

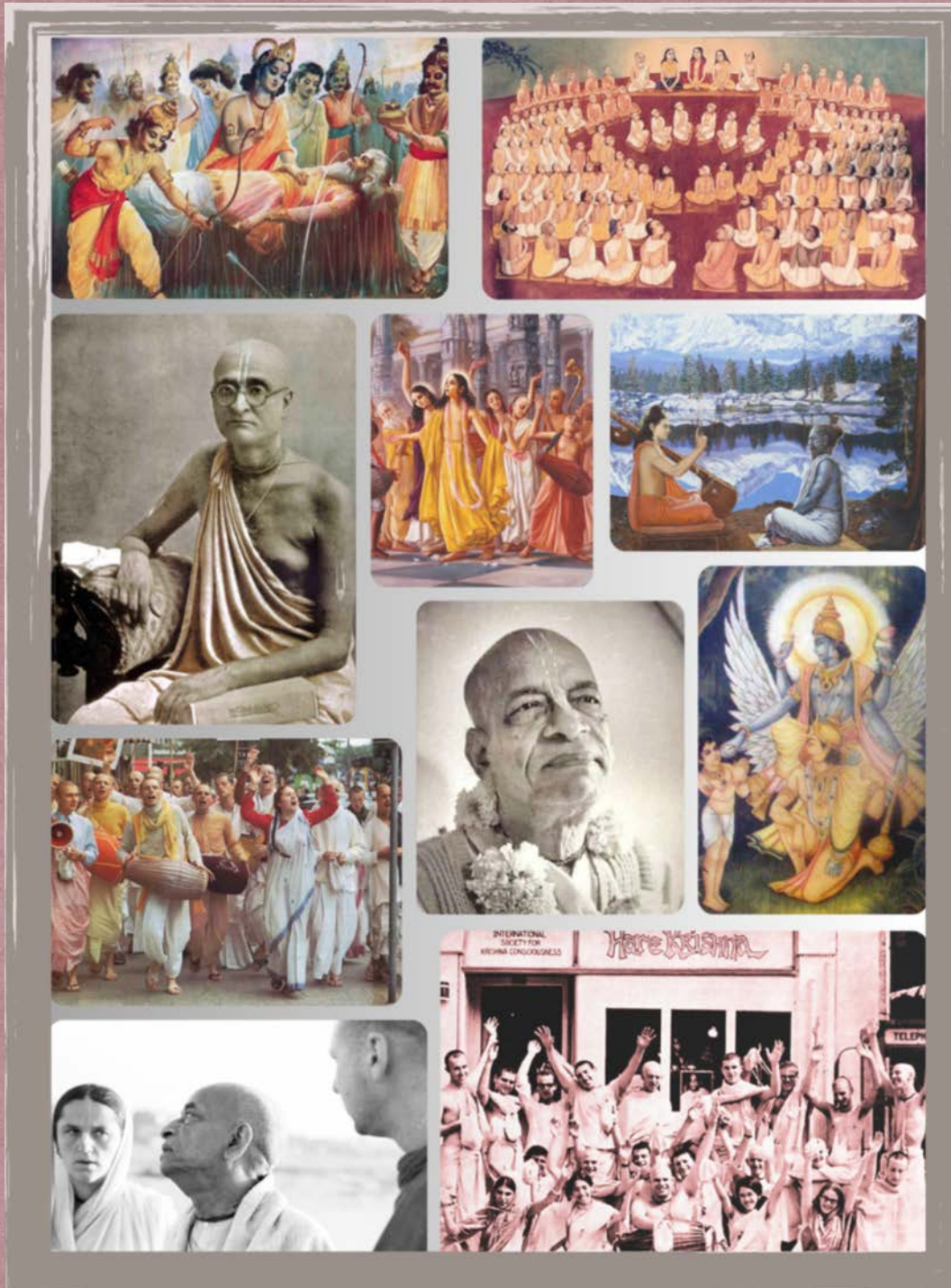
# Sri Krishna Kathamrita



# Bindu

Issue 558

*The Glories of the Devotees*







# Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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The Odia Poet Salabega



The devotees who have a relationship with Krishna are like the swans and cakravāka birds who play in a forest of lotus flowers. (Cc. madhya 25.274)

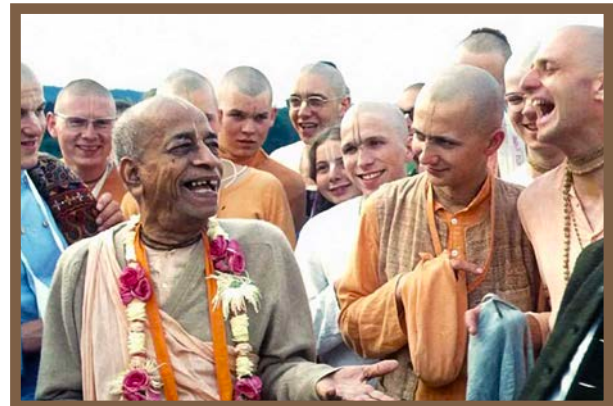
## NECESSITY OF HIGHER ASSOCIATION



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

If we do not try to make further and further progress in devotional service, if we are simply sticking to the śāstric regulation process and do not try to go beyond that... Śāstric process is also regulation; that is required.



Unknown photographer

Cover: A collage of Krishna's devotees. By Bhaktin Valentina.

Unknown artist. Pahari painting from Kangra district. c. 1790-1800



### The residents of Vrindavan are the topmost devotees of Krishna

Without the *śāstric* process you cannot go to that platform. But if we stick to the *śāstric* process only and do not try to improve ourself, that is *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, the lowest stage of devotional service.

*arcāyām eva haraye yaḥ pūjām śraddhayehate  
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position. [Bhāg. 11.2.47]

Generally, people come to the temple and are very devoted to the deity. They offer their respects, flowers and other things, they follow the regulative process, and circumambulate, etc. This is a nice beginning. But one has to go above this. One has to

know who is actually a *bhakta*. One has to do good for others. That is *madhyama-adhikārī*.

If I become satisfied only with these regulative principles for worshiping the deity in the temple and following the regulative principle daily, but I have no other idea, then *sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*. *Prākṛta* means on the material platform. Such a devotee can fall down at any moment, because he's in the *prākṛta* stage. *Prākṛta* means this *guṇamayī, prakṛti* — it is very strong [under the modes of material nature]. Any devotee can fall down if he remains a *prākṛta-bhakta*. One has to raise himself above this to the platform of *madhyama-adhikāra*.

In actuality we are not enjoying. We are only enjoying the interaction of the three modes of material nature. As my Guru Maharaja used to say, only licking the outside of a bottle of honey. That is not real honey. You have to open the bottle and



## NOTICE

All initiated devotees must attend morning and evening classes.

Must not be addicted to any kind of intoxicants including coffee, tea and cigarettes.

They are forbidden to have illicit sex-connections. Must be strictly vegetarian.

Should not extensively mix with non-devotees.

Should not eat foodstuff cooked by non-devotees.

Should not waste time in idle talks nor

engage himself in frivolous sports.

Should always chant and sing the Lord's Holy names.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna  
Hare Hare.

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama  
Hare Hare.

Thank you,

International  
Society for Krishna Consciousness  
26 Second Avenue  
New York N.Y.

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami  
Acharya.

