



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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tava kathāmṛtam tapta-jīvanam

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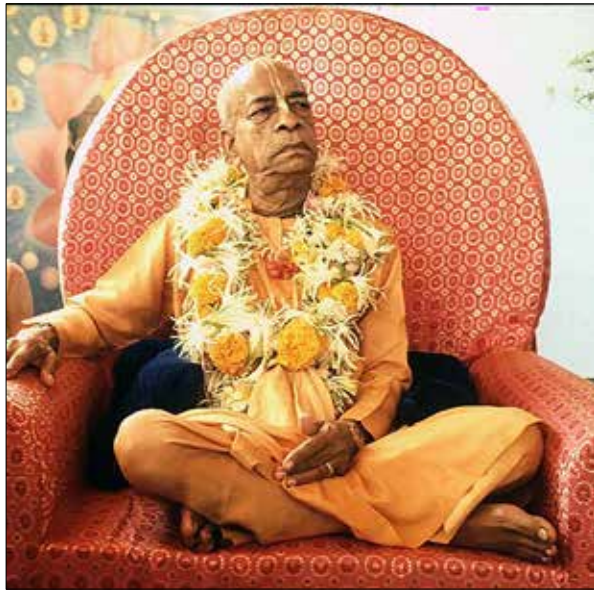
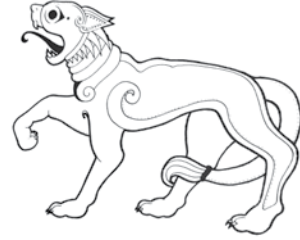
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By an unknown Gaudiya Vaishnava



THE MADMAN RAMANANDA RAY

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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The *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (120–24) states that Ramananda Ray was formerly Arjuna. He is also considered to have been an incarnation of the *gopī* Lalita, although in the opinion of others he was an incarnation of Vishakhadevi. He was a most confidential devotee of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “Although I am a *sannyāsī*, my mind is sometimes perturbed when I see a woman. But Ramananda Ray is greater than Me, for he is always undisturbed, even when he touches a woman.” Only Ramananda Ray was endowed with the prerogative to touch a woman in this way;

no one should imitate him. Unfortunately, there are rascals who imitate the activities of Ramananda Ray. We need not discuss them further.

In Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s final pastimes, Ramananda Ray and Swarup Damodar always engaged in reciting suitable verses from Śrīmad *Bhāgavatam* and other books to pacify the Lord’s ecstatic feelings of separation from Krishna. When Lord Chaitanya went to southern India, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya advised him to meet Ramananda Ray, declaring that there was no devotee as advanced in understanding the conjugal love of Krishna and the *gopīs*. While touring South India, Lord Chaitanya met Ramananda Ray by the bank of the Godavari, and in their long discourses the Lord took the position of a student, and Ramananda Ray instructed him. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu concluded these discourses by saying, “My dear Ramananda Ray, both you and I are madmen, and therefore we met intimately on an equal level.” Lord Chaitanya advised Ramananda Ray to resign from his government post and come back to Jagannatha Puri to live with him. Although Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu refused to see Maharaja Prataparudra because he was a king, Ramananda Ray, by a *vaiṣṇava* scheme, arranged a meeting between the Lord and the king. This is described in the *madhya-līla*, chapter twelve, verses 41–57. Sri Ramananda Ray was present during the water sports of the Lord after the *Ratha-yātrā* festival.

Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu considered Sri Ramananda Ray and Sri Sanatan Goswami to be equal in their renunciation, for although Sri Ramananda Ray was a *grhastha* engaged in government service and

Sri Sanatan Goswami was in the renounced order of complete detachment from material activities, they were both servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who kept Krishna in the center of all their activities. Sri Ramananda Ray was one of the three and a half personalities with whom Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu discussed the most confidential topics of Krishna consciousness. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu advised Pradyumna Mishra to learn the science of Krishna from Sri Ramananda Ray. As Subala always assisted Krishna in his dealings with Radharani in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, so Ramananda Ray assisted Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in his feelings of separation from Krishna. Sri Ramananda Ray was the author of the *Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka*. 🙏



Painting by Murari Das, 16th century. Commissioned by Maharaja Prataprudra.

