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CONTENTS

• EVEN THE CRITICS CAN BENEFIT

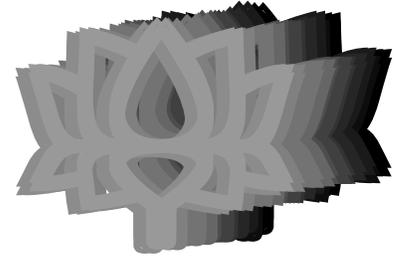
HIS DIVINE GRACE A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

• A CONTAINER TO RECEIVE PREMA

SRILA GOUR GOVINDA SWAMI MAHARAJA

• REGAINING A LOST KINGDOM

EXCERPTS FROM THE LIFE OF MAHARAJA CHODAGANGADEV



EVEN THE CRITICS CAN BENEFIT

SRILA A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA
SWAMI PRABHUPADA

We are spreading the glories of Krishna by pushing forward this Krishna consciousness movement. Krishna's reputation, five thousand years after the Battle of Kurukshetra, is still expanding throughout the world. Every important individual within this world must have heard of Krishna, especially at the present moment, due to the Krishna consciousness movement. Even people who do not like us and want to suppress the movement are also somehow or other chanting Hare Krishna. They say, "The Hare Krishna people should be chastised." Such foolish people do not realize the true value of this movement, but the mere fact that they want to criticize it gives them a chance to chant Hare Krishna, and this is its success. — purport to Bhāg. 5.14.43

A CONTAINER TO RECEIVE PREMA

SRILA GOUR GOVINDA SWAMI MAHARAJA

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-toṣe namaḥ*

O most munificent incarnation! You are Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You have assumed the golden colour of Srimati Radharani, and You are widely distributing pure love of Krishna. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.¹

This is the *praṇāma-mantra* offered by Srila Rupa Goswami. When we offer obeisances to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu we offer this *praṇāma-mantra*. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is *mahā-vadānyāyāvatāra*, the most munificent incarnation, because He gives *kṛṣṇa-prema*. No other incarnation gives *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is non-different from Krishna and He gives *kṛṣṇa-prema* without discrimination. *Patita pāmara nāhi bāche* — He never discriminates whether one is very elevated or very degraded. Even on the part of Lord Brahma such *kṛṣṇa-prema* is very difficult to attain. So how can we get it? It is only by the causeless mercy of Mahaprabhu. He never considers whether one deserves it or not. Generally, you get what you deserve. But Srīman Mahaprabhu is so wonderfully merciful, wonderfully magnanimous and wonderfully munificent that he offers *kṛṣṇa-prema* indiscriminately to one and all. Still, does everyone get it? That is another question.

Liquid Mellow

Mahaprabhu gives *prema-rasa*, loving mellow.

*ānanda-līlāmaya-vigrahāya
hemābha-dīvyā-cchavi-sundarāya
tasmai mahā-prema-rasa-pradāya
caitanya-candrāya namo namaḥ te*

O Lord Chaitanya-chandra! O Lord whose form is full of blissful pastimes! O Lord whose complexion is as splendid as gold! O Lord who gives in charity the most glorious mellow of pure love for Lord Krishna! I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.²

Srila Prabhodhananda Saraswati uses the phrase “*mahā-prema-rasa*”. When referring to mellow, *rasa*, it is not something solid. It is liquid. *Prema-rasa* is to be tasted, relished. Have you gotten *prema*? No? Mahaprabhu is the giver and we are the receivers. We should receive *kṛṣṇa-prema*. So why is it that we cannot receive it? If I offer to give you something: “All right, take this.” How will you take it? You may stretch out your hand and say, “Yes. Give me, give me, give me.” But this is mellow. If someone gives you some mellow you need to have a proper container in which to receive it. If there are holes in your container, how can you receive it? Everything will pour out. With what type of container shall we approach Mahaprabhu to receive the *prema-rasa* that He is giving?

If you go to the Ganges with a pot that is completely filled to the brim with filthy, nasty things, how can you get Ganges water? You must examine the pot to see whether it is suitable or not. If it is filled with filthy things, first remove them and wash it out. Let it be vacant. Then you can get Ganges water. Similarly, Mahaprabhu is giving *prema-rasa*, loving mellow. So how can we approach Him, and with what kind of container? Do you know?

Lions Milk

Another question is there. You can put the milk of a cow in an earthen pot, but can you put the milk of a lioness in an earthen pot? If you go to receive the milk of a lioness in an earthen pot, you cannot get it because the milk of a lioness is very strong. An earthen pot has many pores in it, so it will crack and everything will pour out. To get the milk of a lioness a golden pot is required. Mahaprabhu gives *prema-rasa*, loving mellow. You must approach Him with a proper container that has no holes in it. It is said that Chaitanya is like a lion, *caitanya-simha*. He roars like a lion, He has the shoulders of a lion, and He was born in the *simha-rāśi*, *phalgunī pūrṇimā* the full moon day of the month of Phalgun.

