



# Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्  
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Highlights

- **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR KIRTAN**  
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
- **ALL-ATTRACTIVE HARI-KATHA**  
Commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.1.4
- **VRINDAVAN-DHAMA AND RADHA-NAMA**  
Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati's Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛtam (9.84)



## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR KIRTAN

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I think that you can go on playing your guitar and make it successful for *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*. You do not require to learn sitar. We are not meant for learning something new for the service of the Lord, but we have to engage whatever talents we have already got. Our life is short but any type of education is great and long, so the better part of valor is to utilize properly whatever qualifications we have got for the service of the Lord. (Letter to Murari, 3 August 1967.)

Any sitar player or tabla player or any other musician invited in the temple cannot play anything except Hare Krishna. Neither can anyone utilize the temple for some musical demonstration. Such things are items for sense gratification. If somebody comes in the temple to chant Hare Krishna by his musical talents he is welcome, otherwise not. Please follow this principle. (Letter to Mukunda, 13 May 1967.)

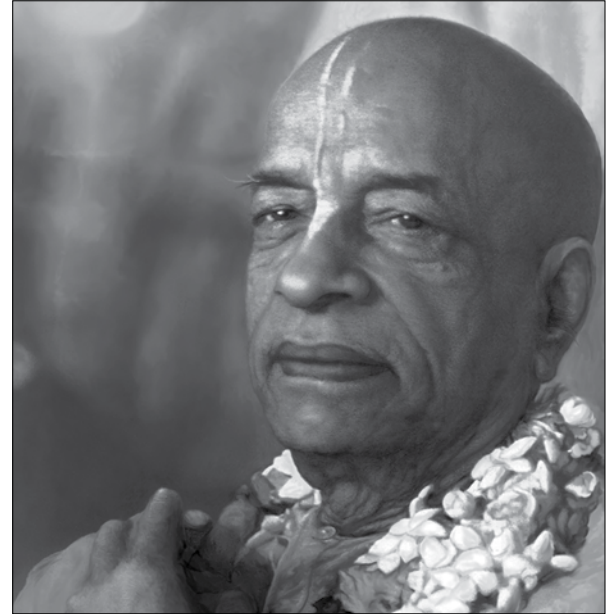
Our concentration should be towards hearing Hare Krishna. That is *bhakti*. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu simply played this *karatāla*, *khola*, that's all. In those days, of course, there was no harmonium, but many stringed instruments were there — sitar, *esarāja*. But these things were not used. Sometimes we do use to attract people, but it is not required. (Room Conversation. 26 December 1976.)

## ALL-ATTRACTIVE HARI-KATHA

Commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.1.4

*nivṛtta-tarṣair upaḡīyamānād*

*bhavaṣadhāc chrotra-mano 'bhirāmāt*



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

*ka uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt*

*pumān virajyeta vinā paśuḡhnāt*

[This Hari-kathā is attractive for all.] It is sung by those who are already on the liberated platform due to being free from all material hankering. It is the medicine [for those who are aiming for liberation]. Moreover, it gives pleasure to the ears and minds [of those who are complete materialists]. Due to all these reasons, which person will cease from hearing such *kathā*, except for a butcher or the killer of his own soul?

**Srila Sridhar Swami:** In this world there are three types of people — 1) the liberated, 2) those who desire liberation, and 3) the materialists. This verse states how none of these three types of people should have

*alam buddhi*, the thought that, “Now I have heard enough (*alam*) *hari-kathā*. Let me stop now.”

The first of the three categories is the *nivṛtta-tarṣaiḥ*, liberated souls who are freed from all material hankerings. [The *Bhāgavatam* is sung by them.] The second category is the *mumukṣu*, those who desire liberation, as even for them this *hari-kathā* is the exclusive solution. This is specified by the term *bhavausadhāt*, that it is the medicine for curing the disease of material existence. The third category is the materialists who desire sense gratification, and for such people, too, this *hari-kathā* is an unprecedented source of sense gratification. This is specified in the term *śrotra-mano 'bhirāmāt*, it provides great delight to the ears and the mind.

[*Vinā-paśughnāt* indicates that there are two types of people who do not delight in such *kathā* and therefore give it up.] This term can be understood in two ways, *vinā-apaśughnāt* and *vinā-paśughnāt*. The first meaning is except for one who kills (*hna*) [the true self-interest of] his pure soul (*apa-śug*). The second meaning is except for the *paśughnāt*, a butcher or hunter.

**Srila Jiva Goswami:** [King Parikshit intends to say in this verse that] even after hearing the pastimes of the Lord in great detail, there is a doubt that I will be satisfied.

The term *nivṛtta-tarṣair* means that such *kathā* is sung by the *bhaktas*, the devotees. The prefix *upa* in *upagīyamānāt* means that this *kathā* is sung more and more by devotees due to it being greater than all other spiritual practices. Due to the fact that such *kathā* bestows the highest result, the devotees sing it always and this indicates the supreme pleasurable nature of this *kathā*.