Dated Nov. 25, 1966



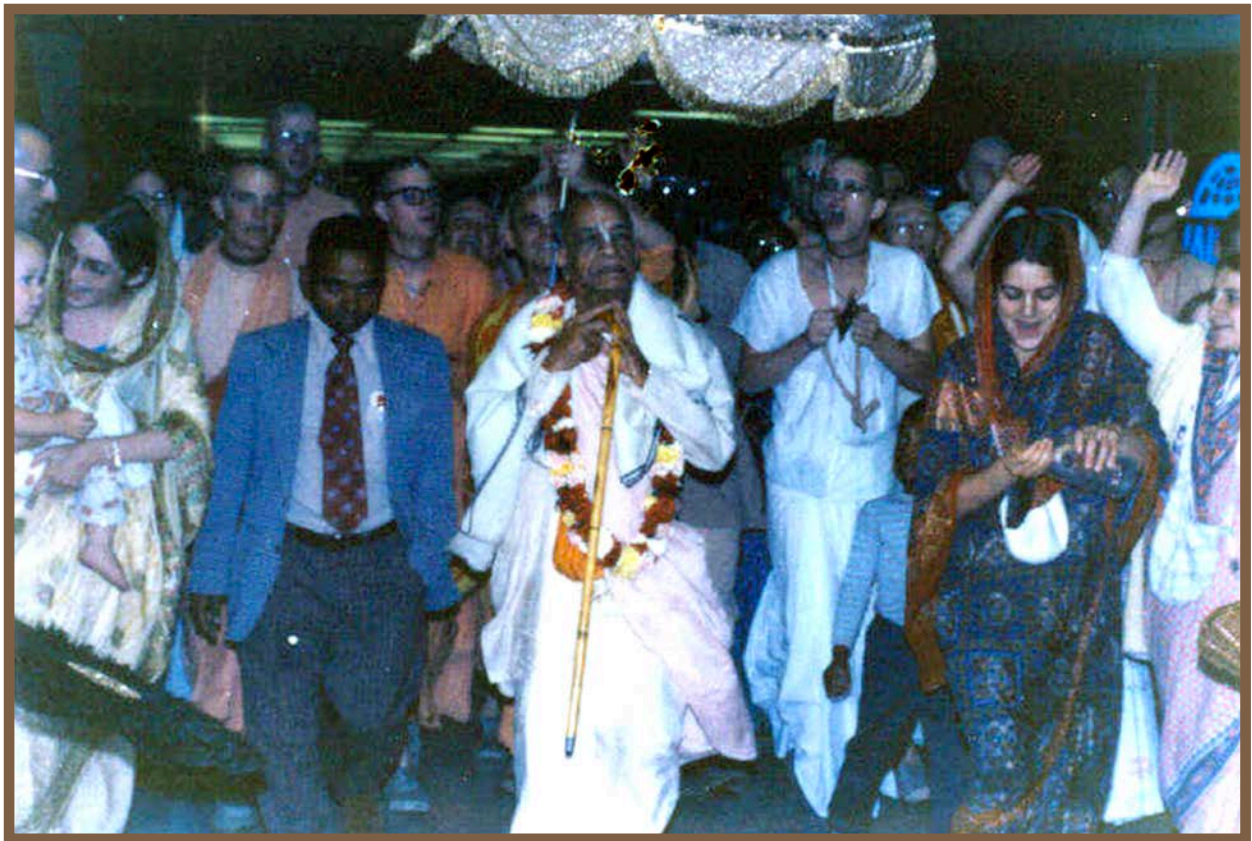


Photo by Sri Nandanandana Das

*Srila Prabhupada accompanied by devotees going through the airport in Chicago 1975*

lick up the real honey, then you'll get a taste. That is advancement of spiritual knowledge.

If we do not associate with advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikāris*, if we simply want to remain in the lowest stage of devotional service, then we are not making progress. Then we shall simply enjoy the material field, without entering into the spiritual platform. (from a lecture in Vrindavan, 12 November 1972)

It is essential that one constantly associate with pure devotees who are engaged morning and evening in chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. In this way one will get the chance to purify his heart and develop this ecstatic pure love for Krishna.

This statement is also confirmed in the third canto, twenty-fifth Chapter, verse 25, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, where Lord Kapila says, "My dear mother, when a person is actually in association with pure devotees, the sublime potency of my devotional service can be experienced." In other words, when a pure devotee speaks, his words act upon the hearts of the audience. What is the secret of hearing and chanting? A professional speaker cannot impress transcendental

ecstasy within the hearts of the listeners. However, when a realized soul who is engaged in the service of the Lord is speaking, he has the potency to inject spiritual life within the audience. One should, therefore, seek the association of such pure, unalloyed devotees, and by such association and service a neophyte devotee will certainly develop attachment, love and devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (from *Nectar of Devotion*, chapter 17) 🍊

**DEVOTEES ARE NEVER  
SEPARATE FROM THE LORD**



***Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada***

One who serves the Supreme Lord is a devotee, and one who accepts service from his servants as their worshipable Lord is God. The Lord's devotees are as worshipable as the Lord himself. Thus, there are two kinds of worship, worship of the worshipable Lord, and worship of his worshipable servants. The Supreme Lord is just like the sun, and the devotees or spiritual masters are just like light.

Unknown artist



*The Lord delivers his devotee Gajendra*

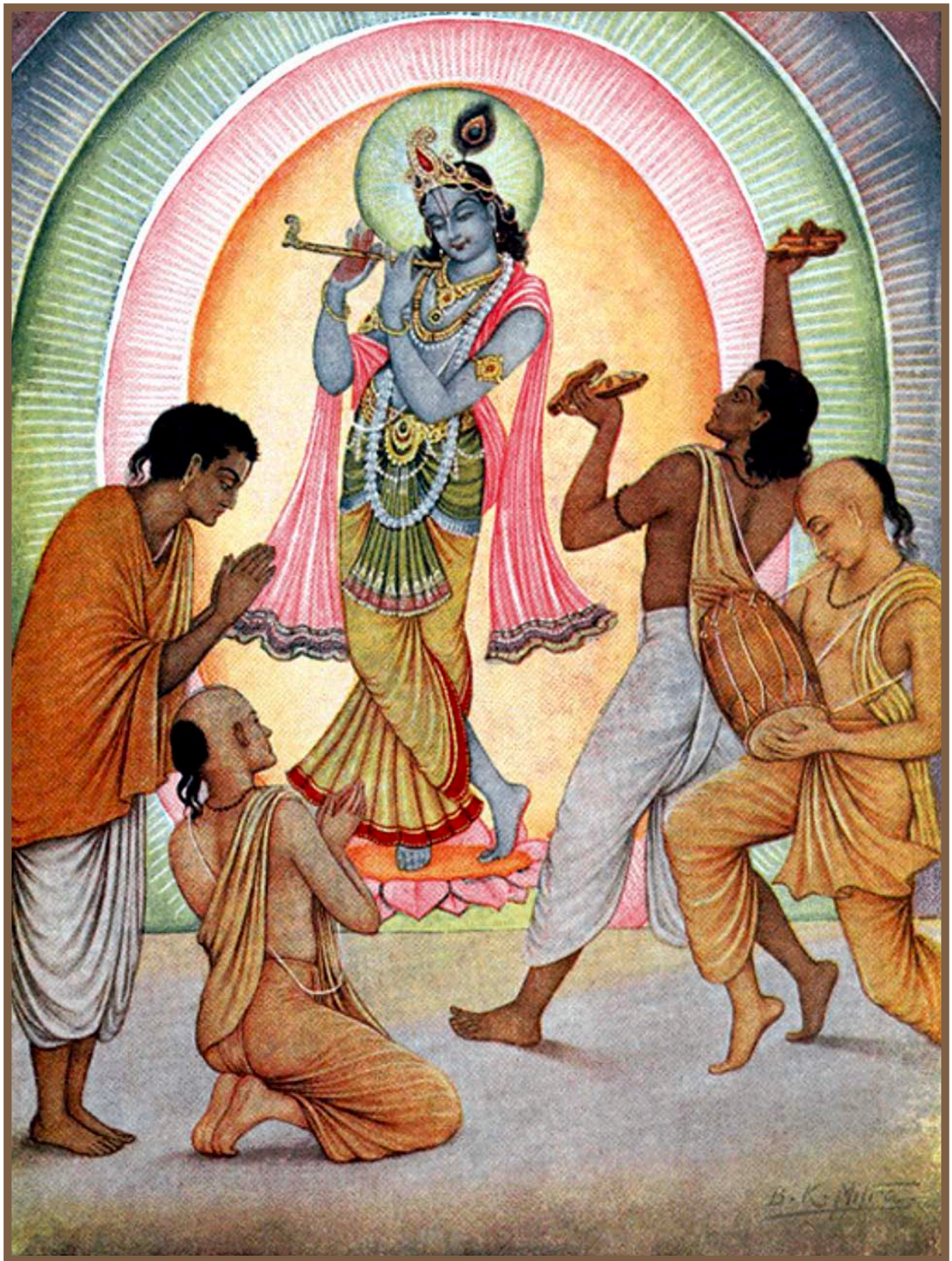
The worshipable Lord and his servants, in other words, are inseparably related. The devotees are never separate from the Lord. The Lord is complete, and the devotees are dependent on him.

The devotees are those who possess devotional service. When we speak about the devotees we must naturally speak about the Supreme Lord, just as when we discuss a man's son, it is natural to speak of the son's father. Similarly, *bhakti*, the devotee, and the Supreme Lord are inseparable. The devotees are ever dependent on Krishna, and Krishna is ever dependent on His devotees. They are nondifferent just as the body's limbs are inseparably connected to the body. If we try to remove the devotees when discussing the Lord, there will be nothing left as the absolute truth. If we stop the worship of the devotees, there is no question of worshiping the Lord.

Bypassing the devotee amounts to having a partial conception of the worshipable Lord. If the devotees are separated from the Lord, their propensity to serve the Lord is also checked, and they will be encouraged to become independent. This is how nondevotees think. The devotees not only serve the Lord but serve those who are engaged in his service. The word "Lord" refers to his name, form, qualities, pastimes, and associates. Our attempt to worship the Lord directly may not often reach him, but worship of the Lord performed through the devotee via medium is infallible and is bound to reach the Lord. This is because in that case, the devotee takes all responsibility for the one worshiping the Lord and ensures that the Lord receives the offering. 🍌

— *Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur*. *Amrta Vani*. 7.39. A collection of statements from Srila *Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur*. Originally compiled in Bengali by Sri *Bhakti Bhagavat Mayukha Maharaja*. Translated into English by Bhumipati Das. Touchstone Media. Mumbai. 2004.