THE GLORIES OF SRILA RAMANANDA RAY

By an Unknown Gaudiya Vaishnava

jayare jayare jaya pitarīti ratnālāra
 rāma rāya rasera sāgara
 āpani caitanya yāhe mano sādhe ava gāhe
 rasonmādi nāgarī nāgara

श्रीकृष्णकथामृत बिन्दु

Glory, glory, glory to the jewel mine of love, Sri Ram Ray, who is the ocean of transcendental mellows. Sri Chaitanya by his own wish takes bath in that ocean. They are just like the lover and the beloved relishing the mellows of love.

gaura prema rasa ghana bhavānanda mandana
 jaya jaya rāmanānda rāya
 ālāla-nātha sannidhāne venkatapura nāma grāme
 kṛpā kari ha-ilā udaya

Ramananda Ray, the son of Bhavananda Ray, is the embodiment of the dense mellow and love of Gaura. He mercifully appeared in Venkatapur, a place near to Alalanatha.

[Note: Venkatapur is today known as Bentapur, and Alalanatha is known as Alarnath.]

śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya nāma śrī rādhāramaṇa rāma
 tāhāre ānanda vitārite
 śrī viśākhā sundarī rāmānanda nāma dhari
 udaya ha-ilā avanīte

To give pleasure to Sri Krishna Chaitanya, who is actually Sri Radharaman Ram, beautiful Vishakha has appeared on the earth taking the name of Ramananda.

śaisābe saṅgī sane rādhā kṛṣṇa guna gāne
 du nayane premadhārā baya
 rādhā kṛṣṇa prema līlā bime anya nāhi khelā
 nīti nava nikuñja racaya

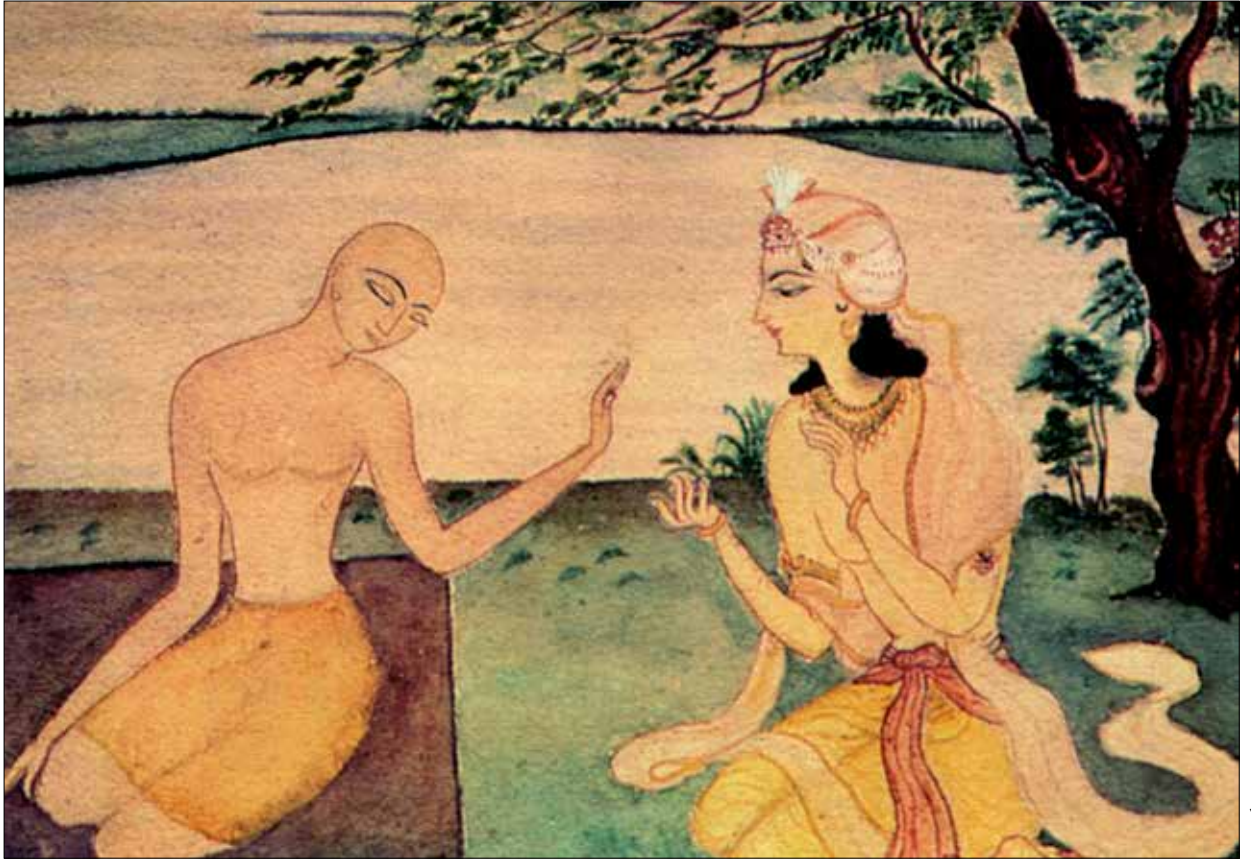
In his childhood he would sing the glories of Radha Krishna while tears of love would roll down from his eyes. There was no other sport for him than the loving pastimes of Radha and Krishna. He would always create new *kuñjas* [forest groves or bowers for their pastimes].

