



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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SERVING THE VAISHNAVAS

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

yat-sevayāśeṣa-guhāśayaḥ sva-rāḍ
vipra-priyas tuṣyati kāmam īśvaraḥ
tad eva tad-dharma-parair vinitaiḥ
sarvātmanā brahma-kulaṁ niṣevyatām

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is everlastingly independent and who exists in everyone's heart, is very pleased with those who follow in his footsteps and engage without reservation in the service of the descendants of *brāhmaṇas* and *vaiṣṇavas*, for he is always dear to *brāhmaṇas* and *vaiṣṇavas* and they are always dear to him.

Purport: It is said that the Lord is most pleased when he sees one engage in the service of his devotee. He does not need any service from anyone because he is complete, but it is in our own interest to offer all kinds of services to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. These services can be offered to the Supreme Person not directly but through the service of *brāhmaṇas* and *vaiṣṇavas*. Srila Narottam Das Thakur sings, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*, which means that unless one serves the *vaiṣṇavas* and *brāhmaṇas*, one cannot get liberation from the material clutches. Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur also says, *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādah* — “By satisfying the senses of the spiritual master, one can satisfy the senses of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” Thus this behavior is not only mentioned in scriptures but also followed by *ācāryas*. Prithu Maharaja advised his citizens to follow the exemplary behavior of the Lord himself and thus engage in the service of *brāhmaṇas* and *vaiṣṇavas*. ❀

— Text and purport to *Bhāg.* 4.21.39

VAISHNAVA-SEVA AND CHANTING

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Question: How important is *vaiṣṇava-sevā* to those who wish to chant purely?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati: People should not make a show of worshipping the Lord while remaining averse to serving devotees living in the temple. A temple contains all the ingredients for the Lord's service. Simply by serving the temple'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. 🙏

— From *Amṛta Vani*, collected teachings of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Compiled in Bengali by Sri Bhakti Bhagavat Mayukha Maharaja. Adapted and translated into English by Bhumipati Das and Isvara Das. Touchstone Media. Mumbai. 2004. Page 182.

A VAISHNAVA NEVER DEMANDS MONEY

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

A *vaiṣṇava* never demands money. A *vaiṣṇava* is so merciful, he offers mercy only, and in return he never demands anything. One who demands money is not a *vaiṣṇava* at all. Thereby they are doing some profession. *brahma-tattvaṃ na jānāti brahma-sūtreṇa garvitaḥ*. [Atri *Samhitā* 372] They don't know *brahma-tattva* but they are very proud, *garvitaḥ*. They show their *brahma-sūtra*, Brahmin thread, "Give me money, *dakṣiṇa*, or I will curse you. You and all your forefathers will be destroyed if you don't give to me." 🙏

— From a conversation at Bhaktivedanta Manor. 11 July 1993.

THE JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION

Prapannāmṛta by Anantacharya
Instructions of Srila Ramanujacharya

*vaiṣṇavānam anuṣṭhāne nopāyamatim unnayet
upeyam eva satatam unnayet sumahāmanāḥ*

Do not consider service to the *vaiṣṇavas* as a means, but rather always consider it the goal. To think that by serving *vaiṣṇavas* one can achieve other fruits is to consider *vaiṣṇava-sevā* as a means, and to think that due to heaps of pious activities one obtains *vaiṣṇava-sevā* is to consider it the goal. 🙏

— *Prapannāmṛta* edited by Srinivas Nrsimhacharya (Balaji Swami). Published by Khemraj Shrikrishnadas. Printed at the Venkateshwar Steam Press, Mumbai. Vikram Samvat 1964 (1907 A.D.)

KRISHNA DOES VAISHNAVA SEVA FOR TRILOCHAN

*From the Bhaktamāla of Sri Nabha
With commentary by Priyadas*

There are a number of books named *Bhaktamāla*, which 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. It was quoted by him in a lecture in Midnapur on 10 February 1925. It is also mentioned by Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode in his autobiography. Furthermore, 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 Gaudiya *sampradāya*. He describes his spiritual preceptors as Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Sri Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Sri Srinivasacharya, and Sri Manohar Das.

The exalted devotee Sri Trilochan appeared in a *vaiṣya* family, but instead of observing his family traditions, he served the devotees, who all belong to the family of the Supreme Lord. However, he was not able to serve the devotees to his satisfaction because there was only his wife to help him at home. Thus he had a desire to employ a servant who would understand the moods of saintly persons and render service to them accordingly. He thought, "I am eternally a servant of the Lord's servants, but what can I do? I don't find a suitable servant."