He is a lion, *caitanya-simha*. So when He gives *prema-rasa*, what type of container is required to receive it? The proper container is the heart. You cannot receive it with your hands or any other container. The container is your heart. Only with that container can you get the *prema-rasa* given by Mahaprabhu. But you should examine your

heart to see that there are no holes in it. Is it a pure heart? If there are holes or nasty things in it, how can you get *prema-rasa*? *Kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *mātsarya*: lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and enviousness. These are the nasty things. These are the holes in the container. Although Mahaprabhu gives indiscriminately to one and all, why is it that one and all are not getting it? How will our hearts be free from all these things? How can we take care of the container of the heart so that we may receive Mahaprabhu’s mercy and make a success of our human birth?

Offer Respect to All

Mahaprabhu gives this *prema* through chanting the holy name.

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

mukhya pati jīva pāya kṛṣṇa-prema dhana
niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana

If your chanting is pure, offenseless, then you will definitely get *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Do not commit any offenses, *namāparādha*. Chant the pure name. Mahaprabhu gives *prema* through chanting, but He gives a condition:

trṇād api sunīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā
*amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*³

One should think oneself much humbler than a blade of grass lying in the street. *Taror iva sahiṣṇunā* — one should be as tolerant as a tree. *Amāninā mānadena* — we should not demand respect for ourselves but rather we should give respect to one and all. The pot of the heart should be made up of these four constituents. Mahaprabhu is the giver and you are the receiver. If your pot is not made up of these constituents, how can you receive?

A Vaishnava is Prideless

To explain this verse, Kaviraja Goswami has written:

uttama hañā āpanāke māne trṇādhama
dui-prakāre sahiṣṇutā kare vṛkṣa-sama

These are the symptoms of one who chants the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*: Although he is very exalted, he thinks himself lower than the grass on the ground, and, like a tree, he tolerates everything in two ways:⁴

vṛkṣa yena kāṭileha kichu nā bolaya
śukāñā maileha kāre pānī nā māgaya

“When a tree is cut down it does not protest, and even when drying up it does not ask anyone for water.”⁵

*yei ye māgaye, tāre deya āpana-dhana
gharma-vṛṣṭi sahe, ānera karaye rakṣaṇa*

The tree delivers its fruits, flowers and whatever it possesses to anyone and everyone. It tolerates scorching heat and torrents of rain, yet it still gives shelter to others.⁶

*uttama hañā vaiṣṇava habe nirabhimāna
jīve sammāna dibe jāni’ ‘kṛṣṇa’-adhiṣṭhāna*

Although a *vaiṣṇava* is the most exalted person, he is prideless and gives all respect to everyone, knowing everyone to be the resting-place of Krishna.⁷

A *vaiṣṇava* is a very elevated person, but his mood is, “I am the lowest of the low. Everyone is superior to me. No one is below me.” That is *trṇād api sunīcena* — no pride at all. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Krishna says,

*dambho darpo ‘bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pārūṣyam eva ca
ajñānam cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurīm*

Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance - these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature, O son of Prtha.⁸

Pride is a demoniac quality. A *vaiṣṇava* is prideless. He gives respect to one and all because he sees Krishna in the heart of everyone — *kṛṣṇa-adhiṣṭhāna*. He does not disrespect even a tiny ant because he sees the relationship with Krishna, “This is Krishna’s *jīva*.”

*ei-mata hañā yei kṛṣṇa-nāma laya
śrī-kṛṣṇa-carane tānra prema upajaya*

If one chants the holy name of Krishna in this manner, he will certainly awaken his dormant love for Krishna’s lotus feet.⁹

This is the condition given by Mahaprabhu. Although Mahaprabhu gives *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and although we may chant for many years, still we cannot get it if we do not follow His teachings. We have so much pride, arrogance, conceit, and ignorance — all demoniac qualities. We are not taking care of the pot. Our heart is the container in which we can receive the *prema-rasa* given by Mahaprabhu. But we have not examined the pot. Our pot has so many holes that although He gives, everything just pours out. We must understand this. Krishna says that this pride, arrogance, conceit, harshness and ignorance are demoniac characteristics. Demons are generally proud, puffed-up persons. But one who has come to this path of devotional service should

not be proud at all. He should be very humble, much humbler than a blade of grass. A *vaiṣṇava* is a very elevated person, but he always thinks, “I am the lowest of the low.” Mahaprabhu is teaching this, not theoretically, but practically.

Notes

¹ Cc. madhya 19.53.

⁵ Cc. antya 20.23.

² Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta text 9.