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

*Devotees doing kirtana*





*Krishna worships his devotee Narada Muni*

## THE GLORIES OF SADHU-SANGA



### *Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*

Mahaprabhu is Krishna himself, but came as a devotee to teach devotion, *bhakti*. In his own life he associated with very exalted devotees of Krishna — with Raya Ramananda and Swarup Damodar Goswami — very, very exalted devotees, *premi-bhaktas*. They had developed pure *kṛṣṇa-prema*. They are always with Krishna and Mahaprabhu. They have bound up Krishna with a rope of love in their hearts and Mahaprabhu associated with them in his *antya-līlā*. By doing so, he has set an example. Mahaprabhu says, “The association of my devotee is greater than the association of myself.” One should associate with such a devotee, such a *sādhu*, by being completely surrendered to him. Without surrender there is no question of association. You’ll get no benefit at all.

It will be fruitless. One may be surrendered to Krishna, but Krishna is not pleased with him if he doesn’t do *sādhu-saṅga*. He cannot capture Krishna. *Sādhu-saṅga* is required. If one is completely surrendered to the *sādhu* and associates, then one gets real benefit.

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, (11.3.22) says:

*tatra bhāgavatān dharmān śikṣed gurv-ātma-daivataḥ  
amāyāyānuvṛtyā yais tuṣyed ātmātma-do hariḥ*

That means that one should be always with the guru, thinking of guru as the very dear, worshipable deity of ones heart, *ātma-devatā*. With that mentality, if someone surrenders unto guru and hears *Śrīmad Bhāgavata-kathā* from him, he’ll get the mercy of guru and this *bhāgavata-dharma-tattva* will be revealed to him.

*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.38) says the same thing:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā-deve tathā gurau  
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

For one who has *parā-bhakti*, supreme *bhakti*, towards the Supreme Lord and guru, to him this





Unknown artist

Krishna and Bilvamangala Thakur

*Bhāgavata-dharma-tattva*, Vedic truth, is revealed. Otherwise you cannot get it. Whatever surrender and service you do should be rendered without duplicity — *niṣkaṭa-vṛtta*. This is a most important thing. If someone surrenders to *sādhu-guru* and serves him without duplicity, Krishna becomes very pleased with him. Otherwise, if one artificially, externally says, “Yes, gurudeva! *Kṛpā karoṅi! kṛpā karoṅi!* — ‘Gurudeva! Give me mercy, give me mercy!’” Upon seeing gurudeva, such a person falls down like a rod and offers *daṇḍavats*, yet there is so much duplicity inside. They are praying from the lips only. They cannot please *sādhu-guru*, or Krishna. Hari is there in your heart. He knows what is in your heart. If your heart is full of all duplicity, Hari knows. You cannot cheat Lord Hari. This is a most important thing. Krishna becomes very pleased only by *sādhu-saṅga* — *sādhu-guru sevā*. Service to *sādhu-guru* without duplicity. There is no other means to please Krishna.

Every day we chant in *gurv-aṣṭaka*, *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo, yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi* — if *sādhu-guru* is pleased then Krishna becomes pleased.

## THE NECESSITY OF WORSHIPING THE VAISHNAVAS

Padma Purāṇa 6.253.177  
quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 10.362

*arcayitvā tu govindam tadīyān nārcayet tu yaḥ  
na sa bhāgavato jñeyah kevalam dāmbhikah smṛtaḥ*

One who worships Govinda without worshiping his devotees is not a real devotee. In truth he is simply a hypocrite.

### Bibliography

— Sanatan Goswami. Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan. 2005.

— Sanatan Goswami. Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Sanskrit with Bengali translation by Kanailal Adhikari. Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. Mayapur. 2000.







Unknown artist

Krishna is dressed by his servants





Unknown artist. Early Bengali School Mid 19th century

## Gaura kirtana

If *sādhu-guru* is displeased, then Krishna cannot be pleased. Therefore Narottam Das Thakur, *Bhaktivinode* Thakur — all *vaiṣṇava ācāryas*, *mahājanas* — have sung the glories of *sādhus*. Srila Narottam Das Thakur sings (*Prārthanā*, song 43):

ṭhākura vaiṣṇava-pada avanīra su-sampada  
suna bhāi hañā eka mana  
āśraya la-iyā bhaje tā're kṛṣṇa nāhi tyaje  
āra saba mare akāraṇa

The lotus feet of the saintly *vaiṣṇavas* are the greatest wealth in this world. O my dear brothers, please listen attentively! One who takes shelter of a *vaiṣṇava* and worships Krishna is never forsaken by Krishna. Others die without reason.

Such *vaiṣṇava-sādhus* are the invaluable asset of the world. They are the ornaments of the world. If one takes shelter of such a *sādhu* and does *kṛṣṇa-bhajan*, Krishna never deserts him. If one doesn't take shelter of such a *sādhu*, Krishna kicks him, "Get out!" He cannot do *bhajan*. Your *bhajan* is no *bhajan* at all. It is only mental speculation. Only by associating with one who is engaged in *bhajan* will you be taught how to do *bhajan*. Otherwise how can you do *bhajan*? Only speculating, saying, "Yes, I can do this, or that, or that, or that." Only speculation. It is nothing else.

Similarly, Narottam Das Thakur sings in *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* (1.5):

## WHO IS A VAISHNAVA?

## Nārada Pañcarātra 1.9.21-22

kṛṣṇa-mantra dvija-mukhād yasya karnaṁ prayāti ca  
taṁ vaiṣṇavaṁ jagat-pūtaṁ pravadanti purā-vidah

Knowers of spiritual science call that person a *vaiṣṇava*, a purifier of the entire world, who has received a Krishna mantra from the mouth of a twice-born spiritual master.

mantra-grahaṇa-mātreṇa nara nārāyaṇātmakaḥ  
punāti līlā-mātreṇa puruṣāṅgāṁ śataṁ śatam

As soon as a person receives a Krishna mantra, he becomes situated on the same platform as Lord Narayan himself and easily delivers one hundred generations of his family.

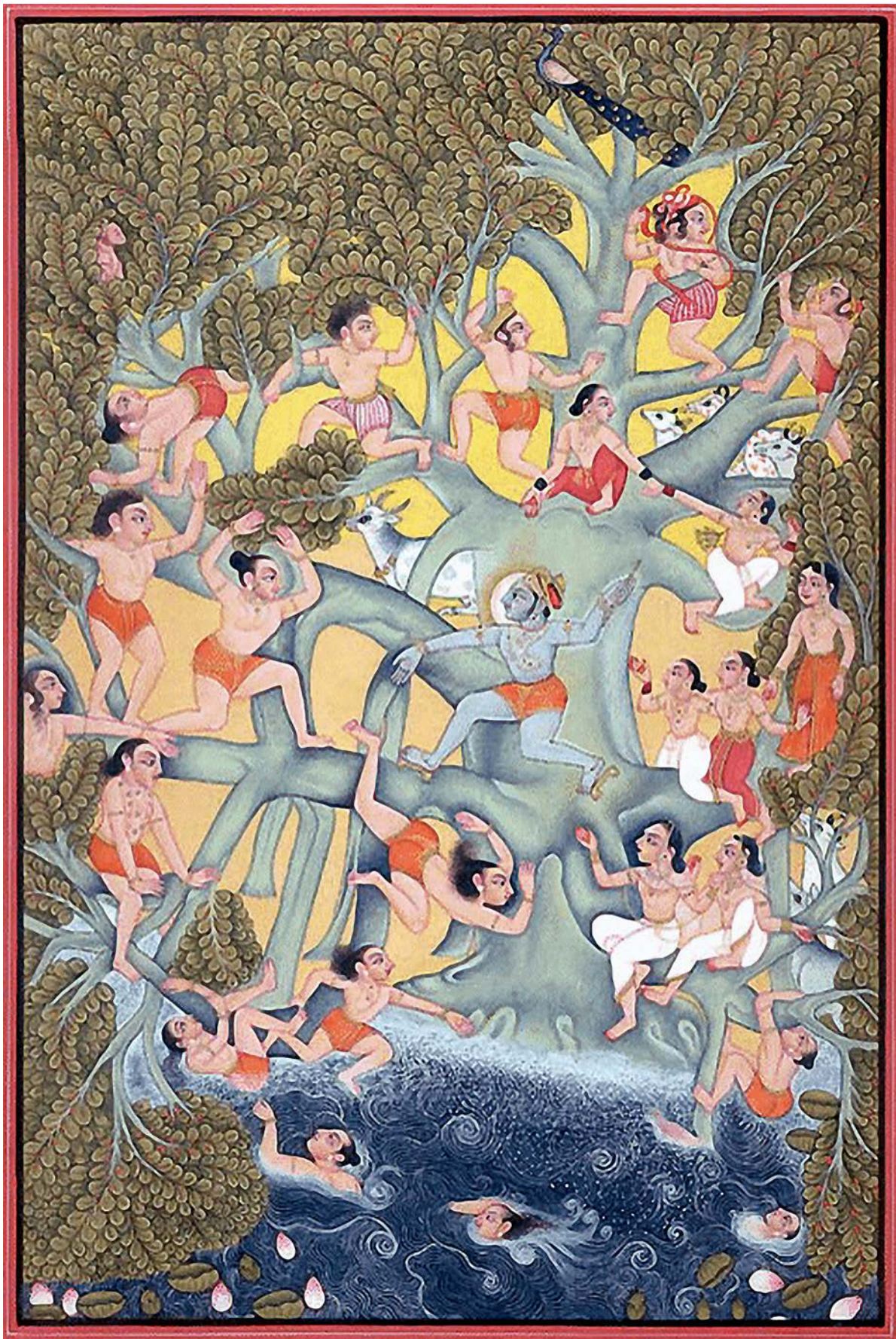
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— *Śrī Nārada Pañcarātra*. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited by Purnaprajna Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan. Date unknown.







