



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 207

Śrī Pavitrārōpiṇī Ekādaśī

1 August 2009

Circulation 2,585

Highlights

• **BEGGING FOR LOVE**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• **OBSERVING JANMASTAMI**

Notes from Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa



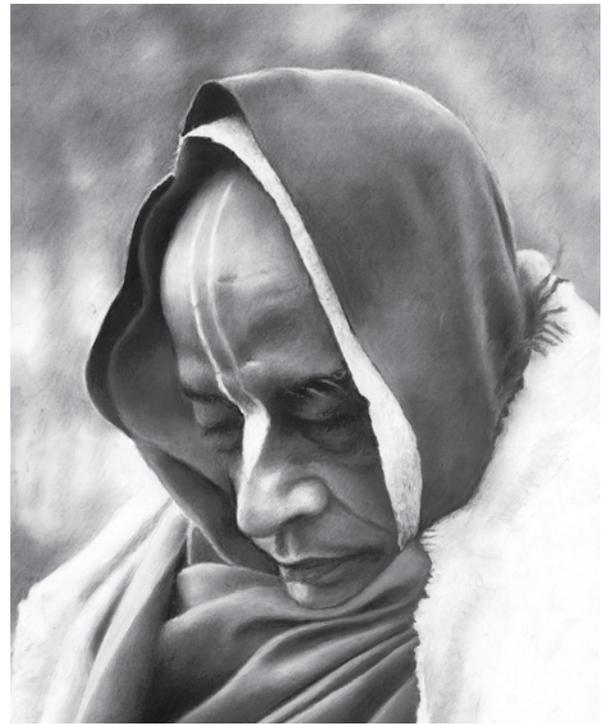
BEGGING FOR LOVE

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

[Krishna] is so opulent that he has no hankering. He is complete — *ṣaḍ-aiśvarya pūrṇaḥ*. He is complete with all six opulences in full. He is the richest, the wisest, the most famous, the strongest, the most influential, and the most renounced. Everything is complete in him. Then why is he asking *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ yo me bhaktiā prayacchatī?* He is so rich and so opulent, yet he is begging, “A little flower, a little water, or a little fruit, if offered to me with devotion and love, I accept and eat it.” We have lost our devotion, our faith in God. So he is begging love and faith. Not money. He is already opulent. What can you give him? And nothing belongs to you. You came from the womb of your mother empty-handed, and when you die you will go empty-handed. Actually, everything belongs to Krishna, but you claim that it belongs to you. That is your *māyā*, illusion. Therefore, out of his causeless mercy he sometimes begs, “Give me this.” Just like sometimes a father asks his child, “My dear boy, will you kindly give me a little cake from your portion?” And if the child is very fond of him, he immediately gives. Krishna is full. Why is he begging? He’s begging for your love. That’s all. Whenever Krishna wants some service from you or begs something from you, it does not mean that he is in need of it. He is not in need of it. But he is in need of your love because you have forgotten how to love God, how to love Krishna.

There is a story that once a *sannyāsī* went to a householder for begging. They are not beggars,



Drawing by Anuradha Dasī

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

but they introduce themselves like that so that the householder may receive and take advantage of his knowledge. So one beggar went to a householder, and the housewife said, “Oh, this beggar has come to our door. Give him some ashes.” So the *sannyāsī* replied, “All right. Give me some ashes. Just begin your charity.” Similarly, Krishna, when he asks, “Give me a little flower, a little fruit, a little water,” it does not mean that he is begging. He is just introducing me to the practice of offering everything to Krishna. ॐ

— Lecture in Montreal, 17 August 1968.

OBSERVING JANMASTAMI

Notes from Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa

Texts 247 to 542 of the 15th section of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* describe the glories of *Janmāṣṭamī* and how to observe it. The introduction to this section describes three reasons for observing the Lord's appearance day:

*nīyatvaṁ ca paraṁ tasya bhagavat-prīṇanān matam
vidhi-vākya-viśeṣāc cākāraṇe pratyavāyataḥ*

The observance of *Janmāṣṭamī* is accepted as a regulative principle in three ways: 1) the Supreme Lord becomes pleased when one observes it; 2) there are special *śāstric* injunctions requiring its observance; and 3) it is a fault to not observe it. (*Hbv.* 15.266)

For Krishna's Pleasure

That the observance of *Janmāṣṭamī* pleases Krishna is supported with the following statement from the *Skanda Purāṇa*:

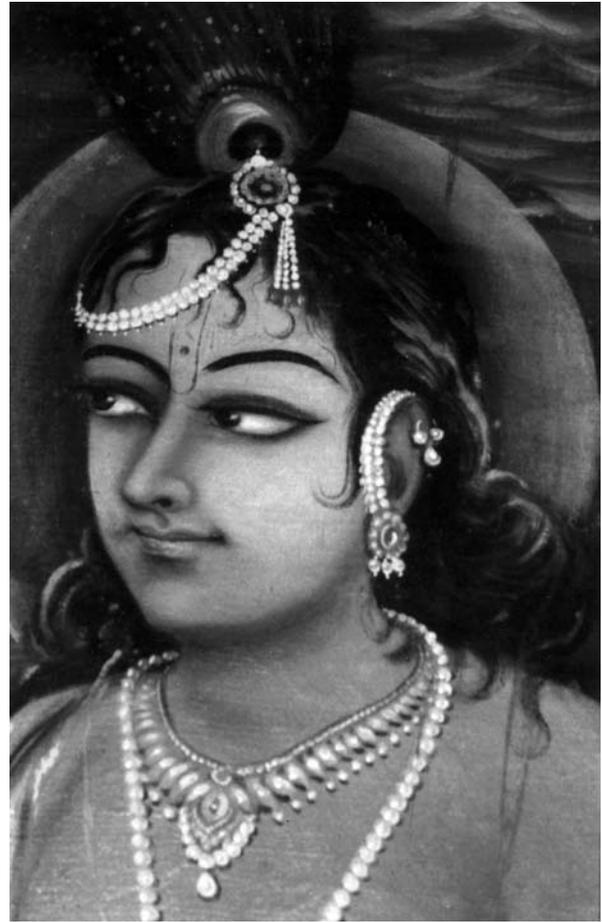
*prahlādādyaīś ca bhū-pālatiḥ kṛtā janmāṣṭamī śubhā
śraddhayā parayā viṣṇoḥ prītaye kṛṣṇa-vallabhā
prājāpatyarkṣa saṁyuktā śrāvāṇasyā sitāṣṭamī
varṣe varṣe tu kartavyā tuṣṭyartham cakra-pāṇinaḥ*

For the pleasure of Lord Vishnu, even great kings like Prahlad Maharaja faithfully observed the vow of *Janmāṣṭamī*, which is very dear to Krishna. It is the duty of everyone to celebrate *Janmāṣṭamī* every year, on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the moon in the month of *Śrāvāṇa*, when it is joined by the *Rohiṇī-nakṣatra*, for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, who carries a *cakra* in his hand. (*Hbv.* 15.267-68)

The Faults of Non-observance

Texts 269 to 282 of this section of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* cite the *Viṣṇu-rahasya Purāṇa* describing various ghastly reactions that one will suffer by not properly observing the *Janmāṣṭamī* fast and offering special worship to Krishna on this day. A few examples:

Eating on *Janmāṣṭamī* is equivalent to eating the flesh of a vulture, a crow, a hawk, or a human being. If one eats on *Janmāṣṭamī* they get the reaction of eating all the sins of the three worlds. If one eats even a tiny bit on *Janmāṣṭamī* they will be tortured by the Yamadutas after death.... Those who eat on *Janmāṣṭamī* take one hundred



generations of their ancestors and one hundred generations of their offspring with them to hell... It is the duty of all devotees to celebrate *Janmāṣṭamī*, even with a very small budget, for the pleasure of the son of Devaki. One should not fail to celebrate Krishna's appearance day, otherwise one will be forced to reside in hell for a *kalpa*. (Texts 270-272, 274, 282)

Material Benefits

Texts 283 to text 340 then go on to speak about the glories of following *Janmāṣṭamī* as collected from various *śāstric* sources. This section entices the reader with many material blessings. For example, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (Texts 283-284, 289-292) quotes from the *Bhaviṣṭottara Purāṇa* regarding the benefits of observing this festival:

[By observing *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī*] one becomes free from the sinful reactions committed in seven lives. One gets good children, good health and great wealth.... One will not have to fear enemies, and will get sufficient rainfall and never have to suffer from drought.



Sri Krishna, the enchanter of the universe

One will not have to fear natural calamities, hellish conditions, snakes, disease, or the attacks of rogues and thieves.

Bhaktivinode's Analysis

In this connection it is interesting to note Thakur Bhaktivinode's enumeration in the first chapter of *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* of the various general motivations people have to try to please the Lord:

- 1) *Bhaya* — out of fear.
- 2) *Āśā* — for satisfying material aspirations.
- 3) *Kartavya-buddhi* — out of a sense of duty (literally, "a mentality of what should be done").