kaiśorete alpadine sarva śāstra adhyayane
 su paṇḍita pradhāna ha-ilā
 bhakati siddhānta khani rasika mukuṭa mani
 nija gune jagat jinilā

Very early in his youth he became the chief of great scholars by studying all the scriptures. He was the mine of all devotional conclusions and the crown jewel of all *rasikas*, those who are learned in transcendental mellows. He conquered the world by his own qualities.

pratāprudra mahārāja jānilena jagamājha
 rāmānanda apūrva ratana
 karibāre rāja kāja yogya nāhi sabhā mājha
 rājya bhāra karilā arpana

King Prataprudra handed over the work of ruling the kingdom to Ramananda, knowing him as a wonderful and incomparable jewel within this world.



Unknown artist

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramananda Ray on the bank of the Godavari River

eka dina śubhakṣane godāvārī nadī snāne
 āilena dolāra chaḍiya
 saṅge pātra mitra-gaṇa cale vandī bādkagaṇa
 pāṭhaka purohita agre la-iyā

One day at an auspicious time, Ramananda Ray came on a palanquin to the bank of the Godavari to take bath, accompanied by courtiers, ministers, musicians and priests.

kari nitya kṛtya snāna ānkhi mudi kare dhyāna
 nija iṣṭa śyāma nava ghana
 śyāmarūpa heri bāre yateka yatana kare
 tata here gaura varaṇa

Completing his daily activities and bathing, with closed eyes he was meditating upon his worshipable, Shyama, whose complexion is like new clouds. Yet the more he strived to see the form of Shyama, he was only beholding someone with a golden complexion.

ājānu lambita bhuja eka nava nyāsīrāja
 rasabhūpa mānasa mohana
 gaura rūpe ālo kari hṛdi simhāsanopari
 varsi kare sarva sva haraṇa

That personality was the king of all ascetics. His arms extended down to his knees. He was the reservoir of all transcendental mellows and enchanting to

the mind. That golden form, illuminating all the directions, sat on the throne of Ramananda Ray's heart and stole his everything.

vyākula ha-iyā rāya nayana meliyā cāya
 dekhe ghāta chāḍi kata dūre
 basi jala sannidhāne kare nāma saṅkīrtane
 cita corā sei nyāsī bare

With great restlessness, Ray opened his eyes and saw that a little distance from the bathing ghat that chief of the sannyaśīs was doing nāma-saṅkīrtana,, sitting close to the river.

sūryaśata sama jyoti ujjvala kanaka kānti
 paridhāne aruna vasana
 subalita dīrgha kāya dhairaja dharite pāre
 mana prāna haila ucāṭana

He was as effulgent as hundreds of suns. His bodily complexion was like bright gold and he was dressed in saffron cloth. His form was strong and tall, the hairs on his body were standing on end like kadamba flowers, and his lotus-like eyes were shedding tears of love.

prānapaṇe prāna dhāne āsi paḍe śrī caraṇe
 karilena ātma samarpaṇa
 kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kaha bali āliṅgite kutuhālī
 nyāsī puḍe tumi rāmāṇanda

Beholding that king of ascetics, his mind and heart became so restless he was unable to restrain himself.



