



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Issue No. 193

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

7 January 2009

Śrī Putradā Ekādaśī, 26 Nārāyaṇa, 522 Gaurābda

Circulation, 2,426

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FLYING ON OUR INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*



Our relationship is eternal. But if somebody lags behind, so in spite of our eternal relationship one may not meet the other at the destination. Just like a flock of birds—although they are very intimately related, each one of them has to fly in the

sky by individual strength. If one is less strong the others cannot keep him in the sky. That is the law of nature. So long as every one of you is strong in Krishna Consciousness, there is no doubt that you can fly to the spiritual sky and meet together without failure. Therefore, individual strength is most important. And that individual strength is achieved in the association of devotees also. ❀

— Letter to Satsvarupa. 20 September 1968.

INITIATION INTO SPIRITUAL LIFE

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati
Thakur Prabhupada
Sri Sajjana-toshani Dec. 1928
Volume 26, No. 7*

Concluded from the last issue

The much vaunted "individual liberty" is a figment of the diseased imagination. We are bound willingly or unwillingly to submit to the laws of God in the material as well as in the spiritual world. The hankering for

freedom in defiance of his laws is the cause of all our miseries. The total abjuration of all hankering for such freedom is the condition of admission to the spiritual realm. Here in this world we desire such freedom but are compelled against our will to submit to the inexorable laws of physical nature. This is the unnatural state. Such unwillingness to accept forced submission bars us from admission into the spiritual realm. In this world, mundane moral principles attract our submission. But even morality is a curtailment of freedom necessitated by the peculiar circumstances of this world. The soul, who does not belong to this world, is in a state of open rebellion against submission to an alien domination. By his very constitution he is capable of submitting willingly only to the absolute.

The good preceptor asks the struggling soul to submit not to the laws of this world, which will only rivet its chains, but to the higher law of the spiritual realm. The pretence of submission to the laws of the spiritual realm without the intention of really carrying them out in practice is often mistaken for genuine submission. In this world, the fully convinced state is non-existent. We are, therefore, compelled in all cases to act on make-believes, viz. the so-called "working hypotheses". The good preceptor tells us to change this method of activity which we have learnt from our experience of this world. He invites us first of all to be really and fully informed of the nature and laws of the other world, which is eternally and categorically different from this phenomenal world. If during the period of novitiate we do not sincerely submit to be instructed in the alphabets

of the life eternal but go on perversely asserting, however unconsciously, our present processes and so-called convictions against the instructions of the preceptor, we are bound to remain where we are. Because the two worlds have nothing in common, this will also amount to the practical rejection of all advice, a fact that we naturally fail to understand because we continue to believe in accordance with our accustomed methods that we are at any rate *partially* following the preceptor. In fact, when we reserve the right of choice we are really following ourselves, because even when we seem to agree to follow the preceptor it is only because he appears to be in agreement with ourselves. But as the two worlds have absolutely nothing in common, we are only under a delusion when we suppose that we truly understand the method or the object of the preceptor. Faith in the scriptures can alone help us in this otherwise impractical endeavor. With the help of the *śāstras* we believe in the preceptor — when we understand neither. As soon as we are fully convinced of the necessity of submitting unambiguously to the good preceptor, it is then and only then that he is enabled to show us the way into the spiritual world.

The crux of the matter lies not in the external nature of the ceremony of initiation as it appears to us — that is bound to be unintelligible to us, being an affair of the other world — but in the conviction of the necessity of and the successful choice of a really good preceptor. We can attain to the conviction of the necessity of the help of a good preceptor by the exercise of our unbiased reason in the light of our ordinary experience. When this conviction has been truly formed, Sri Krishna himself helps us in finding the really good preceptor in two ways. In the first place he instructs us as regards the character and functions of a good preceptor through the revealed *śāstras*. In the second place he himself sends to us the good preceptor at the moment when we are at all likely to benefit from his instructions. The good preceptor also comes to us even when we reject him. In such cases also it is certainly Krishna who sends him to us for no reason whatsoever. Krishna has revealed from eternity the tidings of the spiritual realm in the form of transcendental sounds that have been handed down in the records of the spiritual scriptures all over the world. The spiritual scriptures help all those who are prepared to exercise their reason for the purpose of finding not the relative but the absolute truth, to find out the proper instructor in accordance with their directions. The only good preceptor is he who can make

Nāma-tattva

NAMA SADHANA Sri la Thakur Bhaktivinode's Jaiva Dharma, chapter 23

Vijaya: What is the process of *harināma-sādhana*?

Raghunatha Das Babaji: One must chant *harināma* on *tulasī* beads. If beads are not available, one may count on one's fingers. In any case, one must chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* continuously without committing offences. The reason for chanting upon beads or counting upon one's fingers is to ensure reaching a fixed number of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and to note whether one's chanting is increasing. Tulasi Devi is very dear to the supreme lord. Therefore chanting *harināma* in contact with her in the form of *tulasī* beads enhances one's feeling and attachment for *harināma*.