Unknown artist.

Cowherd boys play with Krishna in Vrindavan





Unknown artist.

Bhima Slays Jarasandha in front of Krishna and Arjuna

vaiṣṇava-carāṇa-reṇu bhūṣaṇa kariyā tanu  
 jāhā haite anubhāva haya  
 marjjana haya bhajana sādhu-saṅge anukṣaṇa  
 ajñāna-avidyā-parajaya

One should decorate one's body with the dust from the lotus feet of the *vaiṣṇavas*, because by this one can achieve transcendental realizations. By constantly associating with the devotees, one's cultivation of devotional service is purified, and one can conquer nescience.

If you chant *hare kṛṣṇa*, do *nāma-bhajan* in the association of a *sādhu*, then your *bhajan* will be pure, free from *aparādha* — free from *anarthas*, contaminations. *Ajñāna vidyā* — ignorance will be completely destroyed. *vaiṣṇava-carāṇa-reṇu bhūṣaṇa kariyā tanu jāhā haite anubhāva haya* — The dust of the feet of such a *vaiṣṇava sādhu* is very powerful. If someone smears his body with such dust of the *vaiṣṇavas*, then his consciousness becomes completely purified, and all Vedic truths — *bhagavata-tattva*, *bhakti-tattva* — become revealed to him. This is the mercy of *vaiṣṇavas*.

Therefore, *Bhaktivinode Thakur* and *Narottam Das Thakur* have sung so many songs glorifying the *vaiṣṇavas*. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.30.34) the *Prachetas* pray:

tulayāma lavenāpi na svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam  
 bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ

## THE PURPOSE OF THE VARIOUS INCARNATIONS OF THE LORD

### Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 14.31

This verse is also quoted by *Srila Jiva Goswami* in his *Paramātma-sandarbha* (anuccheda 93), and by *Srila Sanatan Goswami* in his commentary on *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 14.9.

Lord *Nrsimhadev* says to *Prahlad Maharaja*:

nityaṅca pūrṇa-kāmasya janmāni vividhāni me  
 bhakta-sarveṣṭa-dānāya tasmāt kim te priyaṁ vada

I am fully satisfied eternally. I take various births in order to fulfill the desires of my devotees. Tell me your desire. (*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* 14.31)

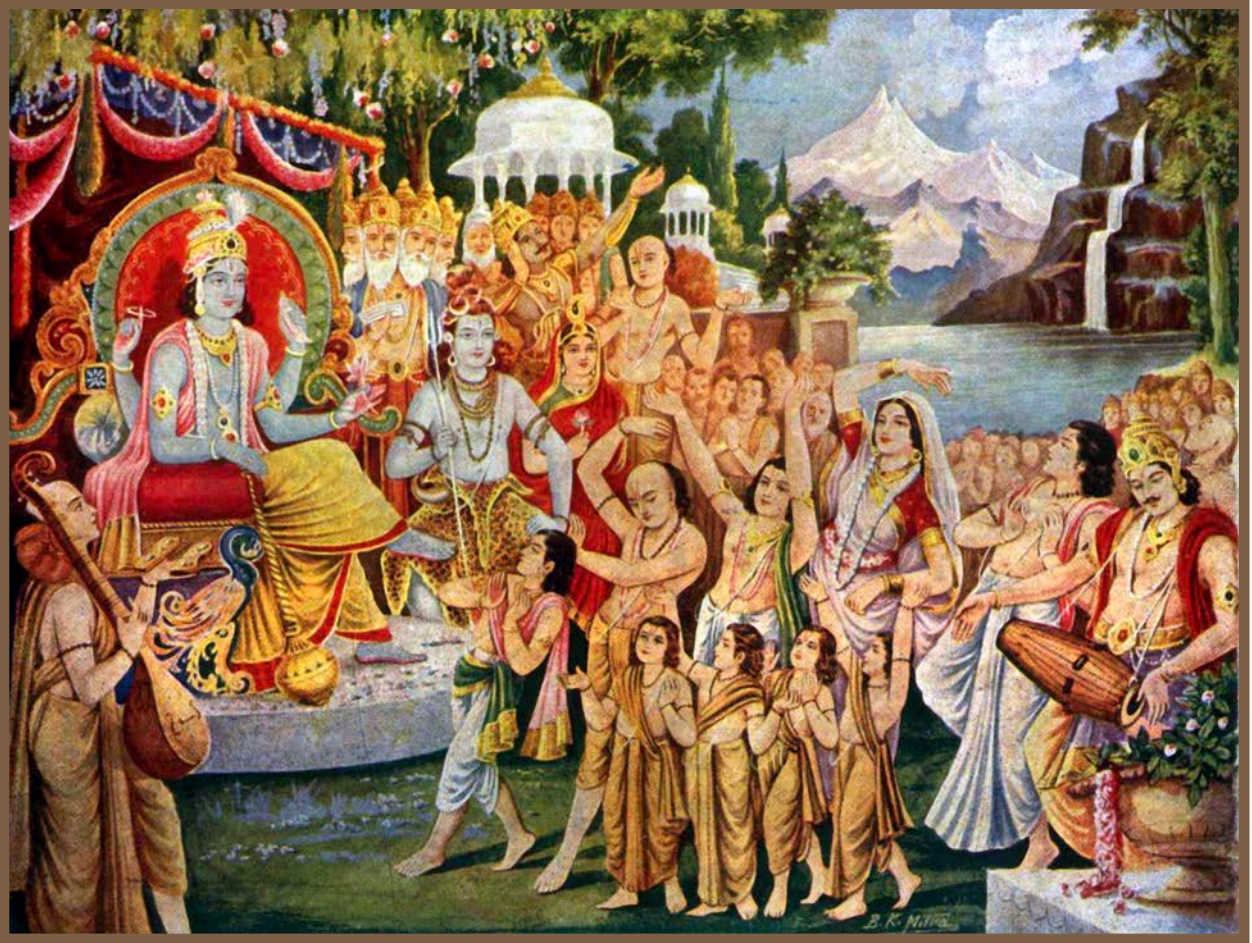
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— *Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*, of the *Nārādiya Purāṇa*. Sanskrit with Bengali translation by *Ram Narayan Vidyaratna*. *Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar*. Calcutta. Bengabda 1405.







Vishnu with his devotees

Pleased with the severe austerities and penances of the Prachetas, Bhagavan Vishnu appeared before them. “Alright, ask for a boon? What do you want?” So what did the Prachetas say? They prayed, *martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ* — we are the residents of this Martyapura, this earth planet, where everyone is subject to birth and death. What boon is there for us? Only one boon is there, that is *bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya*, the association of *sādhu*, who is always with Bhagavan. Day and night, 24 hours with Bhagavan — *bhagavat-saṅgi. tulayāma lavenāpi na svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam* — “Even a moment’s association with such a *sādhu* cannot be compared to elevation to the heavenly planets — heavenly enjoyment. Nor can it be compared even to *apavarga-lābha* — to go to the Brahman platform. So there is only one boon, and that is to associate with such a *sādhu*. Because by the association of such a *sādhu* one can attain pure *bhakti*, *prema-bhakti*, which is rarely achieved, *durlabha*. 🍌

— From a class in Bhubaneswar, 13 March 1993.

## EVEN SEEING A PRETENDER



### Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (13.2)

*aḅṣṇoḥ phalaṁ tvāḍṛṣa-darśanaṁ hi  
tanoḥ phalaṁ tvāḍṛṣa-gātra-saṅgaḥ  
jihvā-phalaṁ tvāḍṛṣa-kīrtanaṁ hi  
sudurlabhā bhāgavatā hi loke*

[Mother Earth speaking to Prahlad Maharaja:] “O devotee of the Lord, the purpose of the visual sense is fulfilled simply by seeing you, and to touch your body is the fulfillment of bodily touch. The tongue is meant for glorifying your qualities because in this world a pure devotee of the Lord is very difficult to find.”

[Note: This verse is quoted in Srila Prabhupada’s purport to *Bhāg.* 2.9.39, as well as by Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in *Cc. madhya* 20.61, and again in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 10.287. In his commentary on the verse in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, Srila Sanatan Goswami writes:]



Unknown artist.