Torn Blanket & Broken Shoes

One day, to fulfill the desire of his devotee, the Lord himself took the form of a servant and arrived at Trilochan's door. The Lord had only a torn blanket on his body and broken shoes on his feet. Trilochan saw him outside his house and asked, "Where have you come from? It appears that you have no parents at home."

The Supreme Lord in the form of a servant replied, "What you have said is true. I have no father and mother."

Trilochan asked, "Will you work for me? I need a servant to serve saintly persons."

The Lord answered, "If my master's nature matches my nature, then I am happy to take up the work."

Sri Trilochan asked, "Why would another's nature not match your nature? Tell me clearly about this."

The Lord replied, "Every day I eat five or six kilos of rice. Because of this, people become upset with me and will not hire me."

Expertise of the Servant

The servant further declared, "I know the principles of the four *varnas*. I carry out all my allotted work perfectly. In my work I do not require help from anyone. As far as serving the devotees is concerned, I have been doing that for my whole life. This is not a new service for me. My name is Antaryami. I agree to become your servant."

The devotee Sri Trilochan said, "You can eat as much as you want. Do not feel shy about eating." Saying this, Sri Trilochan gave Antaryami a pair of new shoes and a new blanket, and bathed him very thoroughly. Trilocana then said to his wife, "Keep this Antaryami as your servant and do not hesitate to feed him to his full satisfaction. Otherwise, he will run away and we will not get another servant like him. Give him whatever he wants to eat. He will render service to the devotees every day, and you should serve him every day. It is our duty to live together throughout our lives, serving the devotees and singing the glories of Lord Hari."

Many saintly persons would daily gather at Sri Trilochan's house. Serving the saintly persons was a coveted desire of Antaryami's. According to the devotees' desires, Antaryami would serve them by massaging their feet and caring for them nicely.

The Real Antaryami

This went on for about thirteen months. Then one day, while Trilochan's wife visited one of her neighbors,

that lady asked her why she was becoming weak and morose. The lady smiled and replied, "What can I do? My husband brought a servant from somewhere, but even after eating so much food, he is not satisfied. Therefore, I have to cook more and more, and because of this, I became weak. Please do not tell this to anyone. Just keep it to yourself. If he comes to know this, he will immediately leave."

Antaryami was actually the real *antaryāmī*, or Supersoul. As soon as he heard this he immediately left Trilocana's house. This was the condition that he had stipulated while being hired. Trilochan became exceedingly unhappy after this incident. He became practically lifeless, like a fish out of water.

After Antaryami left, Trilochan did not eat or drink anything for three days. He felt very sad when he said to his wife, "Alas! Where will I find another intelligent servant? You are very unfortunate! Why did you speak like that? He was very fond of serving the devotees. What can I do to bring him back?"

While Trilochan was lamenting like this, a voice from the sky spoke, "Take your food, and drink something. I am very pleased with your service mentality towards the devotees, and that is why I rendered service to the devotees as your servant. I am actually your servant because I am controlled by your devotion. I eternally reside in your house. If you want, then I can return and serve while staying in your house."

When he heard this voice from the sky, Trilochan understood the mystery and felt even more unhappy. He lamented, "Shame on me! I treated the Supreme Lord as my servant. I could not act as his servant, and although he stayed here, I did not offer him any service. This is most shameful behavior! I can no longer show my face to the devotees. People call me a devotee, but what service have I rendered to the Supreme Lord? I was so foolish that I could not even recognize him. He has such an affectionate attitude towards the devotees, and yet I could not even recognize him. The Lord overlooked all my defects. He is so affectionate toward his devotee that he simply looked at my good qualities and ignored my faults. He came to my house and stayed for so long, and yet I am so foolish that I could not recognize him. If He ever returns, I will fall down at His lotus feet."

In this way Sri Trilochan remained absorbed in thought of Antaryami. He finally took his meal and drank some water only by the order of the Lord. 🙏



Painting by Kartick Biswas

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's dances and cries with the body of Srila Haridas Thakur

MAHAPRABHU'S DEPARTING INSTRUCTIONS

Lochan Das Thakur's

Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala Madhya, song 38

The following are the final instructions Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave to the residents of Nabadwip just before he took sannyasa:



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*tomarā thākibe — ājñā karibe pālana
nirantara-dibā-niśi karibe kīrtana*

Please follow my command. Stay in Nabadwip. Day and night perform *saṅkīrtana* of chanting the holy names.

*hari-nāma bhakta-sevā karibe sthāpana
ei dharma kari' yena tare' sarva-jana*

Chant the holy names of Lord Hari. Serve the devotees. Establish the *saṅkīrtana* movement. This command I give to you all.

*nirmatsara-antara ha-ibe sarva-jana
sabhe sabhākāra mana kara ārādhana*

Keep no envy in your hearts. With all your hearts worship and serve each other.”

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