Vijaya: Gurudeva, there are nine limbs of the practice of *bhakti*, which are further sub-divided into sixty-four items. Chanting *harināma* is one of them. If we chant incessantly, where is the time to execute any of the other limbs?

Raghunatha Das Babaji: The proposal to chant incessantly does not present a contradiction, for the sixty-four divisions are included within the nine limbs of *bhakti*. These nine branches of *bhakti* can be executed in any form, through deity worship in the temple, or by chanting in solitude, or by chanting in the association of elevated devotees. To hear, chant, remember, serve, and so on in the presence of the deities is factually in the category of chanting *harināma*. When one is unable to chant before the deities, one may recollect the deities within one's mind and then hear, chant, remember, and serve the deities. In this way, one may execute all the nine processes of *bhakti* within the mind in the form of chanting *harināma*. Those who are fortunate by the blessings of the Lord have a special taste for constant chanting. Automatically they are simultaneously engaged in all the nine branches of *bhakti*. Certainly chanting *harināma* is the most potent of all the nine limbs. Therefore, when the devotee chants in full ecstasy there is nothing lacking, even though none of the other limbs are apparently visible. ❀

— Adapted from the edition translated by Sri Sarvabhavana Das. Published by Brhat Mridanga Press, Vrindavan, 2003.

us understand the spiritual scriptures and enable us to realize the necessity and the nature of submission to the processes laid down in them.

But there is still every chance of foul play. A very clever man or a magician may pass himself off as a person who can properly explain the scriptures by means of his greater knowledge or deceptive arts. It is very important, therefore, that we should be on our guard against such tricks. The scholar as well as the magician pretend to explain the scriptures, and do so only in terms of the happenings of this world. But the scriptures themselves declare that they do not speak of the things of this world. Those who are liable to be deluded by the arts of perverted yogis persuade themselves into believing that the spiritual is identical with the perversion, distortion, or defiance of the laws of physical nature. The laws of physical nature are not unreal. They govern the relation of all relative existences. In our present state it is, therefore, always possible for another, who possesses the power or the knowledge, to demonstrate the tentative character of what we choose to regard as our deepest convictions by exposing their insufficiency or inapplicability. But such surprises belong to the realm of the phenomenal, and thus they have nothing to do with the absolute. Those who have an unspiritual partiality for scholarship or for magic fall into the clutches of the pseudo-religionists. The serious plight of these victims of their own perversity can be realized by the fact that no one can be delivered from the state of ignorance by force. It is not possible to save a man who refuses on principle to listen to the voice of reason. The empiric pedants are no exception to this rule.

When we actually feel the need of the guidance of the good preceptor, the plain meaning of the *śāstras* are our only guide to seek him out. The scriptures have defined the good preceptor as one who himself leads the spiritual life. It is not any worldly qualifications that make the good preceptor. It is by unreserved submission to such a preceptor that we can be helped to reenter into the realm that is our real home. That real home is unfortunately veritable terra incognita [incomprehensible] to almost all of us at present. It is also impossible to attain access to it via our material bodies and minds, which are the result of the disease of abuse of our faculty of free reason and the consequent accumulation of a killing load of worldly experiences that we have learnt to regard as the very stuff of our existence. ❀

— The Harmonist, No. 2. Published by The Vaishnava Book Trust. Vrindavan. 2006

PRAYERS TO SRINIVAS ACHARYA Yadunandan Das' Karṇānanda, chapter 7

For more about Yadunandan Das and Karṇānanda, see KK Bindu issues 10 and 171.

*śrī rāmacandra pade mora koṭi namaskāra
yāra mukhe śunilā rājā siddhāntera sāra*

I offer my obeisances millions and millions of times to the feet of Sri Ramacandra Kaviraj. The king heard nectarean *siddhānta* from his mouth. (Text 166)

*dayā kara ohe prabho rāmacandrera nātha
karuṇā kariyā prabho karaha kṛtārtha*

O prabhu, master of Ramachandra (Srinivas Acharya)! Please be merciful! Bestow your favor upon me! (Text 167)

*svagaṇe karuṇā kara śrī ācārya ṭhākura
janme janme ha-u tomāra ucchiṣṭera kukkura*

Be merciful to your devotee, O Acharya Thakur! Life after life may I be a dog eating your remnants! (Text 168)

*kukkura ha-iyā rahiba sei sthāne
kabhu yadi dayā kara nayanera koṇe*

Becoming your dog, I'll stay with you and get your merciful sidelong glances. (Text 169)

*dayā kara ohe prabho sadaya antare
janme janme rahi yena tuyā parikare*

O Prabhu! Being kind-hearted, be merciful to me. Birth after birth may I have association with your devotees. (Text 170)