An old painting of Srila Rasik Murari Prabhu

tvādyśānām kathañcit tvad-anukaraṇavatām api  
darśanam evākṣṇoḥ phalam evam anyad api

“What to speak of seeing a devotee, even seeing a person who imitates the feelings and dress of a devotee grants perfection to the existence of the eyes.” 🍌

## DEVOTEES SEE OTHERS' SUFFERING AS THEIR OWN

**Srila Narahari Sarkar's**  
**Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhajanāmṛta, text 29**

sva-duḥkhaiḥ para-duḥkhāni nāśayanti mahā-janāḥ  
parārtha eva sādḥūnām vibhūtir jīvanam sukham

The great souls, taking others' suffering as their own, destroy others' suffering. Concern for others is the wealth of the devotees and the happiness of life.

— English translation by Bhanu Swami. Sri Vaikuntha Enterprises. Chennai, India.



**RASIK MURARI'S  
SERVICE TO THE  
VAISHNAVAS**



### From the Bhaktamāla of Sri Nabha with commentary by Priyadas

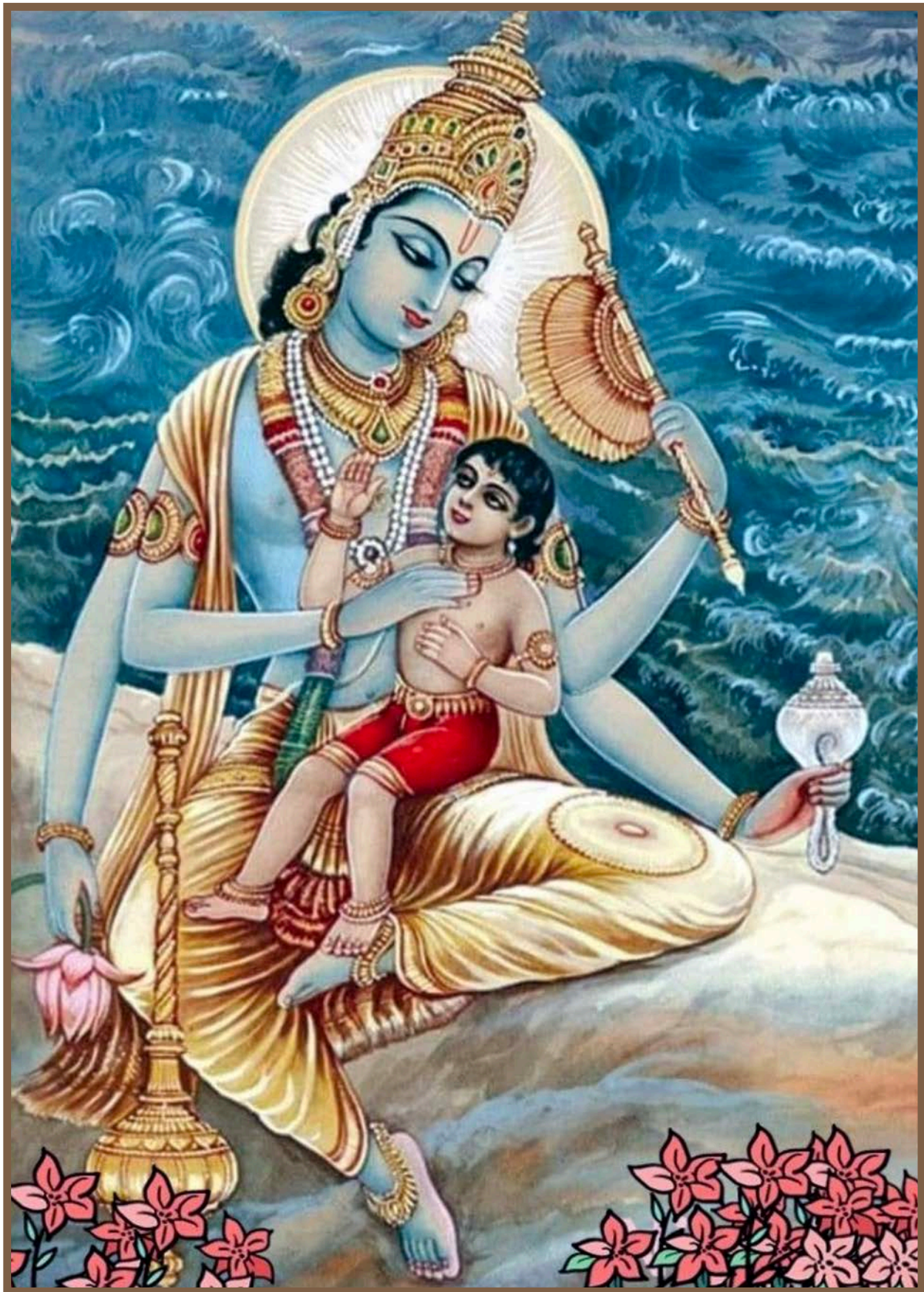
There are a number of books named Bhaktamāla, which are compilations of stories from the Bhāgavatam, other Purāṇas, and local traditions, about the Lord and his devotees. However, some of these Bhaktamālas are not accepted by Gaudiya Vaishnavas. The Bhaktamāla compiled in Hindi around the year 1666 by 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 Bhaktivinoda 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-vaibhāvācārya 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 rāma-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 Mahaprabhu, Sri Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Sri Srinivasacharya, and Sri Manohar Das.

Sri Rasik Murari nourished the mood of serving the vaiṣṇavas, for he served them in a grand manner. Who can describe his power of devotional service? His service attitude and methods of worship were unique. For example, he kept a pitcher filled with the water that had washed the lotus feet of vaiṣṇavas in his house. He would offer obeisances to, worship, and meditate on that pitcher every day. He gave unlimited pleasure to the devotees who visited him.





Unknown artist.

Lord Vishnu with his devotee Dhruva Maharaja



Unknown artist. Rajasthan, Mewar. 1715-1720.



*Krishna plays hide and seek with cowherd boys*

The happiness Sri Rasik Murari derived from serving the devotees is indescribable. He arranged for festivals to worship his spiritual master in a grand way. During these festivals, he spent the entire day singing and glorifying the Lord and his spiritual master while simultaneously feeding all the devotees. This service gave him immense pleasure. Sometimes he would hold a festival that would continue for twelve days, or even more. There would be devotees continuously coming and going throughout these days so that it would be a wonderful sight to see.

One day, as many devotees were taking *prasāda*, Sri Rasik Murari wanted to test his disciples, and so he asked them to go and wash the feet of everyone assembled there. When the disciples brought the water that had washed the devotees' feet, Rasik Murari drank a little and then remarked, "Why

don't I experience the excellent taste of the water that has washed the devotees' feet?"

Sri Rasik Murari doubted that perhaps his disciples had neglected to wash the lotus feet of some of the devotees. With this in mind, he said to a disciple, "Tell me the truth. Did you neglect to wash any devotee's feet?"

Finally one of the disciples said, "There was a devotee who had leprosy on his feet and so I did not wash them."

At this, Sri Rasik Murari said, "Go now, wash his feet, and bring me the water."

The disciple went and washed that devotee's feet. Sri Rasik Murari drank the water and distributed it to others. Such was his faith and devotion in the water that washed the feet of the devotees. He felt unlimited happiness by drinking this water such that tears of love would flow from his eyes. 🍊

— Nabha Goswami with commentary by Priyadas. Bhaktamāla. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited by Purnaprajna Das. Page 296. Rasbiharilal & Sons. Vrindaban. 2017.



Painting by Jaimini Roy, Circa 1930s.



Kīrtana

## GLORIES OF THE BHAKTAS



### **Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa, canto four, chapter one**

*ratiḥ kṛṣṇa-kathāyān ca yasyāśru-pulakodgamaḥ  
mano nimagnaṁ tatraiva sa bhaktaḥ kathito budhaiḥ*

The wise declare that a person is said to be a devotee who is attracted to topics of Lord Krishna, whose heart is plunged in remembering them, whose bodily hairs stand erect and who sheds tears to hear such topics. (text 44)

*putra-dārādikaṁ sarvaṁ jānāti yo harer iva  
ātmanā manasā vācā sa bhaktaḥ kathito budhaiḥ*

The wise also declare that a person is said to be a devotee who with his heart, mind, and words knows that his wife, children, and everything are all the property of Lord Hari. (45)

*dayāsti sarva-jīveṣu sarvaṁ kṛṣṇamayam jagat  
yo jānāti mahā-jñānī sa bhakto vaiṣṇavottamaḥ*

One who is kind to all living entities and who knows that Lord Krishna is present everywhere in this world, is very wise. He is a devotee. He is the best of vaiṣṇavas. (46)

*nirjane tīrtha-samparke niḥsaṅgā ye mudānvitāḥ  
dhyāyante caraṇāmbhojaṁ śrī-hares te ca vaiṣṇavāḥ*

Those happy persons who, alone in a secluded holy place, meditate on Lord Hari's lotus feet, are also great devotees. (47)



Unknown artist. Northern Indian, Uttarakhnad, probably Garhwal. Circa 1830.