Unknown artist

The vision revealed by Mahaprabhu to Ram Ray

With the utmost eagerness he rushed forward and fell at his lotus feet, surrendering unto him. Saying, “Krishna! Krishna!” that *sannyāsī* embraced him with great joy and asked, “Are you Ramananda?”

tenha kahe sei hao carane śaraṇa cāo
tava dāsādama śūdra manda
nyāsi mani tā śuniyā du bāhu pasāriyā
rāmānande ḥṛdaye dharilā

Ramananda replied, “This *śūdra* is your wretched and lowly servant seeking shelter at your lotus feet.” Hearing his words, the crest jewel of all renunciates extended his arms and embraced Ramananda to his chest.

sahaja prema uddipañe prabhu bhṛtya dui jane
acetana bhūmite paḍilā
kampa āsru pulaka gāya doṅhe bhume gaḍi yāya
vismaya māne saba jane

By that touch of love the Lord and his servant fell to the ground unconscious. Shivering, tears, and horripilation appeared on their bodies, and they were rolling on the ground. Seeing this everyone became astonished.

rasa prema sindhu jane rāya taraṅginī mile
kallola bhāsila tribhūvane
godāvarī nadī tīre sei rātre vipra ghare
nirajane milana doṅhāra

All in the three worlds were inundated by the waves of the ocean of transcendental mellows generated from their meeting. That night they met

each other in the secluded home of a Brahmin on the bank of the Godavari River.

iṣṭa goṣṭhi kṛṣṇa kathā rāya vaktā prabhu śrotā
baye yāya premera pāthara
prema sindhu gaura rāya rāya megha bariṣaya
sindhu tāhe ratna ālaya ha-ila

In these discussions of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, where Ray was the speaker and the Lord was the listener, the ocean of love was flowing incessantly. Gauraraya is the ocean of love and Ramananda Ray became the cloud raining the jewels from that ocean.

pahilehi pada śuni āveśete nyāsīmani
rāmarāyera mukha ācchādila
iṣṭa goṣṭhi samāpana kare joḍe nivedana
kare rāya gaurāṅga carane

Hearing the verse beginning with the words “*pahilehi rāga*”, the crest jewel of the ascetics became overwhelmed with emotions and covered Ram Ray’s mouth. At the end of their discussion, Ray pleaded the following at the lotus feet of Gauranga.

[**Note:** The “*pahilehi rāga*” verse (Cc. *madhya* 8.194), was personally composed by Ramananda Ray. It speaks about the height of the love of Radha and Krishna where they become one in mind and heart.]

ye tattva sphurāle more brahmādira o agocare
āmi kabhu nā jāni svapane
kalite sannyāsī veśe more dekhā dile ese
ebe heri śyāma-goparūpa



Photo by Bhakta Charles

The Gambhira in Jagannath Puri where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stayed

“The philosophy that you have manifested within me is not visible even to Lord Brahma, and I do not know them even in my dreams. You came before me as a *sannyāsī*, but now I see you in the form of a cowherd boy who has a blackish complexion.

svarṇa pañcālikā dhākā muralī vadana bāṅka
eki tava līlā aparūpa
prabhu kahe tāhā śuni tumi bhakta cūḍāmani
sarvabhūte kṛṣṇa daraśana

“That form is covered by a golden cloth, is playing a flute, and has a three-fold bending form. How wonderful your pastimes are!” Hearing this, the Lord said, “You are the crest jewel of all the devotees and therefore you see Krishna within everyone.”

rāma kahe gaurahari chāḍa tumi bhāribhuri
nijarūpa nā kara gopana
ebe prabhu mṛḍu hāsi gūḍharūpa parakāśī
priya rāmānande dekhāilā

Ray replied, “O Gaurahari, please give up your pretext. Don’t cover yourself.” The Lord then smiled and revealed his confidential form to his dear Ramananda.

rasarāja mahābhāva dui tanu abhinava
svarūpa rahasya prakāśilā
vivarte vivarta raṅga tāhāte vilāsa raṅga
heri rāya mūrachita bhela

The Lord manifested himself in the two confidential forms of *rasarāja*, the king of mellows, and *mahābhāva*, the embodiment of the topmost love. The Lord then revealed the two becoming one. Seeing this pastime, Ray fainted.

paraśe caitanya diyā rāmarāye uṭhāiyā
mahānanda sindhu ukhalila
ājñā diyā āni tāre nilācale corā ghare
antaraṅga rasa āśvādane

By touching Ram Ray, Sri Chaitanya brought him back to external consciousness and thus the ocean of great transcendental bliss surged up. Giving the order, Mahaprabhu brought Ramananda to the secret chamber in Nilachala where they relished confidential transcendental mellows.

prema vaicitra līlā milame milā amilā
bhāvocchāse niśī jāgaraṇa
bale sakhī o viśākhā kothā se tribhaṅga bāṅkā
eme dekhā nahe prāna yāya

[In Nilachala] they discussed the pastimes of various loving affairs of union and separation, remaining awake throughout the night overwhelmed with emotion. [Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said,] “O my dear friend Vishakha, where is that threefold bending form? Bring him before me, otherwise I cannot survive.”

rāya kahe vinodini kena ha-ila unmādinī
ei bāje madhura vāṅsarī
dhairya dharaha rāi cala vṛndāvane yāi
milāiba śyāma vaṅśīdhārī

Ramananda Ray replied, “O Vinodini [a name for Radha], why are you so impatient? Listen to the sound of that sweet flute. Have patience my dear Rai [Radha]. Let us go to Vrindavan. There I will unite you with that flute-player Shyama.”