[Srila Sridhar Swami had described the first category as *muktas* or those who are already liberated]. These *muktas* are of two types — the *jñānis* and the *bhaktas*. Another way to categorize *muktas* is to divide them according to the four types of liberations they have achieved (*sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, *sārūpya* and *sārṣṭi*).

**[Translator’s Note:** Srila Jiva Goswami has divided the first category into two — the *jñānis* and the *bhaktas*. So according to him there should be a special category for the devotees. Also, since Srila Jiva Goswami only mentioned four types of liberation and did not mention the fifth, *sāyujya*, it indicates that he does not consider those who have merged with the Lord to be truly liberated].

[The third category is described by the term] *bhavausadhāt*, which means that for *mumukṣus*, those



Unknown artist

Members of the Pancha-tattva and the 64 mahants hear kṛṣṇa-kathā

who desire liberation, it is the medicine which relieves all distresses. For them it is also *śrotra-mano 'bhirāmāt*, it provides joy to their ears and mind. By its sound it delights the ears (*śrotra*), and by its meanings the mind (*mano*) is completely (*abhi*) delighted (*rāmāt*).

The remaining category is those who desire material enjoyment, and for them, too, it provides happiness. It should be noted here that for the devotees it provides more joy than for the next two categories (those liberated due to *jñāna* as well as those aspiring for liberation) and therefore the devotees should be placed in the first category.

**[Translator’s Note:** Thus, according to Sri Jiva, the first category consists of those who are liberated due to *bhakti*. The second category consists of those who are liberated due to *jñāna*. The third category consists of those who are aspiring for liberation and the fourth category consists of those who are aspiring for material enjoyment.]

Also it should be known that the fourth category, those who are aspiring for material enjoyment, are also eligible for such *kathā*. In this way since *hari-kathā* is the means as well as the goal, it should be relished in a mood of service by one and all.

*uttama-śloka-guṇānuvādāt* — “He who has the best (*uttama*) glories (*śloka*) is known as *uttama-śloka*. He is the Supreme Lord and has qualities (*guṇa*) such as eternality, transcendence, unparalleled magnanimity, affection, etc.” The constant repetition (*anuvādāt*) of such qualities is *uttama-śloka-guṇānuvādāt*. Who will stop listening to this *kathā* or become satiated by it?

**[Translator’s Note:** Why do the devotees sing such *kathā*? Why not meditate upon it or hear it privately? Sri Jiva Goswami replies as follows.]

For pure devotees, the joy of such *līlā-kathā* constantly arises spontaneously within their hearts. This joy is

even greater than the joy of merging into impersonal Brahman. Due to it swelling like ocean waves in their heart, it comes out naturally in the form of songs. Therefore, due to singing being their natural reaction, the verse speaks about singing [and not meditating]. Therefore, the pure devotees are listed as the first category. On the contrary, such spontaneous energy does not arise in those who are aspiring for liberation or those who are aspiring for material enjoyment. For them, the terms *bhavauṣadhāt* and *chrotra-mano 'bhirāmāt* have been used. This means that for them such *kathā* enters like a medicine (*bhavauṣadha*) through the ears (*śrotra*) into the mind (*manaḥ*). Through this, the importance of the ears is indicated for such people, but the importance of hearing through ears is comparatively lesser than the importance of the previously described activity of singing.

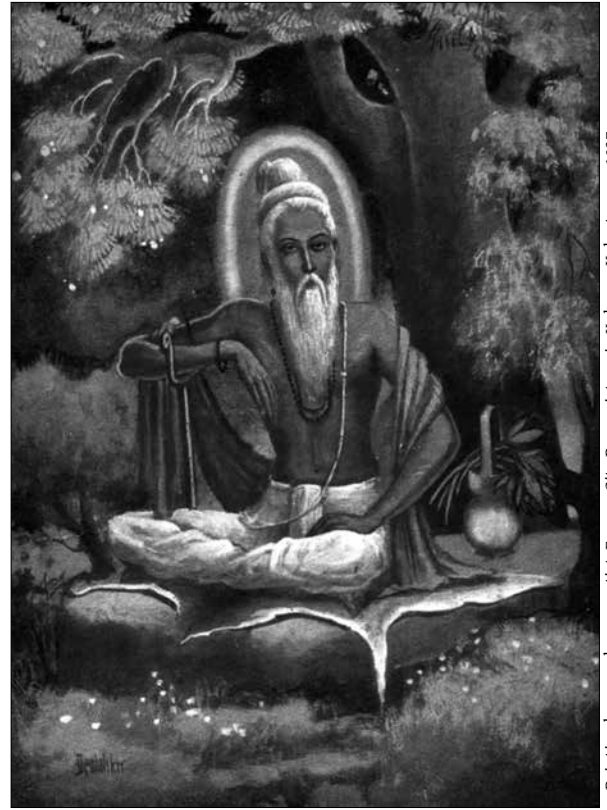
In the second category, those who are liberated through *jñāna*, such *kathā* arises in their heart naturally as the means to achieve their topmost goal, any one of the four types of liberation, and naturally gives pleasure to their ears and mind.