*Krishna takes lunch with the cowherd boys in the forest and brings the cows home in the evening.  
Background: The demon Aghasura on the right and Brahma on the left on his swan carrier.*

*śaśvad ye nāma gāyanti guṇaṁ mantraṁ japanti ca  
kurvanti śravaṇaṁ gāthā vadanti te 'ti-vaiṣṇavāḥ*

They who always sing the Lord's holy names, chant mantras describing His glories, and hear and sing songs describing him, are very great devotees. (48)

*labdhvā miṣṭāni vastūni pradātum haraye mudā  
tūrṇaṁ yasya mano hr̥ṣṭaṁ sa bhakto jñāninām varaḥ*

One who obtains sweet candies and is very happy at heart to offer them to Lord Hari, is a devotee. He is the best of the wise. (49)

*yan-mano hari-pādābje svapne jñāne divā-niśam  
pūrva-karmopabhogāṁ ca bahir bhuṅkte sa vaiṣṇavaḥ*

One who, day and night, and even in his dreams, thinks of Lord Hari's lotus feet, has used up all his past karma. He is a devotee. (50)

*guru-vaktrād viṣṇu-mantra yasya karṇe viśaty ayam  
taṁ vaiṣṇavaṁ mahā-pūtaṁ pravadanti maṇiṣṇaḥ*

The wise say that a person into whose ear a Viṣṇu-mantra has entered from his guru's mouth, is a very pure devotee. (51)

## THE ACID TEST FOR A DEVOTEE

*His Divine Grace*

**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

There are many who pass by the name of devotees, but when they are put in the acid test of genuine symptoms, generally they come to the class of mundaners. Lord Chaitanya says that *kṛṣṇa-prema*, a genuine love for the Lord, is the last word in the kingdom of devotional service. In the absence of such genuine love for Krishna, which is followed by the symptoms of detachment for mundane things, one cannot be certified to have made any progress in the matter of devotional service.

— Srila Prabhupada's commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11. Printed in Back to Godhead, Volume 3, Part 20, May 20, 1960





*pūrvān sapta parān sapta sapta mātāmahādikān  
sodarān uddhared bhaktaḥ sva-prasūnī ca prasū-prasūm*

A devotee delivers his family. He delivers seven generations before and seven generations after, seven generations of grandparents, children, grandchildren, and other relatives. (52)

*kalatram kanyakām bandhum śiṣyam dauhitram ātmanah  
kiṅkaram kiṅkarīm putram uddhared vaiṣṇavaḥ sadā*

## I NOURISH MY DEVOTEES

### Padma Purāṇa

This verse is also quoted in Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's commentary to Bhagavad-gītā (5.26), Srila Jiva Goswami's Paramātmāsandarbhā (anuccheda 93), Srila Baladev Vidyabhushana's Śrī Siddhānta-ratna (1.46), as well as other places.

*muhūrtenāpi saṁhartuṁ śakto yadyapi dānavān  
mad-bhaktānām vinodārtham karomi vividhāḥ kriyāḥ*

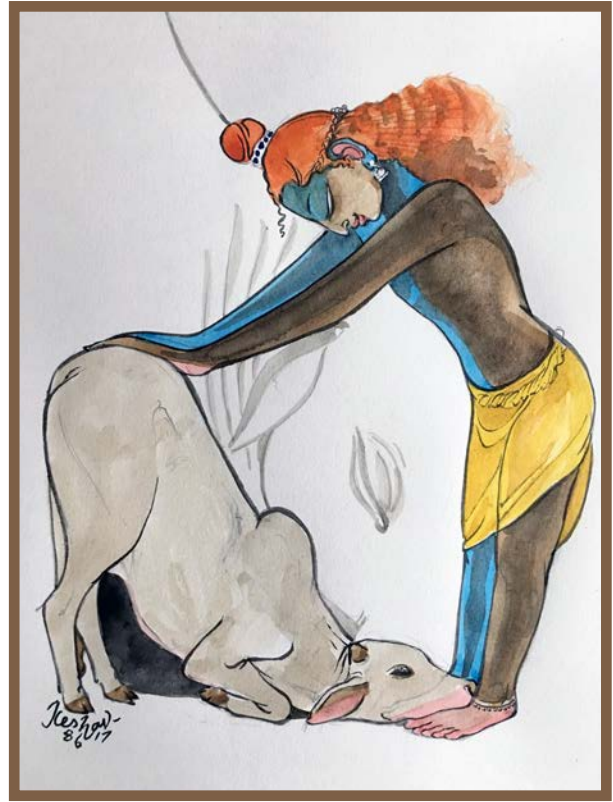
*darśana-dhyāna-saṁsparśair matsya-kūrma-vihaṅgamāḥ  
svāny apatyāni puṣṅanti tathāham api padmaja*

Even though I can kill the demons in a moment, I perform various actions to give pleasure to my devotees. Just as the fish by seeing, the turtle by thought and the bird by touch, nourish their young, [in the same way] I nourish my devotees.

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Painting by Keshav

*Krishna has a loving relationship with the cows of Vraja*

A devotee always delivers his wife, daughter, friend, disciple, granddaughter, servant, maidservant, and son. (53)

*sadā vāñchanti tīrthāni vaiṣṇava-sparśa-darśane  
pāpi-dattāni pāpāni teṣām naśyanti saṅgataḥ*

The devotees always desire to visit holy pilgrimage places. By the devotee's touch and glance, the sins that sinners have left there are at once destroyed. (54)

*go-dohana-kṣaṇam yāvad yatra tiṣṭhati vaiṣṇavaḥ  
tatra sarvāni tīrthāni santi tāvan mahī-tale*

A place where a devotee stays for as long as it takes to milk a cow becomes a holy place. All the holy places on the surface of the earth are present in that place. (55)

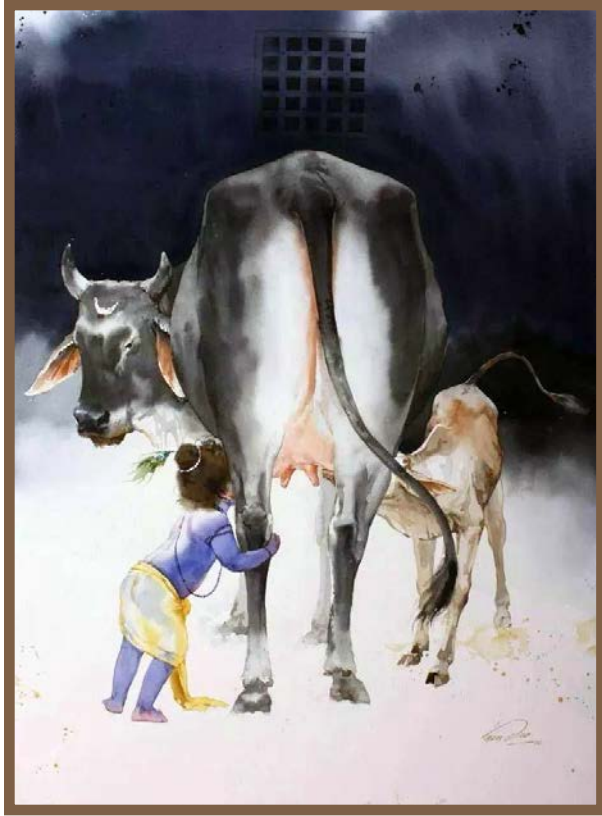
*dhravaṁ tatra mṛtaḥ pāpī mukto yāti hareḥ padam  
yathaiva jñāna-gaṅgāyām ante kṛṣṇa-smṛtau yathā*

*tulasī-kānane goṣṭhe śrī-kṛṣṇa-mandire pade  
vṛndārānye haridvāre tīrtheṣv anyeṣu vā yathā*

As if he were plunged in the Ganges of transcendental knowledge, as if he were rapt in the thought of Lord Krishna, as if he were in a forest of *tulasī* trees, a Krishna-temple, Vrindavan, Haridwar, or other holy places,



Painting by by Vasudeo Kamath



*Krishna treats a cow of Vraja as his mother*

a sinner who dies there (in the place where a devotee stayed) attains the abode of Lord Hari. (56-57)

*pāpāni pāpinām yānti tīrtha-snānavagāhanāt  
teṣām pāpāni naśyanti vaiṣṇava-sparśa-vāyunā*

When a sinner bathes in a holy place, his sins flee. His sins are destroyed by a breeze that has touched a devotee. (58) 🍌

— *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*. English translation by Kusakratha Das. The Kṛṣṇa Institute. Los Angeles.

