*."

The associates of the Lord sat down and began relishing the Lord's remnants. From time to time they praised the glories of the *prasāda*. Everyone assembled there felt delighted. Lalacharya also became joyful, appreciating the influence of the devotees' association.

After taking their meal, the associates of the Lord departed. From the courtyard they flew into the air on their way to Vaikuntha. Meanwhile, the local Brahmins who were waiting saw the Brahmin invitees leave through the sky and so, realizing that they were divine personalities, they felt sorry. Indeed, their pride was smashed. They then went to Lalacharya's house and felt great satisfaction in his company, although they could

Unknown artist



Hanuman is the ideal servant

not look at him in the eyes due to feelings of shame. Having now understood the glories of Lord's *prasāda*,



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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they carefully picked up the particles of *prasāda* that were scattered on the ground and honored them.

Having realized the glories of Sri Lalacharya, the local Brahmins fell down at his feet and begged forgiveness. They rolled on the ground in the courtyard and humbly glorified Lalacharya in various ways. Thereafter, the king of devotees, Sri Lalacharya, told them, “It is because of your mercy that I was blessed with the association of the Lord’s associates from Vaikuntha. Today I had the *darśana* of the four-armed associates of the Lord that are described in the *Purānas*.”

The Brahmins said, “Please do not take offence, but kindly accept us as your servants. This is our internal desire so please fulfill it.” Sri Lalacharya forgave the Brahmins and gave them initiation. By his mercy, they all became exalted devotees, fully purified on the inside and outside, and worthy of praise. In this way the fame of Sri Lalacharya spread like a forest fire all over the country. 🙏

— Śrī Nābhā Dāsa jī kṛta Bhakta-māla with the commentary of Priyadas. 2nd Edition. Published by Gita Press. Gorakhpur. Vikram Samvat 2073 (2016 AD).

REJECTING IMPERSONAL LIBERATION

By Sri Hanuman, compiled in Srila Rupa Goswami’s *Padyāvalī* (112)

*bhava-bandha-cchide tasyai sprhāyāmi na muktaye
bhavān prabhur ahaṁ dāsa iti yatra vilūpyate*

O Lord! I do not desire that liberation which cuts the bonds of this material world if the feeling of you as my master and me as your servant is lost in such liberation. 🙏

— Śrī-śrī-padyāvalī of Srila Rupa Goswami. Edited by Shri Krishnadas Shastri. Published by Shri Gokulanand Brahmachari. 28 October 2000.

KRISHNA’S JOYOUS ACTIVITIES

From Srila Jiva Goswami’s *Bhagavat-sandarbhā* (35)

*sṛṣṭy-ādikaṁ harir naiva prayojanam apekṣya tu
kurute kevalānandād yathā mattasya nartanam
pūrṇānandasya tasyeha prayojana-matiḥ kutaḥ
muktā apy āpta-kāmāḥ syuḥ kim utāsyākhilātmanāḥ*

Lord Hari does not carry out his activities of creation, etc., to attain the fulfillment of any particular purpose. He does everything simply out of joy, just as an exhilarated person dances [without any particular purpose to achieve]. In fact, he is *pūrṇānanda*, completely joyous. How can he have any purpose to achieve in this world? Even the tiny living entities who are liberated are fulfilled in all ways. What then to speak of the Supreme Soul of all living entities? 🙏

— Translated from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.com).