*tomāra pratijñā śuni manera ullāsa
nija gaṇe dayā kara pūra mora āśa*

If I can hear you give such an assurance it will give great pleasure to my mind. Your mercy can fulfill my desires. (Text 171)

*kṛpā kara ohe prabho karuṇāra sindhu
pātakira trāṇa hetu tumi dīnabandhu*

O Prabhu! O ocean of compassion! Please be merciful to me! Because you deliver sinful wretches you are known as the friend of the fallen. (Text 172)

*dante tṛṇa dhari āmi ei mātra cāṇa
janme janme yena tūyā parikare gāṇa*

With straw in my teeth I place before you this single desire. Birth after birth may I have association with your devotees. (Text 173)

*tuyā pade ohe prabho ki kahiba āra
adhama durgata jane kara aṅgikāra*

O Prabhu! What more can I speak unto your lotus feet? You consider the most fallen and unfortunate persons to be your very own. (Text 174)

*pātakira trāṇa hetu tomāra avatāra
ataeva uddhāra prabho mo hena durācāra*

You appeared for the purpose of delivering sinful wretches. Therefore, Prabhu, please deliver me, for I am greatly fallen! (Text 175)

*muñi chāra hīna buddhi nivedita kata
nija citte bujhi kara yebā manonīta*

Who has a more debased intelligence than me? Please think about me/judge me and do what you please. (Text 176)

*nigraha karaha kibā kara anugraha
jāga mājhe keha nāhi bujhi dekha eha*

Punish me or favor me as you please. Please know that for me there is no one but you in this world. (Text 177)

*dayā kara ohe prabho la-inu śaraṇa
kṛpā kari kara mora vāñchita pūraṇa*

O Prabhu, please be merciful to me. I'm taking shelter of you. Please be merciful on me and fulfill my desire. (Text 178)

*tuyā vinu ohe prabho mora nāhi gati
dīna hīna jane dayā karaha samprati*

O Prabhu, I have no other hope than you, the bestower of mercy on the fallen and lowly. (Text 179)

*daiva krame anya janma haye ta āmāra
sekhāne milaye yena tuyā parikara*

If by the arrangement of providence I can be yours in another birth, then I can associate with your spiritual family. (Text 180)



SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:
Gopal Jiu Publications

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National Highway No. 5, IRC Village
Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India, 751015

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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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*bahu bhogya tuyā parikare janamiyā
āśa purṇa kara prabhu sadaya ha-iyā*

By great fortune someone takes birth as your associate. O Prabhu, please fulfill my desire! (Text 181)

*tabe pūrṇa haya prabhu mana abhilāṣa
janme janme ha-u tuyā dāsera anudāsa*

O Prabhu, please fulfill my desire; birth after birth may I be the servant of your servant. (Text 182)

*samvaraṇa kara citte svadāsa dekhīyā
tathāpiha tomāra guṇe khalabala hiyā*

You can decide about this, so kindly consider, seeing your servant. You even have a heart for the crooked. (Text 183)

*kata pāpī uddhārīlā karuṇā bātāse
pātakī avadhi prabhu rahi gela deśe*

How many sinners have been delivered by the cool breeze of your mercy? Prabhu, you came here for the worst of sinners. (Text 184)

*hena jane uddhāriyā dekhāo nijabala
pātakī uddhāra nāma tabe se saphala*

Such a person as you shows their strength by delivering others. If you deliver this sinner then your name as the deliverer of the sinful will be fulfilled. (Text 185)

*sādhya sādhana āmi kichu-i nā jāni
tomāra sambandhe bhṛtya ei mātra jāni*

I don't know anything about the goal (*sādhyā*) or the means to attain it (*sādhana*). My connection with you as your lowly servant is all I know. (Text 187)

*kṛpā kari pūrṇa kara āśāra bandhana
e dīna dukhita janera ei nivedana*

Please be merciful and fulfill the limit of my desire. This fallen, unhappy person places his submission before you. (Text 188)

*vaiṣṇava gosāñi mora patita pāvana
kṛpā kari deha prabhu caraṇe śaraṇa*

O Vaishnava Gosai, my friend of the fallen! Be merciful, Prabhu, and give me shelter at your lotus feet. (Text 189)

*adoṣa daraśī citta tomā sabākāra
ataeva doṣa kichu nā labe āmāra*

Your mentality is to not see anyone's faults, therefore please don't see any of my faults. (Text 190)

*śrī kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhur dāsera anudāsa
tāra dāsera dāsa ei yadunandana dāsa*

The servant of the servant of he who is the follower of the servant of Sri Krishna Caitanya Prabhu is Yadunandan Das. (Text 197) ❧

— Translated by Krishnabhishek Das from the edition edited by Hari-bhakta Das, published by Sri Giridhari Lal Goswami Tirtha. Gaurabda 506. Bengali.