## PRAYERS TO THE VAISHNAVAS



### *Srila Narahari Sarkar's Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhajanāmṛta*

*prītiḥ prārthyā satām agre prītiḥ prārthyā mahājane  
prītir āropanīyā sve hṛdi prītim nibodhaya*

One should pray to the devotees for affection for the Lord. One should pray for affection for the devotees. One should plant affection in one's heart. One should teach affection for the Lord to others. (32)

*jagad dhanam kṛṣṇa eva vaiṣṇavās tad upādhikāḥ  
prema-prītis tato 'py agryā param prīter na kiñcana*

Krishna is the wealth in this world. The devotees are more valuable. *Prema* and *prīti* (ecstatic love and affection) for the Lord is even more valuable. There is nothing greater than *prīti*. (33)

*aruṇāmbhoja-carāṇe śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhoḥ  
mano-vāk-kāya-jaṁ prema vardhatām me dine dine*

May my love for the red lotus feet of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu increase day by day in my mind, words and body. (34)

## THE DEFINITION OF A VAISHNAVA

### Hari-bhakti-vilasa 10.31, 34-35

*Text thirty-one of the tenth vilāsaḥ of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa speaks of the bhakta mukhyaṁ lakṣaṇam — “principal symptoms of a devotee”. Text thirty-four gives the second symptom as: vaiṣṇava-sammāna-niṣṭhā — “Always ready to show respect to vaiṣṇavas.” It then goes on to quote the Liṅga Purāṇa:*

*viṣṇu-bhaktam athāyātām yo dṛṣṭvā sumukhaḥ priyaḥ  
praṇāmādi karoty eva vāsudeve yathā tathā*

*sa vai bhakta iti jñeyaḥ sa punāti jagat trayam  
rukṣākṣarā girah śṛṇvan tathā bhāgavateritāḥ*

*praṇāma-pūrvakam kṣāntvā yo vaded vaiṣṇavo hi saḥ*

One who offers his obeisances to the devotees of Lord Vishnu with devotion and a smiling face — just like one offers his obeisances to Lord Vāsudeva — is to be considered a *vaiṣṇava*. Such a devotee is capable of purifying the three worlds. One who, in spite of being chastised by a devotee of the Lord, offers him obeisances and converses with him politely, is to be considered a *vaiṣṇava*.

— Sanatan Goswami. *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. English translation by Bhumiapati Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan. 2005.

— Sanatan Goswami. *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Sanskrit with Bengali translation by Kanailal Adhikari. Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. Mayapur. 2000.



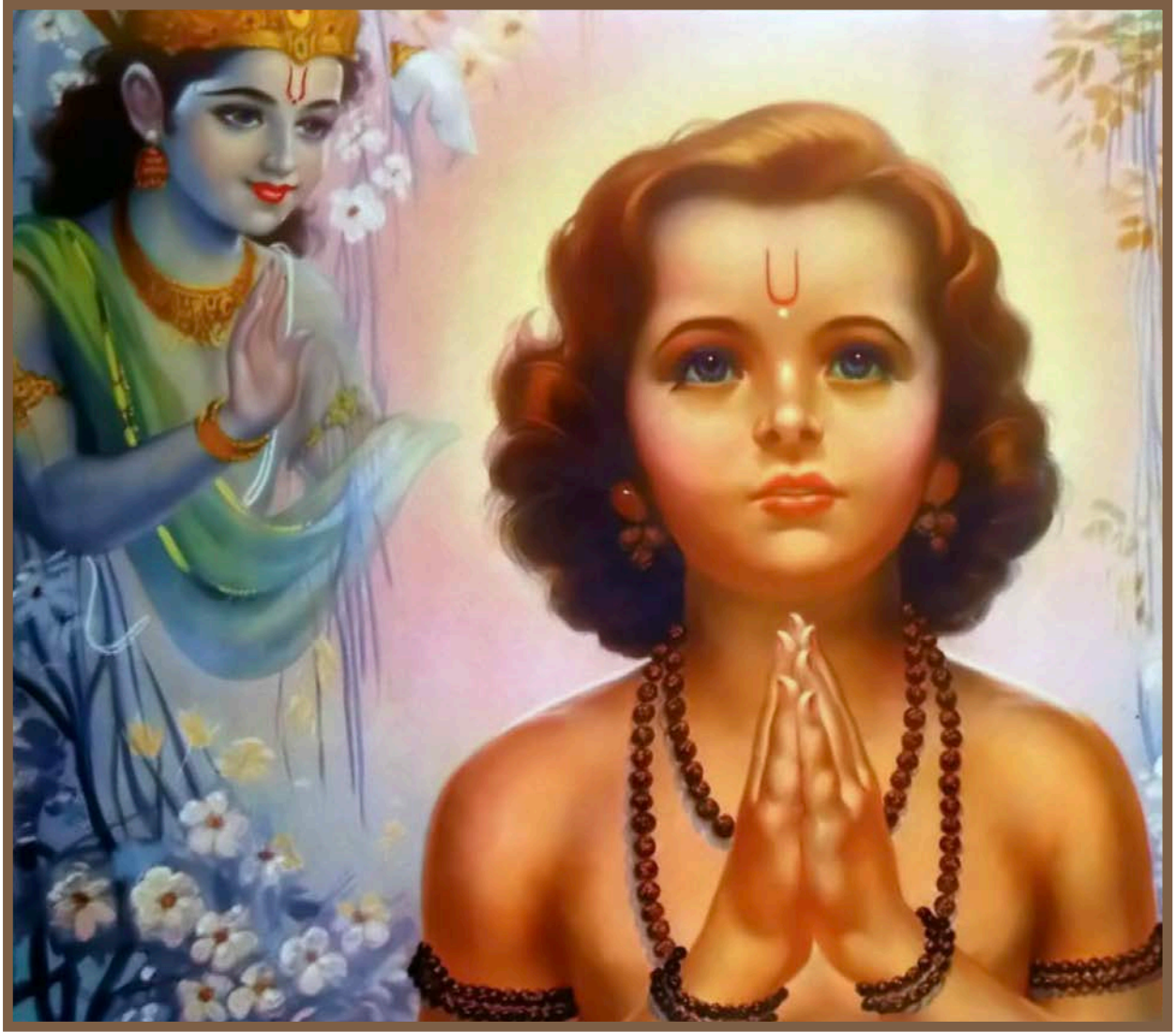




Unknown artist

*Vishnu appeared before Dhruva and blessed him in spite of the fact that the boy had material desires*





Unknown artist

### Lord Vishnu and Dhruva Maharaja

*vaiṣṇave prītir āstām me prītir āstām prabhor guṇe  
sevāyām prītir astām me prītir ārtiś ca kīrtane*

May I have affection for devotees and for the qualities of the Lord. May I have affection for service to the Lord. May I have affection and longing for chanting his name. (35)

*āśrite prītir āstām me prītiś ca bhajanonmukhe  
ātmani prītir āstām me kṛṣṇe bhaktir yathā bhavet*

May I have affection for those who have surrendered to the Lord, may I have affection for those engaged in worshipping the Lord, and may I have affection for my ātmā, so that I will develop devotion to Krishna. (36) 🍌

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### EVEN WITH MATERIAL DESIRES



#### Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur

*In the first shower of his Mādhurya Kaḍambinī, Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur has discussed who is a vaiṣṇava, and addressed the question of do they have to be chanting śuddha-nāma to be considered a devotee:*

Regarding *bhakti*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.33.39 states:

*bhaktiṁ parām bhagavati parilabhya kāmāni  
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

“Attaining *bhakti*, one quickly becomes sober and conquers lust, the disease of the heart.”

By stating “attaining” (*pratilabhya*), this verse indicates that *bhakti* first appears in a person who is



Painting by Kshitindranath Majumda. Circa 1950s.



Mahaprabhu performing kirtana with his devotees

suffering from the disease of the heart, then being fully independent, removes lust and other evils. Even if those evils remain for some time, we don't hear a trace of denunciation of those who have them. What to speak of lust, even a very sinful person can practice *bhakti* and is not condemned. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30) states, *api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām* — “Even if one is most wicked in his behavior, if he worships me ...”, while the *Bhāgavatam* (11.14.18) says, *bādhyamāno 'pi mad-bhakto* — “Even if my devotee is harassed by material desires ...”

Thus, *sāstra* is clear that even though lusty desires may exist in a devotee, they are not condemned even slightly. The *viṣṇu-dūtas* determined Ajamila to be a devotee because he spoke the name of the Lord, even though he was calling out for his son with affection. Ajamila's chanting was just a dim reflection or *ābhāsa*. Actually, Ajamila did not call the Lord's name. He merely used it to address his son, still everyone glorifies him as a devotee. 🍌

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## GAURA'S LOVE FOR THE DEVOTEES



*Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur*

**Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata antya 1.266-270**

After leaving home and taking *sannyāsa*, Mahaprabhu is speaking to the devotees at the home of Adwaita Acharya:

*sarva vede purāṇe āśraya mora cāya  
bhaktera āśrame muṇi thākoṅ sarvadāya*

“All the Vedas and Purāṇas teach everyone to take shelter of me. I always reside in the company of my devotees.