āveśete gaura hari rāya svarūpera kare dhari
cala sakhi vilamba nā saya
cala tvarā vṛndāvane parāna bandhuyā vine
dehe mora prāna nāhi raya

Immersed in that mood, Gaurahari, grabbing the hands of Ray and Swarupa, said, “Let’s go. I cannot tolerate any delay. Let’s go to Vrindavan immediately. I am not able to remain alive without the love of my heart.”

rāya svarūpa saha-carī laye gaura rāseśvarī
gopinātha samīpete yāya
heri gaurā gopinātha māne pāinu prānanātha
bhāvollāse vāmete dāṇḍāya

Accompanied by Ray and Swarupa, Rasesvari [Radha, the controller of the rāsa-dance] Gaura went to [Tota] Gopinath. Upon seeing Gopinath, Gaura considered, “I have got my beloved!” And stood on the left in ecstatic trance.

bhāva nidhi gaura hari rāya bhāva puṣṭikārī
bhāva bujhi karaye sevana
apana nātaka gīta śunāya satata niti
sukhe gorā kare āsvādana

Gaurahari is the ocean of bhāva, and Ray is the one who nourishes that bhāva. Understanding Gaurahari’s bhāva, he performs service accordingly. He constantly arranged dramas and songs that Gaura relished in great joy.



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gaurāṅga parāna bandhu rāmarāya guna sindhu
eka bindu jagata dubāya
arjuna arjunā yāya kari nitya samāśraya
gaura lilāmṛta āsvādāya

Gauranga is the dear friend of Ram Ray. While Ram Ray is the ocean of all good qualities, a little drop of which inundates the entire universe, Arjuna and Arjunaa are eternally within him and he is tasting the nectar of Gaura’s pastimes.

[**Note:** In his *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (text 120), Srila Kavi Karnapur states that Ramananda Ray is both the Pandava Arjuna as well as the cowherd boy Arjuna. A few verses later, (text 123) he says that Ramananda is also the *gopī* Arjuniyaa. Hence this stanza describes Ramananda Ray as both Arjuna and the *gopī* Arjunaa.]

pradyumna miśrete dvāre jānāilā jagatere
nija rāmāndera mahima
rājā pratāprudra rāya yāra kṛpāya gaurapāya
tāra gunera ke pāibe simā

Through Pradyumna Mishra, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu revealed the glories of his dear Ramananda to the world. Who can reach the limit of the wonderful qualities of Ramananda Ray, by whose mercy Maharaja Prataparudra attained Lord Gaura?

jaya rāmānanda rāya kṛpākara amāyāya
eka bindu gaurāṅge mati diyā
gambhīrāra guptadhane dhanī kara nija gune
kahe dīna dvija abhāgiyā

Glories to Ramananda Ray! Please be merciful and give me a drop of attachment to Lord Gauranga! By your kindness, please enrich me with the secret treasure of the Gambhira! This unfortunate and wretched Dwija submits this plea.

[**Note:** It’s not clear who is the author of this song. Out of humility, it’s not uncommon for the followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to neglect giving their name as the author. The signature “dwija” could refer to any one of many of Mahaprabhu’s associates who wrote *padyāvalī kīrtana*, such as Dwija Kavichandra, the author of *Govinda-maṅgala*, Dwija Pran Krishna, who translated the *Gīta-govinda* into Bengali, Dwija Shankar, who wrote *Govinda-lilāmṛta*, or any other of the dozens of devotees with Dwija in their name. Alternatively, it’s also possible that the author, while dropping his name, was simply acknowledging his *varṇa* as a Brahmin.]

— Translated by Mani Gopal Das from Śrī Śrī *Parikara-gaṇera Mahimā Sūcaka*. Compiled by Kishori Das Babaji. Vaishnava Research Institute. Halisahar, West Bengal. 2005. pp. 65-72. Bengali.