[**Translator's Note:** The second category is inferior to the first because such *kathā* does not come out spontaneously through their mouths in the form of songs and stays restricted to the heart.]

In the third category, those who are aspiring for liberation, such *kathā* enters through the ears and causes delight to the mind but does not arise spontaneously in the heart [and thus they are lower than the first two categories]. For the fourth category, those who are aspiring for material enjoyment, they are situated lower than the first category and higher than the other two categories.

[**Translator's Note:** How can the fourth category be higher than two of the other categories? This is because the materialists may also sing the Lord's songs, but out of a spirit of material enjoyment. Still, because they sing such songs out of spontaneous materialism, they are better off than the *jñānīs* and those desirous of liberation, who do not sing such songs. But someone may object by saying that it should either be a decreasing sequence or an increasing sequence. Srila Jiva Goswami replies by saying the following:]

In this literature, three types of sequences of terms are found—(1) successively superior, (2) successively inferior, and (3) randomly superior/inferior. Among these three sequences, the successively superior and successively



Painting by an unknown artist. From a Gita Press picture in Kalyana-Kalpātaru. c. 1937

Srila Vyasa dev writing Śrīmad Bhāgavatam in the Himalayas

inferior sequences are often used where one wants to express *kaimutya*, the mood of “how much more” or “what to speak of ...”. The random type of sequence is seen when the speaker is not exactly worried about a sequence or when the speaker neglects to arrange in a specific sequence due to ecstasy.

So it should be known that the first three categories of people as mentioned above are successively inferior whereas the fourth category is a random case, being inferior to the first category but superior to the remaining two.

[The materialists are superior because] of thinking, “Neither am I liberated due to knowledge nor do I desire liberation. The *kathā* gives joy to my ears and mind because I am a sense-enjoyer, but still I will not desist from listening to it.”

[The term *pumān* (man) has been used in the verse. Does it indicate only men? Srila Jiva Goswami says that] the term *pumān* implies that someone like a lady who may not be fully independent or a person having no gender may not be able to qualify themselves to listen continuously. They may have to stop listening [due to their social restrictions]. Another interpretation is that since males are dominant in all species, therefore they are mentioned. Or another meaning of *pumān* is

“soul”. In this final interpretation, all restrictions on qualifications have been removed.

The term *paśughnāt* refers to a hunter. Even though technically a hunter can be in the category of a sense enjoyer [and can thus be eligible for constant hearing of such *kathā*], due to a mind constantly disturbed by torture and violence caused to others, the hunter loses good intelligence to determine what is favorable for him in this world and the next, and thus even in this world his sense enjoyment is lost [due to such a degraded intelligence]. Therefore it is said:

*rāja-putra ciram jīva mā jīva ṛṣi-putraka  
jīva vā mara vā sādho vyādha mā jīva mā mara*

“O son of the king! May you live forever [because if you live you will enjoy here but if you die then you may be degraded]! O son of the sage! Do not live any longer [for you have no enjoyment in this world but enjoyment is waiting for you in the next]! O self-realized *sādhu*! You may live or die as per your wish [for you will be happy regardless of your situation]! O hunter! Neither live nor die [for you will continue to suffer regardless of your situation]!”

Therefore one who ceases listening to such *kathā* will be unhappy in both worlds and will also undoubtedly cause pain to others just like a hunter. The intention of



Unknown artist. British style. C. 1800s.

A village brahmin recites kṛṣṇa-kathā

the verse is to verbally abuse (*gāli-pradāna*) such people. More elaborations on the same verse are given in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* commentary in the *kathā-māhātmya* section. If the *kathā* of Lord Hari is so attractive, what to speak of the *kathā* of Lord Krishna and his beautiful form? ❧

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from *Aneka-vyākhyā-samalaṅkṛtām Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Canto 10. Edited by Shri Krishna Shankar Shastri. Sola, Ahmedabad.

## VRINDAVAN-DHAMA AND RADHA-NAMA

*Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati's  
Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛtam (9.84)*

*uṣitam vṛndārāṇye kati dināny uditam ca nāma rādheti  
kevalam etan mama balam apāra-narake sva-karmaṇā viśataḥ*

“I’ve spent many days in Vrindavan!” “I’ve chanted Radha’s name!” Only these words will be my strength as I fall deep into hell due to my karma. ❧

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.com).



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