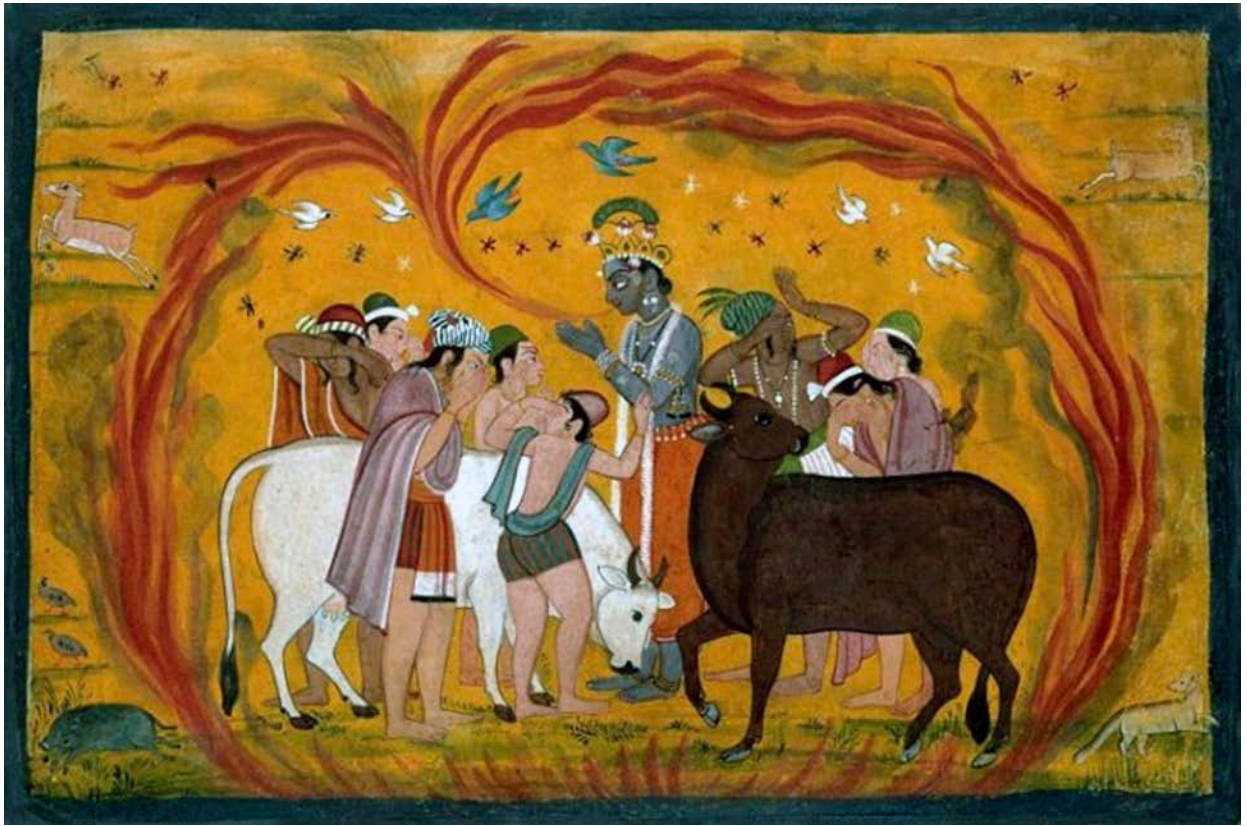
*bhakta bai āmāra dviṭīya āra nāi  
bhakta mora pitā, mātā, bandhu, putra, bhāi*

“There is no one dearer to me than my devotees. They are my father, mother, friend, son, and brother.

*yadyapi svatantra āmi svatantra-vihāra  
tathāpiha bhakta-vaśa-svabhāva āmāra*

“Although I am fully independent and my activities are also independent, it is my nature to be controlled by my devotees.





Unknown artist

*Krishna told the boys to cover their eyes and then he drank the forest fire and saved them*

*tomarā se janma-janma saṁhati āmāra  
'tomā' sabā' lāgi mora sarva avatāra*

“All of you associate with me birth after birth. I incarnate in this world for your sake.

*tilārdheko āmi tomā' sabāre chāḍiyā  
kothāo nā thāki sabe satya jāna ihā”*

“Know for certain that I do not leave you to stay elsewhere for even a moment.” 🍊

— Vrindavan Das Thakur. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* with commentary of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajaraj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.

## GLORIES OF SERVING THE LORD'S DEVOTEES



**Bṛhan-nārāḍīya Purāṇa 1.3.58-62**

*tasmāt sarva-prayatnena saṁpūjyo jagatām patih  
akāmād api ye viṣṇoḥ sakṛt pūjām prakurvate  
na teṣām bhava-bandhas tu kadācid api jāyate*

Thus, the lord of the worlds should be worshiped to the best of one's ability. Indeed, entanglement in

worldly existence never takes place for those who even unintentionally once worship Lord Vishnu.

*hari-bhakti-ratān yas tu hari-buddhyā samarcayet  
tasya tuṣyanti viprendra brahma-viṣṇu-mahesvarāḥ*

O best of the brahmanas, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara are pleased with one who worships those fond of devotional service to Hari, thinking them to be Hari himself.

*hari-bhakti-parāṇām tu saṅginām saṅga-mātrataḥ  
mucyate sarva-pāpebhyo mahāpātakavān api*

Even a great sinner can be freed from all sins simply by contact with those dedicated to Lord Hari's devotees.

*hari-pūjā-parāṇām ca harināma-ratātmanām  
śuśrūṣā-niratā yānti pāpino 'pi parām gatim*

Persons engaged in the service of both those devoted to the worship of Hari, and those whose selves are delighted by the chanting of Hari's names, attain the greatest goal, even if they happen to be sinners. 🍊

— Translated by Matsya Avatar Das from *Bṛhan-nārāḍīya Purāṇam*. Sanskrit with Hindi translation. Hindi Sahitya Samelan. 1989. Prayag, Allahabad, India.



Painting by Tejasvini Radhika



*Bhakta Salabeg in front of the chariot of Lord Jagannath in Puri*

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE POET SALABEG



By Isha-bhakta Das

Salabeg occupies a prominent position among the devotional poets of Odisha. Bhakta Salabeg was born of a Muslim king and a Hindu mother in the first decade of the 17th Century. His father, Lalbeg, on one of his military excursions, came across a young widowed Brahmin girl named Lalita taking bath. Fascinated by her youthful beauty, Lalbeg forcibly took her away and made her his wife. Salabega was their only son. As soon as he was old enough, Salabeg took up fighting in his father's campaigns. Once he was severely wounded in battle. Accepting the advice of his mother, he chanted the holy name of Lord Jagannath and was gradually cured. Feeling greatly indebted to Lord Jagannath, he went to Puri, but was refused entrance into the temple of

Jagannath due to his Muslim birth. Thereafter, he went on foot to Vrindavan wherein he lived the life of an ascetic in the association of *sādhus* reciting *bhajans* in honor of Lord Sri Krishna. After one year in Vraja, he returned to Puri desiring to see the Ratha-yātrā festival of Lord Jagannath, but on the way he suddenly fell ill. Feeling helpless and realizing that he would not reach Puri in time to witness the Ratha-yātrā festival, he offered prayers to Lord Jagannath petitioning him to wait until he arrived. On the day of the return cart festival, Nandighosh, the cart of Lord Jagannath, did not move until Salabeg's arrival. The place where the cart remained stationary to give *darśana* to Salabeg was later used by Salabeg for composing his many *bhajans* in honor of Lord Jagannath. His body was cremated there after his death. The *samādhi* of this great devotee is still standing on the Grand Road in Puri, and his *bhajans* will be forever sung and remembered by the devotees of Lord Jagannath. 🍊



Unknown photographer



**YOU LIVE FOR  
YOUR DEVOTEES**



**The Odia Poet Salabega**

*ekā to bhakata jīvana  
bhakata nimante tora śaṅkha-cakra cihna*

It is you, and you alone, who are the life of the bhakta. It is for their protection that you carry the conchshell and disk.

*bhakata to pita-mātā bhakata to bandhu  
bhakata hitare tora nāma kṛpā-sindhu*

The bhaktas become your mother and father. The bhakta alone is your friend. You are known as kṛpā-sindhu, the ocean of mercy, because of your concern for the welfare of your bhaktas.

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*dhenu pache-pache vatsā game kśīra-lobhe  
bhakata pachare tuhi thāu sehi bhāve*

As a calf, longing to drink milk, follows behind its mother, you follow the love of your bhaktas.

*bāpa mo mogala pua mā'a mo brāhmaṇī  
e kule janmili hindu na khayē mora pāṇī*

O Lord! I, however, am a fallen soul born from a Muslim father and a Brahmin mother. In this status of life, none of the Hindus would even drink water from my pot, considering me untouchable.

*kahe salabega hīna jātire mu' yavana  
śrī-rangā-caraṇa vinu na jāṇa-i āna*

So says the lowly Salabeg, “Even though I am born in a yavana [Muslim] family, I know nothing but your reddish lotus feet.” 🌸

— Translation by Jagannath Mishra Das and Prabhupada Priya Sevak Das from lyricstranslate.com



Unknown photographer

**The deity of Patita Pavan Jagannath in Puri, who sits at the doorway of the temple to give darśana to devotees who are not allowed inside.**