⁶ Cc. antya 20.24.

³ Śikṣāṣṭaka 3.

⁷ Cc. antya 20.25.

⁴ Cc. antya 20.22.

⁸ Bg. 16.4.

⁹ Cc. antya 20.26.

REGAINING A LOST KINGDOM

EXCERPTS FROM THE LIFE OF MAHARAJA CHODAGANGADEV

Devendravarma Rajaraja of the Ganga dynasty ruled Kalinga, Central Orissa, from A.D. 1070 to 1078. After his untimely death his son, Ananta Chodagangadev, became king at a very young age. A great devotee of Lord Jagannath, Maharaja Chodagangadev is credited with having built the present temple of Jagannath in Puri. (Until the beginning of the twentieth century scholars had credited Maharaja Anangabhim II with the building of the Jagannath temple. But in 1990 two copper plate inscriptions were found in Puri at the Trimali Math. These, together with the copper plates of the Gaṅga king Narasimha II which were found in 1892, clearly identify Maharaja Chodagangadev as the builder.)

The following story from the life of Chodagangadev is found, with some small variations, in the history books of Andhra Pradesh, as well as in the Rājacarita of the Mādālāpāñji, containing the history of the kings of Orissa, and also in the Rāmacarita of Sandyakar Nandi, a contemporary of Chodagangadev in Bengal.

Curse of Bhimakavi

Once, the powerful ascetic poet Bhimakavi came to visit the court of Maharaja Chodagangadev. When he was refused entrance, Bhimakavi became very angry and cursed Chodagangadev that within thirty-two days he would lose his kingdom and all of his wealth to his enemies. Shortly after this, the king of Sajjanagara (Jajpur) invaded his kingdom and Chodaganga had to flee. One of Chodagangadev’s enemies was made king.

Chodagangadev was left wandering alone with no friends and no place to go. During the darkness of night he fell down in a ditch by the road. Just then a man was passing by in a palanquin. Seeing the distress of Chodagangadev the man got down and gave him assistance. The former king explained who he was and that his current plight was due to his offense to the great Bhimakavi. Hearing the words of Chodagangadev the man became pleased and revealed that he was actually Bhimakavi. He then blessed Raja Chodagangadev that he would soon defeat the king of Sajjanagara and regain his kingdom.

Theatre

Some days after this a traveling theatre group of the *Kucipuḍi Bhāgavata* sect was passing by. They were on their way to Kalinga-nagara (present-day Cuttack), the capital of Kalinga, for the *paṭṭābhiṣekha*, grand coronation ceremony of the new king. On the way the man carrying all of their musical instruments had died and they were in need of a replacement. They saw Chodagangadev sitting by the road singing a song. Not recognizing him as the former king, they invited him to carry their musical instruments in exchange for meals. Chodagangadev agreed and they shortly arrived at Kalinga-nagara.

The new king made all arrangements for the theatre party. It was decided that they would perform a drama of how the king had defeated Chodagangadev and captured the throne. The chief of the group decided that since he was very brave and could sing well, the newly recruited member of the troupe would be the best person to play Chodagangadev. For his costume they took the sword, horse and crown of the new king.

On the day of the performance, the king, his ministers, and many people gathered to see. When the curtains opened they saw Chodagandadev sitting on a horse with a sword and a crown. Everyone was amazed to see how much the actor looked like Chodagangadev. Chodagangadev suddenly jumped into the audience, came near the new king, and with a single swoop of his sword cut off his head. He then sat down in his former throne and declared to his old ministers that it was actually he, Chodagangadev. The now dead king's followers fled the kingdom in fear. ❀

Adapted from Kailash Chandra Dash. *Legend, History and Culture of India*. Calcutta. Punthi-Pustak. 1997.

WANDER IN VRINDAVAN

*bhrātara bhogaḥ su-bhuktāḥ ka iha na bhavatā
nāpi saṁsāra madhye
vidyā-dānādharādyaḥ kati kati jagati khyāti-
pūjādy-alabdhaḥ
adyāhāre 'pi yādṛcchika uru-guṇavān apy aho
saṁvṛtāt mā
śrīmad-vṛndāvane 'smin satatam aṭa sakhe
sarvato mukta-saṅgaḥ*

O brother, what kinds of enjoyment have you not already experienced in this world of birth and death? What kind of fame and worship have you not already attained in this world by scholarship, charity and sacrifice? For today, O friend, simply accept whatever food comes unsought, look to see the good qualities in others and not their faults, do not put yourself forward but remain obscure and unknown, and continually wander without any companion in this beautiful forest of Vrindavan. ❀

— Srila Prabhodananda Saraswati's *Śrī Vṛndāvana-mahimāṁṛta* 2.14.
Translated by Sripad Kusakratha Prabhu

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