4) *Rāga* — out of genuine attraction for the Lord.

Bhaktivinode elaborates on these motivations:

Those who take to worship of the Lord out of *bhaya*, *āśā* or *kartavya-buddhi* are not on such a pure level. Those who worship the Lord according to *rāga* are real worshipers... *Bhaya o āśā nitāsta heya* — *Bhaya* and *āśā* are extremely low class. When a practitioner's intelligence becomes clear, he gives up *bhaya* and *āśā*, and *kartavya-buddhi* becomes his sole motive. As long as *rāga* towards the Lord has not appeared, the devotee should not give up worship according to *kartavya-buddhi*. From this sense of duty, *kartavya-buddhi*, two considerations arise: *vidhi-samāna*, respect for the rules, and *avidhi-parityāga*, avoidance of those things contrary to the rules.

Srila Prabhupada's Instructions

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada also instructed his followers to abide by the rules of the *janmāṣṭamī-vrata*, such as fasting. He wrote in his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* 11.54:

There are so many rules and regulations, and if one at all wants to understand Krishna, he must follow the regulative principles described in the authoritative literature. One can perform penance in accordance with those principles. For example, to undergo serious penances one may observe fasting on *Janmāṣṭamī*, the day on which Krishna appeared, and on the two days of *Ekādaśī* (the eleventh day after the new moon and the eleventh day after the full moon).

Food Versus Prasadam

As cited above, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* [15.272] states that anyone eating even the smallest morsel on this day will have to go to hell. One may ask, then, why it is that Srila Prabhupada did not repeatedly stress this point, and why it is that that many *vaiṣṇavas* serve *prasādam* to their guests on *Janmāṣṭamī*? Although forbidding the eating of food on this day, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* does not describe any adverse reactions for persons who honor *prasādam*. Krishna states in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.13):

*yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbīṣaiḥ
bhuñjate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin.

Prior to the section describing the glories and rules of *Janmāṣṭamī*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* already described that *prasādam* is not to be considered food. Like Krishna himself, it is always situated beyond this material world. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (9.403-404) quotes the *Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*naivedyam jagadīśasya anna-pānādikaṁ ca yat
bhakṣyābhakṣa-vicāraś ca nāsti tad-bhakṣaṇe dvijāḥ
brahmāvan-nirvikāram hi yathā viṣṇus tathaiḥva tat*



SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada ©Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International. All other materials, unless specified, © ISKCON Bhubaneswar/Gopal Jiu Publications. All rights reserved. Blanket permission is given to redistribute Bindu in electronic or print form provided no changes are made to the contents.

Those foodstuffs and beverages that are offered to Krishna for his pleasure are transcendental and one should never try to distinguish them as eatables and non-eatables. Offerings to Sri Hari are transcendental, incorruptible, and non-different from Vishnu.

Honoring *prasādam* cannot result in any type of contamination. Rather, those who consider that Krishna's remnants, which are non-different from him, to have sin in them, or that there is some mundane fault associated with honoring them, are great offenders. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* further quotes the *Bṛhat-viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*vikāram ye prakurvanti bhakṣaṇe tad dvijātayaḥ
kuṣṭha-vyādhi-samāyuktāḥ putradāra-vivarjitāḥ
nirayaṁ yānti te viprā yasmān-nāvartate punaḥ*

O brahmins, those who have a perverted mentality, and think offerings to Sri Hari to be material, will suffer from leprosy, and reside in hell after losing their wife and children.

As stated in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* [15.282, quoted towards the beginning of this article], it is the duty of all devotees to personally observe *Janmāṣṭamī*. To not do so would be neglecting the instructions of *śāstra*. However, understanding the following principle given in the *Utkala khaṇḍa* (36.19-20) of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, many *vaiṣṇavas* don't hesitate to serve *prasādam* to their guests on *Janmāṣṭamī*:

*aśucir-vāpyanācāro manasā pāpam-ācaran
prāpti mātrena bhoktavyam nātra kārya vicāraṇā*

Even if one is in an unclean state of body or mind, or engaged in irreligious acts, he should eat *mahā-prasāda* whenever it is available to him. There is no need to deliberate on this.

— MD

Bibliography

— *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. English translation and commentary by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Bombay. 1995.

— Bhaktivinoda Thakur. *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*. Sri Chaitanya Math. Mayapur. Bengali. Gaurabda 420.

— *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-kaṇṭhahāra*. Compiled by Atindriya Bhakti-guṇakara. Sri Chaitanya Math. Mayapur. 1960. Bengali.

— 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.